

## Image and Imagination: Pictures and Picture-Based Activities in the EFL Classroom

A summary by Tory Thorkelson, M.Ed., of his  
presentation at the May 1 Muan Outreach Workshop

In my experience, perhaps the two biggest challenges have been to (a) get students to speak in class and (b) keep my lessons fresh and interesting for my students and myself. One of the best ways I have found to accomplish both of these aims is to use pictures to get students talking but the question is: how do we choose the right pictures for the classroom? The following suggests a few ways to do this

### Use Images from What Students Read

First, start with publications like magazines and newspapers to bring a sense of reality into your classroom. Look at what students are reading, and pull material out of those publications if possible. As an example, I use ads from popular magazines to get students talking about fashion, conceptions of beauty, and so on.

### Use a Balance of Images

Second, find images that are both directly related to your student's experience and also ones that are not related to it at all. While textbooks abound with smiling images of people your students' age, they often look unnatural and "perfect," even when the related lesson is not focused on the images per se. My students respond very well to activities where I ask them to imagine an unknown person's biography – and it is often the older people or the intriguing-looking ones that they choose over the ones like them. They welcome the chance to be creative and go beyond the boundaries of their own knowledge and experiences.

### Don't Be Limited By Instructions

Third, do not let activity instructions limit how you use a picture or any other activity in the classroom. The creator and author may have envisioned only one use for their pictures, but you and your students can probably come up with many more ideas for using them creatively and meaningfully to energize your lessons and classes. My students hunger for the chance to be creative and often go beyond my expectations for both the lessons and the outcomes.

### Use Photocopiable Materials

Fourth, look at photocopiable books as well as the innumerable ESL web sites for lots of pictures, picture stories, information gaps, and other picture-based activities. One of my favorite all-free sites for information gaps is: [http://bogglesworldesl.com/information\\_gap.htm](http://bogglesworldesl.com/information_gap.htm), but this site also has flashcards for learners of all ages at: <http://bogglesworldesl.com/cards.htm>. As long as you are patient enough, you will most likely find something very close to what you need in print or on the web.

So, in the end, it is up to you as the expert on your own students to find the best way to teach what you want to teach in as interesting and informative a fashion as possible. I have yet to find a class or classroom where pictures and picture-based activities did not work their own unique magic, and I hope the same magic will work in your classes as you experiment with picture-based activities.

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Chosun University  
English Language Department  
Email: [disin@chosun.ac.kr](mailto:disin@chosun.ac.kr)



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Soyoung Park  
Gwangju Language School  
Email: [ample35@hanmail.net](mailto:ample35@hanmail.net)



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Chonnam National University  
Dept. of English Lang. & Lit.  
Email: [ynell\\_alpha@yahoo.com](mailto:ynell_alpha@yahoo.com)



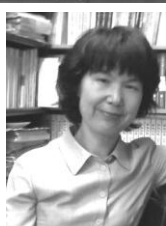
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Exchange and Education



### Chapter Email Address

[gwangju\\_kotesol@yahoo.com](mailto:gwangju_kotesol@yahoo.com)

### Chapter Website

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



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- Bank transfer to **KOTESOL**, Korea Exchange Bank account number: 630-006952-841
- Payment to the Chapter Membership Officer at a Chapter Meeting

# Assessing Speaking Skills

A summary by Maria Pinto of her presentation  
at the May 8 Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter Meeting

## Designing the Exam

When designing an exam, the number of students you have and the time you have available to give the exam help determine the exam format. The location – where you are giving the exam, also influences the type of exam you can conduct – for example, you cannot have students work in groups of three if you are giving the exam in your office, and you only have room for two additional people.

Speaking exams can consist of interviews, planned conversations, semi-planned conversations and debates to test conversational skills, or presentations. Planned conversations test conversation-as-performance, and encourage the students to memorize. With semi-planned conversations and debates, students are told to study particular forms, but are not told the specific task/s or questions that will appear in the exam. This ensures that students study the relevant form, and also that they do not memorize. Presentation exams test students' ability to do research, use technology, coordinate written and spoken material, and, possibly, work in partnership, if students are working in pairs or groups.

## Preparing the Students

Students want to know: how long the exam is, how many questions they have to ask/answer, how many times they will have to speak, and what the assessment criteria are. Make sure that students know the answers to all these questions before the exam day.

