New Content Class Practices Language through Acting

By Carmela Romano Gillette

This year, ESL 093 students have an exciting new option for the content segment of their studies. Along with the American History class, the ELC is also offering an American Performing Arts class for those students who want to learn more about drama in its various formats and also get a chance to try out their acting skills. Assistant Professor Deric McNish, from the MSU Department of Theatre, co-taught the class with the ELC’s Carmela Romano Gillette. Dr. McNish has experience in stage and television acting and his research focuses on new and inclusive approaches to actor training, giving the students a great opportunity to learn from an expert, native speaker and university professor.

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At the start of the fall semester, students were asked to write their reasons for wishing to join the performing arts section and were chosen based on their responses. Many students hoped for a chance to improve their speaking skills while having a great deal of fun. They got what they hoped for, and more: a great deal of work!

Dr. McNish presented lectures on Dramatic Structure, the History of American Musical Theatre, and the History of Acting. After the lectures, we spent time discussing the language and cultural references in the material in order to prepare for the exams. We also talked about good ways to listen to class lectures and to prepare for tests on the material. The lectures connected to practical performance activities. Students in this class all went to see a live production of Carrie the Musical at the Wharton Center, interviewed the star of the show, and engaged in a conversation about the musical with American students enrolled in an acting class.

First Turkish - English Language Exchange

By Kim Benedicto

The ELC has again partnered with the Center for Language Teaching Advancement (CeLTA) to provide language and culture exchange opportunities for both international and domestic students. In October, the ELC and CeLTA hosted the first Turkish Language Exchange. In this activity, Turkish-speaking English language learners and English-speaking Turkish language learners come together to share their cultures and practice their second languages. The language exchange also allows the students to use the language structures they have learned in their classes in authentic conversations.

At the beginning of each meeting, the students played icebreakers to get to know each other. Then the students played language games facilitated by a faculty member. The language games are played in both Turkish and English, and included games such as ‘find someone who’, ‘two truths and a lie’, and Pictionary. When asked what they liked most about the meetings, students said that they really enjoyed being able to meet and talk with people who are native speakers of their second language.

An Unforgettable Homestay Experience

by Wataru Nakagawa

In August 2014, I participated in a special program organized by Shiga University and the English Language Center. I spent four weeks in MSU studying at the ELC. Those four weeks were filled with studying English, meeting new friends, trips to Chicago and Niagara Falls, an MSU football game, and a tailgate party. I learned a lot about American life and culture, but the most memorable experience was my homestay.

My host family was the Hodkinsons, and they were amazing. They made me and the other Shiga student, Takeru, feel welcome in their home. They have four young children, and we had so much fun playing with them. They taught us many games that American children play. On the first day, we went to a big market to buy food for dinner. The next day, we had a bonfire in the backyard. On our last day, we went on a hike in a park. Our host mom and dad cooked many delicious meals for everyone, and the best part was sitting at the dinner table and talking and eating with the whole family.

The homestay was so memorable because it let me experience how an American family lives. I was able to eat the food they eat, do the activities they do, and live in the house they live in. It was a valuable cultural lesson and I learned so much in one weekend. Best of all, I met a wonderful and warm family, and they will always be in my heart.
ELC Students Learn and Experience Football Culture at Tailgate

By Kim Benedicto

Every Fall semester during the beginning of the football season, the ELC hosts a tailgate party for students. The ELC tailgate party this year was during the MSU vs. Jacksonville State game on August 29. A football tailgate party is a big college tradition and a unique American cultural experience. At a tailgate party, sports fans dress in school colors, bring lots of food, and enjoy each others’ company by playing games and uniting in school spirit before the upcoming game. This year, before the tailgate party, ELC instructor Jim Desler delivered a special lecture about American football rules teaching students how the game works. After this special class, ELC students gathered in the park outside Wells Hall to eat, mingle, and play games with friends, teachers, and staff. Aside from a game of football, students and teachers enjoyed competing in a sack race, egg toss, and Frisbee toss. The winners of these competitions were rewarded with Spartan swag, like MSU t-shirts and hats. All in all, this was a fun-filled day for international students to participate in an American collegiate tradition and show their Spartan spirit!

School Visits

By Abdullah Hormani and Abdul Aziz Yatya

We, the students of Jazan University, visited two elementary schools in Holt, Michigan. At the first school, Wilcox, we watched the teacher explain the lesson, however we did not interrupt the lesson. There were many differences we noticed. The tables were arranged differently and there were no annoying sounds, such as the sound of the bell. We noticed that most teachers were women and they were very respected by the children. There were so many students at the school, and they were divided into different classes by ages.

Jazan University, Faculty of Education Visits MSU!

