

The Communicator

A Publication of the World Languages Lab
El Centro College

Vol. 3, No. 2

Fall, 2009

*The one who knows two languages is worth double.
El que sabe dos idiomas vale por dos.
L'homme qui parle deux langues vaut deux hommes.
会两种语言的人具有双重价值*

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other phrases and sentences, both oral and written, are part of Dr. Yang Lee's instruction for the first credit Chinese course at El Centro this fall. The students have been working hard, tackling the unique and beautiful characters and sounds of this ancient and increasingly important language.

Our Chinese program is slated to expand in the spring, when six sections of both 1st and 2nd semester courses will be offered. We project that our Chinese program will become increasingly popular in the future. There is still time to register!

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Full Steam Ahead for Chinese!

"Nee how...?" means "hello..." in Chinese. This greeting and many

Do you know what this is?



It's not a tomato - see next page...

The fruit on the previous page is a **persimmon** – a popular fruit in China and Japan. It also grows wild in North American forests but imported varieties are now grown and marketed in the U.S.

Warning: do not eat many varieties unless they are well ripened and soft, or they will pucker up your mouth!



Moon Cakes

Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival



Dr. Yang Li

Dr. Yang Li and her students presented the first Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival Celebration at El Centro on October 2.

This festival, also known as the Moon Festival, is a 3,000 year old celebration that occurs on the autumnal equinox, when the moon is at its fullest and roundest.

On this day families and friends gather together to admire the harvest moon and eat traditional food such as **mooncakes**. It is also a harvest celebration for farmers.

Do you know what **Pinyin** is?

Pinyin is the Romanized and phonetically parallel version of traditional Chinese script. It is not used in place of the traditional characters, but it is used to help people in pronouncing the characters. For example, the traditional Mandarin Chinese character for “pinyin” is **拼音**. What this means in English is literally, “spelling sound,” or “phonetics.”

Other examples:

English	Chinese Characters	Pinyin
student	学生	xuéshēng
study	学习	xuéxí
teacher	老师	lǎoshī
friend	朋友	péngyou
friendly	友好	yǒuhǎo

Pinyin was designed by scholars and adopted in the late 1950's in mainland China to promote the learning of Chinese within the country and to assist foreigners in learning Chinese. Taiwan also adopted this system on January 1, 2009. It is the pronunciation standard used by the United Nations, and is

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taught as part of our Chinese courses at El Centro.

If you want to say in Chinese, “Please pass me the chopsticks” it is as follows (*the pronunciation in Pinyin is above the character*):

qǐng bǎ kuàizi dì gěi wǒ
请 把 筷子 递 给 我。

Chinese Language Facts

About 1,213,000,000 (way over a billion) people speak Chinese as their first language. The major dialects and the number of speakers in each are Mandarin (845 million), Wu (77.2 million), Yue (Cantonese) (55.5 million) and Min Nan (47.3 million). Source: www.ethnologue.org



Anna Gann, ESOL Coordinator

The following is a recently conducted interview with Anna Gann, our new ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Coordinator:

1. Tell us a little about your background...what did you do before you came to El Centro?

Before I became an ESOL instructor, I worked in the corporate world. Actually, I stumbled upon this career while I was a language student in another country. As a result of this experience, I know how hard it is to learn another language! Before teaching at El Centro, I taught ESOL at Richland College.

2. Why do you like teaching ESOL?

I have a passion for language learning, language teaching, and diverse communities. It is this passion that has led me to become an ESOL instructor at El Centro.

3. What is your philosophy of teaching?

I strive to be a compassionate, creative, encouraging, and enthusiastic teacher. I want to meet my students where they are and point them in the direction of their potential.

4. How do you conduct your classes?

Throughout the course, I incorporate a variety of tasks and activities that enable students to acquire language skills that will be helpful both in and outside of the classroom. In addition, I encourage open communication among students and myself so that we can work together

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as a team to reach our goals through learning English.

5. What is your vision or goal for the ESOL program at El Centro?

I would like to see the program continue to grow and improve to meet the needs of our students. I think we are in a great location for reaching students who are in neighboring communities and those who are employed downtown.

Language Knowledge Quiz

1. Name the 2nd most spoken language in the world.
2. Name the 6th most spoken language in the world (*hint: this is the mother tongue of Rahul Ghose, lab assistant*).

See the last page for answers.

