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Letter from the President: *Michael Lessard-Clouston*

CELEA Colleagues,

It's a privilege to greet you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to share my gratitude for this association. At heart, the Christian English Language Educators Association is about people. CELEA is a grassroots, volunteer organization of Christians who support one another in our work and ministry of English language teaching. CELEA has no paid staff, and no grants or outside funding sources. Accordingly, everything we do as an organization is the result of the efforts of our leaders, members, and volunteers offering their time, talents, and treasures.

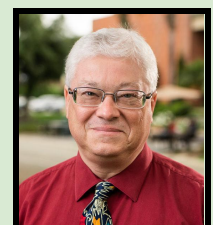
I want to thank our Past-President, Dr. David Broersma, who led the organization this past year, enabling us to continue and move forward during the pandemic. As a result, CELEA hosted our first ever CELT virtual conference March 5-6, 2021. That event was a great success largely due to Dr. Dana Saito-Stehberger, our dedicated and hard-working conference Chair who gathered wonderful volunteers to bring us into the 21st century. Over 200 people were able to connect from around the world during two wonderful days of presentations and discussions on numerous ELT topics. Thanks be to God!

While it's humbling to be President, I'm grateful we have an exceptional Board of talented people who help carry out and expand our efforts. In addition to David, Dr. Michael Westwood is President-Elect, Jenine Hawryluk Secretary, Dr. Amie Sarker Treasurer, and Amanda Dago our Communications Coordinator. Rounding out this fine group are several Members-at-Large who take on various responsibilities during the year, including Dr. Maxine Pond, Heather Snavely, Dr. Dana Saito-Stehberger, and Alexandra Sacramento, who recently joined us following the conference. In addition, Hannah Cole serves as our *CELEA News* editor and Drs. Bradley Baurain and Michael Pasquale edit our *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching*. I'm thankful I work alongside you all and I appreciate your time, energy, and wisdom as together we contribute to our ELT profession while addressing some challenges.

One key issue is that the last number of years CELEA has used at least five different systems to do our work, and unfortunately they don't interact well with each other. As a result, our communications have not always been consistent, and people who thought they had perhaps "signed up" through the website did not actually become paying CELEA members. We're grateful that Amanda and Heather are leading the charge to significantly improve this situation. As a result, we hope to have increased communication with everyone, and to consolidate and expand opportunities with a new website later this year. So as you hear from CELEA, if asked please respond so we can ensure you are part of any improved communication system created.

This is an exciting time for our association, with many new members joining as we consider new endeavours, such as offering occasional webinars and perhaps mentoring opportunities and a Special Interest Group (SIG) on theological writing. I covet your prayers for CELEA and our Board as we work toward these efforts and plan ahead for the CELT 2022 conference next March.

Michael Lessard-Clouston (michael.lessard-clouston@biola.edu)





It was my first time attending the CELT conference in March, offered virtually for the first time. What a delight and privilege it was to connect with Christian TESOL voices worldwide. While virtual interaction has its limitations and glitches, the sheer potential it offers us outweighs the unknowns; plus, it can be really fun! At CELT 2021, we got to see, hear, and learn from people thousands of miles away (see the above map showing many of the attendees). The nations were brought to the virtual table at CELT 2021, and the conference’s theme of Imago Dei was brought to life.

Special thanks to our article contributors Megan Cho, Christine Andrews and Dr. Melina Gallo, and to those who graciously shared their CELT conference experiences. May you comprehend what a blessing your participation really is to all of us.

CELEA is happy to have received word of the interest of several of you in contributing to this newsletter and we look forward to being in touch.

Hannah Cole



Would you like to contribute to our newsletter?
CELEA NEWS welcomes your submissions.

