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edited by Bradley Baurain & Michael Pasquale

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About the *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching*

The *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching* (*IJC&ELT*) is the official journal of the Christian English Language Educators Association (CELEA, see https://celea.wildapricot.org/) and is supported by the School of Education TESOL programs at Biola University (https://www.biola.edu/degrees/g/tesol-ma). It publishes articles and reviews related to English Language Teaching (ELT), with a perspective of particular interest to Christians, and specifically Christian English language educators. Accordingly, this journal is indexed in the Christian Periodicals Index (http://cpi.acl.org/cpititles.html).

The mandate of the *IJC&ELT* (ISSN 2334-1866, online) includes the following aims:
• to publish articles and reviews related to ELT, using a Christian perspective
• to stimulate the integration of the Christian faith and learning and teaching in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
• to encourage and thus promote critical reflection, discussion, engaging theory, excellent research, and inspirational practice in applied linguistics and TESOL
• to provide an international approach to English language teaching and research
• to offer an open access forum that shares knowledge and applies high academic standards, including double blind peer review

As an international publication, the *IJC&ELT* recognizes that there are diverse Christian traditions and perspectives throughout the world and it therefore welcomes articles and reviews that deal with and address different Christian traditions and their connections to English language teaching. The main readership, however, is CELEA members, who themselves come from and bring a range of Christian perspectives to their work in ELT.

Information for Contributors

Aims and Scope

The *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching* (ISSN 2334-1866, online) is an international peer reviewed open access journal that publishes quality empirical, practical, review, and theoretical papers covering a broad range of issues in English language teaching and research. *IJC&ELT* is thus an interdisciplinary forum, publishing both original research and teaching articles, as well as stimulating reflections and reviews of interest to Christians and others in TESOL. It aims to provide an international forum for established and emerging teachers, researchers, and others committed to ELT from a Christian point of view.

Audience

The *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching* is primarily intended for use in the academic community, especially for members of the Christian English Language Educators Association (CELEA, see https://celea.wildapricot.org/), its sponsor. Yet *IJC&ELT*'s interdisciplinary nature also makes it accessible and of interest to educators of various types (including teacher trainers and those working with English language learners), curriculum developers and materials writers, Christian organizations concerned about language issues, and other interested practitioners, researchers, and theorists. Accordingly, the *IJC&ELT* is indexed in the Christian Periodicals Index (http://cpi.acl.org/cpititles.html).

Focus and Format

With the above audience and policies below in mind, the focus of the *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching* is primarily on, though not restricted to, the following areas of inquiry, practice, and thinking in English language teaching:

- applied linguistics and language and culture learning and teaching
- classroom and other best practices in TESOL
- design and development of EFL/EIL/ELL/ESL/ESP curricula and materials
- ELT skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and methodologies
- innovations in teaching and learning English as a second/foreign language
- TESOL teacher education, research, and training
- theory and practice in second/foreign language learning and teaching

As an international publication whose primary audience is Christian English language educators and other interested parties, all contributions should approach the focus or topic at hand recognizing a Christian point of view, though readers realize that this may be more detailed or obvious in some cases and yet may appear less so in other instances. Submissions may be drawn from relevant presentations (CELT or other conferences, for example) or reflect classroom practices, research, or reviews of potential interest to *IJC&ELT* readers.

The journal includes four distinct sections:

Articles – reports of empirical studies, review papers or meta-analyses, theoretical position papers, etc. These should not exceed 7,000 words, including references.
In the Classroom – descriptions of teaching activities or techniques, classroom action research, etc., within a relevant theoretical framework, not to exceed 4,000 words.
Forum – position papers or reactions to articles or reviews, opinion or viewpoint articles, or reports, interviews, or commentary on current topics of interest. These submissions should also not exceed 4,000 words, including references.

Reviews – evaluative book, materials, and software reviews relevant to *IJC&ELT* readers. These will not usually exceed 1,500 words, including references.

Policies

In order to reach the widest readership possible, the *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching* is published online through the *IJC&ELT* website (https://digitalcommons.biola.edu/ijc-elt/), where editorials, articles, reviews, and other relevant communications are freely downloadable in the form of PDF files. CELEA members, libraries, or other readers may print out the complete issue file for themselves. If there is interest and demand, in the future we may offer hard copy issues through a print-on-demand publisher.

Given that the focus is English language teaching, the language of the journal is English. Initially the frequency of issues will be one per year, with the hope that this may increase, assuming a sufficient quantity of quality contents that pass blind peer review. Preference will be given to articles and reviews that make clear, helpful, and fresh contributions to the field of ELT within a Christian perspective, broadly conceived. Articles, advertisements, and reviews do not necessarily represent the opinions or views of the editors, editorial review board, or CELEA. Submissions may be made by readers around the world. Accepted papers and reviews will be approved by the editors and at least two additional readers, as appropriate for the *IJC&ELT* based on their contributions, originality, and relevance.

Articles and reviews shall conform to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA style, 7th ed.). Authors who publish in the *IJC&ELT* retain copyright of their work, enabling the unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction of their article or review in any medium, provided that they formally cite the original publication in the *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching*.

Manuscripts must not have been previously published or currently submitted for review at another journal. Authors should inform the editors if related research or a similar version of their manuscript has been published or is under consideration elsewhere. Authors will not be paid for articles or reviews; neither will they be charged publication fees. Authors, like readers, may freely download and print as many copies of their work in *IJC&ELT* as desired.

Submissions

Contributions should be in the form of Word documents submitted as attached files at IJCELT.Editors@gmail.com. Manuscripts which do not conform to the guidelines in the *Publications Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th edition, 2020) may not be sent for external review. The *IJC&ELT* welcomes articles from both native- and non-native English speakers, yet requests that ideas in submissions be expressed clearly for a broad, international audience. Authors are responsible for fluent language use, as well as for the accuracy of any data, references, or citations they incorporate into their work. Obtaining permission to incorporate any previously copyrighted material is the author's responsibility. The editors reserve the right to make minor editing changes without prior consultation with authors. Major editing or revisions, however, will only be done in consultation with authors.

Please see *IJC&ELT*'s website, https://digitalcommons.biola.edu/ijc-elt/, for the latest information about the journal. We value your contributions, prayers, and readership.

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Editor's Column: Wisdom and Sorrow

Bradley Baurain

There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.
– Ecclesiastes 3:1–8 (NIV)

"There is a time for everything." This truth is clearly seen in the current issue of this journal.

At first, it was a time for wisdom and rejoicing. We invited the winners of the Christian English Language Educators Association's (CELEA) Earl W. Stevick Award to reflect for the benefit of our readers on their collective decades of teaching and service. This award, which is something like a lifetime achievement award, "honors members of the English language teaching profession who embody some of the characteristics of Dr. Stevick in their teaching, mentoring of teachers, scholarship, service to the profession, and living out the life of Christ in this profession." Indeed, I rejoiced to read the lessons they shared and am excited to explore this Forum section with my own students.

As we were putting this issue together, however, it became as well a time for grief and sorrow. Our colleague and brother, the well-known scholar Zoltán Dörnyei, passed away and "graduated to heaven," as a friend of mine used to say. In my very first editor's column for this journal (Volume 5, 2018), I wrote of being "held spellbound" by how Dörnyei wove together in his plenary address (at the CELT 2018 Chicago conference) theology, social science, ministry,

and English language teaching. Others who knew him far better than myself have contributed remembrances and tributes to honor him in this issue.

This current volume 9 of the *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching* covers a spectrum of topics and "times and seasons." There are two main articles. The first is "Language Policy and Planning in Church-Sponsored ESL Programs," by Andrew Schneider, a qualitative research study which explores one church-sponsored ESL program and how its anti-proselytizing policy was interpreted by volunteer instructors within a ministry context. Important issues addressed include integrity, professionalism, and the Christian responsibility to both speak and live the gospel.

The second main article is "Collaboration and Reconciliation in ELT? Personal Reflections on Critical Incidents," by Michael Lessard-Clouston. This essay is based on a presentation he gave as part of a panel at this year's TESOL International Convention in Pittsburgh, entitled "Faith-inspired Collaboration and Reconciliation in English Language Teaching." Questions surrounding collaboration, reconciliation, and cross-cultural ethics in several international contexts are fruitfully analyzed and discussed.

The Forum section is richly stocked with a reflective article as well as the content mentioned above. "Reflections on Church-Based English Ministry," by Rachael Sloan Tsaneva, conveys the thoughts and stories of an early-career teacher working with a nonprofit organization and church network in Virginia. This piece adds to the growing literature on church-based TESOL ministries.

In the second Forum entry, "Wisdom from Experience – Thoughts from Stevick Award Winners," five award winners distill their reflections into "lessons" that are challenging and, while humbly presented, are themselves humbling.

The third Forum entry collects tributes to Zoltán Dörnyei from, respectively: Eleanor Pease, who initially connected him with CELEA via the 2008 Christians in English Language Teaching (CELT) Conference in New York City; Elfrieda Lepp-Kaethler, his doctoral student and a current faculty member at Providence University College and Theological Seminary; and Mary Shepard Wong of Azusa Pacific University, his collaborator and co-editor.

Finally, there are two books reviewed in this issue of the journal:

• *How Shall We Then Care? A Christian Educator's Guide to Caring for Self, Learners, Colleagues, and Community*, edited by Paul Shotsberger and Cathy Freytag, reviewed by Michael Lessard-Clouston.

• *Teaching and Learning across Cultures: A Guide to Theory and Practice*, by Craig Ott, reviewed by Mary Cloutier.

Finally, in the spirit of "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens," it's time for myself and my co-editor, Michael Pasquale, to pass the baton. After five years, countless hours, and co-editing five volumes of this journal, I am going to step down and, while remaining on the Editorial Board, move on to other priorities and projects. Michael is also stepping down after six years. I have been hugely privileged, both personally and professionally, to work alongside him as well as the founding editor, Michael Lessard-Clouston. At the present time, we do not know who will take the reins. If you have relevant publishing and editing experience and would like to consider (co-)editing the journal, please contact me.

Now it's your turn . . . time to read and enjoy—and please pass on this free and open-access resource to other faith-engaged TESOL professionals!

Bradley Baurain (bbaurain@gmail.com) is a Professor of TESOL at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A. He is the author of *On Waiting Well: Moving from Endurance to Enjoyment When You're Waiting on God* (Moody Publishers, 2020) and articles in *ELT Journal*, the *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, *RELC Journal*, *TESL-EJ*, and *TESOL Journal*. For more information about him, his website is https://moody.academia.edu/BradleyBaurain.

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Language Policy and Planning in A Church-Sponsored ESL Program

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Abstract
The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine language policy in privately funded church-sponsored adult English as a Second Language (ESL) programs in the United States. Specifically, this study focuses on one church and how its policy prohibiting proselytization in the classroom is interpreted by its volunteer instructors. The aim of this study is not to critique the success or failure of these policies but instead attempt to observe, describe, and report the spectrum of resistance and acceptance of restrictions (indeed, if it is perceived as such) on the types of language permitted to be used in ESL classrooms. Findings show that volunteers have different interpretations about how the Christian faith should or should not be integrated into curriculum. These beliefs stem from their theological interpretations about religious conversion as well as the volunteers' self-reported depth of religious beliefs. No evidence of proselytization or religious activities was observed, showing that this locally-created policy was effective in its goal of separating the teaching of faith and language during ESL classes. This is significant because it represents, to date, the only example of the impact of explicit language policies studied in adult ESL church-sponsored programs.

Key words: language policy, church-sponsored ESL, proselytization, faith and ESL, community-based ESOL

Introduction

In the United States (U.S.), while having no official status, English reigns as the *de facto* language of the land. It is essential for citizenship, employment, forming friendships in a community, visiting the doctor – virtually all aspects of daily life. For the some 1.8 million immigrants per year and the 12.2 million permanent residents, learning how to speak, listen, read, and write remains a major barrier to integrating into U.S. society (McHugh, Gelatt, & Fix, 2007). Adult ESL learners often do not have the financial resources or time to enroll in academic institutions to meet their language needs. In 1964 the Economic Opportunity Act was established, in part, as policy to address the literacy needs of these English language learners. As of 2006–2007, close to 500,000 adults were enrolled in some type of federally-funded state ESL class ranging from family literacy, life skills, civics, vocational, and workplace ESL classes (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2010). Yet, for all students who are enrolled in such programs,

the demand far exceeds the supply. One study indicated that of the 176 ESL programs surveyed 57% had a waiting list, with some students waiting as long as three years to enroll (Tucker, 2006).

Community and faith-based volunteer-run organizations often fill the void for adults looking to improve their English abilities. Faith-based ESL programs such as Catholic Charities receive grants, and are therefore regulated by the federal government under Title 34 (C.F.R. §§ 75.52(c) (1), 2011). All grantees under the U.S. Department of Education comply with a regulation which stipulates that religious activities such as religious worship, instruction, or proselytization (i.e., attempt to convert someone to one's own religion) must be offered in a separate time and place from language education funded by the grant. Proselytization activities can include: devotional exercises, handing out of religious materials, or any other action that favors one religion over another (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Many smaller faith-based organizations do not have the resources to fulfill all of the requirements to receive federal funding (Durham & Kim, 2019). Additionally, these programs may not wish to comply with policies that determine the role that faith plays in the classroom. Some researchers caution that it is the *de facto* policy of Christian ESL programs to use English as a medium for proselytization (Chao & Kuntz, 2013; Edge, 2003; Pennycook & Makoni, 2005). The need for church-sponsored ESL programs to clearly represent the services they offer along with transparency about how adult ESL learners might be exposed to the belief systems of the religious organization is the focus of this study.

Literature Review

Language Policy, Practice, and Religion

Language policy can be considered both a social and cultural construct (Schiffman, 1996). Schiffman argues that to understand the complexities of these policies, one must take into account both the explicit and implicit dimensions to understand what he refers to as linguistic culture, "which is the sum totality of ideas, values, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, religious strictures, and other cultural 'baggage' that speakers bring to their dealings with language from their background" (p. 276, cited in D. Johnson, 2013, p. 4). Historically, the field of language policy and planning (LPP) has sought to understand the impetus for codified documents and the intention of the authors of such policies (see D. Johnson, 2013). In the last two decades there has

been a shift from a focus on the macro policies (e.g., government organizations, multinational companies, etc.) to the micro policies that locally spring forth. This was not to judge the success or failure of said policies but to see how they are interpreted or even rejected by language educators in classrooms. E. J. Johnson (2012) refers to this as *instantiation*, the ground level where policy and practice intertwine. In the local context, teachers and administrators can and do invent new strategies to cope with the realities of everyday problems they encounter with their learners.

Prior to the turn of the 21st century, very little research had been done examining the interplay of language, teaching, and religion. Ferguson (1981) notes that, historically speaking, Christianity affected the policy that its respective missionaries had towards how they shared the Bible. British Protestant groups translated the sacred text into local languages while Roman Catholics used Latin Bibles (Spolsky, 2003). Researchers like Spolsky (2003) posit that, "scholars interested in language contact were themselves so steeped in secularism that they did not easily become aware of the depth of religious beliefs and life" (p. 82). Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) comment that while religion and language policy is not explicitly codified, the impact of missionaries on host cultures (e.g., Maori in New Zealand, indigenous language in Rwanda) is a form of linguistic imperialism having an 'insidious effect' on local language.

Snow (2013) counters the claim that "missionary colleges + English dominance = cultural imperialism" in his historical review of the Presbyterian-established University of Nanking in China (p. 108). In this case, the early university educators sought to create an educational system in which Chinese and English shared equal status. However, over time the school saw a shift towards prioritizing English. Chinese parents and students sought the benefits of an English education for English-dominated global trade, broadening future education opportunities in English-speaking countries, or the domestic prestige of an English medium of instruction education. Makoni and Makoni (2009) paint an alternative picture of English language dominance in Christianity in recounting the early work of African missionaries. The authors' historical review shows new African languages emerged due to church planting by Protestant and Catholic missionaries and the missionaries' codification of existing local languages. Further, these evangelists' linguistic work into the complexity of African languages served as an appeal that Africans were not racially inferior to their European colonizers. Early missionaries also championed multilingual over an English monolingual sharing of the gospel so

that Africans would have access to the faith through their native languages. As such, an education in English was to serve as a bridge to the Christian faith. Similar to the aforementioned Chinese Christian university, the demand from parents in Africa that their children be educated primarily in English and not in alternative local languages gave rise to government-driven macro policy shifts. Ghana in 1957 and Malawi in 1969 codified English to be used in education which usurped local educators' micro policies that blended local African languages and English as the medium of instruction. The authors state, "compared to the impact of government language policy, community opinion, and the globalizing influences of media and education, the contribution of specifically Christian institutions adds little to the prestigious position of the English language" (Makoni & Makoni, 2009, p. 116).

Christian English Language Teaching and Proselytizing

The role that religion plays in the teaching of English, particularly by Christians both in the United States and globally, is fraught with controversy. Non-religious academics such as Varghese and Johnston (2007) are concerned that U.S. politics push "imperialist goals" which are "guided by an evangelical Christian agenda" (p. 6) which includes Christian English teachers. Others have accused Christian English educators as teaching with a hidden agenda. Edge (2003) declares:

> The issue here, as I understand it, is one of transparency in the relationship between TESOL and evangelism . . . If such transparency is to be ruled out for tactical reasons, and the argument is that the end (saving souls) justifies the means (deception and manipulation), then I am simply bewildered, and finally repelled, by the morality of the stance being taken. (pp. 704–705)

Mirroring concerns about Christian English teaching missionaries' ulterior motives, Pennycook and Makoni (2005) conclude, "the teaching of English has become a lure to bring nonbelievers into missionary clutches . . . The use of English language teaching as a means to convert the unsuspecting English language learner" (p. 139). In direct response to Pennycook and Makoni, Baurain (2007) points out "there is almost no evidence presented that Christian teachers pursue their purposes dishonestly," noting that even the authors conceded that Christian websites they referenced were open about their religious objectives (p. 204). Canagarajah (2013) summarizes, "despite the best efforts of these well-respected scholars, their assumptions that religions are fundamentalist, faith-based teaching is aimed at converting students, faith cannot be

reconciled with reason, and religion motivates intolerance lead to distortion in their findings" (p. xxi). Such tension between two competing viewpoints is clear. Yet, as we will see next, empirical research surrounding the explicit and implicit policies of Christian English language educators is extremely limited.

Church-sponsored ESL

Settings for faith-based ESL programs have been categorized as *church-based* (Chao & Kuntz, 2013; Chao & Mantero, 2014), *church-sponsored* (Kristjánsson, 2018), and *church-run* (Baurain, 2013). For the sake of this study, I will use the term church-sponsored as this study specifically focuses on a program that receives no government funding and thus is not beholden to federal regulations that would dictate how religious activities are integrated into ESL classrooms. It is also apropos given the church in the present study views ESL education as part of an outreach to the non-native English-speaking international community.

Durham and Kim (2019) provide a comprehensive overview of faith-based adult ESL programs in the United States. They quote Chao and Kuntz (2013, p. 16) noting that these programs are described as having "no constraints on [students] entering the programs such as no tuition fees, no prior academic experience, and no requirements to profess Christian faith or follow religious rituals." It is most often the case that these programs are underfunded, offer little in the way of teacher training, and the volunteer instructors that join in these programs do so out of a desire to help newcomers adjust to life in the United States. Additionally, Durham and Kim note that these volunteer instructors often "walk a tightrope" between the multicultural values of the learners and the religious beliefs of the host organization.

Positioned as in an *emic* perspective on ESOL, Baurain (2013) investigates how church-sponsored ESL program Christian volunteers put faith into practice tutoring newcomers from Mexico and El Salvador. In his seven-month ethnographic case study, there was no evidence of proselytization during the classes observed. However, one tutor remarked, "if I am not able to express my faith, which is so foundational to who I am, the student would not be getting my whole picture of who I am" (Baurain 2013, p. 144). Church leadership promoted the ESL program as a way to engage in local missions yet there was no mention of explicit policies either encouraging or limiting faith-related discussions during tutoring sessions.

Chao and Kuntz's (2013) three-year ethnographic study into a church-sponsored ESL program revealed that Christian faith and ESL were intertwined. Class organizers actively integrated prayer, Bible study, hymns, and other elements of religious practice into the ESL program. Some of the participants who held different beliefs (e.g., atheists, Buddhists, etc.) felt that Christianity was being imposed upon them, thus inhibiting their participation, while others converted to Christianity. The researchers came to the conclusion that the church-sponsored ESL program was a platform for proselytizing and mission work.

