

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

creating a successful classroom

A workshop conference for English teachers
sponsored by KOTESOL Seoul Chapter

Saturday May 27, 2006

Motivate.

Focus.

Control.

Inspire.

Excite.

Respect.

Design.

Trust.

Discipline.

Evolve.

Prepare.

Cooperate.

Enforce.

Entertain.

Give.

Execute.

Share.

Or not.



Time

May 27, 2006

12 - 1pm registration
1 - 5pm workshops

Place

Hanyang University
HIT building

Cost

5,000 ₩ KOTESOL members
10,000 ₩ non-members

Contact

www.kotesol.org/seoul
zoeksan@yahoo.ca

It's your classroom.

KOTESOL Seoul Chapter - the chapter with Seoul



President's Message: May Conference

Dear KOTESOL Members, Presenters and Attendees,

Welcome to Seoul Chapter's annual conference. Our theme this year, *CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT: Creating a Successful Classroom* is one that we know will appeal to all teachers. We are also satisfied that our adjusted format of a half-day with 9 presenters talking on a variety of themes pertinent to educators from elementary to tertiary levels will meet the needs of conference goers while not overloading the conference team or breaking the bank as far as Seoul Chapter's finances are concerned. Through careful management of our chapter's dues and revenues (thanks particularly to Ksan Rubadeau, our Treasurer), the Executive has guaranteed that the new President will have a solid financial footing for the next phase of Seoul Chapter's existence. That achieves one of my personal goals during my 2 years as President but let me also mention a few other accomplishments we, as an executive and your chapter representatives, have achieved:

- 1) Membership has reached 320 (or about 36% of the total of KOTESOL membership in Korea) as of October, 2005. Thanks, Heather for your hard work here, and to Jennifer Young for representing the members so well!
- 2) Thanks to Alex Pole and his team, we have a great new version of our newsletter, *About Seoul KOTESOL (ASK)*, which is being produced 3 or 4 times a year (depending on availability of articles, etc.).
- 3) Thanks to Matt and Sarah Sahr, our webpage is looking amazing and is updated frequently to show what's going on with our chapter, and we are also being publicized more often and more effectively than ever before.
- 4) With the efforts of Bruce Wakefield, our workshops are offering a wider variety of topics and, thus, our attendance has been reaching 40+ at our most recent monthly workshops.
- 5) Thanks to popular response, our annual Christmas Dinner seems to have found a home at Suji's in Itaewon. Will other events come to grace our social calendar on a regular basis? That remains to be seen.
- 6) Thanks also go to our Co-VP's (Joe Walther and Frank Kim) for stepping in to do whatever was needed to make sure meetings got organised, newsletters got sent, and so on.
- 7) Finally, my thanks and appreciation go to Mary-Jane Scott, our Secretary and the one original executive member who started this whole adventure

with me in 2004. Thanks for everything you do and have done for Seoul Chapter.

Lastly, before I close, I would like to thank all of the members of the present Executive once again for making the past year or so the best since I joined KOTESOL back in 1998. I know that I leave the Presidency in good hands and the new President with a team that is an enviable one in its professionalism, dedication and creativity.

In closing, it is my hope that you will find some useful ideas here today and that you will also find some new friends with whom to develop your teaching in new and interesting ways you never dreamed possible. Who knows? You may even decide to join KOTESOL and our chapter in making Korea a better place to live, work and learn.

Yours,

Tory S. Thorkelson, M.Ed.
President, Seoul KOTESOL
2004 - 2006.

Don't Forget Seoul Chapter has a Year of Great Programming

Our next meeting is Saturday, June 17th featuring Ian Kutschke.

This workshop is mainly for teachers of elementary age children. The workshop will consist of two intertwining topics that form the fundamentals of a functional, organized and stimulating learning environment. Teachers will be exposed to the benefits of a working merit system using stickers. The main idea of teaching conversation is to get the students to use the language and get them talking. Teachers will find out different ways to organize a class, keep students in line and reduce the amount of teacher talking. Teachers will actively engage in simulated class activities to better understand both the use of the sticker system and the ways young learners read body cues.

Ian Kutschke is an adult conversation teacher and Children's Program coordinator at Korea University.

If you would like to present at a Seoul Chapter meeting, please email Bruce Wakefield

bruce_wakefield@hotmail.com

And, as always, Seoul Chapter meets on the third Saturday of every month at the Injekwan or Professional Center at Sookmyung Women's University from 3 – 5 p.m. Please see our website for further details: www.kotesol.org. Click on chapters then click on Seoul.

Schedule

	Room 612	Room 613	Room 615
1-2	<i>Making the Elementary English Program more Successful</i> David Shaffer (Pg. 4)	<i>Detective Fiction in the Classroom</i> Ji-soo Hwang, In-su Kim, Hee-jung Lim and In-kyoung Lee (Pgs. 4-5)	<i>The Class Journal</i> Andrew Finch (Pg. 5)
2:15 3:15	<i>Classroom Routine</i> Bruce Wakefield (Pg. 6)	<i>Silence and Attention</i> Douglas Margolis (Pgs. 6-7)	<i>Content Based Instruction</i> Kathy Brenner (Pg. 7)
3:30 4:30	<i>Tasked Based Instruction and Student Motivation</i> Thomas Santos (Pg. 8)	<i>Teaching Book and Time Management Skills</i> Kevin Smyth (Pgs. 8-9)	<i>Audio Journals</i> Maureen Cody (Pg. 9)

- Cast your vote in the Seoul Chapter Executive Election at the registration table.
- At 5 PM, join us in the auditorium to hear the election results and take part in a FREE RAFFLE. Don't miss this chance to win a FREE one-year KOTESOL membership.

Table of Contents

1. Abstracts	5
Session 1 (1:00 -2:00 p.m.).....	5
Session 2 (2:15 - 3:15 p.m.).....	7
Session 3 (3:30 - 4:30 p.m.).....	9
2. Extended Summaries	11
3. ASK (Special Edition)	19

ABSTRACTS

Session 1: 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Making the Elementary English Program More Successful

David Shaffer

Room 612 (1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.)

This study is an attempt to evaluate the nine-year-old elementary school English program and make recommendation to make it more successful. The study was conducted in the form of a survey of elementary school teachers in a provincial area and covered a wide range of program-related questions. The results of this study are compared with those of a similar study conducted five years earlier. From the combined results, a set of recommendations are made. The combined results lend strong support to the recommendations made, including a call for a change of teachers in the classroom and the amount of time English is taught.

David Shaffer (PhD, Linguistics) has been a professor at Chosun University for over 30 years. He teaches graduate courses and is a teacher trainer and materials developer. Dr. Shaffer is the author of books, research papers, and periodical columns on English and Korean language learning. He is a Korea TESOL and Asia TEFL executive officer.

