From the ESL Director . . . .

Hello and welcome to Spring 2013!

This semester is an exciting one for me and I hope it is the same for you. We have many activities and events planned, all of them designed to help you advance your English skills as well as your college and career plans.

To begin, we are planning our 13th annual ESL Career Conference where guest speakers share information about programs of study and jobs that are in demand. These presenters are very knowledgeable and friendly. If you have a career in mind, the Career Conference is a great opportunity for you to ask the experts. If you are not sure about the right job for you, this is also a good time to collect ideas for a suitable career path.

We also have planned a set of interesting workshops during the semester. These are designed to help you improve your computer skills through hands-on practice. You will have a chance to review Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Internet Research techniques. We are offering these workshops in the ESL computer labs to be convenient and better prepare you for classroom projects and presentations.

Another project we have scheduled is a student survey. Sometime this semester, we will ask you to complete this survey in the computer lab or on a Scantron form. This will be anonymous; that means we will not ask for your name, but we will ask for your opinion on many things — schedule of classes, counseling services, registration processes, and more. I will be happy to share the results with you in one of our future newsletters.

Finally, I want to mention something obvious. We have a wonderful program because we work all very hard at it. I say “we” because you, the student, play an important part in the success of the ESL Department. ESL requires two-way communication, and that is why we say that language learning is a teaching and learning process. It is definitely a team effort!

If you have any other ideas on how to improve our program please be sure to share them with us. I look forward to hearing from you. Have a wonderful semester!

Best Wishes,
Dr. Liza Becker

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What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
(1749-1832)
German poet, playwright, novelist, philosopher

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Fashion Merchandisers

Fashion Merchandisers select, purchase, promote and sell clothing and accessories. They study fashion trends and visit manufacturers and merchandise markets. They work as part of a team and consult with Managers and Buyers, advise the advertising and display departments, and organize and coordinate promotional activities such as fashion shows. Many consider this to be a glamorous occupation. They book or hire models, choose outfits to be shown, oversee lighting, choreography, and all of the details that go into making a successful fashion show. They often work with a specific line of clothing such as men's, women's, children's or infant's wear.

Personal Characteristics
- Catch on to things
- Question customers about preferences
- Negotiate prices
- Persuade others
- Read and understand trade journals
- Write fashion forecasts
- Add and subtract quickly
- Use numbers to determine costs and write orders
- Use color perception
- Use form perception to verify figures on orders and to determine shapes and figures on textiles and fabrics and in displays
- Get along well with other people
- Judge quality and whether a "line" of clothing will sell
- Interpret the attitude of customers
- Make judgments using knowledge or experience

Current Monthly Wage Data (2011)
Entry/Low Pay $3,225
Average Pay $4,676
Top Pay $5,624 & up

Would you like to learn more about these careers and their requirements? Make an appointment to see a member of the ESL Counseling Team. Ask for Michael Ngo, John Pellitteri or Bertha Rodriguez.
**Alcohol & Drug Treatment Counselors**

Alcohol and Drug Treatment Counselors help people deal with chemical or substance abuse dependency. They use a variety of therapies from behavior modification to interpersonal techniques. They may administer and evaluate initial tests to help in diagnosis and the progress of the client. They maintain records and oversee living arrangements for clients. They work closely with other professionals, such as Medical Social Workers, Mental Health Counselors, Psychologists, and Rehabilitation Counselors, and may make referrals.

**Personal Characteristics**
- Use words appropriately
- Work well with a variety of people
- Make decisions based on data and experience
- See details with accuracy
- Speak and write clearly and concisely
- Patience
- Emotional stability
- Move frequently from one task to another and to use different skills

**Current Monthly Wage Data (2011)**
- Entry/Low Pay $2,217
- Average Pay $3,047
- Top Pay $3,537 & up

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**Bookkeepers**

Bookkeepers record day-to-day business transactions (billing, accounts payables and receivables, payroll, general ledger) on various accounting forms which are needed for effective management. From source documents, such as invoices, check stubs, sales slips, and inventory reports, they record transactions in journals and ledgers, by hand, or by putting the data into a computer. Full Charge or General Bookkeepers balance the books at the end of accounting periods, and compile summary reports and statements to show the financial condition of the organization. The may file quarterly tax returns and financial statements. In small offices duties may include preparing payroll, preparing customers' bills, answering the telephone, and general office tasks.

