

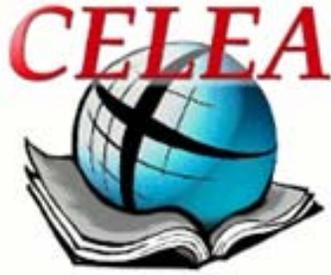
The logo for the International Journal of Christianity & English Language Teaching (IJC & ELT). It features the letters 'IJC' in a large, blue, serif font above the letters '& ELT' in a large, orange, serif font. The letters are set against a background of a light gray grid of dots. A large, faint, gray watermark of the letters 'IJC & ELT' is visible behind the main text.

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Remembrances of Earl Stevick: An Appreciation From the Periphery

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My contacts with Earl Stevick were modest and occasional. I thus consider my remarks to be from the periphery. Others, far more qualified to provide remembrances of Earl than I am, have written from much nearer to the center because they had closer personal and professional relationships with Earl Stevick, the man and the professional teacher¹.

The first time I met Earl Stevick was in June 1965. I had just finished my MA in linguistics after spending four years in Thailand with OMF International and went to spend the summer at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) as one of ten young linguists and language teachers who had been accepted into FSI's first summer intern program. This was basically a type of work-study experience in which we worked in one of the FSI language departments in the mornings and were together in the afternoons to learn about language teaching and testing as it was done at FSI. Earl Stevick was our mentor each afternoon, and we all benefitted from his type of Socratic interaction with us.

My work assignment was to help write drills and practice materials in the Thai department where I could observe a type of modified audiolingualism. Earl made sure that we observed and discussed other types of teaching as well. In a Russian class the teacher used a large plywood board painted with streets, stores, houses, trees, and the like to have students push toy cars as they learned to talk about directions, parking, etc. For Spanish, Earl had us experience a taped programmed course, an early form of machine-based learning. We also had to be tested by the FSI Oral Interview method. As Earl guided us through the various types of instruction programs that summer, he helped us to see that with dedicated teachers and active and involved students a language could be successfully learned through various teaching methods.

¹ See collections in a) the February 2014 issue of *Humanising Language Teaching*, 16(1), available at <http://www.hltmag.co.uk/feb14/mart01.htm>, as well as in b) the Appendix (pp. 312-321) of Jane Arnold and Tim Murphey's edited collection, *Meaningful Action: Earl Stevick's Influence on Language Teaching* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

Later, in the summer of 1981, I attended the TESOL Summer Institute that was held at Columbia University in New York. Earl was teaching a class using material that would appear the following year as his book *Teaching and Learning Languages* (TALL). In class and in personal interaction Earl could respond (as William Acton put it in his *HLT* remembrance) “in his own often enigmatic and metaphorical texture.” I enjoyed the class and gained much from the TALL material.

Over the years, whether during my doctoral program, or when I happened to be back from Thailand, or at TESOL conventions, I sometimes would have an opportunity to meet Earl again. On almost every occasion, as we renewed our slight relationship, Earl would tell me of a book I really had to read. The first was W. Timothy Gallwey’s *The Inner Game of Tennis* (New York: Random House, 1974). I protested that I had tried tennis once but had no talent and was not interested in the sport. His reply was, “Just read it; you’ll see it’s about language learning.” So I did. And it was relevant to learners I had worked with in Thailand and here in the U.S. On another occasion he told me I needed to read Betty Edward’s *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* (New York: Tarcher, 1979). Despite my saying that I could not draw and was not interested in reading books about drawing, he again replied, “Read it anyway; you’ll understand its relationship to language learning.” I did read it and was challenged to look at language learning from a new perspective. The third book Earl recommended was John Bransford’s *Human Cognition* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1979). The subtitle, “Learning, understanding and remembering,” immediately showed that this book was relevant. I was grateful for Earl’s interest in my developing a broader understanding of language learning and language teaching. All three of these books found their way into my teaching of second language acquisition (SLA) so that teachers in training would learn to get understanding and insights from a variety of books, even those that on the surface might seem to have little to do with SLA.

During the summer course at Columbia University, Earl discussed various techniques for aiding memory and for gaining language proficiency. One of his remarks was, “Never throw anything away,” by which he meant that one can always recycle techniques, such as flash cards, dialogs, or whatever, despite their being out of fashion. Tweaked or used in a different way that incorporated some of the newer findings on memory and learning, they could still be beneficial for learners.

I very much appreciated Earl's mentorship at FSI and his interest in my continued development through books he recommended. And I read and used material from all but his latest books in my teaching at Biola University and elsewhere. I especially appreciated Earl's *Success with Foreign Languages* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1989) in that I could see through the learners that Earl interviewed a diversity of learning situations, methods, and personalities which different learners can use to be successful language learners.

Finally, reading through his later short articles that he called *Afterwords* (2002, available online at <http://celea.net/page-1736597>), I was also impressed by how Earl's Christian faith informed his views of learners and ways of learning. His life and his contributions to the field of language learning continue to challenge me to be open to different types of learners and to find ways to help them reach levels of success with second or foreign languages.

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