Music, Chants, and Video-making for the Classroom

By Chad LaRoche

As teachers of English, many of us are often faced with a common problem when handed a textbook to teach from: A lack of interesting or engaging material suitable for our students. As a teacher of 5th- and 6th-grade elementary school students, I found this to be the case when it came to teaching my textbook's musical chants, especially to 6th-graders, who would often retch at the reality of another chant they had to do. As a lover and performer of music and the drums, I chose to inject my own passion into the classroom in place of the CD-ROM-based songs. What I discovered was an engaged and participatory classroom environment that led to a lasting impression of the target language in addition to the creation of a stronger student rapport. Over time, I began experimenting with different ways to make the chants more interactive. I also began to incorporate another personal interest, videography, into the classroom by filming role-plays and creating student centered movies. These video-based activities have given young learners a chance to view and reflect on their own usage of the English language, boosted their motivation and excitement for English, as well as provided creative outlets in which to use the language.

In my presentation, I will provide an interactive demonstration of activities utilizing rhythm, music, and chants in the classroom that teachers can use regardless of their own musical ability. Inviting audience participation, we will look at ways that we can turn simple lines of text from the textbook into our own creation of musical, rhythmic, and interactive dialogue. Two more demonstrations will show the use of rhythmic reading, a method of spicing up reading assignments and exercising reading fluency, as well as the use of musical instrumentals found on YouTube to replace uninspiring textbook chants. The remainder of the presentation will be dedicated to video creation in the classroom for the purpose of student reflection, motivation, and creativity. I will show examples of student-centered video projects I've made with my students and demonstrate the simple tools needed for teachers to create their own.

THE PRESENTER

Chad LaRoche is a guest English teacher with EPIK (English Program in Korea). He has been living and teaching in Korea since October, 2013 at Dae Ban Elementary School and Pung Young Elementary School. After receiving his BA in Communications, Chad worked in TV production at a news station for three years before joining the U.S. Peace Corps and teaching at a secondary school in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. An interest in teaching has brought Chad to South Korea, and Korea has put him on track for an MA in TESOL set to begin at SIT Graduate Institute in September 2015.

(*Chad LaRoche will be speaking on techniques for using music, chants, and class videos at the April 11th Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter meeting at Chosun University.*)

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    Dept. of English Lang. & Literature
    Email: jocelynmnu@yahoo.com

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    Daegu University, Daegu
    Email: peadarcallaghan@gmail.com

Chapter Email Address
    gwangju_kotesol@yahoo.com
    gwangju@koreatesol.org

Chapter Website
    http://koreatesol.org/gwangju

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Reflecting on Classroom Elements: Learner Level

By Tyson Vieira

The more we learn about language learning, the more we are confronted by the diversity of factors embodied in our learners. "Students learn in different ways, at different rates, with different styles and exposing different strategies" (Wajnryb, 1998). Because of this reality, there is no one class that is completely homogenous in regards to learner proficiency level. Even if we were given a class with each student appearing to be homogenous, by the end of the first week or two, different levels would clearly become apparent.

Due to time limitations and having to deal with multiple classes, language teachers might find it taxing to observe and determine individual learner levels. However, this skill is valuable to the teacher because it will help them to reflect on how they can appropriately and efficiently accommodate the learner.

Challenge is necessary in the classroom. If students do an activity easily and accurately, then it is probably below the appropriate level of difficulty for that class. For a teacher to assess the appropriate level of difficulty, they need to be aware of what Wajnryb (1998) calls the *indicators of challenge* and *indicators of ease*. A couple of examples of indicators of challenge can be students whose wait time is long before answering questions and learners looking sideways at a neighbor before answering a question. On the opposite side, there are indicators of ease which consist of students getting started quickly, giving fast responses, and/or completing tasks is less time than calculated. How do you determine the proficiency level of your students? How would you group students together based on level?

