

Chronicles of Hope

(Christian English Language Educators in Korea and Abroad)

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR:

By Virginia Hanslien

Welcome to our fourth issue of the Christian Teachers' Special Interest Group's Newsletter!

Good teaching involves a number of inter-related themes: sound linguistics, depth of pedagogical theory, a healthy respect for accepted praxis, enthusiasm for the craft, a love for people, motivation to help others. All of these come together with God at the core of what they do.

Good teachers are passionate teachers; we like to discuss their art. We want to learn from others in similar contexts, and share what we know works. It is in the pursuit of these ideals and goals as well as a drive for practical excellence that this newsletter receives submissions from teachers in Korea and abroad.

We hope you enjoy the interviews with Chuck Sandy, Jan Dormer, and John Liang, all plenary speakers for CELT 2016, and are inspired to reach your students in ways that you haven't thought of before.

I would also like to bring your attention to the article entitled "Trial and Error." Grace H. Wang teaches at Yonsei University where she had students listen to sermons as part of a listening/speaking class. What is of note here is that Yonsei University was founded by missionaries. It has a Christian heritage, but

many of the professors, students, and administration are not Christian. She describes this as a "Christian-secular" university and the results of her article will be of interest to those who teach in secular or "Christian-secular" environments.

We look forward to CELT 2016. Registration is open at <http://koreatesol.org/content/christian-teachers>. I ask that you would join us in prayer as we go through the final stages of planning. Our theme is collaboration: join us as we build community among Christian teachers in South Korea and abroad.



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Trial and Error By Grace H. Wang

Trial and Error: The Use of Christian Materials in an English Language Course at a Christian-Secular University

In her book Teaching English in Missions: Effectiveness and Integrity (Dormer, 2011), Jan Dormer argues for the notion of TESOL as missions for Christian English language educators, i.e. Christian TESOL practitioners serving as ambassadors and missionaries for Christ in any English teaching context, without necessarily being affiliated with a missions organization.

Dr. Dormer describes four types of TESOL ministry (host evangelism, host discipleship, ambassador evangelism, and ambassador discipleship), depending on whether the context is Christian (host) or non-Christian (ambassador), and whether the goals of the TESOL ministry within each context involve non-Christians (evangelism) or Christians (discipleship).

When a TESOL ministry falls neatly into one of these four categories, there is less ambiguity regarding the use of Christian materials in the English language classroom. For example, Christian materials would be welcome in Christian contexts (such as in a Christian school), but they would likely be unwelcome, if not prohibited, in non-Christian TESOL settings.

Ambiguity regarding Christian materials is rife, however, when a TESOL setting does not fall neatly into one of Dormer's four categories. In Ko-

rea, there are some TESOL settings where the broader context is officially stated to be Christian, but the context at the classroom level is more secular than Christian. That is, while an institution may officially embrace its Christian heritage, values and principles, the content and style of instruction at the class level are largely secular. These TESOL contexts may be called Christian-secular, neither clearly Christian nor clearly secular.

In such settings there is ambiguity about whether Christian materials should be used in language classrooms at all, or, even if there may be a clear allowance for the use of Christian materials, ambiguity about how much and the way in which the materials should be used.

This article will describe one trial of Christian materials that was conducted amidst such ambiguity at a Christian-secular Korean university in a freshman college English listening and speaking course. Then, the article will conclude with some insights that were gained from this trial regarding how Christian materials may be used in Christian-secular contexts.

Setting

This trial was undertaken at a Korean university initially founded as a Christian university, but which had evolved in its content and delivery of academic degree programs to embrace Christian values and principles at more of a foundational level than a practical one

that focused on training and equipping Christian graduates. As a result, it has decidedly mixed Christian and non-Christian elements in its culture. Students do not have to be Christian to be admitted to the university but are required to take a minimum number of credits in chapel classes and courses on Christianity in order to graduate.

The freshman College English courses are required courses for all freshman except those who are waived as result of their English placement examinations. These courses are taught with no requirements made by the institution to address Christian topics in the syllabus or curriculum. Neither, however, are there any stated prohibitions against addressing Christian topics in the syllabus or the curriculum.

The class that underwent the trial of Christian materials consisted of four sections of the intermediate college English listening and speaking course, with a total combined number of 64 participating students. The students were of mixed Christian and non-Christian backgrounds. Some students did not participate in the trial because of absenteeism or failure to complete assigned homework.

