From the Director!

It’s hard to believe we are more than halfway through the spring semester! We are so good at planning our activities, and organizing our schedule, yet we are still surprised by the speed at which we move along the teaching and learning path. Our midterms are done (I hope you did well!) and now we will plan for projects, finals, and celebrations.

Speaking of celebrations, I want to share with you a wonderful surprise we had about one month ago. I thought it was going to be just another normal morning when I came into the office. As I walked by the ESL registration area, I saw balloons, candy, and many “Thank You” notes on the counter. Then I saw more balloons, candy, and notes on other desks. I went upstairs to the teachers’ workroom where the classroom aides work and... guess what! There was food, too! It was clear that someone was thanking us, but who it was, was still a mystery to me. Then I saw a big board with many, many notes of appreciation for our office staff. They were signed by our teachers! So, our teachers were thanking the office staff for all their hard work. Mystery solved.

This is a wonderful example of our excellent program. It highlights the way we work together as a team to provide you, the students, with great classroom teaching that cannot be done by the teachers alone. The teachers, the registration staff, the counselors, supervisors, and managers all work together to bring the best learning experience to the students as possible. Have you heard the saying “It takes a village to raise a child”? Well, I can tell you that it takes a village to offer great ESL instruction, too!

Best of luck with your studies!
Dr. Liza Becker
Director, ESL

“I’m a success today because I had a friend who believed in me and I didn’t have the heart to let him down.”
-Abraham Lincoln
16th President of the United States
Here Today, Gone Tomorrow

The Spanish proverb, “Nadie sabe lo que tiene hasta que lo ve perdido” means that nobody knows what they have until it is gone or lost. An example of this happened to my father. It is sad to say but he did not how important my mother was for him until last year when my mother passed away. To be exact it was last year on January 18, 2013. It has been one year already since my mother passed away and left my father, siblings and I an emptiness that nothing can fill. Since her death, my father has not been the same. He still cannot accept her death. After seventy five years of being married and sharing with her most of his life, and now he cannot picture himself all alone in their house without a companion or anyone to talk to. Now he realized how important my mother was in his life, and what my mother had done for him. As an illustration, she was a devoted wife almost until she passed away at eighty years old. She used to do everything for him. On her last days of life, she could not get up from bed due to a fall from the walker that she was sitting on that caused her a trauma in her back. As a result she had a very sharp pain in her chest and back. She could not move, but she always asked my oldest sister who was taking care of her. “Did your dad already eat? Please make sure that he eats on time.” She was really sick and all she cared about was my father. Now that my mother is not here anymore my father says, “When I lost my parents I felt sad, but now that I lost my wife, I feel like a part of me has died with her. I wish I could see her again to tell her how important she was for me and how miserable I feel without her. Nothing is going to be the same after her loss.” Until now if my dad sees a picture of my mother or if he talks about her, my father starts to cry. For me, this Spanish proverb “Nadie sabe lo que tiene hasta que lo ve perdido” is completely true that nobody sees the value of what we have until is lost or gone, but sometimes at that point, it is too late to be sorry or to ask to be forgiven because there is not much to do.

Martha Plascencia
Writing C

Learn everything you can, anytime you can, from anyone you can, there will always come a time when you will be grateful you did.”

Sarah Caldwell
Author, Inspirational Speaker
I have a dream that I want to be a writer because writing is interesting, and it appeals to me a lot. First of all, in my own stories, I can be anyone, go anywhere, and do anything. I often dreamed when I was writing. Sometimes, I wrote that I went to hundreds of years ago, and met a king in China. We made friends, and I helped him to protect his country. Sometimes, I wrote that I was a super hero in modern society. I solved a lot of mysteries to find the truth. I helped the police to beat bad guys and saved many people too. Sometimes, I wrote that I went to the future to stop a world war. If I did not do that, the world would be destroyed. My writing often records the memories that I was interested in.

Another reason is that writing creates and stores many useful thoughts. If I got some good ideas, I like to write them down. I used writing to organize my ideas and thoughts, then put them into passages. I thought they would be useful someday. During my school time, I read a lot, such as stories, news, dictionaries and other categories of books. After reading, I usually wrote short paragraphs about what I was thinking, and what I learnt from them. The paragraphs created my thoughts, and shared them in my notes even though I forgot them from my mind. I could use my ideas which I noted in the lecture, to complete my projects, even to get high scores on some important exams! For example, I had a very important interview eight years ago. The examiner asked me to talk about the TV shows in China. It was a professional question, and the topic was very general. I was very worried about it until I remembered that I wrote a passage named “if I were a TV show producer.” The passage was written by me after I got some ideas about Chinese TV shows several years ago. I just told the examiners about what I wrote, the examiners were all surprised. Of course, I got a very high score on the interviews.

