

Classroom Dynamics: Teacher Self-Awareness

A summary of the presentation given by Stuart Bills, Chosun University, at the March 13 Chapter Meeting

There are a number of seemingly trivial, but actually very important, things that the English language teacher can do to improve their effectiveness as a teacher and to heighten their rapport with their students. These teacher's appearance and position, voice, methods of questioning and eliciting responses, ability to establish and maintain rapport, and manipulation of the learning environment.

Position and Appearance

The first impression that an English teacher gives the students on the first day or week of classes is as important, if not more so, as that of any other educator. One should enter the first-day classroom well dressed, well groomed, and well mannered. The teacher should also be aware of their position in the classroom at all times. Standing behind the front-and-center lectern all class is not a very effective way of teaching English. A motionless teacher creates motionless learners. The teacher should move around the classroom to keep interest high and students alert.

The role of the teacher, and hence their position in the room, is very much dependent on the type of task that the class is engaged in. For example, for a whole-class activity, the teacher more often assumes a central position, from which the teacher is easily visible to the entire class. If the class is engaged in pair work or group, the teacher is more effective moving around from group to group monitoring and assisting as required.

Voice Clarity and Quality

For a language teacher, voice is an indispensable tool of the trade. It is important to keep that voice in good working condition. The teacher should begin the class with a clear voice and maintain that clarity throughout the lesson. They should also remember to periodically check whether the students can hear them easily, and make adjustments as required. The teacher needs to remember that voice projection is more than just a loud voice. Speaking speed and enunciation should be adjusted to meet the learners' needs.

The teacher must also take care to maintain the quality of their voice. Water should always be available to drink when one's throat becomes dry. One's position in the classroom should be assessed to determine the best location to stand in to be heard with the least vocal effort. It is especially important that the teacher save their voice on those days with lots of class hours scheduled. The teacher must also be careful not to abuse their voice outside of the classroom. Talking loudly in a noisy, weekend bar as well as smoking can be noticeable in the classroom for days afterwards.

Questioning with a Purpose

A major portion of teacher talk is in the form of questions, usually for the purpose of eliciting a response and initiating interaction. These questions can be categorized according to purpose: factual-personal, lesson preparation,

Continued on page 3.

Chapter Officers

President

Dr. David E. Shaffer
Chosun University
College of Foreign Languages,
English Language Department



Membership Coordinator

Soyoung Park
Gwangju Language School



Vice-President

Maria Neliza Lumantao
Chonnam National University
Department of English Language
and Literature



Member-at-Large

Sumi Kim
Chosun University Hospital /
Chonnam National University
Department of Education



Treasurer

Dr. Yeon-seong Park
Chonnam National University
Department of English Language
and Literature



Immediate Past President

Adriane Geronimo
Chonnam National University
Dept. of English Language & Literature /
AOI College of Languages



Membership Coordinator

Jocelyn Wright
Mokpo National University
Institute of International
Exchange and Education



Chapter email address: gwangju_kotesol@yahoo.com

Chapter website: <http://www.kotesol.org/?q=Gwangju-Jeonnam>

How to Join KOTESOL

English teachers of any level or nationality are eligible to join KOTESOL. We welcome native and non-native speakers teaching at primary schools, secondary schools, language institutes, colleges and universities and other organizations. University students may join as student members. Please use the online membership form at <http://www.kotesol.org/>. Click on "Join KOTESOL" at the left and follow the directions.

Paper membership application and renewal forms are available at Chapter meetings for those who prefer working with hard copy.

KOTESOL has four individual membership options:

1-Year Membership (40,000 won)

International 1-Year Membership (60,000 won / US\$60.00)

Lifetime Membership (400,000 won)

Undergraduate Student Membership (20,000 won, Documentation required)

Membership payment can be made to **KOTESOL** at the Korea Exchange Bank, account number: 630-006952-841

Teacher Self-Awareness

Continued from page 1.

metalinguage, comprehension, and opinion-preference questions as well as requests for clarification and repetition.

Factual and personal questions can be used outside of the planned lesson to warm up the students for class and provide additional L2 input. Such questions include: What's today's date? How are you today? Lesson preparation questions occur mainly as the teacher is preparing to begin the lesson: Are you ready to begin? Does everyone have their book? These questions are often done in the students' and teachers' common L1, but producing them in English creates more comprehensible L2 input for the learners. Metalinguage questions are language questions about language, which often occur with older learners at any level of proficiency: What is the past tense form of the verb "dive"? How many syllables does "watched" have?

Comprehension questions serve as an indicator of how well the students have grasped the material presented and practiced: What is Ginny doing in the picture? When does Mr. Park go to work? They are a valuable tool for the teacher in that they provide immediate feedback without the time and effort required to administer a quiz or test. Opinion-preference questions are useful in stimulating and continuing group or whole-class discussions: What did you think of the song? Do you prefer dresses or jeans? Other questions have utilitarian value in understanding and clarifying what a speaker has said: Could you repeat that? Do you mean that he never saw her before? As interaction is vital to second language acquisition, questioning is vital to interaction.