Christian Materials

The materials used for the trial were the audios and transcripts of two sermons by John F. MacArthur Jr. from

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“Christian materials...are likely to be unwelcome, if not prohibited, in non-Christian TESOL settings.”

An Interview with Chuck Sandy



“Sometimes Grace says, ‘Go here and do this,’ and ‘No, there are no other options because this is what you need to do...’ Grace led me here.”

How did you get involved with English language teaching?

I’m not aware of anyone who grew up longing to become an English language teacher, and I’m no different. In fact, I never imagined that I would become a teacher. Growing up, I was most interested in the printed word, so I spent my university years studying literature, taking many creative writing courses, and even majored in journalism for a while. I drifted along with no clear idea about what I might do with my life.

One day my academic supervisor informed me that I had almost enough credits to graduate. I only needed to fulfill a single independent study requirement, but what should have been good news caused me to panic. With no real skills except the ability to read critically and write fairly well, graduating from university was a frightening prospect. I could barely focus as my advisor explained the options available for fulfilling my missing graduation requirement. I had no idea what to do and wasn’t even sure I wanted to graduate yet, so I said I’d think it all over and get back to him.

When I did get back to him, there was only one independent study option left: serving as an assistant to a professor who was teaching a special section of the English department’s Freshman Composition course. The professor turned out to be Dr. Martha Howard, the

Dean of International Students. She explained that since a large group of Japanese students would be entering the University in the coming semester, she’d decided to offer a special section of the course to them. She’d teach and I would assist by grading papers and providing extra help. To get the credit, I would have to keep a reflective journal, write a couple of papers, and meet with her several times a week. None of this sounded like fun to me, but what choice did I have? This is how Grace works sometimes.

Sometimes Grace says, “Go here and do this,” and “No, there are no other options because this is what you need to do...” That is how I wound up in that classroom with Dean Howard and those Japanese students. It took me years to understand the depth of this Grace, but I can tell you that it was in that classroom where I first discovered my life’s calling, met the woman I would one day marry, and took my first steps into a life that’s been entirely in education and mostly in Japan.

Here’s the short answer to your question: Grace led me here.

Writing this now, I can’t help but think of these lines from Thomas Merton as I continue to live the truth of them: “I was not sure where I was going, and I could not see what I would do when I got there. But you saw me further and clearer than I, and you opened

the seas before my ship, whose track led across the waters to a place I had never dreamed of, and which you were even then preparing to be my rescue and my shelter and my home.”

Our readers would be interested in your journey from professor to educational activist. Could you explain how these changes came about?

Although I’ve always been an activist of sorts, it was during my speaking tours for Cambridge University Press when I was first offered the opportunity to see the incredible need faced by teachers working in the developing world in very difficult circumstances. Having the chance to work with teachers who had very little opened my eyes, and once my eyes were opened I couldn’t look away.

Still, what could one person do? Working alone, not much. This is why I began joining and building organizations that could provide material assistance along with development opportunities to teachers working in what one could call poverty. Later though, I began to understand that poverty can’t be defined as a lack of basic necessities. Poverty is better defined as an absence of hope, and that’s something endemic to educators all over the world- not just in the developing world. This poverty is everywhere and it’s

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An Interview with Chuck Sandy

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enough to break your heart.

Yet, heartbreak is the exact place at which God calls us most clearly, says my friend Lowell Shepard. It's right there where our hearts break where we find our work, in this very place Christ's suffering becomes visible to us in the world. Once I saw this need for healing, I couldn't look away.

I don't want to say too much here, but this is how I became an educational activist and it's why I eventually left my university position. There came a point when I could no longer do the work my university required of me while also doing the work I came to quietly understand that I'd been called to do.

Years before this, I'd heard my friend Bob Stilger say, "Whatever the problem, community is the answer," and that "Your community is full of leaders waiting to be asked to step forward," and these lines really resonated with me. Even though I quoted them often and even worked them into the iTDi principles, I wasn't able to truly live them until Grace knocked me free from my university job.