In Summer 2014, nine students from the College of Education in Jazan University, Saudi Arabia participated in a special training program at the English Language Center. The participants received training in teaching methodology while also learning about American life and culture.

Trip to the Windy City of Chicago!

By Ahmed Alqahtani and Mohammed Alshahrani

We went to Chicago by train. It was the first time to travel in a train. We loved the travel, and the train was very comfortable. We took six hours to arrive to Chicago, but it was very good. We liked the train station. There was a lot of traffic when we arrived. We were hungry, so we went to famous pizza restaurant in Chicago. We ate together in the restaurant, and the food was good. After that we went to Willis Tower. It is one of the tallest buildings in America. We took some pictures there. Really it was very tall. We were scared when we saw the ground. Then we went to the hotel to get rest and sleep.

The next day in the morning we went to eat breakfast and to shop. Next we went to Shedd Aquarium. It was a big place. We saw different kinds of fish. Then we watched a movie in 4D. It was the first time for some of us to watch 4D. After finishing the movie, we went to eat dinner and then took the train home. Chicago is a very cool city and we recommend that you visit it yourself!

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Student Activity Feature

The English Language Center organizes trips and activities for students about every two weeks during the semester. The activities are organized and led by ELC “Fun Captain” Laura Ballard. Information about the trips and activities are announced to ELC classes through teachers and are also posted on a signboard in the ELC office. Students sign up and pay for the activities at the ELC front desk in Wells Hall B Wing. Check the signboard for the upcoming trips and join other ELC students for fun-filled activities that will let you experience American life and culture!

Rock Climbing Adventure in Kalamazoo

By Laura Ballard

Indoor rock climbing, originally developed as a way for serious mountain climbers to train at home, is a sport that is growing in popularity among the general public.

This October, a brave group of students from the English Language Center ventured to Climb Kalamazoo, an indoor climbing gym in downtown Kalamazoo, Michigan, to give indoor climbing a try. The gym, the only of its kind in southwest Michigan, features bouldering caves and 40-foot-tall climbing walls designed to challenge climbers of different ability levels.

The students began their climbing session with a safety lesson on the equipment used for climbing (harnesses, ropes, and belay devices). Next, with the guidance of a climbing instructor, each student learned how to belay, or hold the ropes for, a climber. After everyone passed their belay test, they spent the remainder of their time trying out the different climbing routes in the gym. With tired arms and a sense of adventure and accomplishment, they ended our trip with a stop at Sweetwater Donuts, one of Michigan’s top-rated donut shops, located in Kalamazoo. The students had such a good time that plans are already in the works to go rock climbing at Planet Rock, a climbing gym in the metro-Detroit area.

Below: During the safety lesson, students learn how to tie knots and correctly use their harnesses.
Unforgettable Experiences at American Hospitals

By Ayaka Tokumaru, Hikari Matsuo, & Jongwon Jung

During the Medical English Program, we had the opportunity to visit some hospitals in America. Between several visits, we will share our experiences at the three most memorable hospitals.

For our second hospital, we visited McLaren Bay Region hospital. We could feel the atmosphere of the hospital and we were surprised to see differences between American hospitals and our country’s. For example, doctors and nurses were calm, there were many pictures in the waiting room, and there were many private rooms. At McLaren we first noticed that there is a greater effort here to make patients be calm and comfortable than in our countries’ hospitals.

Next, we had a nice experience at McLaren Greater Lansing hospital. We took a look at rooms for cancer patients, and Dr. Gorbis, who was leading us, introduced the concept of HIPAA, which ensures privacy and confidentiality of medical records. Also, we asked a question about Doctor of Osteopathic medicine (D.O.), which is an unfamiliar concept because there is no D.O. in Korea and Japan. With the explanation, we could understand the basic concept of D.O. and osteopathic medicine.

Moreover, we visited MSU Radiology in the Clinical Center on the MSU campus, which is part of MSU health care. We looked at some machines, for example, MRI, PET, and CT. We could feel the force of magnets in the MRI, which was about three tesla. The doctor guided us, and explained about them. We learned the different goals and functions of the machines.

Through hospital visits, we learned a lot about the American healthcare system and medicine. These experiences were very meaningful and educational for us because it is very difficult to have chances to visit an actual medical facility, especially for international students like us. We appreciate being able to participate in this program.

The English Language Center and the Institute of International Health (IIH) delivered a special three week program covering medical English and health sciences in August 2014. Students from Hallym Medical Center, South Korea and Nagasaki University School of Medicine, Japan, participated in lectures from IIH faculty and toured a number of Michigan hospitals. The ELC’s instruction involved ESL classes focusing on lecture and tour preparation as well as hospital and lecture debriefings.

Below: Medical English students, Language Culture Partners, faculty, and coordinators all join for a final farewell snapshot.