

THE ESL LINK

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From the editor

We are delighted to bring a variety of content into this issue, the first issue of 2015. In particular, we feature 2 flourishing ESL ministries: one at Knox Presbyterian Church, the other at Midtown Alliance Church, both in Toronto. The former has a long history while the latter is newly established. They are in downtown and midtown respectively. But both reflect the heart of dedicated coordinators and volunteers, whose love for the students have kept them coming. We hope you will be encouraged and inspired by them.

Finally, Midtown Alliance Church uses a social media network to advertise for their ESL, which is also described in another article in this issue.



A Life of Learning with our Master

A belated Happy—indeed, Blessed—New Year!

The early weeks of a New Year are a time many reflect on life—things past and things to come—and perhaps make resolutions. Actually, any time is a good time to reconsider our priorities and reorient our lives accordingly. At the core of such ‘first things’ would be who we are. No doubt you have visited that question many times before, and perhaps answers come readily to mind. And yet, let me remind myself and you of two basic realities. Sometimes I tell my students that a firm grasp of the obvious takes you about 90% of the way, 90% of the time. I’ll mention these two obvious basics with applications to each of us and our ESL groups.

First, we are children of God (1 John 3), created in His image (Genesis 1-2; Romans 8:29; etc.), and redeemed by His grace through heartfelt trust in our Lord Jesus (Ephesians 2). That means God is our Father (Matthew 6; John 20), and we are family, brothers and sisters (Ephesians 2; Galatians 6:10). That’s the “what”;

what’s the “so what?” A few very simple reminders: (i) draw near to the throne of grace in times of need; you are coming to your Father and will find mercy; (ii) love one another (really! the apostle John repeated that at least 10 times); we are family, and indeed, “members of one another” (Ephesians 4:25). Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, being gracious to each other, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also has been gracious to you, forgiving you.’

Second, we are disciples of our Lord Jesus. Disciples are learners; the word ‘disciple’ in fact means a *learner, pupil, apprentice, follower*. Jesus said, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me” (Matthew 11:29). I wonder what kinds of learning you think being a disciple involves? All learning? Would learning more about being an ESL leader or facilitator or helper be included? What about becoming more and more a friend of the attendees? Would not such also be a part of being a faithful disciple of Jesus? Why not? After all, Jesus is The Wisdom of God (for all circumstances), in Him “are hidden all the treasures of... [next pg]

CELT 2015

Christians in English Language Teaching Conference in Toronto

Janice GT Penner, the conference chair, encourages us to attend CELT 2015 at Knox Presbyterian Church in downtown Toronto on March 25. Christian academics and English language instructors from Canada, the USA and abroad will spend one day together sharing insights on serving in their contexts.

What can we learn at [CELT](#) during the numerous 45-minute sessions? See the presentation titles below. These presenters are preparing to interact with you! If you have not already done so, you can register [here](#).

Plenary Speaker: Dr. Michael Lessard-Clouston
Biblical Themes for language teaching: Christians in ELT

Session Titles:

- Proverbs & quotations in multi-level classes
- Archival research of China's missionaries: Implications for today's teachers
- Crossing bridges for effective interaction
- Revealing the divine in the secular
- A compassionate community: Bridging EAP and TESOL students
- Bridging faith-based training and secular-context teaching
- Towards a theology of language learning as peace building
- A curriculum to build bridges for Gospel conversations
- Grammar-based reading comprehension strategies
- Christian faith, teacher knowledge and cheating in TESOL
- Created in God's image: Implications for TESOL
- Turning old youth group games into language learning opportunities
- Reader's theatre & the "subversive" Anne of Green Gables
- TESOL's new certification standards: Implications for Christian programs
- The Virtues: A curriculum integrating life and faith
- Learner reticence and pedagogy
- How can we love strangers with English we teach?
- Spiritual motivations and language teaching
- Validation, values and language learning in cultural transition.
- Teaching as Ethical Training
- Teaching learners from conservative cultures
- Classics in class: Using literature for catalytic teaching
- Culturally responsive teaching through a Christian worldview

Janice GT Penner is a full-time TESOL and English for Academic Purposes instructor at Douglas College in New Westminster, BC. She has been involved with the ESL Ministry network in metro-Vancouver since 2006.

