Team Teaching: Making It Work

Dear Diary, I really don't understand the point of having a co-teacher. They cannot hold a full conversation in English, so how can they teach the language? They don't help me with lesson planning, they show up late to class, they sit at the back of the classroom and send text messages, while I'm trying to teach the class. The only time they get involved is when we have an "open class." I wish that they would just stay in the teachers' office so that I could just teach the class without any distractions. -- Jake

Dear Diary, Today was another typical day with the native teacher. During class, she showed no passion for teaching our students and just stood at the front while I taught the majority of the lesson. The only time she got involved was when I asked her to model the dialogue with her "wonderful" native accent. In the office, she just sits at her desk all day surfing the internet while I plan the lessons by myself, not to mention all the other paperwork I have to do. --Mee-hee

> *Team teachers are able to complement each other's strengths and weaknesses.*

Perhaps some of you can relate to parts of the fictitious journal entries above. Perhaps you know someone like that or have unfortunately been in a similar situation yourself. Through discussions with various players, we have learned team teaching is a source of frustration for both Korean and foreign English teachers. The idea of team teaching can bring a feeling of dread and sleepless nights. However, we feel that if both parties are willing to try, team teaching can be very fruitful. In this article, we will highlight the benefits of team teaching and share specific methods and techniques that Korean and foreign team teachers use successfully.

Why team teach? Richards and Farrell (2005) offer many positive effects of team teaching. One of the main benefits is that team teachers are able to complement each other's strengths and weaknesses. Each member of the team can focus on parts of the lesson that they are more comfortable with. From our perspective, the greatest potential benefit comes from the potential of having a reflective partner, which is expanded upon later on in this article. Also, the benefits are not just limited to the teachers. Students also benefit from being exposed to different teaching styles, different accents, and different personalities, creating a richer learning environment for students.

We believe *team teaching* is not *co-teaching*. The latter is the more commonly used term to describe two people teaching together, and for us, *co-teaching* is a larger umbrella term that includes situations where two (or more) teachers share a class and teach the same group of students consecutively or deliver the same course material to different classes concurrently. For us, *team teaching* describes teaching contexts where two teachers are in the same classroom delivering a lesson together. We have a very clear view of what team teaching is not.

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Team teaching is not having the Korean teacher translate into Korean what the foreign teacher says in English, or using the foreign teacher to only model language. In order for this teaching dynamic to work, both teachers need to work together as a team.

Team teaching relationships are exactly like all other human relationships; there are going to be people that you get along with well and those that you do not. For those of you in negative situations - such as the ones described in the above diaries - we preface that the ideas we share below only work if both members of the team are willing to cooperate and give team teaching an honest chance. For those of you on the fence about the benefits of team teaching, we hope our suggestions help push you over to the positive side. If you have never previously thought team teaching could be possible for you, you may learn that it can and wish to give it a try.

Depending on your school and background you may be in a team teaching relationship where you and your partner have varying degrees of teaching experience, teacher training, and English language proficiency. Nevertheless, regardless of the knowhow and skills that each of you bring into the team teaching dynamic, we feel the ideas we offer below are applicable to a vast range of team teaching scenarios.

As with most everything in teaching, effective team teaching starts before you enter your first class. One of the first things you need to do is to clearly define?the?roles and responsibilities, which can either be shared or divided between the two of you. There are many important questions that you and your partner need to answer. Who is going to be responsible for lesson planning? Who is going to create/make materials? Who is going to start the class? Who is going to teach what part of the textbook? Who is going to be responsible for class management?

These roles and responsibilities can alternate between partners at different times. You may be great at making lesson plans based on your textbook while your partner is great at coming up with creative supplementary activities, but sometimes you might think of a great activity that would fit perfectly with a given topic. It is important to have set roles and routines, but equally important to set up a relationship where flexibility is encouraged and where opportunities are given for partners to work on the weaker aspects of their teaching practices so that both can develop skills under the watchful eye of their partner-expert.

Team teaching starts before you enter your first class.

Another essential question to answer is when and where are you going to discuss lesson plans. It is important to have a regularly scheduled time where you both can go over who will teach what part of the lesson. Another essential point to consider is how and when to reflect on lessons after they have been taught. This is a great opportunity to fully exploit having an extra set of professional eyes in classroom. Many teachers view class observations with great anxiety and nervousness, and with good reason. However, your team teaching partner is someone with whom you are hopefully comfortable with since having them in the classroom with you is a regular occurrence. Over time, you can build mutual trust and respect that allows you to openly and constructively give feedback on each other's teaching practices.

During the lesson there are specific techniques you can employ to take advantage of having another teacher in the room. These techniques include: both leading the class at different times, modeling activities together, distributing materials together, monitoring students during activities together, one teacher walking around the room and helping or keeping students focused on the lesson while the other teacher is leading, setting up the blackboard/whiteboard for the next activity while the other is leading the class, checking-in with each other while students are engaged in activities, and having one partner help manage your class reward system as the other leads the class (please refer to our Summer 2010 column for specific ideas about class management and reward systems).

Even with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, it is impossible to anticipate every eventuality that will occur during a lesson. There are going to be times where things do not go exactly as planned. In these instances, it is easy for the lesson to come to a screeching halt as one teacher jumps in to try to restore order and revert back to what was originally planned. This makes for awkward moments for both the teachers and students. We recommend developing hand signals so that you can clandestinely communicate with each other without disrupting the flow of the lesson or interrupting each other.

We hope these ideas provide you with the impetus to approach team teaching with a positive outlook. While team teaching can certainly present challenges, we feel that using the above strategies can really energize your teaching and make a better lesson for everyone involved. For those of you co-teaching this spring we urge you to give team teaching an honest chance.

Reference

Richards, J. C., & Farrell, T. S. C. (2005). *Professional development for language teachers: Strategies for teacher learning*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

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Building Positive Group Dynamics

By Michael Griffin & Manpal Sahota

Every teacher knows that group dynamics are an important factor in the success of lessons and courses. Much harder than agreeing with this is putting it into practice, and creating rapport and a positive group dynamic. In this article, we focus on how to build and create positive group dynamics.

Group dynamics begin the moment students come in the door on the first day of class and continue until the end of the course (and beyond). Clearly, starting the course out on a positive note is very important. Ample time should be spent allowing the students to get to know each other as well as the instructor and the course. Icebreaking activities like those found at both www.eslcafe.com and www.eslflow.com can be very helpful.

Michael once worked in a program where the director complained when time was spent on "getting to know you" type activities at the start of the term and informed the teaching staff that these activities were to be avoided. Michael feels that this policy was detrimental to group dynamics and thus detrimental to student learning. Students need time to acclimate themselves to all the newness that comes with a new class.

We are big proponents of creating group norms or rules with the class in the early stages of a course. By doing this, everyone will be "on board" regarding the course norms and expectations. This also has the added benefit of helping the students feel engaged and involved, and as though it is their class. The good news is that at the start of a term or course there is likely to be a lot of goodwill, curiosity, and excitement that can be converted into rapport and positive group dynamics.

The aptly named *Classroom Dynamics* by Jill Hadfield contains a wealth of activities for improving group dynamics at all stages of a course. *Group Dynamics in the Language* Classroom by Zoltan Dornyei and Tim Murphey is also highly recommended as it provides a nice mix of practical suggestions and academic thoughts that draw from a variety of fields.

It can be helpful to have students create nicknames for their groups when they will be working in the group for any significant amount of time. Going beyond nicknames, Michael has had success having groups make a coat of arms, motto, chant, and handshake. One group took it a step further and created their own rap song.

Another important element in creating positive group dynamics is making sure that all group members can easily see and interact with each other. Manpal recently observed an elementary school teacher who had his students divided into two groups of seven students, with each group seated in a horizontal line, one group in front of the other. This setup made it difficult for students to interact with their group members. Furthermore, the two students on each end of the line could not even see each other. After the class, Manpal and the teacher moved the chairs around so that each group sat in a horseshoe shape and each group member faced the other members. Since the change, the teacher has noticed a marked improvement during group work and has seen his students attach themselves to their group identity. The small but important change has significantly improved cooperative learning.

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Physical location can have a big impact on group dynamics. We also think that changing students' seats and groups around on a regular basis can be very helpful for promoting group dynamics. Students of all ages have mentioned to each of us that they enjoyed having the opportunity to work with a variety of partners. Without changing seats and groups, the atmosphere can get stale more easily. Working with different people can exploit the natural information gaps that occur, while keeping things fresh. This makes sense pedagogically but can also have a big impact on the group. Having students move around can give them chances to make friends with other people in the class more easily. Additionally, moving around and changing partners can help integrate "loners" into the classroom community more easily.

