



CELEA News

Newsletter of the Christian English Language Educators Association

Biannual

Volume 2 (2) ~ November 2010

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Letter from the President: CELEA Matters

Frank Tuzi, President@celea.net

What a joy and a blessing to serve CELEA this year as president. Thank you all who were involved with CELEA this year at the CELT (Christians in English Language Teaching) and TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) conferences in Boston and with the newsletters and CELEA website. We have been truly blessed to have so talented a group of people. Special thanks to Michael Lessard-Clouston (Biola University), Jan Dormer (Anderson University), Mary Beth Haan (El Paso Community College) and Daniel McClary (Millersville International House) for their contributions on the newsletter. Of course, I want to thank Michael Pasquale for his continued support and encouragement. What a blessing! It is also a delight to be working with Nancy Ackles and Karen Asenavage Loptes this year. We desire to see CELEA grow stronger and more effective in providing for the needs of our members and for the CELT community at large.

This year, we hope to complete the process of establishing ourselves as an NPO (Non-profit Organization). The new status will provide us a better standing and enable us to provide more to our members. There are many opportunities where CELEA can aid others in teaching, training, guidance and encouragement. With the many wonderfully talented and caring people we have, CELEA can become a beacon to people in need.

We are excited about the coming TESOL 2011 conference where we will once again gather to meet each other, share our passions and concerns and to be an encouragement to each other. We also submitted a proposal to the Academic Session, entitled “Encouraging Values-based Writing and Materials Development”. We will hear in October whether the proposal is accepted. Finally, we are unsure whether there will be CELT Conference this year. This is an item of prayer. If you are interested in having or participating in a CELT Conference in New Orleans, please post on the CELEA Forums (<http://www.celea.net/forum/3>).

I encourage you all to consider ways that you can use your gifts, abilities and resources to aid others in CELEA. We have many tools at our disposal and many in need. What a joy to be able to share together and strengthen one another. If you have ideas or needs, why not post them on the CELEA Forums.

Frank Tuzi teaches linguistics, TESOL and technology and chairs the Department of TESOL at Nyack College in Nyack, New York.



CELEA 2010 Election Results

The summer elections closed, and the results of the voting have been completed. The new officers are: Dr. Frank Tuzi as President. He has been a member of CELEA (CETC) for over a decade and has contributed to the organization as a newsletter editor and webmaster. He currently chairs the TESOL Department at Nyack College (Nyack, NY). Dr. Nancy Ackles is President-Elect. She has taught in intensive language programs for 25 years and most recently has been an English Language specialist for Fulbright and the State Department. Karen Asenavage Loptes is Secretary. She is the Associate Director of the Yale Center for Language Study and Director of the English Language Programs. She has also been involved with the Christian Educators in TESOL for many years and is committed to supporting the ongoing efforts of CELEA. We are still in need of a Treasurer. If any one is interested and able to take up the reins, please contact Frank Tuzi at President@celea.net.

There are other non-voting members of the CELEA team. These include: Dr. Michael Lessard-Clouston and Dr. Jan Dormer as *CELEA News* co-editors, Daniel McClary as *CELEA News* layout editor, and Andy Bowdler as E-list manager. For more information on the committee, please visit <http://www.celea.net/node/1>. Thank you to all who voted. We hope to have a productive year as we strive to move the organization forward to make it more beneficial to members, the profession, and the community.

CELT 2012 in Hong Kong

A Christians in English Language Teaching (CELT 2012) conference will be held in Hong Kong from 27 to 29 January 2012. It is co-organized by CELEA (the Christian English Language Educators Association) and the Centre for Quality Life Education (CQLE) of the Divinity School, Chung Chi College, the Chinese University of Hong Kong. The following individuals have accepted our invitation to be plenary speakers at the conference: Suresh Canagarajah, Pennsylvania State University, Zoltan Dornyei, University of Nottingham, and Agnes Lam, University of Hong Kong.

A conference organizing committee has been formed, comprising the following members. *Conference Chair*: Icy Lee, Faculty of Education, Chinese University of Hong Kong; *Local Committee Chair*: Andy Gao, Department of English, Hong Kong Institute of Education; *Program Committee*: Carolyn Kristjansson, Trinity Western University, Canada, Kitty Purgason, Biola University, USA, and Mary Wong, Azusa Pacific University, USA; *Publicity*: Lawrence McAllister, English Bridge Program, Simon Fraser University, Canada; *Webmaster*: John Liang, Biola University, USA; *Fund-raising*: Brad Baurain, University of Nebraska, USA; *Members-at-large*: Shelley Page, English Language Institute, Beijing, China, and Don Snow, Nanjing University, China.

A call for proposals will be sent out later, and the committee will provide regular updates. If you would like to offer to help with any of the above areas, please contact the appropriate committee member or the Conference Chair, Icy Lee (icylee@cuhk.edu.hk). For further information, please visit the CELT 2012 website at <http://www.celtconference.org>.