[cont'd from p1] wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3), and He accepted the title "Teacher" (John 13:13f). He reframed the goal of our discipleship this way: "It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher" (Matthew 10; Luke 6), and He commanded us to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19f).

Most of us have surely thought much about being disciple-learners of our Lord Jesus as the Master Teacher. I am wondering, though, if we have given much thought to being more and more what some call "Learning Organizations", that is, ESL groups that foster the discipleship-learning of each member in such a way that our programs are continuously transforming, adapting and growing. There are many benefits, including: better connections of our resources to the needs of the attendees; improved quality; improved 'image' (that is, better thought of and more buzz in the community); enhanced levels of innovation; better able to adapt to changing circumstances, etc.

Can you think of ways your ESL group might continue to grow as we each and all grow as disciples of Jesus? Here are a few easy suggestions: (i) take time to pause, individually (especially the leaders), and as a group, discussing together your thoughts; (ii) ask the attendees how they think the programs might be improved; (iii) consider what others are doing, asking if your group might find some innovations to incorporate; (iv) and of course pray!

You will also find many on-line resources to encourage you (google, for example, <learning organization>). And, of course, The SOCEM ESL LINK you are reading offers ideas and suggestions, as does the SOCEM website: <http://www.eslministries.org/>.

May your New Year be blessed with much discipleship-learning as we follow the Master.

—Tom McCormick

"Despondent", "flustered", "exhilarated"... It is a skill to be able to name one's emotions; it is good for one's mental health. Emotion words are also very useful for students to learn, for describing people, telling a story, etc. Here is [a list of emotion words, with some difficult vocabulary for higher levels](#)



Two Flourishing ESL Ministries

The English Conversation Café of Midtown Alliance Church

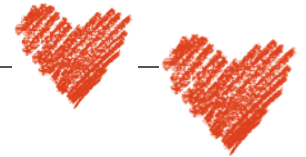
The English Conversation Café (ECC) is a ministry borne from a need we see in our neighbourhood. Just within a block of Yonge and Eglinton in midtown Toronto we count eight language schools. We were given the nations, right at our doorstep! The opportunity was there for us to provide a space where international students could practice speaking the English that some have only learned to read and write. We know our qualifications are not in teaching grammar or syntax, but rather in our ability to speak English and our willingness to be friends. We began meeting in a local coffee shop with a weekly attendance of no more than four or five people. The group sizes were great for people to speak as much English as they wanted, and we were able to build relationships beyond the program by helping with resumé writing and homework.

When we started to consider increasing our advertising, we were introduced to [Meetup](#), a search engine for events and programs in Toronto. We joined as a part of a larger English Conversation Café group, sharing the same page with other ESL ministries in the city. The first week after signing up we had ten new people. The

next, we had twenty. Until finally, there was so many people that we took up the entire coffee shop and all the chairs in addition to the students who stood for the full two hours. God had said “yes” to our prayers of expanding, and now we had the task of stewarding it. We have since moved the ECC program into our church building, and now receive forty people every week, many of whom are consistent attendees. We have also reached out for help from the Church community and now have six English-speakers facilitating four groups, with others making coffee and setting up rooms.

Over the past year and a half, we have relished the many natural opportunities to share the love and gospel of Jesus Christ. Starting in February we will add a fifth group to directly address the Good News based on Rick Warren’s material *The Purpose Driven Life*. We have continuously seen our faithful God work in the lives of our ECC friends and we anticipate His involvement each week. Please pray for the ECC ministry.

—Karmen and Tom More



Knox Toronto ESL Conversation Classes

Monday nights are bustling with lively conversations at Knox Presbyterian Church. From mid-September to the end of June, Monday night is the time we host our ESL Conversation Classes. Each week, 25-40 students gather for a warm meal followed by small group English conversations on themes relevant to everyday life and their experience of Toronto and Canada.