It is also important to make students responsible for each other and for their group. One way to do this is by designating group captains/leaders. You can shift many of the traditional teacher roles and responsibilities onto group leaders. Another option is to assign specific roles to each member of the group (secretary/writer/timer/spelling and grammar checker/reporter/researcher, etc.). We recommend changing group roles periodically so that all students can experience various leadership roles and the sense of duty to their group.

Another benefit of changing seats and groupings is that students can play different roles in the different groups that they are part of. Many teachers like to make groups that are balanced in terms of English ability, leadership, and effort. While he can certainly appreciate this, Michael sometimes likes to make a group comprised of all leaders and other groups comprised of people that do not typically take leadership roles. This often has the benefit of forcing the non-leaders into leadership roles and giving those that typically lead a new and different experience to reflect on.

Play is an often under-appreciated factor in creating positive group dynamics. Students can create powerful bonds when working together in groups. This can be especially true when they are competing against other groups, and your class management system includes an on-going group-based point/reward system (please refer to our Spring 2010 TEC article for more details on class management techniques). We recommend using a variety of competitive and collaborative activities and games when possible.

The games that are often used in class favor students with extensive vocabularies and grammatical knowledge. While this is certainly understandable, there is great benefit to be gained from rewarding students whose talents lie in areas other than conjugating verbs and remembering vocabulary. Ideally, teachers should reward students' effort during class rather than their prior linguistic knowledge. Michael recently talked to a Korean teacher who used activities where students with clear handwriting were prized. Since this was a departure from the things typically valued in class, different students were able to get support and encouragement from their peers. Grouping students and setting up activities that value things other than just English ability can be very helpful to promote a positive group atmosphere and boost students' confidence and participation, while also improving group dynamics.

Of course, there will be times where certain students may hinder positive group dynamics. When this happens, it is vital that you address students that are not positively contributing to the group and encourage them to get on board. One poignant example of this is "Leroy time" which was the strategy that a teacher in the United States used to help an outgoing but potentially disruptive student, Leroy, concentrate in class. If he participated positively in class he was awarded with five minutes of time with which he could lead the class. In Korea, "Leroy time" might not be practical or even possible, but it is important to remember that different students might require unorthodox strategies in order to get them to engage in classroom discourse.

Remember that every day is different. Do not expect that what worked two years ago, or Tuesday, or this morning, will work with every group. Do not expect all groups to be the same, do not give up, do not show your anger, do not write a class off because of a few bad days or bad apples, and do not expect all group members to behave as best friends. We encourage you to adapt the ideas we presented, as well as the information from the sources we recommended, to the particular students that you find yourself with each day.

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Reducing Teacher Talking Time

By Michael Griffin & Manpal Sahota

The famous American educator John Holt wrote, "The greatest enemy to student learning is the talking teacher." This quote is probably more accurate in EFL classrooms, especially here in South Korea. In this column, we will offer suggestions for reducing teacher talking time (TTT) and increasing student talking time (STT).

Many Korean English teachers have spent considerable time and energy trying to develop their English ability. It seems natural that they should use their English speaking ability in class. But at what cost to the students' language development? Class time is the wrong time for the teacher to practice their English. Similarly, many native-speaker teachers feel that they have been brought to Korea primarily because of their native tongue. It seems natural that they should model natural and correct English in their classes. Again, if the teachers talk too much, they don't leave any time for the students to speak. Every moment that the teacher is talking is one less moment for students to speak.

We certainly don't want to say that all teacher talk is bad. Nor do we want to say that teachers should never talk in class, as this is impossible. What we do want to say is that teachers should try to reduce their talking time as much as possible. Below we have four suggestions for limiting teacher talk that we would like to share with you.

Don't Explain, Don't Tell

Michael has worked with some teacher trainers who refer to and think of "explain" as a bad word. This is for a good reason. Explaining means that students are not talking and it is likely to mean that they are not really listening or taking in the information. For example, rather than telling students how the present perfect is formed, give them examples of sentences that use the present perfect and give them a chance to "discover" the information that you want them to learn. Through this type of inductive learning, students have chances to interact with each other as they search for rules and meaning as opposed to just listening to the teacher dictate the grammar rules to them.

One great way to limit explaining is to have the students do it. This way they can practice their English while gaining a better understanding of the material. "Jigsawing" material into smaller parts and having students work with a new group that is not familiar with their part is one way to do this. A classic jigsaw involves dividing reading material into different parts and then having students become "experts" on their own part of the reading before sharing what they know with other students who have looked carefully at a different section. Jigsawing is a great technique that lowers TTT, increases STT, and gives students a better chance of retaining information.

It can be very easy for the teacher to talk excessively when the teacher didn't plan for the students to do anything in the class. It is very easy to slip into "default mode," which for many teachers is lecturing. One way to combat this is to always think about ways for the students to interact with each other, which will certainly relieve the need for the teacher to talk endlessly.

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Modeling Activities and Using Written Instructions

Teachers often waste a lot of time explaining activities and the procedures and steps of activities. In our column, "Effective Activity Delivery," in last fall's TEC, we mentioned the benefits of modeling and displaying written instructions. These two techniques make it much easier for students to grasp what they need to do than a big explosion of TTT. Modeling and displaying written instructions are very effective ways of lowering, and possibly eliminating, excessive TTT. Giving instructions is probably not the best time to practice or display English ability. Rather, giving instructions is the time to let students know what the teacher wants them to do as clearly and efficiently as possible. To that end, excessive teacher talk when giving instructions is definitely something you want to avoid.

Plan Your Teacher Talk and Put It in Your Lesson Plan

Michael has worked with Korean teachers who planned every single word of their teacher talk before class. While this might strike some people as excessive, it seemed to help the teachers increase their confidence. At the same time, it decreased their teacher talk. Since they had to carefully think about what they wanted to say and how they wanted to say it, they chose their teacher talk more carefully. The result was less TTT and more STT.

Teacher talk is something that can, and often should, be placed right in a lesson plan. We realize that it sounds like a lot of extra time, but we think it is time well spent. When teachers plan their teacher talk, they invariably talk less and give more time to the students. By planning your teacher talk, you allow yourself to be conscious of slang, colloquialisms, and off-the-cuff divergences that are not likely to help your students learn new language.

Most teachers have experienced the sensation of being at the front of the room re-explaining something and strongly wanting to move on. Manpal recalls teaching a class a couple of years ago where he knew he was using too much teacher talk, but he kept on fumbling through what he wanted to say. Manpal then took a few minutes to plan his teacher talk before he taught the same lesson to a different group of students later that day. The second class went much more smoothly as Manpal kept his TTT short and succinct, which allowed his students to understand the task more clearly and gave them more time to complete it. Writing out teacher talk beforehand is often a good way to limit teacher talk because it really forces us to make decisions about what we will say in class.

Set Goals and Reflect on Your Teacher Talk

Think about how much time you want to spend talking in class. Choose a percentage that you think would be reasonable for your class and try to measure it against what actually happens in class. The most effective way to measure is by recording your lesson with either a voice recorder or a camcorder. While reviewing your voice recordings or videos may seem time-consuming, it can be very enlightening as many teachers are sometimes unaware of the teacher talk they are using when they teach. Of course, another option is to ask a peer to observe your class and measure your TTT. (We will look more closely at peer observations in a future column.) Teacher talk is another aspect of teaching that teachers can reflect on before, after, and during their lessons.

Concluding Remarks

We strongly feel that if you put the above suggestions into use, both you and your students will benefit from a more productive language class. We encourage you to try out these ideas. Most of all, we encourage you to be aware of your teacher talk and to own the choices that you make when using it. This will likely not result in completely eliminating talking from your lessons but might help you find more time for students to speak in class.

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Erratum

Rose Shayeghi

In the Featured Focus II article on page 33 of *The English Connection* Summer Issue, authorship was incorrectly credited to Sasan Baleghizadeh and Zeinab Dargahi. It should have been credited to **Sasan Baleghizadeh and Rose Shayeghi**. We deeply regret the error.

Rose Shayeghi is an MA student of TEFL at Shahid Beheshti University, G.C. of Iran. She has vast experience in teaching English as a foreign language in Iran. Her research interest is exploration of the relationship between multiple intelligences and learning styles. Email: rose_memol@yahoo.com

Classroom Management for Large Classes

By Michael Griffin & Manpal Sahota

Teaching anything anywhere has its challenges. Here in Korea, one common challenge that teachers face is large class size. Classroom management becomes paramount in delivering effective lessons in such a situation. Too many good teachers have seen their lessons derailed by deficient classroom management skills. In this column, we wish to highlight successful strategies to effectively manage large classes.