Johnston's (2017) work asserts itself squarely in the center of the debate, offering a data-driven approach to investigate evangelical Christians' motivation, instantiation, and transparency in couching English language teaching within a 'bible-based curriculum'. Johnston's year-long ethnographic study of Lighthouse, a mission-based Christian English language school in Poland, focuses on classroom observations of adult intermediate EFL Polish students (ages 20s to 50s) and their missionary instructors. The guiding questions of the investigation take square aim at the aforementioned long-standing critiques that Christians teaching English deceive the vulnerable in efforts to indoctrinate religiously-justified homophobic and colonialist values. Johnston's exploration of Lighthouse revealed a *whole-self* approach to teaching and learning English. Students used English as a medium to explore religious themes surrounding the source content (e.g., Defoe's classic, *Robinson Crusoe*) engaging in discussions of unusual emotional openness, atypical of Polish culture. Lessons were interjected with what Johnston refers to as 'mini-sermons', direct connections were made between course materials and Biblical scriptures, and all lessons appeared to end with prayers. While the teaching skills of each instructor varied, the study paints a clear picture of a school that wholly integrates evangelism into an EFL classroom; an approach which is fully and knowingly accepted by its students though no formal policy was mentioned in the study. Additionally, Johnston concluded that the notion of Christian ESL teachers 'converting' their students oversimplifies the mutualistic relationships in the classrooms at Lighthouse. It is worth noting that Johnston's most staunch criticism of the school, or rather some of the leadership of the school, came in the form of unsolicited prayer on his behalf:

> . . . many prayers being said for me, both in my presence and when I was absent. There were times when, inwardly, I took offense – usually because a prayer or 'approach' overstepped what I consider the bounds of privacy (I am an extremely private person). (Johnston, 2017, pp. 38–39)

The concept of Christian prayer was integrated into class discussions and group prayers

concluded class sessions. One student viewed the prayers on her behalf to be a "great gift." Conversely, when the author was prayed for in a group meeting, he interpreted it as a violation of trust.

Examining church-sponsored ESL in Canada, Kristjánsson (2018) interviewed representatives from three non-government funded Christian organizations. One of the churches' adult ESL programs chose to actively incorporate the Bible into ESL classes, even providing bilingual Bibles to learners. The other two programs deliberately chose to exclude Christian materials from their curriculum as well as prayer and Bible use in the classrooms. One program went so far as to adopt the policy that all new members entering the program are directly informed of the 'Christian orientation' of the program which excluded public prayer as well as Christian content in the classroom. However, the inclusion of Christian values and perspectives as well as Christian holidays were acceptable. The program director emphasized, "Some schools start with prayer. We don't . . . we don't want to push anyone" (Kristjánsson, 2018, p. 182). This policy was described to be born out of respect for the various religions represented in their student population. All of the church-sponsored ESL directors reported that they did not see covert proselytization as a goal of their programs but rather their programs are a practical way for them to show the love of Jesus to disadvantaged Canadian newcomers.

The Present Study

The following study describes the language policies set forth by the participating church, observes if these policies are adhered to in the ESL classrooms, and interviews a stakeholder administrator as well as volunteer ESL instructors (referred to as "volunteers"). The discussion is interwoven with the findings so as to link each instructor's views of proselytization in general, in the ESL classroom, and their own personal beliefs on if, how, and when one's personal beliefs intersect with their social lives.

This investigation adopts a qualitative ethnographic stance to investigate language policy and planning within church-sponsored ESL programs. I say 'stance' because, ideally, an ethnographic researcher will spend extended periods of time embedded in the *ethnos*, steeping themselves within a culture. Prolonged exposure leads to thick description (Geertz, 1973), hypothesis generation (Canagarajah, 2006), and reveals how language policy is interpreted by human agents on a local micro level (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007).

As E. J. Johnson (2013) summarizes, ethnographic research in LPP "provides a balance between policy power and interpretive agency" (p. 45), a perspective greatly needing representation in the discussion of how Christian English language volunteers express their spiritual and social agency (Dörnyei, Wong, & Kristjánsson, 2013).

The two research questions addressed in this study are:

1) Are there explicit policies towards proselytizing in a church-sponsored ESL program? If so, what are those policies?
2) What are the implicit beliefs, values, and practices of volunteer instructors regarding proselytizing in a church-sponsored ESL program?

Methods

Program and Participant Profile

This ethnographic study was conducted on-site at Trinity Church (a pseudonym) during March 2019 and subsequent participant interviews took place in April via internet video chat. There are numerous church-sponsored ESL programs in the Southeastern U.S. but this site was selected due to my relationship as a member of the host church and the access that my status as an insider in the community grants. However, prior to the start of this study I had neither taught nor observed Trinity ESL classes, nor did I have any previous relationship with any of the participants.

Trinity ESL was founded in 1994, starting with two proficiency levels of learners and then expanding to the current four-level system. Since its inception, the program has had over 500 students and close to 150 volunteers participate. Similar to other faith-based ESL programs (Durham & Kim, 2019), Trinity ESL does not require students to hold a specific faith.

The adult ESL program meets twice a week from 7:00-9:00 pm on the church premises. The format of the meetings (Table 1) was typically as follows: some type of warm-up questions (e.g., *What did you do last weekend?* etc.), an introduction of vocabulary and model sentences (Group 1) or cultural topic prepared by a volunteer (Groups 2–4), a 20-minute coffee and light snack break combining all levels, and then a last game, topic, or other wrap-up activity for the final portion of the session. The break was held in a coffee-shop style room at the end of the hall of the classrooms. The administrator (Admin) stated that some years ago, a different group of church members from Trinity would bring food and drinks and remain during the break time to provide extra conversation for the attendees, but that did not happen during my observations.

Table 1. *General Timeline for Trinity ESL Sessions*

7:00-8:00	8:00-8:20	8:20-9:00
ESL Class (leveled)	Coffee/Snack Break (All levels)	ESL Class (leveled)

Over the last four years, the Admin of the program sought to shift the dynamics of the classrooms away from a teacher-centered design, referring to teachers as 'volunteers' and students as 'members'. At the time of this study, the majority of members participating in the ESL program were comprised of newly arrived Venezuelan refugees, international scholars from several universities in the local area, and immigrants from Japan, Korea, Senegal, Syria, Croatia, Germany, and China. In a meeting with the Admin prior to observation, I was told that the member population of the program has been greatly influenced by the political climate. Refugees had made up a significant portion of the members in years past but since the changeover to President Donald Trump in 2017, refugees have almost completely vanished from the program (personal communication with Admin, 2019).

Members divide into four levels and each group typically meets in separate rooms, although when the upper-level groups 3 and 4 have low attendance, they will occasionally combine the groups. Those members who had been long-time attendees of the program and had achieved a relatively high level of English proficiency could shift and then become volunteers themselves. There was no mention of any language teaching training for volunteers either prior or during their time in volunteer service, however long they choose to volunteer for the program. Childcare service was provided, of which many members took advantage. Each room was equipped with a whiteboard. All participants sat around a group of combined collapsible white tables in a square formation. Each member would write their name on a folded piece of colored construction paper and stand it on the table space in front of themselves. While there was no assigned seating, leaders of each group requested volunteers and members be spaced out as evenly as possible. During my observations, the lower two levels had a member-to-volunteer ratio of 2:1 and the two upper levels were the opposite.

Four volunteer staff (V1-V4) of the Trinity ESL program (Table 2) were chosen as focal participants because they acted as group leaders during English sessions. While there were as many as five volunteers in a class, it was the group leader who was responsible for coordinating the activities for the class. During sessions, these volunteer leaders had the greatest amount of

Table 2. *Interview Participant Demographic Information*

Program staff and volunteers	Sex	Age	Profession	Prior ESL teaching experience	Location	Time at Trinity ESL program
Administrator	M	40	Full-time missionary, part-time ESL teacher	Yes	EFL Korea (6 years) & U.S. (4 years)	4 years
Volunteer one (V1)	M	30	Part-time ESL teacher	Yes	International Rescue Committee, Peace Corp, EFL China	7 months
Volunteer two (V2)	F	49	Writer/editor for a federal agency	Yes	2 church-sponsored ESL programs	4 years
Volunteer three (V3)	M	65	Project manager at engineering company	No	NA	3 years
Volunteer four (V4)	F	26	Medical assistant	No	NA	2 years

control and thus the greatest influence over the policies of their respective groups. As such, their stances on how Christian beliefs are, can, and should be practiced at Trinity ESL in relation to the existing policies in the program was of central importance to this study. While meetings between volunteers and members in the form of dinners, parties, and other social events outside of class were frequent and might also contain opportunities for volunteers to share or practice their religious beliefs, such interactions, while worth mentioning, are outside the scope of this study. The program Admin (Table 2) was also interviewed to compare volunteer leaders' interpretations with that of the creator/compiler of all official Trinity ESL policies. Approval was given by way of consent forms from the Admin, volunteers, and all members observed by the researcher. Additionally, this research was sanctioned by the governing body of the church sponsor and the researcher's institutional review board.

Data Collection

Data were collected on-site during four class sessions, one for each of the four levels.

Five 24–45 minute semi-structured interviews were conducted via Skype, and the audio was recorded on an iPhone X microphone. The protocol for the interview (Appendix A) was adapted from a previous study about faith and practice in church-sponsored ESL programs (Baurain, 2013) and from research investigating pre-service Christian English language teachers' viewpoints on sharing their beliefs or converting their students (Varghese & Johnston, 2007). Interviews were recorded and then initially transcribed using *transcribe* (www.https://transcribe.wreally.com), a web-based auto transcription service[1].

Observations were conducted over four evening sessions during March 2019. In each session a different group of learners was observed. Following McCarty's (2015) protocol for observation notes, verbatim quotes, gestures, and other comments were recorded by hand during sessions using a 'Rocketbook' smart notebook. This notebook allows handwritten documents to be scanned and sorted automatically and is erasable for reuse. Notes were then expanded into field reports 30 minutes after on-site visits to retain as much detail as possible from the event (Glesne, 2016). This data, along with reflections from all interviews was then input into a research journal. Artifacts related to Trinity ESL policy were provided by Admin (Appendix B) and information from the ESL program website was also included for analysis.

Analysis

The analysis for this study is based on language policy as linguistic culture (Schiffman, 1996). In this model, policy is examined by both explicit texts and stated beliefs as well as implicit attitudes that can influence stance toward the policy, how policy is interpreted, and how those factors influence practice (overtly or covertly). This was achieved using thematic analysis (Glesne, 2016) in which, through an iterative process examining all data collected, general patterns emerge.

The first round of data coding was derived from observation notes, field reports, researcher journal entries, and artifacts (e.g., Trinity volunteer agreement, Trinity ESL website) using Word document commenting functions. Volunteer responses to the protocol were summarized in an MS Word table for analysis of convergent and divergent patterns. Individual volunteer interviews were then coded using NVivo 12 in search of emergent themes. In the

[1] While the service is wonderfully convenient compared with traditional listen-and-type systems of transcription, each subsequent file generated by the program needed to be reviewed to correct errors in spelling, word choice, and general formatting.

second round of coding, emergent themes were then cross-referenced with patterns from first round coding and then reorganized into *explicit* (i.e., stated) beliefs and *implicit* attitudes towards Trinity ESL policies. These themes were further triangulated by cycling back and forth between observational data and artifacts. Relevant sections of artifacts were extracted and used as context to complement quotes that best encapsulated emergent themes. Follow-up emails and conversation between Admin and volunteers served as a form of member checking in which I requested clarifications on data.

Researcher Positionality

One major criticism in the field of ethnography of language policy is when researchers study a culture that is wholly foreign to them (D. Johnson, 2013). As a member (but not a volunteer instructor) of the host church for Trinity ESL, I have the unique position of viewing their language policy and practice from an emic perspective. This, however, comes with its own set of responsibilities unique to my relationship with this ESL program. As Rampton (2007) points out, "if you are researching people and institutions in the area where you are based, the kind of people you are studying may well turn up in your classes and/or read-and-reply to what you've written, and this provides quite strong incentives to hedge your claims and clearly specify their limits" (p. 591). I am, therefore, cognizant of the responsibility I have to illuminate policy and practice within the Christian community while at the same time to pursue this research with the scientific rigor that the academic community demands.

I see knowledge as being socially constructed between myself and my participants. This meant that I was more than just a 'fly on the wall' during on-site observations, thus I functioned as a researcher and resource in the classroom (Sarangi & Candlin, 2003). I interacted with both volunteers and members during class time both for the sake of developing rapport and offering skills as an ESL instructor when requested. My identity was constructed in the various communities of practice (Wenger, 1999) at Trinity ESL. With the members of Trinity ESL, I am a Caucasian native English speaker. In the United States this puts me in a privileged status which I took care not to abuse, but may have unduly influenced members' willingness to join the classrooms that I observed. To volunteers, I was both a peer in the church and an outside researcher. While I assured anonymity in my report, our peer status may have caused less-than-candid responses from some members in order to save face in the church community. I have

attempted to mitigate my personal biases by representing the voices of the participants as often as possible to allow the reader to interpret and draw their own conclusions as to how volunteer beliefs interpret policy related to proselytization.

Results

Trinity ESL Policies

The guiding questions surrounding this exploration of policies at this church-sponsored ESL program are, 1) Are there explicit policies for proselytizing in a church-sponsored ESL program and if so, what are they? and 2) What are the implicit beliefs, values, and practices of volunteer instructors towards proselytizing in a church-sponsored ESL program? Trinity ESL has a written agreement (Appendix B) between leadership and the volunteers in the program and it is that agreement which will be the focus of the explicit policies and attitudes towards proselytizing. Volunteer-stated attitudes towards proselytizing in email and interviews, my observation notes, field notes, and artifact comparison will attempt to uncover any implicit policies towards what forms of faith-sharing are acceptable and unacceptable at Trinity ESL.

Explicit Policies

Written Policy at Trinity ESL. While it had been the practice in the past, for the past several years new members (i.e., the learners) are not required to complete any paperwork that would indicate their personal beliefs. In other church-sponsored ESL programs, such practices were reported to pressure the students to falsify their religious identity to gain a greater position in the community (Chao & Kuntz, 2013).

All volunteers, prior to entering into an ESL session at Trinity, are required to sign an agreement outlining the expectations for how volunteers are to interact with the members of the program. The agreement ranges from general guidelines about contacting the Admin should a volunteer be late, creating a comfortable and equitable classroom for all volunteers and members, avoiding debate and critique, and other best practices. The most overt language in the document comes in the form of what is listed as the National Association of Foreign Student Advisors (NAFSA) *Ethics Program: Guideline for Working with International Students* (Article 10, The NAFSA Ethics Program, p. 11). The majority of the clause mandates that organizations that provide services for international students have “a clear statement of purpose and

responsibility" that is accurate and establishes a mutual dialogue between both parties. The final statement requires that "the organization should make clear that *surreptitious, deceptive, or coercive proselytizing is unacceptable*" (italics added, p. 11). This specific verbiage had been copied into the Trinity ESL volunteer agreement. Admin explained that, while there are updated versions of this NAFSA policy, the language in the older policy offered a "*stronger warning*" than current NAFSA documents.

According to Admin, before taking over of the program about four years prior, there had been no written agreement between Trinity ESL leadership and its volunteers.

> So before I started pushing that policy and educating people about it, there are people that would come in and hand out literature like 1 John in different languages and assign it as homework. People that might have been overly looking for opportunities to educate people about the Christian faith. And so what I keep emphasizing is it's we love inter religious education. That's, that's awesome. And we want people to learn about you know, where we're coming from. I want to learn about other people are coming from. So the language is shifted to more of a mutual learning exchange that is based on an invitation. A clear invitation and waiting for the invitation to be received or waiting for an invitation for that. So I tell people err on the side of not sharing about – and since most of the volunteers are Christians – not sharing about the Christian faith in any way without making sure there is that invitation that it is welcome. And done in a way that is in spirit of mutual learning exchange not one way learning about Christian beliefs. (Admin, April, 2019).

Admin's intentions in establishing written policies stemmed from both the mission organization through which he was currently employed and his own personal beliefs.

> A commitment to ethics. And when I say that in those policies, it's making sure nobody feels like pressuring them to convert. And then when I go over that with people I say, "assume that people might have the fear that we're trying to do" . . . within that same ethics, making sure that we are transparent in our invitations to people. (Admin, April, 2019)

Interestingly, when the policies were first implemented in the Trinity ESL program, there was initial pushback from some of the current volunteers in the program. Admin said that some organizers went so far as to ask what the whole point of the Trinity ESL program was if they were restricted in how they could share their beliefs with the members. This prompted a group discussion.

> We would talk about, what does it mean to love others, you know? And, we don't just help the people that seem to be responding positively to Christian call, you know – it's not love. And so that was very helpful in getting people to understand it. (Admin, April, 2019)

Current Stance Towards NAFSA Proselytizing Clause in Trinity Policy. Baurain (2007) says that the term proselytize "is made to carry connotations of a forced change of mind, outright deception or questionable persuasive techniques, or an indirect or unethical use of position or power to effect 'changes of heart'" (p. 204). All four volunteers interpreted proselytization as having negative connotations. In their view, forcing Christian beliefs on another person runs counter to the types of nonconfrontational and open conversations that are needed to engage in a genuine dialogue about Jesus and his teachings. Volunteers associated proselytizing with the action of arguing or sermonizing; ways to pressure the other party into accepting the speaker's beliefs.

Another closely-related synonym of *proselytizing* mentioned by Admin and others was the concept of 'conversion'. To that end, Admin remarked that "*proselytizing is God's work. Our work as the followers of Jesus is to proclaim the good news about Jesus.*" Similarly, Volunteer two (V2) commented, "*I don't believe that it's possible for me to convert somebody. So we're getting into the theology here*." The theological aspect mentioned here is a concept put forth by French theologian and pastor John Calvin known as *irresistible grace* which asserts that God's call to convert a person can only come from God and not humans. Under such an assumption, V2 as well as Admin see that they have no power or responsibility to proselytize to members at Trinity ESL.

V2 offered the word *witnessing* as the more appropriate term for how she thinks Christian believers should share their faith.

> Some ground rules for good witnessing: ask permission to share your story or share what you believe, be willing to listen to the other person's story/beliefs, don't attach any conditions to the other person's response, don't do it at a time when I should be doing something else (i.e., working or teaching an English class), don't treat people like a project, speak with humility, and respect the other person's culture. (V2, April, 2019)

With regards specifically to the Trinity ESL program, Volunteer three (V3) outlined that witnessing, more specifically "*a hearing*," must be earned "*as we display servant behavior through the freely offered ESL program, along with genuine interest in the participants and their 'stories'*."

Explicit Policies Establish Trust. Most of the volunteers seemed to be thankful for the NAFSA clause at Trinity ESL. Volunteer four (V4) commented that without such a policy in place, local sending institutions (primarily colleges and universities) would lose trust in Trinity

ESL which would, in turn, damage their willingness to recommend the program to newcomers. In fact, other than the ties between Christianity and its connection to holidays in the United States, V4 actively shifts discussions away from religious topics.

> I mean you can't force it on them. And then once you start down that path you kind of notice that their eyes glaze over and also is a possibility that their trust in us gets broken. (V4, April, 2019)

Volunteer one (V1) expressed his appreciation for the policy saying that members wouldn't respond well to pressure, "*especially with religion. Yeah, because I think religion is such an important part in like someone's – like – identity and what they believe*." One example of how members have been pressured into participation was in the form of corporate prayer. A member confided to V2 that "*she stopped going to other churches' programs because she felt like . . . they were praying all the time. And she felt kind of uncomfortable with that, and that's why she liked [Trinity ESL] . . .*"

This act-then-believe type of model would seem to function as a type of "training into faith," which is viewed by many at Trinity ESL with disdain. V2 continues, "*In general, there should never be coercion. Even when you're sharing your faith it should not be that coercive kind of setting*."

Explicit Policies Restrict. Not all volunteers were of the same mind regarding the NAFSA proselytizing clause. While V3 was in favor of being transparent about the goals and group activities at Trinity ESL, his general feeling was that the current policy may be too limiting for volunteers who wish to more directly speak about their beliefs with the members in their classes. In the view of V3, the NAFSA clause exists as a tool for recruitment at secular universities.

> I'm not enough of an expert about this situation Admin is in as he recruits participants. Admin is pivotal to the program in his recruiting efforts [at Southern University] particularly. And other places, I know are under a bit of constraint regarding no proselytizing. So I understand why he needs something there. (V3, April, 2019)

Often V3 spoke in the hypothetical with regards to a desired change in Trinity ESL policy. This allowed him to not usurp Admin's authority while at the same time expressing V3's frustration at not being able to fully represent his faith to the members in his group. "*So I don't know that I would be presumptuous enough to say here's how I would change it. Love to be a little more unfiltered, you might say.*" He also remarked that one of the results of removing this "*limitation*"

would be that volunteers could "*introduce [members] to the elements of our faith*," which in turn "*could lead other people seeing more about what Christianity is about*." V3 comments that such an approach may be a positive one for members who attend Trinity ESL and "*it may lead to some people saying, 'This isn't for me. I know where these people are going and I don't want that,' and they pull away. It'll be all of the above*."

V3 viewed the NAFSA policy and the restriction of personal discussion of religion in ESL classes as a necessary but undesirable tool for recruitment.