- ★ Classroom **activities** or teaching **techniques**
- ★ **Reflections** on experiences or interests in TESOL
- ★ **Research reports**
- ★ **Book reviews**
- ★ **Student** submissions (soon-to-be TESOL professionals)
- ★ Other ideas? Please write to: celeanewsletter@gmail.com

Editorial Team:

- Maxine Pond
- Annie Wong
- Amanda Dago
- Dana Saito-Stehberger

And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor. [...] Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

(1 Corinthians 12:23a, 27 NKJV)

CELT 2021 Virtual Conference Reflections

First of all, I would like to thank the CELT team for granting me such a huge opportunity in my life that I could present virtually. I presented a paper on *Mentoring English Learners Beyond the Formal* after which I got very meaningful feedback. One of my favorite things about being a scholar and English Teacher is attending conferences. I always want to bring an international dimension to my profession. It was a great opportunity to connect with the broader community of practice, share ideas, cascade new knowledge, and get inspired. I have returned to my profession feeling energized and excited, full of heart to push the research forward. I was able to connect and collaborate with many God-fearing educators and researchers who have become my mentors directly and indirectly. I attended different sessions which have shaped my profession. I was not confident about how I could connect at this virtual conference via Hopin. Finally, I did it. Thank you!

***Prakash Chandra Giri** is the principal at Goodwill Activity School and a lecturer in English at Gupteshwor Mahadev Multiple Campus, both in Pokhara, Nepal. He is also a research scholar at Nepal Open University, Kathmandu. Prakash has presented papers at various regional, national and international conferences; and is particularly interested in exploring applications of open-source software and online tools.*



Attending this conference gave me the opportunity to meet talented professionals from all over the globe who are passionate for service to Christ through teaching English to the nations. After meeting one of the participants in the Prayer Lounge, my devotion to communing and abiding in Christ daily was refreshed and renewed. The one-on-one networking space allowed me to meet another passionate believer in Christ from the UK who is serving God through Christian TEFL training for teachers. Watching one of the sessions ignited my passion to participate in the special interest group on Writing in Theology. Moderating for another session opened an opportunity for me to collaborate with a free digital ESL Bible curriculum. Watching the keynote speaker made me appreciate my M.A. TESOL classes where I was familiarized with the latest research in SLA. Finally, setting up Hopin platform and collaborating with wonderful volunteers, board members, and presenters in preparation for the conference sharpened my skills necessary to honor God in the workplace. CELT 2021 has been a breath of fresh air and a place to connect in the midst of a world that gets progressively more disconnected. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity!

***Anna Heremes** was born in Ukraine where she grew up speaking Russian and Ukrainian and picked up German and French in middle school. During her exchange year as a high school student in Nevada, she also started learning Spanish and came to know Jesus as her Savior at the age of 17. Upon returning to Ukraine, she decided to serve her neighbor through teaching Business English and then founding an English discussion club in her hometown. She received her Bachelor's degree in Education from Berea College in the U.S. and is now working on her M.A. TESOL from Trinity Western University in Canada.*



The Virtual 2021 CELT conference offered me a golden opportunity to grow as an educator. One of the most memorable parts for me was learning that it is important to enhance humanizing pedagogy because every student's life matters. As a teacher, I have the responsibility to meet the needs of all my students. Diverse presentations helped me grow as a teacher who hears my students and cares for them. I have been reminded that struggling students also have gifts which need to be ignited. The opportunity to present has contributed to the improvement of my public speaking and presentation skills.

Célestin Katembo Mukirania is passionate about teaching English to speakers of other languages. As a bilingual education coach and faculty development coordinator at the Christian Bilingual University of the Congo, located in Beni/DRC, Célestin has planned and facilitated several professional development sessions to help teachers improve student learning. Célestin is married to Sylvie and God has blessed them with two daughters.



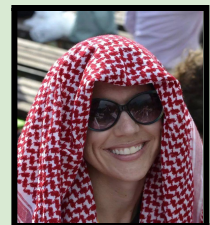
This year was only my second time attending the CELT conference and my first time presenting. Initially, I was a little concerned about the virtual nature of the conference and wasn't sure how much I would be able to get out of it. However, I was very pleased with how things went. One of the most valuable aspects for me was the opportunity to connect with and hear from other like-minded professionals in the TESOL field. I enjoyed all of the interactions that I had and found the presentations very beneficial and uplifting. The mix of professional development and fellowship was encouraging and refreshing. I'm so happy that I was able to attend and participate in this year's conference and look forward to doing so again next year.

Joshua Detherage teaches at Campbellsville University in the ESL Institute and M.A. TESOL program. He has an M.A. in TESOL and Intercultural Studies from Wheaton College and five years teaching experience in Mongolia with ELIC. He is passionate about preparing international students for academic success in a U.S. university and equipping graduate TESOL students to be effective English teachers. He lives in Campbellsville, Kentucky, with his wife Jennifer and three children.