That's when I was allowed to see how the International Teacher Development Institute I'd helped to found already provided a structure that could help alleviate the suffering of teachers who'd either lost hope or were in danger of losing it. Since that community of educators all over the world

is full of leaders waiting to be asked to step forward, I made it my business to call them, and that's at the heart of the work I do now. I've written about this in an article called *The Miracles of Community Leadership* in which I say,

Each and every day I am a witness to teachers working miracles of community leadership. I watch as they encourage the discouraged, empower the powerless, and welcome the stranger into their midst. I see them conquer their fears, rise out of depressions, take on new challenges, and grow in ways they not long ago thought possible. When one does not have the skills needed to do the work that needs to be done, I watch as others step forward to offer assistance. When one falls back in need of rest and renewal, I watch as others step forward with open hands and say yes. When one suffers the sort of loss that leads to clenched fists and a closed-up heart, I watch as others step in and lift that one back up. This is how leadership works in community. We take turns doing what we can for each other, and we do it because we're teachers and this is what we do. We build, we connect, we comfort, and we love. We hold each other. We don't break faith. This is how we keep the lights lit, and how we hold the sea back from engulfing us all.

And once I understood that God helps to work these miracles of community leadership, I also discovered how God provides me with enough so that I'm able to make this underpaid work my work.

What is the International Development Institute (iTDi)?

iTDi is an online community of teachers around the world working together to become better teachers. Although we do some work in the physical sense, we mostly offer online courses, certificates programs, and other professional development opportunities that are open to all teachers—regardless of their background or ability to pay—because all the founders believe that teachers everywhere are hungry for community and connection and that maybe hope can be restored one teacher at a time by offering this in a very real way.

At this moment, we serve thousands of teachers in over 90 countries around the world and have a faculty that includes people like John Fanselow, Penny Ur, Scott Thornbury, Jill Hadfield, and Stephen Krashen. In addition to all these big names, we also offer several ways for all teachers to step forward and present their ideas live in our Summer Intensive, in writing on the iTDi Blog, or via our new collaboration with Gallery Teachers. There are also opportunities to mentor or be mentored, as well as other ways to serve and be served. To get involved, all you have to do is ask. You don't need to wait for someone to call.

For those who believe in the iTDi mission and yet are too busy with their own work to

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"Yet, heartbreak is the exact place at which God calls us most clearly...it's right there where our hearts break where we find our work..."



“I have identified four ‘M’s that can characterize ESOL teaching as Christian: Methods, Modeling, Materials, and Mentoring.”

An Interview with Jan Dormer

How did you get connected with English language teaching?

I grew up as the daughter of missionaries in Brazil, and began tutoring Brazilians in English when I was just a teenager. It was natural, then, for me to pursue an MA in TESOL right after completing my undergraduate degree in Elementary Education. I married a Canadian pastor, and began my TESOL career teaching adult immigrants in Ontario. After eight years in Canada we became missionaries, and I taught ESOL in just about every imaginable context during our years in Indonesia, Brazil, and Kenya. One thing I love about TESOL is the variety it offers. I have enjoyed teaching all age groups, at all language levels, in all different types of schools and programs.

Tell our readers about your teaching context. Where do you teach and how long have you been there? What kind of courses do you teach?

I am an Associate Professor of TESOL at Messiah College, where I mostly teach in our graduate level TESOL programs. I have been at Messiah College for four years — ever since we returned from serving overseas. Our graduate program at Messiah College includes four main TESOL courses, which comprise our Graduate TESOL Certificate. Students can then go on to complete our full M.Ed. in TESOL. I teach Second Language Acquisition, TESOL in Ministry, TESOL Methods, and

offer thesis supervision. I do teach a course focusing on Global TESOL and TESOL Ministry at the undergraduate level as well. I am passionate about helping all of my students discover how they can serve God and others through TESOL!

One of the goals of the Christian Teachers Special Interest Group (CT-SIG) is to explore the way our faith connects to our teaching contexts. Can you comment on this? What are some of the ways you connect your faith to your teaching?

My faith saturates my teaching! God has called me to be salt and light for Him, just as he has called all of us, no matter what our professions. TESOL is the vocation He has given me in which to do this. At the same time, He has given me a passion for TESOL, and the exuberance and joy that I have when teaching ESOL or TESOL comes from Him.

On a more concrete level, I have identified four “M”s that can characterize ESOL teaching as Christian: Methods, Modeling, Materials, and Mentoring. How these aspects play out will vary from context to context. In the Christian English school that I developed in Brazil, our program was transparently Christian, and we saw a lot of spiritual growth in our students and staff. When I taught English for three years in a Muslim elementary school in Indonesia, these principles played out very differently. To learn more about these M’s of

Christian ESOL, come to my plenary at CELT Seoul!

