ELI Director
Contributes
Language Teaching
Expertise to Online
Project

Juffs, has contributed his expertise in language teaching to en.news, a new collaboration between CNN and Pittsburgh's WeSpeke, to teach English to the world online AND on smartphones for FREE!

The en.news with CNN website (https://en.news) and app use artificial intelligence (AI) to select news articles for students based on their interests and then uses those articles to provide activities that focus on pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. To further improve their English, students can visit wespeke.com to find an online conversation partner who they can practice their speaking and listening skills with via chat. WeSpeke also offers focused language lessons, activities, self-tests, and other language learning resources, some of which are free.

You can read more about en.news and the ELI’s contributions to this project at https://tinyurl.com/en-news-PittELI.

Lunar New Year

Lunar New Year is one of the world’s most colorful and exuberant events and triggers celebrations all across the globe. Unlike our festivities, which always take place at midnight between December 31 and January 1, Lunar New Year varies each year. Lunar New Year takes place on a different date each year because it is based on the lunar calendar. New Year’s Day normally falls between January 21 and February 20.

The Lunar New Year is celebrated with an explosion of light and sound, involving lighting firecrackers, bell ringing, and watching traditional lion dances. Families gather together for a reunion dinner on New Year’s Eve, and clean their houses to sweep away bad fortune on New Year’s Day. Traditionally, kids would be given red envelopes stuffed with ‘lucky money’ and positive wishes on New Year’s Day.

This year will be the Year of the Dog. According to Asian astrology, your year of birth - and the animal this represents - determines a lot about your personality traits. Anyone born in an Earth Dog year will be communicative, serious, and responsible in the workplace. The choice of animals is significant - the ox, horse, goat, rooster, pig, and dog are six of the main domestic animals raised by people. Other animals include the rat, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake and monkey. The twelve animals were separated into two categories - yin and yang - depending on whether they have an odd or even number of claws, toes or hooves. They were then arranged into an alternating yin and yang sequence.

ELI Activity:

Snow Tubing Deadline Today!

If you want to join the ELI as we travel to Boyce Park to go snow tubing on Saturday, February 24, you must pay the main office by 4:30 pm today, February 15. The price is $30, which includes 2 hours of snow tubing and roundtrip transportation in university vans. Space is limited to 20 passengers. ELI students studying in the Intensive English Program get first priority. Please bring the exact amount. There are no refunds.

If you would like to bring a guest who is not an ELI student, please contact Ece at ecu4@pitt.edu, and she will let you know if there is still space available after the deadline today. If you have your own transportation and would like to meet our group at Boyce Park, email Ece, and she will send you the link for purchasing tickets.

On February 24, we will meet at the ELI at 1:00 pm. Be sure to check the bus schedules to campus, as they are slightly different on Saturdays. We'll take university vans to the park, which is approximately 35 minutes from the University. Once we arrive at Boyce Park, we will have 2 hours to enjoy tubing. We will return to Pittsburgh around 6:00 pm.
Belongings in Classrooms

Recently, one of your fellow ELI students discovered that cash was missing from her backpack, which she had left in a classroom. Please see Stacy if you have any information about this situation. We want you to be comfortable here at the ELI, and while you may know and trust many of your classmates, please remember that it is never safe to leave your bags alone anywhere. The ELI cannot guarantee the safety of your belongings if you leave them in an ELI classroom between classes or during the lunch break. ELI classrooms are not secure places to leave your bags, computers, or other valuables. It is always safer to keep your things in a locker. See the ELI main office if you would like to sign up for a locker for the term. Also, please remember to never leave bags in ELI hallways, the lobby, the Vault, or any other open area.

ELI Storytellers Series

One of the benefits of studying at the ELI is the chance to meet and to learn from people with diverse backgrounds and experience. The ELI Storytellers Series gives students an opportunity to share their stories with classmates. Speakers give a 10-15-minute presentation, followed by a question and answer period. The talks are scheduled during the 1:00 lunch break. The series is open to all ELI students, and it is a great way to get extra speaking and listening practice outside of class. Your English doesn’t have to be perfect! This is a great opportunity to challenge yourself and share your story with your friends, teachers and classmates.

How about you? Do you have an interest or a skill you would like to tell us about? Have you accomplished something special or done something fun and exciting? Would you like to share information about your culture or hometown? What is your story? If you are interested in giving a short presentation, email Heather at hlm44@pitt.edu.

ELI Activity:

Handwriting Workshop

Do you wish your handwriting were more legible? On Tuesday, February 20, at 1:00 pm in Room M15, the ELI will offer a handwriting workshop. Just like language learning, improving your handwriting takes time and practice. That means your handwriting will not immediately transform after this workshop. However, Ece will offer some tips and guidance to get you on the right path to legible handwriting.

You do not have to register for this activity in advance. Just show up! Feel free to bring your lunch. If you have any questions, please contact Ece at ecu4@pitt.edu.