From the Editors

We're pleased to offer you this November 2010 issue of *CELEA News*, and we're thankful for the development of this publication for CELEA members and other interested parties. As we've noted, our plan is to provide two solid issues a year, which means that readers need to submit short or medium-length articles that will be of interest to others in CELEA. If you presented at the CELT 2010 conference in Boston, for example, please consider sharing your work with a wider audience by possibly submitting an article version of your presentation. Our deadline is January 7th to be considered for the next issue, which will hopefully appear in late February or early March 2011. You can refer to the final page of this issue for Guidelines for Contributions. We also need for another co-editor who can devote time to editing articles and helping with long term planning over the next few years. Please contact us if that might be of interest!

This issue starts with new CELEA President Frank Tuzi's letter, and we've included some CELEA updates on the recent elections and the CELT 2012 conference in Hong Kong. Our two main articles deal with the Dream Act in the U.S.A., by Brad Baurain (from his presentation at TESOL 2010 earlier this year), and Iris Devadason's reflections on collaborating with subject matter specialists as an ESP practitioner. We also have a spotlight from Ken Ikeda in Japan, and two short articles by Laura Jacob and Karly Semenov. We hope you find something to encourage and help you in your teaching, research, and service in English language education.

Michael Lessard-Clouston & Jan Dormer

A Faith-Based Case for the Dream Act

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This article is a faith-based argument in favor of the Dream Act — proposed federal legislation that would permit states to extend in-state tuition rates at public colleges and universities to undocumented immigrant students.

At a more personal level, this article is about solving Marie’s problem (Hoover, 2004). Marie was born in Costa Rica, but when she was very young her parents came to the U.S. She grew up in Missouri, did well academically, and graduated from a top high school. Her grades were good enough to earn her membership in the National Honor Society, and she also competed with the tennis and track teams. Somewhere along the way, her parents’ visas expired. She and her family became undocumented immigrants and the door to higher education was effectively closed. “This country was made by immigrants,” Marie said. “What have I done to deserve deportation to a country I barely know?” (p. A1).

Immigrant Students

The United States is presently home to about 35 million immigrants constituting 12% of the total population (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). About one-third of these immigrants, an estimated 11-12 million, are undocumented. Some believe this group has been chronically undercounted and that the number may be as high as 20 million (Soerens & Hwang, 2009).

Twenty percent of all school-aged youth have immigrant parents, a number that will grow to one in three by the year 2040 (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). This makes immigrant students by far “the fastest-growing segment of the youth population” (p. 1). Lack of documentation affects an estimated 1.8 million children or youth directly, plus 3.1 million more who are in households headed by undocumented adults. For students without documentation, the path to higher education is blocked by lack of access to in-state tuition rates and financial aid. Once they realize this, typically in high school, this fact has a demotivating effect and helps perpetuate cycles of academic failure, poverty, and social vulnerability. The Dream Act would be a significant step towards addressing this issue.

Given these numbers, it is no exaggeration to say that the future of American education depends on immigrant students. That is, American public education will in large measure succeed or fail based on how such students do within the system. Because the TESOL profession stands at the crossroads of language and education, we are inescapably involved in these policy issues every day in our classrooms.

What is the Dream Act?

The Dream Act (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act) would open the door for states to grant undocumented residents in-state tuition rates at public colleges and universities, if applicants are able to meet several conditions (NILC, 2009a, 2009b; Batalova & McHugh, 2010):

- (1) They were brought to the U.S. while still a minor, before age 16, and are less than 35 years old at the time

the law is passed.

(2) They have lived in the U.S. for at least five years.

(3) They have graduated from a U.S. high school.

(4) They can demonstrate good moral character, including having no criminal record.

The Act would also create a pathway to legal citizenship for such persons, whom to be eligible would need to complete an associate's degree or serve two years in the U.S. military. After six years of conditional status, they could then be granted full legal status.



Despite bipartisan support, versions of the Dream Act have failed to pass in Congress several times since 2001. Most recently, it won a 52-44 vote in the Senate in 2007, but that was less than the 60 votes necessary to overcome a filibuster. President Barack Obama supports the Dream Act, reintroduced it into the House and Senate last year, and has recently made it a legislative priority as part of an immigration reform package. His opponent in the last election, Senator John McCain, also supported it and previously co-sponsored the bill. Former President George W. Bush supported it as part of his immigration reform package, but when that was defeated he did not support it as a standalone bill.

To date, ten states—including California, Illinois, New Mexico, Texas, and Nebraska—have passed their own versions of the Dream Act, minus the citizenship provisions and federal financial aid eligibility (Flores, 2009). In addition, individual universities such as the City University of New York (CUNY) offer in-state tuition to undocumented students via university administrative policies (Rincón, 2008). On the other hand, several states — including Colorado and Arizona — have passed anti-Dream Acts, specifically disallowing in-state tuition rates for undocumented students. While the legality of states making laws involving a federal domain (citizenship) remains murky, the status quo offers absurd scenarios such as this one: An undocumented student in Colorado cannot get in-state tuition rates there, but he or she can do so in New Mexico through a reciprocal tuition agreement between the two states (Horwedel, 2007).