Come to this workshop to share your thoughts, opinions, and experiences. This collaborative workshop will focus briefly on learner levels, how one determines learner levels, what the overt indicators of learner level are, how one can group students together (activities and seating arrangements), and how keenly learner levels reflect on your teaching and lesson planning. A handout with reflective questions and an individual exercise will be given to each workshop attendee. After being given a short time to complete part of the handout, we will break into small groups based on the age group and proficiency level one teaches. Each small group will discuss their personal reflections and work on an activity regarding determining learner levels, seating arrangements, and ways of grouping levels. After small-group work is finished, group members will present their results to the whole class for further analysis and discussion. In addition, as a whole class, we will create our own list of indicators of challenge and indicators of ease, and ways to apply these to our lesson plans.

Reference

Wajnryb, R. (1998). *Classroom observation tasks*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

The Presenter

Tyson Vieira works in the Jeollanamdo Language Program (JLP) under the Provincial Office of Education. During his first two years in JLP, he taught at five elementary schools in Haenam simultaneously, and is now at Muan Englishtown. He has an M.A. in TESOL from Azusa Pacific University in California. He was involved with the National English Ability Test (NEAT) as a test-item writer and with various JLP projects such as the English Camp as coordinator and a member of the curriculum development team. He also writes articles on TESOL for JLP's newsletter, *Bibimbap*, and for *Gwangju News*. Tyson is an active member-at-large for the Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter of KOTESOL and also serves as the co-facilitator of the local Reflective Practice Special Interest Group.

(*Tyson Vieira will be speaking on language learner proficiency levels within the class at the April 11th Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter meeting at Chosun University.*)

Gwangju-Jeonnam KOTESOL April Chapter Meeting

■ Time: Saturday, April 11, 2015, 1:45–5:00 p.m.
■ Place: Chosun University Main Building (Gwangju), 4th Floor, Room 4211

■ Schedule

Reflective Practice SIG Morning Session
Topic: *Motivation: Reflecting on Learning Experiences*
11:00-12:30 pm: Starbucks, Chosun University Branch (back gate area), 2nd Floor.

Chapter Meeting: Main Session
1:45 pm: Sign-in and Meet-and-Greet   (Admission is free.   Future membership is welcomed.)

2:00 – 3:00 pm: PRESENTATION
Music, Chants, and Video-making for the Classroom
Chad LaRoche (EPIK, Gwangju)

3:00 - 3:20 pm: Refreshment Break

3:20 – 4:20 pm: COLLABORATIVE WORKSHOP
Reflecting on Classroom Elements: Learner Level
Tyson Vieira (Jeollanamdo Language Program, Muan Englishtown)

4:20 Swap-Shop Session
Everyone is invited to Share one of your Teaching Ideas, Classroom Activities, Games, Books, or other Teaching Wisdom. (Handouts welcomed.)

4:45 pm: Announcements / Drawing for Door Prizes / Closing

6:00 pm: After-Meeting Dinner

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Upcoming Chapter Events

May 2, 2015. Monthly Chapter Meeting.

June 6, 2015. Spring Outreach
Mokpo National University, Muan

June 20, 2015. Monthly Chapter Meeting

July 11, 2015. Monthly Chapter Meeting

August 8, 2015. Monthly Chapter Meeting

Chapter Calendar of Events: http://koreatesol.org/content/calendar-events-1-gj-chapter

Upcoming KOTESOL Events

**Jeonju-North Jeolla KOTESOL Chapter
Conference**
Jeonju University, Jeonju, Jeonbuk
May 9, 2015 (Saturday)

Daejeon-Chungcheong Spring Conference
Gamification in the EFL Classroom
April 25, 2015; Cheongju, Chungbuk

The 2015 Korea TESOL National Conference
Bridging the Digital Divide: Examining Online Language Teaching in Asia
May 30, 2015; Sookmyung Women's Univ., Seoul

KOTESOL Calendar of Events: http://koreatesol.org/content/1-kotesol-events-major

Upcoming Korea ELT Events: http://www.koreatesol.org/content/2-domestic-elt-events-non-kotesol