This was my first year attending the CELT conference. Friends from the International Congress on Language Learning recommended the conference, and I'm glad I attended. The most beneficial part of the conference was hearing and learning from others with the same passions and hopes as they seek to serve through excellence in education. I started my educational doctorate last year, and am just at the beginning stages of doctoral level research. My working topic is trauma informed education for Arabic speakers with refugee experiences. The most exciting part of the conference was realizing that a scholar I had just cited in a literature review was a presenter at the conference! Thank you for the opportunity to meet with others as we press on towards excellence as we meet the linguistic, social, and spiritual needs of those we serve.

Jennifer LaChonce teaches ELLs from Arabic-speaking countries at a public school in the Chicago area, translating math lessons into Arabic as well as giving English lessons. She worked as a teacher in the Middle East for many years. She speaks Spanish and is fluent in spoken Levantine dialect.



Enlightening our Religious Life through Vocabulary Learning

by Megan Cho

“When I first attended an English Mass in the U.S., I could not understand the Mass because there were too many new words.”

The above quote is my own personal experience. I have been attending English Catholic Mass for more than four years, but I still cannot fully understand the Mass due to the heavy load of new vocabulary. This experience guided me to work on theology vocabulary, with a special emphasis on vocabulary from homilies and the Catholic Mass. There are many studies about vocabulary (Nation, 2013; Coxhead, 2000); however, there is not much previous work on theology vocabulary which could help second language English speakers (SLES)’ understanding in the Catholic Mass.



Photo by Jeff Sheldon on Unsplash

Until now, there is no theological vocabulary list published except for the Theological Word List (TWL) by Lessard-Clouston (2010). Therefore, I created a vocabulary list called Catholic Mass Word List (CMWL) by analyzing 43 homilies by Msgr. Patrick S. Brennan from St. Mary Catholic Church in Portland and the *Order of Mass* in Roman Missal¹ to add more variety to theology vocabulary lists.

This project was not easy but it was very meaningful work for me. The vocabulary analysis of the Catholic Mass words was chosen for my personal needs as a SLES. My language barrier has been an obstacle many times during my academic journey but it has also allowed me to identify what could improve the quality of life of SLES living in the United States. For me, family, friends, and religion provide emotional support. That is why I decided to work on the words analysis for the Catholic Mass- to enrich my religious life. Some people might point out that I can access Korean Mass online or go to a Korean Catholic church. While that is true, it is a short-term solution. I want to have more engagement in local society and feel a stronger sense of belonging in the community where I live. I still cannot understand 100% of English Mass words. However, I feel much more confident now since working on this project and learning essential Catholic words.

Be patient and never give up as we learn by doing. God is always there for us. I truly hope that SLES Christians in the United States can continue their religious life with spiritual support. Attending English Mass will get easier if we do not give up. We cannot let language barriers stop our religious life where we receive emotional encouragement. My hope could be delivered to many people who visit my website (<https://sites.google.com/view/km-catholic-corpus>).

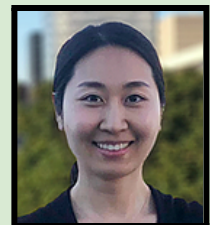


¹ *Roman Missal* is the book containing the prescribed prayers, chants, and instructions for the celebration of Mass in the Roman Catholic Church (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2019).

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Coxhead, A. (2000). A new academic word list. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34(2), 213–238.
 Lessard-Clouston, M. (2010). Theology lectures as lexical environments: A case study of technical vocabulary use. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 9(4), 308-321.
 Nation, I. (2013). *Learning vocabulary in another language (2nd ed.)* [Kindle DX version]. Retrieved from: Amazon.com.

Megan Cho is an M.A. TESOL and Educational Leadership and Policy graduate of Portland State University (PSU). Currently, she is working as a mentor of sophomore students in the University Studies department in PSU as a Graduate Teaching Assistant peer mentor. You can reach her at meganchomail@gmail.com.



Faith in ELT Discussion e-list

Are you a member of the **TESOL International Association**? If so, are you aware that there is a **Faith in English Language Teaching** e-list within the organization?