Using Detective Fiction in the English Language Classroom

Ji-soo Hwang, In-su Kim, Hee-jung Lim and In-kyoung Lee

Room 613 (1:00 – 2:00 p.m.)

This presentation focuses on practical uses of detective fiction in ESL or EFL classrooms. Books and written texts have numerous uses for language acquisition. They provide language input, and opportunities for reading comprehension; you can even make dialogues based upon the reading and many other exercises. But, it is the opportunity to practice critical thinking skills that makes detective fiction particularly exciting for the ESL or EFL classroom. Students have to use advanced reading skills and logic to solve the mysteries. It also offers the opportunity to discuss questions of right and wrong (or morality).

Ji-soo Hwang was born in Seoul, Korea where she grew up until the age of five. Her family moved around a lot and finally set up in Busan. She graduated from elementary school and a girl's middle school in Busan. When she was in her third year of middle school, she took the admission test for

Hanyoung Foreign Language High School. In the winter of 2005, I got admission to the OSP (overseas study program)

In Sue Kim is currently a high school student at Han Young Foreign language HighSchool. She is involved in the Overseas Study Program and planning to attend an American University after graduating high school. In-su's dream is to achieve her full potential and serve as a global leader and philanthropist worldwide.

Heejung Lim was born in South Korea on November 18, 1989. She is currently studying at Hanyoung Foreign Language High School. As a child, she lived in the U.S. for four years. Her interests are in diverse fields including law, politics, literature, language, and the environment. Heejung enjoys reading, writing, acting, singing, and exercising.

In-kyoung Lee was born on October 13th 1989 in Seoul. As a child, she lived in U.S. She returned to Korea when she was in kindergarten. Since then, she has been overseas a couple of times. She is currently attending the Overseas Study Program of Hanyoung Foreign Language High School

The Class Journal

Andrew Finch

Room 615 (1:00 – 2:00 p.m.)

The Class Journal (CJ) is a student-centred means of taking care of various classroom organisation matters. Instead of the teacher being responsible for marking attendance, participation, assessment, etc., the CJ gives the responsibility to the students. The teacher simply puts the relevant forms in the CJ, and the students enter their scores and attendance. This has the double benefit of lightening the burden on the teacher and promoting responsibility in the students.

Of course, there can be problems. Students are not used to being treated as adults, and they can be tempted to make false entries. This is usually the case with only a small percentage of students, and is not a reason for punishing everyone. Rather, it can be seen as an opportunity to raise the issue of responsibility. If we want responsible citizens, then this relatively unimportant activity presents a microcosm of larger issues. In this case, the classroom is a mirror of the larger society, and the Class Journal offers opportunities for discussing and promoting social growth. If used in a non-threatening manner, the CJ can be a convenient vehicle for promoting confidence, motivation and positive attitude change.

This workshop will describe the theory and practice of using a Class Journal, and will show a video about the CJ in use, in addition to providing various sample CJs for inspection.

Dr. Andrew Finch is associate professor of English Education at Gyeongbuk National University, where he teaches TEFL methodology, using a holistic, humanistic approach. Andrew has authored a number of ELT books, which can be viewed online at www.finchpark.com/books. His research interests focus on ELT as education of the whole person.

Session 2: 2:15 – 3:15 p.m.

Classroom Routines

Bruce Wakefield

Room 612 (2:15 – 3:15 p.m.)

This workshop will be aimed at assisting teachers with facilitating the learning of English by young learners. However some of the ideas could be adapted for use with adult students. In the workshop I will explore issues related to setting up effective routines for an EFL classroom. In turn I would look at topics such as control, motivation and working towards tangible learning outcomes. We will also look at the question of tracking student progress.

This workshop in particular will set out to challenge some notions about classroom control that I feel need to be debated in the South >Korean situation.

Currently, **Bruce Wakefield** is a Senior English teacher at the New Zealand Center in Gangnam, Seoul. Mr. Wakefield's teaching experience in Korea has included three years at Soonchunhyang University, near Onyang City. Prior to arriving in Korea Mr. Wakefield had spent nearly 30 years teaching in the New Zealand Primary school system. A considerable part of Mr. Wakefield's time in New Zealand was working with pupils who were learning English as a Second Language.

Silence and Attention

Douglas Margolis

Room 613 (2:15 – 3:15 p.m.)

Handling student silence and eliciting their participation is a major part of language teaching. Attention, according to Richard Schmidt, is a necessary condition of language acquisition and also a focus of teachers' classroom management endeavors. This presentation discusses these two foci from a

classroom management perspective, offering instructional strategies from several different viewpoints for coping with silence and directing attention. Attendees may be surprised by, and disagree with, the presenters take on classroom interactions, but should nevertheless walk away with several practical ideas that can be applied in the classroom on Monday morning.

Douglas Margolis currently teaches at the International Graduate School of English in Seoul while finishing his PhD in Second Language Acquisition from the University of Hawaii. He is interested in classroom research, pedagogy, the nature and role of interactions in second language learning and computer assisted language learning. Email: margolis@hawaii.edu.

4 Skills Activities for Content-Based Instruction

Kathy Brenner

Room 615 (2:15 – 3:15 p.m.)

Content-based instruction (CBI) has developed a significant presence in today's ESL/EFL curriculum. Whether theme-based, sheltered or adjunct, CBI provides language support for content-driven subject matter.

The language teacher needs to organize the content material into various segments such as background knowledge (activating schema), vocabulary, text and content analysis. Once the segments are designed, the 4 skills activities can be created.

The presenter will focus on an article from *U.S. News & World Report* and present assorted 4 skills activities that teachers can apply. Handouts of the template segmentation and a listing of the 4 skills activities will be provided.

Kathy L. Brenner is an ESL instructor and curriculum designer at Samsung Hoam Center in Yongin. In Boston, she has taught at Northeastern University and Harvard University. In addition, she has been a writing consultant at the Harvard School of Public Health. She has her master's degree in TESOL from the School for International Training.



Session 3: 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Task Based Learning and Student Motivation

Thomas Santos

Room 612 (3:30 – 4:30 p.m.)

It is a constant challenge to motivate and stimulate our students. We want to coax them into engagement with the material so that they will learn to read, write, and speak English. Unfortunately, we are not always able to do this. Due to the external pressures of social responsibility, our young learners are not always mentally or emotionally present. This presentation will look at educational motivation theory and its relation to actual classroom practice. Task-based learning, as described by Jane Willis, is one strategy to motivate our students extrinsically if intrinsic motivation is not present. The built-in aspect in TBL of the requirement of students to produce something as well as reflect on their learning process can help push students to engage with the language. This extrinsic motivation can be a powerful tool for teachers to arrive at their ultimate goal, learning.

