

Autonomous Language Learning

By Sun Hongmin, Park Hyegyung, Kim Aron

Autonomous language learning is often described as a new methodology. Some say that autonomy is not a method of learning, but an attribute of the learner's approach to learning. Leo van Lier and others often use the term "self-directed learning" in connection with autonomy. It implies that learners study under their own direction rather than under the direction of another. Self-directed learning does not necessarily imply "learning without a teacher," but in self-directed learning, the teacher's role may become more like that of a helper or counselor. Thus learning to be autonomous is basically an individual, gradual, never-ending process of self-discovery. It may be practiced totally without any formal courses. It may be practiced in addition to courses being taken, such as in university and secondary school education. Or it may even be incorporated by a teacher as part of their English course.

Why Study Autonomously?

There are several reasons why learning a language autonomously outside of the classroom can be an asset to students who wish to further develop their competency and proficiency. First, one of the key aspects of autonomy is being able to reflect on one's learning. If students are reflectively engaged in their learning, they are likely to make the learning more effective and efficient. Second, autonomous learning is a general skill that can also be useful in lifelong learning. Some features of learning a language are universal enough to be adapted in other contexts. Third, learners can tailor their study to fit their personal study needs. They can spend more time studying in the areas they are weak in. Fourth, they can study using interesting and effective methods that the classroom may not offer, such as Extensive Reading, listening to radio broadcasts, watching TV broadcasts, and accessing online materials. Fifth, they can study what they want when they want to.

Learning English from Native English Speakers

By Oh Soohyun and Park Munwon

We have chosen to speak about this because the number of native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) who come to Korea is increasing as the interest in English increases every year.

Advantages of NESTs

(1) NESTs can be an exact model of pronunciation and language usage. Students can learn how to speak and how to properly use grammar and vocabulary words from NESTs. (2) NESTs can provide instant, accurate, and better feedback to help students overcome incorrect usage. Native speakers have the natural ability to sense what words work together. So when students make mistakes, NESTs can correct them immediately. (3) Nest can aid in the understanding of different culture. Through them, students can discover their different customs, culture, and ways of thinking through classes. (4) Learning conversational English: through activities and games, students can learn how to speak like a native speaker and engage in real and regular conversations.

Disadvantages of NESTs

(1) NESTs are hired without much concern of their educational background just because they are just native speakers. The qualification standards that government requires are too low. (2) NESTs personally may not understand the difficulties that students might have in learning English. (3) Students can't understand exactly what NESTs mean when they speak in English.

How to Better Use NESTs in Korea

(1) Strengthen the qualification standards. For example, NESTs should have a degree in English education, or a certificate in TESOL, or teaching experience. (2) NESTs should work as assistants to Korean teachers in regular public school English programs.

■ Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter Officers

President

Dr. David E. Shaffer

Chosun University
English Language Department
Email: disin@chosun.ac.kr



Membership Coordinator

Kristine Dona

Nongseong Elementary School
Email: chris.tan92@yahoo.com



Vice-President

Maria Neliza Lumantao

Chonnam National University
Dept. of English Lang. & Literature
Email: ynell_alpha@yahoo.com



Membership Coordinator

Faith Fishley

Sunchon National University
ffishley@hotmail.com



Treasurer

Vivien Slezak

Chosun University
Language Education Institute
vivienlezak@gmail.com



Chapter Email Address

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

Learning English in the Public School System

By Han Seungwoo and Kim Choyeon

When our parents' generation went to school with over 50 other students in their class, sometimes 70. According to my parents, there was no English speaking class and the teachers used old-fashioned and Japanese-style grammar books. Classes focused on readings, grammar, and vocabulary. As a result, they did not learn correct pronunciation or intonation, and used improper expressions.

How English Is Taught Today

Grammar or structure is considered basic to English, so students are made to understand it. However, the problem is with the textbooks and the teachers. They need to teach how grammar points are connected to each other. This they do not do, leaving the learner with no strategies to form sentences, or to speak or write well using the grammar that they have learned.

Also, since language learners need to know the vocabulary, teachers have students memorize up to 100 vocabulary words a day and test them up to three times a week. In this way, the students forget words quickly the day after the test. Finally, the school system focuses on testing reading and grammar. English classes need to include practice in speaking and writing, the productive skills.

Unfortunately, learning English in the public school system serious problems associated with it. Very importantly, most students have low English speaking proficiency. Also, students lose their motivation to learn English because English instruction is geared toward test-taking. Third, there is no chance in English class to have discussion or debate.

