

THE ESL LINK

Biblical Foundations for an ESL-Hospitality Ministry

1. **Worship:** Remember our goal: "Let all the peoples praise you!" (Psalm 67). We also are to be worshippers.

2. **Your Own Personal Spiritual Vitality (1).** You will be tested and stretched; be prepared. "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer" (Romans 12).

3. **Church Leadership Support is not Optional.** Is your leadership team supportive?

4. **Unity of Spirit and the Bond of Peace.** Is the full team characterized by love and joy and peace? "How good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! ... For there the LORD has commanded the blessing" (Psalm 133).

5. **Integrity:** a. *Never promise more than you can deliver.* b. *Do your homework before you start:* Find out what the needs are: get informed advice about how to meet those needs which aren't being met. c. *Keep high standards:* provide the necessary training; start small if necessary; seek further professional development.

6. **Love...or it is all "nothing"** (1 Corinthians 13): *Be compassionate & sensitive about personal, cultural, and learning issues; be prepared; pursue excellence; be there early, stay late; serve food and drink; etc.*

7. **Your Own Personal Spiritual Vitality (2).** Be 'hospitable to strangers'...and be (come) more a 'stranger' yourself: "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers..." (1 Peter 2); "Do not be conformed to this world" (Romans 12).

-Tom McCormick

Gathering X

The SOCEM annual conference - Gathering X - for those involved in ESL ministry is fast approaching. This issue of the Newsletter is a pre-conference edition.

Apart from the piece "Biblical Foundations for an ESL-Hospitality Ministry" which is an essential reminder for everyone, the issue features articles that have to do with some of the topics of the workshops in the Gathering.

A cluster of articles talk about EFL for short-term missions ("Teaching English as a Foreign Language in India", "Planting Seeds in Uncle Ho's Garden", "EFL Mission Report - Brazil" and "Know English, Know the World!"), and introduce the topic of the workshop that bears the same name.

"Moving Professional Learning to Classroom Practice: An Instructor Handbook: A Review" gives a taste of the workshop "Reflective Practice in ESL", while "What Attracts People to Church-based ESL Groups?" is an appetizer for the workshop "Drawing and Keeping ESL Students".

We hope that these articles will draw many to the presentations to find out more.

Do you and your team practice "reflective teaching"? Have you or those in your church engaged in teaching English in short-term missions? If so, do share your experiences with us by sending articles or comments to eslministries@gmail.com



Gathering X

Date: November 2, 2013 (Saturday)

Time: 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Venue: Don Valley Bible Chapel (near Don Mills and Finch)

Cost: The cost of the conference is \$12.

An optional sub sandwich/wrap lunch will be available for \$8.-

Registration: You can register online by visiting our website: <http://eslministries.org>

I stayed up all night to see where the sun went. Then it dawned on me.

EFL MISSION REPORT - BRAZIL

In the spring of 2013, ten of us had the opportunity to help a (Portuguese) missionary pastor in Brazil for a two-week period. Although our main purpose for going was a building project, we were also able to help in teaching English in the evenings. We contacted Tom McCormick, and he arranged some basic training for a couple of us. Armed with that, we headed for a small fishing village in Brazil with a population of less than 400.

The first English class was held Tuesday evening. I started out using TPR ("Total Physical Response" involving actions) for

teaching verbs and that worked really well. It was also useful for teaching some prepositions like 'in' and 'out'. "Point and name" worked for concrete nouns. The one thing I didn't have (but someone else had) that I found very useful was a Portuguese-English dictionary, especially since we did not have an interpreter. Without the dictionary, teaching would have been much more difficult.

The main challenge lay in the fact that my students changed every time; most came only once or twice, and there would be someone new almost every time. Of

those who came, most were interested but not committed. This might be because English is not necessary for most people in their own country (whereas if you move to an English-speaking country, English would be necessary for survival). We were in a fishing village that sees some tourism: even those tourists are mostly from Brazil.

The student who was most interested and eager to learn English was the missionary pastor we had come to help. He made it to four out of the six classes I was able to hold. He wanted to learn more verbs, so I put 25 or so on cards (ones I

Brazil

Continued from page one

thought would be most useful to him) which we worked through, and had him write the Portuguese on the back so that he could continue to practice them after we left. Using the dictionary, I double-checked a few of the words he wrote to make sure he got the meaning correct. In the process he was also introduced to some nouns and phrases.

I enjoyed the teaching, especially with a student who was as eager as the pastor. I also enjoyed learning a little Portuguese along the way! The frustrating part was knowing that I had only limited time to make a tiny dent in such a huge task.

- Cindy Egberts & Gary Crosbie

"All my life, I always wanted to be somebody. Now I see that I should have been more specific."

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www.eslministries.org

Contact Us: eslministries@gmail.com
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"Know English, Know the World!"

