

## Do They Get It? Six Techniques For Monitoring Student Comprehension in Class

By Heidi Vande Voort Nam

No lesson is successful unless the students “get it.” To find out whether students are “getting” the material, teachers need to monitor their students’ comprehension. Unfortunately, questions like “Do you understand?” rarely reveal how much students have understood. A comprehension check is unsuccessful when students do not respond or pretend to understand. Likewise, the comprehension check fails when the teacher overestimates the ability of the class because of a few responsive students or does not follow up by helping the students who do not understand.

### The Workshop

This workshop will demonstrate six comprehension checking techniques: eliciting L1 translation, requiring a physical response, grading the difficulty of comprehension questions, monitoring written work, using pairwork, and cold call. Teachers can effectively check comprehension of even the lowest level students by eliciting either L1 translation or a physical response because these techniques do not require the students to respond in English. The teacher can support English responses to comprehension check questions by using yes/no and either/or questions effectively. Since questions addressed to the class as a whole do not help teachers find out which students are struggling, teachers may gauge individual students’ progress by monitoring written work or pairwork or by using cold call, which is directing oral questions to specific students. Workshop

participants will practice generating and evaluating comprehension checks.

### The Presenter

Heidi Vande Voort Nam holds an MA TESL/TEFL from the University of Birmingham. She currently teaches in



the Department of English Education at Chongshin University, where she prepares English education majors for student teaching and for the national English teachers’ exam. Heidi also teaches beginner-level general English courses, including special courses for North Korean

and Chinese students. Within KOTESOL, Heidi serves as a presenter for Korea Teacher Trainers (KTT) and facilitates KOTESOL’s Christian Teachers Special Interest Group (CT SIG), a group that hosts meetings and online discussions for Christian English teachers. Heidi lives in Seoul with her husband TaekHyeon Nam, who is a public high school English teacher, and their children, Joseph and Miriam.

*(Ms. Vande Voort Nam is presenting on the monitoring of student comprehension at the November 10 Gwangju-Jeonnam KOTESOL Chapter meeting at Chosun University.)*

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# ■ Joining Korea TESOL

## Who May Join

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.

## What Memberships Types Are Available?

- **Individual 1-Year Membership** (40,000 won).
- **Lifetime Membership** (400,000 won). Student and International Membership options also available.

## How to Join

Apply by using the online membership form at <http://www.koreatesol.org/>. On the front page, click on "Join KOTESOL" in the menu, and follow the directions.

Alternately, paper membership application and renewal forms are available at Chapter meetings for those who prefer making a hard-copy application with Chapter assistance.

**Membership payment** may be made by:

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

## Warmers and Coolers

By Matthew McLaughlin-Stonham

Teaching classes with a solid focus using clear aims and objectives is always an integral part of the job for any EFL teacher. Sometimes, however, the best-laid plans for a lesson can fall short due to any number of reasons. Time management, student disinterest, a lack of interactive activities, and even over-planning are just some of the reasons why lessons result in being unsuccessful. Therefore, every teacher should have their own little “box of tricks” up their sleeve in case the perfect class fails.

The aim of this presentation is to demonstrate exciting and interactive activities that are short, fun, educational, and above all, easy to prepare. In fact all of these activities require just two ingredients: a whiteboard and a board marker. Some of the activities are variations of well-known classic EFL activities; some are of my own creation. The activities can be applied to all age groups. From a theoretical viewpoint, the aim of the activities is to encourage a communicative classroom atmosphere although this is by no means exclusive. Some of the activities are simply to help break the ice or to establish understanding. Workshop attendees will have the opportunity to practice the activities in pairs and small groups.

### The Presenter

Matt McLaughlin is currently studying for the MA TESOL at the University of Nottingham, UK, and teaches freshman classes at Chosun University. He



previously taught at Wonkwang University in Iksan and at several private academies in the Cheonan area. Matt comes from the United Kingdom, where he taught intensive summer camps for students from various parts of Europe, including Italy, Spain,

France, and Russia. After completing his CELTA in London, he taught in the Andalucia area of Spain. He holds a strong interest in communicative teaching methodology, which will be the focus of his thesis for the following year. He lives in Gwangju with his wife Hilary, who also teaches at Chosun, and his one-year-old daughter, Matilda.

