Mind the Gap: Information Gaps and English Learners in Korea

By Bryan Hale

In an information gap activity, students have different information and communicate with each other to share it. Normally students have a task to complete which requires exchanging information.

When I first started using information gap activities with elementary and middle school classes in Korea, there were problems! Some students would use Korean or simply show each other the answers. Perhaps worse, students treated the activities as drills, and used formulaic language very mechanically. It seemed like information gaps required me to do a lot of classroom policing for little communicative value.

In a critique of communicative teaching, Michael Swan argued against information gaps which ask students to exchange "unmotivating, imposed information," and called for more personal exchanges where "students are simply asked to talk about themselves." Scott Thornbury has paraphrased this as "the best information gap is the information gap that exists between the people in the room."

This ideal was attractive, but daunting. I was teaching students who shared a first language, who often already knew each other very well and at the same time could be reluctant to share personal information, and who didn't always have much motivation to use English. Between the classroom reality and the ideal, I felt like giving up on information gaps.

However, with more time, I have found that when information gaps do work with my students, they are very useful. Students use language with increased fluency and purpose. Students negotiate language with each other. Students take ownership of the activity.

In this session, we will discuss the classroom management of gap activities in classrooms in Korea, and also the design or adaptation of gap tasks for students in Korea. I will share my ideas about why certain information gaps have worked for me and my students, and we will consider some different activity ideas in terms of our own teaching settings.

PRESENTER BIOGRAPHY

Bryan Hale is from Australia, where he first learned about information gaps while getting a CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults). A lot of Bryan's experience is with teaching middle school and older elementary students, but he has experience in Korea teaching students of all ages from very young to adult. Bryan currently teaches at Sunkyung Academy in Gwangju. Email: bryan.english.teacher@gmail.com

(Bryan Hale will be speaking on the use of information gap activities at the May 2nd Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter meeting at Chosun University.)

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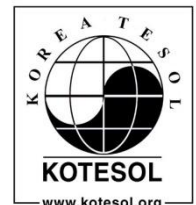   gwangju@koreatesol.org

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

Tech Tools for Adding Audio-Visual Elements to Conversation Class

By Lindsay Herron

It's amazingly easy to add spice to your classroom; thanks to technology, it's easier than ever to add audio and visual elements to your class?even worksheets! This workshop will present a selection of free, flexible, easy-to-use tech tools for creating and sharing multimedia input.

Participants will discover how video, auditory, and display tools can be used singly or in tandem to create a more engaging, active, and memorable lesson. Want to make a newspaper with moving pictures, Harry Potter-style? This workshop will show you how. Want to integrate video or auditory clues into a game? Look no further. Participants will have an opportunity to create their own multimodal project with the tool or app of their choice, using their smartphone or tablet. With a little preparation and creativity, these flexible tools can help create a dynamic, interactive lesson that won't soon be forgotten!

Among the tools to be featured are the following:

YAKiT/YAKiT Kids (iOS and Windows; http://www.freakngenius.com/). Make any photo talk! Just upload a photo, add a mouth, add decorations, and then record whatever you want your creation to say. The mouth will move in time with your speech, and you can adjust the pitch for maximum hilarity. When you are finished, you can send your video by email or save it to your phone. Tellagami (iOS & Android; http://tellagami.com). Create a short video featuring an animated avatar. Just choose and customize an avatar, select a background, add any doodles you desire, and then record your voice for up to 30 seconds. Videos can be shared via email, Twitter, or Facebook.

ShadowPuppet Edu (iOS; http://get-puppet.co/). Upload some photos and start recording! As you scroll through the photos, you can add narration or music, draw on the photos or add text, zoom in or out, add emoji, or move the image, and it will all be captured on video. You can save the finished product to your camera roll or export it to YouTube, Dropbox, or Google Drive. The free Edu version allows teachers and students to create a video story that is up to 100 pages and 30 minutes long.

WeVideo (iOS, Android, and web; http://www.wevideo.com/). This video editor is simple but flexible. The mobile apps allow students to record, edit, and merge video clips and add music and voiceovers. The full website, meanwhile, offers an impressive (and fairly intuitive) range of editing tools, making it easy to add effects, transitions, text, and more.

Aurasma (iOS, Android, and web; http://www.aurasma.com). Aurasma allows you to add a video overlay to a particular image. When students scan that image using their Aurasma app, they trigger a video that they can watch on their mobile device.

Note: Attendees will have an opportunity to try out several tools for themselves; bringing a smartphone or tablet pre-loaded with a QR-reader app (e.g., QR Droid, QR Reader) and the Aurasma app is encouraged and will save time during the presentation. Make sure your battery is full, and you might wish to bring earphones so you can hear the videos clearly!

PRESENTER BIOGRAPHY

Lindsay Herron has been a visiting professor at Gwangju Natl. University of Education since 2008. Prior to that, she taught English on a Fulbright grant at a boys' high school in Jeju-do. She has a master's degree in language education from Indiana University-Bloomington, a master's in cinema studies from New York University, bachelor's degrees in English and psychology from Swarthmore College, a CELTA, and the CELTA YL Extension. She is currently the First Vice-President of KOTESOL and Membership Committee Chair, Treasurer of our Chapter, and the new facilitator of the Multimedia and CALL Special Interest Group.

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(*Lindsay Herron will be speaking on using Internet tools to add audio-visual elements to classroom instructional materials at the May 2nd Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter meeting at Chosun University.*)

Gwangju-Jeonnam KOTESOL May Chapter Meeting

■ Time: Saturday, May 2, 2015, 1:45–5:00 p.m.
■ Place: Chosun University Main Building (Gwangju), 4th Floor, Room 4211

■ **Schedule**

Reflective Practice SIG Morning Session
Topic: *Interactions Between Cultural Beings in the Classroom*
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 1
Tech Tools for Adding Audio-Visual Elements to Conversation Class
Lindsay Herron (Gwangju Natl. University of Education)

3:00 – 3:20 pm: Refreshment Break

3:20 – 4:20 pm: PRESENTATION 2
Mind the Gap: Information Gaps and English Learners in Korea
Bryan Hale (Sunkyung Academy, Gwangju)

4:20 pm: 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

June 6, 2015. Spring Outreach
Mokpo National University, Muan
Five Presentations/Workshops
See Chapter Website for details.

June 20, 2015. Monthly Chapter Meeting
Using Alternate Reality Games in the Classroom
Paul Starr (EPIK, Hanam Middle School, Gwangju)

Panel Discussion: *Online Professional Development Options* (Lindsay Herron Facilitating)

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 – May 9 – CANCELLED

National Council Meeting
May 10, 2015; Injae-gwan, Room 207
Sookmyung Women's University, Seoul

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