If a national Dream Act becomes law, how many people might stand to benefit? About 65,000 undocumented students graduate from American high schools every year, among whom just 5% go on to postsecondary education (Gonzales, 2009). It is currently estimated that passage of the Dream Act would affect 726,000 young adults who would be immediately eligible for the new law's provisions. In addition, there are an estimated 934,000 youth and children younger than 18 who would be eligible if they graduate with an American high school diploma. Finally, another 489,000 persons ages 18-34 would be eligible if they returned to high school and graduated or successfully completed their General Educational Development GED test. The total number of potential beneficiaries is thus over 2.1 million, however, the same source estimates based on history that realistically only about 38%, or 825,000 people, will take advantage of the Dream Act (Batalova & McHugh, 2010). The bottom line is that, whatever does in fact happen, the Dream Act would have a positive impact on the educational opportunities available to more than two million undocumented immigrants who currently have severely limited access to higher education. Though it addresses only one issue in a limited way, the Dream Act would thus be a step toward social justice for a significant group of people.

Recent debates over the Dream Act and immigration reform tend to center around economic considerations, but in this article I explore and engage with the proposed law from a moral and spiritual perspective, and specifically from my standpoint as an evangelical Christian. The arguments presented here are by no means exhaustive—there are certainly others which can be made. I also am not suggesting that all evangelicals, Christians, or people of faith will agree with these arguments. A final caveat is that I am not making these arguments from an exclusively Christian perspective. I imagine that people of other faiths and worldviews will be able to find common ground with me on this issue.

Championing the Vulnerable

One reason I believe Christians should support the Dream Act is that it champions the vulnerable. Scripture is full of

commands and exhortations to show care for people without social status or power, such as widows, orphans, and immigrants: “The Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing” (Deuteronomy 10:17-18; cf. Jeremiah 22:3; James 1:27).

One vulnerable group addressed by the Dream Act is children. The Dream Act is a logical extension of the 1982 Supreme Court decision in *Plyler v. Doe* (Drachman, 2006; Frum, 2007). In that case, the Court ruled that all children, regardless of legal status, have the right to a free public education. The idea was that undocumented children should not have to suffer for the choices and actions of their parents. The Supreme Court accepted this reasoning and “acknowledged that although the undocumented were not authorized to be in the United States, they were nevertheless protected under the provisions of the Fourteenth Amendment” (Rincón, 2008, p. 213). Commitments to constitutional law and human rights mean we have an obligation to extricate undocumented youth from the legal paradox within which they currently exist. They already possess a well-established right to a free public K-12 education, so it is inconsistent and even cruel to slam the door of higher education in their faces as soon as they come of age.

Another vulnerable group relevant to the Dream Act is exploited laborers. Hoffmeier (2009) notes that the word “stranger” or “alien” in the Bible suggests a “legal resident alien.” Yet it would be a mistake to say that legal status determines personhood or human rights. Undocumented or illegal immigrants retain basic human rights, which in Christian terms are based upon the doctrine of creation and the view that people are created in the “image of God.” One of these rights is to fair wages. A worker’s illegal status does not give an employer the right to pay exploitative wages. The biblical prophets frequently deliver messages of judgment against those who take advantage of their employees in this way: “Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his countrymen work for nothing, not paying them for their labor” (Jeremiah 22:13). “Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty” (James 5:4).

The exploitation of undocumented immigrants for their labor in agriculture, meat packing, and other industries (see, e.g., “The speed kills you,” 2009) is hypocritical. “Which part of ‘illegal’ don’t you understand?” reads the bumper sticker, ignoring the fact that illegal immigrants tend to work for illegally low wages under illegally unsafe conditions, often doing work that other workers are unwilling to do. Social justice thinking indicates that there are a host of interlinked laws and practices which need to be changed in this regard. In the meantime, supporting passage of the Dream Act is a specific and practical way in which Christians and others can help prevent new people from being forced to join this vulnerable group. That is, if undocumented American high school graduates do not have an opportunity to pursue higher education, they are all but condemned to job opportunities that place them in this exploited working class.

Showing Grace to Overcomers

Immigrant students, including those who are undocumented, tend to be English language learners (ELLs) as well. During their K-12 school years, such learners face many sobering challenges. Gándara and Rumberger (2009), for example, find ELLs to be disadvantaged in seven core areas: “(1) They attend more segregated schools (2) where facilities and conditions are poor; (3) they have teachers with less training and (4) who receive very little professional development to aid them in teaching English learners; (5) they have inadequate books and materials and (6) are assessed with tests that distort or fail to capture what they know; and (7) they have insufficient time to learn the curriculum they must master.” They conclude that there are thus “enduring inequities in educational opportunity.”

According to Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Todorova (2008), immigrant parents often “find their children mired in the worst schools in the United States—schools that are racially, linguistically, and economically segregated” (p. 366). These high-need schools tend to have less-qualified teachers and they also often lack informational resources

about higher education. Immigrant students are “consequently at a significant disadvantage as they strive to adapt to a new culture, learn a new language, master the necessary skills to pass high-stakes tests, accrue graduation credits, get into college, and attain the skills needed to compete in workplaces shaped by the new global economy” (p. 96). Additionally, research by Callahan (2005) indicates that school tracking practices and academic English proficiency are the best predictors of educational success, and that immigrant students are at a significant disadvantage in both areas.

