

# CLA Newsletter

May 2021

Issue 03

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## Message from the Editor:

by [Erin Schwartz](#)

This issue is our penultimate newsletter issue for the Spring 2021 semester. As we prepare for the month ahead, and push through to graduation I want to offer my sincerest thanks to everyone who has contributed over the past few months. It's been my hope that this newsletter is seen as a valuable method for communication in our college community. The College of Liberal Arts represents the heart of WKU, and it has been my pleasure to help bring our diverse voice together.

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## Representing the CLA on 3-in-1 Day:

By [Liam Duffy](#)

On the 3-in-1 exam day, I had the honor of speaking to a group of parents in the new Gehekai Hall. This was an opportunity to practice my public speaking skills.

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In ESL 0403, we have been doing presentations recently. I tell my students to become familiar with the teaching station to avoid technical difficulties. I tell them to make eye contact with their audience members, display confident body language, speak in loud, clear voices, and ask at least one open question to connect with the audience and temporarily take the pressure off of them. However, after speaking to the parents, I had to tell my students: “do as I say, not as I do.”

I originally thought that we would be presenting in CPBM. I told Arthur Wang, the student who would be presenting with me, that there might be bright lights on, and we might get hot up on stage. That turned out not to be an issue as we met the parents in Gehekai Hall. I had yet to ever enter that building, so I had already broken my rule about being unfamiliar with my surroundings.

When I first entered, I saw some parents on the left and the right but did not realize until standing by the podium just how many more people were in the audience. I did not have a problem making eye contact with audience members, but some seemed more attentive than others. The wireless microphone enabled me to walk around and project my voice, and I do not think body language was much of an issue. However, the PowerPoint had a lot of slides, and I kept turning to look at them. It was either look at the big screen or hover over the laptop. It appeared to be a formal occasion, and since I was not sure who could speak English, I decided against asking an open question. In hindsight, I wish I had. Asking a crowd an open question is taking a risk; if no one replies, there can be awkward silence and it can feel like rejection. However, getting the audience involved, or “doing crowd work,” can result in the reward of a more enjoyable experience for everyone.

I give my students advice about how to give quality presentations, yet I broke two or three of my own rules recently. It is not always easy putting theory into practice. However, overall I think it was a successful talk. Every time someone gets up in front of a classroom, a meeting room, or on a stage, they are getting more experience and a chance for their public speaking to improve.

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## Learning About Teaching

By [Virginia Parker](#)

ESL and ENG Lecturer, School of English



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This semester, I have been lucky to be teaching EMSE 3421, which is the second part of a two-part Theory and Practice of Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) course. This is a unique course, which helps our WKU students learn more about the techniques and methods we use as ESL specialists. This semester, we have been focusing on Reflective Language Teaching, in which the teacher / student-teacher remains open to peer feedback and self-reflection on every action taken in the classroom. Students have been doing regular micro-teaching (demo teaching to each other), feedback sessions, personal reflections, and tasks designed to increase the 'noticing' skill of observation. Before coming to WKU, I did work as a teacher trainer throughout Asia, and many of the resources and ideas I use with the WKU students come from that era of my career.



I strongly believe that learning must never end at the classroom walls, and I have always tried to find different ways to engage students in authentic scenarios. Recently, this group of students had several opportunities to explore ESL teaching both inside and outside the classroom as they observed ESL



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faculty in action, visited a Canadian school, welcomed a guest speaker, and asked questions of an expert panel of Chinese ESL teachers.



First off, each student observed at least one of our qualified ESL professors in action. If given the option, these students were also offered the opportunity to teach a portion of an ESL speaking class. The pedagogy students immediately noticed that every teacher is different in their approach, but that this can be considered a strength, as they always respond to the needs of their students. They also noted the big leap between the artificial world of our micro-teaching demos and the authentic experience of facing real students (for those who opted in to the additional teaching experience). We agreed to keep the identities of the ESL faculty who participated anonymous, but I do wish to thank

all who opened their classrooms to these students. You know who you are. 😊

The next big event for us was a tour and visit to Wenzhou School #22, which rather uniquely houses a Canadian secondary school on its property. This time we invited the full-time MA TESOL students to join us as well. Having befriended the school's Canadian principal, Mr. Kent Tamblyn, we toured the grounds of the school, met Canadian-certified teachers, and learned more about this unique partnership. The students observed classes and teaching in action, and were most impressed by the school's Harry Potter-style 'Houses', each named after a Canadian animal. Students asked Mr. Tamblyn loads of questions about the curriculum, and came away with ideas on print-rich classroom environments and reflections on the cultural aspects of student-centred education. A big thank you to Evangeline and Ricci in the CLA office for their help, to the MA TESOL faculty for supporting us, as well as all the teachers whose classes were impacted by this field trip.