The Explicit Policy's Influence on Classroom Practices. One assumption in many church-sponsored ESL programs, the Admin described, is that because ESL classes are being conducted in a church, the curricula will naturally be based around the teachings of the Bible. In Admin's experience, other programs that he has worked on in the past have said, "they feel that they have the, that right" and that the members that join Trinity ESL "are happy that we don't do it that way." For volunteers like V4, the decision not to center ESL classes around Christian teaching but on themes of community and peacebuilding is a welcome one. She confided that she has been struggling with her faith over the last year. Trinity ESL does offer a specific time for discussions about the Bible and faith outside of ESL classes on Sunday mornings and V4 said, "I think my role doesn't extend into Bible study. That's 'cause I don't I don't believe that I have the gifts for that. For me, I'm just at that beginning stage rather than the later stages."

The addition of the NAFSA policy was not intended to repress or eliminate volunteers' Christian beliefs from the class sessions.

> I do . . . encourage the volunteers try to identify their faith . . . like say they're talking about their weekend . . . don't hide the fact that you spent time praying and don't hide the fact don't hide your religion out of your life. Just being normal and authentic just be very, make sure you're not doing that in a way that's making others feel like you're pressuring them to accept your views. (Admin, April, 2019)

V4 interpreted the policy somewhat differently. She spoke of taking an active role that discussions of faith be discouraged from her group, "*if a student has questions on Christian beliefs. I try my best to be as gentle as possible . . . that the conversation doesn't steer towards religion just because it's uncomfortable for the students that really don't care for it*." Unlike V3's views that volunteers might be able to have a more unfiltered conversation about Christian teachings, V4 tries to avoid all talk about any religion from both other volunteers and members in the class. The opinions of V4 were also mirrored by V1. He stated that the main reason he

likes volunteering at Trinity ESL is the program's emphasis on the broad themes of love and peacebuilding being at the center of classroom discourse, "*because everybody needs those, like, kind of messages in their daily life, too*."

Turning our attention to V3, during my observations of his class, one of the members spent the better part of half an hour confiding with everyone his struggles and decision to quit his Ph.D. program. With a heavy heart he recounted the slights and jabs of his advisor over the course of two years until he finally, within the last week, reached his breaking point and quit. After he finished his story, V3 spoke to everyone expressing his appreciation for the students' openness to the group. He emphasized that if each person in the room took their turn sharing, they would hear more stories of "*unfairness and injustice*." This could be interpreted as contextualizing the members' experience through a Christian lens. In the interview with V3 he commented on that specific moment in class.

> I was – so you might say – trying to bring that Christian understanding of 'sin is endemic to the race and all across the globe'. So that, to me, is an example how a Christian understanding of the world influenced how the conversation was driven. (V3, April, 2019)

While V3 didn't specifically comment that his language choice during this episode in class was restricted by the Trinity ESL policies, his motivation to share Christian teachings, without directly naming it as such, could be viewed as evidence of how policy shapes practice.

Explicit Policy Ongoing Management. For most volunteers, discussions about the policies and practices of Trinity ESL with Admin preceded the signing of the written agreement. Newcomer V1 remarked that it wasn't until a couple of months after he had already started volunteering that he was introduced to the written policies. In many respects, there was little difference between the Trinity ESL policy and the person who authored them (i.e., Admin). On a local level, this type of micro policy management is possible. In conversations with V1 prior to leading volunteering Trinity ESL classes Admin "was very clear on what he . . . wanted the classes to focus on . . . he doesn't want Trinity ESL to be so primarily focused on any specific religion . . . He wanted it to be more of an open community-based program."

One of the dual functions of the break time in the middle of classes is to gather volunteers together to discuss how classes are going. Volunteers frequently made note of how active Admin is in creating, monitoring, and enforcing policies. Sometimes policy management came in the form of verbal cautions from Admin during these meetings. V4 recalled one such meeting in

which the Admin warned,

> Make sure you guys should know that your main purpose here is for ESL. It's not to practice evangelism in any way. If God is willing it, it'll happen on its own. This is not the setting for it . . . if it'll happen it's because we are leading toward Him informally by forming relationships with them not trying to be like, "hey, there's Christianity." (V4, April, 2019)

Even though V3 expressed his desires that the Trinity ESL policies be loosened so that he might feel more open to teach members his Christian faith, he reiterated several times his reluctance that current policies be modified saying, "*I'm not enough of an expert about this situation Admin is in as he recruits participants. Admin is pivotal to the program in his recruiting efforts*." V3 seemed so sensitive to the policies that he even edited his language during our interview, "*I keep using the word student. Admin doesn't like us to use that terminology*" reiterating that the nomenclature had been officially changed from "students" to "members" when referring to learners in the Trinity ESL program.

Implicit Policies

Is Teaching ESL a Class or a Mission? Why does a Christian volunteer to participate in an ESL program? For V1, his faith had no bearing on his decision to pursue a career as an ESL educator. In fact, he described himself as "*not the most spiritual or religious person . . . if there was this, like, a scale one, two, three . . . I would say I'm probably like a two consistently, you know?*" His aim in second language teaching is tied to the classroom context. At Trinity ESL, V1's main focus during my class observation revolved around teaching culture and building community, whereas in his ESL teaching in other contexts, his goals were tied more closely to student employment and admissions to college. Similarly, V4's initial impetus for participating as an ESL teacher was "purely just volunteering" and not spiritually motivated. Durham and Kim (2019) suggest that some seek church-sponsored ESL as a leisure activity. Having been a recipient of ESL classes herself as a child, V4 felt a kinship with the members in her class because of her experience learning English as second language. She, like V1, also reported struggling with her faith as of late. If anything, V4 views her job in the medical field as the primary means in which she serves God. She reiterated that, if members at Trinity ESL have questions about Christianity, people like Admin would be more equipped to help them.

In classroom observations of both V1 and V4, topics tended to focus on things like current events such as a recent university exam scandal, cultural tidbits, Southern U.S. idioms, and holidays like St. Patrick's Day. In all of the discussions lead by these two volunteers, there was no active linking of conversation topics to Christian themes nor was religious imagery present on any materials that they provided to the members.

On the other hand, the two more experienced volunteers were quite direct about their Christian faith motivating their participation in the ESL program.

> I definitely see [my faith] as a big part of my motivation, just to – you know – to help. And, because I've been given much, it's a way for me to give and maybe opportunities to share my faith with people. (V2, April, 2019)

> It's back to, "reaching out to the immigrant, the poor, the, the refugee" – you know – those, those injunctions. To, "lift up the visitor among you and welcome them in" . . . My wife and I . . . we're both mission-minded people and this is something we see as part of that. (V3, April, 2019)

Both V2 and V3 were equally frank about the role that their faith played in their daily life. V2 explained that she is involved in her church, reads the Bible, and prays every day. Her faith influences her daily decisions, priorities, and how she treats others. While teaching the English language to newcomers to the U.S. is her focus, she explained that such things could not be done "*in isolation of spiritual purposes*." Her image of how that manifests in the classroom comes in what she described as experiencing the love of Jesus through another person. In the Trinity ESL lower-level groups, the language levels of the members were so low that even basic conversations were a significant challenge. Pauses between warm-up questions like, "*What did you do today*?" were filled by V2 with a sincere and sympathetic smile. When the right response failed, all that was left between V2 and her members was experiencing the presence of another. Faith plays an active part in V2's daily life but at the same time she was comfortable with excluding religious activities from Trinity ESL classes.

When asked about the role faith plays in his daily life V3 declared, "*It starts in the morning and it goes to the end of the day when I lay down again. It's all the way through*." While other volunteers described their participation in Trinity ESL using words such as service, volunteering, and ministry, V3 made known that he viewed teaching as part of a general calling for all Christians.

> I think the Christian has a mission and it's a clear mission. And, every Christian I think feels a sense of telling somebody else, "I'm a beggar like you but I found where the bread is. Here's the good news you've been waiting for." Every Christian, every Christian ESL teacher . . . member or not, will do that. (V3, April, 2019)

V3 had two perspectives for the purposes of church-sponsored ESL: 1) improving general English ability through accent reduction and increased vocabulary; and 2) giving newcomers a place to meet and connect in a community. In his closing comments to his group during class, V3 expressed his appreciation for the gathering, sharing, and being part of this community. Taking into account his desire to somehow meld the sharing of the Gospel with ESL classes, the previous story between V3 and the doctoral student member could be seen as an act of compassion or an opportunity to connect the students' problems to the teachings of the Bible in a type of 'mini-sermon' (Johnston, 2017) evangelism.

What emerges from juxtaposing V2 and V3 with each other is a continuum of deep faith and motivation to share that faith with others. If, how, and where such evangelism should take place seemed to depend on their motivation for volunteering. V1 and V4, on the other hand, preferred to keep their role in the classroom separate from any type of evangelistic or mission-oriented ambitions.

Prayer as Implicit Policy. Most volunteers described prayer as a primary expression of their faith both personally and as a non-imposing way to connect with ESL members. In the warm-up activity for one of the lower-level groups, the members expressed their sadness for the political strife in their home country in recent news. V2 clapped her hands together and said that "[she] will pray" for them. This was the only time I directly observed mention of prayer in any of the ESL classrooms.

Yet, there appeared to be a distinct difference in policy between praying *for* someone and praying *with* someone. Admin relayed that several members have expressed their appreciation for not incorporating group prayer into ESL classes. V1 commented likewise.

> . . . that's why I like volunteering [at] Trinity ESL because they focus a lot more on – like – the stuff with prayer. And – you know – the Christian focus is more – like – behind the scenes. (V1, April, 2019)

Soliciting prayer requests from members, though not present during my observations, appeared to be well integrated into the fabric of Trinity ESL. V2 said that it was common practice for her to, "*ask students if they had things that [they] need, to let them know that we had a group that*

prayed for people, [that] is a part of the program." Even V4, who frequently expressed a desire to avoid religious conversations in class communicated her desire to both pray and relay requests to prayer ministry at the church.

> I'll specifically say those words and then I'll say, "However, since we are Christians, we do want to pray for you guys. If you have any prayers that you'll be okay with us sharing with each other so we can pray for you, please let us know. It doesn't have to be like right now. You can just text it to me or maybe you can tell me after class, I'll leave it up to you." And in a lot of cases students won't tell us obviously just because they're kind of a little hesitant to do so . . . or maybe you're talking and they say hey, "I actually have court next week because of a ticket," and I'll say, "Oh, hey, well I'll be praying for you. It's okay if I pray for you?" and they'll say, "Oh yeah. Sure. I'll take what I can get." (V4, April, 2019)

The member's hesitancy in these situations may represent a member caught between wanting to refuse a prayer request, but choosing silence instead of disrupting relations with volunteers at Trinity ESL.

What might not be known to the members at Trinity ESL is that it is, in fact, the policy of the program that volunteers actively pray. In the written agreement volunteers initial that they will 1) "pray for the group, the class, and the members," and 2) "Try to email or text Admin one prayer request each week for you or the members or the ministry for email prayer to pray for" (see Appendix B). Yet, the program website makes no mention that members will be solicited in this manner. In interviews there was the feeling that, while requesting and then sharing the needs of the learners to Christians was an acceptable practice, the members themselves would not be pressured into verbalizing those prayers during class time. In this way, prayer takes on two dimensions – prayer as a class activity, and prayer as a private request. Speaking to the latter, Admin remarked, "*Praying for people to believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior is as close to proselytizing as I go*."

Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine 1) Are there explicit policies towards proselytizing in a church-sponsored ESL program? and 2) What are the implicit beliefs, values, and practices of volunteer instructors regarding proselytizing in a church-sponsored ESL program? With regards to RQ1, Trinity adopts a policy that is consistent with NAFSA guidelines which make explicit that there shall be no attempt on the part of the volunteer to proselytize to the student.

The results of examining the explicit and implicit policies and attitudes towards proselytization at church-sponsored ESL in this study have revealed that, by and large, explicit written policy with ongoing local management of that policy has had a homogenizing effect on volunteer teachers. Trinity ESL is not beholden to the policy, rules, and regulations of a U.S. federally funded faith-based ESL program, namely, that religious worship, instruction, or proselytization take place separately from services supported by the grant. However, the locally created policy and practices at this faith-based ESL program strictly separate explicitly religious activities from language classes.

Some of the volunteers welcomed the separation of teaching Christian doctrine in ESL classes because they didn't feel comfortable teaching language through religion. Others saw the policy as inhibiting their mission as a Christian but acquiesced nonetheless. This may have been so that they can stay connected to volunteer activities of their home church rather than search for a different church-sponsored ESL program which actively integrates Christianity into the ESL curriculum. Acceptance, resistance, or ambivalence towards policies also seemed to be largely influenced by each volunteer's theological interpretations of how people become believers in Jesus Christ. This reveals that how Christians share their faith through ESL largely depends on if they feel it is their personal responsibility to convert a student or if that power resides with God.

According to Baurain (2007), "True conversion is thus a personal decision to change core beliefs. It cannot be forced, imposed, or manipulated; indeed, the use of false, distorted, or perverted tactics would yield false conversions and be self-defeating (as history attests)" (p. 215). This perspective makes one ask the question, is *coercive, surreptitious, or deceitful proselytizing* even possible? The NAFSA policy indicates as much. Given that participation in any church-sponsored ESL program is completely discretionary, if learners are uncomfortable at any point because of conflicts in religious beliefs, they can simply stop attending. Most church-sponsored programs cost very little money (Chao & Kuntz, 2013; Durham & Kim, 2019; Kristjánsson, 2018) and do not offer any type of certificate of completion. On the other hand, given the high cost of formal ESL classes or the lack of availability in non-religious community-based ESL (Tucker, 2006), learners might feel that they have no choice but to conform to a Christian community – whether they "truly believe" or not. Turning back to the words of Baurain (2007), and citing the cautions from Snow (2001),

> The greater danger lies in CETs [Christian English Teachers] being insufficiently aware of how the power inherent in their roles affects the way students respond to their interest in proclaiming the gospel, whether in or outside class. In one such scenario, students gradually discover that the CET is very interested in sharing his or her faith, and tends to be quite pleased when he or she has a chance to do so. This gently tempts students to express an interest in Christianity in order to get on the teacher's better side and get what they want (better grades, more chances to practice English, whatever). (pp. 76–77)

In light of this power imbalance between volunteer and member, it is all the more important that programs like Trinity ESL carefully consider the role of prayer as a type of *soft* proselytization. Since the primary goals of Trinity ESL center around building a community for newcomers, this would include making sure that the physical and emotional needs of the community are being met. The Bible teaches Christians to bring such prayers before God in submission and thanksgiving. However, prayer, regardless of one's religious affiliations, is a highly intimate conversation. As we saw in Johnston's (2017) experience at Lighthouse in Poland, unsolicited prayer, no matter how well intended, may provoke intensely negative reactions. In church-sponsored ESL programs, when members disclose their personal problems during the course of a class, sharing such sensitive information with others in the church community, even though well-intentioned, may be a violation of the student's privacy. This can be mitigated by policy revision and/or teacher training which outlines the timing and function of prayer, if it is to be included in Christian language classrooms.

In the classroom, Christian English language educators, novice or seasoned, instantiate policy based on a multilayered identity. Kubanyiova (2013) describes this identity as a person's "past personal and professional histories, present beliefs, emotions and dispositions, as well as their future images in relation to the multiple contexts in which their activities are situated" (p. 90). While much attention has been given to how members of organized religion express their beliefs when teaching ESL, in all classrooms, as identities mix within a community of practice (Wenger, 1999) they form the linguistic culture (Schiffman, 1996) from which policy springs forth. As a future Christian ESL teacher in Varghese and Johnston (2007) points out, "In the field of TESOL, you know, the thinking that you shouldn't influence people's values or beliefs is in itself a belief and a value . . . All teachers aim to change their students, and all have an implicit or explicit agenda," to which the authors rebut, "as atheists, we feel no urge whatsoever to convert others to our views nor even to share our beliefs" (p. 26). Kristjánsson (2018) views those in Western academia who do not hold traditional religious beliefs as significant

stakeholders in asserting their philosophical stance of secular humanism and scientific behaviorism (Gross & Simmons, 2009). Goheen (2009) goes so far as to say that this "religion of secular humanism domesticates traditional religions" and that this religion "eliminates rival truth claims and competing visions of the world by finding a non-threatening place for those rival stories" (p. 70). Such a view raises the question, are policies that restrict faith-based organizations from integrating religious activities into ESL attempting to relegate their deeply valued spiritual beliefs to Sunday worship services?

This study revealed the need for deeper, longer-term observations. It was also limited to discussion with volunteers and the Admin. Future studies that combine members' perceptions and perspectives on policies in Christian ESL would give greater insight into implicit practices of these programs. Language policy and planning researchers also recommend that ethnographic research on policy be conducted at multiple sites (E. J. Johnson, 2013). This could even include faith-based organizations (e.g., Catholic Charities) that are government-funded and therefore subject to the policies of the U.S. Department of Education. One major topic revealed in this study is the function of *prayer* in Christian ESL. Future research could examine *de facto* or *de jure* policies towards prayer both within the classroom and on a larger organizational level.

While some studies exist that examine future ESL teachers at Christian universities (e.g., Varghese & Johnston, 2007), future research investigating how missionaries are trained by mission organizations to teach ESL both in the U.S. and English as a foreign language would paint a larger picture of the interplay between Christianity and teaching English to non-native speakers.

Conclusion

When it comes to integrating faith into the classroom, similar to results in Lessard-Clouston (2013), Trinity ESL volunteers reported that a generous attitude and sharing life experiences were the most frequent avenues for expressing their faith with their members. This expression of faith was done with the intent to not impose the volunteers' beliefs during class time – as doing so would be a violation of Trinity ESL policy. Policies regarding prayer and its role in adult ESL education may be a form of proselytization. However, as Baurain (2007) contends, "All teachers proselytize in the classroom, that is, whether consciously or

unconsciously, they try to persuade students by words and actions to accept their beliefs and values . . . they do so with an often evangelistic fervor or missionary zeal" (p. 209).

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

(adapted from Varghese & Johnston, 2007, and Baurain, 2013)

ESL

1) Describe your professional status at present.
2) What ESL teaching have you been involved with and where? How long at Trinity ESL?
3) What about your background, in particular, led you into ESL teaching?
4) Has your Christian faith played any part in your motivations for starting or continuing as an ESL volunteer? What and why?
5) What do you believe is the purpose of teaching ESL?

Faith and ESL

6) What part do your religious beliefs play in your daily life?
7) *Generally speaking,* what do you think is the place of religion and religious beliefs in teaching and education?
8) Has your Christian faith played any part in your choices of teaching methods or curriculum? What and why?
9) Have there been specific moments in which your religious beliefs influenced your decisions, choices, and actions in the classroom and/or with your students? Can you describe such moments?

Policy, Faith, and ESL

10) Which policies at Trinity ESL Peace stood out to you (negatively or positively)?
11) If you could make a new policy related to language and language teaching, what would it be?
12) In the agreement that all volunteers sign before starting the ESL program, there is a specific area about the NAFSA guidelines. How do those guidelines affect your language in the classroom; particularly the statement, "there shall be no coercion to change [members'] religious beliefs."

13) To what extent do you think a person has the right or the responsibility to let others know of his or her religious beliefs? (Is this in fact a right or a responsibility?)
14) Similarly, do you think a person has a right or a responsibility to try to convert others to his or her religious beliefs?
15) What do you think sets this program apart from non-religious ESL classes or programs?

Appendix B: Trinity ESL Volunteer Policy and Related Documents

1. Trinity ESL Volunteer Policy

I agree to interact with members according to the following outlined expectations:

You will email or text Admin to let him know about any interactions that you plan to have or unexpectedly have had with the Trinity ESL members from other countries outside of class or off the Trinity Community Church campus. _____

Try to email or text Admin one prayer request each week for you or the members or the ministry for the email prayer team to pray for. _____

You will read and follow the NAFSA Guidelines (at the end of this document) for interacting with international students and apply the same guidelines to your interactions with any of the members at Trinity ESL. _____

You will contact Admin or your class coordinator if you are unable to make it or if you will be late. _____

You will not bring people with you to help volunteer without approval from Admin or the class coordinator. _____

You will contact Admin if you feel uncomfortable during your volunteer experience. _____

Volunteers will avoid communicating with other volunteers in front of the members about topics, or stories, or in levels of English fluency, that are not comprehensible for those members. Avoid communicating in ways that exclude the members round you from participating in communication. _____

You are expected to leave any interaction immediately and contact Admin if you feel unsafe for any reason during your interaction. _____

You are encouraged to interact and build friendships with members and invite them into your lives, homes, churches, and ministries. You are expected to focus your interactions on the ESL members from your own gender when you are outside of the class or off the church campus. This is not a place for finding a date. _____

2. Trinity ESL Levels "Groups"

Group 1: Members are learning basic English conversation.

Group 2: Members are able to communicate back and forth in conversation. However, they are

making many mistakes. And they have limited vocabulary. This groups relies heavily on breaking the members up into pairs or small groups. Study values and storytelling.