On a typical evening, students roll in around 6-6:45pm, are greeted by our registration team, and enter into our main room set for dinner. New students register and go through a quick language assessment to place them in a class suitable to their English level. Those who are hungry enjoy the meal and at 6:45 things quiet down for a short time of welcome and announcements before class. At 7:00pm, our teachers are unleashed to lead their classes of 2-7 students through the curriculum provided for them. Classes are a buzz until 8:45 when conversations wind down and students are sent into the world to enjoy the rest of the week.

In my observation, a few factors keep our program shining. One is definitely Knox's commitment to serving the needs of our community and the world. We have a long history of actively engaging the people and needs of our neighbourhood and equipping men and women to

serve across the globe. This means our community thoroughly supports this kind of ministry with prayer and people to help.

Another factor is our amazing volunteers. To support 40 students we have 2 administrators, a curriculum developer, 6-8 seasoned and newly trained facilitators, a chef, a few hands for dishes and our custodial team for setup and teardown. This group of about 14 people makes Monday happen!

ESL is the entry point for many internationals into the life of the Church and encountering the Gospel. Many students who attend Monday choose to draw nearer to the heart of our ESL hospitality by joining our ESL Bible studies, Sunday worship, and many congregational activities through the year like festive meals, outings, and summer camp for their kids.

Directing Knox’s ESL program through 3 years has been a fruitful experience of witnessing how the Spirit moves through us as we reach out to meet basic human needs—food, communication, and friendship—and sparks curiosity and conversation that allow us to share the love and truth we find in Christ.

—Samantha Mudiappahpillai



Valentine's Day Resources

Valentine's Day is fast approaching. How will you talk about it with your ESL students? Here are a few good resources on Valentine's themes:

[What love means to kids](#) (great conversation starters)

[Dating and Marriage Vocabulary in English](#) (always a topic of much interest)

[Love and Valentine's Day lessons \(The Virtues series\)](#) (readings, including from the Bible; discussion questions, quotes and other activities)

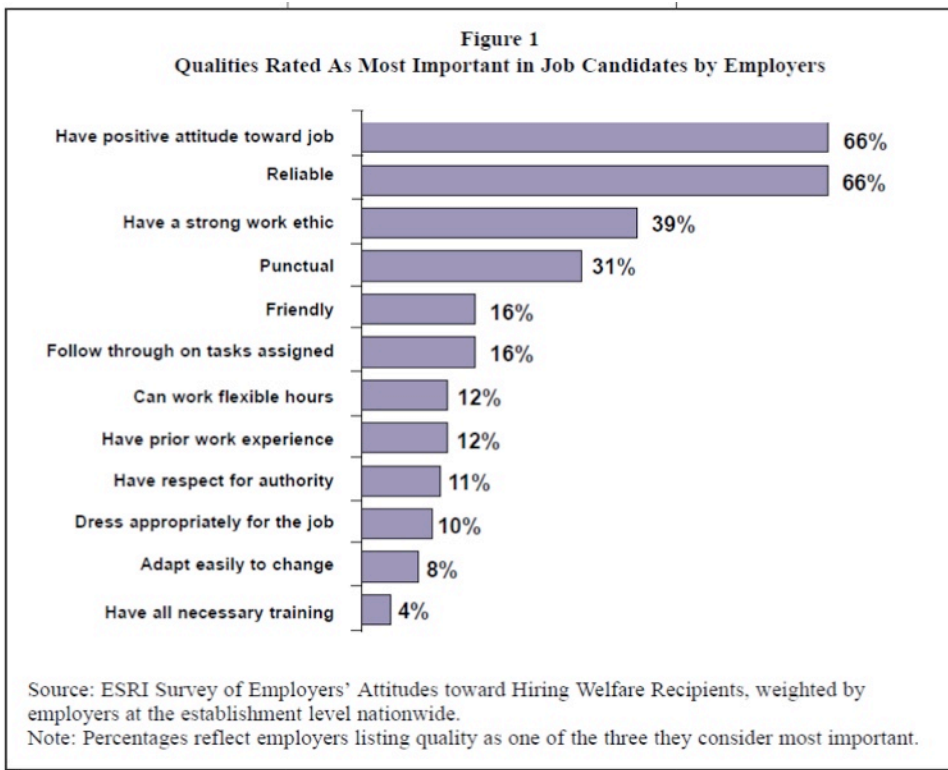
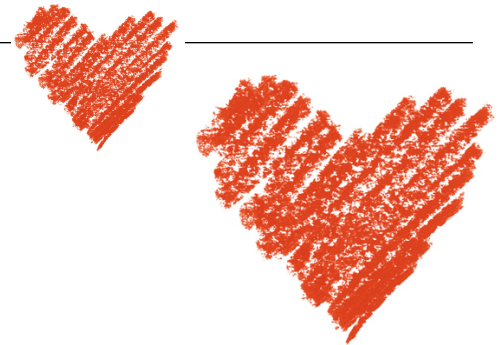
http://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/resource_files/valentinesday.pdf (excellent reading on the history and customs of Valentine's Day, with glossary)

