

A Visitor to Peterborough's Reflections: HUGO GONZALEZ SANTIAGO

In the fall of 2010, Hugo Gonzalez Santiago came to Peterborough to attend Fleming College.

Hugo volunteered with the Peterborough Social Planning Council for over three months. The role that he played was that of consultant to our research on immigrant integration. His task was to reflect on his experiences as a new-comer to Peterborough. What did we do well as a community to welcome someone from another country? What do we need to do as a community to improve those first impressions that someone has as they move to Peterborough? Hugo's experiences are documented in his journal (below) that he has agreed to let us share with the community.

IMMIGRATION IN PETERBOROUGH

Brief Background

I had a lot of good moments in Peterborough, these last four months were some of the best of my life, and they were really amazing. I knew a lot of kind people, I made a lot of friends and I had opportunity to know more about Canada, Ontario and Peterborough. I'm really decided to come back as soon as possible; I'll do my best for coming back in Summer time and probably I will be able to apply for a permanent residence.

I want to recognize the support of Government of Canada for sponsoring my stay here, I think we got the goals of strengthen the relationship between Canadian and Mexican students, this year Fleming College received eleven Mexican students and next January Universidad del Valle de Mexico will be receiving nine Canadian students, this experience will be amazing for both groups. Actually I knew two Mexicans who after finishing their exchange semester decided to stay here and this time, two of the eleven Mexican decided to stay in Peterborough and Fleming College as well. I'm pretty sure that I will graduate in Mexico and I will come back Canada (hopefully Peterborough) to keep studying or maybe for looking for a job.

Peterborough has some characteristics that it could easily to take advantage of them, for example is a city that is strategically located between two major cities, Toronto and Ottawa, Toronto is only two hours far and Ottawa is only three hours far, this second is the capital nation so all government institutions are placed there, this can be an excellent way to promote Peterborough not only to immigrants but companies.

Most of Peterborough population is open to immigration but businesses in the city need training about how serve immigrants and be apt to understand different accents and be able to comprehend what they want in case that an immigrant.

I hope this project is useful to Peterborough Social Planning Council and to Peterborough Partnership on Immigrant Integration Council in their labor to help immigrants to adapt to the city because Peterborough has a great opportunity to grow and increase its population and become a key city in the progress of Ontario and Canada. I call PSPC and PPIIC to keep analyzing and supporting the immigration issue because this phenomenon is not going to stop and even is going to strengthen over the time.

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| <p>FRIDAY, AUGUST 27</p> | <p>On August 26th I arrived to Pearson International Airport in Toronto. I was a little bit afraid because I recognized that I was in a different country, with people speaking two different languages than mine, I saw people from many ethnic backgrounds at the same place, it was great.</p> <p>After taking my luggage I exchanged US dollars for Canadian dollars. I had checked in Mexico what was the conversion but in the airport was more expensive so I only change part of the money for paying my transportation to my home stay. I had a reservation for shuffle service but I hadn't found Couch Canada, Transportation Company which would take me to Peterborough. After asking for Couch Canada I get there. The driver man, who unfortunately I don't remember his name but was really nice with me, told me many things about Canada and Canada's culture that I didn't know, he described Kawartha Area and Peterborough, he give useful advises, we keep talking during the trip and he told me where Fleming College is and take me safe to my home stay.</p> <p>At six o'clock I arrive to my new home for six months, Jennifer welcomes me; she was also really nice since I came home. Then I thought, Will I be a lucky guy or all Canadian people are really nice? I guess the second choice. Jennifer was with a friend, we were talking for a while, after we make a walk with Franky, Jennifer's dog who is pretty cute. She told me how Canadian life is and some important information that I should know about the city.</p> <p>That night I met Jim, Jennifer's boyfriend and we were talking about Canada and Mexico, he told me he have sometimes visited Mexico and I told him how Mexican life is, he likes Mexico and Mexican food, two days I made it for them. I told him he must back to Mexico and meet the rest of the country; in fact, he meets places that I don't. I was excited describing my country and also that a Canadian likes so much Mexico.</p> |
| <p>SATURDAY, AUGUST 28</p> | <p>I woke up and breakfast was ready, that is a feeling that many students love, Jennifer had made pancakes, that was great because I had many time without eating pancakes, in Mexico is not very common eat pancakes, but in Canada is a common breakfast. Jennifer drove me to the bank, to open a bank account, because it is easier paying with debit card than with cash in every place, so I decided to save the money of my scholarship in my account as soon as I receive it. Jennifer took me to know her parents, they live close to Chemong Lake, and it is to 20 minutes from home, they are really nice; also I met Melissa, Jennifer's daughter who lives away from home because of work. Her family asked me about Mexico and I told them that they should go and know the country; also I told them that I had a good first impression of Canada.</p> |
| | <p>On Sunday, Jennifer invited me to go to a farm, because she, her daughter and two friends more would go to see a TV star that will be there, I don't remember the actress' name was, but she took pictures with almost people</p> |