**Personal characteristics**
- Work with numbers and use basic math skills
- Use clerical skills
- Communicate verbally and effectively
- Use finger and manual dexterity
- Use eye-hand coordination
- Use good English grammar, spelling and punctuation
- Work with the public
- Operate control machinery, or equipment
- Observe detail accurately and do exact work
- Work independently

**Current Monthly Wage Data (2011)**
- Entry/Low Pay $2,634
- Average Pay $3,372
- Top Pay $3,996 & up
**Tibet: My Dream**

I love Tibet with my whole heart for many reasons. The first reason is that I saw a lot of pictures about Tibet since I was a little girl. The sky there looks so blue without even a cloud. The Potala Palace looks really magnificent. Lake Namco looks like a tear drop of the moon, pure and quiet. The portrait of people who live there is different from the others, very different. You could find out if a person comes from Tibet or not just by looking at his/her face. Because of the highland climate, the color of their face is reddish brown. The girls there all have two “red apples” on their face. They are so cute. The old man/woman’s face is full of wrinkles. That is time who engraved it so lively. And all of them have a pair of very beautiful eyes just like Lake Namco, peaceful and mysterious. I was lost in their sight even though I had not been there yet. This feeling stayed in my heart, and flashed in my dream for about twenty years until I got home.

Another reason is about Buddhism. It is a mystery for me. It is so near to me, and it is so far from me. It is so easy and so hard for me. It is so real and such a dream for me. Tibet is the exact birth land of Tibetan Buddhism. You could see the Buddhists are everywhere in Tibet, and it is full of Buddhist atmosphere. I love the smell of the Tibetan incense. I love the sound of the low mass. I love the color of the streamers. I love to Kowtow in the temple. I love to sit in the corner of the Bajiao Street and look at the followers of Buddha worship on bended knees a thousand times. How I year for it!

The most important reason why I love Tibet so much is about freedom. In my mind, Tibet is another word for freedom. I went there by myself. I was alone but not lonely. I enjoyed it. I could do everything I wanted without discussing it with others. No talking means more thinking, and more time to communicate with myself and nature. Mt. Everest is in Tibet, which is the highest place in the world. It was so near to the sky as if I could touch the clouds by hands; as if I could pick off the stars from the sky. The wind blowing through my hair, I stood on the snow mountain, as free as a bird. Not only the body but also the heart flying, flying in the sky. When I came back to my home, my friends asked me about the feeling of Tibet. My answer is that it is just like a dream! It is gorgeous! And I will be back!

Yan Dong (Dora)
Writing C
Getting Shots and Living Through It

We were in the darkness filled, mountain-top cold, waiting room. We were preparing for the shots of our lives. Getting shots for malaria and more.

There were many benches all covered in the night. It was hard to see the color in the murky dark but it seemed to be some sort of faded brown. The room was big, huge which gave it the more reason to bring terror to you. Who knew what would be around the corner! Rat, monster, especially when you would hear the screams coming from behind the doors. There were three doors which were also brown and also faded. One was the way in. Not the way out unfortunately. Another was the way to the other evil places. The last door was the most evil, The Shot Room.

The rest of the room was filled with families. Including my family of five. My five year old self, my three year old brother, and my one year old sister. Then there was my mom and dad. Some of the other children were screeching or crying or not knowing what would happen to them. So they would just be playing. I was in the middle of both. I was playing with fear, playing knowing what would happen, knowing that the worst moment of my life was coming over closer. It was like knowing you would be put to sleep, sent to detention, waiting to take a ride in the Electric Chair.

I had shots before. They were not your best friend. After a long while a nurse said, “Alyssa, Trevor and Taryn, your turn.” It was our turn. I got half dragged and I half walked. The door creaked open. It was the room of no return. The door slammed shut. There was no way out. Grown-ups guarding every escape. Seeing there was no way out we gave up and went for it.

Trevor went first. Before the shot was even touching him he was already howling.

When it did hit him he was yelling loud enough to deafen you. He was done. It was my turn. (He was still crying so a nurse tried to calm him down.)

I was paralyzed with fear, I was near death, I was scared. My mom and dad told me to “just be brave.” “Just be brave?!” how could I “just be brave?!” But I had no time to think. It was coming. Just waiting to pounce, just waiting to penetrate my skin! I say why Trevor had screamed so loud. I couldn’t hear anything, I could just see it coming.

It touched, entered my flesh, and fulfilled it’s job. I started with a whimper the, BOOM! full blast cry.

When Taryn had her turn she didn’t even notice! Ugh! She was supposed to cry the most! Worse than Trevor!

But then I remembered it was over. We opened the door and the sparkling sun blinded our eyes. It was over. All over. Finally.

Linlin Tao
Writing C

Every life experience teaches you how to write that story but not the next story.