When one knows English, I am convinced that one will get to know the world. This has been the propelling power in me to teach English with excitement.

SEND International has two kinds of opportunities for teaching English in China. One is to go and teach the high school students. This is what I would recommend if you are going for the first time. There are 12 consecutive days of teaching and activities, and days are full from 7:00 in the morning to 11:00 in the evening. However, responsibilities are shared among two or three teachers teaching the same class. This means that teaching loads are lighter and you could observe and learn from one another.

The other opportunity is to go to Beijing to teach in a university. Here the students are the university students and professors. You will have the chance to talk to them as equals. After three weeks of teaching, you should be able to build a good relationship with them so that they become "email pals" at the least. If you could spend some non-teaching time with them, they are always happy to show you around, see movies together or go to karaoke. As they treat you as friends, they will be more open to the gospel.

Moving Professional Learning to Classroom Practice: An Instructor Handbook: A Review

Developed by the Toronto Catholic District School Board and funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Moving Professional Learning to Classroom Practice: An Instructor Handbook* is a valuable online resource for instructors teaching English to adult newcomers in Ontario. There is a variety of information about professional development, mentoring, utilizing research and lists of resources. All in all, it is about becoming a better teacher, reflecting on our own teaching and helping others to do so.

The *Handbook* is divided into four chapters. The first chapter describes current professional development opportunities for Adult ESL instructors in Ontario, including conferences, workshops, and mentoring or support from one's peers and supervisors. The second chapter outlines "a reflective method" whereby one can take stock and reflect on one's teaching through selecting a focus, collecting information, reflecting on the information, making a plan, returning to class and experimenting, and reflecting on the results. The third chapter offers summaries of Second Language Acquisition and Teaching of English as a Second Language research literature on topics such as multi-level ESL classes, pragmatics in the ESL classroom, pronunciation and task-based language teaching. The fourth chapter summarizes key practices in assessment, and lists resources for program planning that are related to the Canadian Language Benchmarks.

As I consider the information in this book in light of our church ESL contexts, I realize that we can learn a lot from it. First of all, the emphasis on collaboration between teachers made me think that perhaps we could be doing more with our teams of teachers, no matter how large or small. What is your church doing in terms of teacher collaborations and mentoring new teachers? Might you want to share with us?

They will also be more likely to keep up correspondence with you, and a year or two later, they may contact you for help when they come over to Canada to stay!

Apart from these, we have a special ministry to the Teaching Assistants (TAs). They are university students in neighbouring cities majoring in English and are above the age of 18. When we meet up every day for class preparation or debrief, we have a lot of opportunities to witness to them.

To be able to teach in China, we require an approval process, fundraising, and orientation. To teach high school students, the teacher needs to go through a 3-hour training for each of the 10 weeks before they go on the 19-day trip. The Beijing trip will need a

Second, to what extent do we consult research literature and apply it in the classroom? While we may not want to emphasize "professionalization" over a servant's heart, we do want to pursue excellence in teaching. There is help as to where to start, as can be found on pp. 48-49, "TESL-related journal and article sources." We do offer some of this at the SOCEM Gatherings, but can we do more? Do you want more? Do you have ideas to offer?

Third, and perhaps most important, to what extent are we reflective teachers? While we all make intuitive evaluations about what goes well in the classroom and decisions about how to proceed along the way, could we be more intentional about this process? After all, as Parker Palmer says, "We teach who we are."

I hope to put some of the ideas in this *Handbook* into practice. Here is a plan: I will find out, in my church's conversation classes, if there is enough, or too much, correction by the teacher, what types they are, and how effective. If there are pronunciation errors, what kind of more explicit pronunciation instruction could help? I will use the tool provided in this *Handbook*, "Giving Feedback on Oral Errors" (pp. 74-75) to record the observations and analyze the results. I hope to report on the results and subsequent actions in a workshop in our annual Gathering.

What about you? Would you like to try some of this out and share your findings?

--Jennifer Tong

I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I can't put it down.

two-day orientation prior to departure and another week of orientation in Beijing.

The gate is wide open. Will you take up the challenge of teaching in a foreign field?

--Albert Wai
(albert2001wai@hotmail.com)

No matter how much you push the envelope, it will still be stationary.

What attracts people to church-based ESL groups?

Through my studies in the Psychosocial Rehabilitation program of Mohawk College, I was able to complete a research project about church-based ESL groups. My first research question was "What attracts people to join church-based ESL groups?" I was able to hear, through email surveys, from 35 volunteers and teachers who are involved in SOCEM ESL groups, and I completed structured interviews with two participants in the ESL group with which I am currently involved in Kitchener.

The most common way to hear about an ESL group is by word of mouth from friends or other participants. Some participants find out about the group through advertising, such as posters, church signs, or information in local newspapers. Both interviewees thought there should be more advertising, citing examples of participants who have lived in the neighbourhood for years and only recently found out about the ESL group.