Classroom management begins the moment you first step into the classroom on Day 1. It is important to set the classroom culture on the very first day of class. A great way to do this is through the establishment of class rules. Some teachers simply dictate their class rules and expect students to follow them. We feel this may not be best as it excludes students from the process of forming the classroom culture. We strongly feel that students should be included in this stage since they are obviously integral members of the classroom. Rather than merely dictating classroom rules, have an activity where students decide in groups what class norms should be instilled. This can prove to be a great ice-breaking activity since students often come up with creative and absurd rules. This can help to create a more comfortable atmosphere on the first day of class. Hopefully, when groups share their answers, you will have some reasonable rules, and at this time, you can add your own rules if students fail to mention any that you deem important. If students help make the rules, they will be more inclined to follow them.

Students should be included in making classroom rules.

Michael has had success taking the list of student-generated norms and making a class contract. With great ceremony, he has the students swear to uphold the contract for the duration of the course. He also likes to post the norms on the wall for everyone to see. If a student forgets to follow the norms, a simple nod in the direction of the poster is enough to get them on track. Student involvement in the creation of the norms is really important so that the teacher can simply remind the students that they are not following the norms that were created together.

While establishing class rules with your students is paramount, equally important is having consequences if those rules are broken. If students break rules without any consequence, your class management system will undoubtedly break down. There are various consequences you can establish for rule-breaking, depending on your teaching context.

For public school teachers who have large class sizes (30-40 students), a great classroom management technique is to use an on-going group merit/demerit point system. If students are given merit/demerit points based on groups, this will help them police themselves, thus shifting the responsibility from you to your students. Peer pressure can be exerted in powerful ways so that students who are hurting their teams will strive to do the opposite. In elementary schools, it is important to have a merit/demerit score chart visible for all students to see so that they can track their progress. Often, you motioning towards the score chart can cause students to stop misbehaving. Each class, students can receive points/stickers based on their performance, which can go towards a reward either at the end of each month or at the end of the semester.

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An on-going reward system set up in this way is far more effective than giving daily "candy" rewards to students. These classes can resemble a parade because of all the candy being thrown around, and the reward strategy often loses its effectiveness after a few weeks as students expect treats every class. It is still possible to give more frequent rewards that are not material in nature. For examples of non-material rewards, look at the following link: http://k6educators.about.com /cs/classroommanageme3/a/rewardsprizes.htm

Manpal saw a great example of a merit/demerit point system from a teacher at Suseo Elementary School. The teacher, Sun Yi, uses a large board that has 5-6 vines running vertically (one vine for each group). At the bottom of each vine is a cut-out of a monkey. The teacher calls it "Monkey Up/Monkey Down." Whenever groups exhibit positive behavior (e.g., volunteering answers, helping their group members, etc.) their group's monkey goes up one notch on the vine. If groups exhibit negative behavior, their group's monkey goes down one notch on the vine. At the end of class groups who reach the top of the vine get a sticker that is counted towards a reward at the end of the semester. This method is quite effective as students can track their progress on the board. It really promoted cooperative learning and team work among group members.

Another example is writing a word on the board (for example, E-N-G-L-I-S-H) and erasing a letter anytime students are misbehaving. As mentioned before, simply motioning to erase a letter can cause students to change their behavior. If students improve their behavior, you can add the letter back. At the end of class, students can get points/stickers based on how many letters are left. You can either give points /stickers to each student or award them to the class as a whole, and have them compete with other classes in their grade. If you choose the latter method, it is important to show classes their ranking at the start or end of each class.

A great technique is to use a merit/demerit point system.

For middle and high school teachers, with older students, a slightly different strategy is required. The basic principles of creating rules with your students and using a merit/demerit system with consequences for rule breaking remain. However, rather than giving points that go towards an on-going reward, teachers in secondary schools should have the merit/demerit system tied in with students' grades. If you are a foreign teacher working in a public school, talk to your co-teachers before the semester starts and ask that some percentage of the students' final English grade be allocated to your classes. Ideal would be 10-15%, but even 5% would be enough to make students want to earn full marks, especially with students in upper grades where the educational environment can be quite competitive. Without allocating some percentage points of the students' final English grade to your class, it can be extremely difficult for you to manage your students. If students know that they are not being graded in your class, they may not take your class seriously and instead see your class as a "break time" from regular schooling.

For university teachers, since you are normally responsible for the entire English grade of your students, it should be easier for you to create rules with your students and implement a merit/demerit system with consequences that will affect their overall grade. It is important to clearly spell out your system to your students and let them know how they will be given/deducted marks on the first day of class. It is also important to keep a weekly record so that students can track their progress during the term. At the end of the term, the weekly record will come in handy when students ask you for grade adjustments, as you will have something tangible to show them why they received the grade you gave them. Transparency is the key here. We recommend making something that could appear subjective seem as objective as possible.

It is also important to combine the ideas mentioned above with other essential teaching methods and techniques. These include using verbal and non-verbal cues, reducing teacher talk, asking comprehension check questions, and modeling activities fully. For more detailed information on these and other strategies, please refer to our article on *Effective Activity Delivery* in the 2009 summer issue of TEC. As well, for those of you who teach with co-teachers, there are strategies that you and your co-teachers can implement to improve class management. We will cover those strategies in a future article. We hope the strategies we discussed in this article will provide you with some more ideas on how to manage your classes effectively and will encourage you to try them out.

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Better Use of Dialogues

Training Notes

By M. Griffin & M. Sahota

If you have been following ELT conferences or journals over the last few years, you have probably come across the term *reflective practice*. Reflection seems to be one of the common buzzwords in teaching today, and it might be the type of thing that we would typically dismiss offhand as a fad or yet another term seemingly created to distinguish between the knowers and non-knowers in the ELT field. However, we feel reflective practice is an integral part of every teacher's professional development and more teachers need to understand its benefits.

There have been several excellent seminars recently on reflective practice at various KOTESOL events, including seminars by one of the world's leading voices in this field, Dr. Thomas S.C. Farrell. You can catch Dr. Farrell's thoughts on reflective practice with his regular contributions to TEC in his column on professional development. For further information regarding other methods of reflective practice see Dr. Farrell's book, *Reflective Language Teaching: From Research to Practice*. In this, our third column, we hope to add to his work and share a bit about reflective practice and how it has shaped our thinking, our teaching, and our work with in-service teachers.

What is reflective practice? It is analyzing what you do in the classroom and challenging your beliefs about your teaching practice. Once you gather this information, you use it to implement changes and guide your future teaching practices.

All teachers have classes that go very well, and all teachers have classes that make them question why they got into teaching. Many times teachers attribute great classes to the strength of the lesson or teacher, and terrible classes to the weaknesses of the students. However, more often than not, the opposite is true. Perhaps the great class had nothing to do with what you did in the classroom, and maybe the terrible class was a result of the activities you tried or the methods you employed during the lesson. This is a simple but important point often raised by Dr. Farrell. Reflective practice helps teachers to find the reasons behind successes and failures in the classroom.

Reflective practice helps teachers to find the reasons behind successes and failures in the classroom.

We feel that a great way to engage in reflective practice is through journal writing. Journalizing your thoughts, experiences, successes, failures, fears, and anxieties can prove to be a very insightful endeavor. You can choose when and how often you write journals, from writing every day after each class to writing at home once a week. By writing about your classroom experiences, you will be able to achieve a new understanding of your teaching practices, and most importantly, you will gain a new quality that all teachers should possess: awareness. Awareness of what you do, awareness of how you do it, and awareness of why you do it. Being aware of these three areas will help you develop and improve as a teacher.

Michael, who is generally proud of his healthy skepticism, decided to try keeping a reflective journal after hearing so much about reflective practice from many people in the field, including Manpal and Dr. Farrell. Michael was immediately impressed with the clarity of thought and peace of mind that keeping a reflective journal provided him. Michael started to think that reflecting on the class was at least as important as planning. He is quick to say that keeping a reflective journal is not a panacea, but Michael strongly feels that there are definite and tangible benefits to such a practice. The first is that it helped him to frame the issues about his teaching in an unemotional way and gave him a chance to calmly approach the blur of activity that English lessons and training sessions can be. Teaching is often an emotional business, and it has been very instructive for Michael to separate emotion from rational thought through the use of journaling.