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| <p>SUNDAY, AUGUST 29</p> | <p>who were there. Unfortunately I forgot my camera in home so I couldn't take pictures of horses, we ate hamburgers and soda. I met some Jennifer friends and I was talking with a French friend who has been here for four years, I could recognize that many Canadian host foreign students because I saw Canadian with Asian girls and boys, also Latin American. I also noted that some Canadian love farms and enjoy riding horses, now I know that Canada is not only large cities, they also likes farms, horses and country music, something that many Mexican don't believe.</p> |
| <p>MONDAY, AUGUST 30</p> | <p>On Monday, I went to store with Jennifer, and I bought some stuff that I needed, unfortunately she took me a store that my friends say is one the most expensive, and I actually thought all is really expensive here, so I didn't buy too much, only basic stuff. There an employee, who I suspect she has Latin background, she told us about a card which one can save points and save money, so we got it. But, I never went back there, I have visited other stores and from then I decided to buy in another than is cheaper, fortunately when a student is in another country and has limited money, one has to find the best options to save money. Jennifer was excited because, she had received a call from China, three Chinese students are coming to home, they will be living there, that is exciting because the home will have a multicultural environment, with Chinese, Canadian and Mexican people, I think that'll be great.</p> |
| <p>THURSDAY, AUGUST 31</p> | <p>Today, Mauricio, a Mexican friend and me went to Fleming College to know Debbie Harrison, International Inquires Coordinator, she welcome us and show us Fleming facilities, we took picture for ID Student Card and we know classrooms. After that, we decided to go downtown while we was walking we talked about our first days in Peterborough, he told me that he arrived Canada without having a place where stay because rentals are really expensive, in general many things as such food and public transportation is expensive for us. Here a bus ticket costs 2.50 bucks that makes 30.75 Mexican pesos while in Mexico a bus ticket costs only 6 pesos for adult and 3 for students and seniors, a big difference.</p> <p>Also, this day was important because it was the first time that I went to Peterborough Social Planning Council; I introduced myself to Dawn Berry-Merriam, Research & Policy Analyst, we talked about the project that I'll do during my stay in Peterborough. She explained me about what PSPC does, and I like their labor and I'm exciting to help them in this project, giving a point of view as someone new to the community.</p> <p>To conclude this long day, m friend Ursula invited me to go the movies, so I decided to go with her and Julio, another Mexican student, I didn't meet them until now, they are nice and we wanted to go on Thursday because is cheaper than the rest of the week, Thursdays each ticket costs 5 bucks that makes 62 Mexican pesos, that is very similar to a normal ticket which costs 50 pesos and 40 on Wednesdays, but going to the movies in Thursdays is a great deal</p> |