In the presentation, there will be an opportunity for participants to discuss the applicability of TBL. They will also look at student textbooks and experiment with how to adapt them to a task-based model.

Mr. Santos is a Senior English Language Fellow with the US State Department assigned to Korea for the current school year. Back home, he is a lecturer in Applied Linguistics at the School for International Training. A trained professional actor, he has taught using drama for language learning in many countries throughout the world. Thomas has taught in Czechoslovakia, the Czech Republic, Morocco, and Bangladesh. In 2003, he was a Fulbright senior scholar in Budapest, Hungary.

Teaching Book and Time Management Skills

Kevin Smyth

Room 613 (3:30 – 4:30 p.m.)

The biggest difference between low- and high-performing students is likely not intelligence, but organizational skills. Sadly, however, many low or mid-performing students believe that the difference is intelligence. Disorganized students live in a world of unexpected surprises and high stress in the best of cases. In the worst, they live in protective apathy and distractive misbehavior.

Teaching time and book management skills is at least a favor to students, and possibly a pre-requisite to any kind of learning. This presentation shows how time management skills can be fostered through class procedures and methodology, and how book organizing skills can lead to a more confident and

competent student.

Kevin Smyth was a junior/senior high school English and social studies teacher in Canada. He received his masters in TESOL from the University of Birmingham. He has been teaching for ten years in Korea, and is currently in the English department at Korea University's Suh-chang campus.

Audio Journals

Maureen Cody

Room 615 (3:30 – 4:30 p.m.)

An audio journal is a recorded collection of a student's thoughts or a set of oral essays on one or a series of topics. Students make recordings at regular intervals, and frequently the teacher reviewing these recordings makes some oral comments on the student's work, thus beginning a useful dialogue and feedback loop outside of class.

This presentation will present a theoretical rationale for journaling, specifically audio journals. Then, the presentation will document one teacher's use of audio journals during several 10-week spoken English programs where trainees frequently complained that they didn't see any improvement in their language skills. Audio journals were used as a concrete way to demonstrate student achievement when students questioned the amount of language they were learning. Audio journals also served as a way to add detailed individual language feedback without taking up valuable class time.

The description of audio journals in the presenter's class will include a list of lessons learned and potential pitfalls to watch out for when using audio journals.

After documenting how audio journals were used in her class, the presenter will lead participants through a series of practice and discussion activities designed to make them assess the benefits of audio journals in their own teaching situations, then devise ways to implement audio journals in their own classes.

Maureen Cody is an instructor and curriculum developer at Samsung Human Resources Development Center in Yongin. Maureen has worked for Samsung for almost 2 years. Maureen received her MS in applied linguistics and TESOL from the University of Pennsylvania, where she is currently conducting doctoral work. Her research interests include academic reading and teacher training. Before coming to Korea, Maureen taught academic English at various universities in the United States. She also worked for Literacy Volunteers of America, providing teacher training seminars to volunteer ESL teachers who did not have TESOL backgrounds.

Extended Summaries

The Class Journal

Andrew Finch

Gyeongbook National University

Most teachers would agree that part of their job is to prepare students to enter a democratic society. In fact the 7th National Curriculum tells us that this is a main goal of education in Korea:

The objectives of Korea's education are, under the ideal of *hongik-ingan* (contributing to the overall benefit of humankind — the founding spirit of the first kingdom in Korean history), to assist all people in perfecting their individual character, to develop the ability to achieve an independent life and acquire the qualifications of democratic citizens, and to be able to participate in the building of a democratic state and promoting the prosperity of all humankind. (Korea Institute of Curriculum and Evaluation, 2006)

It follows, therefore, that *hongik-ingan* should be the main priority in our classes. In practice, however, teachers complain that they never have the opportunity to develop their students' individual characters and to prepare them to become democratic citizens, since all their time is taken up with test preparation, which requires an autocratic, transfer-of-knowledge, rote-learning approach. Foreign ELT teachers also tend to sidestep the issue of *hongik-ingan*, since their job is "to teach English."

So when does the training for democratic citizenship take place? At present, students are supposed to assume the necessary autonomy, critical thinking skills, informed decision-making skills, and responsibility, through some magical rite-of-passage, which occurs when they leave university. Their educational experience up to that time has nothing to do with democracy, since they are not involved in any democratic processes.

If students are to become democratic citizens, then they need to experience a democratic environment, and they need to learn how to deal with the issues that arise in that environment. Because of this, it is vital that they be involved in decision-making at every level of their education. The Process Syllabus is a step along this road, and the Class Journal (CJ) is another small, but effective attempt to democratise the learning experience, with the added benefit that it helps the teacher with class management, and thus frees up extra time for teaching, monitoring, and facilitating learning.

Individual CJs can be designed by the teacher to suit each class. They typically contain Attendance sheets, self-assessment sheets, peer-assessment sheets, presentation-assessment sheets, and photo pages. They can also include any data-collection resources (e.g. assignment dates, hand-in dates, extensive reading details, etc.) the teacher feels to be appropriate. During the semester, this CJ is made available to all the students, in all the lessons. The CJ moves around the classroom, and students fill in the assessment details at suitable times.

It goes without saying that issues do arise. Students will often “help” each other by filling in each other’s attendances. If these attendance entries are false (a student is absent), then the CJ seems to be ineffective.

However, such a situation is in fact a learning opportunity. The teacher has been freed up from classroom-management by the CJ, so he/she has more time to walk around the class, talking to students about their attendance, self-assessments, and peer-assessments, etc. When he/she notes examples of unrealistic expectations (self-assessments too high or too low), peer-pressure (peer-assessments too high or too low), or the absence of students who are “present,” this is a good opportunity to talk with the students about intra- and inter-personal responsibility. An excellent follow-up activity for this situation is the “Classroom Contract,” in which students make their own rules for classroom behaviour.

The classroom is a microcosm of society, so it makes sense that social mores can be investigated and discovered in the “safe environment” of the classroom. Whatever subject we are teaching, there is always time to fashion the learning environment in a way that develops social responsibility. In fact we might ask what is the use of teaching without attention to this factor. As Pine and Boy observe:

Education becomes a meaningless endeavour unless the education acquired has some impact on the human condition. (Pine & Boy 1977: 237)

References:

- Korea Institute of Curriculum and Evaluation. *National Curriculum*. Retrieved March 29, 2006 from: http://www.kice.re.kr/kice/eng/info/info_2.jsp.
- Pine, G. J. & Boy, A. V. (1977). *Learner Centered Teaching: a Humanistic View*. Denver, Colorado: Love Publishing Co.

Of Time and Books

Kevin Smyth

Korea University, Suh-chang Campus.