The first attractive feature of ESL groups is the opportunity to learn English. The programs offer an opportunity to practise and improve the skills of speaking, listening, and pronunciation. By contrast, newcomers to Canada may not have the opportunity to practise spoken English in academic credit-based ESL classes. Participants view the weekly

topics as practical and interesting, whether that involves learning about Canadian culture, discussing ideas, or hearing about other cultures. When the ESL group has a low teacher-student ratio, each participant can have a chance to speak. Participants also like to take part in program planning by providing ideas, such as future discussion topics.

Individuals who join ESL groups are also attracted to the warm and welcoming atmosphere of the class. They describe the group as a happy and friendly place where they are accepted and encouraged. They feel comfortable, and safe, and there is no pressure of tests or exams as in most academic settings. When food is shared, and when games are included in the program, the atmosphere is fun and promotes socialization.

Another attractive feature of ESL groups is the development of relationships that naturally occurs. Participants become friends with each other and with the volunteer teachers. They help each other with practical issues related to settlement in Canada. They appreciate the friendliness, patience, and encouragement of the teachers and receive support from them beyond their language learning needs. Newcomers to Canada value getting to know Canadians as well as being invited

into a Canadian home.

Other attractive features include the fact that the group is free. A free program is important for newcomers with financial limitations and is especially appealing to visitors to Canada, postsecondary students or spouses, and Canadian citizens who are no longer qualified for free government programs. When the group meets near the students' homes, schools, or work places or on a bus route, they are more likely to attend. Free concurrent child care and homework clubs are invaluable to mothers with children. Evening meetings are convenient for those who work or attend school, while daytime is best for parents with school-aged children, older adults who do not like to go out at night, and evening shift workers.

This preliminary research shows why a church-based ESL group is attractive for newcomers to Canada. I will share my findings on how to attract more people to the ESL groups in a later article. I pray that these findings will encourage and inspire you as you continue to welcome strangers (Matthew 25:35) in this hospitality ministry.

- Mary-Jane Davison

Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language in India

From July 20 to August 11, 2013, I had the privilege of serving in a short-term mission in Kolkata, India. One of our main ministries there was to teach ESL to 15 women rescued from the sex-trade and now working at Jewels in a Crown (www.jewelsinacrown.com). JIAC is a Christian NGO that teaches women life skills, and provides them with basic education and a career. Much of this involves teaching the women English - with a focus on conversational English, but also grammar and writing.

Thanks to a contact in my local church in Toronto, I was able to find a host of materials, activities and curricula for our teaching (for nearly two weeks) and for their local teacher after we leave. During our teaching, we found that what worked best were interactive activities. Games, conversations, pictures, flashcards and group work made English seem like a real language that was useful rather than just abstract concepts and some words on a page. We spent most of our time doing interactive activities and engaging the women in conversations, and they loved it. We saw definite improvements in their communication skills even during the short time we were there, and saw the great pride and joy that come from conquering a small part of such a difficult language.

A huge thank you to Parkway Forest Community Church for the resources, time & prayers they shared with me and my team over our time - we were truly blessed!

- Julia Cole

Planting Seeds in Uncle Ho's Garden

This past summer I had the opportunity and challenge of teaching English to (North) Vietnam university students and lecturers for four weeks to prepare them for IELTS (International English Language Testing System). Even though I had made plans for my retirement, I was responding to the Lord's call as I said to him, "Father, whatever you want me to do, I'm available."

Our teaching curriculum involved teaching reading, writing, speaking and listening. Mornings were spent in working on speaking and listening, which they needed most. We had good textbooks and were encouraged to supplement them. It was challenging but very rewarding as I saw my students improve in these skills. The use of communicative activities in the classroom was strange but exciting to them. We had fun!

In the afternoons we taught them North American culture (I was the only Canuck on the team) and they were invited to teach us Vietnamese culture. We talked about festivals, marriage and family, music and dance, values, leisure, etc. It was an opportunity to learn English in

an informal, life-related context, and by talking about a Christian North American wedding, for example, we could present truth.

Imagine the joy of living and working in the heart of Uncle Ho's (Ho Chi Minh) region of Vietnam, planting seeds, and representing the Master.

Every day I asked the Father to open doors for sharing truth, both inside and outside of class. It was thrilling to see these doors open and walk

through them. For example, I had a very special discussion with one of my students, L, who had many questions. In the end I left her a copy of "My favourite Book", and in recent correspondence she wrote how she faithfully reads it. My deep desire is that L and several other students will take a step towards the source of Life.

ELIC/Vietnam is looking to expand the Summer Teaching Program for next summer. My availability commitment is still on the table. Would you, or someone you know, be available for next summer? Or perhaps even longer term? For further info please see www.elic.org or email me at elmer.warkentin@gmail.com.

- Elmer Warkentin