Group 3: Members are able to discuss social issues and explore American cultures with deeper conversations despite making some mistakes in speaking and comprehension. Intentional focus on peace education.

Group 4: Members are nearly fluent and able to keep up with deep explorations of American society and cultures with peace education.

3. Classroom Volunteer Expectations

Group leaders and group members will communicate with each other regularly about the class expectation, volunteer roles, and lesson plans. _____

You are encouraged email reflective journal entries after each class to Admin and/or contact him for further assistance or questions as much as needed. _____

Group leaders will try to facilitate the involvement of volunteers in different roles throughout the semester. _____

Collect feedback from members and bring ideas to group leaders. _____

Ideally, each volunteer would follow up with at least one member over the week. _____

Pray for the group, the class, and the members. _____

The members at Trinity ESL from other countries are all expecting you to help them improve their ability to communicate in English. They want you to help in ways that empower them to speak and actively learn. So please communicate and behave in ways that empower the members to speak and actively learn in class. Some examples of these communication expectations are:

If you are a classroom volunteer, you will try to restrict your speaking in class to less than 20% of the class time. If there are other volunteers in the class, you will share that 20% limit. _____

Be a communication and exploring facilitator for the members. _____

Provide a safe comfortable community for members to communicate and explore. _____

Safe places usually require a recognition that every person is a unique, complex, and multicultural individual that experiences thought and emotion. _____

Safe places typically avoid debate until trust is established, and safe places try to validate other people's feelings and thoughts with respect and good listening. _____

Try to be assertive about how you feel and think without communicating that your feelings and thoughts are the way others should think and feel. _____

Don't critique or correct in ways that embarrass members and volunteers. _____

Use active listening often in large group, small group, and pair-work activities. _____

4. Trinity ESLVolunteer Program Volunteer Application

Your Personal Contact Information:
Name_____Age_____
Home Address _____
City:_____Zip code:_____
Phone_____
Email _____
Church you currently attend: _____
Pastor's Name and Phone (for reference):
_____
Names and numbers of three other references:

1. Name_____
   Relationship_____
   phone_____
2. Name_____
   Relationship_____
   phone_____
3. Name_____
   Relationship_____
   phone_____

Do you have any training or past experience with international students or refugees? Do you speak any other languages? (Please explain).
_____
_____

5. NAFSA Ethics Program (Article 10, The NAFSA Ethics Program, p. 11)

Guideline for working with International Students

When members share their faith with internationals there shall be no coercion to change their religious beliefs. Members are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the ethical standard outlined in the 1993 NAFSA/Association of International Educators Code of Ethics, particularly section 10:
Members with responsibilities in Community Organizations working with Foreign Students and scholars shall:

a. Make certain that organizations providing programs for foreign students and scholars have a clear statement of purpose and responsibility, so that all parties can know what is expected of them.
b. Accurately portray their services and programs, making clear the identity, the intent, and the nature of the sponsoring organization of each particular event or service.
c. Provide appropriate opportunities to observe and to join in mutual inquiry into cultural differences.
d. Provide adequate orientation for volunteers and participants in community programs so that they may understand each other and may interact constructively. The organization should make clear that surreptitious, deceptive, or coercive proselytizing is unacceptable.

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Collaboration and Reconciliation in English Language Teaching? Personal Reflections on Critical Incidents

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Abstract
Collaboration is largely assumed in English language teaching, while reconciliation is often a goal in this discipline. This article briefly introduces frameworks to help us think about collaboration and to understand reconciliation. Next it discusses three critical incidents in EFL teaching and ESL teacher education from personal experience in China, Indonesia, and the United States. Using the literature and frameworks outlined, the article reflects on cultural and other challenges, notes helps and hindrances to collaboration, and possible ways such issues were or might have been reconciled in the three incidents.

Key words: collaboration, cooperative principle, critical incidents, EFL, intercultural communication, politeness theory, reconciliation

Introduction

English as a second and foreign language (ESL/EFL) teachers and teacher educators are not only focused on English language teaching (ELT). *People* are central to teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). At the heart of our work in classrooms and in our relationships with those 'speakers' is communication – helping others learn to use English to communicate both information and their personal and professional aspirations, insights, questions, and thoughts in spoken and written exchanges. As such, ELT essentially assumes collaboration. Yet both students and teachers often aim for reconciliation, too: we hope for friendly relations as we collaborate and communicate, and where there is or has been tension, we hope for restoration in relationships, particularly as Christian teachers and teacher educators.

Since relationships, and both collaboration and reconciliation, are very personal, this article is the product of some personal reflections on more than 35 years of experience teaching ESL/EFL and being involved in teacher education in a variety of contexts and schools in my native Canada, as well as in China, Indonesia, Japan, and the United States. Collaboration and reconciliation can and do take place on various levels, but for this essay my focus is primarily on the personal and interpersonal, between teachers or teacher educators and their students,

colleagues, administrators, and others. Accordingly, while relevant work at institutional, policy, and national or international levels is also valuable, that is not my emphasis here.

Like Dormer and Woelk (2018), I believe that ELT can be used to pursue peace and to transform relationships, and thus enhance collaboration and reconciliation. In his influential applied theology for Christians in ELT, Snow (2001) states, "As ambassadors of the church, one important task of [Christian English teachers] is to live among the people they serve in a way that will build toward reconciliation between Western Christians and people of different cultures, and also between humankind and God" (p. 63). I agree with Snow that Christians in TESOL have an important role in building relationships and toward reconciliation between different types of people from different cultures, and that our lives and how we live them can and should serve to point people to the God we love and serve. However, it seems that like most people Christians may be better at describing ideals than in dealing with the complexities and often messy realities of actual cross-cultural relationships. So I do not offer easy explanations but instead hope that reflections on some of my experiences will help others in their ELT work.

This article first outlines some ways for teachers and teacher educators to think about collaboration and reconciliation. Next it discusses three critical incidents in EFL teaching and ESL teacher education, in order to consider cultural and other challenges, helps and potential hindrances to collaboration, conflict, and reconciliation, and possible ways that things were or might have been reconciled in each of the three situations. Critical incidents are used because they allow us to consider specific examples in some detail, and in intercultural communication such incidents often help shed light on how different norms in communication and interaction seem to be at the root of particular problems (see, e.g., DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2016).

The goal of this article is to assist readers in reflecting on collaboration and reconciliation in ELT. Accordingly, this is <u>not</u> a "how to" or "how I have it all together" essay. Instead, as a firm believer in collaboration and working together, as well as in the importance and power of reconciliation, I hope sharing some of my personal experience and reflections will assist others in continuing the valuable work of collaborating and working for reconciliation, while also recognizing that at times there may be limitations to such collaboration and reconciliation.

Collaboration and Communication

While ESL and EFL education often centres on English grammar and vocabulary, much

of English language teaching revolves around communication, and helping others learn to communicate their messages in and through English. Such communication may be oral – in person, face-to-face, over the phone, virtual, or even in recorded video via TikTok or YouTube. Or such collaboration and communication may be carried out through writing – in print articles or books, or through technology, including via texts, emails, blogs, letters, and even tweets. Yet often spoken and written communication connect. For example, someone might post an oral explanation on YouTube, and those who watch and listen to it may respond by writing in the Comments section. Communication today, in speech or writing, is often multimodal. Both speakers and writers assume collaboration – that people they speak with or listen to, and others whose work they read or who will read what they write, will actually work with them in order to communicate and understand different oral or written messages. Two approaches to analyzing communication may be helpful as we think about collaboration and reconciliation.

First, in linguistics and pragmatics, one useful framework for thinking about communication is the cooperative principle introduced by Grice (1989). I will consider this principle in regards to communication in general, but Grice's points relate to a current, specific conversation (or communication) at hand. In short, Grice (1989) explained that the cooperative principle builds upon four underlying categories which he believed reflect generally agreed upon rules of conduct concerning quantity, quality, relation, and manner.

The first category addressing *quantity* summarizes two related points, that one's contribution should be as informative as required, while not providing more information than necessary (Grice, 1989, p. 26). So too little information in interaction may cause one to come across as too direct or even abrupt, while too much detail can appear lengthy or verbose. The second category concerns *quality*, focusing on truthfulness. Accordingly, you should not say what you believe to be false, or something for which there is inadequate evidence, since you might then be labelled untrustworthy if a conversation partner learns you shared something untrue (Grice, 1989, p. 26). The third underlying category deals with *relation* and is concisely, "Be relevant" (Grice, 1989, p. 27). Thus what we say should be related to what has previously been shared and be relevant to the conversation at hand. If your contribution is not on topic, an interlocutor might lose interest or believe you are wasting time. The fourth and final category focuses less on content, the 'what' that is shared, and turns to *manner*, or 'how' something is said. Four sub-points for manner relate to avoiding obscurity and ambiguity while being brief

and orderly (Grice, 1989, p. 27). Siegel, Broadbridge, and Firth (2019) summarize the fourth maxim: "be brief, orderly, and as clear as possible" to experience communicative success (p. 34).

A second framework in pragmatics to consider comes from Brown and Levinson (1987) and addresses politeness theory. Expanding on previous research, Brown and Levinson (1987) assumed that all people have "face," and that in interactions with others they have face wants and needs. In particular, people want to experience positive face, where they are appreciated in social contexts, experience approval, and are able to maintain a positive image. Yet at the same time people also require negative face, which offers them the freedom to make their own decisions and to avoid impositions on them by others. Common examples of positive face in interactions include when we give someone a compliment, or when someone at a lecture or conference introduces a speaker by appreciating and outlining their individual achievements. Examples of negative face in interactions include not interrupting someone (letting them speak freely without being interrupted by others) or in being clear that we are not imposing on or taking advantage of someone with whom we are communicating. Experiencing and offering others both positive and negative face in our communications appear to assist in collaboration and reconciliation.

While both the cooperative principle and politeness theory are concerned with spoken conversations, I believe there may be similar dynamics at play in written communication. For example, in a recent study by Usó-Juan (2022) students were taught about writing emails to faculty, who noted that before the instruction the students had a "lack of awareness of the need to respect the principle of negative politeness" (p. 234). Yet afterwards, "post-instructional data revealed a move from preference of directness to conventionally indirectness which involves less potentially face-threatening effects (Brown & Levinson, 1987)" (Usó-Juan, 2022, p. 234). So awareness of politeness theory may help people communicate in speech and in writing.

Another point, for my purposes, is to note that some authors critique the cooperative principle and politeness theory as too Western. In referring to these two frameworks, Wierzbicka (2003) states, for example, that "the very choice of these particular parameters reflects clearly the authors' culture-specific (anglocentric) perspective" (p. 68). Yet despite such criticisms, other authors such as Kiyama, Tamaoka, and Takiura (2012) determined that Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory did in fact apply in the non-Western context of Japan. Perhaps, as with all communication, we should be conscious of the context and the people involved[1].

[1] Two of the incidents below took place in non-Western Asian contexts, not dissimilar to the Japanese

Collaboration and Reconciliation

Using Dormer and Woelk's (2018) definition of reconciliation as the "restoration of relationships, particularly where there has been a history of harm, conflict, or misunderstanding" (p. 3), there are many possible ways that teachers and students, as well as others in various educational contexts, may harm others, verbally or otherwise. We might also create conflict of different types, even unknowingly, or we might generate misunderstandings, even for ourselves. In an article on reconciliation in ESL/EFL classes, Westwood (2014) states, for example,

> Particularly in the English as a second language . . . classroom, it is highly unrealistic to expect perfect peace and harmony among diverse peoples bringing unique perspectives, especially considering misunderstandings that can occur simply as a result of the unfamiliarity with the target language. Offenses are inevitable. (p. 83)

Westwood refers to an example that Smith (2007) mentions of one student intentionally insulting another student in class, yet Westwood (2014) notes that teachers and students can also offend one another. As teachers we should be aware that we might not only take offense, but we can also offend our students, their families, or others we work with closely.

In introducing their 40 dilemmas in TESOL through critical incidents, Messerschmitt and Hafernik (2009) declare, "Increased cultural understanding can help prevent or resolve negative conflicts or turn them into constructive ones" (p. xvi). They go on to note that, "Tensions and conflicts – whether they be interpersonal, intercultural, or cross-cultural – are daily occurrences" in ELT (p. xvi). Messerschmitt and Hafernik (2009) suggest that an "overarching principle is to strive to be professional and humane in all our interactions with others" (p. xvi), and they offer several suggestions for dealing with difficult situations, from annoyance to extreme conflict:

> • recognize that conflict (i.e., tensions and problems) is inevitable and simply part of life.
> • recognize that conflict can be constructive and is not always negative.
> • recognize that individuals have different strategies for dealing with conflict, with some of these strategies influenced by culture, personality, and upbringing . . .
> • recognize that communication choices (i.e., verbal and non-verbal) are important. For example, in some cultures, refusing a request with a No threatens the face of others . . .
> • help others save face . . .
> • recognize that with conflicts, people generally have strong feelings (such as anger,

context addressed by Kiyama, Tamaoka, and Takiura (2012). Despite Wierzbicka's (2003) criticism of the cooperative principle and politeness theory as too "anglocentric," the EFL students in China and Indonesia were studying English in cultures where face is a recognized cultural value. Accordingly, I believe it may be helpful to consider these frameworks as we reflect on those critical incidents. Readers interested in considering Grice's work in relation to data analysis in research will find Chenail and Chenail's (2009) article of interest.

> depression, and despair) . . .
> • recognize that an individual does not operate in a vacuum, but within a broader social context. (adapted from Messerschmitt & Hafernik, 2009, p. xvii)

Messerschmitt and Hafernik (2009) recognize our human interconnectedness, but suggest that "within the broader community, the individual is crucial to dealing with conflicts and in effecting change" (p. xviii). For teachers working with classes and students, these are key reminders.

In their Christian perspective on intercultural communication, Moreau, Campbell, and Greener (2014) observe that "people act out their values of honor and face through the communication means that they value" (p. 200). Honour-oriented cultures, they suggest, tend to emphasize "collectivism, large power distance, and high-context communication" (p. 200), which are clearly at odds with much of Western culture (which is more justice-oriented), where individualism, egalitarianism, and direct or low-context communication are more common. Moreau, Campbell, and Greener (2014) also include a useful chapter on conflict and culture. They rightly state, "Assuming that conflict arises from the sin of another person rather than from differences in cultural values and resolution style may sabotage the conflict-resolution process from the beginning" (p. 332). These authors note the importance of cultural values, and they introduce key differences in communication and conflict styles between individualism versus collectivism, large versus small power distance cultures, high verses low context communication, and "the importance of saving face" (p. 338). Turning to conflict resolution, Moreau, Campbell, and Greer (2014) offer an important insight, stating, "Westerners believe that people and problems can be separated, whereas people from Majority World cultures do not believe this is possible or desirable" (p. 341). Accordingly, Moreau, Campbell, and Greer (2014) argue that preserving relationships is key to long-term goals.

In her recent work, Abrams (2020) devotes a chapter to miscommunication, conflict, and intercultural communication and language pedagogy. Abrams notes that there are many different sources of conflict, which may be intrapersonal (within oneself) or interpersonal (with one or more other individuals), and intracultural (within one culture) or intercultural (between two or more cultural groups) (p. 295). Abrams helpfully outlines different characteristics of conflict styles, which may be more or less direct in communication and emotionally restrained or expressive (p. 299). In terms of conflict management, Abrams (2020) declares, "Conflict resolution is a complex process, but it can be an excellent opportunity for improving

communication skills and understanding, and strengthening relationships (Dai & Chen, 2017)" (p. 300). Collaboration and reconciliation are indeed opportunities for growth. Like Moreau, Campbell, and Greener (2014), Abrams (2020) states, "conflict does not have to end relationships" (p. 302). Perhaps most surprising for a secular book, Abrams advocates forgiveness: "Be willing to forgive; anger and grudges take up exorbitant amounts of energy, whereas forgiveness promotes cooperation and peaceful relationships" (p. 302).

With this background from relevant literature and research, we turn now to three critical incidents, where collaboration, conflict, and reconciliation (or a lack of it) might be considered.

Three Critical Incidents for Reflection

This section will outline three critical incidents, which Snow (2015) defines as an event that is "seen as important by one or more of its participants" (p. 287). As I hope to show, the critical incidents I will sketch briefly were important to me and to other people, and they are from my personal experiences in EFL teaching and in ESL teacher training in China, Indonesia, and the United States. While unique to me and only reflecting my experience, and therefore certainly not representative, I believe these types of critical incidents are not unusual in TESOL. Each critical incident involves either relationships common in ELT between students and teachers or between teacher educators and their colleagues and administrators. Following my description of and comments on each of the incidents, I will reflect on some helps and hindrances to collaboration and reconciliation for teachers of faith in ELT.

1) The Chair Incident

First is what I will call *the chair incident* from my first year teaching EFL at an educational college in northwest China. It was fall 1985, and I was teaching an oral skills EFL course for 40 experienced English teachers. Our class met twice a week, and my job was to help them improve their English listening and speaking skills. I was not given a textbook, but instead created thematic mimeographed materials for units on various topics that included some readings and dialogues, vocabulary lists, and various types of exercises, cultural notes, etc. I tried to use something of a communicative language teaching approach, where I often put students into pairs or small groups to discuss certain questions or to practise model dialogues, and so on.

On the day of this incident, my class was divided into pairs or small groups and was very loudly doing what I had asked them to do, but time was running out and I could not get students to stop talking and to return their attention to me, the teacher. I wanted to quickly debrief and remind students of their homework. I tried asking people to return their focus to me at the front of the classroom, but with no success. In perhaps a bit of exasperation I stood on a chair and clearly asked students to give me their attention. Immediately, the room went silent. A bit surprised at how quickly things went from very loud talking to absolute silence, I stepped down from the chair and pressed on, asking if any groups would like to comment on their small group discussions or make any observations about the task they had just been so actively engaged in. But there was absolute silence. Even my normally talkative and vocal students seemed to avoid my gaze when I looked toward them to see if they might share any insights with the class. My students were quiet, as I had hoped, but they no longer responded. That was quite different from usual. I do not know how long this went on, but it felt like forever. I briefly reminded the class of the homework for later that week and, mercifully, the bell rang to end that class period. Students quickly packed up and exited the classroom without talking or making eye contact, which was unusual, since often students lingered to ask questions. I saw the class monitor also avoided me. I said that I wanted to talk with him about that day's class, and he agreed but quickly left.

As Westwood (2014) declared, "Despite their best intentions, teachers will occasionally offend students, and students will inadvertently offend teachers" (p. 84). This incident clearly reflects the former situation, for I had apparently not only offended my students, I had insulted them. The problem was apparently that by standing on a chair in class I had displayed very unteacherlike behaviour. When the class monitor later came to see me with a couple of other students from the class, I was informed that the whole class was very upset by my class that day, and how I had stood above them on a chair rather than asking the monitor or someone else in the class to help get the students' attention.

When I learned this important information I felt terrible. In fact, I was horrified that I had upset the class. It simply never occurred to me that my students would be insulted by me trying to get their attention in that manner. In the meeting with the monitor and the others who had come to back him up and communicate the seriousness of my inappropriate behaviour, I was thankfully able to apologize and to ask them to forgive me. I think that my surprise at what they told me must have helped them see that it was perhaps something of an honest mistake. I shared

with the group that I realized something was wrong in class, but I did not understand what, so I really appreciated their bravery in coming to help me understand and set things right. But I also asked them what I should do in order to make things right again with the whole class. I did not want this situation to hinder everyone's learning and participation in class from now on, or to colour everyone's perspective on me as their teacher.

The monitor took the lead and said that just as I had apologized to the group, he felt I should do the same thing at the start of the next class. The group agreed that that was a great idea. I committed to do that, and indeed I did offer the whole class an apology at the start of my next class. While awkward, students' responsiveness greatly improved, and I made sure after that that I never stood on a chair again during a class in my two and a half years teaching in China. Thankfully, no one ever referred to the chair incident in a hurtful way again, though a few people did remind me of it sometimes when we talked about Chinese and Canadian cultural differences.

As Messerschmitt and Hafernik (2009) indicated was possible, from my perspective this was an incident with negative conflict that became constructive. I believe how the situation was handled actually improved my relationship with students, and reflected reconciliation. Thinking back to the cooperative principle, the meeting with the monitor and other students seemed to incorporate the right quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. In terms of manner, remembering that important conversation I believe it reflected the brevity, orderliness, and clarity that Siegel, Broadbridge, and Firth (2019) argue are needed for communicative success. As for politeness theory, I had apparently made my students lose face, and they worked with me to help me understand how we could all regain positive face while avoiding impositions (negative face), and we made decisions together in that conversation that restored our relationship.