Tell our readers about your book, *Teaching English in Missions: Effectiveness and Integrity*.

During my years on the mission field I discovered that though there were many people engaged in English ministry, few had training in TESOL. At the same time, criticism against “Teaching English as a Missionary Language” (e.g. Pennycook & Coutand-Marin, 2003) began to emerge from the professional TESOL community.

As someone with a foot in both the missionary and the professional TESOL world, I felt God nudging me to explore what characterized teaching English in missions *well*. I focused in on the need for *effectiveness* — to have the training needed to truly teach English well, and *integrity* — to be honest and transparent in our claims and actions.

My book first provides cautions against the use of TESOL ministry without appropriate preparation and understanding, outlining the possible four “harms.” It then goes on to explain 4 distinct types of TESOL ministry, drawn from differing goals and contexts: host evangelism, host discipleship, ambassador evangelism, and ambassador discipleship. Finally, my book seeks to show what the hallmarks of effectiveness and integrity in TESOL Ministry are, in what I hope is a reader-friendly tone with lots of anecdotes from real ministry experiences!

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An Interview with Chuck Sandy

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get involved, we also offer the chance to contribute financially by becoming an iTDi Patron. This is especially important as we give scholarship to any teacher who requests one, and typically over 50% of the teachers taking our courses are on scholarship.

One of the goals of the Christian Teachers Special Interest Group is to explore ways our faith connects to our teaching contexts. Can you comment on this?

It's pretty clear that Christ calls us to serve others regardless of where they're from or what they believe. He also calls us to come together in community and tells us again and again in the gospels that through His and the power of the Holy Spirit, that we're called to be the hands, feet, hearts, and minds of the miracles and graces He has intended for the people we serve. Though I sometimes fail at this, I keep trying my best to live all this in my life and in my work. It's through these efforts, which include many failures, that I've come to know Christ more clearly. By working in community to help others while also allowing others to help me, Christ comes closer and increasingly visible in me.

Working to make Christ visible in my person and through my work is important because like many of us, I do my work in contexts where Christ is not

readily welcome and with people who are not yet ready to hear the truth of the gospels. I can't come in with gospel answers, but I can come in as an ambassador of His kingdom and a reflection of His light. I've yet to encounter anyone anywhere in the world who is not somehow aware that there's something going on far greater than whatever work we appear to be doing. By His grace, this is the moment when questions sometimes get asked. I can answer with gospel truth, a door opens up, and a journey into Christ begins for someone. My job as a person of faith is to keep my eyes and ears open for such moments while continuously working in ways that His light may shine, and encourage those moments into being.

The theme for CELT 2016 is collaboration. How do you address collaboration in your teaching context?

All the work I do is collaborative, and though I think I've already outlined my collaborative efforts, I'll add the most challenging aspect of this work involves disappearing far enough into the background once work gets going that it seems to have nothing to do with me.

A good book on this process that I need to reread is to **Embracing Christianity: Becoming Nothing in the Light of God's Everything**. Appropriately enough, the author is Anonymous. When we put Christ as the center of what we do, the pursuit of our own glory cannot become a part of the equation. The real work of a collaborative master is to disappear so that others get

the credit and God gets the glory.

Years ago, Charles Barton, a former Headmaster at Nagoya International School, perfected this for me. When I was given an opportunity to speak at his funeral, I talked about a recipe for dream builders. I'm modifying it here as a recipe for collaboration.

A Recipe for Collaborative Kingdom Builders

Look far into the future, trusting in Christ's beautiful vision. Share that vision with words as you can but always through the work you do. Listen carefully to others and be willing to compromise on the details, but be unwavering about the vision. Make each person know that nothing would be possible without his or her unique contribution- no matter how small- and make it seem like hard work is fun. Do it all with a smile and a wink.

As the work progresses, get all to believe that the ongoing work they set in motion was actually their idea. Thank each person by name and lead with so much love that they forget that none of this was actually possible until they all arrived. Because you know that Christ has been at the center all along, take no credit for any of it, and be sure to give God the glory. When the time comes, leave everyone believing they didn't really need you. Understand that the work will continue on without you because it's never been about you. It's about His Kingdom. Embrace that truth and accept it humbly as you disappear into the love of Christ.