The day after our Canadian school tour, we came together again with the MA TESOL students, this time with the spotlight on the part-time MA students, who are themselves teachers working in both primary and secondary schools in Wenzhou. Who knows teaching better than a teacher? For over two hours, the expert panel of certified Chinese teachers of English answered questions, giving our young pedagogy students a glimpse into the reality of teaching in a public school. Thank you to Dr. Agnes



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Tang for agreeing to host us. This was incredibly useful to our students. I wish I'd had such an opportunity when I was first learning to teach 20 years ago.



Our final special class coincided with the Week of the Child and was fittingly child-centred, as Tammy Clark, Vice-Principal of the WKU experimental kindergarten (located across from the WKU campus) presented and discussed the Reggio Emilia method. Students adored Tammy's presentation, only regretting that we needed more time to enjoy all her expertise. In the future, we hope to arrange a visit to the kindergarten, to see the ideas we learned about first-hand.

These students are genuinely interested in pursuing education and teaching in their future studies and as potential career options. Extending their experience beyond the classroom walls will, I hope, result in them becoming reflective practitioners who remain open to new ideas, while also being grounded in the reality of their chosen profession.

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## Conference presentation announcement

On April 24, David S. Hogsette, Executive Director of the School of English Studies, delivered a paper titled "Cultural Fluidity in Global Literary Pedagogy: Teaching Hamlet in China with The Banquet" at the College English Association of Ohio annual conference. In his ENG 2403 World Literature course, Dr. Hogsette ends his unit on Shakespeare with films, asking students to engage in comparative cultural analysis of common themes expressed differently in Franco Zeffirelli's Hamlet and Feng Xiaogang's The Banquet, a Chinese remake of the Hamlet story. A few students' rather powerfully disappointed and frustrated responses to the Chinese cinematic appropriation and intercultural translation of Hamlet caught Dr. Hogsette's attention. Upon reflection, he realizes that he took for granted that Chinese students would value Xiaogang's intercultural translation of key Hamlet themes into a uniquely Chinese historical and cultural context, thus expanding the cross-cultural significance of this core Western text. He did not expect some Chinese students to express a curious Orientalist canonical protectionism that shows deep concern over losing the perceived Western authenticity of



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Shakespeare's work and bemoans what some scholars have called the erasure or disappearance of the original text when translated into another language and cultural context. In this presentation, Dr. Hogsette provides brief background on higher education in China, discusses some challenges teaching liberal arts in China, describes the activity, shares and analyzes the student responses in terms of theories related to global Shakespeare studies, and then closes with some observations and questions about global education that he hopes to explore further.

Some images:



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## International Distribution for Documentary

This spring, John Chua was happy to learn that *Off the Fence*, the commercial arm of ZDF, Germany's state TV network, picked up his 2019 86-minute documentary, **Cut: Exposing FGM Worldwide** for distribution outside North America.

<https://www.offthefence.com/Brand/2587/cut-exposing-fgm-worldwide>.

In the United States, the film has been released by Gravitass Ventures on streaming platforms such as NBCUniversal's Vudu, Fox's TubiTV and Viacom's Pluto TV, as well as Amazon Prime. An earlier half-hour version of the film won a PBS prize and broadcast in 2017.

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## ID 2415 Students Launch Dyslexia Social Media Campaign



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Students in John Chua's ID 2415, a core course for the COMM major, launched this spring China's first pervasive social media campaign to inform the public about dyslexia. On platforms including QQ, Weibo, WeChat, Little Red Book, Bilibili, and Instagram, our students post videos, articles, memes, and messages to explain the dyslexia phenomenon, which is seldom discussed publicly in China. Prince Louis de Nassau of Luxembourg, an advocate for dyslexics, advises the students and provides them with content suggestions. Already some of our posts are seen by as many as 25,000 online users. We aim to change the public's perception of dyslexia in China.

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## Submit to Next Month's Issue: End of Semester Special

by **Erin Schwartz**

We're coming up quickly to graduation! If you have any end-of-semester messages, updates, stories, farewells, student shout-outs, or any information about the summer you'd like to share with your CLA colleagues before we collectively take a breath after a hard semester, please submit those pieces to the google folder linked below before **May 31**.

**Issue 04 will be like a yearbook, a time to reflect, express gratitude, and appreciate our colleagues and students over the past difficult academic year. Also a place to let us know what's going on during the summer.**

This newsletter will be on hiatus during the summer. In mid-August I will send out an email letting you know how to submit for the Fall Semester.

To access the folder, please sign in with your Kean email address. (If you do not have one, let me know to give you access.)

Issue 04 "Yearbook Edition" Folder:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1orPtmX\\_9V7PuTvw2y0FTwXuZs8wJl62d?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1orPtmX_9V7PuTvw2y0FTwXuZs8wJl62d?usp=sharing)

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中国浙江省温州市瓯海区大学路88号 邮政编码：325060

+86 577 5587 0000