Finally, I think writing is a polite way to show your feelings and opinions, which are very hard to say to others. Sometimes, I was affected by jobs, studying, friends etc. Some things made me happy, some things made me disappointed, and some things made me even crazy. I wrote down things which were special. I could share my happiness and anger with others, with organizations and specific details. One month ago, my friend, Leo, lied to me. I was very angry. I wanted to quarrel with him, but I thought that was not polite, and I knew that quarrels never solve problems. I cooled down and wrote a paragraph about “lies harm trust”, and I was angry and sad about him. He read it and thought a lot. Finally, he came to talk with me that he noticed he was wrong, and he would never lie again. In conclusion, writing is a good hobby that makes me to close with my dreams, and makes me better.

Yang Yang
Becoming Fluent in Speaking and Writing English

If you want to become a fluent English speaker you should take some advice: There are four skills in learning English which are reading, listening, speaking, and writing.

The most important thing you must bear in mind is that reading and listening are inputs whereas speaking and writing are outputs. In other words, if you want to improve your speaking and writing skills you should first master the skills of reading and listening. There are some ways that you can do so, which I will try to summarize.

1) Reading

Read as much as you can. But your reading must be active. It means that you must think about the structure, unfamiliar words etc as you read. There is no need that you stick to some complicated grammar structures or try to understand all the unfamiliar words you come across, but the fact that you see them for the first time and recognize them whenever you see them for example in other passages or books is enough. It would be better to prepare yourself a notebook so you can write down the important words or structures in it. To begin reading, I recommend the Penguin Readers books. They are classified by level of difficulty.

2) Listening

As for listening, there are two options:

- Aside from reading, you can listen every day for about 30 minutes.
- You can only concentrate on your reading and become skillful at your reading, then you can catch up on your listening.

I myself prefer the latter because when you are skillful and native-like at reading, your listening skill grows automatically. Since you have lots of inputs in your mind, you can easily guess what the speaker is going to say. This never means that you should not practice listening.

For listening I recommend cartoons or some movies that are specially made for children. Their languages are easy and do not contain complicated phrases or slang terms. Or if you are good at listening you can listen to VOA or BBC programs broadcasted every day. Again the thing to remember is being active in listening and preferably taking some notes.

If you follow these pieces of advice, your speaking and writing will improve automatically, and you can be sure that with a little effort they will become perfect.

The 7 Best Study Skills For ESL Learners

Studying English as a Second Language is difficult. Whether you are doing homework, going over notes, or studying for a test, good study skills will help you get the most out of your time and effort. The best students are usually the ones who have mastered the best study skills, such as these:

1. Make a study plan. Decide in advance which areas you want to study, or what topics you need to review. If you have a plan, you won’t feel as overwhelmed. The act of writing out what needs to be done so you can check it off later lets your brain stop worrying about remembering those to do items, and frees your mind so you can focus on your work.

2. Set goals. When writing that study plan, set small goals that are easily achieved, and reward yourself. Studying for 20-30 minutes, then taking a 5-10 minute break and studying for another 20-30 minutes is more effective than studying for an hour without the break. It’s much easier to stay focused when you know that a break and a treat are coming up!

3. Keep your body well fueled. Your mind will wander and you will have more trouble concentrating if you are hungry or tired. Eat regular meals and get enough sleep, even when studying for an exam - while it can feel like drinking coffee and staying up all night will help you master the material, it doesn’t. Your brain needs rest to function properly.

4. Choose your study location carefully. Some people study best in the library, some prefer a table in a coffee shop, others like to be alone in their rooms, and still others find that studying with a partner or a small group helps them learn. However, no one will be focused on the material trying to study if their roommate is playing loud music or their child is throwing a tantrum. Find a spot where you have as few distractions as possible, and are comfortable but not so comfortable you’re likely to take a nap!

5. Turn off the technology. Texting, IMing, chatting on your phone, and tweeting are not things you should be doing when studying! Use the break discussed in Tip #2 to text, talk, or tweet, and turn off your phone during the study periods. If you are using a computer, don’t turn on your IM program during a study period - your friends can wait until your break to hear from you!

6. Play games. When you are studying alone, try to use mnemonic devices to remember things - My Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizzas can help students remember the order of the planets. Similarly rhymes can help - "when two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking" helps you remember that a word like fear has a long e. If you’re studying with others, playing word games, with flash cards, or creating your own game can help the lesson stay in your head.

7. Don’t give up. English is a language filled with exceptions, and ESL classes aren’t easy. It’s tempting to give up when the work becomes difficult and the workload becomes overwhelming. However, you can do it! Divide up the work into more manageable sections, and be persistent. Go through the sections one at a time, with regular breaks and rewards, and you’ll figure it out faster than you thought you could!

Groundskeepers and Gardeners

Also called: Commercial Groundskeepers, Gardeners, Industrial Groundskeepers, Landscape Maintenance Workers, Park Groundskeepers.