Sign in on tesol.org and check "My Subscriptions" to see if you are signed up for **Faith in ELT**. When you have a resource or information to share, you can click on the right side on "Connect with myTESOL." On the next page along the top, click on "Participate." Then you can create a thread and click on "SELECT COM" where the drop down includes **Faith in ELT**. Your message or attachment will be sent out to the **Faith in ELT** community, which is currently about 350 strong.

Do Not Hinder the Children:

Welcoming Children into Language Learning

by Christine Lewis



Photo credit: Christine Lewis

“Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’” Matthew 19:14, NIV

Christ’s words, addressed to adults, always spoke to me about how children relate to God and how adults should remove hindrances that prevent children from coming to Him. This verse came to mean so much more, when in the midst of frustration and despair about children’s language learning, I learned how we can shape the path to learning through relationship and communication. Understanding and communicating with others is how loving them begins.

My journey in teaching children language began with my own. I was a new mom of two, immersed in intensive language learning during my first months in urban India. I was in a perfect context for adult language input, but this was not the case for my kids. The language classes couldn’t accommodate them because of methods and pacing. The outside environment became a mounting challenge as basic daily tasks with my stir-crazy, attention-starved children brought scolding and chiding by locals.

Since I was barely fitting in myself, I wasn’t able to explain to them how they should behave to be welcomed in that culture. The collective experiences at the outset were very negative for my children, and they responded self-protectively with hostility to the culture and aversion to language acquisition. I had inadvertently hindered my children’s learning and relationships with those we were there to serve.



Photo credit: Christine Lewis

“Hindering” of children also happened as I was teaching English. I was invited to step into an absent teacher’s role providing English lessons at a nearby slum community. I figured I could do an English program similar to the one that I had received in Hindi, keeping it at a child’s pace. It involved concrete concepts using real objects (colorful plastic miniatures and toys) which I assumed would draw their interest.

Something was wrong right away: instead of paying attention, the slum children of all ages constantly snatched at the toys, even hiding them to steal home later. It baffled me until reality struck: these children had no toys at all. Switching to using non-toy objects like fruits and vegetables brought similar results: the students had such limited diets that putting beautiful produce before them to touch (and “learn from”) was too much temptation. By my unawareness of their reality, I was approaching language learning in a way that hindered language acquisition.



Photo cred: Alyssa Johnson

In the frustrating situation of both my children and students, which I both felt trapped in and responsible for, this verse played in my mind: “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them” (Matthew 19:14, NIV).

Through conversations with a close friend of mine, Alyssa Johnson, a new way to do language

learning for children began to take shape. The teaching and learning process was boosted by the thinking of Charlotte Mason, a child educator in the 1800s. Her philosophy dictated: “Education is the science of relations” (Mason, 2017, p. x). She saw that a child’s attitude toward learning must come from a right relationship between self, the teacher, and the material being learned. How could I heal my children’s broken relationship with the seemingly harsh culture around them? How could I help my students learn English by removing hindrances created by my teaching method?



Photo cred: Christine Lewis

Putting language learning before relationships was putting the cart before the horse. I needed to remove all barriers to the children relating in the new language so that they could feel welcome in the new culture. The emphasis was now relationship-first language learning. We created a curriculum to use at our school where there were no toys, just simple drawings. We wanted to share the best that the English language had to offer children so that they wanted to relate in that language. We used catchy songs, vivid stories, cultural games, roleplay, and even mothering scripts. Our language approach also helped the language-learning mom discover explicitly “how to mother” in that culture so she becomes the

corrective force for her own children, rather than the scolding from watchful neighbors.

After a few years of polishing this [freeform curriculum](#) and seeing many people abroad use it to help their children learn a new language or help local children acquire English, we noticed the need for a more “well-traveled road.” We reduced some of the lesson prep by uploading [videos](#) with stories, script recordings, songs and toy reveals, sending them to native speakers to get their translation and audio. In this way, the work one family does to plan and record the lesson in a given language can bless countless others. We

can aggregate free resources to offer to any family in their bilingual journey. Our aim is to provide the language tools needed for children to relate naturally in a language, to play and remove hindrances to building friendships.

We invite others interested in translating our materials into new languages to join us. Welcoming children into relationship with God’s world, His people and their languages is welcoming Christ: “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me” (Mark 9:37, NIV).

Reference:

Mason, C. (2017). *Home Education* (5th ed.). Living Book Press.