"It's pretty clear that Christ calls us to serve others...we're called to be the hands, feet, hearts, and minds of the miracles and graces He has intended for the people we serve."

An Interview with Jan Dormer

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The theme for CELT 2016 is collaboration. How do you address collaboration in your teaching context? What collaborative projects are you currently working on?

I love this theme, and I am hard-pressed to think of any part of my career that has not been marked by collaboration. My doctoral research focused on NEST-NNEST (Native English Speaking Teacher and Non-Native English Speaking Teacher) collaboration and relationships at Christian schools in Indonesia and Brazil. That research resulted in a template that schools can use to ensure positive and mutually-edifying relationships, which I call “shared competence,” between NESTs and NNESTs on staff (See Dormer, 2012).

Currently, I am part of a team developing an ESL program at our church. Our area has many Somali refugees who are Muslim. As these individuals have begun coming into our church for ESL classes, we have had many hurdles! However, collaboration, with our shared goal of Christian ministry, is taking us through the bumps in the road. It is exciting to see what God is doing, and none of it would be possible without the work of many people, each carrying out their part and contributing to the whole.

What aspects of collaboration do you find particularly challenging?

Working closely with others always requires a high degree of compromise, and that is sometimes hard! If our new church-based ESL program is

really going to be a team effort, for example, that means that what I think is “best” may not always prevail. Others need opportunities to use their ideas, and to learn from experience. What I try to keep front and center in my thinking is that this is *God’s* program, not mine. He is fully capable of carrying out His plan despite our human missteps and imperfections. That perspective helps me to extend grace and support instead of insisting on my own ideas.

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“What I try to keep front and center in my thinking is that this is God’s program, not mine. He is fully capable of carrying out His plan despite our human missteps and imperfections.”



“John, if I were to have an interview with you on the phone, I would take you as an American and would offer you a teaching position. But if we were to have a face-to-face interview... I would not hire you since you’re not a native speaker.”

An Interview with John Liang

How did you get connected with English language teaching?

English language teaching wasn't what I initially dreamed about as a career when I studied English as a major in college in China. Initially, I dreamed about pursuing a career related to foreign affairs or international journalism. I had never thought about teaching English until my senior year when I had a chance to tutor a Cantonese businessman who was planning to immigrate to the U.S. In his mid-thirties, the business man had no formal education in English.

As I was planning for the tutoring sessions with him, I naturally followed the way I was taught and trained in English in college. I remembered that during the very first two months of my first-year English studies in English, all I focused on practicing was accent reduction. So I decided to spend three months with him, drilling him in pronunciation, hoping that he could learn to pronounce words clearly and accurately before he proceeded to learn conversational English.

To my amazement, in three months of intensive drilling practice, he was able to pronounce words clearly without any Cantonese accent. That was very encouraging. For the first time, I felt that teaching English could perhaps be a career to pursue.

A year later, I graduated

from college and was admitted as a distinguished college graduate to a graduate program in English language and literature at the same university where I did undergraduate studies. At that time, as a first-year graduate student, I had to do a teaching practicum in a freshman class for English majors under the supervision of a professor as my master teacher.

On the first day of the practicum, however, the professor, who was one of my English instructors in college, fell sick and did not show up for class. After we waited for fifteen minutes, the students began to urge me to teach the lesson instead. Not knowing where the courage came from, I walked up to the podium in the front and started teaching, unprepared, unplanned.

That lesson turned out to be a great success, to my surprise! Both the professor and the English department heard of the success and allowed me to continue to teach for a total of four weeks until the master teacher had fully recovered.

For the second time, I felt strongly that I might want to seriously consider pursuing a career in English language teaching in a college setting.

With this dream, I came to the U.S. for graduate studies in English, hoping not to return to China.

While studying in the U.S., there were many challenges I had to battle. Academics were never the issue. What often caused me to be in doubt was lack of recognition of me as a non-native speaker to be an English teacher. Many of my friends

from China laughed at me, commenting, “So, John, why are you studying English in graduate school? You see, many of us are studying either business or science, so we can get a job here. But look at what you are studying! English? You really think you can teach Americans English?”

One of the most disconcerting comments I heard was from one of my American supervisors in an ESL program where I worked as a student secretary. “John, if I were to have an interview with you on the phone, I would take you as an American and would offer you a teaching position. But if we were to have a face-to-face interview and I saw you in person, I would not hire you since you’re not a native speaker.” His comment was encouraging and discouraging at the same time. He saw potential in me as a qualified ESL instructor and yet I was deemed disqualified for being an Asian, not a white, Caucasian native speaker of English.

