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LANGUAGE  
PROGRAM



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# THE ESL TIMES



SPRING 2017 PROFESSOR NORBERT HELLMANN PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION



(Group Photo, Left to Right: Moe Araki, Chang Shu, Mohamed Badr, Ikumi Nagao, Fan Xia, Jingyi Shao, Martina Bellucci)

**By Martina Bellucci**  
*Italy*

When I heard about the Norbert Hellmann Speaking Contest , the first thing that came to my mind was “ No way!” Me, stand in front of a huge audience and talk? I won’ t survive! But then I read the

topic of the competition: “speak up and speak out”. I realized that I had a lot of things to say and to share with the other students.

As an ESL student, the first thing that I’ve learned during my classes is how important it is to work in a team and how fundamental it is to share your ideas and your opinions with your teammates. This time, the challenge was a little bit harder, because I had to share my thoughts with all the students from the Haggerty English Language Program! But I decided to accept the challenge, so I could put into practice one of the most important skills that I’ve acquired thanks to this English Program: the ability to communicate.

Like most of the international students, when I first came here I gave up my voice. The power of speaking language was not on my side and I was too scared of being judged by my classmates. But one day, I finally found the courage to speak up for myself, to scream to the world what I was thinking, and I felt so good and proud of myself that in that specific moment that I decided I would never, ever give up my voice again. I decided to share this personal experience with the other students, because I wanted them to know they are not alone. All of us sometimes feel lost in a country with a different language and a different culture, but at the same time if we don’t speak up for ourselves, we risk not enjoying what this studying abroad experience has to offer.

**By Moe Araki**

**Japan**

At this event, the topic was "speak up and speak out." I was creating something I wanted to tell others in my head. I was determined to speak about "attempting a world without nuclear weapons" because I

am from Nagasaki, and I am the only Japanese student from there at SUNY New Paltz. I had known a few people who directly experienced the atomic bombs, including my family. The tragic bombing of Nagasaki was taught by my teachers my whole life. However, it was controversial to speak about with other international students and American professors because they have known it in terms of their perspectives. I was not able to calculate what information they had about it and how they recognized and felt about it. I just believed and counted on the tragedy resonating in their hearts.

Pursuing this topic was worthwhile. All audiences members were listening to my speech sincerely. I hope some of them took it to heart. This opportunity was ultimately for improving my English and speaking up and out. It was not easy to speak to everyone, who were from different countries, but it was a chance for me to place this consideration into their minds. This experience will be kept in my mind forever!



**By Fan Xia**

*China*

I am appreciative that there is this competition for our ESL students, I learned a lot from the other competitors. It was an amazing experience. I couldn't have experienced it without my teachers, especially James and Sarah! Thank you!

## How to do Pumpkin Carving

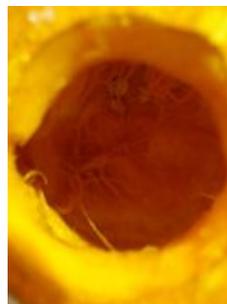
**By Maxine Leu**

*Taiwan*

Pumpkin lights are a traditional decoration for Halloween where faces on pumpkins represent the legend of Jack-o'-lantern. Usually a traditional jack-o'-lantern pumpkin has two triangular eyes, a triangle nose and a curved mouth. Nowadays, pumpkin carving no longer just follows this theme, and people can carve their own idea on the pattern. This article is about the bas-relief of pumpkin carving from choosing, designing, carving and protecting.

The first step is choosing a pumpkin: Pumpkin-picking season in New York is usually around the middle of September to the end of October, or you can find a pumpkin at a pumpkin farm or supermarket. However, there are many kinds of pumpkins and each pumpkin has a different shape; some pumpkins are a little longer, and some pumpkins, based on their hardness, are not meant for creating. Only avoid choosing some pumpkins that are already rotting, but I personally like an imperfect one because that usually makes for more possibilities. For example, I chose a sunken pumpkin, and then I decided to make a squeezed face in it.