Introduction

The difference between a strong and a weak student is organizational skills much more so than intelligence. To whatever degree a teacher believes that, it is certainly more productive to act on that basis. If a teacher believes it is solely a matter of intelligence, then little can be done to improve it. Indeed, it would make us wonder why a person who believes that would become a teacher. Organization skills, however, can be taught and learned.

In my experience, organization is key. Most of my unsuccessful students fall on the basis of poor time and work management rather than being blunt-minded. They attend poorly or arrive late often; they fail or forget to do homework; their books are invariably a mess if they have one at all.

It is hard for the organized to imagine the mindset of the disorganized. For them, it is like having no capacity for memory. Every class is a new class unconnected to the last or the next; lectures, assignments and instructions come at them from all directions and as a shock; the bigger picture of the course is invisible to them; tests are an embarrassing experience that they can't prepare for because they have nothing to review. Small wonder, then, that they protect themselves by avoidance and apathy. Most dangerous of all, they begin to believe that they are, indeed, stupid.

Before we can teach such students anything of our subject, students have to believe in their intelligence and start developing some of the organizational skills necessary for success. This can be done.

A. Time Management for problem students

Time management is an elusive thing to teach. Games, exercises and lectures simply do not get the point across. It is best taught in our day to day dealing with the students, especially with regards to absences, lates, missed work or late work. Let's look at some precepts for teachers that can become policy in the class and thereby teach the students some important and necessary lessons about organization and responsibility.

1. Do no favours – Simply put, a favour to one student is a disfavour to all the others. Dogs may eat homework, but some students beg for our understanding while others quickly re-do without our even knowing. Forgiving the former is unjust because it evaluates them equally. This delivers the wrong message, and when put that way to the students, they usually understand.
2. Keep the books straight – Whenever we don't enforce responsibility, we are allowing irresponsibility. If a student is sick or his grandmother dies, he needs to make a choice as to whether it or class is more important. It may be they should miss class, but they should also accept the consequences of that decision. Excusing them exempts them from making the kinds of decisions they will have to face in life. Simply put, that is the opposite of teaching.
3. Encourage good communication – We should never allow students to fully recover marks for absences, but we should allow the effect of absences or late work to be diminished by a responsible handling of the problem. If students let the teacher know ahead of time about an absence or late; make arrangements to work around problems; or communicate well in the event of an unforeseen problem, teachers should negotiate. Always, however, it's with an eye toward teaching responsibility, not allowing irresponsibility.
4. Discuss the reasoning with students – The above policies merely seem harsh, inflexible, and unreasonable if not explained to students. Time and effort must be spent in helping students understand the reasoning.
5. Foresee problems and require students to take responsibility for them – When I see a problem shaping up, I stop calling the student's name out on role call. It forces them to come and see me. I often begin an honest conversation with, 'what mark are you planning on getting in this class'. I tell them frankly what I think they are getting, but make clear I want them to do well. This can be the starting point of a turnaround: my job helping them to do well and their job to actually do it.

B. Time Management for advanced students

All students need to learn to balance the many demands on their time. They need help in improving their habits and making wise choices. This is a huge area, the theory of which is well-covered in self-help books. The classroom can be a place to put it practice.

We tend to teach students piecemeal, feeding them one assignment at a time, and thereby manage their time for them. One way of teaching time management is to give them several assignments at the same time and then give them a measured period in which to complete them.

Writing class seems the best situation for this. A teacher can start small and give 3-5 tasks that should be completed over the next few classes. At first, students may need monitoring and advice on their progress. After, students can be encouraged to write about how they managed time and what they would do differently next time. From there, increasingly larger and independent projects can be assigned. For these, students benefit from being introduced to scheduling plans, and many need advice about planning over-ambitiously and the like.

The handout given for this presentation outlines a project I used on teaching my students.

2. Notebook organization

Many of the problems mentioned in the introduction to this piece are clearly evident in the notebooks of the students. In fact, a student's notebook is the clearest reflection of how they are understanding and progressing in the class.

However, many students lack even basic skills of keeping a notebook and suffer in their learning because of it. Something as simple as keeping track of handouts and reading them is not a habit that most students have. At first, I worried it was too elementary schoolish to take in notebooks from university students. However, when I saw how poorly most students managed their books, I had no doubt they needed help. The results have been tremendous. Students do not resent it but appreciate it, and the control they feel over their own learning and affairs gives them a confidence that I have come to believe makes them learn faster.

The process is simple and relies on a handout I give to students, a copy of which I provided in this presentation. It begins by outlining the basics of what I expect in their books:

A clear file for keeping handouts – I expect it to be complete and in order.

A class notebook – I expect students to record each class's procedures on a separate page and do all assigned work in their notebooks.

Many students lack the organization to do even this much. Some problems I often see are outlined on the handout, but more important is the general confusion students feel in not being organized to this level. Students do appreciate being expected to do this, and for some of them, knowing and doing this is the start of a turnaround.

The handout also offers higher level suggestions, such as reviewing class time and making notes on their thoughts. In short, the handout tells students what I expect at a C level, B level, B+ level, A and A+ level. They can use the handout to decide what they want.

This semester, I have taken it one step further into a self-evaluation project. After presenting the information, I asked students to assess what mark they think they would get on their books at this point, and what mark they intend to get when they hand their books in three weeks hence. I mark not only their notebook, but their accuracy in assessing themselves, and their determination in their planning. I have had interesting discussion about some students being unrealistically ambitious.

Conclusion

I have experienced the reward of having a weak student do a turnaround because of learning organization skills, and becoming a strong and confident student. Such an experience makes me laugh at the suggestion that intelligence has much to do with success. It is only after developing in the students the basic organizational skills and attitudes (such as taking responsibility) that, we can get down to the business of teaching the subject of the class. These things are not tricks of teaching; they are teaching.

Making the Elementary English Program More Successful

David E. Shaffer

Chosun University, Gwangju

It has been nearly a decade since the introduction of English education into the classroom at the elementary school level. During this time there has been surprisingly little inquiry made into how successful the elementary school program has actually been.

Rather than merely accepting the opinion of the detached researcher as assessment of the elementary school program, this study goes to the chalkface to survey the classroom teacher to get their collective opinion on how the elementary English program is actually faring and to make recommendations on how to improve it.

The participants in the survey were third- through sixth-grade teachers in the Jeollanamdo area. The questions in the survey dealt with teacher satisfaction with teaching elementary school English, general opinions on English education at the elementary level, teaching materials and methods, the educational environment (parents, students, administration, other teachers), teacher proficiency, and in-service training programs. In addition to sampling teacher opinion of the elementary school English program, the study compares the survey results with those of a preliminary evaluation made five years earlier. In many respects, the results of the two studies are quite similar. Of particular significance was the teachers' own evaluation of teacher competence and the type of person who should be at the chalkface.

