

Resource**Work Voices #13****Eve Olimpo – Sustainable Interior Designer**

It is helpful to view one segment at a time

Context

Eve Olimpo is a native French speaker from Montreal, Canada and has lived in the US for 12 years. She is an interior designer working in a store, [Inhabiture](#) in Palo Alto, which is a retail outlet for an architectural company which specializes in sustainable design and construction - “we create beautiful and healthy residential and commercial spaces.” Eve works with clients to explain options in terms of green design and advises them on sustainable furniture and furnishing, products that are selected for natural eco-friendly qualities.

As an adult with four children, Eve learned English by knowing how to get by in casual conversation, and describes how scared she felt not being able to understand the language when she went to college. She joined the certificate program in the [Interior Design Department](#) at West Valley College followed by the [LEED Internship Program](#).

Eve firmly believes it is never too late to learn and that there are many training programs on offer in her field. She is inspiring, having found a path which is not just about aesthetics, but also provides customers with products that are good for their health as well as for the environment. Clearly she is doing something she loves and feels passionate about.

Preview activities/Introductory questions

Warm up questions

How would you apply the term “green” to your everyday life?

Are there ways you could be greener in your life?

What does green design mean to you? Give examples.

Vocabulary

Interior design, accessible, sustainability, aesthetics, functionality, adequate, alternatives, general contractor, specialized, environmental features.

Focus questions

- Where does Eve work?
- Why does she like her job so much? Why does it inspire her?
- Why does the company choose the products they use?
- What factors does Eve consider when she advises clients?
- What options in terms of specialized training does she mention?

Discuss responses.

Post viewing

Research

a Training courses

- Find training programs in interior design that you could choose.
- Find the information you would need about each program in order to decide to apply for it.
- Find programs that emphasize sustainability in relation to design.

b Job opportunities

- Investigate the different fields for employment in interior design using green materials.
- Look for job opportunities in your locality.
- List the range of job options you could pursue i.e. which kind of companies might employ you.

Summarize findings for a and b in two paragraphs to share and discuss with the class

Reflection

- Why does Eve recommend this work?
- What are the challenges she faced?
- What kind of personal qualities would work well for this job? List the qualities you would need.
- What personal qualities does she bring?

Write a short reflection paragraph in response to these questions

Contact assignment

Interview someone who works in interior design and, if possible, is interested in using eco-friendly materials. Record the interview if you can.

Post it to your class blog – if you have one.

Further resources

- [Interior Design Department](#) at West Valley College
- [LEED Internship Program](#)
- KQED Education ESL [Eco-Literacy Resources](#)