Abrams (2020) declares, "Mistakes are opportunities for developing situationally appropriate knowledge regarding what works and what does not, so that we can better align our interests with others in future instances of conflict" (pp. 303–304). I would like to say clearly that the chair incident led to me offending my students in class, which impeded their ability to learn and to focus on our lesson. There were cultural and educational expectations about teacher behaviour in China that I was unaware of, and I broke one of the apparent taboos. To this day, I still do not fully understand why everyone was so upset, but I do understand that what I did was wrong and that I needed to make amends for it. Among the helps in resolving this situation are that I had a class monitor and students who were committed to communicating with me about my

offense, and they worked together to help me understand what I had done wrong and what I could do to set things right. People seemed to value their relationship with me and wished to give me the benefit of the doubt, and therefore they did not allow my offense to irreparably harm our relationships, individually or collectively, long term.

2) EFL Writing Plagiarism Incidents

The second reflection actually involves a series of *EFL writing plagiarism incidents* from the summer of 2010, when I was teaching three required undergraduate EFL writing skills classes at a private university outside of Jakarta, Indonesia. In multiple sections of the course, some students submitted writings that they had copied from the Internet for their homework assignments. It was obvious each time, as I could Google a sentence and find the source online.

Since this was not the first time I had faced plagiarism in ESL or EFL, I was not surprised, but the syllabus I had been given had a clear plagiarism policy that stated that work copied or plagiarized would be given zero, and that students could not make up for such work with resubmissions. Early on when this happened, I spoke with some Indonesian teachers and my Indonesian Dean, who affirmed that the syllabus policy was what I should do. I spoke to each of my three classes about the problem, reminded students of the syllabus policy, and shared that because I was there to help them improve their English writing, I needed them to actually practise the writing skills that our class and textbook focused on. I said that when they copied something written by someone else that did not help them improve their English writing, and it meant they would receive no credit for such work that they submitted. I reminded students that if they copied someone's writing from the Internet, I could easily locate it and provide proof that it was not their own written work. But several students continued to submit nicely typed required homework assignments that were plagiarized, and that I therefore had to give them zero on.

Discussing this ongoing situation with Indonesian colleagues confirmed that they were not surprised by plagiarism happening repeatedly. Some shared with me privately that they had had similar experiences when they were teaching that required course, which most of them taught regularly. As it happened, one reason I went there to teach that summer was that the President of the university was an American who had previously been the Provost where I worked before, and he invited foreign faculty to come teach for the summer to support the university in its desire to offer a Westernized approach to education. At a dinner shortly before I

left at the end of the summer semester, I mentioned the plagiarism situation to him as something that I felt badly about, because the students who continued to plagiarize would fail my course.

I then learned from the President that he had recently had a situation where a Dean had plagiarized, by presenting someone else's work as their own in a moving talk given to the administration that was particularly well received. Apparently they had used a moving story they had read but presented it as their own, and everyone was moved by it and talked about how impressive it was . . . until someone who had been in the audience shared with the President that they had read the same story in a book by a famous author, and noted that the Dean had not attributed the story to the original author when they had spoken. When the President later confronted the Dean about that information, they admitted that they did not know how to incorporate the perfect story into the talk without presenting it as their own, so they let others think it was their experience. At the dinner, the President informed me that he had asked the Dean to resign at the end of the summer semester. Interestingly, before I left I learned that it was actually a Dean who had given me advice about how to deal with plagiarism in my classes.

Considering these EFL writing plagiarism incidents in relation to the cooperative principle, in terms of quality I reminded my students about the course syllabus policy and explained that if they submitted something copied from the Internet or elsewhere that was plagiarism. I wonder if I should have done more. As for quality and relevance, I only addressed the classes and students involved. In terms of manner, I considered what I did clear and orderly, but perhaps I could have been clearer. Since teaching there, I have found articles on plagiarism in Indonesia that I was unaware of at the time. As for politeness theory, it surprised me that the offending students did not seem to be bothered by losing face by receiving zero grades, as the course syllabus indicated they would, and students exercised their right with negative face to have the freedom to make their own decisions. Moreau, Campbell, and Greener (2014) write, "Cultures that value saving the face of the other tend to see domination and confrontation as unnecessarily aggressive and humiliating" (pp. 339–340). In hindsight, I am grateful I did not make a big deal of the EFL writing plagiarism, either in or out of class.

Unfortunately, with these EFL writing plagiarism incidents I do not feel that there was the level of resolution I experienced with the chair incident in China. I completed the summer courses successfully but in each section of 30 I had at least two or three students who failed my class because they repeatedly plagiarized a significant number of writing assignments. My

Indonesian colleagues said that was normal, and par for the course. In previous situations where I faced plagiarism, students had changed their action, or even if they continued it, they recognized it was wrong and that it harmed them. None of those Indonesian students actually ever talked to me about it after I gave them numerous zero grades, and they knew they would have to repeat the course. Part of my discomfort about the EFL writing plagiarism incidents was that there seemed to be other important dynamics going on that I did not really understand. This is one of the challenges with situations of collaboration. Yet in this context helps were that there was a clear plagiarism policy, faculty who supported me in upholding it, and students who did not contest it.

A final comment on these EFL plagiarism incidents is that time is often necessary in order to develop understanding and to work toward better collaboration and reconciliation. But in this case I was hired to teach intensive EFL writing courses, and I was only on site for eight weeks. Perhaps if I had done more research on plagiarism in writing in this context before I arrived or if I had been at the university for a full four month semester there would have been more time and greater opportunity to help more students avoid failing the course. However, as Brown and Levinson's (1987) expectations of negative face require allowing others to make their own decisions and to avoid imposition, without more experience and time it would be hard to know. From the reaction of my Indonesian colleagues, perhaps the result would be the same.

3) The Harassment Situation

The third critical incident is very personal, so I will be less specific. I will call it *the harassment situation* which unfortunately took place over two academic years early during my time teaching in the United States. One of my former graduate students at the university repeatedly harassed me in many different ways. After she graduated from one of our programs, she began to teach part-time in my department. As it became more intense, through email, phone messages, face to face, and so on, I collected a lot of evidence of the harassing behaviours and worked with my department chair about the situation. As the harassment moved into a second semester, the Dean also became involved. The situation is really complicated, because the former student who became a part-time instructional colleague was married to another full-time professor at the university. When it became clear that my department chair and the Dean were not really helping to stop the harassment, I contacted Human Resources, as harassment policies

and guidelines existed, but they were unfortunately not being followed. Yet the harassment expanded and the situation grew worse during the first academic year.

Towards the end of the spring, or second, semester, the Dean called a meeting with the part-time colleague, her husband (to support her), my department chair, and me. The Dean's goals were to bring things out in the open, address the problem head on, and to draw up an agreement of conduct and consequences. I had reservations about the meeting, and I was not offered the option of anyone present to support me, but we tried to discuss the problems and agreed to a set of limits and consequences for breaking them. The part-time colleague apologized, I accepted her apology, and I thought we had an agreement and that she would stop harassing me. Moreau, Campbell, and Greener (2014) write about an interesting strategy in conflict resolution called "taking the low-down position, which, by making yourself vulnerable, allows you to take the heat in a difficult situation" (p. 345). In some ways I believe that meeting put me in the low-down position, and made me vulnerable. I hoped at the time that that would help bring resolution to the situation. After the spring semester came summer break, when I had no classes that year, and I avoided the part-time colleague and her husband.

Once the fall semester started at the end of August, unfortunately the harassment continued. I communicated examples of it to the department chair and Dean, but both hesitated and did not actually follow through on the consequences set for the part-time colleague. That fall semester the university installed a new President, at a very public ceremony and luncheon in October. I attended with some students and another colleague, but later that week I learned that I had just been falsely accused of sexual harassment by the part-time colleague who was harassing me. Apparently the main reported event took place during the new President's inauguration luncheon, when thankfully I was surrounded by some students and another colleague from my department. So I went from being harassed in many small yet troublesome ways to now being harassed by being falsely accused of sexual harassment by a part-time instructor in my department who was in fact harassing me. A university investigation was carried out, during which I, my students, colleagues, and others were interviewed. Shortly before Christmas the university rightly determined that there was no evidence that I had sexually harassed that person.

As I worked with my chair and Dean to carry on teaching, research, and service, the part-time colleague continued to harass me in the second spring semester. I appealed to the university Provost to follow through on the consequences agreed to by the part-time colleague, my chair

and Dean. It was clear to me by this point that, as Hill (2006) affirmed, "Reconciliation is a costly life-style" (p. 40). It can really take a toll. I had kept communication lines open and tried to maintain professional relationships while guarding my safety and sanity, but the harassment continued. After receiving outside legal counsel, I informed the Provost that if the university did not act soon according to the agreement with the part-time colleague, there would be legal consequences. Finally, near the end of the second spring, after almost two years, it was announced that both the part-time colleague who harassed me and her professor husband were leaving the university at the end of the semester. Apparently, unbeknownst to me, the professor husband had apparently joined his wife in the charges of harassment and in the lies against me, so the university determined both had to leave. To be clear, let me state that preserving that relationship with the former student/part-time colleague during and after those two years of harassment was simply not possible, as Abrams (2020) suggests is sometimes the case.

During the whole harassment situation, I was very aware of communication and aimed to follow Grice's (1989) cooperative principle carefully. I quickly realized that any responses to my harasser were often misconstrued and used later to harass me further, so in terms of quantity I worked hard to only ever communicate what was required to respond, and never more. As for quality, truth became crucial in the face of my harasser's lies, so I worked to only communicate what was accurate and relevant in any interactions with her. As for manner, I aimed to be clear, brief, and orderly, and opted to respond in writing as much as possible, to have a paper trail of the continued harassment and my responses to it. In reference to politeness theory, harassers are not trying to be polite, but in this case my harasser was concerned about her image, and she often wanted to experience positive face. Yet she also wanted the freedom of negative face to make her own decisions and to avoid impositions on her that she had actually agreed to previously.

Reflecting on this third incident, there were important helps that enabled me to survive almost two years of continued trauma. One was counselling, which I started after the first year, to process what was happening to me. Another was that I worked in a context that had procedures and policies to follow, but unfortunately they were not set up for the type of harassment I endured. I also had colleagues, family members, and friends who supported me in numerous ways. Hindrances, however, included administrators not following through, and not carrying out the consequences agreed upon during the meeting near the end of the first year of harassment. Although the harasser had apologized to me and I had extended forgiveness, as

Abrams (2020) suggested, she continued to harass me, and expanded and increased her harassment the second year. As Abrams (2020) observed, "in some instances conflict resolution is not possible, and participants *must* walk away from the situation; if individuals are in danger, they should *not* feel compelled to stay in contact with their opponent (e.g., a stalker)" (p. 302). My harasser and her husband had something against me and were bent on harming me in a significant way. I wish that they had left and everything went back to normal. But that is not how that story ends. Yet for our purposes, that is the end of the third critical incident.

Further Reflections on Collaboration, Conflict, and Reconciliation

I want to recognize that in two of the three critical incidents outlined and reflected on above my EFL students communicated with me in English, despite us being in Chinese and Indonesian contexts. The fact that those incidents ended positively in China and perhaps neutrally in Indonesia is a testimony to my students' hard work and perseverance. Dealing with conflict in one's native language can be difficult; doing so in a second or foreign language is admirable. An article by Kohn (2022) considers issues with global Englishes and "the pedagogical challenge of developing one's own voice" (p. 119). Especially with the chair incident, my EFL students found their voice in English and were able to use it effectively to address our conflict.

Readers of this article might think, as a reviewer indicated in their comments, that the chair incident largely involved a cultural misunderstanding, the EFL plagiarism incidents seemed to reflect different cultural game rules, and the harassment situation attempted collaboration yet reconciliation did not happen. While that assessment may be accurate on one level, I believe that is an oversimplification of reality and my experiences. Obviously, there was a whole lot more going on in the three critical incidents than I have the space to share, yet I included these incidents and some of my reflections on them because doing so offers potential glimpses into the complexity of collaboration, conflict, and reconciliation for those who work in ESL and EFL teaching and in ELT teacher education. Collaboration and conflict involve more than one person: they may involve a teacher and a group of students, as in the chair incident, or a teacher and several students in different classes, as with the EFL plagiarism incidents, or a teacher and a colleague/former student, as with the harassment situation. In order to collaborate well and work toward reconciliation, the various parties involved need to work together. I am grateful that the

chair incident ended well, from my perspective, but honestly that result is not as common in my many years of experience teaching. Reconciliation also takes two or more people; one person alone cannot work toward it and expect a good outcome. And forcing people to collaborate may not end well, as happened toward the end of the first year with the harassment situation introduced here. In the plagiarism incidents, there was no option to ask students to redo their work, due to the university policy, but they were not forced to stop plagiarizing, either.

Perhaps a reader is thinking, so why bother sharing about these things? First, as Westwood (2014) noted, offenses are inevitable in ELT, and they may come in the form of misunderstandings, as perhaps with the incidents shared here in China and Indonesia. Therefore it would be helpful for ESL/EFL teachers to be trained to think ahead of how to act and react in different situations in or out of class. For example, in the program where I now work an important course I teach includes students presenting and discussing various dilemmas and how we as teachers and Christians might consider options in addressing them. Second, as one reviewer of this article noted, it may be helpful for teachers to recognize that over the course of their careers in ELT they will likely need to deal with numerous incidents of conflict and misunderstanding, or worse. Perhaps such recognition may help them be better prepared with potential reconciliation strategies.

While Grice's (1989) cooperative principle and Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory may be criticized as being too Western, these basic frameworks can nonetheless be helpful to those who want to collaborate with others, address conflict, especially cross-culturally, and work toward reconciliation. Yet even when we follow Grice's (1989) maxims and aim to recognize people's need for positive and negative face (Brown & Levinson, 1987), there is no guarantee of communicative success, especially in conflict, as the three critical incidents above indicated. However, any limitations in communication and in the attempts at reconciliation, particularly in the harassment situation, were due to my or others' human failures or weaknesses. I remain confident that God can and does work miracles in conflicts, healing in relationships, and that He has used even that awful harassment situation for my good (Romans 8:28).

For Christian teachers and teacher educators, our Christian faith guides and sustains us in our life and work, including our collaborations, situations of conflict, and reconciliation efforts. For me, and others, faith is not just a set of beliefs, it is a way of life centred around our personal relationship with God. We collaborate with others because we know that where two or more

believers are gathered, Jesus is among us (Matthew 18:20). We know our work is better when we work in collaboration with others. But as Westwood (2014) indicated, with people in ELT, there will be offenses. So conflict is to be expected (Messerschmitt & Hafernik, 2009), reconciliation is necessary when at all possible, and Christians are committed to such reconciliation (Dormer & Woelk, 2018). In fact, Christians working in ELT believe that we are called to a ministry of reconciliation, because God reconciled us to Himself through Christ (2 Corinthians 5:18), as Snow (2001) has indicated.

Since this is a series of personal reflections, I can add that personality-wise I avoid conflict at all costs. In fact, in StrengthsFinder "harmony," which is about helping others find common ground through practical solutions, is one of my top strengths. Although I avoid conflict, by living in several different contexts and cultures I have come to learn through experience that avoiding conflict does not necessarily create peace, and instead can actually lead to silent wars with others. Yet Jesus calls us as believers to be peacemakers (Matthew 5:9) and Hebrews 12:14 tells us to make every effort to live in peace with everyone. A relevant quote from Snow (2001) comes to mind:

> Christ through his sacrifice broke down barriers between humankind and God. Christians are entrusted with the task of reconciling the world to God (2 Cor. 5:17-20), and one aspect of this is actively working toward the cause of peace in the world. (p. 125)

As Snow suggests, peacemaking (or harmony) is an active pursuit, which may be useful for Christians to remember as we work toward collaboration and reconciliation.

I would like to note some additional helps in my collaborations and reconciliation were willing interlocutors, people who talked to me and worked with me, as well as helpers, and the goodwill of those that I taught and worked with. Other helps included official policies and procedures, regarding plagiarism or harassment, even if they were not always followed. On a personal note, for me prayer was the biggest help – not just me asking God for assistance, guidance, intervention, and protection, but also other people's prayers sustaining me, including through two long academic years of harassment. But hindrances to collaboration and reconciliation also existed, in simple things such as cultural differences, personal and institutional expectations, people not following the policies and procedures they had agreed to work within, and some people's real and consistent intent to harm themselves and/or me. Moreau, Campbell, and Greener (2014) wisely state: "Remember that despite the best efforts and

practiced skills, not all conflict is resolved" (p. 347). They quote Romans 12:18 to exhort Christians to live at peace with everyone, as much as depends on us. Moreau, Campbell, and Greener (2014) also suggest that "Whether or not conflict is resolved, forgiveness should be offered," since we also need to offer it in order to receive forgiveness from God (Matthew 6:14–15) (p. 347).

Conclusion

Let me end by referring to the question mark in my title. Yes, I have experienced collaboration and reconciliation during a long and ongoing career in English language teaching, but I have also faced a costly lifestyle as someone who has aimed to work on collaboration, address conflict, and work toward reconciliation. As we have seen recently in world conflicts, sometimes it frankly may not be possible to reconcile relationships when we collaborate with others who create conflict and are bent on harming us – even working to destroy us or our careers. As Abrams (2020) noted, in such situations we need to walk away and work to protect ourselves and those in our care. To conclude, however, I would say that even when seemingly impossible, for Christians in ELT our goal must always be to pursue collaboration and reconciliation in the face of conflict, as much as it depends on us (Romans 12:18).

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Reflections on Church-Based English Ministry

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Abstract
This article provides a reflection on lessons learned in directing a church-based ESL program in the United States. The author reflects on stories of God's provision, the importance of preparing and teaching well, the deeply relational aspects of this ministry, the integration of the Body of Christ, and the importance of encouraging and supporting volunteers in these programs. Special consideration is given to the scope and purpose of church-based English programs and the ways that TESOL professionals can support volunteer teachers in this work.

Key words: church-based ministry, church-sponsored ESL, community-based ESOL

Introduction

After several years of experience in TESOL teaching and teacher training, in the fall of 2021, I stepped into the role of directing a church-based English program in Virginia. Although I have loved directing this program, I am now preparing to transition this role to someone else, which is a perfect point for me to step back for a moment and assess what I have learned. These reflections on what I believe about TESOL ministry can certainly also apply more broadly to Christian TESOL professionals of all kinds, and indeed, I have seen these principles also apply when teaching in secular contexts. As I have reflected, it has seemed fitting to me for each reflection to be summarized with a key verse. I pray that each principle and story is an encouragement to my colleagues.

We are richly supplied with all that we need.

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:19 (ESV)

As I have consulted with multiple church-based English programs over the last few years, I have encountered a variety of approaches by church leaders to these programs. Some wholeheartedly embrace the program and are able to invest significant funds and even paid staff into the ministry, while others are less involved and may or may not have funding to contribute. Our program has been blessed to not only have the financial support of the host church, but also

to have received multiple financial gifts from several other churches, some of whom are not even in the same denomination, to help fund this program. I recognize that it is a rare occurrence for churches to give financial gifts to other churches for their ministry, and I praise God for his provision in this way!

Beyond finances, the Lord who calls his people from every walk of life has also called volunteers from every background to serve with us. One volunteer, who drives a few of our students to and from class each week, is also an optometrist. When one of my teachers mentioned that two of the students were having trouble reading their textbooks, I contacted this doctor and asked if he would be willing to help, thinking he might have suggestions about getting them low-cost glasses. He went a step further, providing free and complete eye exams to each of them. His office even had a staff member who spoke a language in common with those two students! It was a privilege to go with one of the students, who, as a refugee, said she had never had an eye exam, and see the love of Christ shown in this way.

God has provided us with volunteer teachers who work in many fields: education, speech-language pathology, Christian ministry, finance, electrical infrastructure, accounting, homemaking, and more. Their rich experiences and backgrounds have grown and deepened connections with our students, who are touched when they understand that their teachers are volunteering their time out of love.

Furthermore, we have volunteer childcare workers and drivers who give of their time (and gas money) to help our students have access to class, overcoming the barriers of childcare and transportation that are ever-present in our community, especially for our international neighbors. I've seen God continue to richly supply all of our needs, just as he has supplied me with wisdom in learning how to bring together a diverse group of people. This is truly a picture of the Body of Christ.

One other need of English programs has been supplied, as well—the students! When we restarted classes after COVID, we were unsure how many students we might have and where they would come from. We walked through three neighborhoods where many of our former students lived, handing out multilingual flyers and inviting residents to attend. Some students had attended the church's English classes in the past, and our seasoned volunteers invited them back again, continuing years-long relationships. Others saw our banner on the street and simply walked in. Some heard about us through the grapevine, and we still aren't exactly sure how they

knew to come. Still others came from other community contacts, and one couple even joined us because a local man, who had been going door-to-door to meet internationals in their apartment complex, invited them! As is common in these programs, we have students who come and go, but we are thankful for the ones that God sends, no matter how long we get to know them.

Ultimately, "the Spirit of God supplies the resources of ministry in the church" (Gallagher, 2017, p. 141). Whether those resources are time, funds, volunteers, or students, the Holy Spirit is at work in ways we cannot even imagine.

We are called to do our work well, as unto the Lord.