Establishing Rapport

To create a favorable, non-threatening learning environment, it is essential that there is rapport between the student and the teacher. Students are undoubtedly thinking, "What does the teacher think of me?" One small

thing that offers a positive answer to this question is learning students' names. This signals that you have interest in your students. In building rapport, the question arises as to how much one should act as a friend. One needs to balance being friendly with being a professional. If you are sincere and friendly as a teacher, rapport will build between you and your students. If the teacher has a positive attitude towards teaching English and treats students equally and fairly, the resulting rapport will contribute to making the learning atmosphere an even better one.

Ten Dynamic Tips

The following are ten tips for making your classroom dynamic. (1) Always begin your lesson by explaining the goal of the lesson. If the students are aware of the lesson's focal points, they will be better able to focus on them. (2) Be aware of the phrasing of your questions. Questions should be easy to understand, especially comprehension check questions, because it is the answer that the students should be focusing on, not decoding the question. If your question is unnecessarily difficult, re-phrase it. (3) Your responsibility is "response-ability." As a teacher you must be able to present material in such a way that students will become able to produce the desired output. (4) Do not flood the students with regulations, procedures, and instructions. Administrative matters are to be presented on paper, allow the students to ask about the rest. (5) Remember that teachers have many different roles to play in the varying situations that they find themselves in, both in and out of the classroom. (6) Plan a 45-minute lesson for a 50-minute class. Always allow five minutes at the end of class for questions from the students. (7) Personalize the subject matter. Share your own experiences related to the topic and encourage your students to do the same. (8) A textbook has no dynamics; it is the teacher and the students that bring this to the lesson. (9) Always be prepared. And (10) always be yourself to create a pleasant atmosphere, which will produce a dynamic classroom.

Gwangju-Jeonnam KOTESOL April Chapter Meeting

Time: Saturday, April 10, 2010, 2:00-5:00 pm

Place: Chosun University, Main Building, 2nd Floor, Room 2123.

Schedule

2:00 pm: Registration and Welcome

2:30 pm: Presentation 1: James Baldrey (Chosun University)
Culture and Communicative Language Teaching in Korea

3:20 pm: Snack Break

3:40 pm: Presentation 2: Nancy Jo Marcet (Oedae Institute, Jeonju)
Developing Sentence Structure from the Bottom Up

4:30 pm: Teaching Idea & Activity Share-time: Everyone
Bring your activities/ideas to share with us (5 min. each)

5:00 pm: Announcements

Chapter Business: Old or New

KOTESOL Membership Give-Away

Book Drawing

Closing

(Admission is free. Membership is encouraged.)

Upcoming Chapter Events

May 1. Outreach Workshop

1. Tory Thorkelson (Hanyang U.; KOTESOL Past President): *Image and Imagination: Pictures and Picture-Based Activities in the EFL Classroom*
2. Keum Ju Cheon (Chapter Member)
Storytelling Techniques at Work
3. David E. Shaffer (Chosun University; Chapter President) *Professional Development for Us All: The Why and How*

May 8. Chapter Meeting

1. Yeon-seong Park (Chonnam University; Chapter Treasurer): *Creative Grammar Instruction Techniques*
2. Maria Pinto (Dongguk U. Gyeongju Campus; KOTESOL Publications Comm. Chair): *Assessing Speaking Skills*

June 12. Chapter Meeting

1. Tim Thompson (KAIST; Daejeon-Chungcheong Chapter): *Don't Get Depressed; Get Creative*
2. Jeffrey Hamilton (Chosun University): *Developing Supplementary Course Materials*

July 10. Chapter Meeting

1. David E. Shaffer (Chosun University; Chapter President): *Teacher Development: The Five Circles*
2. Jocelyn Wright (Mokpo University; Chapter Membership Coordinator): *English Zones for English Learning*

Upcoming KOTESOL Events

May 15, 2010.

KOTESOL National Conference 2010

Learning to Teach, Teaching to Learn: Lessons from the Classroom

Daegu Technical College, Daegu (UCC Center: Co-sponsor)

May 29, 2010.

Jeonju-North Jeolla Regional Conference

Developing Tools for the Changing Korean Context

Jeonju University, Jeonju, Jeollabuk-do

June 26, 2010. Busan-Gyeongnam Chapter Summer Conference

Young Learner, Teacher Training, CALL and MALL Strands

Pusan University of Foreign Studies, Busan
Call for Presentations Deadline: May 5, 2010

October 16-17, 2010. PAC 2010 – The 18th KOTESOL Int'l Conference

Advancing ELT in the Global Context

Sookmyung Women's University, Seoul

Call for Presentations Deadline: May 31, 2010