The second step is designing for lighting: The basic pumpkin carving tools are a jab saw and a spoon, but you can also use a fruit knife for the details. Use a 2B or soft lead to make a draft on your pumpkin, and you can use a wet rag to modify your draft. For traditional pumpkin lights people usually carve a palm-sized hole in the top for putting a candle or LED into the pumpkin. When you are done with the hole, make sure you use a spoon to take out all the strands and seeds from inside the pumpkin.



The third step is carving: As you clean up inside of the pumpkin, you can observe the thickness, so you can know how deep you should carve your template or draft. The bas-relief of the pumpkin carving requires the peel to be cut before you start carving it. I begin to use a fruit knife at the same time to chip the general outline of my draft on the surface while I cut the peel. Subsequently, I use a loop tool for detail, and it feels like using a pencil to draw a 3D sketch. Following the direction of your draft, carve it from outside to the inside and from light to deep.



The final step is protecting the pumpkin: After the whole process is finished and the pumpkin is starting to dehydrate, the pumpkin rots and smells bad after three days. There are two common ways to protect your pumpkin carving. One way is using Pumpkin preservatives. Another way is immersing the pumpkin in bleach and water with a proportion of one to five for two to three hours. These two methods can let your pumpkin stay fresh from two weeks to three months.



The most interesting part of making Halloween pumpkin lights is having freedom to create anything. In addition, in the whole process, you have a lot of fun seeing your pumpkin from start to finish, and you can feel accomplishment in changing a normal material into a piece of unique artwork. In fact, pumpkin carving is a kind of fruit carving, not necessarily only for Halloween. You can also see this type of carving in some restaurants using watermelon, radishes, apples or other materials. If you have not tried it, go find a pumpkin first!

## Cross Culture

By Saaya Matsumoto

*Japan*

**I**t was snowing so my all classes were canceled. I was so bored in my room. My RA called me in the lounge and she gave me Japanese candies. I did not know why she gave me candies, so I asked her. She told me she was thinking

I was not okay these days, and that is why she gave me Japanese candies. Actually, I was feeling very low during that time. She told me she understood how I felt because she is also an international student. She said “You can tell me anything. Don’t be too nervous. Your English is so much better than before. I like your smile. Keep smiling always.” I almost cried. She told me if she feels low, she always eats Japanese candies! Actually, she really likes Japanese culture. And then we talked about how to solve my stress by myself. She recommended that I do things I like, go outside and walk, shop, eat my favorite food... I could not remember everything because it was a lot. My roommate, who is an American, came to join us. She recommended I sing a song and watch a funny movie. We sang and listened to each person’s favorite music. We also played in the snow. They are so kind and they made me happy. I began to feel better. It was a really good time for me. I really appreciate them. I could not forget this time. I had so much fun with them!!!



## My experience at New Paltz

By Thomas Yebouet

*Ivory Coast*



**D**o you know that the word “illiteracy” can apply to an intellectual? That expresses my situation pretty well. In my previous life in Africa, I finished my studies 20 years ago. Like any education system in French speaking countries, English is taught in high school. But I preferred other disciplines to English so that I was never able to use this language on a professional level. For me, it didn’t matter as I didn’t need it until I changed employers and had to often deal with English. During the rest of my career, I accumulated many frustrations that led me to make a serious decision: learn English more until I have become fluent. To reach this goal, I chose SUNY New Paltz. I knew that many challenges awaited me such as my age and the conditions of studying.

Coming back to school after 20 years is a challenge. University is for young people, not for veterans like me. I am called to mix with students who could be my own children. But I quickly realized that the company of these students is pleasant. Mostly Chinese and Japanese, they are well-educated, polite and smart. For example, one day, during a tour of New Paltz village in Campus Resources class, one of them suggested to me to take a picture of myself with my own smartphone. I found this initiative very friendly. I had never been close with the nationals of Asian countries before, and I consider that knowing them better is an asset for me.