If possible, it would be highly beneficial to share your journals with other teachers who are also engaging in reflective practice. By allowing others to read your journals and give feedback, your peers can support or challenge what you have written. You will be able to learn from their experiences and thus improve your personal practical knowledge at a greater rate. A group of teachers engaging in reflective practice together in this way is what some refer to as a "community of practice."

Manpal was part of a community of practice with two other teacher trainers when he worked at an in-service training institute for Korean English teachers. Being able to journalize our experiences and receive feedback from each other was very insightful for all three of us. It helped us to overcome classroom difficulties and encouraged us to implement changes in our lessons. Indeed, Manpal felt his teaching practices improved as a result of writing journals.

Where Manpal now works, new teachers starting each semester are required to participate in a community of practice with 4-5 peers for their first 12 weeks. The teachers write about their successes and failures in the classroom, and offer advice and resources when a teacher is struggling with a certain class or topic/grammar point/etc. It was impressive for Manpal to see how open and supportive these communities became week after week. By the end, the overwhelming opinion was positive as many teachers appreciated being able to discuss and share ideas with other professionals in their field. For many, it was the first time they actually talked or even thought about what was going on in their classrooms.

> *Reflective practice is still not part of mainstream TESOL education.*

In addition to sharing journals with peers, some teachers find sharing their journals with students to be helpful. For a few teacher training courses, Michael posted his journal on his web site for course participants to see. This provided a model of what a reflective journal might look like and offered at least two additional benefits. The first was that it showed course participants that Michael was committed to reflective practice and that he valued it. The other benefit was that it gave course participants a chance to see what the trainer was thinking and feeling. Michael heard from many participants that reading his journal gave them a better understanding about teaching English as well as a better understanding about what he was thinking and feeling about the class. Michael felt that it was a good way to share both his thoughts and the class-related decisions that he made.

Of course, it is not easy to share your journals with just anyone. Many people do not feel comfortable sharing their worries and failures with colleagues for fear of judgment or being labeled a "bad teacher." Some teachers feel a sense of competition with coworkers and are not interested in helping their colleagues improve as teachers. These are important obstacles to consider when forming a community of practice. You need to choose people who you trust, who you feel comfortable with, and who are not afraid to share intimate accounts with you and the other members of your community. Another idea is to create "critical friends" with friends you already have and who are in the EFL teaching profession. Sadly, it is quite rare for friends, even if they are both in the EFL/TESOL profession, to critically discuss their teaching practice with each other (this was the case for Manpal and Michael for several years). Starting out with friends can be a gentle entry into the world of reflective practice.

While it is passionately supported by its adherents, reflective practice is still not part of mainstream TESOL education. Many teacher training courses, especially those for new teachers, do not include reflection. Apparently reflection is thought of as something for more experienced teachers. We feel that more courses and thus more beginning teachers should experiment with reflective practice as early as possible. Many of us have heard the difference between a teacher with ten years of experience and a teacher with one year of experience repeated ten times. We feel that healthy doses of reflection can help prevent teachers from getting stuck in ruts and having "Groundhog Day" type lessons, courses, and careers.

If your New Year's resolution was to become a better teacher, why not start reflective practice today?

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Reflective Teaching

Dewy (1933) identified three attributes of reflective individuals that I think are still important today for teachers: open-mindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness.

Thomas S. C. Farrell
Reflective Language Teaching (2007, p. 2)

Better Use of Dialogues

By Michael Griffin & Manpal Sahota

Michael: Hello Manpal. How are you today? *Manpal*: I am fine, thank you. And you? Did you have lunch? *Michael*: Yes, I had pizza for lunch today. *Manpal*: Do you like pizza? *Michael*: Yes, I do. But I don't like dialogues.

Dialogues. Often inane. Typically stilted. Generally boring. Occasionally confusing. Rarely inspiring. They exist in nearly every textbook. A common question from teachers is how to handle them. With this in mind, it seemed appropriate to devote our second Training Notes column to this topic.

While dialogues can certainly be problematic, there are also some benefits for teachers and students. First of all, dialogues are often helpful for providing a context for the use of language. They can also be a source of important grammar and vocabulary, providing valuable language input for the students. Dialogues can be confidence boosters because students don't have to worry about producing language all on their own from the start. A final strong point of dialogues is that they are familiar. Language learners have come to expect dialogues in their classes. This probably means that dialogues are here to stay, so it might be best if we, as teachers, try to find strategies to exploit dialogues to the fullest. We believe that, as teachers, we only need to "own" a few routines to help us spice up our inevitable time with dialogues.

With lower-level students, dialogues can be helpful in demonstrating how to use the target vocabulary and language structures that you planned for your lesson. However, simply getting all students to practice reading dialogues with a partner at their desks is where some teachers misuse dialogues. After introducing the core dialogue for the lesson and allowing students to practice reading it aloud with their partner, it is important to jump into an activity where students have a chance to play, use, and absorb the language.

One thing that might seem like a small point that we believe is very important is to make sure that students make eye contact with each other while performing dialogues. Michael is always pushing the "look up and say" technique. Simply looking at the book and monotonously reading the words in it is not acceptable in his classes when practicing with dialogues. He has noticed that his efforts to push students to actually look at each other when working with dialogues pay off. After a few "look up and say" dialogue experiences, they begin to make eye contact without prodding.

Training Notes

One very simple, but effective, activity that we like to use with dialogues is to get the target dialogue on the board and progressively erase parts of it as the students internalize the dialogue. A good strategy is to erase key words first and then erase big chunks until there is almost nothing, and then finally nothing, left. This can be a fun and effective way to draw students' attention to target language. Also, practicing a dialogue from the bottom up can be just the change needed to spice things up.

The next step involves engaging students with activities that allows them to use and digest the language in the dialogue. Michael recently observed an activity where a teacher cut the dialogue into strips of paper and used a different colored paper for each of the two speakers. The students were asked to predict the order of the lines of the conversation before hearing a recording of the conversation. Having the extra chance of working intently with the language of the dialogue before having to perform seemed to help the students feel comfortable with the dialogue.

Another activity that Manpal has seen work well with a large class (30+ students) is "Speed Row Dialogues." With this activity, you divide the class into 2 or 3 large groups and, when the teacher says "Go!," the first student in each group practices the dialogue with the student beside them. Once they finish, the second student turns to the third student and practices the dialogue with him/her. This continues until all the students get a chance to practice the dialogue. The goal of this activity is not accuracy but to have fun with the dialogue and take in the language.

A resource book that Michael has found very helpful for exploiting dialogues is *Dialogue Activities: Exploring Spoken Interaction in the Language Class*, by Nick Bilbrough. Part of the Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers series, this book explores different ways to use dialogues in ELT classrooms. The book is divided into sections like: understanding, analyzing, reproducing and reconstructing, memorizing, rehearsing and performing, co-constructing, creating and personalizing, and communicating. Each of these sections provides a variety of activities that can be adapted and used.

Once students have been presented with a simple dialogue and have been given various opportunities to digest the language through engaging activities, it is time to move from dialogue practice to language production. Ultimately, every dialogue-based language class should include language production. Provide students with some vocabulary expansion and let them create their own dialogues. Lower-level students can do simple word substitutions into the core dialogue structure, while higher-level students can expand the dialogue to include prior knowledge related to the lesson topic.

When students present their own dialogues, there are a few things to keep in mind. First, it is not necessary for students to memorize their dialogues. If some students are struggling to recall what they want to say, allow them to use their scripts as a reference. Also, encourage your students to adlib and go off script, provided the improvised language is relevant to the overall dialogue. Teachers should also consider the fun that can be had by performing dialogues with different moods, characters, afflictions, personalities, etc. There is a lot of value to changing a dialog to reflect what it might look like if the speakers or situations changed.

Teachers need to try to find strategies to exploit dialogues to the fullest.

With large classes, you may find students becoming restless and talking amongst themselves while other groups are presenting their dialogues. An excellent strategy to deal with this problem is to include an active listening component to the dialogue presentations. Ask comprehension check questions after each dialogue presentation or give students a worksheet with 3-5 simple questions that they must answer after each presentation. This keeps the whole class involved and forces students to listen and pay attention to each group.

We hope the suggestions above will help you make dialogues more engaging for your students. Though dialogues are familiar and expected, there are a lot of benefits to their use. They can provide a clear situation, provide an entry into grammar and vocabulary, and help build confidence.