The affirmation came during the first winter break of doctoral studies at the University of Texas in Austin when I received a letter from a student back in China. She wrote, “We’ll be graduating from college in a year. The other day, several of us were talking about the best teachers we had in college. One of my classmates mentioned that you were the ONLY best teacher she had, and we miss you. The postcard was a timely encouragement since at that time I had almost come to a decision to change majors. The timely arrival of that letter completely changed my life.

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An Interview with John Liang

It affirmed the dream I had to be a teacher whose job it is to bring blessings in many respects to his students.

Tell our readers about your teaching context. Where do you teach and how long have you been there? What kind of courses do you teach?

After I completed my doctoral studies at the University of Texas in Austin, I joined the University of California in Riverside, where I directed and developed an ESL program in the Learning Center, offering ESL courses to international graduate students, including international teaching assistants (ITAs), who taught college reading and writing to first-year students in the summer bridge program. I joined Biola University, a private Christian university in Los Angeles, and have ever since been teaching in their MA TESOL program as a teacher trainer. The courses I have taught involve pedagogical English Grammar, ESL materials, ESL teaching practicum, language testing, teaching second language reading, teaching second language writing, teaching English pronunciation, and technology-enhanced language learning.

One of the goals of the Christian Teachers Special Interest Group (CT-SIG) is to explore the way our faith connects to our teaching contexts. Can you comment on this? What are some of the ways you connect your faith to your teaching?

As teachers with Christian convictions, faith is inseparable from our teaching practice.

This is true of teaching English as a second or foreign language; it is also true to training future ESOL teachers!

I would like to briefly discuss how faith can shape our teaching beliefs and practices.

First, faith informs us of our purpose. To teach is more than to inform the mind; to teach is also to form and transform the heart of the learner! Yet, the only source that can affect the change in the heart of the learner is to know God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, to teach is to ultimately lead our students to the knowledge of the Truth, who will change their hearts, spirits, and minds. Making this connection, we ought to say as one of our goals: **“We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.”** (Col 1:28-29 NIV)

Faith also provides teachers with perspective on the learners. First, like us, they are also created in the image of God, even though this image is blurred due to sin. Therefore, to teach is to be the teaching vessel of the Holy Spirit that works within the lives of our students. Second, our students are “God’s flock that is under our care.” (1 Peter 5:2 NIV)

This leads us to a Christian perspective on the role and attitude of the teacher. As teachers, we ought not **“provoke (our students) to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from**

the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4 NLT)

As teachers, we need to **“Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them — not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve: not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.”** (1 Peter 5:2-4)

I can go on and on and on, but I feel that with these three perspectives informed by our Christian faith, we can teach with a renewed attitude—the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

The theme for CELT 2016 is collaboration. How do you address collaboration in your teaching context? What collaborative projects are you currently working on?

Many teachers feel that teaching is solitary. As teachers, we often feel that the classroom walls are confining; this limits our thinking within the walls. Yet, to be a teacher is first to be a learner. Therefore, teachers should bravely tear down the “walls” within their teaching mindset, and collaboration is one great strategy a teacher can implement to break the “walls.”

For the past several years, I have been collaborating with a like-minded teacher trainer in a K-12 setting in an academic outreach to K-12 English teachers in East Asia. This collaboration has pushed both of us out of our comfort zones (continued on page 12)

“Many teachers feel that teaching is solitary. As teachers, we often feel that the classroom walls are confining; this limits our thinking within the walls.”

Trial and Error by Grace H. Wang

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Grace to You (<http://www.gty.org>):

The Virgin Birth: <http://www.gty.org/resources/sermons/2181/the-virgin-birth>

Jesus' Birth Fulfills Prophecy: <http://www.gty.org/resources/sermons/80-163/jesus-birth-fulfills-prophecy>

Reasons for choosing the sermons for the trial:

- They contained solid exegetical Bible teaching rather than experience-based preaching.
- The factual, logical and detailed nature of the content had the potential to appeal to critically-thinking minds.
- They were about an event that is familiar to nearly all people, the birth of Jesus Christ.
- John F. MacArthur Jr. is a gifted teacher, preacher and expositor, as well as an excellent speaker.
- Transcripts were available along with the audio recordings free of charge.