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| | because the rest of the week, it costs 10 bucks that makes 123 pesos, double that in Mexico. |
| WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1ST | Today, I went to a David Jones' concert with Jennifer and Jim. In Peterborough during summer there is a festival called Little Lake MusicFest, and today was the last concert, I really liked it and was great have a good time with Jenny and Jim, I saw how people cohabite, we ate hot dogs. I think should there are more activities like this not only in summer but also the rest of the year, because there many immigrants people who live in the city all the year and we usually miss festivals and other activities that are realized in our countries. Today I bought my semester bus pass for 200 dollars, a little expensive but now I can use public transportation when I want and it is unlimited. |
| TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2 | Chinese have arrived. My house now is busy of Chinese people, that's great, now I have three people more to talk and cohabite in the house, they are Stephanie, Mann and Pok Hoh, Stephanie has a year living in Peterborough, she is 15 and is studying High School, Mann and Pok Hoh have 14 and 16 years old respectively and it is the first time that will be in Canada, they don't know much English but Stephanie will help them to adapt. |
| FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3 | Today I went to New Canadian Center, I met with the Executive Director; Ziyah D. Markson, who showed me NCC facilities, I knew about what NCC does, and how it helps immigrants, they offer courses, orientation to newcomers to adapt to Peterborough and the region, they help immigrants to looking for a job, looking for a house and they make activities which includes newcomers and Canadian citizens. I think, this is great because despite Peterborough is a small city in comparison with Toronto or Ottawa, Peterborough is also house for immigrants who come from different countries and that helps to newcomers feel welcome in Canada and in particular in this area. Unfortunately, while I was on the way to NCC, it begins to rain and I got a little bit wet and this is because in Peterborough the weather is some peculiar, sometimes in the morning is sunny, and after it is raining or cloudy, but now I know that I should always be prepare in case that it rains. |
| MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 6 | Labor's day. Today all is closed and everyone is at home. It is similar than in Mexico, we celebrate Labor's day not working. In Peterborough, all is paralyzed, schools, stores and public transportation. I was at home waiting for my first classes day. |
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| <p>THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7</p> | <p>On September 7th, all Mexican students that hold to the International Trade Exchange Program had to attend to an orientation session; today I could meet the rest of Mexican students that we will the next fourth months. Debbie Harrison was our host and she told us about basic information of Peterborough as public transportation, medical insurance and every aspect related with our stay in the community. Also she told us about academic aspects as grades, courses, schedules, etc. Also we had opportunity to know the Peterborough Wellness Center, place where Fleming College's students can attend for free. After we were with Russell Turner, who is International Trade Program Coordinator, he talked to us about our courses and what about the exchange program, in January some Canadian students will go to Mexico and take classes in the Universidad del Valle de México (UVM), our Mexican university, though that it was great because it is an excellent way to exchange not only knowledge but culture aspects and stretched the relation between both countries, this is something that not only Mexico and Canada must do but the rest of the countries.</p> |
| <p>WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8</p> | <p>My first day of school! Today was my first class day, I was pretty nervous about it; I was excited to meet my new teachers and new classmates but everything was nice, the most important thing is that I could understand to my professors because I was a little worried about it, but they speak very clear, so Mexican students think that the language won't be an obstacle in our studies. This day was very tired, I finished school at 6pm, that is a dramatic change, because in Mexico usually classes finish at 2 or 1 o'clock and you have the rest of the day to do something else, now I want take dinner and sleep, actually all week is hard, except Mondays when I have a single class.</p> |
| <p>TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9</p> | <p>Canada is a bilingual country, for this reason when I was in Mexico I thought that would be easy find English or French course in Canada, but unfortunately is not. I wanted to register me to a French course but it was really expensive, 600 dollars, the problem is the same with English courses So I started to find courses in some places, Jennifer helped me making some calls, but unfortunately in District Education Board could not give us information about it. I think this is important, because many immigrants come to Canada with enthusiasm of adaptation, of learning the language and feeling that they are Canadian but if they don't have opportunities to learn the language, this is a first obstacle for adaptation, there are expensive courses that sometimes it can't be covered by immigrants, so I think a good option to help immigrants to adapt to Canada is offering English courses, in our case, we are eleven Mexican students that we are really interested in improve our level of English and maybe we can pay for it, but it should be a accessible price, this was one of the first challenges or obstacles in Peterborough.</p> |
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| <p>WEEK SEPTEMBER 12-18</p> | <p>I think I have adapted to Peterborough, I know very good the bus schedule also where are the stores and important places. The group of Mexicans that come from UVM are agree to organize a party this Wednesday because it is our independence day, so this year Mexico has 200 years of independence from Spain and it will be an important date for all Mexicans. We got organize to buy some things as food and beverages. It is amazing how we were discussing about what store would be cheapest as if we were Canadians. Each one lives in different part of the city so we can give suggestions about what store is cheaper for a particular product. The party was a hit, too many people came to our party, there were a lot of international students there, students from China, Singapore, Colombia, Japan and many other countries and of course people from Mexico, a Mexican friends offered her house to make the party and her home family was really kind with us, they helped us a lot with the organization. Unfortunately the party was over really early to be a so special day, but many of us don't have someone who can drive us home back. This is bad because in Peterborough there are a lot of young population, I mean, here there is Fleming College and Trent University, two post secondary schools which attract young people from other near cities and having fun is something essential for young.</p> |
| <p>WEEK SEPTEMBER 19- 25</p> | <p>In this week, I was talking with Jennifer about some problems that the kids are having in school, because unfortunately the school doesn't want to offer them the transportation to school because they are immigrants. She told me that, school bus usually drive students to school but she doesn't know why they are denying the service to them, she was really mad because she says that kids are students too as any other Canadian and the last year school gave Stephanie the service but they said that she would have this service only for a year, now that her brothers are here, school doesn't want to offer it again.</p> |
| <p>WEEK SEPTEMBER 26 - OCTOBER 2</p> | <p>Two weeks ago during the Mexican party we knew a lot of friends from different countries and we knew to an Costa Rican who is taking marketing in Fleming College, he invited us to join us to an committee of marketing in Fleming so we could make suggestions and make like a group of international students at Fleming, that's was an interesting idea and we accepted, there were some events created by the committee like a Salsa class for who were interesting and fortunately there were some people interested on that, also they prepared a conference with the major of the city; Paul Ayotte and their rival in the next elections, they were talked about their aspirations and what they will do if they were in charge of the city and how young people could benefit in each respective period. It was interesting how they were trying to gain our vote and differences between campaigns here and in Mexico. At the end of the conference, we took a picture with the mayor.</p> |
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| <p>WEEK OCTOBER 3-9</p> | <p>This week was my friend Carla's birthday and she invited me to pass the day with her host family and her in Toronto, it was a really nice day, her parents drive us to Toronto, and we were knowing the city, downtown and CN Tower, it is amazing, we could see all Toronto since the top also we ate there and their parents paid for us that was really so cute from them. We took a lot of pictures and her father told me about first nations in Canada when we were at CN Tower, he told us that most of the territory is unoccupied and that almost 80% of Canada total population live in the 200 hundred km from Canada-US border, that's very interesting because now I know Canada is able to receive more immigrants and adapt them to its work force. In Toronto I could see a lot of immigrants who live in the city and in comparison with Toronto, Peterborough has not a lot of immigrants, actually in Peterborough most of its population is Canadian and there are only few immigrants. The sir told me that close to half population of Toronto are immigrant, that's a really interesting fact.</p> |
| <p>WEEK OCTOBER 10-16</p> | <p>I have had some problems to communicate with my parents because in some stores they don't have telephone cards for international calls but fortunately a friend bought some cards for me near to her house and I only gave her money, also I have tried to buy Mexican food, but unfortunately there are not places that sell Mexican products and stores that sell it, they have only few products and are expensive but it is OK by this way I will have to eat only Canadian food and when I am in Mexico I will eat with more desire. Alcohol is more difficult find it here because there are unique stores to buy it, that's is good because we can be sure that we are buying good alcohol and avoiding adulterated alcohol, some common in Mexico. School was hard because we had to summit some projects and assignments because of midterm week.</p> |
| <p>WEEK OCTOBER 17-23</p> | <p>On Friday, a professor of Fleming take us to Toronto to attend the Dalai Lama Conference, it was really interesting. I was surprised because there I saw a lot of Chinese people and people from other places in the South East Asia. We also went to Chinese Town; it was amazing seeing that in this place everything is in Chinese, banks, stores. With this experience I could see the importance of culture in Canada and I'm happy that Canadian government allows it, because in other countries, minorities are persecuted. It was really great this trip because Mexican students could socialize with Canadian students, in this aspect, Fleming College is a good promoter of diversity, because Fleming wants that international students involve in student life. Today, my reading week began that was perfect because this week was really hard, we had midterm test so we need a relaxing week. Exams week was hard because we had exams of short answers where we have to write the answer and give an explanation so we have to have a good vocabulary to use in our answers, but fortunately I have experience making reports, essays and presentations in English in Mexico so it was really useful for me.</p> |