New I-20 for F1 students

If you are a new F1 student in the ELI, please see the ELI main office for your new I-20. You have a new copy of the I-20 that shows that you have registered for classes and are living in the US legally. This is the document that proves that you have enrolled in school, so you must pick up the updated copy for your records.

Sponsorship Letters

If you have an official sponsorship letter from your government (SACM or CBIE, for example) you must submit it to the ELI Main Office. Students must give an updated sponsor letter to the ELI and to the Student Payment Center each term. If you have any questions about this, please visit the ELI Main Office.

All sponsored students must also complete an information sheet in the ELI Main Office. The ELI must contact sponsors throughout the term, and we require updated information about the student’s sponsor and advisor. Students must complete this form each semester and when their sponsor information changes.

English in the Classroom

This is just a reminder that it is a huge benefit for your language learning if you speak English as much as possible. Some of you are still tempted to speak your native languages to your friends. This is understandable because it is much easier and more comfortable. Please remember, though, that when you are in an ELI classroom, your teachers and your classmates only want to hear your English, even if it isn’t quite accurate yet. Your teachers cannot be flexible with this requirement; they have to insist that you utilize your English.

Information for Sponsored Saudi Students

If you are a sponsored student, the ELI is required to report on your performance each term. Please note the following information from the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM).

SACM has reminded us that it has a 100% attendance policy for its sponsored students. SACM writes, “Students are expected to be in class at all times, and absences must be limited to sick leave authorized by a physician and/or an immigration situation that requires an absence to maintain legal standing.” Please be careful to attend all classes for the rest of the term unless you have an illness or an immigration issue that requires attention. The ELI is required each term to report on progress and excessive absences of sponsored students to SACM.

Please note: The ELI has its own attendance policy, as well. There are no excused absences in the ELI. If you miss class because of an illness or an immigration issue, it will be counted as an absence on your ELI record, even if SACM allows it. There are no exceptions to this rule. For details on the ELI attendance policy, see the online Student Handbook.

If you have any questions about these policies, please see Stacy.

Visit the ELI NEWS online: www.eli.pitt.edu/eli-news
Keeping Classrooms Clean

We try to create a nice environment for our ELI students, and part of that is providing neat and tidy classrooms for you. Please help us to keep our classrooms clean by throwing away any garbage in the appropriate trash cans. Please don’t leave any water bottles, cups, papers, or any other trash on desks, on the floor, or in the hallway after you have finished with them. There are trashcans in every classroom and in each hallway-please use them.

Midterm Grade Reports

by Heather McNaught

On Wednesday, February 14th, your teachers will turn in your midterm grades. Although these are not your final grades, they do show you how well you are doing in each class. Teachers also write specific comments for each student in each class, which tell you exactly what you do well and what you need to work a little harder on.

Finally, if there is something you don’t understand about the grade, please talk directly to your teacher.

Your copy of the midterm grades will be given to you on Monday, February 19th, in your Listening class. If you are absent or do not have listening class on Tuesday afternoon, you may pick up your midterm grade report in the ELI Main Office on Tuesday the 22nd. If you receive very low grades or have many absences, you will be given an appointment with the Student Advisor to discuss any problems you might have and get advice about how to improve. If you still have questions about grades, read p. 11 in the ELI Student Handbook!

Please Note: Students with unpaid tuition and fees on their account will not receive a grade report until they have paid.

ELI Activity:

International Speed Friending

Join us for International “Speed Friending” on Tues., February 27 from 4:30-6:30 pm in the O’Hara Student Center Dining Room (4024 O’Hara St). This is a fun way to make friends fast, have fun, and practice your English!

If you’ve ever heard of “Speed Dating,” this is similar. The only difference is that the objective is to make friends! On Tues., February 27, international students from Pitt will have the opportunity to meet American students at Pitt, and vice versa. Students will be seated across from each other (one American student and one international student) and have 5 minutes to talk with each other in English to see if they have similar interests or hobbies. This is not for dating! This is for making friends. After five minutes, a timer will go off and the students move on and talk with someone else. Students will also have the opportunity to exchange contact information in case they want to keep in touch. Refreshments will be served.

You must pre-register for this event by Monday, February 26 at www.tinyurl.com/ISF2184. Seating is very limited and is on a first come, first served basis.

Don’t be reluctant to do this. You have nothing to lose and will gain practice with English and maybe even a new friend!

For more information about this event, contact Ece at ecu4@pitt.edu.

Title IX Policy

Title IX is a U.S. law that gives you the right to report any instances of sexual misconduct to the University, have the University investigate what happened, and have your complaint resolved. Sexual misconduct is sexual contact that you do not want:

• Someone speaking to you in a sexual way or asking you for sex when you aren’t interested.
• Someone forcing you to have sexual contact.
• Relationship violence: Spouse/partner speaking to you or treating you in an abusive or violent way.
• Stalking: Someone repeatedly following or threatening you, including by phone/text/email/mail/social media.