http://www.eslholidaylessons.com/02/valentines_day.pdf (a reading with lots of accompanying activities)

<http://iteslj.org/questions/valentine.html> (Valentine's Day conversation questions)

http://bogglesworldesl.com/valentines_day_worksheets.htm (vocabulary and writing activities for lower level)

<http://www.bestofthereader.ca/Ebooks/Holidays-print.pdf> (pp. 5, 6: for low beginners)



HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE SETTLEMENT STRUGGLES FOR YOUR IMMIGRANT STUDENTS?

Have you encountered students who are refugees or refugee claimants who have special emotional needs? Click to find out some information about [a free online course on Refugee Mental Health](#). Some of us have taken it and found it informative, enlightening and relevant to our circumstances. If the current sessions are closed, you can add your name to the waitlist [here](#).

Do you have ESL students who are looking for jobs? Do you know what qualities employers are looking for in job candidates? This chart may give you a good idea. You could use it to launch a discussion with your students.

What is the reason we call a child a 'kid'? Where did we get the word 'salary'?

See [here](#) for a few interesting word origins.

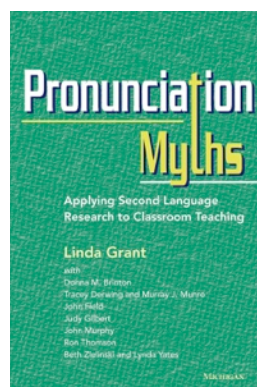
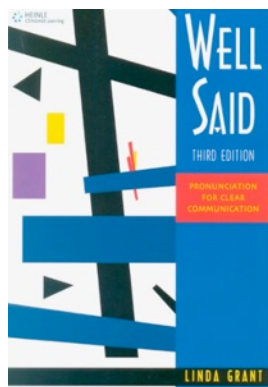
Did you know...

"One particularly useful service to provide for people who have survived torture is help learning or improving English skills. This important component of mental health promotion provides a practical way of engaging with others, a distraction from suffering, a grounding in the present, a possibility of low-key socializing with others and a growing sense of self-esteem. It also improves the survivors' ability to build a life in Canada in which they can fully participate. However, it is important to keep in mind that some of the consequences of torture, such as lack of concentration, distrust of strangers, and fear of groups and authority figures, are barriers to learning a new language. Survivors of torture may benefit from smaller classes and a curriculum adapted to meet their needs (CCVT, n.d.)." ("Providing support to survivors of torture", online course on Refugee Mental Health, <https://courses.camh.net/d21/e/content/8306/viewContent/214923/View:2015>)

Fun... and such opens a window into our humanity and languages:

<http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20141216-ten-untranslatable-words>

Pronunciation Files: Linda Grant Conference Session Review



Linda Grant was the plenary speaker at ATESL's October conference at the Fantasyland hotel in Edmonton. She delivered her keynote address by summarizing her work in the field of pronunciation. Linda has worked for many years at Georgia Tech in Atlanta, honing her approach. Let me share my notes, as well as what I see as her primary contributions to pronunciation/accent reduction instruction.

