



Talk English

Issue 1
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Thank you to our Donors:

Gaill Theunissen of Addington Primary School, who so generously provides us with classrooms in which to teach our students and a place to store our resources.

International House, for allowing us the use of their resources and photocopying facilities (we wish them good luck on their move to Umhlanga!).

Greta Schuler, our 2006 intern from Claremont Mckenna College. Greta wholeheartedly joined us for the time that she visited and also raised funds for us through the The Claremont McKenna Peace and Social Justice club.

Cedric Sissing, manager Adams campus bookshop for his assistance in sourcing and finding out costs for course books. He has offered to help us with fund-raising by distributing this newsletter at conferences and identifying local donors.

**Publication of
Talk English**

Newsletter

Talk English News

Julie Douglas

We're almost 2 years old now and it constantly amazes me that we've survived with no real resources or funding. It's entirely thanks to our dedicated teachers and administrators who worked so well together to keep things going. Also there's been something strange about how when one key and well-loved member leaves, someone new steps in to fill the gap. We've all, students and staff alike, made many wonderful friends through this work. The project gained its own momentum from our first meeting on August 13, 2005 and some of you will remember the way it grew to over 60 students in several weeks.

The project was initiated by 4 students who completed the CELTA course at international House, Durban. The objective is to provide English language conversation classes at beginner, elementary and intermediate levels for French-speaking refugees in South Africa from DRC and Ruanda. A medium term objective is to provide English for special purposes to these refugees, for example to professionals such as teachers, doctors, engineers, and to those wanting to study at tertiary level

Talk English takes place every Saturday morning from 09am – 12am at Addington Primary School.

World Refugee Day

Nicole Rimensberger

On the 20 June World Refugee Day was commemorated at the City Hall. This event was organised by the Mennonite Central Committee and UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). Talk English was invited and Nicole and Kyla attended on behalf of the project. A film, called "I live here", made by refugee children was screened and various speakers followed, including the deputy-mayor, Logie Naidoo, as well as Mr M. Gigaba, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs. The event proved to be very popular and was well attended. It provided a good opportunity for networking and exchanging information. Talk English flyers were distributed in order to promote our lessons.

Yasmin Rajah of MCC has provided constant encouragement and support for Talk English, and in 2007 funding used to buy teaching resources. .



Talk English "Group Lesson" in action

Rotary Club

Megan Reuvers

The Rotary Club had been paying us some special attention of late – Dictionaries and educational resources were given to us by Rotarian, Ray Levenberg from Bedfordview Rotary. Student bags and books were arranged by Rotarian Gary Galanos of Umhlatuzana Rotary.

Monique Labat had mediated much of this and we thank her for her constant interest and encouragement.

Refugees learning English for survival

Julie Douglas

Refugees are those who fled across a national border and cannot return for fear conflict or persecution. People working with refugees know, and research shows, that they are often resourceful, well-educated skilled professionals who left a good standard of life behind them.

Refugees have special needs. Often they do not have time and energy to study. They may work in more than one job, commuting long distances, maintaining family life and adjusting to life in South Africa. Sometimes they are highly qualified graduates, chronically disempowered by the inability to communicate and lacking confidence. Many come from education systems where strict listening, reading and writing were tools for learning, with the aim of factual recall (adapted from Seufort, 1999). Teaching methods for English as a foreign language are very different.

At Talk English we teach in a highly interactive, informal way. We focus primarily on speaking and pronunciation using phonemic symbols to help students replicate the sounds of English. We aim to make students first communicate in English with us and each other so as to give them survival skills in verbal communication. As when a child learns to speak, basic speaking and understanding come before reading and writing. Once students lose preconceptions and inhibitions they have fun and learn very quickly.

Talk English Team - People on the move

Julie Douglas

Welcome back to Nicole Rimensberger, one of our founder teachers who spent 2006 in Germany and who set up our admin system and gave us structure. Welcome to Sandra Smith who taught English at Durban Girls College and who we know will be an invaluable member of Talk English. Similarly Craig Nelson, an advocate who recently qualified through CELTA on the same course as our Rosemary. We hope you both become Talk English addicts and stay with us for a while.

Congratulations to Rosemary Gibson for completing her CELTA qualification.

Welcome and thanks to Shirley Taylor who joined us recently and has been gently keeping the admin going after Drew Pivallizza left to follow her studies. We miss you Drew and Craig for your support, dedication, and generosity.

Good wishes to Dave whose new job means he can no longer teach with us. We hope you come back soon Dave. You're a great teacher and your students will miss you, as will we all.

Our love and condolences go to Chatty, one of our star students, who left at the end of last year when her first baby was almost due. He was a delightful chubby and beautiful little boy. She and Fortune lost him as a result of cot death in June. Nicole and I spent a lovely afternoon with them both in Mitchell Park a few weeks before it happened.

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Teacher Training

@ Talk English

The project offers teachers some really insightful monthly workshops that are built around practical teaching tips. They are a great way of bringing in a fresh approach and new ideas, as well as opening the opportunity of discussing common problems. I think we've all used some of Waheeda's ideas in our lessons and this is a great selling point for us as a project. So far the workshops have covered Story-telling, Freer speaking activities, Dictation and phonemics. The August workshop will take a look at self assessments. Look out for upcoming workshops.

Talk English "Wish List"

Megan Reuvers

Talk English is currently working towards becoming a section 21 company, non-profit organization. This will ensure that we are more eligible to apply for funding. More funding will help us fuel our resources thereby gearing the project for future growth.

Currently Talk English has a wish list. We really would like to improve our resources to make it easier for our Volunteer Teachers to prepare their lessons.

Our "wishlist" comprises of a computer, photocopier, printer, paper, telephone, internet connection, workbooks and CDs, dictionaries, simple novels and textbooks, CD player, whiteboards, a supply of biscuits and juice. Getting a photocopier was rate at the top of our priorities. Watch this space for more developments.