*(Mr. McLaughlin is presenting on the use of warmers and coolers at the November 10 Gwangju-Jeonnam KOTESOL Chapter meeting at Chosun University.)*

## Chapter Members in the News

**Dr. David Shaffer** was at HUFSS in Seoul on October 13 to present at ALAK 2012, the annual Applied Linguistics Association of Korea’s International Conference. His presentation was entitled “Korean EFL Students’ Attitudes Toward English Punctuation.”

**Ten Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter Members** presented at the KOTESOL International Conference in Seoul on October 20-22 at Sookmyung Women’s University. They are as follows:

**Dr. Yeon-seong Park:** “A College English Course Through Poetry Instruction Incorporating MI Theory.”

**Dr. David Shaffer:** “Affecting Language Learner Self-Direction Through Journaling.”

**Dr. David Shaffer:** “Extensive Reading’s Contributions to Language Skills Acquisition.”

**Darren Bean:** Intellectual Property Within the Educational Industry.”

**Henry Gerlits:** “What’s Wrong with Following the Book? Using Methodology to Adapt Textbook Activities.”

**Nico Lorenzutti:** “That’s NEAT: 5 Communicative Activities for Teaching NEAT Speaking Preparation.”

**Nico Lorenzutti & Michael Rabbidge:** “Extensive Reading and Listening Experiences in EFL Classrooms.”

**John McDonald:** “HOCs and LOCs: What Every EFL Teacher Should Know About Teaching Writing.”

**Julien McNulty:** “Drawing Blanks: 10 Paper Activities When You Have Nothing But Technology Fails.”

**Julien McNulty:** “Whodunit? Technological Approaches to Forensic Linguistics Analysis of a Fraud.”

**Catherine Peck:** “Becoming Intercultural in the Korean EFL Classroom.”

**Michael Rabbidge & Nico Lorenzutti:** “The Bimodal Narrative Approach, Story Without Struggle.”

**Han Seo:** “CALL – Story About Teachers Taking the First Step.”

## Gwangju-Jeonnam KOTESOL November Meeting

- Time: Saturday, November 10, 2012, 1:30 p.m.
- Place: Chosun University (Gwangju), Main Building (본관), Room 5210.

### ■ Schedule

**1:30 pm:** Registration and Welcome

**2:00 pm:** PRESENTATION 1

***Do They Get It? Six Techniques for Monitoring Student Comprehension in Class***  
Heidi Vande Voort Nam (Chongshin University)

**2:45 pm:** Refreshment Break

**3:00 pm:** Chapter Elections for President, Vice-President, and Treasurer

**3:15 pm:** PRESENTATION 2

***Warmers and Coolers***

Matthew McLaughlin-Stonham (Chosun University)

**4:00 pm: Swap-Shop Session**

Share your Teaching Ideas, Classroom Activities, and Language Games.  
(Open to All Attendees. Handouts welcomed.)

**4:30 pm:** Announcements / Drawing for Prizes / Closing

(Admission is free. Membership is encouraged.)

## Upcoming Chapter Events

### December 8. Chapter Meeting

- *Good Teachers and Bad Coursebooks:  
Adapting Materials to Fit Your Class*  
Henry Gerlitz (Gwangju University)

- *Incorporating Writing Activities into the  
English Classroom in Korea*  
Warren Merkel (Chonnam Natl. University)

## Upcoming KOTESOL Events

### November 10, 2012

**Jeonju-North Jeolla KOTESOL Drama Contest**  
Jeonju University, Jeonju, Jeollabuk-do

### November 24, 2012

**Daejeon-Chungcheong Chapter Symposium and  
Thanksgiving Dinner**  
Woosong University, Daejeon

### March 30, 2013

(CFP: Nov. 30)

**Seoul KOTESOL Chapter Conference**  
*Preparing for Tomorrow: Real Ideas for Real  
Classrooms*  
Sookmyung Women's University, Seoul

## Upcoming Korea ELT Events

### 2012 GETA International Conference

*Pedagogical and Evaluative Approaches to  
Speaking and Writing*  
Jeonju Natl. Univ. of Education, Jeonju, Jeonbuk  
November 24, 2012

### 2012 ELLAK Global Conference

*Border, Translation, and Convergence in English  
Language and Literature*  
December 11-14, 2012; BEXCO Center, Busan

### 2012 International Conference for the Korean Association for Corpus Linguistics

December 10-11, 2012; Busan

### KAPEE 2013 International Conference

*Promoting Creativity in Primary English Ed.*  
January 19, 2013; Seoul Natl. Univ. of Ed.