Students who do not master the demands of academic English — an endeavor which research shows can take 4-8 years — cannot even begin to dream of entering the world of American higher education (Rodriguez & Cruz, 2009). Yet another challenge facing these learners is many parents’ low educational attainment, a variable which correlates strongly with children’s academic achievement. According to Hernandez, Denton, and Macartney (2009), the fact is that “children of immigrants are much more likely than the native born to have less educated parents who have not graduated from high school (40-41% vs. 12%) ...one fourth of children in immigrant families have parents who have not entered, let alone completed, high school” (p. 620). Other educational barriers facing immigrant students stem from poverty or a lack of material resources, including inadequate housing, food, clothing, and books. Being undocumented is just one more barrier on top of this daunting list!

Undocumented immigrant students who have fought through these formidable challenges and are able to meet the Dream Act’s criteria deserve our compassion and our admiration...and I believe they are certainly worthy of the extension of some grace. Even if one thinks that their undocumented status earns them no privileges (such as in-state tuition), I contend that we should and indeed must err on the side of grace in recognition of all that these students have already been through and of our own status as aliens and strangers who have received God’s grace.

Pursuing Social Justice

As I have been arguing, supporting the Dream Act is a step towards more just immigration laws and enforcement practices. One way in which this is true is that the Dream Act takes a stand against racism, especially racism against Hispanics. Rhetoric surrounding immigration is an area of public and private discourse in which racist language and orientations continue to be tolerated. Communications scholars, for example, “have identified discursive connections [in the news media] between the rhetoric of immigration and representations of other human problems such as crime or war” (Cisneros, 2008, p. 569). Media-based metaphorical associations for immigration include disease, infection, infestation, burden, and flood (p. 572, Table 1). This is true about both legal and illegal immigrants, but illegal immigrants especially tend to be represented as “contaminating” or “polluting” communities, labor markets, schools, and American culture in general. The “metaphor of immigrant as pollutant articulated in popular [media] discourse is significant for the ways in which it constructs immigrants, through racial and xenophobic stereotypes, as objects, aberrations, and dangers” (Cisneros, 2008, p. 591; see also Jefferies, 2009).

These kinds of bias and prejudice were on striking display this past Halloween as an “illegal alien” costume that can only be considered insulting and dehumanizing was sold at major retail outlets including Target, Walgreen’s, and Amazon (Espinosa, 2009; Gutierrez, 2009). The costume featured an orange, prison-type jumpsuit with the words “Illegal Alien” stenciled across the chest, a “green card,” and a space alien mask. One version of the mask included a ball cap and a dark mustache, suggesting the stereotype of a Hispanic laborer. Especially given the openness of such racism, to oppose it in ways that include but are not limited to supporting the Dream Act is to stand in the great moral traditions of abolitionism and civil rights.

There is no doubt that Christians must respect the rule of law (Romans 13:1-7; see Hoffmeier, 2009). But the fact that a person has broken the law does not define or confine his or her identity, strip away basic human rights, or rule out all other considerations—not even in the courts, as the Supreme Court’s *Plyler v. Doe* decision demonstrates. So an additional factor favoring the Dream Act is that our current immigration policies are not consistent or fair, a problem compounded by erratic implementation and enforcement. Legal immigration flow charts, for instance, show many long wait times (a decade or more in some cases), dead ends, and family separations—one in three

families with an undocumented member also has a U.S. citizen member (Soerens & Hwang, 2009, p. 39). All sides of the debate seem to agree that the system needs fixing, but proposed solutions have been stuck in political gridlock. Given all this, Carroll R. (2008) goes so far as to suggest that the question of undocumented immigration may be an appropriate issue for Christian civil disobedience. Churches that offer “sanctuary” already act on this basis. By comparison, this article’s recommendation of passing the Dream Act is a single recommendation from within the system and only a first step in a more positive direction.

Conclusion

To summarize, from a faith-based perspective, I believe that to support the Dream Act means to:

- Fulfill a Christian obligation of championing the vulnerable, namely, children and exploited laborers.
- Carry out a Christian privilege of extending grace to and recognizing the effort and sacrifices of those who stand to benefit from the Dream Act.
- Meet a Christian responsibility of supporting social justice by opposing racism and working for more just laws (immigration reform).

In conclusion, I argue that we had best pursue justice in how we treat those within our borders, because God will certainly do so. If we do not, we risk being described by these harsh words: “The people of the land practice extortion and commit robbery; they oppress the poor and needy and mistreat the alien, denying them justice” (Ezekiel 22:29).

This material was originally presented at the TESOL Convention in Boston on March 25, 2010, as part of the Christian English Language Educators Forum, “Social Justice, Faith and ELT.”

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Reflections on The ESP Teacher As Collaborator

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Introduction

According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), an English for specific purposes (ESP) teacher has five roles: teacher, course and materials designer, researcher, evaluator, and collaborator. These roles overlap and being a teacher and evaluator is well established, but to be a course and materials designer one needs 'inner' knowledge and must collaborate with subject teachers. Being a collaborator involves venturing into other subject areas and this has been questioned or even resisted, as some say an English teacher should only teach General Academic English. For Christian educators, theology is familiar ground as it is the basis of our faith, yet even here I know that teachers in other theological colleges in India have resisted the idea of reading theology to teach English. So, how do we go about working with others? Some of my colleagues, non-native English speaker (NNES) teachers like myself, have felt that English is 'owned' by English teachers and so they are uncomfortable in our presence, even though we are NNESs, too. English teachers, on the other hand, have complained that we are 'invisible' to them. How can we respect each

other's abilities and positions? And what contributes to success when teachers of other subjects request help or when we seek information from them for our own purposes? This article seeks to address some of these issues, drawing on my experience teaching English in a theological college.