Major findings from the survey include the following: (a) Though teachers find teaching English to be burdensome, their satisfaction rate is increasing. (b) Teachers perceive a lack of adequate resources for teaching English. (c) English is often taught as an isolated unit and not accessed during the remainder of the school day. (d) Teachers are not highly satisfied with their English textbooks and think that teaching English through English (TETE) is a good teaching technique. (e) Principals, parents, and other teachers are supportive of the English program. (f) Many teachers think that they themselves lack TETE skills and that very many other teachers lack TETE skills. (g) Teachers have a favorable opinion of in-service training programs. (h) Teachers think that their students enjoy studying English but also feel that many objectives are not being met because they are not realistic objectives. (i) Teachers are supportive of teaching English at the elementary school level but think that it should be done by an English specialist rather than general teacher. (j) Teachers think that 1 hr./wk. of English for Grades 3-4 and 2 hrs./wk. for Grades 5-6 is not enough.

These findings, combined with those of an earlier study, lend strong support to the resulting recommendations of this study: (a) Elementary school English teachers should be supported with upgraded resources in the form of textbooks, visual aids, and audio and video recordings. (b) In-service training programs should be made more available to the teacher, be upgraded and broadened in their content, and include TETE. (c) The objectives of the elementary school English curriculum should be reviewed by the MOE and revised to make them more realistic and more attainable for the elementary school language learner. (d) An MOE task force should be formed to consider the feasibility of having elementary school English taught on a large scale by English specialty teachers rather than by generalist teachers. (e) The number of hours per week and the number of times per week that elementary school English is taught should be increased.

Five years earlier, H.W. Lee and M.-R. Park (2001) in their study of elementary school teachers, administrators, students, and students' parents, arrived at quite similar conclusions: Teachers should strive to keep 5th- & 6th-grade highly motivated. Teachers need to develop visual aids. Sufficient in-service training programs should be provided for teachers. Better textbooks must be written. And lastly, English should be taught by specialty teachers. Though there have been successes in the English classroom since the introduction of English instruction at the elementary school level a decade ago and in the last five years, this study reveals that there is still much to be done.

Would you like to volunteer your time for Seoul Chapter?

Please email Mary Jane Scott mjinkorea@gmail.com





Hello and welcome to this special edition of the ASK for the Seoul Chapter Conference on Classroom Management. I am sure you will find the conference and the ASK interesting and useful. In this issue of the ASK, you will find articles by many of your KOTESOL favorites. Eowyn Brown writes the second in her series on “Young Learners.” In this article, she examines the meaning and value of vocabulary and how to test it. Jennifer Young, the current Member at Large for Seoul Chapter, writes an interesting review of podcasts, how she uses them in the classroom and where they can be found on the web. Elizabeth Root writes about her current research on the cultural interaction between native-speaking teachers and their students. She is looking for people to tell their stories, so if you can, please contact Ms. Root. Lastly, Gina Woo has very kindly offered her services in our on going dialogue about the cultures and ethnic backgrounds of teachers here in Korea and Korean culture. In this article, Ms. Woo writes about the Korean concept of age and gives a few language tips too. Thanks to all the fine contributions to this special addition of the ASK.

The ASK is always looking for contributions, so if you are looking for someplace to publish your research, to share some insight about teaching English in Korea or to say something about being a teacher here in Korea, please feel free to email me your submission anytime. I can be emailed at alexpole@hotmail.com

End of an Era

Tory Thorkelson, President of Seoul Chapter, will be stepping down at the end of this Conference. Mr. Thorkelson has done an amazing job of stewarding Seoul Chapter into its current renaissance; membership has never been higher, the Seoul Executive has never been more productive, and meetings and conferences have never been more lively and useful. I want to express a big thank you to Mr. Thorkelson. He has not only provided strong leadership for Seoul Chapter, but he has been a true mentor to me as well. Again, thanks!

Table of Contents

Vocabulary Development for Young Learners	20
Podcasts.....	23
Culture in the Classroom.....	26
Koreans are Two Years older than Westerners (Let's learn about Korean Culture)	27
Meeting Spotlight.....	28

Call for Articles

Seoul Chapter is looking for contributors for the newsletter About Seoul KOTESOL (ASK). ASK accepts submissions on a continuing basis. Topics should be relevant to teaching English in Korea. They may include:

*Useful teaching tips *Practical suggestions for the classroom

*Teacher Training *Current issues in ELT

*Reviews of ELT-related theory *Others!

Email Submissions to alexpole@hotmail.com

Seoul Chapter meetings meet at the Professional Center (*Injekwan*), on the third Saturday of every month, from 3:00 to 5:00

"ASK is edited for length and style. It is editorial policy to publish diverse content and opinions."

KOTESOL Seoul Executive – 2005–2006:

Tory S. Thorkelson, President

Hanyang University.

Work: 02-2290-1849, Cell: 010-7738-0778

Email: thorkor@canada.com, thorkor@hotmail.com

Frank Kim, Vice-president

Daechul Middle School

kihongkim20032@yahoo.com

Joe, Walther, Vice-president

Sookmyung Women's University

joe.walther@gmail.com

Ksan Rubadeau, Treasurer.

Korea University

Email: ksanrubadeau@hotmail.com.

Mary-Jane Scott, Secretary

Soongsil University Language Center.

Work: 02-820-0774 Cell: 011-9539-0098

Email: mjinkorea@gmail.com

Bruce Wakefield, Workshop Coordinator

New Zealand Center

bruce_wakefield@hotmail.com

Azucena Bautista, Membership

GIFLE

bautista.azucena@gmail.com

Sarah Sahr, Public Relations

GIFLE

sarhsahr@yahoo.com

Jennifer Young, Member at large.

Elite Educational Institute, Inc. Korea

Email: waegoogin@yahoo.com

Alex Pole, ASK Editor

Anyang University

Email: alexpole@hotmail.com

Robert Proudlove, ASK Asst. Editor

Anyang University

proudlove@hotmail.com

Matt Sahr, Webmaster

Vocabulary Development for Young Learners:

Alternatives to Test-It and Forget-It

By Eowyn Brown

Vocabulary is a building-block of language; a pre-requisite, even, to that perennial greatest hit of EFL instruction, grammar, for, even the staunchest traditionalist must acknowledge that words are necessary to fill grammatical positions. As such, any second-language learner faces the task of developing a vocabulary sufficient to their aims, whether these are a high score on Junior TOEFL, reading the Harry Potter series in English, or assuaging their mothers' ambitions for them to live, study, and work in an English-speaking country. So how well are educational institutions like *hagwons* and public schools meeting the need for vocabulary development? Based on an informal survey of teachers of young learners, the approach taken by many schools in Korea consists of variations on the following: students are periodically given a word list containing English words and their Korean translations, instructed to memorize them, and then tested. If teaching takes place prior to testing, direct instruction is the most frequent method used. The tests themselves usually consist of the teacher calling out the English word and the students spelling it, and only occasionally call for students to demonstrate an ability to use the word by, for example, writing a sentence containing it. Following testing, re-encountering the vocabulary items seems to have been left mostly to fate by the institutes in question, however, at least one of the institutes informs

parents that, on the basis of this method, students will learn over 3,000 English words per year of instruction.