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| <p>WEEK OCTOBER 24-30</p> | <p>This was my reading week and I unfortunately had a lot of homework, but I made my best to finish it by Wednesday and I got it. So I was free for Thursday and I took Tour called French Kiss, where we visited One Thousand Islands, Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec. First, a friend an me took the bus to Toronto, because the tour departs from there, but unfortunately the last bus leaves Peterborough at 7.30pm and we had though taking the bus at dawn, but the first one is at 4am and we had not sure about if we would have enough time to look for the place, take subway o taxi, so we decided take the 7.30pm bus. We arrived to Toronto at 9.30 and we had a lot of free time and we had not booked hotel and we had to wait in the terminal until 6am when we go by subway to the place to where bus would departure.</p> <p>So my tour began, I loved these places and it was very enriching experience because both Montreal and Quebec have cultural differences, in both places French is speaking, but in Montreal when you enter in a store or restaurant usually tell you Bonjour>Hello, and it depends in which language you response in which the conversation continues. But, in personal I prefer Toronto and of course Peterborough to live, because I felt a little uncomfortable in Montreal, I had a bad experience when I was in the main street taking pictures, when two guys hit my camera intentionally and hopefully it didn't drop, it would have been really bad because it is new. Also in Montreal sometimes drivers don't respect the lights and we were a couple of times endangered to be hit by a car. I don't know if it happened because we are immigrants or if it is usual in the city, it was really different than Toronto. Quebec is a beautiful city, but everyone speaks French, a few people speaks English or they don't want to speak English, so I had to remember some basic French words that I learned in French courses in Mexico. And finally Ottawa is another beautiful city, we visited the Parliament building and other important places in the Canada's capital, I took more than four hundred pictures in this trip, which I'm excited for showing to my family in Mexico, I have sent them some pictures but I have many more. The tour last four great days, which flew by, and I obviously needed more time but I'm sure that someday I will back to these places, it was a great experience where we have chance to meet people from South Arabia, Colombia, Japan Germany, Brazil and other places, and of course I made more than one friend.</p> |
| <p>WEEK</p> | <p>On November 5 was the first snowing day in my life and in the life of other Mexicans who are living in Peterborough, we didn't know that this day would be rainy because we usually don't check the forecast before leaving home, something that many Canadians do. But when we were at Fleming, it was getting cold and later it began to snow, we were really excited and we took a video, only it was snowing for a couple of hours so there were not a lot of snow, our professor at Fleming told us that when will be enough snow to make a snow fight we will go out to do it. Also this week Jennifer took us a pumpkin</p> |