## Designing & Using Grading Rubrics

A grading rubric outlines the assessment criteria for the exam. Teachers can choose to use one-word descriptors, such as “Excellent,” “Good,” “Fair,” “Poor,” or rubrics that clearly define what each of these terms means in the context of that exam. The advantage of using one-word descriptors in an exam is that these do not vary. However, they are too general when giving feedback to the students – telling a student that their grammar was “fair” does nothing to help the student understand what they need to work on, and

what specific grammar points to target. Descriptors such as “Adequate proficiency; Occasional minor problems with patterns, but these did not interfere with meaning,” are easier for students and teachers to understand. Rubrics often use a 5-point scale. It is easy to choose the midpoint when using a five point scale. Making a 4-point scale forces the examiner to think about where the student really falls during the exam.

Personalize your rubric. Someone else's rubric might not conform to your teaching or grading style, and might be difficult to work with. A conversation always involves at least two people. An exam testing conversation skills should take this into account, by giving students marks for pair work as well as for individual ability. Some pair work descriptors that can be useful for a planned conversation exam could be: *timing*, *content organization*, *coherence*, and *conversation sharing*. Individual descriptors generally include *grammar*, *vocabulary*, *fluency*, and *clarity and tone*. Teachers might choose to assess *listening comprehension* in a semi-planned conversation, or in a debate – was the answerer's response clearly related to the question, and was the follow-up question clearly in response to the answer given previously?

## The Role of the Examiner

During the exam, it is important that a distinction be maintained between the teacher and the tester. The instructions you give during the exam should be brief and clear. When students begin their exam, do not interrupt them to correct mistakes, give instructions or feedback. Intervene in a pair work exam only when one or both of the partners are unable to complete the task. Give one example. Then, if one student is still unable to complete the task, take over and be the partner for the other student, to enable him/her to complete the exam. When planning the exam, make sure you allocate sufficient time to give feedback. Give feedback immediately after the exam – if you see your students only once a week, neither they nor you will remember how they performed a week earlier.

-- For sample rubrics, email: [maevid@hotmail.com](mailto:maevid@hotmail.com).

# Gwangju-Jeonnam KOTESOL June Chapter Meeting

- Time: Saturday, June 12, 2010, 2:00 p.m.
- Place: Chosun University, Main Building (*Bon-gwan*), 2nd Floor, Room 2123.

## Schedule

- 2:00 pm: Registration and Welcome  
 2:30 pm: Presentation 1: *Don't Get Depressed; Get Creative*  
 Tim Thompson (KAIST; Daejeon-Chungcheong Chapter)  
 3:20 pm: Snack Break  
 3:40 pm: Presentation 2: *Developing Supplementary Course Materials*  
 Jeffrey Hamilton (Chosun University)  
 4:20 pm: Teaching Idea & Activity Share-time: Everyone  
 Bring your activities/ideas to share with us (about 5-10 min. each)  
 5:00 pm: Announcements  
 Chapter Business: Old or New  
 KOTESOL Membership Giveaway  
 Book Drawing  
 Closing

(Admission is free. Membership is encouraged.)

## Upcoming Chapter Events

### July 10. Chapter Meeting

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

### Sept. 11. Chapter Meeting

1. *Creating a Sizzling Language Classroom Environment*  
 Grace Wang (Yonsei University,  
 KOTESOL Membership Comm. Chair)

### Oct. 2. Outreach Workshop (Suncheon)

## Upcoming KOTESOL Events

### May 29, 2010.

**Jeonju-North Jeolla Regional Conference**  
*Developing Tools for the Changing Korean Context*  
 Geunyoung High School, Jeonju, Jeollabuk-do

### May 30, 2010.

**KOTESOL National Council Meeting**  
 Geunyoung High School, Jeonju, Jeollabuk-do

### June 26, 2010.

**Busan-Gyeongnam Chapter Conference**  
*Young Learner, Teacher Training, CALL and MALL Strands*  
 Pusan University of Foreign Studies, Busan

### September 18, 2010.

**The 1st Multimedia and CALL SIG Conference**  
 Hosted by Daejeon-Chungcheong Chapter in Daejeon  
 Deadline for Proposals: June 12, 2010  
 Email Sheema Doshi at: kotesol.mc@gmail.com

### October 16-17, 2010.

**2010 PAC—KOTESOL Internat'l Conference**  
*Advancing ELT in the Global Context*  
 Sookmyung Women's University, Seoul  
 Call for Presentations Deadline: May 31, 2010

## June Chapter Meeting Presentation Preview

It's easy to become frustrated when student don't perform the way we want them to. When setbacks occur, we need to find ways to keep the class motivated and challenged without allowing them to give up. Tim Thompson will provide examples of challenging teaching situations and the successful solutions that make the classes work will be presented.

There isn't enough material in your coursebook to complete the course. What to do? Your students are getting bored with the coursebook and you are getting tired of its repetitive activities. What to do? No coursebook is perfect There is always something that you would like to change or expand upon. Jeff Hamilton will show you a variety of ways to supplement whatever book you use.