Things Are Changing

We wish to believe that things are changing for the better in our public schools. English teaching in general is getting better. The Ministry of Education has recently proposed innovative plans. The government is requiring all English teachers to be able to teach English in English beginning next year and is providing funds and support to the English teacher to improve their teaching skills. This will, in turn, give students a better environment in which to develop their own speaking skills.

Teaching English as an English Learner

By Ko Eunae and Jung Mungyung

Many university students have experience teaching English. Even though they are English learners, they teach English as a part-time job. They sometimes think that the job is just to make money, but teaching English is also a way for English learners to improve their English.

We believe that teaching English is quite effective for learning English for three reasons. The first reason is preparation. To lead a class, teachers should study specifically before class begins to have their students understand. Preparation for class is a great time for teachers to brush up on their grammar.

Another reason is the environment for learning English. The language institute can be a great place for us to learn English. The native-speaker teachers in institutes give the part-time teacher many chances to communicate with them in English. There is also a variety of books and materials for teaching English at the workplace, which we can use for autonomous English study. There are experienced Korean teachers at the workplace, also. They can be good guides for both making lesson plans and solving difficulties we have with English.

The final reason we mention is the effect of repeating. One of the best ways to learn something is to go over what we study. Teachers sometimes teach the same lesson to different groups of students. Teaching the same contents helps us to learn naturally.

In Korea, there aren't many chances to speak English. We often just learn English by using books for taking tests to gain high score. So it is difficult to enjoy learning. That is why most Koreans get good scores on English tests but are not very good at speaking English. However, while teaching, we are required to use English. Like it or not, we have to use English and use it well. We believe that teaching English can be an effective way for advanced English learners to improve their English proficiency.

[The four articles appearing on pages 1 and 3 are summaries of the presentations given the authors as a student symposium at the December 11, 2010, Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter meeting.]

KOTESOL Conference in Gwangju

"Classroom Interaction: A Young Adult & Young Learner Essential"

Organized by: The KOTESOL Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter and the
KOTESOL Young Learners and Teens Special Interest Group

- Time: Saturday, March 12, 2011, 12:30 p.m.
- Place: Chosun University, Main Building, 2nd Floor, North Wing

Schedule

12:30 Registration Begins

1:00 Opening (Room 2104)

1:30 Plenary Session: Principled Techniques for Social Interaction in the Classroom Jake Kimball (2104)

2:30 Guiding YLs into the World of Extensive Reading Bora Sohn (2123)
Putting Technology to Work in the YL Classroom Jennifer Young (2211)
Revise and Edit: What do students look for? Faith Fishley (4211)
Cambridge University Press Presentation Donald Kim (2104)

3:25 Connecting Reading and Writing with Young Learners Keumju Cheon (2123)
Young Learner Teacher as Classroom Manager Jake Kimball (2211)
Word Puzzles to Activate Listening and Reasoning Phil Owen (4211)

4:20 What Color Is Your Personality – Ideas That Work Allison Bill (2123)
Teaching Young Learners . . . and Grammar? David Shaffer (2211)
Enhancing Vocabulary Acquisition with Graphic Organizers Julien McNulty (4211)

5:10 Closing and Book Drawing (Room 2104)

(Admission is gratis. Membership is encouraged.)

Upcoming Chapter Events

April 9, 2011. Chapter Meeting

- *Helping our Students to Become Successful Users of English*
Joo-Kyung Park (Honam University, Past President)
- *Teaching Collocations*
Vivien Slezak (Chosun University; Chapter Treasurer)

May 7, 2011.

Chapter Monthly Meeting/Workshop

June 11, 2011.

Chapter Monthly Meeting/Workshop

July 9, 2011.

Chapter Monthly Meeting/Workshop

Upcoming KOTESOL Events

March 26, 2011.

Seoul Chapter 8th Annual Conference
Serving Students Through Technology
Sookmyung Women's University, Seoul

April 23, 2011.

The 3rd Franklin Global SpellEvent with TESOL
Korea Preliminary Round hosted by KOTESOL
Sookmyung Women's University, Seoul

May 14, 2011.

The 2011 KOTESOL National Conference
Advancing Korean TESOL in the 21st Century
Woosong University, Daejeon

October 15-16, 2011.

The 2011 Korea TESOL Intl. Conference
Pushing our Paradigms; Connecting with Culture
Sookmyung Women's University, Seoul

Upcoming Korea ELT Events

Asia TEFL 2011: The Asia TEFL Intl. Conference

Teaching English in a Changing Asia
July 27-29; Hotel Seoul Kyoyuk Munhwa Hoegwan

For KOTESOL, Korea & International ELT Events:

<http://www.koreatesol.org/ConferencesAndEvents>