1. **Listening discrimination is a big problem.** You may say Chad but a Vietnamese student may hear "Cha" They have to guess whether you are saying "Chat", "Chap", or "Chad". Our ear has to be good at hearing the differences before we begin producing the differences.
2. **"Intelligibility" needs to be "comfortable intelligibility"**. As a knock on a pronunciation-focus, some have said that as long as a person is intelligible they don't have to have a native-like accent. True, but if it's not easy (or comfortable) to understand their accent then problems may result.
3. **Well Said is her popular classroom textbook.** It has been through many editions and has remained a favourite. Chapter titles include:
 1. Your Pronunciation Profile;
 2. Using a Dictionary for Pronunciation;
 3. Sound/Spelling Patterns;
 4. Syllables and Word Endings;
 5. Stress in Words;
 6. Rhythm in Sentences;
 7. Intonation and Focus in Discourse;
 8. Phrasing, Pausing, and Linking
4. **Pronunciation Myths: Applying Second Language Research to Classroom Teaching is her new book (2014; 259pgs).** It contains contributions from many leaders in the field, that budding pronunciation teachers would love to read. Seven myths are debunked which include "Pronunciation instruction is not appropriate for beginning-level learners", and "Intonation is hard to teach".

Linda Grant has made it her mission to help students improve their pronunciation. She means business and makes her students keep a journal of what words they have heard wrong and what pronunciation points they are working on. Perhaps some of her ideas or reading one of her books would be useful to you and help you increase your skill in teaching clear speech and/or pronunciation.

—James Edel

Reprinted from November 2014 issue of CESLM Newsletter, "News Worthy", with permission ([here](#)). Our thanks to James and CESLM.

A useful site for those applying for Canadian citizenship to study on their own: [Online Citizenship Preparation](#)

Meet-up: A New Way to Advertise ESL Ministries

Advertising at our fledgling ESL group in the urban core of Toronto is difficult when your church building is on the top of a store-front. I once placed posters all over the University of Toronto without a single response. Finally, we discovered meet-up.com and as a result international students started coming, even as far as North York and Mississauga.

What is Meet-up? It is a social networking tool that makes it easy to link up and organize special interest groups — in our case an English language group called English Conversation Café, in which native English speakers (who are Christian) can meet those who want to practice English. At the end of the day, newcomers to Canada need to develop a new family and a new network of friends.

This has been a positive experience for both our church-plant which is becoming “a house of prayer for all nations” and an international church that serves the nations who make Toronto their temporary or permanent home.

I invite you to prayerfully check out meetup.com/about. Let God give you the inspiration to start your own Meet-up group. I am available to consult or coach you if you decide to use this medium (email nkwan@rogers.com). There are also others at SOCEM who are already using this tool. Please contact eslministries@gmail.com for their contact information. Also, if you like, please visit our international church website at faithinfoocus.ca
—Nathan Kwan

Note: I am also looking to establish a prayer distribution list for our downtown Toronto ESL ministry. If interested, please contact me at nkwan@rogers.com.

“Task-based learning focuses on the use of authentic language through meaningful tasks such as visiting the doctor or a telephone call. This method encourages meaningful communication and is student-centred.” ([here](#))

The TESL Canada Journal recently published a [Special Issue on Task-Based Language Teaching](#) where there are research articles on instructor perception and practice, task-based curriculum design, and pair and group tasks; and articles focused on classroom-based applications.

The longest known palindromic word is saippuakivikauppias (19 letters), which is Finnish for a dealer in lye (caustic soda).

A palindrome is a word or phrase where the letters read backwards, give the same word or phrase.

How do you get rid of a boomerang? Throw it down a one way street

What do you call a line of men waiting for a haircut? A barberqueue

What's round and bad tempered? A vicious circle



So Funny, This Human Anatomy

Where can a man buy a cap for his knee,
Or the key to a lock of his hair?
Can his eyes be called an academy?
Because there are pupils there?

In the crown of your head can
jewels be found?
Who crosses the bridge of your nose?
If you wanted to shingle the roof
of your mouth,
Would you use the nails on your toes?

Can you sit in the shade of the
palm of your hand,
Or beat on the drum of your ear?
Can the calf in your leg eat the
corn off your toe?
Then why not grow corn on the ear?

Can the crook in your elbow be
sent to jail?
If so, just what did he do?
How can you sharpen your
shoulder blades?
I'll be darned if I know - do you?

