

St. Norbert College
Center for Global
Engagement
ESL Institute

July 2020

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Attending ESL Classes Online From Around the World

Written By: Fr. Gregory Zacek, Xuan (Darvin) Feng, Yishu (Wendy) Li, and Subash Lamichhane

Photo credits: Fr. Gregory Zacek and Xuan (Darvin) Feng

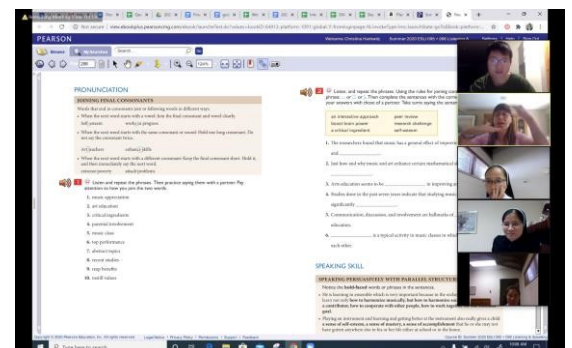
Photo captions: Fr. Gregory at work at Thomayer Hospital, Prague, Czech Republic (Top); Pronunciation practice in the Zoom Listening Class (Bottom)

The COVID-19 pandemic certainly changed the class format from traditional to online for our Spring 2 and Summer 2020 ESL students, who had to make quick arrangements. This change, however, allowed students from other parts of the world to learn with us while maintaining their responsibilities back home. “The obligations of my work both in parish and in the hospital are complicated but I am grateful that my brothers in our monastery are helping me with some masses during the class meetings, and also I can connect to our class from the hospital office right-away after completing my work there” explains Fr. Gregory, who is attending classes from his home country, the Czech Republic. He adds, “As a result of time-shift I have enough time during the day for finishing my homework and in the evening (or late afternoon) I have class meetings.”

Despite the challenges and new adjustments students had to make for online learning, some students found it the safest way to study under the circumstances of the coronavirus. Darwin highlights the benefits of online learning platforms when he says, “Studying online also has many interesting applications to deepen our memory. For example, Kahoot, NoRedInk, and Quizlet are very useful tools to strengthen our impression about vocabularies and grammar.” Wendy underscores the vast capabilities that technology and the internet provide when she comments, “The ESL class is just like a big family. Even though we are thousands of miles apart, we are still closely connected by the network.”



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Contact Us

St. Norbert College

Center for Global Engagement:

English as Second Language

Institute

Bemis International Center, 3rd Floor

Mission

We're here to enable students to acquire the language and cultural skills necessary to read, write, speak, and understand American English for academic and professional purposes.

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Virtually Together

Written by: Sr. Dung (Cecilia) Nguyen, Sr. Lan Nguyen, Sr. Sach Kieu, and Subash Lamichhane. Adapted from <https://www.snc.edu/magazine/2020spring/eslclass.html>

Photo Credit: Sr. Cecilia Nguyen, Sr. Lan Nguyen, Sr. Sach Kieu

Photo captions: Sr. Lan, Sr. Sach, and Sr. Cecilia studying together at the Convent of the Sisters of our Lady of Charity, Green Bay, WI

There are different preferences for the mode of instruction delivery. Sr.



Cecilia likes studying in a traditional classroom, but Zoom video conferencing for live class meetings has been working really well for her and for other sisters from Vietnam who live together with the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity in Green Bay. Zoom's breakout rooms are especially a nice feature for a varied group dynamic. "I have to

be surprised by learning through Zoom," Sr. Cecilia says. Moreover, the current alternative instruction format has allowed Sr. Cecilia to greatly improve her English skills. "When I come here, I just say, 'Hello, how are you?' That's it. So, I'm very shy. Now I can write essays and I feel more confident."

Teaching Online

Written by: Christina Hankwitz, Jana Dettlaff, and Subash Lamichhane

Our ESL instructors also had to transition their teaching methods from traditional in-person to online, but have reflected on the many benefits this change has brought. Ms. Christina Hankwitz noticed that "students are very punctual for the start of class and when returning to the class after a break. I think it might be harder to "sneak in" late to an online class than into a physical classroom." While learning a second language can be intimidating and scary for students, she remarks that, "compared to a traditional classroom, the students in the online classroom seem to be more confident and participatory, perhaps because they feel safe and comfortable at home in their personal space, rather than being in a classroom surrounded by their classmates." And while her neighbor's gardeners and a house construction in her neighborhood added a challenge to teaching, she has felt more at ease with headphones with a built-in mic, which cut down on the outside noise.

Besides using Zoom and Schoology LMS for language teaching, our instructors are using various tools to make sure students get familiar with the campus and the Green Bay area, too, regardless of where they are taking classes from. Dr. Dettlaff, another ESL instructor, said she, among other things "has been using the power of our ESL Facebook page to introduce the students to various cultural points of interest in our area." "I do Weekly Cultural Posts through which I provide information about the Wildlife Sanctuary, the NEW Zoo, Green Bay Packers, of course St. Norbert College campus and beyond."