

Palatine High School graduate, Cecilia Pacheco made a most positive impression on teachers in the Family Consumer Science Department when she took every class the department had to offer in preparing students for teaching careers.

"It was there we saw Cecilia's true talent and passion for teaching, and it was there that we saw how she would not be deterred in her goal to be a teacher," observed Miriam Castro, EB 211 mentor, former teacher, now counselor at Palatine High School.

Cecilia graduated from Palatine as a Golden Apple Scholar and entered Illinois State University buoyed by EB211 support. Majoring in bilingual education, she was committed to bringing the same opportunities she had received as a bilingual student in Palatine schools. One challenge that Cecilia did not anticipate, however, was feeling in the minority.

"I could relate in my classes because as bilingual student, I knew what students would encounter in lower elementary school. But as a minority in college, I wasn't prepared to feel so alone," revealed Cecilia.

So this resourceful problem solver joined clubs: College Mentors for Kids, Spanish Club, Partners in Reading and became treasurer for the Student Association of Bilingual Education. And with her mentor, Miriam Castro's, help gained confidence she did not know she possessed.

"That's one of the biggest lessons I learned in college: not to give up, to always believe in myself," said Cecilia. "And I thank EB 211 for that. It was always good to get my mentor's texts, and always at just the right time, urging me to just breathe and to believe in myself."

In September, Cecilia will bring that confidence and commitment to John H. Hamline Elementary School in Chicago where she will teach second grade.