

Information Sheets: Seminary Conversations

During a BILC workshop at a seminary in the USA some of the students began to discuss how it might be possible for them to engage with the Bible with students from other parts of the Anglican Communion without having the expense of travel. During the discussion, Ellen Davis who had been involved in a number of aspects of BILC, shared a dream she has for just this to happen. Later she put it in writing:

"My dream is that no one should graduate from an Anglican theological college or seminary anywhere in the world without having spent "face time" in conversation with an Anglican or a group of Anglicans from another country or continent. Imagine what our worldwide Communion would become, if every leader now in training were to have that experience, via Skype if not in person. We Anglicans speak of the bonds of affection that unite us; this would serve to make those a felt reality."

Following this conversation BILC drew up a possible way of making Ellen's dream a reality. BILC also invited a couple of institutions to 'try it out'. Can this become a model more widely adopted across the Anglican Communion? Can this be one way of making our 'bonds of affection' that felt reality Ellen speaks of?

What might these Skype conversations look like?

1. The conversations would be between groups of 3 or 4 students from each of the two seminaries or theological colleges. 3 or 4 would enable everyone to gather around one computer in each location. There may be a number of these conversations happening in one seminary or college.
2. The conversations are about listening to the experiences and ideas of the partners in order to learn more about what it is like to be an Anglican/Episcopalian from another country.
3. The conversations would ask for a commitment, in the first instance to three conversations of an hour within the first 4-6 months.
 - a. In the first conversation it would be good to start by the partners introducing themselves to one another and perhaps where they are from and what they did before coming to their seminary or college. Then to follow this with a passage from one of the Gospels – for example, looking at Luke 10:1-12 [the sending of the 70] and asking one another what verses 3-12 mean in your context.
 - b. For conversations two and three for each group to choose a Bible passage they would like to explore together. The group that chooses the passage would then lead the discussion on the passage by posing one or two questions to explore together.
4. Finally, the freedom to plan anything the group feel led to suggest for the future - to dream your own dreams about ways to sustain all that unites us!