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Effective Activity Delivery

By Michael Griffin & Manpal Sahota

Through reflecting on our own teaching practices and observing talented teachers, we have come to be aware of what techniques make or break a classroom activity. From our own experiences, we both remember the frustration we would feel after taking the time to plan and prepare what seemed like a great activity only to see it fail miserably in class. More often than not, we did what we think most teachers do: We blamed the students for lacking motivation or focus during class. We now realize that the main reason why some activities would fall flat was primarily due to the way they were presented. Planning and preparing activities is important, but nothing is more essential to the success of an activity than the delivery. In this, our first article for *The English Connection*, we hope to share some suggestions for how to present activities more effectively.

Michael felt for a while that giving instructions was the weakest part of his teaching. He decided that he needed to take action to improve this area and started including his instructions in his lesson plans. At first, he would write exactly what he wanted to say during class in his lesson plans and would compare this to what he actually said. Over time, he began to feel much more comfortable with instructions and now encourages his in-service teacher-trainees to include instructions in their lesson plans.

While planning instructions ahead is certainly important, we feel that modeling is the most important part to delivering an activity well. Students need to see what is expected of them, and proper modeling of activities allows students to physically see what the activity entails. Many times, we as teachers give detailed verbal instructions and expect our students to understand complex language that is often more difficult than the specific vocabulary or language structures that the lesson/activity is focused on. If you have a large class with a wide range of ability levels, as many teachers do, complex teacher talk and excessive verbal instructions will confuse students and force you to re-explain the activity to individual groups/pairs, thus shortening the time students have to participate in the activity and reducing your ability to monitor other groups. Modeling the activity will help all students, especially lower-level students, to physically see what is expected of them.

You can model the activity with your co-teacher, one of your higher-level students, or if you are going to do a group activity, an entire group to show the rest of the class what steps are involved. Some activities are quite involved and require many steps. It is not necessary to model the entire activity at once, as this can lead to information overload. Instead, model one-half or a part of the activity and let the students get started. Later, get the students' attention again and model the next part of the activity. It is important to reduce the amount of unnecessary teacher talk and increase the amount of visual demonstration.

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Last month, Manpal had a chance to observe an elementary school teacher who spoke no more than 20 words when he modeled his activity with his class. He simply had five volunteers come to the front of the class, and he guided them as they went through each step of the activity. The rest of the class watched intently, and after about three minutes, all the students understood what they needed to do. When the teacher told the rest of the class to begin the activity, it went off flawlessly.

While modeling is essential to the success of an activity, another important element is checking comprehension. Once you finish modeling the activity for/with the students, it is vital that you ask comprehension check questions (CCQs) to ensure that the students understand what to do. There are various types of CCQs that you can use - from simple yes/no questions to asking them to tell you each step of the activity. The common question, "Do you understand?" (often coupled with vigorous head-nodding) is best avoided because it does not accurately reveal whether or not the students truly understand the instructions. Likewise, "Any questions?" (coupled with aggressive shaking of the head) is not likely to cause students to admit that they did not follow the instructions. Much more effective are questions like, "Are you going to stand up and walk around?" or "How many people should you talk to?" By using CCQs, you can gauge how much the students understand and whether or not you need to model the activity again with clearer and simpler language.

Another useful way to help students understand what is expected of them in an activity is to provide written instructions. This can be done on the board, on a handout, or on a PowerPoint slide. One benefit of this technique is that students can check the instructions at any time during the activity. Another positive is that the level of language can be slightly higher than the oral instructions.

Before you can model activities and ask CCQs, you must make sure you have the attention of your students. Insisting that students pay attention when you are giving instructions is an essential step. While this might sound like a hard-line approach, it can actually be a timesaver over the long run. You want to avoid talking over your students and competing with other voices in class. Instead, you should employ a mixture of verbal and non-verbal cues in order to get your students' attention. The most effective verbal cues that Manpal has seen elementary school teachers use are ones where the teacher says one or two words and the students must repeat a phrase back (e.g., teacher says "Listen…" and students say: "Up!" or teacher says "1, 2, 3, eyes on me!" and students say: "1, 2, 3, eyes on teacher!").

Examples of non-verbal cues include (a) you putting your hands on your head (or putting your hand in the air) and students must do the same and stop talking, (b) ringing a small bell on your desk, (c) flicking the lights on and off, or (d) clapping some pattern that students must repeat. The last technique above is very popular among Korean public school teachers. It is ideal to use a mixture of 2~3 verbal and non-verbal cues so that students do not get bored with the overuse of one cue, thus losing the effectiveness of the cue. It is vital that you teach these cues to your students at the beginning of the term so that they become ingrained into the classroom culture. One suggestion is to create a game where students are expected to respond to the cues as rapidly as possible. This will help make responding to the cues a habit.

It is also important not to hand out any materials or papers before you model the activity. If you give students something that they can touch or play with, they will most likely not pay attention to you when you are modeling the activity. It is only natural that they will focus on the new thing in their hands. It is important to give the materials to students after you have modeled and asked CCQs so that they are not distracted when they should be focused on you. If you model and ask CCQs before students actually get started, the chances of the activity being successful dramatically increase.

There are quite a few ways to help ensure that you deliver your activities in an efficient and effective way. We hope that we have shared some useful ideas in this article. We recommend writing your instructions before the class, modeling, using CCQs, and being sure to have your students' attention. While some of these ideas might seem like a big investment of time, we feel that they are investments that will pay off. We feel that spending time to make sure that students know what is expected of them in the activities is an important step in making the activities more successful.

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Fostering Emergent Literacy

By Kyung-Min Nam

Children understand the role of written language and begin to develop a form of literacy long before they enter school. This is not surprising. Children in modern societies live in a world filled with written symbols. Each day they observe their parents reading books, newspapers, and magazines, and they also see printed text in storybooks, on calendars, lists, signs, and printed messages on TV. Through these informal experiences, they try to figure out how written symbols convey meaning. They do not wait until someone teaches them. Teachers must value this, and instead of asking whether children are ready to study literacy or not, we should find out where they are and build on what they already know.

Regardless of where children are in the process to literacy, an essential step in further development will be to create a print-rich environment in the classroom. In the case of the EFL classroom, English print should be everywhere in the form of labels, lists, signs, charts, and posters. Bulletin boards should include English-language labels as well as pictures. Special days, such as students' birthdays, holidays, and other important upcoming events in a class, can be marked on a classroom calendar with words. Children can put weather cards written and illustrated with pictures of the sun, clouds, rain, and snow on the weather chart. Students' stories and booklets can be displayed as well.

Literacy can be enhanced by "setting the scene."

When I teach young children, I start teaching with my "Morning Message." I write one sentence in English on the whiteboard related to special daily events or activities before class, and the children try to figure out what it means so as to learn the main event for their class day. It is a good way to familiarize them with written English, even if they are not yet good at reading it, as they understand what each word means naturally through related activities during the class.

Classroom routines or procedures placed on charts also provide opportunities for print discussion. I like to post the principle procedures for activities such as using the class library, using dramatic play centers, or using the restroom. Here, it is important to give children enough time to make re-reading these procedures a routine to expose them to enough practice with the texts.

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Children want to make sense of what they read and write. The meaningful part of reading and writing occurs when children talk to each other, write letters, and read good storybooks. Fostering literacy is a matter of making reading and writing a natural part of their classroom activities. One way to increase early literacy experiences is to stock classrooms with books and texts to make reading and writing a natural part of the class.

In dramatic play centers such as a restaurant, a post office, a hospital, a bank, or a grocery store, children have the chance to role-play the roles of adults they see. They are more likely to role-play literacy tasks if the appropriate materials are available. If the classroom is small, such centers can be changed frequently according to a theme.

Playing with print is an important part of literacy development. For example, when the play or study theme involves a grocery store, the class includes empty food containers with familiar labels and paper and pencils for creating signs, making food lists, and pricing items. Viewing videos and reading books about food, fruit, or clothing would also extend students' knowledge of the topic. I try to use props, realia, and real pictures related to the theme to promote student interest.

Literacy is a naturally occurring process that takes place over a long period of time. Teaching literacy skills can be enhanced by "setting the scene" and encouraging students to practice their skills.

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Solving the Big Problem of Small Words

By Julie Sivula Reiter

The English article system is notoriously difficult for non-native speakers, and article use is ranked as the single most difficult item for EFL instructors to teach. Why do such small words create such big problems? While some believe the article system is simply too complex to be taught, several studies have concluded that systematic instruction on articles can significantly improve their use. How can we present articles more effectively?

The Problem with Articles

The definite article, *the*, is the most frequently occurring word in English. The indefinite *a* is often named the fifth most frequent. The use of the zero or null article, symbolized as ∅, exceeds even the use of *the*. Because they are so common, they demand constant thought and attention, and provide constant opportunity for errors. Worse yet, despite their ubiquity, they are often invisible: articles are usually unstressed in spoken discourse, rendering them difficult, if not impossible, for learners to hear.