Also used were one-page introductions to both sermons written by a graduate from the university who is now attending seminary in the United States. Included at the end of each introduction was a list of useful vocabulary from the sermon.

The Assignment

The sermons were used for two consecutive weeks in lieu of the regular hour-long, weekly classes as well as the required extensive listening assignments. After the two weeks, the students resumed their extensive listening assignments consisting just of TED videos.

The task was first introduced with an explanation of its rationale that a part of the responsibility of students in attending a Christian university is to gain a better understanding of Christianity and the Bible. The university sees to this by requiring students to attend chapel classes and taking a minimum number of credits in courses about Christianity. It was explained that the task would be a short-term trial only, and the decision to continue or discontinue it will depend on students' responses to it.

The students were then asked to read the introduction to the first sermon and study the vocabulary list before listening to the sermon for homework. The students were also given an opportunity in class to discuss the introduction in small groups to give some thought to what they might expect to hear from the sermon in advance.

For homework, the students were asked to listen to the audio of the hour-long sermon with the help of the accompanying transcript, pausing the recording as necessary to enhance their comprehension. After listening, they were asked to write at least 100 words to discuss what they learned, thought, or felt from the sermon, making some specific reference to what the pastor said and providing some evidence in their response to demonstrate that

they had listened to the entire sermon, not just read the transcript.

Analysis of Responses

The responses from students were sorted into three categories: (1) positive effect or response, (2) neutral effect or response, (3) negative effect or response.

The criteria for (1) positive effect or response:

- the student specifically described or mentioned a positive experience or outcome as a result of the listening exercise;
- the student expressed or demonstrated a positive change in his or her perception of God, Jesus, the Bible, or Christianity.

The criteria for (2) neutral effect or response:

- no mention was made as to the quality of experience or outcome gained as a result of the listening exercise;
- no change in the student's perception of God, Jesus, the Bible, or Christianity was discernible in the response.

The criteria for (3) negative effect or response:

- the student explicitly described or mentioned a negative experience or outcome relating to the content of the sermon rather than the difficulty of the listening task;
- the student expressed or demonstrated a negative change in his or her perception of God, Jesus, the Bible, or Christianity.

Trial and Error by Grace H. Wang

Results

A total of 114 responses were analyzed. Of these, 68 (59.4%) were positive, 41 (36%) were neutral, and 5 (4.4%) were negative.

The following paraphrased comments represent the best of the positive effect or response group:

- some students stated that while they remained unbelievers, they came to accept the possibility that the Bible may be true or credible;
- some unbelieving students came to develop an interest in learning more about Jesus;
- believing students came to develop a heightened interest in studying the Bible and learning more actual facts about Jesus;
- students mentioned that what the Bible has to say is more logical than they thought;
- while one student had believed in evolution, he or she came to think that creation may also be possible;
- one student was glad to have some of his or her prejudices about the Bible and Christianity corrected;
- some unbelieving students expressed surprise in learning that there is actual evidence about Jesus Christ;
- some believing students were edified in their faith in some way.

The following paraphrased comments represent those

typical of the neutral effect or response group:

- a summary of what the student understood the pastor to have said;
- that listening to the first sermon was difficult, but it got easier with the second sermon
- that the sermon was difficult to understand because the student lacked background knowledge in Christianity

The following paraphrased comments were the strongest of the (3) negative effect of response group:

- that the student felt his or her belief system was being imposed upon;
- that the pastor sounded aggressive;
- that the sermon was making the student feel averse towards Christianity.

Discussion

1. While the ratio of positive responses to neutral seems encouraging, it has to be borne in mind that some students may have written what they felt the teacher would like to hear. Thus, the actual number of the positive group responses is probably somewhat lower than what was indicated by the students' responses.
2. In addition, some students may have shied away from being overtly negative and wrote neutral responses, instead. Therefore, the low number of negative responses may need to be viewed with caution.

3. What was most surprising were the three strongly negative responses. Though the number is small, these responses show that a negative affective barrier may have been raised in these students, possibly rendering language learning more challenging, at least during the period of the trial. This was of special concern because the first mandate of the TESOL professional, Christian or non-Christian, is to be an effective English language teacher.