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. Colossians 3:23–24

As an English ministry trainer and consultant, one of the values closest to my heart is to help English ministry workers do their work well. This does not mean that I require all of my workers to have MAs in TESOL or to write elaborate lesson plans. For our purposes, with only 90 minutes of class one night per week, simple is best. We know that our students will not make great leaps in proficiency at that rate; this is an unattainable goal without additional help. What can happen, however, is this:

- Students can grow in confidence as they practice their English in a safe, loving environment.
- Students can gain skills in learning that they can apply outside of the classroom.
- Students can join a community that welcomes them in, feeling a sense of belonging, and be connected to others through this network of friends.

It is crucial that our teachers plan and teach well so that the students can feel this sense of welcome and safety in our program. Nearly all of our teachers have participated in a weekend intensive workshop to learn the basics of church-based TESOL ministry, and some have also worked with me individually for further help with lesson planning. Furthermore, our beginning and intermediate learners are taught using professionally-written curriculum, ensuring that they learn in a realistic progression. Although the program previously used a more academic curriculum, we changed this year to use Intercambio, which is written for adult immigrant and refugee students in the US and is much more applicable in terms of life skills and everyday needs than many other curriculum options, which are written for college-level programs. Our advanced learners study topics that relate to their lives, needs, and interests, helping them to acclimate to

culture and customs in the United States. We try to give our students as many opportunities as we can to speak English meaningfully with one another.

All of these factors, from teacher training to curriculum choice to classroom activities, are intended to provide the best education that we can offer in this setting. Snow (2001) exhorts Christian English teachers that they

> should view the quality of their teaching work as the primary means through which they bear witness to God and share his love with students. One reason for this line of reasoning is that, from the perspective of a student of English, the most immediate and pressing need is for assistance in learning English. The best way to demonstrate love to such students is by offering them the help that they need and call for. The diligence with which Christian English teachers offer this assistance thus becomes a visible and credible measure of their level of concern for students. (Chapter 4, "Christian Witness in the Classroom," para. 2)

Thus, offering classes that are welcoming and provide the instruction our students need is vital in sharing Christ's love with them.

Even in our devotional times, we seek to do things well. As a program meeting in a church, we are open about the fact that we are Christians, while at the same time we welcome students of all religious backgrounds, and we are thankful that so many students of different religious backgrounds do, indeed, join us each week. However, to avoid anyone feeling as if there has been a bait-and-switch, the devotional time in each class is only about five minutes long and is entirely optional. The teachers are provided with a simple English explanation and pictures to help explain each verse. Ultimately, we want our students to know Christ, but we know that only he can move in their hearts, and it is our role to love them well, plant the seeds, and allow God to work in whatever way he wills. We know the Holy Spirit is the greatest teacher, so we pray for his work in moving our students' hearts to come to know him and his help in each aspect of our teaching and our students' learning (Gallagher, 2017).

Relationships are the key to success.

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 1 Corinthians 13:1

Each time a new person or family walks into the church for English class, we learn a new story. Our students have come from several continents, many as refugees, with no one prevailing ethnic or linguistic background represented in the program, creating both a beautiful tapestry and

a heartwrenching web of stories. One student lost both of her aging parents this year within the span of a few months, but was unable to return to her home country to say goodbye. We sent cards and checked in on her, sharing in her grief. Another student, who is always faithful to attend class, missed one evening, and when we checked on her, we learned that she had driven across the state with her family for her naturalization interview. When she returned, we presented her with flowers and cheered together at one of our newest Americans.

Another student had been asking for help studying for her naturalization exam. She shared that she'd taken the exam before, but was failed on a technicality, so she needed to reapply and be reexamined, costing hundreds of dollars more for her family. I promised that we'd be praying for her, and she was visibly moved. A few weeks later, she came into the church and immediately asked for prayer, since her husband was sending her application off the next day. Another teacher and I prayed with her and two of her daughters. I'm not sure who was more moved—the student, who felt so loved, or the teacher and me, as we prayed with a woman in a hijab in the church lobby!

Yet another student, a young African refugee, came to us declaring that she wanted to become a nurse. I knew that a local nonprofit offered free nursing training to those who qualified, and was able to take her to learn about the program. God even provided a staff person there who spoke French and could help the student understand! Although her English level is not yet where it needs to be for her to study nursing, it was helpful to give her hope and an avenue to follow when she is ready.

A Pakistani couple started attending classes in fall 2021 and attended for just three weeks. Though we were disappointed, this is a normal experience in church programs, as students have shifting work schedules, family responsibilities, and priorities. However, in March 2022, the couple returned to class. On their first night back, the wife exclaimed, "We have missed you all so much!" I was touched and humbled that they felt so deeply connected after all that time away, and even more so as they continued to return, week after week.

As we welcome our students in, we fulfill Christ's command to welcome the stranger (Matthew 25:35). Smith (2018) also writes of the difference in our motivation in language learning when we view it through the lens of hospitality to strangers and loving our neighbors, encouraging us to "learn how to open a hospitable space in ourselves toward linguistic and

cultural others" (p. 68). We are no longer just providing information, but welcoming them in to a community where they can belong.

One way we show hospitality and honor our students' backgrounds is by making sure that they can access God's word in their heart languages. During our five-minute devotional time, each student has the opportunity to read the verse being studied in his or her heart language(s). One of our students is a native Kirundi speaker, and, though I searched a number of online resources, I was unable to find access to the Old Testament in Kirundi from which I could reliably pull verses when we had a verse from the Psalms in the devotional time. This student kept asking for the verse in her language, and I even reached out to some friends who were missionaries in different parts of Africa, asking for help and contacts, but to no avail. Then, one day, I was talking with the student's daughter, who told me that Kinyarwanda is mutually intelligible with Kirundi. I was so excited to be able to find the right verses in that language and to give them to this student so that she, too, could be included, and the student felt honored that we had found a language that she could access. Each time that we add new students (which can be any time, as we have rolling enrollment), we make it a priority to add their languages to the multilingual devotional handout, showing them that we know and value them and that God is the God of all languages, peoples, and nations.

Thursday nights are not only time for English class at the church. The worship band also has practice at the same time. Many of our students, Christian and non-Christian, have been attracted to the beautiful, live music, and will go into the sanctuary to listen or even film some of the practice time on their phones while their children dance to the beat. The band has been incredibly welcoming, seeing not an interruption, but yet another opportunity to love their international neighbors and show a unique brand of hospitality. We are building a community, a place to belong, and we pray that these students will one day decide to visit on a Sunday morning and learn more about Christ. One of our newest students has attended worship services several times already, sitting with his teachers, who quickly found another church member who spoke his heart language to welcome him in.

In our city, as in many cities throughout the country, transportation and childcare are major barriers to community involvement for internationals and, more specifically, to learning English. The public adult ESL programs available locally cannot usually offer childcare, but, as I love to remind churches, God has already made the way for us to do so, as churches' liability

policies already include childcare for weekly events! Most of the children attend school and speak English well, but we have also created a youth class for a few newcomer refugee kids who needed more English practice time. The other children, who come with their parents, attend a mixed-age childcare group, with games, lessons, and singing, or play in the nursery with other volunteers. We are delighted to build relationships even with these little ones. We pray that they will always keep these memories of being loved inside the church and will one day be drawn to Jesus Christ.

The body of Christ is essential to success, across denominations, vocations, and backgrounds.

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually, members of one another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them . . . Romans 12:4–6a

One of the biggest barriers that I've found in encouraging churches to run English programs is in staffing. "We barely have enough volunteers for Sunday morning activities," I hear, "so I'm not sure we could get anyone else to help with something like an English program." I have no doubt that this is true; however, I also have no doubt that if a few people from each church came together with members of other churches, hundreds of new church-based English programs could be started across the country. This has proven to be true in our program, where we have:

- One full-time ministry worker (me), working for a nonprofit that equips churches for ministry.
- Volunteer teachers from four churches, the majority of whom attend the host church.
- Childcare volunteers, weekly drivers, and substitute drivers, who attend six different churches.
- Community contacts who occasionally help us by translating or interpreting, representing five churches.
- Four churches and one locally-headquartered missions organization that have given funds to help pay for materials, staffing and events.

Though some of these churches have been involved in more than one way, in total, 12 churches from at least six different denominations are represented here. This, truly, is the Body of Christ, as the many members come together to use their different gifts to love and serve. In addition, I've had the privilege of training and consulting with dozens of other volunteers from

even more churches who are tutoring in other church programs or individually, particularly in Afghan refugees' homes in our region.

Our program's volunteers come with particular strengths as well. Several couples serve together, either working together or separately, in teaching or childcare. One of our assistant teachers is also a special education math teacher, so occasionally she steps out of class to help one of the teens in the childcare room work on her algebra homework. Another volunteer has given up several Saturdays to help some of the students study for their citizenship exams. Above all, though, what each person has to give is his or her time. In showing up faithfully each week, God continues to use them to grow relationships and share his love.

We've also found encouragement in being able to refer and connect our students to other community resources. One student received help with applying for Medicaid; others were referred to a local branch of Immigrant Connection, a ministry equipping Department of Justice-accredited legal consultants who provide low-cost immigration legal services. We have referred and even helped arrange rides for students to attend ESL classes with the local adult education program that meet more often during the week than our program. In God's providence, there are believers who work in that program, as well, who are strong partners with us to love and serve our students.

Gallagher (2017) reminds us that "Christ lives in his people through the Spirit as a living presence" (p. 140). In working in this program, I am reminded how the Holy Spirit has mightily provided for and encouraged us by drawing together the right people to love and serve our international friends in this way.

Encouraging one another.

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.
1 Thessalonians 5:11

The more that I work with church-based English program volunteers, the more I see what a rewarding role it is—but also, often, an exhausting one. Lesson planning takes time and effort, and perhaps even more so when you are a first-time teacher and only writing one plan per week. Furthermore, as this is a relational ministry and not just a transactional class, our teachers and students are sharing their very lives in relationship together, dealing with all of the joys and awkwardness and challenges of cross-cultural friendships. Students come and go, sometimes

with no warning. Class sizes swell and drop. New students arrive at all times during the year. And the teachers remain constant, but often they are just tired.

Additionally, because few English ministry volunteers have any professional background in teaching, they can struggle to access helpful resources. One pair of teachers in our program has a one-on-one class with our sole beginner student, who is a native Spanish speaker. While talking to then teachers after class, I mentioned that I had a bilingual picture dictionary that they might find helpful. The following week, they came back to me full of thanks, sharing how helpful that resource had been to them in communicating with the student. This simple suggestion made a big difference in their connection with him!

As I train more and more volunteers in our region, I am finding that their biggest needs are someone to talk to for ideas and affirmation and the knowledge of materials that are appropriate to use in each tutoring or teaching situation. One of my unique privileges has been to distill the information I learned in my MA TESOL program down to be understandable to a volunteer teacher, who has experience, but little or no underlying theoretical knowledge. Through webinars, instructional videos, and individual consultations, it has been a privilege to support these volunteer teachers in areas like teaching preliterate learners, teaching on Zoom, coming up with level-appropriate activities, using error correction strategies, and more. Our nonprofit has also hosted periodic gatherings for church-based English teachers, providing some professional development in terms of reflections and activities they can use, but also (and perhaps more importantly) giving them the space to talk and share their challenges, successes, and experiences.

I would like to encourage my fellow TESOL professionals that this is an area in which our assistance is greatly needed. We can serve as resources for volunteers, helping them choose appropriate books or making suggestions about how to approach certain communities of learners, including children, preliterate adults, and older learners. If each church-based program had access to a TESOL professional who could periodically check in and offer support and insights, imagine how these volunteer teachers could grow and flourish! If you are not aware of a church-based ESL class near you, I would suggest contacting someone with Mission to North America's cross-denominational ESL network at https://pcamna.org/ministry/esl-ministries/ or the SEND Relief (Southern Baptist) ESL programs at https://www.sendrelief.org/resource/english-as-a-second-language-esl/. Our own program has often had visitors from other ministries and the

community sit in on our classes. You might ask if you can visit a local program to learn more and pray about how you could be used in a supporting role.

As Bradridge and Walsh (2019) remind us, "We are all prone to getting weary and Christians are not immune to this. The excitement at the beginning of a new project can soon ebb once routine sets in. Part of your role, if you are the leader, will be to encourage people to carry on, use their gifts, and grow into the roles God has given them" (Section 3, "Getting the best out of volunteers," para. 4). I would humbly add that all of us, from TESOL professionals to new volunteers, can pray for and encourage one another and offer the resources and insights we have in order to build each other up for longevity and effectiveness in this ministry.

Conclusion

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me. Matthew 25:35

Ultimately, ESL ministry is about far more than teaching English. Our relationships go deep and create a safe place for belonging and community, for students to practice English without fear of judgement, and for the Gospel to be shared in word and deed. It has been a gift to be part of this team of volunteers and see how the Lord has woven each member together to accomplish his work of welcoming the stranger even as he grows each one of us in this unique ministry.

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Forum

Wisdom from Experience – Thoughts from Stevick Award Winners

According to the website of the Christian English Language Educators Association (CELEA), which also publishes this journal: "The Earl W. Stevick Award honors members of the English language teaching profession who embody some of the characteristics of Dr. Stevick in their teaching, mentoring of teachers, scholarship, service to the profession, and living out the life of Christ in this profession."

To date, from 2017–2022 there have been six winners of this prestigious award. Given the collective wisdom they represent, we asked them to share with our readers key lessons they have learned over the course of their careers. Five of the six winners were able to contribute to this invited Forum, which we present in chronological order of receiving the award.

What Have I Learned? Four Answers

Robin Gingerich
Winner of the 2017 Earl W. Stevick Award

At a recent faculty assembly, the Human Resources director called me to the front of the room to recognize me for 25 years of service to LCC International University. Afterwards, I wondered, what was I recognized for exactly? Twenty-five years of teaching? Twenty-five years of administrative duties? Then I realized it was probably for twenty-five years of faithfulness and tenacity—nothing more than just showing up and learning lessons. I am not a flashy person or outstanding in any way. I love my work and I have learned a few lessons over the years.

First, stay flexible and open to the Spirit. I love routines. I create personal and professional routines to guide my days and months. I feel confident and stable when I know what will happen next. But teaching demands adaptability and resiliency. I know that for every project, the result might not look much like the initial plan. A lesson changes the second I realize that the technology I normally utilize is cut off by an internet glitch; on the spot, I must trust my intuition and the Holy Spirit to engage my students in a different way. The next day, my schedule is upended by an unannounced visit from a Lithuanian school teacher. I must stop to listen and help even as the tasks at the desk are waiting. At the end of the day, I see that my carefully crafted plans were turned upside-down, and it all worked out better than I could have planned. I will never be perfectly prepared for any lesson, meeting, or presentation. Sometimes I actually hear myself say things that I never could have planned. God's words come pouring out

of me when I least expect them, but when I most need them. I am still learning to welcome the disruptions and stay flexible to allow the Holy Spirit to guide and provide. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13, NIV).

Second, I have learned to ask a "second question." Listening is vital to understanding anything well, especially in a multicultural situation. But it is so tempting to dominate a conversation with my ideas, my experience, or my advice. Teachers love to talk, and I am no exception. I have learned to resist the temptation to interrupt. Asking the first question is easy. "What did you think of the reading?" Asking the second question takes patience. "Can you tell me more about that?" For native speakers and for language learners, a "second question" welcomes the speaker to explain, to expand, or to offer a deeper answer. This semester my group of 30 freshmen included students from 13 different countries. We all needed many opportunities to listen well to each other. These "second questions" offer the speaker a listening ear and an open mind to their ideas as they formulate and reformulate their words. "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4).

Third, when the music starts, always choose to dance. I am not particularly graceful or poised. But, twelve years ago, I leaped out of my comfort zone and began dance lessons. I joined a group of energetic Lithuanian ladies who love to enjoy life. We are not professionals, but we have annual festivals and parties. I have learned a lot from being a dance student. Dancing helps me to remember what it feels like to be a student who is learning a new language; I am reminded that my students need thoughtful review as they learn vocabulary and syntax. Dancing is risky; the dance floor is public, and people are watching. I am reminded that when I ask my students to speak in English, I am also asking them to risk. Dancing takes concentration; you must focus your attention to keep in step with everyone. I need additional concentration as my dance lessons are in Lithuanian. I am reminded that when I ask my students to take a test, they too must concentrate and that can be hard. Dancing is a release of tension; when I am dancing, I forget all about my administrative tasks as I enjoy the energy of the music. I hope that I can provide space for my students to relieve their tension and offer space for laughter and joy during our classes. I would hope that all students and teachers have an outlet for their souls to relax, to enjoy, and to move freely. So now when the music starts, I jump up and start dancing because I am learning

new skills along with my students. "Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with timbrel and harp" (Psalm 149:3).

Fourth, remain faithful. Some days are hard. I often fail my students by not having enough energy to explain things well. Some months are long. Winters in Lithuania are cold and the daylight hours are few. But over the years, I have learned to keep showing up, despite rain, sun, or snow. Being faithful has its own rewards. Over time, I have made many Lithuanian friends who have accepted me with all my shortcomings. Over time, I have developed trusting relationships with colleagues. Relationships don't blossom overnight. Good relationships take many coffees and long walks together. In fall 2021, when the US withdrew from Afghanistan, our Afghani students were distraught. Faithfully listening to their stories helped me to begin to understand their stress. In spring 2022, when war broke out in Ukraine, our faculty quickly realized that faithfully coming to class provided a much-needed routine for our war-affected students. "Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man" (Proverbs 3:3–4).

I have learned other lessons, too. Some lessons were stressful and hard to accept. Other lessons were delightful and brought joy. I reflect on the faculty assembly and the award for serving at LCC International University. I am humbled by God's generous mercy and unending love as He teaches me more and more each day. I still have a lot to learn, but may I always be a faithful learner.

Dr. Robin Gingerich is an associate professor at LCC International University in Lithuania. She currently chairs the English Department, which includes an MA program in TESOL, a BA program in English, and an intensive English program (PRIME). She also teaches TESOL courses and writing courses in the BA program and the PRIME program. Robin has given professional development workshops for English teachers in Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine, Russia, Albania, Turkey, Estonia, and Congo. Her specializations are curriculum development, teacher knowledge, and TESOL methods.

Lessons Learned from Teaching

Marilyn Lewis
Winner of the 2018 Earl W. Stevick Award

The lessons reported here are based on my experience of teaching students of various ages in a number of countries and also of observing others teaching. They are by no means

exhaustive.

(1) Use your talents. One way of expressing this first lesson would be to say, "Be yourself, rather than trying to imitate others." An example of trying to borrow the talents of others comes to mind from two teachers I once observed. One was someone who always entertained his colleagues in the morning tea room but who became serious (and rather boring) in front of the class. When asked about why this was he said, "Isn't that how teachers are meant to be?" The second teacher was exactly the opposite. By nature, he was thoughtful and on the quiet side, but in the middle of a lesson he would sometimes come out with a joke, which was often irrelevant and certainly failed to amuse his students. During the after-class debriefing, he said he had observed a teacher who was by nature humorous and who often had his students laughing as they learned. "I thought I'd try to be like him." In each of those cases the teacher failed to use the talent he had (love of humour, a patient listener) in favour of trying to imitate the talents of others.

Sometimes we don't know our own talents well enough to use them in class. In that case, one lesson I have learned is to ask others to remind us of what we do well. At whatever stage of one's career it's never too late to invite in an observer and to ask for feedback along these lines. "You know me already as a friend and colleague. Please tell me if I am using the best parts of my personality in front of the class."

(2) Go with the flow? Another lesson is worded as a question. What "flows" should influence us as teachers? The word *flow* could refer to what is happening around us in the classroom and school or it could refer to the wider world of educational changes. In the classroom, there are times when we have to abandon our lesson plans, however worthy they are, in favour of adjusting to what is happening around us. Maybe the wild weather has made the class restless and we have to move to an activity that will calm them down. Maybe the activity we chose is too hard for the class, and instead of reprimanding them for failing to complete it we can model humility with words such as these. "I think I chose something too difficult for that task. Let's switch to something else." Occasionally it is good to blame ourselves, not the learners.

When it comes to the wider flow of educational changes, sometimes the answer to the question is "No." Over the years, methods and approaches have come and gone in language teaching as well as in other subjects, sometimes in an almost circular movement. One lesson

learned is that since students are all different, and learn in a range of ways, it can be a good idea to swim against the flow by varying the classroom tasks to suit students' preferences and abilities rather than insisting on the latest idea. Memorisation is a case in point. There have been times when this practice was taboo, yet some students would make up their own rhymes particularly to remember grammar rules.