Theoretical Issues

Dudley-Evans (1997), writing about the well-established Team-Teaching course at the University of Birmingham for international students at the post-graduate level, distinguishes *co-operation* as seeking information by the teacher alone, *collaboration* as working together with subject teachers for the ESP class, outside the classroom, and *team teaching* as working together in the same classroom. He also says that collaboration and team teaching share a spirit of inquisitiveness about subject departments and a desire to make English for academic purposes (EAP) relevant and to question whether EAP is serving the needs of the subject departments. He predicts that if EAP is not close to the subjects it will lose its dynamism.

As I teach in India in a theological college, I make a few distinctions which others might not see as relevant. United Theological College (UTC) caters to churches and they are largely rural. ELT in rural areas is poorer than in urban areas. Therefore, an ESP teacher must recognise these issues and be willing to play 'handmaiden' to theology and the needs of the church. Hence, I would say that subordinating one's training and insights to teach English and identifying with the students' special needs is the first requisite here. This sacrificial willingness 'to serve and not to be served' is co-operation. I would argue that co-operation, as I define it, is part of collaboration. I do not make a distinction between the two for I see non-co-operation as the total rejection of the role of service to another subject department.

ESP teaching calls for this subordination of roles (and egos), the willingness to see one's identity as an English teacher as empowering students to handle their subject areas with confidence. Collaboration would not be possible if there were no co-operation in the first place. Team teaching, of course, is clear. ESP teachers as collaborators respond to a felt need by the subject teacher and do not intrude nor make claims of superiority. They bridge the gap between subject teachers' expectations and students' inadequacies.

Areas of Collaboration

In the college where I work, collaboration has taken place in three different aspects of the academic community: the position of the English Language Committee within the overall academic structure, administrative issues relating to admissions, and selecting subject-specific passages for teaching and testing.

Interestingly, the newly formed English Department earlier attached to other departments is now called the English Language Committee (ELC) and its membership has changed every year with representatives from the different subject areas. With this ELC the notion of collaboration for a common purpose was established.

At first, I only collaborated with subject teachers in the setting of the English Entrance Examination paper, which was in line with the college's policy of two paper-setters and evaluators for all examinations. I worked with the Directors of the Graduate and Post-Graduate divisions. I was the first examiner, the Director the second. For over a decade now, the ELC has collaborated in evaluating entrance exam papers at both B.D. and M.Th. levels, because grades in English are related to admissions and this has become a very sensitive issue considering the needs of churches for trained clergy. Churches are our financial supporters! Hence, the more involvement there is on the part of subject teachers the less tension there is.

At the Masters' level subject teachers recommended that I use the GRE test papers for Comprehension and Vocabulary, yet we often disagreed on what was a suitable word or text for their field since they found my choice of passages and words too 'literary', and not likely to be within the students' area of reading at their previous undergraduate level. We thus made compromises on this (e.g., *gullible*...X, *sophism*...√). Later, when the GRE list was given up as being too difficult, I was asked to recommend another word list. Here, I collaborated with senior students, who had studied with me, regarding which part of the 6-part series I had used with them I should recommend for the

new entrants. I often found that when I chose a text subject teachers or students remarked that it was “difficult”. I later requested they provide me with 600-word texts that I could use for Reading Comprehension and longer ones for précis writing. But I found that when they gave me texts, though they were familiar ‘content-wise’ they were ‘linguistically more difficult’. Students seem to feel at home in their subject-texts and distrust anything that is more general.

Yet some faculty insisted that students should have some general reading, too, and so requested texts from literature written by Indian writers in English, a practice that still continues. However, the insistence on Indian writers in English is not convincing as imaginative writing is the same always and the language used is not simpler even if the context is Indian. The assumption seems to be that literature is “less serious or less intellectual” than theology. In terms of essay topics, I often set a few for the essay question and the Director supplies two or three of his own choice. There are no conflicting views here.

Research-Based Collaboration For Teaching Academic Writing 1999-2005

During this period, I had observed that students who had done a pre-session Remedial English (RE) course with me always secured very good grades, even distinctions, for their thesis two years later. This was despite their examination marks being less impressive. I wondered, what was the cause of this “academic osmosis” in them? How did they overcome their weaknesses in writing in English, excelling over those others who had no basic problems with the language? The RE course was only six-weeks’ duration and could not be the answer to this change in them. I needed to know how this change was brought about and whether I could improve my teaching of writing to them at the pre-session level. I needed to deepen my understanding of my own practices while I traced their remarkable growth.

Thus began my more specific collaboration with the faculty in trying to find an answer to this question. With the intention of doing a doctoral programme later, I set out with a structured questionnaire to the faculty to find what their expectations were of these students during their course work and thesis writing. I also gave a questionnaire to the students (on completion of their thesis-writing) on the processes of composition.

Further, when I had edited their written work some faculty expressed great satisfaction with the outcome. Surely this was an area that needed to be explored further: the role of the ESP teacher in ‘refining’ the thesis. The faculty’s response was very positive and all co-operated in answering the questionnaire. They identified the very good theses in the archives, an input which I have shared with weaker students to enable them to familiarise themselves with what is approved and acceptable here. This is valuable inner knowledge and I have used it constructively.