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| <p>OCTOBER 31 - NOVEMBER 6</p> | <p>for each of us to make faces with them, it was really funny because Chinese guys and me were laughing about our pumpkins and Jim and Jennifer were taking pictures of that, they taught us how make it and at the end we took it outside home for Halloween night, also we bought candies for the famous trick or treat. In Mexico we make something similar but it is not the same because we go to neighbors and scare them "Queremos Chichiliques" (We want stuff) and they give us candies, food, fruit or any that they want, we put a death altar where we place the favorite food of our dead relatives, because we believe that they come to live on November 1st and November 2nd, a tradition very important for us, in Mexico these days are holidays so any go to school or work. But Canadian or American can find their traditional Halloween in Mexico as well, mainly in big cities where this tradition is getting popular but government doesn't want that this happens because we could pay more attention to Halloween than "Día de Muertos" (Day of the Dead). This is more related with religion so I respect other traditions and Canadian people respect our believes, this is an important issue when cohabite people from different backgrounds.</p> |
| <p>WEEK NOVEMBER 7-13</p> | <p>This week I went to Lansdowne place and bought some stuff for my family and friends in Mexico, sometimes is very frustrating that people in stores don't understand immigrants, I think our English is not bad for living here and I know speak and read very well, my weakness is in the listening, because Canadian people speak fast and in Mexico we learn to listen English really slow but I have improve my English in these four months for sure. In stores, cashier and employees sometimes are mad or angry and they desperate because they don't understand my English, this is very sad because I'm making an effort to speak clearly and unfortunately they don't make an effort to understand my English, this happens a couple times and once where I was tired of the gestures made by the cashier I asked another thing that I don't like just to go out there.</p> <p>I think NCC and the partnership council should make some conferences or training to business in the city about how understand immigrants and make them easier to serve them, employees have to be tolerant with us and we will improve our English level for sure.</p> |
| <p>WEEK NOVEMBER 14-</p> | <p>This week I attended to Peterborough Partnership Council on Immigrant Integration (PPCII) meeting. The meeting was really interesting, there were a representative of each organization who is part of the partnership council and each department gave their report about what they have done on immigration issues. Also a professor of Trent gave a presentation about the modifications about refugees law, what's new, in what cases can refugees apply for staying in Canada and when not, and another issues related with this. Debbie Harrison introduced me to the Council and later I introduced myself and explained about my project with Peterborough Social Planning Council. I was a little bit</p> |