However familiar procedures like this may be, such an approach to vocabulary fails to take into account a great deal of research about vocabulary acquisition. Granted, there is disagreement – even among experts – about many aspects of vocabulary acquisition, however, just because *not everything* is known does not mean *nothing* is known. In fact, there is enough general agreement available to inform a coalition of best practices when it comes to vocabulary instruction.

What Does It Mean to Know a Word ... In Any Language?

Knowing a word starts with having an understanding of basic meaning *and* use. These two criteria are inextricably tied together: consider how often, in response to a request for clarification of word meaning, we respond with examples of the word used in a sentence level context, rather than rattling off a dictionary definition; similarly, consider how frustrating it is to a learner to look up a word like *diligently* and find it defined as *the act of being diligent*. Teachers should also keep in mind that knowledge of meaning includes an understanding of the limitations of meaning. To illustrate, it is well-known that children learning English as a first

language go through a phase where words are over-generalized. For example, at two years of age, a child may know that *daddy* refers to “a person, not female” but not understand the limitation of meaning to “affectionate term for a male parent” resulting in an embarrassing phase in which, from the child’s point of view, male checkout clerks, postmen, mechanics, and friends of the family are all greeted as *daddy*.

In addition to meaning and use, word knowledge includes: awareness of multiple meanings, derivations and word forms, frequency, register, connotation, shades of meaning, collocation, and grammatical environment, pronunciation, and, if we are interested in the written language, spelling (this list is an adaptation of the lists compiled separately by the University of California Writing Institute and the Center for Adult English Language Acquisition).

If this sounds like a lot to teach, it is. So how can a teacher of young learners possibly introduce all the relevant information about every word that is required for young learners to truly know it? The short answer, which conveniently brings us to the second point of our discussion, is that you can’t.

The Importance of Indirect Vocabulary Acquisition

And that’s okay, because *even for native-English speaking children*, most vocabulary is not learned through direct instruction. According to the National Institute for Literacy, administered by

the Secretaries of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services in the US, “Children learn the meanings of most words indirectly, through everyday experiences with oral and written language.” NIFL informs teachers that children mainly learn vocabulary in three ways:

1. By engaging in oral language
2. By listening to adults read to them
3. By reading extensively on their own

Interactive use of the language, combined with reading, is a powerful tool for vocabulary building. But an important caveat must be added to this. In order to aid vocabulary acquisition, texts must not be too difficult for young learners. Presenting a youngster with a text that is well beyond her level does *not* accelerate vocabulary acquisition, it accelerates non-comprehension, frustration, and, if you will, raises the affective filter as high as a flag on Veteran’s Day. If you have trouble believing this, find an audio excerpt of a language you don’t know, and force yourself to listen to it intently for ten minutes, secure in the knowledge that if you listen hard enough, it will begin to make sense. Nation (2005) estimates that using context to understand new vocabulary requires an understanding of more than 98% of the words in a passage. So reading texts with the aim of building or solidifying a vocabulary base should be AT or BELOW the students grade level.

In his 2004 article, *The Underestimated Importance of Vocabulary in the Foreign Language Classroom*, Keith Folse states that

“research clearly shows that learners need multiple encounters with words ... the most important point in teaching and learning vocabulary is the number of times the learner has to retrieve the word.” One important result of appropriate reading, then, is the opportunity for those all-important multiple encounters. Careful selection of reading texts, along with other classroom activities, can provide students with the multiple encounters they need for complete acquisition.

But, but, but ... what about the role of explicit instruction?

Neither I, nor Mr. Folse, nor the NIFL advocate an abandonment of explicit vocabulary instruction. Particularly in the EFL environment, explicit instruction, and even testing, are not only acceptable, they are a desirable element of vocabulary building. The point is that explicit instruction should be informed by what it means to know a word, not, as is unfortunately too often the case, only on the basis of the memorization of spelling. In brief, such an approach would include presenting both meaning and use to students, as well as information about the other eight points of word knowledge outlined above. Folse (2004) provides a useful list of seven different types of vocabulary building activities to do with students, which is available online. Appropriate testing would require students to demonstrate the depth of their understanding, for example, given a choice of four sentences, selecting the one in which the vocabulary item is used *incorrectly*. But teachers and

administrators must keep in mind the limitations on acquisition through direct instruction: NIFL estimates that “you will probably be able to teach thoroughly only a few new words (perhaps eight or ten) per week.”

Conclusions

Why, given all that is known about the acquisition of vocabulary in a second language, does teaching children in Korea still typically involve the one-to-one translation word list followed by a spelling test as the chief method of instruction? One reason harkens back to the first column in this series: the enormous investment made by parents in their children’s English education. This fact, combined with the fact that many parents do not speak English themselves, presents concerned parents with a quandary. How are they to determine whether their child is learning English? Latching on to the knowledge that a certain number of words are being learned each week might be very comforting. “Byung-Jae learns three thousand English words every year,” his mother might assure herself, as she again prepares to pay 30% of the family’s monthly to the local *hagwon*. “He’s making progress.” Perhaps it is inevitable that parents in this situation will rely on some kind of test result to convince themselves that learning is taking place. But, crucially, test results based on sound teaching procedures may fill this need just as comfortably as those that are not, providing a happy symbiosis: satisfied teachers and satisfied parents.

CAELA (2004). *Question of the Month:*

Vocabulary has emerged as a major factor in the acquisition of reading skills by English language learners. What are the some of the issues involved in vocabulary acquisition for adult English language learners? Retrieved April 15, 2006 from http://www.cal.org/caela/ask_caela/.

Folse, K. (2004). *The Underestimated Importance of Vocabulary in the Foreign Language Classroom.* CLEAR News 8:2. Fall 2004. pp. 1-6.

Nation, I. M. P. (2005). Teaching and learning vocabulary. In E. Hinkel, Ed., *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 581-595). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

National Institute for Literacy (2004). *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read.* Retrieved from:

http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/reading_first1vocab.html.

University of California Writing Institute (2004). *Addressing Vocabulary and Word Choice Concerns.* Retrieved April 15, 2006 from

<http://www.ucwrite.org/esl/content/documents/waldivocabintro.pdf>.