What Assignments are Expected of Students?

This question concerned the kind of assignments the students were expected to do as their course work. The answers provided a wealth of information, which helped me review my perspective on teaching reading and summary writing.

1) Read and Report

This task was common to all departments. In small groups, students are asked to report on a set number of pages that they have read and to comment critically on them. The articles may be the latest in the field, five pages long, or 20 pages of standard required reading. The time allowed for preparation could be 4 weeks and for presentation 30 minutes or 1 hour, including 10 minutes for responding to questions. Some faculty require written documents while some prefer oral delivery. Smaller departments provide more time for such work and a student may read 10-12 papers in a 10-week term. Such authentic and valuable information could only be collected from teachers themselves and it reflects a variety of viewpoints and specific expectations. It also highlights the intensely critical nature of the skills demanded of these students.

The students’ responses to these tasks, however, are related to deeper issues such as the prior learning situation in rural and secular colleges and the novelty of the tasks. The requirement at UTC to read independently in English,

comment critically and to report with authority is definitely one that is rarely given in colleges which students have attended earlier. Most teachers there, including myself, are simply expected to train students to pass examinations and to complete a set syllabus by giving students notes that they must memorize. Students, too, do little more than this to satisfy parents and administration. Learning is a passive task. So, at UTC the weaker student's response to such assignments is understandably often one of despair. One specific example that I wish to cite to support this fact follows from the Department of Church History:

Task: a) Read about one particular incident of conversion that had taken place in the 19th century from seven different historical sources, such as Journal Articles, Missionary Home Reports, Letters, and Newspaper articles by Indians, Hindu leaders and Christians. b) Critically comment on these documents.

Unskilled L2 students were totally disturbed as this was the first time that they were being asked to read independently and to formulate their own opinions. Their expectations were what they were used to in the earlier learning situation of being given notes to memorise. But in the two-year period, prior to writing the thesis, students soon overcome their apprehensions as they did assignments based on their reading.

2) *Transforming One's Reading and Not Re-telling It*

This task involves what Bloom in his Taxonomy of Educational Objectives has described as involving six steps of reading activities as follows: from simple knowledge acquisition to comprehension, application, analysis and finally to synthesis and evaluation. UTC faculty's expectations of students involve much of what Bloom has described as being the more advanced stages of reading and it is in this direction that our students are being trained. In referring to Blooms' taxonomy of educational objectives I highlight the fact that most students, given the education they have already received, tend to stop at levels 1 and 2, i.e., data collection (knowledge) and mere understanding (comprehension) of the material, and do not do an interpretation of it, so their writing tends to be mere 'knowledge display'.



Faculty's comment that students tend to offer mere summaries of the texts assigned is a confirmation of these patterns of poor prior education. They have had no exposure to the idea of reading to explain to another, which would involve understanding, followed by interpretation. Thus, reading and reporting is clearly a very valuable exercise in enculturation and training in genre-specific reading and writing.

3) *Various Types of Academic Writing*

Students entering professional institutions find themselves in a new situation for writing, which is a difficult skill and takes time to acquire. Students at UTC have no time to practise these skills as they are thrown into the deep-end from the moment they register for this course, except those who do the RE course. Acquiring academic English is concurrent with doing their subject specific work and this is the hypothesis underlying my research. Short essays in the departments are subject-specific types of writing which lead to the final longer tasks such as Seminar and Inter-Departmental Integrated Papers¹, Thesis-Title Drafts and the Thesis. For example, word study, translations and literary criticism in Biblical Studies leads to exegesis on which interpretation and theological arguments are based. Explaining concepts in Christian Ministry and Counselling helps students to apply these to situations that they encounter in their field work and in the case studies they must undertake. Book reviews apply to nearly all Departments except Church History, where they are rare, as literature review is essential to every field.

All these tasks are a combination of self-study, consultation with peers, and advice from the faculty. Students often seek help from their seniors and occasionally consult me for help with English during the initial stages of their enculturation. The tasks require thinking in English as much as they call for discipline-related skills.

Academic writing is an area which is being discussed widely nowadays as the number of NNES students studying in Anglophone countries is increasing. John Swales initiated the move towards a more sympathetic attitude towards adult ESP students for whom language, not content, was a hurdle. While explaining the rationale underlying his work, Swales (1971) said one factor was the recognition “that our clientele were intelligent undergraduates.” This sympathetic attitude, I believe, is the basis for the advent of ESP itself. Students are conditioned to ways of writing which we must offer to change by the kind of tasks we set them. Consequently, even in the RE class I now teach discourse analysis, logical writing and the product approach, which I believe is near genre teaching (see Devadason, 2009).

Faculty perspectives have enabled me to see more clearly the needs of students who must write the thesis despite their limitations in English. They have helped me identify closely with such students and to re-think my own methods of teaching writing. I have become more focussed in teaching writing and tend to heighten their awareness in the kind of new work that I have introduced, since 2002, alongside my research. My teaching is more supportive and meaningful than it was earlier and has forced me to read along with the students and identify with their understanding of different areas of study and ministry.