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| <p>20</p> | <p>nervous but all was done well. I realized about what is doing the council to help immigrants to establish in the city. I still go to the English course offered by New Canadian Centre, it is really interesting because we have opportunity to learn skills in conversations and listening, I have known some really nice people there from different countries and the most important is that my roomies Pok Ho and Man have seized the course and they have told me that it is really useful for them because they learn things that in their schools don't learn. This type of course is really useful for new comers and I think NCC and other organizations should implement more courses to help immigrants improve their level of English because immigrants really want to learn improve it but sometimes they don't have enough money to pay it.</p> |
| <p>WEEK NOVEMBER 21- 27</p> | <p>On Monday, Teresa, a professor of Fleming College, invited us to her house for dinner, it was really good, and we had a good time talking about our experience in Peterborough and about our classes, also about Mexico and Venezuela, her home country. Also, an Ecuadorian friend of her attended to dinner, and we were talking about differences in Spanish of Mexico, Ecuador and Venezuela, something like British and Canadian English. Her house is really far from our houses, she lives close to Trent University, and fortunately in the bus terminal there are maps available for who wants to check a specific address. In personal, I think public transportation is good but it could be better, I think it is necessary increase the number of busses in routes that are busiest and it takes a lot of time for a bus departure from terminal and go back there, this because buses take long routes, they could create new routes or modify current ones. I think they charge enough money to provide an excellent service. I thought that gas was cheaper here because Canada is one of the most important exporters of oil worldwide so I don't understand why transportation is so expensive, if I want to go Toronto or Ottawa as well, tickets are high prices. I have thought about going Calgary o Vancouver in the east coast but prices killed my dreams, I think Canada should improve its transportation system and make it more accessible to people and by this way encourage them to travel and know other Canadian places, Canada has a vast territory that their people don't know, at the same time this can be a good choice to increase population in unoccupied areas.</p> <p>On Thursday was my Mexican friend's birthday and we went to a Mexican restaurant, we got different meals but it was not what we expected, the Mexican owner is really nice and food is good but it is really expensive, ingredients are not the same and he could make an effort to get better raw material for plates, due to quality of food it is necessary lows prices to attract new clients and when people wants Mexican food he will be able to increase prices, unfortunately he told us that the business is not doing well so maybe he close it. After dinner we went to residences and we made a party for her there, we took the last bus to get there and before we bought some drinks. That day was snowing so while we were waiting for the bus we had not anything for covering against snow, unfortunately in Peterborough there are a lot of bus</p> |

