

Accelerating ESL



Dr. Seo Hyun Park

The Intensive English Language Institute (IELI) is putting new emphasis on the “Intensive” part of its title. The IELI coordinates the English as a Second Language (ESL) program at DWC. With a revamped class schedule and greater focus on listening and speaking skills, the plan is for students to become proficient in English in a shorter period.

“In the past structure, beginning students had to spend 2 ½ years to finish ESL,” said Dr. Seo Hyun Park, IELI director. “In this system, students can possibly finish within 2 years.”

Originally, students had to pass five levels, one per semester, and summers offered a chance to practice. The new plan, which has eight levels, splits each semester into two terms and includes a summer term. Students can take the first four levels their first year, the fifth level in the summer and the last three levels their second year. If all goes well, they finish midway through the last semester with one term to spare.

“But if students have to repeat a level, they could still finish within two years because of the extra term.” Dr. Park said. “Otherwise, we have developed some opportunities to improve their skills during that last term, such as auditing courses or volunteering at area non-profits.”

The changes have put pressure on members of the ESL faculty. They are teaching more classes and working with new textbooks, all of which means more prep time. The college has also hired more ESL teachers to carry out the new program.

“Everyone is so busy we don’t have much time to chat, it’s even hard to meet at lunchtime,” Dr. Park said. “But feedback is positive so far.”

Meanwhile, the tutor program Dr. Park began more than a year ago continues to grow. Area volunteers tutor by being conversation partners and helping with homework. Young men and women at Emmaus Bible College, who are studying to be ESL instructors, do the same while getting valuable teaching experience.

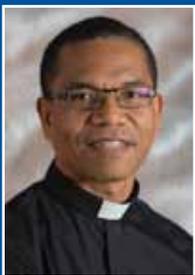


Tutor Orientation at the beginning of the new school year. ESL students and instructors met with 26 tutors from surrounding communities and Emmaus Bible College to review guidelines and answer questions.

The working relationship with Emmaus is developing beyond tutoring. One of the opportunities for DWC students who complete their ESL program is to audit classes at Emmaus. It exposes them to new voices and accents and offers an opportunity to improve their listening and speaking skills before they begin their college degree program at DWC. It is all a part of helping DWC students establish a solid foundation in English.

“I hope the new system helps our students learn better and be more proficient in English,” Dr. Park said. “It will take a while until we actually see the fruits, but I think we have a good start.”

Teacher Wants to Learn



Fr. Anthony Waget, SVD

Fr. Anthony Waget, SVD, arrived this fall as an ESL student—not to learn English, but to become a better English teacher.

Born in Indonesia and a priest for 20 years, Fr. Waget learned English while on mission in Africa. In 2006, he returned to his home where he has taught ESL to 12-15 year olds. Now he has come to DWC to learn how to be a better teacher so he can return to his country to help other ESL teachers improve.

“I would be a teacher’s mentor,” he said. “I would like to help my friends in the seminary or go from place to place to see how the teachers are doing and then help them.”

Currently taking ESL classes at DWC, it is hoped that Fr. Waget can benefit from the collaborative relationship with Emmaus Bible College, which has a program for training ESL teachers.