> *A dynamic notion of countability, grounded in a context-dependent analysis.*

To make matters even worse, learners often view articles as unnecessary, because their misuse rarely leads to communication failure. In reality, however, multiple semantic functions (definiteness, countability, and number) are bundled within a single article package. In fact, when making article decisions, learners must focus on abstract complex distinctions, often arbitrarily mapped onto different article forms. For example, a learner may successfully identify a noun reference as "generic," but genericness is expressed by all three forms - *the*, *a*, and ∅. Similarly, the distinction between specific and nonspecific referents frequently has no bearing on article use:

I'll bring *a cake* to the party-but I don't know what kind it will be. (*nonspecific*)
I'll bring *a cake* to the party-I just made a chocolate one I can bring. (*specific*)

Despite the difference in specificity, in both instances, the indefinite article is used.

Finally, even when concrete rules can be identified and taught, learners have difficulty applying them. For example, "anaphoric reference" is a corollary to the idea that the definite article is used with previously mentioned nouns, such as in: "I was driving along when suddenly *the windshield* shattered." The mention of driving implies a vehicle, which implies the windshield, and therefore, the definite article is appropriate. Learners often have trouble determining whether a noun would be considered "previously mentioned" within this associative anaphoric context.

> Training Notes

Traditional Approaches

Many EFL textbooks avoid articles altogether. Those that address them follow consistent pedagogical themes. First, most texts adhere to the notion of countability, relying on the rule that single countable nouns (e.g., *tree*) take the indefinite article and uncountable nouns (e.g., *water*) do not. They often provide lists of nouns - categorically treating them as either countable or uncountable. Second, most texts present concepts of "previous mention" and "specific referent" to guide definite article use. For example, *the* is recommended if the referent is "something already mentioned" or "there's only one."

Do these traditional pedagogical approaches actually lead to accurate article use? In a recent study, researchers asked Japanese English learners to complete a task by filling in blanks with *the*, *a/an*, or ∅, and then interviewed them immediately afterwards to elicit explanations for their article choices (Butler, 2002). An analysis of the results reveals that the learners were often misguided by the *very same concepts* advanced in textbooks - countability, subsequent mention, and specific referent.

Advice for Teachers

The countable-uncountable dichotomy simply fails to adequately elucidate the complexities of this concept. While countability is an important factor in determining the appropriateness of *a/an* or *the*, students make mistakes when they believe that countability is a *fixed attribute* of nouns. Butler demonstrates this through metalinguistic data:

> *Incorrect use*:
> Japan has ∅ old culture, stretching back in time more than 2,500 years.
> *Learner comment:*
> "I did not insert anything here because I thought culture is not countable."

> *Incorrect use:*
> Japanese arts have ∅ long and splendid history.
> *Learner comment:*
> "I was not sure whether or not history is countable ... Can it be countable?"

The confusion lies in the fact that many, if not most, nouns are used in both countable and uncountable ways. Therefore, it is not realistic or practical to offer lists of countable and uncountable nouns. Instead, we should present a dynamic notion of countability grounded in a context-dependent analysis. A student explained: "I judge whether [a reference] is countable or not based on the context. When it refers to something as a whole, then it should be uncountable. If I can think of an individual case, then I take it as countable." Yule (1998), in his handbook for language teachers, reflects this intuition in his notion of "individuation," which occurs when the referent has clear boundaries (as opposed to indistinct ones), and is treated as discrete (as opposed to mass-like). Article instruction is more effective, therefore, when it incorporates practice in context-dependent countability detection.

A second problem is learners' misguided application of the concepts of specific referent and previous mention. For example, this response relates to a specific referent:

> *Incorrect use:*
> Yesterday, when I was feeling sad, ***the woman*** appeared with lovely pink roses.
> *Learner comment:*
> "I don' t know who showed up, but I supposed that it must be somebody specific in the scene. That's why I chose *the* here."

This example illustrates students' difficulties understanding anaphoric previous mention:

> *Incorrect article use:*
> Japan has an old culture, stretching back in time more than 2,500 years. Japanese arts have ***the long and splendid history***.
> *Learner comment:*
> "Because *history* and culture are related, I feel like history was already mentioned... I thought...this *long and splendid history* was the *old culture*, wasn't it?"

In contrast, successful students focus on "hearer knowledge." They recognize that specificity and previous mention are useful, but must be considered within the context of the hearer. A referent, despite its specificity, does not take *the* unless it is part of the hearer's knowledge base. Conversely, an item not previously mentioned may still fall within the hearer's knowledge, and would take *the*.

Conclusion

Based on this analysis, article instruction should include practice making dynamic, context-based countability determinations grounded in individuation, as well as determinations of definiteness based upon hearer knowledge. Classroom instructors can create activities from sets like the following, which highlight the malleable nature of countability:

> He decided to get *a coffee* on the way home.
> They were out of *coffee* so they had tea.

> She owns *a business*.
> *Business* has been booming this season.

> Siberia is *a cold environment* for camping.
> We're conserving energy to protect *the environment*.

Instructors can also create activities highlighting the scope of hearer knowledge and anaphoric reference with sentences like the following:

> I got a **part-time job** (*unknown to hearer*) in **an Italian restaurant** (*unknown to hearer*), but **the pay** (*anaphorically known*) was really low.
> It will cost more to go to **the pool** (*known to hearer*) this summer. **The increase** (*anaphorically known*) takes effect May 1.

Although such concepts are difficult for students to master, the research indicates that instruction in these areas can lead to greater article accuracy - despite the odds.

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Reflecting on Achievement

The young teacher, and quite a few old rusty ones like me, often questions the point of learning theory and old methods. I understand resistance to theory when faced with the immediate need for an activity that can satisfy a class of students and help teach modals or correct pronunciation of "l" and "r." When thirty or more students await your instruction, talking about the language theory of Suggestopedia or how the Audiolingual Approach conceives of the role of the teacher hardly seems worthwhile.

At the same time, how does a teacher know what activity is appropriate? How do you know that your information gap activity succeeded in developing learner proficiency? How do you determine what is conclusive evidence for learning? These questions beg for theoretical perspective.

We all have a theory of teaching, but we do not all make it conscious and available for critique. Whether we believe that grammar instruction is helpful or not helpful is part of our theory of learning and instruction. If we believe a Jeopardy game helped our students master question forms, a theory of learning is present, suggesting that learners make progress through communicative engagement in the language, implicit focus on form, and in the midst of enjoying interaction.

Obstacles to learning pronunciation: input filters, L1 interference, and L2 complexity.

When we say to ourselves, "Today's class went real well," something that we observed during the class is in harmony with our theory of teaching. Maybe students were actively engaged in the class, maybe we covered all the items on our lesson plan, maybe we avoided boredom.

Students might enjoy a class, however, because it was full of games, required exotic activity, or simply did not burden them - and not because they learned anything. In such a case, the observation that students enjoyed the class would not be sufficient evidence that the lesson was effective. Similarly, the fact that we covered all the points on our lesson plan is meaningless if students could not follow the lesson or failed to achieve any of the objectives that we had set for it.

Theory helps us imagine how lessons should be and conceive of appropriate indicators to measure their effectiveness. Professionalism is the commitment to hold ourselves accountable to a clear articulation of our theory of learning, to consciously assess our own effectiveness in the classroom, and make adjustments when necessary that lead to state-of-the-art best practices, ensuring that our students obtain the most efficient instruction possible.

Training Notes

By Douglas Margolis

Training Notes is a column that aims to bring theory and teaching practice together to facilitate professionalism in English language teaching.

Historical Roots

Eight years ago, *The English Connection* (TEC) managing editor, Robert Dickey, and I discussed the possibility of a TEC column that might showcase KOTESOL Teacher Training workshops. I was the coordinator of KOTESOL Teacher Training (KTT) in 2000 and looking for a platform to expand KTT's effectiveness. Rob worried that the new column might overlap too much with Teachniques, which presents a detailed recipe for an activity and justifications for how the activity might benefit learners. I suggested that the new column could differentiate itself by focusing on one pedagogical tool or theoretical concept and briefly describing several relevant activities.

The Birth of Training Notes

Rob and the editorial board agreed to this proposal and Training Notes was born. The first Training Notes, an article by Peter Nelson on teaching stress, intonation, and rhythm, appeared in the January 2001 TEC.