Difficulties In Collaboration

Despite all of the above points and experiences, there are some difficulties in collaboration, too. My first attempts at team teaching proved unsuccessful as no one responded to my written request to give a special lecture to the undergraduate students with me attending, to later teach some techniques for note-making. This could have been because of tight work schedules and I gave up too soon. Secondly, my keenness to share with theologians my research on aspects of language use in theological prose also drew a blank as my colleagues proved indifferent to a linguistic analysis of theological prose even though it had been done for a pedagogical purpose. These were NNES theologians. The few theologians who were interested in my work and supported my efforts were NES theologians, though even to some of them I remained invisible. However, after many years of serving in this institute I find collaboration easier, though some of the attitudes to English teaching remain.

Conclusion

Team teaching and collaboration call for mutual trust and respect as egos are involved, too. They involve acknowledging the power that accompanies professional qualifications, roles, age, gender and experience. If subject teachers realise that the purpose of collaboration is to match our inputs to the level of their demands there may be less indifference or suspicion. If the notion of helping students is accepted there need be no fear that English teachers are trespassing into their domains. Finally, for those teaching in seminaries or theological colleges I believe that immersing oneself in the life of the college and all its related activities (chapel, seminars within and outside the college on church-related themes, editing / proof-reading theological publications, serving on various committees, etc.) creates a spirit of camaraderie and paves the way for productive academic collaboration.

Note

¹ Here a common topic, e.g. communal riots, is discussed from different departmental perspectives.

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Iris Devadason is a retired UTC professor, who recently completed her doctoral studies. She has revived her long-neglected skill in painting and is now exhibiting her work to raise funds for a charity.





Spotlight

Ken Ikeda

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Tell us a little bit about yourself. How are you connected with the world of English language teaching?

I fell into the profession. I had completed a joint Master's in Japanese history and library science and at my history professor's recommendation went to Japan as an Assistant Language Teacher (though I had no ELT training) in what was the first year

of a government-sponsored program. Shy by nature, I viewed English teaching as an excellent conduit to help me develop an extroverted self. After six years on this program I was motivated to enroll in a teaching certificate course in EFL, and after another six years I graduated with a Master's degree in TESOL. I then spent about ten years teaching at several universities in the Tokyo area before the Lord opened the doors two years ago into a full-time position at a women's college. Here I teach English skill courses, an upper-division seminar focusing on ethnic studies and observation techniques, and an academic writing course to graduate students, as well as provide guidance to undergraduate thesis writing in English. Besides teaching, I am able to have impact on students throughout their college years in homeroom sessions, a study abroad program, and other extracurricular activities.

Is there a relevant joy or challenge you experience which you could share with CELEA News readers?

I am still having difficulty adjusting to constant demands on my time which envelop the overall concerns of the university beyond the classroom and leave scarce time to conduct research. My biggest personal challenge is tackling the inadequacies of my Japanese language ability. Hitherto I could rely on my speaking skills but I am now expected to write reports in Japanese as well. Currently I take weekly lessons at a Japanese language school. I believe these challenges are honing me to call on the Lord by the minute to tap on His vast reservoirs of blessings, discernment and strength. He has also sustained me mightily through my wife in a blessed 18-year marriage coupled with a very supportive local church.

What is your favorite Bible verse, and why?

Hosea 10:12 - "Sow with a view to righteousness, reap in accordance with kindness; break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the LORD until He comes to rain righteousness on you." This verse sums up what I have come to accept as God's directive these recent years. Sow, reap, break up; these verbs strike me as acts of cultivating my mind into rigor so that I am able to conscientiously seek the Lord's call to save souls. Past is the time when I could concentrate on just teaching; I seek the Lord for vision within a secular and quite sheltered university where some students are given almost nil exposure to the gospel.

Is there a book, article, or individual related to ELT that has influenced you and/or your teaching? If so, could you explain how?

During my MA TESOL studies at Teachers College Tokyo I was blessed to take an introductory course in applied linguistics from Thomas Scovel, who came as a visiting professor and awed the class with his thorough explication of the discipline while sharing his Christian faith with aplomb. The other individual of vast influence is my Japanese father. Although he was unable to learn English and finish junior high school due to wartime, his lifelong trust in Christ showed me that a bedrock faith is far more precious than language ability or an education.

Battling Videogame Brain Haze

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My concern for the younger generation of English Language Learners (ELLs) is growing as I watch my young teenage students become increasingly entrenched in the world of their videogames. These computer-animated graphics are their all-compassing worlds after school. I teach intermediate-level international students (primarily Chinese) in a private high school in Los Angeles.

Some manage to complete their required homework while others literally cannot unglue their eyes from their computer screens. When asked how many hours they play games, their responses range from four to twelve hours daily. Students are often in a “brain haze” in class. They might seem awake and can even make eye contact but are simply not present mentally. When asked a question, they simply sit and stare.

I have wondered if this is a response to culture shock, or if younger students are themselves members of a new, developing culture: the videogame generation. Either way, the “brain haze” response to an addiction alarms me, and I believe it is an issue that needs to be addressed.

Contemporary urban life lends itself to isolation and loneliness for my young students who are already in a state of culture shock. The hours of free time they have after school might seem empty to students whose true homes are oceans and time zones away. Videogaming is a way of coping with a new life and new culture.