Featured Instructor



Professor José Tamez

Professor Tamez writes:

¡Hola! I'm new to El Centro though not to the teaching field. I've been teaching Spanish since 2002 and enjoy it even more so now. My family moved from Monterrey, Mexico, to Dallas when I was 2. I had the advantage of learning English at a very young age. But, my interest in Spanish came about as a result of the infamous high-school requirement. I was shocked to struggle to earn a B in a beginner class! I decided to major in Spanish.

The most rewarding decision ever made was to study abroad for a year in Cuernavaca, México, where I truly became fluent. Since then, I have traveled extensively throughout Latin America and Europe visiting countries such as Spain, France, and Colombia. My next adventure will lead me to Africa to practice my French. As a language learner, you are no longer relegated to one culture. With over 6,000 languages spoken in the world, why stop at 2? I am Mexican by birth but a citizen of the world.

Benefits of Language Learning: Improved English and World Peace by Professor José Tamez

Although many students study a second language to earn credits toward a degree, its benefits transcend a diploma. One benefit is an improved understanding of English. We study English grammar for over 10 years to end up with an

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incipient understanding of how English grammar functions. I realize this when I try to teach *indirect objects* in Spanish. I have seldom encountered a student who can explain what it is in English.

This poses a major challenge for a language instructor. How do you teach grammar in a second language, if the student doesn't know how it functions in their native tongue? I am forced to start my Spanish lesson of indirect objects by teaching/reviewing its use in the English language. Incredibly enough, after teaching the concept in Spanish, the student can then explain its use in English, too. They finally get it!

If you want to improve your English, study another language which will serve as the comparison. A knowledge of a second language does not hinder your English, but rather strengthens it. I always tell my students: "If you want to major in English, make sure you take as many Spanish classes as you can."

Another benefit of studying a second language is the promotion of world peace. World peace stems from cross-cultural communication. When you study another language, you delve into a new culture. As you do, you realize that to achieve even a basic level in the target language, you have to invest countless hours, and this, in turn, results in intense frustration which serves an important purpose. As native speakers of a

language, we get used to expressing our ideas with such ease to the point that when a foreigner isn't fluent in English, we judge them as incompetent. This divides us. But, when you study a second language, you recognize that improved speaking is a life-long process. Imagine experiencing the frustration of not having the necessary vocabulary to express your innermost desires, on a daily basis. The foreigner simply finds the courage to speak English out of need. When we study other languages, we are more patient and tolerant of imperfect English and therefore, of others. Don't judge them. Teach them. Remember that they too must be patient with you when you try to communicate in your second language. Tolerance begets tolerance. Learning a second language does much more than earn you a degree: it earns you a rung on the ladder of world peace.

Texas Cultural Event
Congratulations!

Dean Lisa Theriot's brother Lee came in 9th at the annual chili cooking contest in Terlingua, Texas. See this link for more information:

<http://www.chili.org/terlingua.html>



Big Bend National Park
(near Terlingua, Texas)

New Lab Assistant



Sandra Robinson

Sandra is originally from Cali, Columbia. After earning her bachelor's degree in business she worked for several companies in Columbia before she moved to the U.S. She has been an ESOL student at El Centro for 1½ years and this is her first job in the U.S.

would probably not be understood by a native speaker. You can actually say an English word with imperfect pronunciation, but if you have the syllable stress correct, you will most likely be understood.

Likewise in Spanish, syllable stress is crucial. For example, the word “**hablo**” without the accent mark receives the stress on the first syllable and means “I speak” (present tense). But “**habló**” [with the accent mark] receives the stress on the last syllable and means “he, she, or you spoke” (past tense). So if an inexperienced Spanish speaker uses this word and puts the stress on the wrong syllable, it can be confusing to the listener.

Interestingly, in some languages such as Thai, all the syllables in a word receive just about equal stress, so syllable stress is not a crucial factor in oral communication as it is in English and Spanish.

by Jeff Gregory

Syllable Stress in Communication

A crucial factor in oral communication in English and Spanish is to stress the correct syllable in a word when it is being pronounced. For example, take the English word “culinary.” The stress falls on the first syllable: **cu'-li-nar-y**. But if we say it with the stress on the second syllable, we have: **cu-li'-nar-y** -which sounds very different and

Answers to Quiz on p. 4

1. Spanish – it has 329 millions speakers. English is in third place with 328 million speakers.
2. Bengali – it has 181 million speakers and is the primary language in Bangladesh and the state of West Bengal, India.

Source: www.ethnologue.org