

Meet the Speaker: An Interview with Kathleen Kampa

Kathleen Kampa is a featured speaker for the International Conference this year. The following is an interview that she gave to *The English Connection*.

TEC: Please tell us a little about yourself and how you became involved in English language education?



Kathleen Kampa: From the time I was a child, I wanted to embrace the world through teaching children from many countries. My first international teaching assignment was in Tokyo. One of the parents at my school

suggested that I give a workshop for English teachers using music and movement activities from my young learner classes. That workshop opened the door to my work with Learning World, and later Oxford University Press. My husband, Charles Vilina, and I wrote our first course entitled *Magic Time* using music, movement, and multiple intelligences strategies to help all students be successful.

Since that time, my husband and I have conducted teacher training sessions and webinars around the world. Our continued work with Oxford University Press has produced two new courses, *Everybody Up* and *Oxford Discover*.

My TESOL thesis research on the use of songs and chants in the young learner classroom led me to create and produce two CDs (*Special Days and Holidays* and *Jump Jump Everyone*) with engaging music. We continue to write songs and chants that are brain-compatible, effective, and engaging.

TEC: What is the focus of your presentations, and how will they be useful to the EFL teacher new to Korea as well as to the veteran practitioner?

Kampa: I'm passionate about bringing 21st century skills into the ELT classroom. I'm concerned, however, that many students and teachers are consumed by technology. I'll lead participants through no-tech and low-tech activities that teachers can use immediately in

their classrooms to challenge students to think deeply about information, make connections, work together, and solve problems creatively.

In my second presentation, I'll share a wealth of songs, chants, and movement activities for teachers of young learners. Teachers will learn numerous brain-compatible strategies for making effective use of music and movement in their classrooms.

Both new and veteran teachers should be able to gain some new ideas from my presentations.

TEC: Of all the ELT-related activities that you are involved in, which of them provide you with the most satisfaction?

Kampa: This is a difficult question for me because I embrace each facet of my work.

To truly understand today's students, I continue to teach young learners in the classroom. In this way, I can easily explore new ideas, new strategies, and activities. When I write materials, I try them out with my students.

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I love collaborating on writing projects for new English textbooks. My husband and I work together on most projects. Writing a coursebook requires all of the 21st century skills we use in our classrooms – critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and clear communication. It's rewarding to see how students grow as successful English students by using our books.

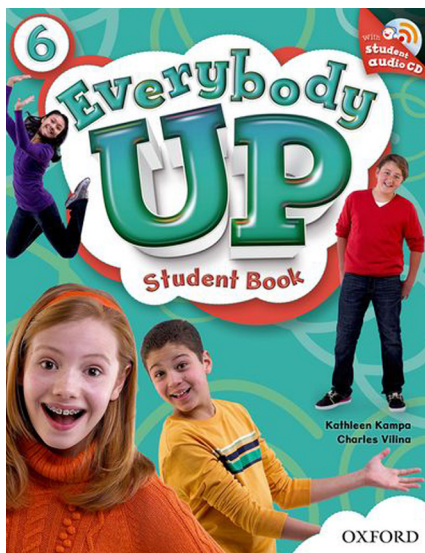
I love creating music for children. This is perhaps the most "magical" part of the work I do. I write music when I'm taking a walk, riding my bike, or swimming. The songs replay over and over in my head, tweaking with each repetition. Then, I introduce the song in my classroom to get student input. At that point, it's ready to be recorded.

I enjoy the excitement of a conference or workshop! Bringing our current ideas together in a presentation helps me further clarify my ideas. I think that we all need a little extra motivation and some new ideas to ignite learning in our classrooms. I hope that my work at the KOTESOL conference inspires teachers!

TEC: What skills – teacher skills and/or learner skills – are needed to best prepare our English language students for their future?

Kampa:

I strongly believe that the 21st century skills of *critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication* should be the primary focus of learning in the English language classroom. As we focus on developing these skills



in our students, we create many opportunities to build powerful language skills. When students are challenged to think *critically* and *creatively* about the world around them, especially while *working together*, English becomes the means of *communication* through which goals are met. In this learning environment, teachers serve as facilitators who guide students on the path of discovery.

TEC: Would you share with us a little about your life outside of ELT?

Kampa: I am married to my best friend and co-author, Charles Vilina. We have two sons, John, 29, and Christian, 25. We have taught in Tokyo, Japan, for most of our teaching careers, but we love traveling to discover the everyday lives of people around the globe. We return to our home state of Minnesota, USA, in the summers to spend time with family and friends.

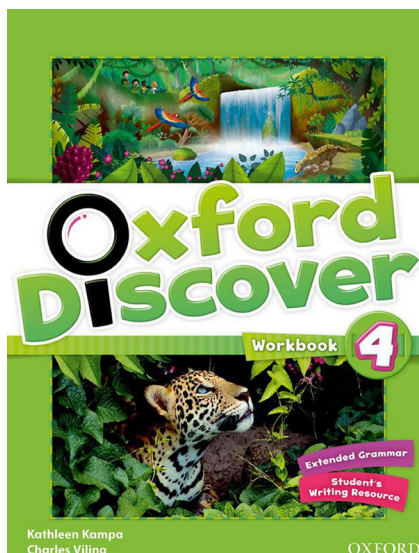
I love being active! I swim, dance, do tai chi, practice

yoga, and take long walks. My journey to school along the cherry tree-lined street is one of my favorite times of the day.

TEC: How do you plan to spend your time at KOTESOL 2017?

Kampa: First of all, I am inspired by the plenary sessions. With each session I attend, I like to reflect on how it connects to my current practice. I enjoy connecting with teachers from around the world,

especially young learner teachers. We can learn so much from each other.



Secondly, I like to explore the culture and food of each place I visit. I'm looking forward to some *bibimbap*.

TEC: If you could change anything about ELT – in the classroom, outside the classroom, even ELT conferences – what would it be?

Kampa: I love conferences that are organized based on threads or interest level. For example, one group may be a young learner group. All of the workshops pertaining to young learners would be held in one or two adjacent workshop spaces. Scheduling would be done so that no more than two young learner workshops are held at one time. Spaces for teachers to connect informally would be available near those two rooms. A learning wall between the rooms would allow teachers time to comment and make connections with their own practice.

Finally, having a wrap-up session with young learner teachers at the end of the conference would allow teachers to process and reflect on what they've learned. Featured speakers could be part of this reflection time.

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