Christine Lewis has a B.A. in Cultural Anthropology and Linguistics from California State University of Los Angeles. A mother of four children, her hobbies include homeschooling, hospice care, reading widely and listening to and sharing stories with others. She has eight years curriculum development experience and two years TESOL experience in India.



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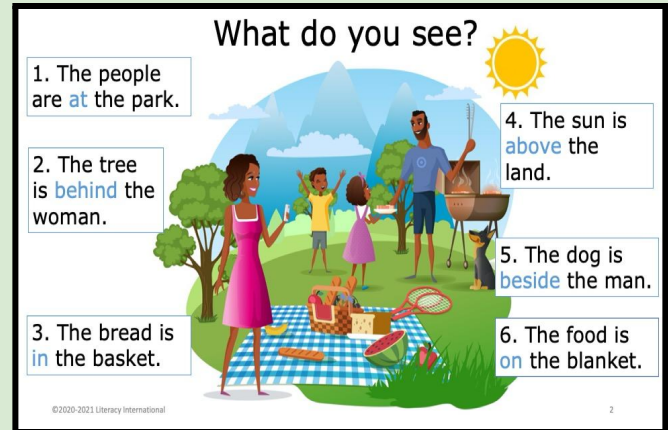
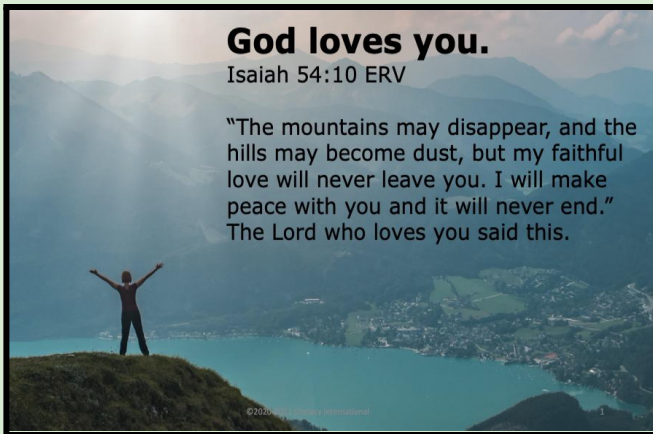
Volume 8 is forthcoming this summer!

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“Light of the World” ESL Curriculum

by Dr. Melina Gallo



For more than 50 years, [Literacy & Evangelism International](#) has trained volunteer teachers to share the message of Jesus Christ through the gift of reading and ESL. We provide literacy materials in more than 270 languages as well as ESL curricula. An estimated 1.5 billion people around the world are learning ESL. Many refugees, immigrants, and foreign language learners have not yet heard the gospel message.

This past year we began to create a free, high-quality curriculum that can be used by Christians around the world to share the love of Jesus through the gift of ESL.

This curriculum is designed to be used in diverse settings and formats including on large screens in traditional classrooms, online with video conferencing lessons, on mobile devices, or printed on paper. Students can easily view and listen to the lessons on mobile phones or computers to practice at home.

Light of the World is a free Bible-content ESL course that prepares learners for academic success as they learn about Jesus. It is designed with a simple format and detailed teaching notes to make it easy to use for non-professional and professional teachers alike.

These lessons are available in PowerPoint and video formats with audio narration and songs. The learning is interesting and joyful in order to impart practical skills and eternal values. Each lesson contains a Bible lesson and essential ESL skills practice. You can download the free lessons [here](#).

Romans 12:6 tells us that we each have different gifts according to the grace that has been given to us. A diverse group of teachers, artists, musicians, and narrators of all ages are using their God-given talents to volunteer on this project. In the past 12 months, we have created the first 50 lessons of this high-quality curriculum. By using prayer, video calls, and a structured lesson template, we work together. A diverse collaborative team of dozens of volunteers from Asia, Africa, North and South American and Europe meet via Zoom weekly to pray together and edit lessons.

Here is [the short video presentation about our program](#) from the CELT Conference.


Our lessons have already been downloaded by teachers in 22 countries on 6 continents. We are getting helpful feedback as we continue to improve and add new lessons each week in slide and [video](#) format.

In April 2021, we began two new online ESL teacher-training classes, with more than 40 enrolled to learn to use the materials to help English learners in their communities. Many of our teachers-in-training are in under-resourced areas of Africa, and they have been very creative in finding ways to learn online with limited internet access.