(3) Love the unlovely. Another lesson I have learned from teaching a range of ages is that while some students are easy to appreciate, it is the ones who are most annoying, disruptive, and inattentive who most need our attention. Showing them Christian love and care may not be easy but it reaps rewards. This doesn't mean ignoring bad behaviour, but rather combining discipline with words that let them know of their strengths, however few these may be. Here are a couple of examples of what I have learned to say to misbehaving young learners. "I was surprised to see you playing around with your friend instead of answering that difficult question, because I have noticed that you are especially good with questions that others find difficult." "That looks as if it must be a good joke. Would you like to come out the front and share it with us or is it one that's better left for lunchtime?" Once, in an end-of-year card, a primary school boy who was known for being disruptive wrote something to his teacher along these lines. "Even when you have to tell us off for misbehaving you still look as if you like us." In other words, the lesson learned is to combine firmness with showing an appreciation of the student.

Maybe the saying about not judging a book by its cover applies here. Looking at a student's results in tests and examinations may not be the best way to predict that person's future. People who fail to shine at school may rise to great heights later and, of course, vice versa. The "book's cover" can refer to more than academic achievement. A joking, lively exterior can hide a shy individual who will benefit from being grouped with people he or she can relate to for out-of-class activities.

(4) It's time to mentor. Learning how to assist newer teachers is another lesson learned over the years. The move from being mentored oneself to mentoring others can be seamless. Looking back on how others encouraged us early in our careers can be one starting point. What I learned from the kindness of senior teachers in my early career days became a model of ways in which I could, eventually, mentor others. As one example, in my first year of teaching I overreacted and sent a boy to the principal for something not very serious. By morning tea time I was expecting the principal to say something negative to me but my fear was needless. He came

and sat at my table and spoke along these lines. "It was good that you felt you could turn to me when you had a problem. I'm here to support you."

His example reminded me in later years that I could support new colleagues by walking alongside them without being judgemental. That made me avoid making critical comments or responding to their own self-criticism with a comment like "Oh don't worry. That's nothing." If the teacher thinks it is something serious then that has to be the starting point for our support.

(5) Learn from the student. The final lesson that comes to mind relates to what one learns from students. For me, this has applied most dramatically in the case of refugees. Their life stories before they arrive in our classes can teach us a great deal about how people overcome tragedies. More mundanely, there are lessons to be learned from students every day, one being about perseverance. In the words of Robert Bruce as he watched the spider, "If at first you don't succeed then try, try and try again." It can be inspiring to watch "weaker" students who are determined to master something new.

There are many other lessons I have learned during my teaching career, but the five I have explained above are some lessons about teacher-student relationships. I look forward to reading what others have learned.

Marilyn Lewis has taught English and other languages in New Zealand, India, and Cambodia, where she has lived. In her "retirement," she continues to enjoy leading workshops in person and online. She has written and co-written numerous articles and books, including Teaching Speaking *with Melissa K. Smith and Tasha Bleistein (from TESOL Press, 2020).*

Lessons Learned as a Christian TESOL Scholar and Practitioner

Michael Pasquale
Winner of the 2019 Earl W. Stevick Award

I have recently marked twenty years as an educator at a Christian liberal arts university. Given the nature of higher education in these troubled times, I don't take that position for granted. I consider the role of professor as one that allows me to live out my vocation as a servant of Jesus Christ and as a scholar of applied linguistics and TESOL. *Soli Deo Gloria*. Three lessons stand out to me as I look back on my tenure so far.

(1) Community. We are often taught at an early age to think of our own career trajectory, to figure out how we can best succeed in life. The North American society in which I have been raised has put a primary emphasis on individual choice and success. However, I can't stress

enough how important it is for us to be in community with one another. We can and should be members of multiple layers of community, whether a temporal one such as a semester class, or more enduring ones such as a campus community, a church body, or a professional organization such as CELEA or TESOL. Live into these communities in which you belong and draw inspiration and support so that you can be a blessing and give and serve others.

I have been grateful for the friendships made over the years through CELEA. I had the privilege of helping to lead the transition from the old TESOL caucus model to the establishment of the new, independent CELEA organization. It wasn't easy, but it was very fulfilling to dream, set goals, and work alongside colleagues. I was thankful to serve as the first president of CELEA and those with whom I served in those early days have remained dear friends and colleagues.

(2) Collaboration. I have been blessed with so many fruitful and life-giving examples of collaboration in my career, from team teaching a course on C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien in Oxford on a study abroad trip to co-authoring an article or book with a colleague. At times when a solo effort may have led me to stop when faced with writer's block, working together with colleagues has been a blessing. Find ways to work with others and bless those around you, such as mentoring students and new colleagues. If you are having a hard time thinking about that next step in your scholarship journey, consider co-presenting at a conference or co-authoring a journal article.

My most precious collaborations have been with my wife Monica, a fellow TESOL professional. We are blessed to not only live life together but to serve and work together at times. We complement each other and that only strengthens our workshop, project, or class together. For the past several summers we have worked together to teach English to minor league baseball players. My love of the game of baseball (and sometimes my life as a baseball fan dominates) is balanced by her precision in planning the best English for Specific Purposes lessons for our students.

(3) Collegiality. This sums up these ideas, which all basically relate. What I have learned is the deep need that we have for each other. We need grace as we engage in conversation. We need to show hospitality to our students and colleagues. We need to live out the virtue of love and gratitude to those around us. In this we will find blessing and encouragement in a world filled with stress, anxiety, and fear.

Our words and actions matter in such a world. Let us speak to each other with words of kindness, grace, and gratitude. Let us live out the words shared by the apostle Paul in the book of Philippians 4:5–7 (NIV): "Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Michael Pasquale is professor of Linguistics and Director of the MA TESOL program at Cornerstone University, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A.

Lessons Learned from a Lifetime of Teaching

Kitty Purgason

Winner of the 2020 Earl W. Stevick Award

When I was in elementary school, we used to sing, "Make new friends, but keep the old; one is silver and the other gold." That's true of my teaching as well. There is always something new to learn: new research on vocabulary acquisition, new techniques for motivating and engaging learners, new priorities for teaching structures based on corpus linguistics, new ways to use technology to facilitate learning across the miles, and so on. But the old can also be of value. I try to repurpose techniques from the 1960s, such as dialogues and drills, for the 21st century. I don't want to throw out controlled composition, weekly quizzes, or anything else from the past without extracting from those techniques what might still be valuable. I also want to keep learning and not be afraid of new challenges, concepts, viewpoints, techniques, or technology. Eagerly keeping up with what is new while esteeming what is good from the past is a matter of balance—and the value of balance is another lesson I've learned. Accuracy and fluency. Reading/writing and speaking/listening. Input and output. Published materials and student-generated materials. Vocabulary and grammar. Language and content. Quiet and interaction. L1 use or translanguaging and prioritizing the target language. Hard work and relaxed fun. Teacher control and student initiative. (That one is from Earl Stevick!) There are so many aspects of learning and teaching that are in opposition like this. While there might be situations in which one side is weighted more heavily than the other for the sake of student needs, in general, I prefer a level seesaw. Here's one example from my own recent language learning experience. I can enjoy watching the series *Justice* in Arabic, soaking in the sounds and picking up some phrases.

But unless I sit down and study, watching the show won't take me any further than a greater appreciation for the language.

I believe that the more active the learning, the more effective it is. Action can be achieved in many different ways: A clear goal with achievable steps toward that goal. A fast-paced lesson with multiple components. Lots of opportunities for learners to take responsibility. The body giving the brain a helping hand in the work of learning and remembering.

I have also learned how important love is. Love for our subject (language and pedagogy) and love for our students are like plants and pollinating insects. Their "mutualistic relationship" benefits both. When I love English or experience joy in conveying new ideas in a new language, I long for my students to feel that too, and as I seek to understand how to make that happen for the individuals in my class, I come to love my students. When I love my students, I want to provide what is best for them and that leads me to learn more about pedagogy and the English language, coming to love my subject more, too.

I am grateful for the many things I have learned over the years—from schooling, conferences, reading, colleagues, students, and experience. One might say I'm both smart and qualified. But there have been many times when I have been stumped by the teaching, administrative, or personal challenges in front of me. That's when I rely on this breath prayer: "Resting in his love, wisdom from above" (from, e.g., Psalm 127:2; 1 Peter 5:7; Isaiah 43:4; Psalm 23; James 2:17), which I adopted at a particularly challenging point in my career. It reminds me that God is the source of wisdom. He can help me remember something important, make a new connection, come up with a creative idea, or persevere to find the answer. And whatever the outcome, God loves me, with an everlasting love I can count on and rest in.

Every time I teach a class, I come away with ideas for how I might improve it in the future. The same is true for writing. I want to keep tinkering with it, adding or subtracting ideas, or rephrasing what I've written. Then I remember that I have also learned that the perfect can be the enemy of the good (as Voltaire, and probably many others, have said). So, here is my essay on some of the lessons I've learned, at least the ones which have come to my mind at this point in my life.

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Specialist. She is the author of Professional Guidelines for Christian English Teachers *(William Carey Library).*

Reflections on Life Lessons

Mary Shepard Wong
Winner of the 2022 Earl W. Stevick Award

Many thanks to the editors of the IJC&ELT for this opportunity to share 3–5 of my life's lessons. I encourage readers to write and share their own and look forward to reading them!

(1) Seek God. "Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4). This verse is not a personal promise that God will give us what we desire, rather it speaks to the reward that results from seeking God. When we delight in God, our hearts and desires are changed to align with his. As Hudson Taylor put it, "I used to ask God to help me. Then I asked if I might help him do his work through me." We find our purpose in serving God with all that we are, including all of our talents and our flaws. It is there that we find fulfilment. When I pray passionately for outcomes that are not granted, I accept the loss at first with disappointment and gradually with thanks, surrendering my will to God's, seeking his desires, not mine. Sometimes this leads to a change of circumstances in which I am presented the very thing I had surrendered. Moreover, there have been times that the loss of what I wanted allows for an even greater opportunity. There are also times I'm left to wonder why there is seemingly no response, but this results in a deeper dependency on God, which I have come to learn is the desire of my heart.

(2) Follow your dreams. Seeking God does not mean abandoning our passions and dreams, as they are part of us and how God made us. I resonate with William Carey's words "To know the will of God we need an open Bible and an open map" (and I might add, an open mind). At Urbana '79, I felt called to Asia. My dreams have taken me to China, Thailand, and Burma through teaching and later through scholarship. However, my dreams have changed over time. For example, I taught in Thailand annually for over 20 years (pre-COVID). Early on, I learned of refugee camps along the Thai/Burma border. After finally getting access and learning more, I took groups of students to teach in the camps a few times, and eventually also in Myanmar. This led to a shift from teaching just English to teaching for peace and social justice, and a more complex understanding of language-in-education policies and practices. I had no grand research plan at first. I just followed my dreams like bread crumbs, and these lead to bigger dreams.

(3) Take risks. "Dream a dream so big that unless God intervenes it will fail" ~ Hudson Taylor. "Expect great things from God, receive great things from God" ~ William Carey. These two quotes inspire me. But I must say that a Ph.D. did not at first seem like a remote possibility for me, nor did authoring/editing five books, getting three Fulbrights, or winning external grant bids. I would not have been able to plan all this from the start, or believe it was achievable. I just followed my dreams and prayed, and one thing led to another. Kind of like finding my "ZPD" (à la Vygotsky) of goal-setting and accomplishing a dream, led to a slightly bigger one. I gave a keynote address in Paris at TESOL France on professional development not long ago, and asked the participants to provide a one-page visual of their professional journey with dates across the top and boxes of accomplishments below. I had mine as an example on a PowerPoint slide. Then I thought this might be intimidating to a new teacher (as it would have been to me decades ago). I thought of sharing a visual that showed my failures, an "anti-CV" if you will, with all the grants I didn't get, the journal submissions that were rejected, the schools that didn't accept me. It would be three times as long as my accomplishments. That turned out to be one of the best take-aways of the talk. We need to take risks and embrace failure to accomplish greater things, but we can take it one step at time. Bread crumbs, follow the bread crumbs, and find your ZPD for dreams so you can dare to take one little risk at a time.

(4) Sort out your priorities. One of my favorite lines in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* is the exchange when Hermione states: "Now, if you two don't mind, I'm going to bed before either of you come up with another clever idea to get us killed or worse . . . expelled!" and Ron retorts, "She needs to sort out her priorities!" While on my Fulbright at Yangon University, I stayed in housing where two young girls did my laundry. I asked to have my *clean* silk shirts and longyis pressed. They did so, but only after first laundering them with all the other clothes, ruining the silk fabric and running the colors. When handed my garments, I asked what happened. Not much more was said, but I sensed they were hurt and I had tarnished our relationship, which took a while to repair. I learned "people are more important than things," including silk shirts, publications, and the whole lot. Sorting out priorities, keeping God first, is one of those lessons I have had to relearn time and again. I try to be aware of how conflicts and setbacks can provide an opportunity to recalibrate.

(5) Collaborate. My joy and success in publishing has come through collaboration. I asked Suresh Canagarajah to co-edit my first scholarly book, Zoltán Dörnyei and Carolyn

Kristjánsson my second, and Ahmar Mahboob, my third. In international grant applications, I pulled in Andy Xuesong Gao and Icy Lee, and currently I am researching educators in exile from Myanmar with a graduate student, David Kareng from Kachin State, Myanmar. I have learned that collaboration is vital to my scholarship. Who could you collaborate with on a project of your dreams?

Mary Shepard Wong is a three-time Fulbright Scholar and author/editor of five books. Her doctorate is in International Education (USC), and two master's degrees are in East Asian Languages and Cultures (UCLA) and TESOL (APU). She is Professor and Director of TESOL at Azusa Pacific University in southern California. She has taught for 40 years in the US, Hong Kong, Thailand and Myanmar, conducted over 150 presentations, and written over 30 articles and chapters. Her teaching, writing, and research focus on critical intercultural studies, social justice and peacebuilding in Myanmar, and religious faith in teacher identity and development.

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Forum

In Memoriam
Zoltán Dörnyei (1960-2022)

The Christian TESOL community was saddened to hear the news of Zoltán Dörnyei's death on June 10, 2022. He was a friend and mentor to many and will be greatly missed.

Zoltán began his career as a language teacher for International House in Budapest, Hungary. He completed his PhD in Psycholinguistics at Eötvös Loránd University in 1989 and he began teaching in the School of English and American Studies at Eötvös Loránd University in 1988. He joined the School of English at the University of Nottingham in 2000. In 2003 he received a D.Sc. in Linguistics from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. In 2017 Zoltán completed a Ph.D. in Theology from Durham University.

Zoltán's research and scholarship focused on how motivation affected the language learning process, and he was considered one of the foremost scholars on the topic. His Christian faith also was an important part of his life and he was eager to integrate his faith and scholarship.

In 2013 he co-edited the book, *Christian Faith and English Language Teaching and Learning* (Routledge). His theological dissertation was revised and published in 2018 as *Progressive Creation and the Struggles of Humanity in the Bible: A Canonical Narrative Interpretation* (Pickwick). He published a final book on this topic, *Vision, Mental Imagery and the Christian Life: Insights from Science and Scripture* (Routledge, 2020).

Zoltán was a friend and mentor to many in the Christian TESOL community and in this section we hear from three individuals who knew him well in these roles. Eleanor J. Pease describes the influential role his work had in her scholarship. Elfrieda Lepp-Kaethler shares her experience in working with him as her doctoral advisor. Mary Shepard Wong recounts the opportunities that she had to collaborate with Zoltán on several projects. Each of these tributes portrays Zoltán as more than an intellectual giant, but more importantly as a kind, humble and godly man.

Tribute to Dr. Zoltán Dörnyei

Eleanor J. Pease

While preparing for a higher education course on second language acquisition, I was introduced to the work of Dr. Dörnyei. As I developed more Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages courses, I leaned heavily on his work and the deeper my research went the more I realized that something set him apart from others. I thought, "This man must be a Christian." His treatment of the motivational needs of learners and the methods for facilitating their motivation and learning was in tune with biblical teaching. Sometime later, in talking to a colleague, I discovered that Zoltán was indeed a Christian, well-known for taking a stand for the claims of Jesus Christ. This fell in line with the history of linguistics and the wealth of dedicated Christians, such as Eugene Nida, Kenneth Pike, and William Smalley, who were leaders in the field.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Zoltán because of the strong influence of his work when I was in my doctoral studies on the role of affect in Japanese adolescent English language learners, when developing graduate level language-related courses for two colleges, and when teaching in those colleges. In 2008, I chaired the annual CELT conference in New York City and was thrilled when he agreed to be the plenary speaker. This gave my own students an opportunity to meet him face-to-face and to talk with a globally known professor whose calling was not only in psycholinguistics, but also in demonstrating Christ-like humility.

Zoltán's gracious generosity is another notable quality. Through the years, whenever I had occasion to communicate with Zoltán, he was always prompt in responding. He shared something about his life, such as his goal to earn a PhD in Theology and then its completion, and he always took care in answering my questions. The greatest example of his generosity is in granting permission to adapt his motivational self-system for a women's Bible study on "Daughters of the King." In addition, he sent materials that would help with building the course. Most encouraging was his statement, "I would also love to hear more details about how my work fits into the intriguing topic of the course. It sounds genuinely interesting!"

I don't know why God chose to call Zoltán home, but when I think back over my many students—students diverse in race and religion—who were influenced by Dr. Dörnyei's work, I can confidently say God has done great things through this humble and gracious man and will continue to do so because his work lives on.

Eleanor J. Pease (ejpease2005@yahoo.com) semi-retired in 2009, when she and her husband moved to a retirement community in Fort Myers, Florida. She continued to teach online for Nyack College in New York and agreed to teach for Spring Arbor University in Michigan. About four years ago, she went into full retirement and now enjoys playing her cello and writing a weekly devotional for women.

Zoltán Dörnyei, my Doktor Vater

Elfrieda Lepp-Kaethler

When I began my work as assistant professor of TESOL in 2007, I was encouraged to apply for doctoral programs "– not right away," said my dean, "but once you have mastered that anxiety that is common in a new teaching post." "Your supervisor is the key," advised another colleague. "Make sure he or she is someone you can work with. Go to conferences, listen to presenters, find someone who resonates."

I first met Zoltán in the spring of 2008 at a conference of Christian educators in TESOL at Nyack College in New York. I had read some of his work on L2 Motivation. At Nyack, he spoke of his Motivational Self System and its relevance to Christian faith. Mesmerized by his gentle and humble manner, I heard him inviting 'practitioners' to take his constructs and research them. I had the urge to shoot up my hand right there and shout, "I could do that!" I didn't shout, but I made a quiet beeline to shake his hand and ask if he was taking doctoral students.

Once at home, I formulated my research questions in a brief paragraph, but sending them to him in Nottingham was a steep climb. I felt insignificant against this giant of a scholar. Would my small voice even be heard in the halls of the towering Nottingham? With much encouragement from my colleagues, and much trembling, I pressed the 'send' button. Two hours later, I had a response from Zoltán. Two hours. He told me about this on his end later. "That first email, Frieda, I knew you were on to something."

This was the beginning of annual trips between Winnipeg and Nottingham. Always eager to travel, my husband (born and raised in a South American country) volunteered to be my 'bodyguard'. Always eager to combine motherhood with work or studies, I offered my three children – now in their teens and twenties – each a turn to accompany their mother on 'educational field trips' to the U.K. Everyone got to meet Zoltán and Sarah, Aaron and Benny, and enjoy dinner at their house – a privilege enjoyed by all Zoltán's doctoral students. Zoltán's 'Hungarian' hospitality was memorable: scrumptious Goulash till we could not hold another bite.

Then Zoltán to Sarah in a low voice imitating a typical Hungarian host: "You see, Sarah, they didn't even like the food. They ate nothing!"

Having grown up in communist and atheist Hungary, Zoltán encountered Christian faith as an unanticipated and unlikely explosion into his life. Over dinner in their home, Sarah and Zoltán related to us their radical conversion stories – in a small evangelical church in Budapest. As a new Christian, he took up several 'spiritual disciplines.' One was painting icons. "I'm not an artist," he said, "But I just love the colors." Another discipline was launching on a program of study in Theology. "It's just the way I learn best." His humility was astounding. His PhD in Psycholinguistics was not seen as relevant for studies in Theology; he was expected to begin from scratch, which he did, without complaint. Except once. In his undergraduate in Bible and Theology, he was required to take a course in learning styles. He approached the instructor after class one day and said, quietly, "Well, actually, I've published a book on this topic." His instructor (who obviously had no idea of Zoltán's illustrious and world-renown career in Psycholinguistics and L2 Motivational Theory) said: no. Zoltán still had to take the course and do all the assignments. His MA was a thesis on Transcendental Beauty, which shed light on his fascination with 'visual theology' and iconography. Only then could he start his PhD in Theology proper, which was about the time I arrived at Nottingham. "We'll do this together," he said to me, "we'll both be doctoral students." Zoltán completed his PhD. in theology in 2016.

As a family, we got precious glimpses into Zoltán's devotion to his wife Sarah, and to his children, Ben and Aaron, who is on the spectrum. Zoltán's playful tenderness as a father might be best seen through the eyes of Chippy, Aaron's little toy duck, who was also 'pursuing a doctorate'. Each time we came, we would get dinner table updates on Chippy's 'progress'. At one point, Chippy was 'narrowing down his research questions', then he was 'working on his literature review'. Once, Chippy had been 'fooling around and neglecting his research, having too much fun'. "But, Zoltán," I said, "you told me we should be enjoying our research process." "Yes," he said, "those are lies we tell our first-year students."