As a reading teacher, I fear that this young generation of ELLs might never read books. How can we entice students to explore new worlds that unfold in literature? I've had success in teaching *The Chronicles of Narnia*. We start at the beginning of *The Magician's Nephew* and lose ourselves in Lewis' fantasy world of the pools in the woods that lead to new cities, realities and worlds. My students like exercising their imaginations in a fun way. They like the idea of getting lost in a world of fantasy, where Aslan renews and resizes their idea of reality and what is possible.

We explore the seas together in *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. By the time we reach *The Last Battle*, Aslan has become real to students. Reading *Narnia* and experiencing Lewis' worlds together with students is a journey I have come to treasure. I pray that students may encounter the true Aslan in the course of their lifetime. I also pray they will learn to love books and read in their spare time, trading video games for books and building a habit for the future. Reading ensures an active imagination, creatively engaged for the tasks of their future studies, goals and careers.

Laura Jacob is an MA TESOL student at Azusa Pacific University in Azusa, California.



“Contextualization”

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Photo © Franck Guiziou/Hemis/Corbis.com (Retrieved November 2, 2010.)

The first time I heard the term *contextualization* was when I took a course with this title at Wheaton College. The purpose of the course was for students to analyze how to communicate the gospel message effectively by taking into account the *context* of the culture in which the message was being presented. I more recently heard the term *contextualization* at a professional workshop focusing on intercultural communication. Far from describing a method of spreading the gospel in culturally appropriate ways, it defined how secular organizations (international businesses, study-abroad programs, etc.) needed to adapt their modes of communication in order to become more globally successful. As I looked around at the other workshop participants, I wondered if or how faith played a role in these well-meaning “multiculturalists’” lives and how I was supposed to communicate Christ’s love to them.

My questions were addressed early on in the workshop when the facilitator stated, “You cannot believe Jesus Christ is the only way, and be a multiculturalist¹.” My jaw almost dropped at the directness of her statement. She said this to illustrate a point that multiculturalists cannot hold on to their religious beliefs too tightly or else they risk ostracizing others. The facilitator, who had been raised Catholic and considered herself a Christian, had recently been told that she could not be a Christian unless she believed that “Jesus was the only way.” This, apparently, was a major turn-off to her. It seemed that she believed one’s religious beliefs were purely cultural – comparable to how people greet each other in public: with a kiss on the cheek, a bow, or a handshake. To say that Christ was the only way would be as ridiculous as saying that the only way to greet someone was by kissing them on the cheek three times. For me, as a Christian, what was ridiculous was this dismissal of the gospel message simply because it was a claim of absolute truth. It appeared that truth was indeed relative for many of the workshop participants, and I was at a loss as to how to counter this perception.

Similar to the Athenians in the New Testament (Acts 17), modern-day multiculturalists love embracing different cultures and the new ideas that these cultures embody. Apostle Paul’s strategy for reaching the Athenians was to use “the altar of the unknown god” as a platform for introducing “The God who made the world and everything in it ...” (v. 24a). What “altar” or value can Christians find in common with their multiculturalist colleagues, friends, and neighbors? By embodying God’s great love of people from different cultures and by demonstrating a profound respect for others’ beliefs, can we contextualize the gospel message to the “multiculturalist”?

I welcome your responses to this question by email. Through discussion, perhaps we can collectively articulate a loving yet unwavering Christian response to the secular multiculturalist perspective.

Note

¹From my understanding, “multiculturalist” means a person who has experience dealing with multiple cultures in an interculturally competent way. Intercultural competence is defined as being able to adapt one’s behavior in order to communicate successfully in another culture.

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About CELEA News:

Guidelines for Contributions: CELEA News is the newsletter of the Christian English Language Educators Association (CELEA). We are particularly interested in receiving relevant announcements, news items, and especially submissions or ideas for our Articles section. We welcome short (about 250-500 words) or longer (up to about 2500 words) articles that describe a favorite classroom activity or teaching technique, reflect on experiences or interests you have had or are developing, or report on classroom or other research, etc. We also invite book, software, and other reviews, plus response articles to something published in CELEA News or elsewhere, or to relevant presentations you have attended, talks you have heard, etc. Writers might offer another perspective, raise some questions, or present new practical, philosophical, or theoretical points of view on topics of interest to CELEA members.

Submissions may be drawn from relevant conference presentations or report on readings you are familiar with or research you have carried out. Some articles will include a more obvious or detailed Christian perspective, while others may appear less so. Yet our main audience is clearly Christians, and in particular CELEA members and other people interested in relevant topics and issues from a Christian point of view. If you have an idea and are considering submitting an article, we would be happy for you to correspond with us about it. If it does not seem appropriate

for CELEA News we might be able to suggest other options. If you have something for us to consider, please first review articles in recent issues of the newsletter for models and examples, observing the style and format (e.g., APA, etc.). Prepare your submission as a Word document, and be careful to quote sources appropriately, include all references you mention, and respect the copyright of any authors you cite. Then contact us to state that you have something for us to consider for publication, and we'll work with you on it from there. We look forward to hearing from you, and possibly to working with you on your submission. Contact: editor@celea.net.

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Photo: Corbis.com, available October 14, 2009.