Eowyn Brown came to Korea in 2002, and spent over two years teaching children and working as a curriculum developer. She has written and published speaking, storytelling, and literature series used throughout Korea and has been an active member of the teaching community, both as a conference presenter and as a researcher,

publishing several papers on teaching-related topics, including one in the Internet TESL Journal. Eowyn left Korea in 2004 to complete her MA in Applied Linguistics at the University of Essex in England, and returned to Korea this fall. She is currently teaching both children and adults at Yonsei University's Foreign Language Institute. She can be contacted at eowyn_nw@yahoo.com.

Podcasts

By Jennifer Young

I have been obsessed with podcasts and podcasting. I would like to have my own podcast, but, well, I just haven't quite gotten around to it. I have however, listened to around a quadrillion podcasts that other people have found the time, not to mention the organizational skills, to put together and I am going to review a few of them here. There is a mix of podcasts for ESL listening, podcasts for educators, and other podcasts that could be used in the classroom. There are so many great podcasts out there, that I know many of you will have others to contribute, so perhaps a future ASK could feature KOTESOL members favorite podcasts. This is by no means a complete list, just some that I have come across that I really like as well as a few well-known ones for those who are not yet slaves to their mp3 players. In addition to podcasts, there are numerous sources of downloadable audio files, but this will focus on podcasts.

Most people know about the fabulous BreakingNewsEnglish.com podcast. If you haven't used this site, it's great for older, higher-

level students. Sean Banville reads a short newscast (two levels of difficulty) and has numerous activities to complete while or after listening. Sadly, this podcast has been on hiatus for over a month now, but if you haven't used it before, there are plenty of archive files as it was (and hopefully will be again someday) a daily podcast.

Another sight that many people are familiar with is one that I don't particularly care for, The Bob and Rob Show (www.englishcaster.net/bobrob). This podcast features two native speaker teachers having a forced, unnatural dialogue which they then explain in depth, all done at a speed beyond the level of their target audience. To me, it sounds like any basic ESL text CD but faster. It offers listening experience with both British and North American accents, but if you have a CD for Interchange, for example, you don't really need this show. I'm being *a bit* unfair-- over time, the episodes have gotten away from that format into such areas as showing interest or expressing disapproval.

NewYorkEnglish.net is cast from a similar die as The Bob and Rob Show, with a twist. They offer interesting (to some) topics, such as "Partying and Drinking" and "Technology and Adultery" which could entice students to actually give it a listen. It is not spoken with a "New York" accent though, much to my disappointment. The hosts are in China, so there are some brief explanations in Chinese. There are about a dozen episodes so far. ELTPodcast.com also offers basic level topics in the same vein, but they have transcripts on their

website. Therefore, it is my hands down favorite. Also, they actually speak a little slowly and enunciate clearly, as one would expect for a basic-level dialogue. These are quite short compared to the other two, as well.

For the true beginner, there are phonics resources. Ugoeigo English Sounds (www.ugoeigo.com) has six episodes, so far, of videocasts which demonstrate phonics. SoundsofEnglish.org is not a podcast, but it has downloadable sound files with handouts and lesson plans.

There are also numerous podcasts of books, usually one chapter per episode. Many of these are science fiction and fantasy novels, but there are several, such as public domain podcast (publicdomainpodcast.blogspot.com), podiobooks.com, which is not a podcast, but has a podcast to announce new stories that have been uploaded, and librivox.org, which is also not a podcast but has numerous classics available for download for free. All feature readings of older literature which are now in the public domain, but they have varying levels of audio quality. The public domain podcast, in particular has reduced audio quality in order to keep each twenty minute episode under ten megabytes. I wanted to limit this article to podcasts, but in this case the two non-podcast sites are superior, so they should be mentioned.

For children, there are podcasts like Storynory.com, [Bedtime Stories My Kids Love \(storiesmykidslove.blogspot.com\)](http://Bedtime Stories My Kids Love (storiesmykidslove.blogspot.com)), [Club Kid Cast \(clubkidcast.vitalpodcasts.com\)](http://Club Kid Cast (clubkidcast.vitalpodcasts.com)), and

Tale Lady (www.ourmedia.org/user/65947) which have children's stories, some well-known.

There are also fun sites for students too old for fairy tales. www.villainology.com has a handful of interviews with monsters, which I plan to incorporate into my Halloween classes this year. [Pendantaudio.com](http://pendantaudio.com) has several serials including Batman: Ace Detective, James Bond, and Indiana Jones which are (melo)dramatically read by actors and quite fun. I would really like to find a way to incorporate this one into my class.

Another interesting podcast is peopletalk.org which has interviews with "regular people" and episodes about locations around England. I particularly like the "sound-seeing" tours to places such as Kipling's hometown. The accents might be a bit difficult for some students, but the interviewees are interesting. The website has in-depth descriptions of each episode.

Finally, there are many podcasts for teachers. Education Podcast Reflections (booruch.libsyn.com/rss) is a great place to start. Each episode discusses uses of podcasts in the classroom. There are interviews, ideas, and reviews of sources of classroom material. For example, a recent episode discusses a podcast lecture series on Byzantine history. The site's bookmark page (del.icio.us/dafc1885) has a large collection of podcast resources for educators.

ESL etc. (www.uglyexpat.com) has about fifteen episodes covering a variety of ESL podcasting issues. This one is kind of an audioblog, which I

like. The podcaster teaches Global Issues to Japanese and Korean students in Hawaii and he talks about what he is doing in his class. He posts accompanying handout materials on his website, which I also like.

As a teacher of elementary school students, I particularly like Room 208 (www.bobsprinkle.com) and [mgspodcast](http://mgsonline.blogs.com/mgspodcast) (mgsonline.blogs.com/mgspodcast) which are both podcasts by and for elementary school children. The former is from a U.S. 3rd/4th mixed class and the latter is from a Scottish primary school. Beyond school announcements, there are horoscopes, word of the week, weird fact of the week, literary circle discussions, and lots, lots more. My current favorite is Kidcast (www.intelligenic.com/kidcast). There is podsafesafe music (the artists have given permission for their music to be included in podcasts) and great ideas, such as a reader's theater contest for listeners to have their students write, perform, and upload their own radio show-style skits.

This is just a small sample of what is available in the podcasting world. If you are not familiar with podcasting, you should browse around at podcastpickle.com. In my opinion, it is the most user-friendly podcast directory. It provides good descriptions of the podcasts and each episode available, in case listeners want to listen rather than subscribe or download past episodes. If you have your own favorite educational podcasts, let me know (jenniferteacher@gmail.com) and a future ASK can let others know about them, too.

It is clear that there are many educational uses of podcasting, beyond listening practice. At a recent KOTESOL meeting, Heidi van der Voort Nam discussed a transcription activity which she assigns her students using a cell phone or mp3 player. With podcasting and a wiki page, students could collaboratively create the ideal versions of the transcripts, for example, or transcribe other students' audio files.