That year, five KTT presenters published articles: There were two by Peter Nelson, and one each by Jim Gongwer, David Kim, David Ellis, and myself. Our topics covered pronunciation, learning strategies, culture, writing, listening, and eliciting student talk. In 2002, Peter Nelson again contributed two articles, on self-assessment and oral testing. Gerry Lassche contributed one on young learners, James Ranalli wrote a two-part article on top-down and bottom-up listening, and I wrote a piece on incorporating Computer-Assisted Language Learning in the EFL classroom.

By 2003, most of the KTT presenters had written a Training Notes version of their workshops, and I began seeking writing talent outside KTT. Students and faculty from the International Graduate School of English in Seoul contributed articles on teaching young learners, developing motivation, and addressing grammar.

The end of 2008 marks seven years of Training Notes in TEC. In recent years, Hyewon Lee has contributed an article on using drama in the EFL classroom, Kyungnan Park wrote one about ways to exploit movies for language teaching; and Tim Thompson focused on techniques for teaching segmental pronunciation. The column has also covered test construction, error correction, storytelling, and vocabulary knowledge development, among other topics. Archives of *The English Connection* and Training Notes can be found at the Korea TESOL web site (www.kotesol.org).

Share Your Opinions and Expertise

Over the years, Training Notes has provided a steady stream of ideas for TEC readers, and I am proud of having been able to recruit excellent writers for the column. In recent years, however, my work has migrated away from Korea and KTT, and I have been out of contact with writers and trainers in Korea who could supply the articles for the Training Notes column. As a result, my writings have dominated the column over the last couple of years. To ensure the quality and relevance of the column and to maintain the diversity of perspectives that it has provided in the past, I am using this month's Training Notes to ask readers for two things: (a) ideas for topics that you would like the column to address and (b) articles from authors living and working in Korea. TEC is a great place to start your publishing career!

Your ideas and comments help keep the column relevant and worthwhile. Please send them to margolis@umn.edu.

Article Submission Guidelines

Articles should be approximately 1200 words with a 40- to 50-word biography. I am willing to work with you by email to get the article in top shape. (Send them to my email address above.) Some topics that have not been covered yet include use of visual aids, grouping techniques, class management, busted lessons, needs analysis, lesson planning, and sequencing tasks. Topics that we have already covered, if presented in a new way, are also welcome. Each article should focus on a teaching concept, principle, or tool and help readers understand how it fits into EFL classrooms in Korea. The article should conclude with a brief description of two to three activities that embody the principle.

Please look at previous TECs for style and format ideas. Generally, these articles are lightly referenced with 2-3 citations that give readers interested in more information an idea of where to find it.

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Teaching Pronunciation

Many students gauge their English progress by pronunciation. This practice is unfortunate because pronunciation is one of the most difficult aspects of any language to master and to teach. Thus, this *Training Notes* identifies obstacles to pronunciation instruction that might help teachers better understand the challenges students face, and then sketches a brief teaching strategy.

Obstacles to Pronunciation Instruction

Obstacles to learning pronunciation can be grouped into three loose categories: (a) input filters, (b) L1 interference, and (c) L2 complexity.

Obstacles to learning pronunciation: input filters, L1 interference, and L2 complexity.

Input Filters

Lightbown (2001) lists a range of input filters that limit student ability to perceive and process foreign language. These input filters include affective factors that increase student anxiety; cognitive factors, such as student phonemic discrimination ability; and linguistic factors, such as L1 interference and L2 complexity, discussed separately below.

Most teachers know that affective factors like shame and embarrassment need to be avoided. Cognitive factors also need consideration. For example, the mind has a fascinating ability to perceive patterns, but discards information to make patterns perceivable. Infants perceive the sounds of every language, for example, but their minds quickly discover which sounds carry meaning and disregard the rest. Filtering out meaningless sounds leads to later difficulty perceiving them in a foreign language.

Memory and attention capacity also serve as cognitive filters. Most people can at best hold only five to seven items in short term memory at one time, and fatigue further limits this amount. Research suggests that attention also has limits.

These cognitive and affective factors not only obstruct learning, but also impede teachers' ability to pinpoint pronunciation problems. That is, identifying errors and articulating the precise problem in a manner that can help students, while focusing on lesson objectives, group dynamics, and class management requires, great skill.

L1 Interference

Another obstacle is L1 interference. Korean has specific rules not applicable to English. Han (1997), for example, suggests that the common Korean pronunciation of "nickname" and "all ready" as ningname and *all leady* does not stem from inability to pronounce /k/ and /r/ properly. Rather, these errors arise because of two rules from Korean phonology: (a) /k/ before a nasal is reduced to an "-ng" sound, (b) when "r" follows "l" it assimilates to /l/. Korean students transfer these rules to English naturally.

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Another form of L1 interference is that allophones in Korean may be phonemes in English and vice versa. A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a language that carries meaning. In English, for example, /l/ and /r/ are two phonemes and interchanging them changes meaning: *road* versus *load*.

Allophones are the smallest unit of sound without changing meaning. In Korean, all variations of "r" and "l" sounds are allophones, so Koreans do not recognize /l/ and /r/ like English speakers because these sounds do not mark a phonemic contrast.

Stress presents another issue. Korean syllables receive equal timing whereas English syllable timing depends on word and sentence stress. Consider: (a) *Cats eat mice*. (b) *The cats eat the mice*. (c) *The cats are eating the mice*. Korean would require more time as the sentences get longer, but in English, all three sentences take essentially the same amount of time because native speakers reduce the unstressed syllables (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 1996).

The Korean language also uses inflections for marking topics and prominence, but English speakers mark new information through adding sentence stress or resorting to particular intonation patterns.

L2 Complexity

L2 complexity is a third source of pronunciation difficulty. For example, conflicts between the orthographic system - the language's written form - and pronunciation can confuse students. Consider, for one example, the irregularity of the following words: *bird, heard, absurd*, and *word*.

Some learner errors arise from pronouncing words according to spelling, like *often, camera, knead*, and *paradigm*, which works in some languages. But not English. Another issue is the presence of phonemes nonexistent in Korean, such as /f/, /v/, and the "th" sounds. Tongue and teeth placement may feel uncomfortable. Consonant clusters can also be problematic. In short, pronunciation instruction must account for these obstacles.

Pronunciation Instruction Strategy

Instruction must start with perception work, noticing and attending to English forms. Develop student awareness of sounds - both segmentals and suprasegmentals - in listening texts, such as songs, movies, and podcasts.

Heighten student awareness of word stress, sentence prominence, and intonation by exploring how meaning changes when these are altered. For instance, students need to become sensitized to the difference between "***SALLY** likes Harry*" and "*Sally likes* **HARRY**."

Next, help students understand the differences in sound production in L1 and L2. For example, Korean students may focus on lip rounding for production of the "sh" sound, as in the word sure because that is a key aspect in Korean. For English production of "sh," however, lip rounding is not the key feature that native speakers attend to, thus in words such as "she," "shy," "fashion," and "sham," little, if any, lip rounding occurs and may give the word a foreign sounding accent.

Work on one issue at a time. Make it fun and playful and be optimistic. Finally, most textbooks recommend multimodal techniques, such as using both visual and sound aids, as well as physical movements. Teachers might find Jeremy Harmer's new book (Harmer, 2007) a worthy resource (see MacDonald review in the June issue). For an in-depth treatment of English phonology and instruction ideas, see Celce-Murcia et al. (1996). There are also useful web sites and free tools on the Internet. PRAAT (http://www.fon.hum.uva.nl/praat/), for example, is software that allows students to visually see their intonation and stress patterns, and compare theirs against a native speaker.

A Quote to Ponder

The most important thing that you can do as a teacher is to be aware of [the] characteristics that have the potential to impact what happens in your speaking class.

Keith S. Folse. *The Art of Teaching Speaking: Research and Pedagogy for the ESL/EFL Classroom*, 2006.

One Activity for Intonation

Research suggests that stress, rhythm, and intonation may pay bigger dividends than spending loads of time focusing on individual phonemes, though phonemic work is helpful. One intonation activity is "Question-Statement." Write a list of sentences on the board, such as the following, without any final punctuation:

1. I'm going to the store
2. You are going to the library
3. John is at the park
4. Eunjin likes tomatoes
5. Mary drinks too much
6. Byunggu can lift 250 pounds

Then read the sentences as questions or statements and have students identify them:

Teacher: I'm going to the store?
Students: Question
Teacher: You are going to the library.
Students: Statement

Follow-up by discussing meaning nuances. For example, the first one may suggest surprise, while the second as a statement may carry a domineering nuance. After students call out the correct form regularly, discuss how the intonation is different for statements and questions, then break into groups to practice these sentences and others.