I had heard about New Paltz and its ESL program, which I was told is very serious and helpful. Entering into this program has been an opportunity to realize that it is true. Indeed, after the series of tests to find out the background of students in order to determine their right levels, classes really began. ESL student are treated like “normal” student i.e. students who take academic classes. All the resources of the university are accessible to them. One class is specifically designed to present our resources to lead students to profit from them whenever they want. Professors are attentive and very professional. I don’t know how it is possible but I’m able to catch what they say easily when they speak whereas it is not obvious with other Americans. I think it is because they are qualified to teach ESL students. In addition, they are friendly though they are rigorous. I was impressed when they called me by my name without looking at any paper. They seem to have known each student for a long time, even the Director of the program. It is incredible. The schedule is manageable regarding the beginning and the end of classes each day. In such an atmosphere, all my anxieties have quickly disappeared. As a result, I feel comfortable with this program and at the end of this semester, I feel my English has really improved.

The ESL program at New Paltz is one of the best ways to integrate into American society. By its seriousness and its depth, it is able to qualify students to study at university, and is helpful to any person who wants to know more about the American society where they live. The testimonies of the former students confirm it eloquently. The cultural mix caused by the program opens one’s mind to a wider horizon than the borders of one’s country.

## Student Interview with Maxine Leu and Huaqi Liu

### 1. How long have you been studying at New Paltz? Why did you choose New Paltz?

**MAXINE:** Two years. I chose New Paltz for three main reasons. Firstly, I am an art major, and New Paltz has the top art program. Also, my former professor graduated from here so it feels familiar.

**LIU:** I have been here for two years. I chose New Paltz since it has the best Jewelry Design program, which I like, and also has a conditional acceptance policy so that I don’t need to worry about my TOEFL score when I apply to school.

## 2. Do you like New Paltz?

**MAXINE:** Yes, I love New Paltz very much! New Paltz is quite a cute, quiet and friendly village. Unlike like many big cities, people don't have too much pressure here. I also love my school here. Our schools' international students are from more than 50 countries and that makes feel not alone.

**LIU:** I love New Paltz's environment. It's pretty clean and nice. People are nice here and helped me improve my English a lot.

## 3. What's your favorite class in ESL?

**MAXINE:** My favorite class is Professor Warren's class. I love his teaching style! He always taught us in a very funny way. We learned through his games. He really knows our weaknesses and helped us a lot.

**LIU:** My favorite class is Professor James's Reading and Writing class. He has been teaching me for two years. He knows me very well, and he teaches me what I need.



## 4. What do you do out of class?

**MAXINE:** I have a wonderful American conversation partner. We've hung out at many places together. Also, I joined the community family program, so that I can join a local family for Christmas and Thanksgiving and so on.

**LIU:** I like to play basketball with my American friends. That's helped me to improve my English Communication skills and make many friends.

## 5. What do you like the most of program?

**MAXINE:** I love the trips! We have many trips held by the center for international students every semester. For example, we have trips to Washington D.C., Albany, Boston, Halloween (in Sleepy Hollow), Snow Tubing, Woodbury. We also have many other events at school like Game Club, Conversation Partner Table, and Valentine's Day party.

**LIU:** I like Speak Out club very much, that makes me feel much more confidence to speak English.



## The ESL Times

The Haggerty English Language Program delivers high quality English language instruction to speakers of other languages. Our student-centered curriculum is designed to educate international students both linguistically and culturally to be successful in an American university. By promoting cross-cultural encounters, outreach, and participation, we contribute to the diverse multicultural character of the campus and community.

## Write for the Times

The ESL Times is almost exclusively comprised of articles written by students of the Haggerty English Language program.

We welcome submissions of any kind be it academic, creative, or artistic.

If you would like to contribute to a future issue, please send an email to:

[esl@newpaltz.edu](mailto:esl@newpaltz.edu)

## Upcoming Dates

**May 9**

**Last Day of Classes**

**May 11**

**TOEFL Exam**

**May 12**

**ACCUPLACER Exam**

**May 19**

**End of Fall Semester**