You can report sexual misconduct to ELI officials or to the police. The ELI will help you report the issue to the University. Please note: If you report an issue to an ELI staff or faculty member, the ELI is required to report the issue to the University Title IX office. The ELI cannot maintain complete confidentiality. In other words, if you tell any teacher or staff member in the ELI, they must report it to the university. If you want to speak to a confidential advisor, the ELI can help you find a counselor at the University Counseling Center. In almost all cases, this counselor will not inform other people about what you tell them.

University Counseling Center
119 University Place
Nordenberg Hall
412-648-7930

If you experience any type of sexual misconduct, harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, please talk to the ELI Student Advisor or an ELI teacher immediately.

Follow Us on Twitter!

Follow us on Twitter at @UPITT_ELI

Coffee Talk on Fridays!

4:00 – 6:00 pm Panera (3800 Forbes Ave.)

Visit the ELI NEWS online: www.eli.pitt.edu/eli-news
Repeating Level 6 at the ELI

Many of you are making plans for your academic future here in the U.S. Please remember that ELI students are allowed to take only two semesters at level 6. After you complete two terms at level 6, you must transfer to another program if you want to stay in the U.S. The ELI cannot make exceptions to this rule, so please plan carefully.

ELI Activity:

Baseball Game

Join the ELI as we cheer for the Pittsburgh Pirates when they take on the Cincinnati Reds on Sat., April 7, at 7:05 pm. Check the flyers posted around the ELI for pricing information.

Our seats will be in the Upper Level Grandstand (with a view of the game and the skyline!). Everyone in our group will get a Pirates Cap! In addition, we will get to enjoy a fantastic fireworks show after the game.

If you would like to go with our group, you must pay the main office by 4:30 pm on Thursday, March 1. Please bring the exact amount, cash only. Feel free to buy a ticket for a friend, too, even if they are not in the ELI.

There are no cancellations or refunds. Even if it rains, we will still go to the game. Baseball games are rarely cancelled because of weather, but the fireworks show could be cancelled because of the rain.

ELI Absence Policy

We often have questions about excused absences in the ELI. It is true that if you are sick, it is not appropriate for you to come to school—you may infect others, and it is crucial that you rest to get well. Please note, though, that the ELI attendance policy states that “there is no such thing as an excused absence” in the ELI. Even if you are sick, the absence must be counted as an unexcused absence according to the ELI rules.

If you miss over 8 classes, you will not receive a certificate of attendance at the end of the term. If you miss over 12, you may not be invited back to the ELI next term. If you are an F-1 student and you miss over 15 classes, your visa may be terminated. Please see the online Student Handbook for more information on the ELI attendance policy.

Also, please remember that if you do not do the work in your classes and the homework, this will affect your grade. If you want to make progress with your language learning, it is important that you attend class on time, regularly, with your homework complete. Please see Stacy if you have any questions or concerns about attendance in the ELI.

ELI Activity:

Language Music Club Special Guest!

Next week the Language Music Club will be back in its usual room, M15. Bring your lunch and join us! You are welcome to stop by at any time from 1:00-1:50 pm.

For the last three weeks, we have practiced grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency while enjoying music from a variety of artists, including Ed Sheeran, James Taylor, Bruno Mars, and The Beatles.

Next week we will have the additional bonus of someone new to lead us in the activities. I wonder which songs this special guest will choose. Join us and find out!

For more information or to make song suggestions, please email Ece at ecu4@pitt.edu.

ELI Final Exam Schedule Spring 2018

The ELI gives final exams at the end of the term. These exams are worth 30% of the final grade for each class. There are no excused absences for finals. The ELI does not give early final exams or makeup exams. Please note the following schedule and plan to be present for the finals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Friday, April 6</th>
<th>Monday, April 9</th>
<th>Tuesday, April 10</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing final 10:00am-12:00pm</td>
<td>Grammar final 10:00am-12:00pm</td>
<td>Reading final 10:00am-12:00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaking final 1:00pm-3:00pm</td>
<td>Listening final 2:00pm-4:00pm</td>
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Lateness

Please remember that the ELI Attendance policy states that a student will be considered absent if the student is over 5 minutes late for class. Your teachers do not have any flexibility with this policy; they must mark you absent if you are over 5 minutes late. Please be aware of your breaks between classes and come to class on time.

Mark your calendars!
Upcoming ELI Activities

Monday, February 19: Language Music Club
Tuesday, February 20: Handwriting Class
Friday, February 23: Pitt Night at the Ballet: Swan Lake
Saturday, February 24: Snow Tubing
Tuesday, February 27: International Speed Friending
Friday, March 2: Fish Fry
Friday, March 9-Sunday, March 11: Trip to Washington, DC
Saturday, March 17: ELI Night
Saturday, April 7: Pirates G