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| | <p>stops without cabin and most of them only has the signal of bus stop and in case that it is raining you will wet.</p> |
| <p>WEEK NOVEMBER 28 – DECEMBER 4</p> | <p>This week was really funny because it was three of my Mexican friends' birthdays so we made three different parties; one was in a restaurant, other in a house's friend and another in the club. Although Peterborough is a small city, I'm impressed about clubs, bars, restaurants I think this is very important characteristic to attract new comers, it because all people aged or not aged need have fun sometimes and by this way to cope with stress, with students happens the same we are waiting weekends to relax at bar or pub or with friends in a house, prices are really expensive for us that usually spent "pesos" in Mexico, here a beer is at 4 or 4.5 bucks, that makes 48 or 56 pesos while in Mexico in a pub, bar or restaurant each beer is at 20 that makes less of 2 bucks. For this reasons in Peterborough Mexicans usually buy beer in any store and go to a friend's to drink before going to pub or bar and then we only buy a couple of drinks, that's our strategy. A big difference here is that usually Canadians arrives to party with their own drinks, in Mexico the house's owner buy a lot of drink for everyone and who wants bring a special drink can bring it to the party, well I can understand the reason and this can be cause there drinks are cheaper than here. This week was full of funny and we are some stressful with final projects so it is necessary go out with friends. Something that we have realized is that on Fridays the bars are busy of work mates who go to have a good time and cohabited, in Mexico we usually don't do that, on Friday after work, each one go home and see each other until Monday, unless there is a special event or something like that. I think this is a great idea because it builds a work community and it builds a good relationship in the work environment. Important fact is that weather is getting cold</p> |
| <p>WEEK DECEMBER 5 - 11</p> | <p>This week my final exams begin, I'm a little bit sad because is coming the day that I leave Peterborough, I went with some of my friends to Little Lake and downtown to take some pictures, unfortunately because of school we didn't have time to do it before. It was so interesting see some parts of the lake frozen. Most of us are sad, because we don't want to leave Peterborough and some are thinking about coming back, I'm one of them. Two Mexican students are going to stay in Fleming College definitely, but they resigned to Mexican diploma and they only will receive the Canadian one. In my case, I don't want to do that because my parents have spent a lot of money in my education in Mexico and I don't want to waste it. Also, for international students is really expensive to take classes here, my friends are talking about six thousand per semester, that's so expensive for me and my family, actually we are here thanks to an agreement between our Mexican university (Universidad del Valle de Mexico) and Fleming College, so we are still paying the same tuition to my Mexican university. This Saturday, in my home stay we had our Christmas dinner because Jennifer and Jim will go to Mexico on December</p> |

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| | <p>22th, so they won't be for Christmas. Dinner was delicious, there were turkey, potatoes, corn and a lot of snacks as such cookies, chips, etc. to the dinner Jennifer's parents, daughter, friends attended, and Chinese kids and me for sure, at the end of evening we had a gift exchange of funny stuff, it was really nice and we had a great time. In Mexico we also celebrate Christmas but it is different because we usually eat different plates. It was a really nice evening and this could be my goodbye from my host family, who was really nice people with me and helped me to had an amazing experience in Peterborough.</p> |
| <p>LAST WEEK IN PETERBOROUGH DECEMBER 12-18</p> | <p>For my last week, I will be really busy because I have final exams so it will be a hard week for us, Friday is our last day of classes and we officially ends our semester in Fleming College, that's really sad because I love Peterborough and I don't want leave the city, my friends and even my host family, but fortunately I will be able to see again my family in Mexico after five months since the last time that I was with them, I have planned make a stop in New York City to know it and in North Carolina where my brother's lives and spend holidays with him, so I will seize my last week here and I will enjoy the snow, I will take the last pictures before leaving and I will do my best to be again in Peterborough soon.</p> |

THE END