Groundskeepers and Gardeners take care of lawns, shrubs, flowers, and trees on the grounds of public and private buildings and in parks and other public places. Job duties include trimming and watering lawns and plants, pruning trees and shrubs, raking leaves, picking up litter, and applying fertilizers and insecticides.

Ability to:

- Use motor coordination
- Use manual dexterity
- Use eye-hand-foot coordination
- Read and follow instructions
- Write legibly
- Write independently
- Use words to communicate with others
- Work well with others
- Move often from one task to another using different skills
- Like working outdoors
- Willing to do same tasks over and over
- Demonstrate artistic flair

Work Environment:

- Work is done outdoors in all kinds of weather, performing physically active work that at times requires lifting and carrying medium to heavy objects from ten to twenty-five pounds frequently and from 20 to 50 pounds occasionally.
- Occasional climbing, balancing, stooping, kneeling, and crouching.
- Frequent reaching and handling; using arms, hands, and fingers.
- Occasional talking to and hearing others around noise from machines is required.
- Some workers frequently use color vision.
- Some workers are required to wear uniforms.
- Seasonal slack periods during winter cause layoffs.
- Higher than average risk of injury.

Current Monthly Wage Data (2013)
Entry/Low Pay $1,757  
Average Pay $2,394  
Top Pay $2,797 & up  

Source: www.eureka.org database
Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT’s)

Also called: Ambulance Attendants, Ambulance Drivers, Emergency Room Care Physician Assistants, EMT's, Paramedics, Paramedic/Mobile Intensive Care Technicians

Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's), provide immediate care to the critically ill and injured, and psychological patients. Some drive ambulances. EMT's determine the nature and extent of illness or injury, provide first aid, lift and carry patients on stretchers to ambulances, and radio the patient's condition to medical personnel at the hospital. Most must inspect and maintain medical equipment to insure efficient operating condition. Some may also inspect and maintain an ambulance. When not on call they spend their time at the station where they wait, sleep, and eat. The levels of certified activities include:

- EMT I-A (trainee),
- EMT I-a Ambulance Attendant,
- EMT I-a driver, ambulance or emergency vehicle,
- Paramedic trainee,
- EMT II Paramedic,
- EMT-paramedic/mobile intensive care,
- Emergency Room Care Physician Assistant training.
- Duties vary depending on the certified level.

Ability to:

- Do strenuous work
- Move quickly and confidently
- Lift, carry, and move patients
- See slight differences in objects
- Learn and understand procedures
- Use words to give and receive verbal and written directions and instructions
- Use numbers

- Visualize objects from pictures, drawings, and descriptions
- Work with accuracy
- Use physical coordination to climb and stoop
- Compile information
- Use manual and finger dexterity
- Use hands to reach and manipulate things
- Use color discrimination
- Use eye-hand coordination
- Work well with people
- Make judgments using experience
- Work under stress
- Deal with emergency situations
- Handle people who are injured, ill, or in a state of shock
- Demonstrate emotional stability

Work Environment:

- Both indoors and outdoors in all kinds of weather.
- Usually work in teams of two.
- May work rotating shifts; some work 24 to 48 hours and may then be off 24 to 48 hours.
- Others work ten to twelve-hour days for four days and are off duty for four days.
- Overtime may be required at times.
- Physical ability to do heavy lifting; and exposure to the risk of back injury.
- May be exposed to health problems such as contagious diseases and parasites and toxic substances.

Current Monthly Wage Data (2013)
Entry/Low Pay $1,927
Average Pay $2,890
Top Pay $3,398 & up
14th Annual ESL Career Conference

Wednesday, May 14th 2014

This dynamic and energetic conference informs matriculating ESL students about Mt. SAC programs and services. There will be speakers (Mt. SAC faculty and staff) who will be presenting on degree and certificate options, college services, information about career and job skills, and general college success. There will also be presenters that will give information regarding personal experiences in certain careers. Sessions are 45 minutes in length.

MORNING CONFERENCE
8:30-9:15, 9:30-10:15, 10:30-11:15
EVENING CONFERENCE
7:00-7:45, 8:00-8:45

Bursar’s Office New Location

To more efficiently serve students, the Bursar’s Office is moving to the lower level lobby of the Administration Building (4), effective Thursday, May 1st. The last Day of service in the Bursar’s current location (9A) is Monday, April 28th. Hours of operation will remain Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Students will continue to go to the Bursar’s Office for payment of:

- Registration fees for credit courses
- Parking permit and parking citation fees
- Enrollment verification fees
- Production card fees
- Mandatory and optional fees for certain classes (e.g., field trips)

Photo ID’s will no longer be issued by the Bursar after April 21. Students will obtain ID’s in the SacBookRac after that date.

The Bursar’s new space will house a HigherOne student refund ATM as well as computer stations to allow students to handle various business transactions online via their portal accounts.