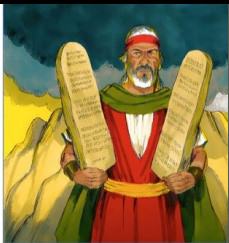
Our goal of reaching millions of people around the world is drawing closer through God's grace.


We pray that we may continue on this journey together as we serve by spreading His Word through all nations, one ESL learner at a time.

Would you share your talents to reach English learners with the love of Jesus? If you are interested in using your gifts to volunteer as a teacher, writer, or other role, please [contact us here](#).

 **Moses Song**


Moses walked **across** the desert.
 Moses prayed to God **above**.
 He led God's people **out** of Egypt
 And told them of His love.
 Moses walked **up** the mountain
 And walked **down** with God's commands.
 Then they walked **around** for 40 years
 To reach the promised land.



 **Every Day Song**

Every day, I wake up and eat.
 I do the dishes
 And I brush my teeth.
 I work and study
 And I go to sleep.
 And Jesus is here with me.

Every day, he wakes up and eats.
 He does the dishes
 And he brushes his teeth.
 He works and studies
 And he goes to sleep.
 And Jesus is here with him.



Dr. Melina Gallo is a missionary serving as Director of Global Distance Learning for Literacy and Evangelism International. She has an M.A. in Linguistics (TESOL) from Northeastern IL University and a Doctorate of Education from Northern IL University. She has taught ESL for more than 20 years and lives in Chicagoland with her husband Johnny and their Whippet Hound, Amazing Grace. She enjoys kayaking and singing off-key.



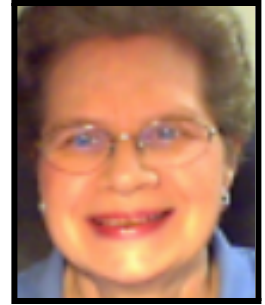
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Winner: Dr. Lonna Dickerson

Earl W. Stevick Award 2021



The Earl W. Stevick Award honors members of the English language teaching profession who embody some of the characteristics of Dr. Stevick in their teaching, mentoring of teachers, scholarship, service to the field, and living out the life of Christ in this profession.

By CELEA Board Member-at-Large, Maxine Pond

The Nominating Committee was unanimous in the selection of Dr. Dickerson for the Earl W. Stevick Award which was presented at the 2021 CELT Conference. She is an Adjunct Professor at Wheaton College and holds a Ph.D. in Second Language Acquisition and an M.A. in TESOL. Dr. Dickerson has authored and co-authored numerous articles and books. Her professional interests focus on pre-service training for Christians who will experience on-field language and culture learning. She is involved in the development of materials for teaching English for Biblical and theological study. The Committee members praised her for the many ways in which she exemplifies the characteristics of the Earl W. Stevick Award.

Lonna Dickerson's long-term mentoring of TESOL professionals is an inspiration and model for others in the field. Her Christ-like character was evident in the nomination where she was described as humble, patient, godly, and kind. Her work as a mentor, scholar, and leader truly embodies the characteristics of the work and life of Earl Stevick. (Tasha Bleistein)

The documents submitted in support of Dr. Lonna Dickerson's nomination demonstrate that she is someone who has lived a life of service to the profession and to the Kingdom of God. This has been done through her various roles in academia and through her commitment and development of initiatives designed to prepare followers of Christ for language learning and cross-cultural encounters for Kingdom purposes. Some examples of the above include her work at the University of Illinois, where she was one of the first professors in a new M.A. TESOL program, and Wheaton College where she started an M.A. in Intercultural Studies and TESOL. She also served at the Toronto Institute of Linguistics for over two decades and founded the Institute for Cross-Cultural Training (ICCT) at Wheaton College, through which she instituted a series of Language Coach workshops intended to support those working with missionary language learners around the world. In addition to this sampling of Dr. Dickerson's achievements, particularly noteworthy is the account of how, over the years, she has consistently reached out to and mentored those around her, investing in them in ways that encouraged personal and professional growth, helping people become more than they thought they could be. She is a deserving recipient of the award. (Carolyn Kristjansson)

Dr. Lonna Dickerson is clearly an authentic, humble, and compassionate mentor of others. She has been engaging in scholarship and contributing to the TESOL profession over the scope of her diverse career. (Debbie Nelson)