

# EPDE Newsletter

News from the *EFL/ESL Program via Distance Education*

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## Announcement from DE Coordinator

Registration for the summer courses for returning students will begin on March 24th, 2010. Also, registration for the fall semester for returning students will begin on April 5th, 2010. Authorization is required for all online courses, so regardless of your registration appointment, please request authorization early by emailing [deregstr@indiana.edu](mailto:deregstr@indiana.edu). Please be sure when requesting authorization for a course that you include your name, student ID number, the course number, and the section/class number. For the list of summer courses, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/ylpp92o>. If you have any questions regarding authorizations or registration, please contact Sara Gibson at [deregstr@indiana.edu](mailto:deregstr@indiana.edu).



Mongolian students at Huree University in Ulaanbaatar, which is the capital of Mongolia. Teaching in Mongolia has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. Whenever I went to Mongolia and had a chance to meet the students and teach them, I felt tremendous excitement and joyfulness from the deepest part of my heart. Whenever I saw the students' eyes full of passion and eagerness for learning a new language, I felt a thrill of joy because I knew that I could support and help them with my teaching even though it was informal. I have to admit that I was simply a young, pure, and novice teacher motivated by passion alone.

I had only just completed my freshman year of college when I went to Mongolia for the first time in June of 2005. Even though I was majoring in English Education, I had taken only general courses and knew nothing about teaching methods or how to deal with students. I still remember my nervousness on when I stood up in front of dozens of Mongolian students for the first time. They did not speak Korean, nor did I speak Mongolian; therefore, English was the only available tool of communication. To make things worse, as low proficiency English speakers they did not understand much of what I said.

For two weeks, I had tried my best to introduce to them the basics of English. I am still not sure that my instruction was adequate and effective since I knew nothing about language pedagogy. I believe, however, that this reckless experience helped me develop my dream and passion as a language teacher and an educator. This time spent in Mongolia was the starting point of my development toward becoming a future EFL educator.

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## Becoming an English Teacher

*Feature Story by Hyona Park*

My native language is not English, but Korean. I have been learning English as a second language since I was 6 years old. Under the influence of my mother, whose college major was English, I was able to learn how to read and write in English from quite a young age. I loved studying English because I had never learned a foreign language before. I felt real excitement when I could read an English word by myself for the first time. The more I learned English, the more I wanted to know English. As time went by, my English language studies became the main source of my confidence and pleasure. As English was my favorite subject during my school days, I am still learning English not only as a student of language, but also as a potential instructor who is studying how to teach the language with passion and commitment.

Education is the other excitement and passion of mine. Even though I am not a full-time teacher yet, I have been always interested in the field of Education, especially its importance for people, and how learning provides potential for future success. During my college years, I have had very unique and invaluable teaching experiences. Since 2005, I have traveled to Mongolia each summer; there I volunteered to teach English to



After the clumsy experience as a novice teacher, I started to take classes in the School of Education, where I acquired actual instructional theories, methods, and skills. After the first teaching experience in Mongolia, I began to learn how to transfer my knowledge to others efficiently. The more I acquired a proficiency in both language and pedagogy, the more I desired to apply my knowledge in practice. This is why I returned to Mongolia in 2006; there I realized that my teaching improved considerably and working with students become significantly easier. Most importantly, I discovered the joyfulness and excitement of 'teaching'. Moreover, during my five visits to Mongolia, I realized that education takes an important role

in one's life, yet also affects the possible futures of a society and a country. With its very poor education system, Mongolia has few teachers who can teach English professionally and efficiently. As I visited the country, I gained the desire to learn how to teach English skillfully, with time-tested methods and effective pedagogies. It is for this reason—to further my enthusiasm for language and education—that I decided to pursue a Master's degree in the department of Literacy, Culture, and Language Education at Indiana University-Bloomington. While working on my Master's program, I have also decided to complete the ESL/EFL Program via Distance Education (so-called EPDE). I decided to finish this program not only because it perfectly matches what I am interested in the most, ESL education, but also because I believe that this program will enable me to gain invaluable teaching experiences and will impart further academic skills and teaching methods as an ESL instructor. Since this is the first semester in the EPDE program, I am taking two courses, L530 and L525, from the four required courses for this semester. In particular, the L525 class, Practicum in Language Education, will allow me to gain the situational knowledge made possible only by actually teaching students. The process involves choosing two of my focal students and applying various assessments to them. Because I am a non-native speaker of English, the courses are sometimes difficult, and they require me to test my skills as a learner. Obviously, these classes are somewhat tricky; I believe, however, that taking the four required classes will eventually become a base and a huge resource for me as an ESL instructor and a future educator. It is not an easy step for me, but this process will provide the scaffolding for my future.

### About the author

Hyona Park is a Master's student in Literacy, Culture, and Language Education. She is originally from South Korea and was educated there until high school. She earned her Bachelor's degree in secondary education at IU School of Education. She loves children and helping the poor. She visited Mongolia five times to teach English to Mongolian students. She hopes to be an educator either in Korea or in the under-developed countries in the future. Also, she is planning her sixth trip to Mongolia for this coming summer.

## EPDE courses in upcoming semester

Three EPDE teaching certificate courses is going to be offered in the summer semester.

- L539 Language Foundations for ESL/EFL teachers
- L530 Computer Assisted Language Learning
- L525 Practicum in Language Education

The courses for the EFL/ESL teacher trainer certificate are not yet offered but they are going to be offered in the fall semester. For more information about the class schedule, please go to <http://tinyurl.com/ylpp920>. If you have questions about the courses, please email Sara Gibson at [deregstr@indiana.edu](mailto:deregstr@indiana.edu).



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