Implications and Conclusion

Some insights that were taken away by the author from this trial of Christian materials in the English language classroom of a Christian-secular setting are as follows:

1. Using Christian materials is, in general, a good idea, as there is some clear potential for attracting students to the biblical truths concerning Jesus Christ.
2. However, it would be a good idea first to ascertain the religious 'temperature' of the class before deciding on what materials to use and how. The use of a sermon, no matter how good it may be, may pose affective challenges for some students.

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An Interview with John Liang

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and prompted us to extend our expertise in an area beyond our current teaching field. For him, he is conversant with theory and practice in K-12 settings in the U.S., and to strengthen our professional outreach, he needs to pursue new knowledge and skills in the English language teaching field; for me, I am well-familiarized with the beliefs and practices in teaching English to adults, and yet I need to come to a better understanding of the learning process pertaining to young adults in an EFL secondary setting. It is this type of collaboration that brings us down on our knees in full cognizance of our need to continue learning and growing.

Another collaborative project I am doing is a research study I am doing with a secondary teacher from East Asia. She has a passion for experi-

menting with task- and project-based learning in her English classes. Though she has made many achievements out of intuition, she needs to learn to approach her classroom instruction more systematically and consistently, and this is where I can play a role to assist her. As for me, the extended learning opportunities have helped me come to an experiential understanding of the many problems and possibilities of implementing task- and project-based learning in an examination-based culture, thus expanding my theoretical understanding that will help me better train the teachers-in-preparation in my program.

What aspects of collaboration do you find particularly challenging?

There are many challenges educators have to deal with in collabora-

tion, such as being in a different time zone, coming from different backgrounds, having different personalities, etc. Perhaps, one of the biggest is lack of humility. While differences represent growth opportunities, only when the collaborators are truly humble can they work in true partnership and collaboration. A correct attitude, the collaborators' willingness to play second fiddle, is essential to any successful collaboration. For this, Romans 12:10 has always been very encouraging: "Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle." (Romans 12:10 The Message) In my experience, when collaborators stand in humility in full acknowledgement of a unifying vision and as a result are truly willing to play second fiddle in support of each other, there will be successful collaboration, with His name being glorified.

"When collaborators stand in humility in full acknowledgement of a unifying vision and as a result are truly willing to play second fiddle, there will be successful collaboration, with His name being glorified."

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(continued from page 11)

3. In language classes of Christian-secular settings, students should be given the option to engage and interact with Christian materials by choice rather than by course requirement. Mandatory engagement may be appropriate for other types of classes, but in the language classroom, consideration needs to be given to maintaining as low an affective barrier as possible to maximize language learning.

Dormer, Jan (2011). Teaching English in Missions: Effectiveness and Integrity. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library.



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Christian Teachers SIG (CT-SIG)

Purpose Statement:

The purpose of this group is to inspire Christian teachers to seek excellence in their teaching, integrity in their lifestyle, and serve others by:

- providing role models who integrate their faith with their profession.
- sharing resources for teaching and personal growth
- encouraging one another through fellowship and worship

Highlights from the International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching

The International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching is a free, open-access publication from the Christian English Language Educators Association (CELEA), an international, non-profit association for those in English language teaching. It is supported by the Department of Applied Linguistics and TESOL in the Cook School of Intercultural Studies at Biola University, Mirada, California.

Here are some highlights from Volume 2 (2015):

Thankfully second language acquisition (SLA) research has recently begun to address Christian learners and teachers, concluding that sacred texts can and do enhance motivation in SLA (Lepp-Kaethler & Dornyei, 2013), “learners’ empowerment arising from their faith in God” is possible (DING, 2013, p. 202), and Christian teachers can experience an integration of their Christianity and their profession as English language professionals (Chan, 2013). p 47

An ecological perspective of language learning shifts educators away from the traditional notions of language classroom being places for only linguistic transactions and communicative exchanges. Instead, learners are seen as complex and existing in unfinalized timescales: they are “social actors” engaging in “symbiotic competence” who have potential for “creating multiple meanings and identities” (Kramsch, 2008, pp 400-402). Such a shift in pedagogical approach is welcomed since it preserves a holistic conception of the learner that is inclusive of the intricate dimensions of being part of humanity. The second language classroom should be an interactive environment that engages the dimensions of the human experiences including issues of spirituality, ethics, and morality. p 59

...“good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher ... Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects and their students so that the students can learn to weave a world for themselves” - “a meaningful world,”... (Stevick’s) power to generate connections instantiated by the scholars whose essays are gathered in **Meaningful Action**. p 75

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