- Eudora Welty
American Author of short stories and novels of the American South (1909-2001)
Tips for Learning a New Language

When I arrived in Buenos Aires in the beginning of 2010, I could barely order food in a local restaurant. Two years later, I calmly explained the mechanics of Russian grammar to a Guatemalan friend… in her native Spanish.

Today, I’m quasi-fluent in Spanish, conversational in Portuguese, and low conversational in Russian. I’m not going to lie to you and tell you it was easy or that there’s some shortcut! I practiced non-stop. Honestly, I’ve looked into the numerous ways for language-learning, and none of them worked for me. It took hours of study combined with stumbling through many, many conversations.

Here are some language-learning tips I’ve gathered over the past few years:

1. **Conversation, Conversation, Conversation.** If there’s a “secret” or “hack” to learning a new language, it’s this: hours and hours of awkward and strenuous conversation with people better than you in that language. An hour of conversation (with corrections and a dictionary for reference) is as good as five hours in a classroom and 10 hours with a language course by yourself.

   There are a few reasons for this. The first is motivation. I don’t care how cool your study guide is, you’re going to be far more invested and motivated to communicate with a live person in front of you than a book or audio program on your computer.

   The second reason is that language is something that needs to be processed, not memorized. I’m no expert on language learning, but in my experience staring and memorizing a word in a book or with flashcards 100 times does not stick the same way being forced to use a word in conversation a mere two or three times does.

   I believe the reason is that our minds place more priority on memories which involve actual human and social experiences, memories which have emotions tied to them. So, for instance, if I look up the verb for “to complain” and use it in a sentence with a new friend, chances are I’m always going to associate that word with that specific interaction and conversation I was having with her. Whereas I can blow by that same word 20 times with flashcards, and even though I may get it right, I haven’t actually practiced implementing it. It means nothing to me, so it is less likely to stick with me.

2. **Intensity of study trumps length of study.** What I mean by this is that studying a language four hours a day for two weeks will be more beneficial for you than studying one hour a day for two months. This is a reason why so many people take language classes in school and never remember anything. It’s
because they only study 3-4 hours per week and often the classes are separated by multiple days.

Language requires a lot of repetition, a lot of reference experiences, and a consistent commitment and investment. It's better to allot a particular period of your life, even if it’s only 1-2 weeks, and really go at it 100%, then to it over the course of months or even years.

3. Some classes can be an inefficient use of time and money. All things considered, you get a really poor return for your time and effort in large group classes. There are two problems. The first is that most classes move at the pace of its slowest student. The second is that language learning is a fairly personal process — everyone naturally learns some words or topics easier than others, therefore a class is not going to be able to address each student’s personal needs as well or in a timely fashion.

For instance, when I took Russian classes I found verb conjugations to be simple because I had already learned Spanish. But an English classmate struggled quite a bit with them. As a result, I spent a lot of my class time waiting around for him to catch up. I also had a German classmate who had already been exposed to cases, whereas I had no clue what they were. I’m sure he ended up waiting around for me to figure it out as well. The larger the classroom, the less efficient it’s going to be. Anyone who had to take a foreign language in school and retained absolutely none of it can tell you this.

Nonetheless, any hands-on practice is going to be beneficial towards your earning.

4. Start with the 100 most common words. Not all vocabulary is made the same. Some gives you a better return on investment than others. For instance, when I lived in Buenos Aires, I met a guy who had been studying with Rosetta Stone for months. I had been working on and off with a tutor for a few weeks, but I was surprised by how he could not follow even the most basic of conversations despite months of study and living there.

It turns out, much of the vocabulary he had been studying was for kitchen utensils, family members, clothing and rooms in a house. But if he wanted to ask someone which part of town they lived in, he had no idea what to say.

Start with the 100 most common words and then make sentences with them over and over again. Learn just enough grammar to be able to do this and do it until you feel pretty comfortable with all of them.

- Mark Manson www.smashwords.com
Do you want to practice learning English outside your classroom? Then why not stop by the Language Learning Center also known as the LLC, located in the Learning Technology Building (Bldg. 6).

The Language Learning Center has a large variety of language learning software, videos, DVD’s and recordings to improve listening, speaking, and pronunciation skills.

To find out more you can also visit the website and see the number of audio, video, internet and software resources available for the different levels by clicking in the Resource Link and selecting the LLC Materials/ESL.  http://llc.mtsac.edu

To use the Language Learning Center, you must register at the ESL Registration Counter in Building 66 and you will also need to have your Mt. SAC Student ID Card.

Hope to see you there!