Having too much fun was not my problem, at least not initially. Four months into the program and I found myself on a one-year medical leave with a severe clinical depressive episode. Foundationally shaken in my already weak confidence in my ability to climb this sheer doctoral cliff, I floundered with changing my research focus. "We need to talk with Zoltán," said my husband. We arrived in Nottingham on a Sunday. Zoltán, together with his family, picked us

up from our hotel along with another international Ph.D. student – from Japan, I think. "I had promised the kids we'd go to McDonald's," he said, half apologetically. Over hamburgers and French fries, Zoltán smiled warmly across the table. "We'll figure something out for you, Frieda."

The last time I met Zoltán was in Chicago in 2018 at the international TESOL conference. I planned on paying for drinks, but he insisted, "Of course not, Frieda – once a supervisor, always a supervisor." We got caught up on work and family. Still fascinated with the 'Chippy saga', I asked about 'Chippy's progress.' Yes, finally, the time had come for Chippy's defence – an 'external' had to be found for him. The eminent Emma Ushioda became Chippy's examiner, and a celebration dinner was held at the Dörnyei home. Chippy, just six inches tall, had completed his Ph.D. But then Zoltán was never one to worry about stature.

In German, the term for one's doctoral supervisor is 'Doktor Vater' – Doctor Father. The words of the German poet Matthias Claudius (1740–1815) from his poem "At the graveside of my father" come to mind: "They have buried a good man . . . but for me he was more."

Elfrieda Lepp-Kaethler (elfrieda.lepp-kaethler@prov.ca) is Associate Professor of TESOL at Providence University College. Born and raised on a grain farm near Rivers, Manitoba, Canada Frieda has lived and worked as an English/Spanish language teacher and teacher educator in several countries including Paraguay, Ukraine, China and The Philippines. She has been on faculty at Providence University College (in Otterburne, Manitoba, Canada) since 2000.

Emails from Zoltán

Mary Shepard Wong

When I read The University of Nottingham's "In Memoriam - Professor Zoltán Dörnyei" I was a bit disappointed as there was so much more to this man than his Ph.D.s and many publications. To me, it failed to get at who he was, how he sought after God, and the many ways he invested in his students and colleagues.

I'm one of the lucky ones. I got to work with Zoltán for well over a decade. My email exchanges with Zoltán number in the high hundreds. It all started with an email request to contribute a chapter to the edited volume that Suresh and I were working on from 2005–2009. I don't have a record of emails before 2010, but I recall he was quick to accept. Later he told me that the chance to deeply reflect on how his academic work intersected with his Christian faith

was something new to him and that he deeply enjoyed. He mentioned that writing the chapter for us was the impetus for him to start a doctorate in theology, which he completed in 2017.

To get a sense of what it was like to work with Zoltán, let me share excepts from some of his emails. I sent this email to Zoltán after Carolyn Kristjánsson and I drafted a book idea on a napkin at the Cheesecake Factory in Boston following our TESOL panel, *English teaching and Christian mission: Empirical research perspectives*.

> April 17, 2010 Dear Zoltán,
> [. . .] My co-presenter, Carolyn Kristjánsson (Trinity Western University) and I got to thinking, why not edit a book on empirical studies on ELT and Christianity? Since we both have done qualitative studies and are not well-known scholars in the field, our thought and prayer was to ask a scholar like you to join the project to lend credibility and support. :) So I got to dreaming what a call for papers would look like and came up with the following. (See attached).

His response came so quickly that we were shocked.

> April 19, 2010 Dear Mary and Carolyn,
> Thank you very much for your intriguing e-mail with the very kind invitations. I really appreciate your thinking of me. Having thought about this, my answer to both issues is an enthusiastic 'yes'.
> [. . .]
> I am genuinely touched by your gracious response. I sincerely hope that our planned volume will become a significant contribution both to our own lives and to the field. There is undoubtedly something very special about English with regard to the progress of Christianity, just as Greek played a crucial role in New Testament times – so I pray that we may understand and reveal to others some of this special character in the post-Babel world.

Not long after that, we got the good news of an accepted book proposal, which resulted in the 2013 volume that the three of us co-edited with a few co-authored chapters. He wrote us this:

> Jan 26, 2011 Dear Mary and Carolyn,
> We did it! I am really pleased about this - Routledge is a good publisher. (I must admit, I have doubted until now whether they would issue a contract without seeing the actual studies . . .) Well-done to both of you for dreaming this up and Mary, I think you handled [it] perfectly - thank you!

Something I'm sure many others know about Zoltán was how welcoming he was, eager to share both professionally and personally as expressed here:

> April 2010 Dear Mary and Carolyn,
> Just to make our cooperation more personal, please find attached a photo of myself with my family, taken last week during our family trip to Israel (the church behind us is the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem).

> All the best,
> Zoltán

Carolyn and I would plan dinners with Zoltán every time he came to speak at TESOL or AAAL. Those dinners were amazing. I recall that getting to a restaurant near the conventions was not always easy with so many people coming up to him to shake his hand or ask for a photo. I felt like his bodyguard at times. We had more extended time to talk over several days in Hong Kong in 2012, when once again, he accepted my request, this time to be a plenary speaker at the CELT conference at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

I'll conclude with one of his last emails from 2019, telling me he was mailing me yet another one his books from the U.K.

> Aug 9, 2019 Dear Mary,
> The Vision book is out! I would love to send you a copy – what address shall I send it to?
> Once again, thank you for all your help!
> With love,
> Zoltán

Love to you, too, Zoltán. Thank you for sharing your work and your life with us.

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Reviews

How Shall We Then Care? A Christian Educator's Guide to Caring for Self, Learners, Colleagues, and Community
Paul Shotsberger and Cathy Freytag (Eds.). Wipf and Stock, 2020.

Reviewed by Michael Lessard-Clouston, Biola University

The last several difficult years have caused a number of teachers to leave the field of education completely, while those who stayed have had additional reasons to be concerned for their wellbeing. Research by Wong, Pompeo-Fargnoli, and Harriott (2022), for example, shows that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted both them as teachers and their students' learning, while an online survey of 765 language teachers around the world by Gregersen, Mercer, and MacIntyre (2021) interestingly revealed both major stressors and uplifts (sources of positivity) due to the pandemic. In a conference talk from well before the pandemic started, Gkonou (2019) noted "four core aspects of wellbeing": physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual. Thinking about these issues as I prepare ESL/EFL teachers, and wondering how to connect Gkonou's fourth aspect in training English language teachers, I knew when I saw this book that I needed to discover what the editors and authors share about educational care by and for Christians.

How Shall We Then Care? is an edited collection composed of a Foreword, an Introduction, and 10 chapters by different authors. In his Foreword, David I. Smith warns that an ethic of care is not just about being nice; "It is a careful philosophical proposal with specific roots and contours that quickly open up a range of theological, philosophical, pedagogical, hermeneutical, and practical questions, each calling for further investigation" (p. xi). In his Introduction, editor Paul Shotsberger makes clear that "care theory" reflects God's nature and "helps us understand God's love and care for us" (p. xiii). Shotsberger draws upon Noddings's (2002, 2007) work, but noted that Noddings "had no place for God in her theory" (p. xv). Yet the authors in this volume are all Christian, though they work in a variety of contexts, some public and others Christian. Accordingly, Shotsberger declares, "A Christian ethic of care serves to illuminate our relationship with God while also helping to flesh out what care looks like in various contexts" (p. xv). Shotsberger also briefly introduces each chapter in this collection.

Chapter 1 aims to answer the question of its title, "What Can Christians Learn from Care Theory?" (p. 1). Authors Sean Schat and Cathy Freytag (the volume's other editor), draw from Noddings' (2013) work to suggest that human beings need both to care for others and to be cared

for by others. Their chapter offers a theological foundation using four sections. The first addresses "the love mandate" found in Matthew 22:34–40, Jesus' teaching on the greatest commandments. The second section of the chapter then outlines how the church has failed at carrying out the love mandate, through harm Christians have caused, ways we have supported marginalization, and forfeited our right to speak or failed to successfully communicate love and care for those we are in relationship with. The third section suggests care theory can help the church because it indicates care is bidirectional, yet care is only successful when it is accepted as such by the one being cared for (p. 12). The fourth section in Chapter 1 challenges Christians to follow Christ and His example of caring for others, despite their sins, so that "successfully communicating care can help us reveal God's love to others" (p. 16).

In Chapter 2, Sean Schat draws upon his dissertation data (see Schat, in press) to focus on a six stage model for how he believes "successful communication of care occurs" (p. 27). The model begins with recognizing care needs, moves into the teacher's caring intentions, reflected then in teacher caring behaviours, which ideally lead to the student responding that care has been successfully communicated, so a relationship is established, and the outcome is a transformed relationship, where care has been extended and recognized. In Chapter 3, Anna Berardi and Brenda Morton introduce trauma-informed school practices by drawing upon the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15 to challenge readers to respond to the younger son more like the father in the story than like the older son. Using several visuals and making use of counselling approaches, Berardi and Morton present a "tri-phasic model" (p. 52) with three phases (connecting, coaching, and commencing) to help respond to "victims of social-cultural exclusion and violence" (p. 49). They also apply the model to six subsystems within a K-12 education system, including districts, schools, educators, classrooms, communities, and support systems.

Chapter four is the longest (at 33 pages), and focuses on "Game-Based Teaching Methodology and Empathy" (p. 66), by Angel Krause, Scot Headley, Danielle Bryant, Alicia Watkin, Charity-Mika Woodward, and Sherri Sinicki. The chapter describes how a Doctor of Education course in ethics delivered partly online and partly in person used various texts and a role-playing game to engage with ethical dilemmas. The chapter is co-written by the professor and five (of ten) students, who themselves taught in schools of education, a state university, and high schools. After describing functions of role-playing games and the course experience, the middle section of the chapter outlines an interview study on the experience of the doctoral

course, and the findings, which indicated a successful course with applications that fostered empathy among the students (p. 83). The interview questions are included (pp. 96–97). The last part of the chapter includes four students' stories (roughly a page and a half each) from one year after the course was completed, and how it impacted them, as well as the professor's story (roughly two pages in length), including how the game was used in his subsequent courses.

In Chapter 5, Danielle Bryant's essay outlines that empathy is a Christian calling, reminding teachers of Romans 12:15, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, mourn with those who mourn" (p. 102). Bryant developed the ACTS model to help slow down busy moments in teaching in order to allow for contemplation on empathy: "**A**ctively Listen, **C**ommunicate Back, **T**hink with Empathy, and **S**peak a Response" (p. 104, emphasis added). Bryant also gives an example of how the ACTS model has been used in an elementary classroom and another of how it was used in an undergraduate education class. In Chapter 6 David W. Anderson's essay describes "The Ethic of Care and Inclusive Education" (p. 112), starting with what is needed in inclusive education following the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and connecting it to an ethic of care. For Anderson, Christ's example of care for all, including the "diseased, disabled, outcasts, widows, Jews, gentiles, tax-collectors, adulterers" (p. 117), is the model Christians and teachers should emulate. Drawing upon his (2012) book outlining a theology of special education, Anderson ends his chapter with a description of qualities which evidence an ethic of care, including compassion, presence, interdependence and hospitality, relationship, authenticity, and service (pp. 119–122).

Alicia Watkin's Chapter 7 builds on Anderson's and addresses the responsibilities of Christian special educators. Watkins recounts numerous examples of her work as a special educator in different types of schools and argues that the greatest commandments to love God and neighbour (Mark 12:30–31) require building relationships with "students, parents, colleagues, and administrators" (p. 128). Turning to teacher education for special needs, Watkins believes collaboration is needed to learn to address Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs). She ends with three action steps she believes "special educators must put into practice: *listen*, *show up*, and *advocate*" (p. 132). In Chapter 8, Michelle C. Hughes proposes four dispositions for teachers to develop during their teacher preparation: being a lifelong learner (Proverbs 2:4), a reflective practitioner (Proverbs 24:32), a compassionate professional (Colossians 3:12), and a grateful servant (Colossians 3:18) (pp. 154–155). She also recommends individual and collective

reflection and includes two useful appendices, including one for these dispositions.

In Chapter 9, "Self and Soul Care: Spiritual Practices to Sustain Teaching" (p. 159), Stephanie Talley argues that, for Christian teachers, faith and soul care not only inform our practices but also sustain us and keep us going. Observing Sabbath, saying no, and setting boundaries are key, since "the caretaking of your soul is critical to sustainable teaching. It is as important as staying current in pedagogy" (p. 165). Talley also describes a new teacher event her institution hosts, and she offers examples of small group activities that foster discussions of faith and teaching. In the final Chapter 10, Elaine Tinholt's essay discusses "Caring for New Teachers Once They Leave Campus" (p. 174). Tinholt's focus is largely on first year teachers, and she starts by reflecting on her own first year. She discusses preparing graduates for their first year of teaching, including through higher education partnerships, and devotes sections to supporting first-year teachers, including through constructive feedback, induction support structures, supportive communication with administrators and colleagues, and practical ways to care for novice teachers. Tinholt believes that when we support and care for new teachers, "we are also caring for the students they serve in their classrooms" (p. 192).

As an academic I appreciate edited books because they embrace narratives and research that does not always appear in many journals. This collection incorporates work from 15 unique teachers and teacher educators in many different states (and one in Canada). The chapters largely reflect the efforts of these teachers and teacher educators to care for themselves, their students, and their colleagues, while there is less emphasis on the "community" at the end of the sub-title.

Challenges with edited books include bringing unity to so many different voices and order to a range of contributions. With contributions ranging from 12 to 33 pages in length, there are understandably major differences in the breadth, depth, and range of individual chapters here. The outlier for me was Krause et al.'s Chapter 4, which aimed to incorporate some empirical qualitative research yet did not meet the standards for detail that would be expected in a journal article for replication. Personally, the chapters that resonated most with me included Bryant's essay and ACTS model, Hughes' work on dispositions in education, and Talley's on self and soul care, as well as those addressing special education, a topic about which I am learning more. But the introductions to care theory and attempts to connect it to Christian educators and to theology were also useful. Since there seems to be a need for a more detailed guide about educational care and teacher wellbeing, perhaps a more developed philosophy or theology of

care in education is needed to assist Christian teachers and teacher educators in pursuing this topic further. Yet this volume offers a good foundation.

Having read Mercer (2021) and Mercer and Gregersen (2020), which are mainly geared toward individual teachers' wellbeing, I appreciated the way this edited collection brought in the church and Christian programs of education. A good read, this is a valuable book which should accordingly be in the library of every Christian college or university with an education program.

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Teaching and Learning Across Cultures: A Guide to Theory and Practice
Craig Ott. Baker Academic, 2021.

Reviewed by Mary C. Cloutier, Moody Bible Institute

Teaching cross-culturally is one of the most challenging and rewarding opportunities for

the scholar-teacher, whose great love for learning and the learner help them to overcome the unknown and unpredictable. Craig Ott has served for decades in cross-cultural theological education and church-planting, adapting his teaching to the various learning environments and students. He draws together the theories and practical applications most useful for intercultural communicators and instructors. But this is not as much a "how-to" book as "here are the many variables to consider" – which encourages the teacher to ponder, to create, to analyze, to interpret and to learn from their students. While affirming various instructional theories, Ott sees both the teacher and the student as evolving and progressing in the learning process. All teaching preferences and methods are equally considered, but there is no assumption that the teacher is limited to tradition or their learners' preferences. In our changing, interactive world, both teacher and student will benefit from such variety, carrying the new skills and understanding into future relationships and circumstances.

Chapter One of the guide helps the reader to understand the challenge of teaching cross-culturally, giving careful thought to the combination of culture and content of teaching, the various types of learning, and the contrasts of learning approaches and goals across cultures. Ministry workers, whether serving at home or abroad, will need to develop skills in teaching and training. As our cultures shape our expectations and responses, so we need to better understand the complexity of the intercultural ministry field. Creativity, innovation and willingness to change will help the teacher to better connect and communicate cross-culturally. Ott then gives a quick overview of the "five dimensions of culture's influence on teaching and learning" (p. 24), involving the overlap and interaction of cognition, worldview, social relations, media and environment.

Chapter Two offers a general definition of culture and analyzes human differences and commonalities through the three categories of the universal (genetic; characteristic of all people), the cultural (learned; characteristic of the group) and the individual (both genetic and learned; characteristic of the individual person). Neither the teacher nor the student is culturally neutral, and cross-cultural learning is both informed by, and leads to, globalization and cultural hybridization. The teacher should strive to grow in intercultural competency, self-awareness, general knowledge, attitude and experience, and purpose to be a receiver, as well as giver, in the learning process. All of this will contribute toward better communication skill and satisfying relationships in their host community.

Chapter Three discusses learning styles, learner preferences and expectations, teaching styles and the implications for teaching in various cultures. Ott acknowledges the competing educational theories, and juxtaposes studies conducted around the world, which underscore the differing outcomes and expectations in each scenario. A teacher should be aware of their students' preferences and expectations yet be willing to introduce alternative approaches new and unfamiliar to them (p. 58). The teacher and the students can both adapt, but with the expectation of some misunderstanding and discomfort in the process.

Chapters Four through Six focus on cognition, including concrete and abstract orientations, the relationship of language, literacy and cognition, critical analysis and various approaches to reasoning. This will help the teacher to better adapt questions and illustrations for clearer understanding, and how their students may approach argumentation and rhetoric. Learning may include a combination of storytelling, the use of metaphors and object lessons, proverbs, case-based instruction, mixed media and abstract teaching. The Bible gives any number of examples of teaching methods both new and familiar to the learners. Culture, environment and school all impact a student's cognitive development. Again, the teacher should seek to understand and communicate in ways understandable to the students, but also be willing to introduce new perspectives.

Chapters Seven and Eight cover the worldview dimension, including epistemological differences between cultures. Our sources of knowledge may include various combinations of science, tradition, and the supernatural. Teacher credibility and authority in a given culture may be based on their credentials, title, position, age and life experience. Worldview also impacts learner motivation, concept of time, and punctuality. The cross-cultural teacher, and their students alike, should be aware of how these factors impact learning. Worldviews can be challenged and changed in the intercultural environment, but both teacher and student should approach it with a spirit of humility. Ott encourages teachers to implement a variety of approaches for worldview change.

Chapters Nine and Ten focus on the Social Dimension, which considers status, hierarchy and authority in the community and learning environment. Teachers serving in a new culture should purpose to understand and adapt to local cultural expectations of teacher-student relationships, and help the students equally adapt to varying modes of relationship and authority. Ott gives multiple examples of teacher-student expectations across cultures. A mismatch

between a teacher's style and student expectations can lead to confusion and dissatisfaction. Status, power and authority in a culture impact how a student will communicate with the teacher and participate in the classroom setting. While the teacher should be mindful of these variables, they can combine adaptation and change to help the student feel both comfortable and challenged in the learning environment.

Chapters Eleven and Twelve deal with the media dimension of contemporary cross-cultural education. Media allows for greater variety in teaching methods but can also increase confusion and misunderstanding. Oral and written learning preferences are impacted by language differences, the availability and use of instructional materials, and expectations on note-taking and assignments. The teacher's body language, use of humor, choice of illustrations and examples, may greatly impact the student's learning experience. The teacher should also be sensitive to whether the students truly understand, and benefit from, the media used in the classroom. Incorporating drama, song and the arts can enhance learning and comprehension. As online education grows and expands, the cross-cultural teacher can adapt and improve in its use, while being mindful of its limitations. Ott gives guidelines for improving teacher effectiveness and student comfort and participation in online learning experience.

Chapter Thirteen touches on environmental conditions which impact learning. The cross-cultural teacher may have to adapt to power outages, inadequate space, equipment or teaching materials, and other interruptions to their planned course activities. Student availability, living spaces, climate, health and other conditions will impact teaching efficacy and learning outcomes. Community and family relationships, social and safety considerations, the institutional environment, student expectations and other cultural conditions will also add to the complexity of the teaching experience.

Ott recommends that cross-cultural teachers become students of their students, getting to know their culture and context, showing genuine care and concern, and fully depending on God's grace and enablement for what can be a challenging and rewarding ministry.

This guide is both highly academic and broadly applicable to real-life cross-cultural teaching. Students preparing for cross-cultural education and ministry will benefit from its comprehensive sweep of teaching theory and methods in the intercultural setting. I would recommend it for courses related to intercultural ministry, and intercultural/multicultural education. As a cross-cultural educator who has taught in a second language, I find the material

realistic, valuable and useful. Seasoned ministry workers, trainers and teachers will appreciate the honesty and affirmation that we are ever learning and adapting our teaching methods. This will be a valuable resource for the cross-cultural educator, helping them to confidently and creatively adapt their teaching to the circumstances, environment and participants.

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