Jennifer Young is the current member at large for the Seoul Chapter Executive Committee. She also served as the Volunteer Coordinator at the International Conference.

Culture in the Classroom: My

Question of Interest

By Elizabeth Root

What is a pressing concern or question for you as you teach English in Korea? I know there is always the rush of planning lessons, finishing grading, answering questions, conducting classes, providing appropriate feedback both to students and administrators, etc., but if you ever have a quiet, reflective moment, where does your mind go? What is it about teaching English that challenges you?

One of my pressing concerns deals with the role of culture in the classroom. As a native-English speaker from the USA, I sometimes wonder about what cultural messages I communicate to my students. I can theoretically understand how language and culture are inseparably related, but I still have yet to understand how this fully affects

what happens in my own classroom. The longer I teach English, the more I become somewhat confused about what, exactly, I'm trying to teach. If there was the existence of a "neutral" language, for example, an international form of English not tied to any particular locale or culture, then perhaps I wouldn't have so many questions. There is no "culture-free" language, however, and that leads me to wonder how much of my own culture I bring into the classroom and into the language forms that I use in my classroom.

An interesting ethnography conducted by Duff and Uchida (1997) highlights this issue of the prevalence of culture in a language classroom. These researchers observed and interviewed four English instructors at a language institute in Japan; two of the instructors were native-English-speaking teachers from the USA and the other two instructors were Japanese. All four teachers clearly explained that they did not think their role as a language instructor should involve any explicit teaching of culture. However, the conclusion from Duff and Uchida (1997) was that implicit cultural transmission happened everyday in all of these teachers' classrooms. These four teachers were not necessarily acting inappropriately in the classroom; they simply did not have any critical awareness of the pervasiveness of culture. Condon (1986) also has stressed that teachers tend to operate from an ethnocentric position; most teachers assume that what is the norm for them should also somehow be the norm for whoever is in their classroom.

These thoughts lead me to ask such questions as:

What happens when someone from one culture walks into the classroom to educate people from a vastly different culture? What cultural messages are being communicated, perhaps without even the teacher's awareness? Are these issues simply unavoidable side-effects of English becoming the international language? Or, are these important concerns that both teachers and students should consider carefully?

I don't have easy answers, especially not at the moment. I do, however, hope to raise questions that I believe language teachers should consider. Another goal of mine is to also ask for help as I explore these questions. My search to find a clearer understanding of the role of culture in the classroom led me back to graduate school a few years ago, to study intercultural communication. I have currently returned to Seoul to collect data for my dissertation. My plan to study the interactions that happen in a cross-cultural classroom involves collecting narratives of experience. I am looking for native-English-speaking teachers who are willing to tell me a story about a memorable experience they have had with Korean students. If you are interested in participating in this research, **please contact me**. You can e-mail a written version of your story, or else I would be delighted to meet with you and have you tell me your story. I look forward to hearing your story, and I sincerely thank-you for your participation. Elizabeth Root, E-mail: emroot@unm.edu; Phone: 010) 2349-4955

References

- Condon, J. (1986). The ethnocentric classroom. In J. M. Civikly (Ed.), *Communicating in college classrooms* (pp. 11-20). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Duff, P. A., & Uchida, Y. (1997). The negotiation of teachers' sociocultural identities and practices in postsecondary EFL classrooms. *TESOL Quarterly* 31(3), 451-486.

Koreans are two years older than Westerns!

By Gina Woo

I am 27 in Korea, but when I talk with foreign friends from the West, I become 25. How weird! That's because the Korean age counting system is different from that of the West. While age in the West refers to the period of how long you have lived on earth, in Korea it means the number of years one has spent in one's life. That is, one year old in Korea does not mean that you have lived for one year, but that it is the first year of your being born. That's also why every Korean gets one year older on the first day of every New Year. For example, in my case I was born on August 11, 1980, and that year was my first year in my life, so I was one year old in 1980. 1981 was my second year, so I became two years old on the first day of 1982. Although I had lived only for 4 months 20 days by the first day of the year of 1982, I became 2 years old that year.

There is another opinion on the reason, which is based on the idea of respecting life. It is said that Korean ancestors regarded embryo itself as a life, so they believed that the actual life of a new born baby gets to start as soon as a sperm and an egg

cell meet. Therefore, a baby who has lived in its mom's womb for 10 months (on the lunar calendar) is regarded as one-year old when it comes to the world. For this reason, abortion is illegal in Korea.

However, Korea does have the Western age system, which is called “만(Mahn).” It is often used when you fill out a record in a public institution such as hospital, school, court or other institution. In addition, most legal rights are based on the ‘만’ system. For example, when you become 19, you are eligible to buy alcohol and cigarette. Also, Koreans have the right to marry when a boy becomes 18 and a girl becomes 16 upon their parents' approval. It is mandatory for young men to serve in the military for 2 years in Korea, and guys as old as or older than 19 are only eligible to apply for the military service. However, all the ages mentioned above is according to the “만” system, which is your Western age.

* Language Tips

몇 살이에요? (*Meo Sal E-eo-you?*): How old are you?

만으로 몇 살이에요? (*Mahn-eu-ro Meo Sal E-eo-you?*): How old are you according to the western age system?

☛ If you have any questions about Korean culture, please let me know.

Gina Yoo: gomtaenggu@yahoo.com

Gina Woo received her Master's in TESOL from Sookmyung Women's University in 2004.

Meeting Spotlight

At our last meeting, we opened the floor for an

idea exchange. All meeting participants were invited to share ideas that they found successful in their classroom. It was an impressive array of practical and fun ways to inspire language usage in our classrooms. Afterward, there was a lively discussion about the value of games and tasks in an academic classroom. Most participants agreed that games and tasks should be used as part of a lesson's overall language objectives not as a substitute for “real” teaching.

Of note, Heidi Vande Voort Nam of Chongshin University talked about her use of in-class recordings and transcriptional homework. She thought it was a very effective way to encourage and assess better speaking skills. Since students could replay the recording and read its transcriptions, students could clearly analyze their spoken communication. She also reminded the audience that many tests including the new TOEFL require recorded “speaking,” so this type of practice is very useful for students.

Another interesting presentation was done by Tory Thorkelson on world music and international education. It was a good lesson for teachers who want to introduce culture into their classrooms. Mr. Thorkelson purchased a CD of world music from all five continents from an internet book store. For the lesson, he asks students to listen to some music and express how the music makes them feel and from what country it was made. I am sure you can ask any question you think is pertinent to your lesson. In the process, students have fun using English and learning about the cultures of the world.

For more interesting and practical ideas, come to the next Seoul chapter meeting!