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Vocabulary Knowledge and Skill

Language learning demands much more than memorizing vocabulary lists, and yet, without concentrated effort to develop vocabulary knowledge, language acquisition is likely to be slow and inefficient.

To develop vocabulary knowledge, Graves (2006, p. 5) recommends a four-part program: (a) provide rich and varied language experiences, (b) teach individual words, (c) teach word-learning strategies, and (d) foster word consciousness. Nation (1990) argues that words need to be prioritized; some require class attention while others do not. He suggests that teachers should concentrate on the 2000 most frequent words and the 500 most frequent academic words and claims that these will help learners comprehend 90-95% of the texts they encounter.

The 2000 most frequent words, also known as the "General Service List" can be found at the following URL: http://jbauman.com/gsl.html. The academic word list (AWL), which actually contains 570 words, can be found at http://language.massey.ac.nz/staff/awl/headwords.shtml. These 2500 words provide a vital foundation that assists learners in acquiring additional words incidentally. Knowing these words also motivates learners to continue gleaning through texts to obtain more input.

Nations'(1990, 1994) perspective is that these 2500 words are sufficient to help learners make progress on their own. In addition, too much attention on less frequent and more technical words simply wastes class time because the payoff in terms of aiding reading comprehension or supporting incidental vocabulary learning is negligible, and thus not worth the cost. This article thus focuses on how teachers can help students learn these 2500 most important words.

What is Word Knowledge?

Words are often taught as if knowing them simply requires understanding their meaning and the only debate is whether a bilingual or monolingual dictionary is best. The difficulty of vocabulary learning, however, comes from the fact that word knowledge actually includes much more: spelling, collocations, nuances, connotations, part of speech, pronunciation, morphology, and pragmatic usage. Throw in etymology for fun, and students can easily become overloaded with just one word. Few people can learn all these aspects of a word at once. That is why one introduction of a word's meaning in class rarely leads to mastery.

Developing word knowledge requires repetitive encounters in diverse contexts to build experience, episodic memory, associative memory, and opportunities to experiment and calibrate the word with the learner's developing interlanguage system. Another important part of vocabulary development is distinguishing similar forms from each other and obtaining a feel for the words, which takes lots of reading, listening, and insight from word users.

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Obstacles to Word Acquisition

A major constraint to obtaining all this word knowledge and engaging in the necessary practice, however, is that there are so many darn words. Students can quickly become overwhelmed with new words, so an important part of the teacher's role is to shelter students from too many words at once. Another important way that teacher's can help learners is to sort through and prioritize words so that learners expend the most energy on the most useful words first. Finally, teachers can help learners avoid discouragement by highlighting difficult words, identify L1 interference problems, help learners find appropriate texts and teach words in meaningful contexts.

Another obstacle to word acquisition is the similarity of words. Some sound the same regardless of spelling (*bow - bough* or *piece - peace*), others look the same but have different meanings (*bear* [to endure] - *bear* [the animal]). Synonyms can also cause trouble for learners, for example, words such as *job, occupation*, and *career*, or *duties* and *responsibilities*. English words borrowed into Korean also present a problem because many students incorrectly assume their Korean meanings are the same as their English ones. Some examples are *panties, cunning, circle*, and *ribbon*.

Folse (2004) identifies eight factors about vocabulary teaching that also add difficulty for learners. For example, many teachers do not give enough time prioritizing words or planning for their instruction. Further, many teachers and most textbooks rarely revisit words and thus fail to allow students the multiple experiences necessary to cultivate word mastery. Folse also suggests that teaching words in semantic sets retards acquisition. That is, rather then learning synonyms, antonyms, and related words together, he argues that when encountering unknown words, grouping them by similar features can lead to confusion. The haphazardness of vocabulary teaching could also be considered an obstacle to effective learning.

Aids to Vocabulary Development

Repeated exposure in authentic contexts, through multiple modes - sight, sound, touch, and movement - and raising awareness of the multifaceted aspects of the word should facilitate learning. Yet, learning 2500 words at 30 minutes each would take 12 years with classes meeting twice a week for one hour per session, assuming the whole time was devoted to vocabulary and the class met all year round. That means that the most important aid to learning vocabulary is prioritizing words and helping learners decide which ones to concentrate on. Students also need to spend time with their word lists, writing stories, and reading to reinforce and cultivate their vocabulary.

VENN DIAGRAMS

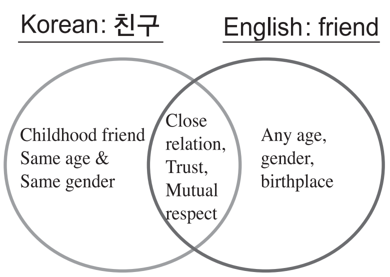

Figure 1. Venn diagram for Korean and English "friend"

Graphic organizers, such as Venn diagrams and semantic feature charts can also serve as important aids. A Venn diagram can be used to compare and contrast English words with their Korean translations or two English words that have overlapping meanings, as exemplified by Figure 1.

SEMANTIC FEATURE ANALYSIS

Roads & Walkways	Typical Characteristics					
	Narrow	Wide	Paved	Unpaved	For walking	For driving
Path	+	--	--	+	+	--
Trail	+	--	--	+	+	--
Road	+	+	+	+	--	+
Lane	+	--	+	+	+	--
Avenue	--	+	+	--	--	+
Freeway	--	+	+	--	--	+

Figure 2. Semantic feature chart for "roads and highways" words.

Semantic feature charts can help make subtle distinctions more salient; for example, the differences between road, path, and other types of roadways becomes more clear in the following chart (Figure 2). Focusing student attention on word parts, etymology, and word associations can also aid in acquisition. The most important way to facilitate the learning of words, however, is through repetition and use.

Vocabulary Activities

Nation (1994) provides an excellent vocabulary teaching resource for teachers. He offers over 100 activities for teaching vocabulary. To close this article, here are three abbreviated samples:

Arranging Students

Instead of counting off, arrange students by groups of vocabulary words. Before the lesson, pre-select enough words to accommodate the class. Find words related to the topic that can form a set of three or four. Then write each word on a separate 3x5 card. Give each student a word, and ask them to find the rest of their set.

Vocabulary Match-ups

Write one word per 3x5 card and place their definitions on separate 3x5 cards. Then distribute one card per student. Next, students seek out their partner and discuss the word and its definition. For extension, build a story with the word.

Sense or Nonsense

Create sentences with vocabulary that students have been learning. Some sentences should make sense, others should not. For example, if students have been learning prepositions, a nonsense sentence might be: *John put the book from the table* or *Karen fell above the floor*. Then give the sentences to students and ask them to determine which make sense and which are nonsense. You can also ask them to correct the nonsense ones.

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Implementing Extensive Reading

Reading is not easy to teach. You cannot see words transforming into meaning within students' brains. Reading, from the teacher's perspective, is a learner staring at a text. Whether comprehending or mis-comprehending, who knows?

Extensive reading is an approach to instruction that steers away from intensive dissection of, often-irrelevant, texts and argues that the best way to learn to read is by doing it. Bamford and Day (2003) identified the following 10 principles of extensive reading.

1. The reading material is easy - instead of *i+1, i minus 1.*
2. A variety of reading material on a wide range of topics is available.
3. Learners choose what they want to read.
4. Learners read as much as possible.
5. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower.
6. The purpose of reading is pleasure, information, and general understanding. Rather than 100 percent comprehension, learners aim for sufficient understanding to achieve their reading purpose.
7. Reading is individual and silent. Learners read at their own pace.
8. Reading is its own reward.
9. The teacher orients and guides the students, explaining what extensive reading is and how to go about it.
10. The teacher is a role model of a reader.

(See Bamford & Day, 2006, for an expanded version of these principles).

If you do a Google search for "extensive reading," many Internet resources will appear. Few authors, however, discuss how to implement an extensive reading approach in real classrooms. That is the purpose of this article: to explore the nitty-gritty, i.e., how to support extensive reading, prepare your classroom, organize reading time, and integrate extensive reading with assessment needs.

Supporting Extensive Reading

Some students might complain that they can read on their own at home and unenlightened colleagues might question devoting large segments of class time to silent reading. Nevertheless, SLA theory is on your side. Reading recycles vocabulary, reinforces grammar, and provides large quantities of authentic input. Students also develop confidence and, best of all, become better readers, learning by doing. Although extensive reading is not a panacea for all learning problems, it motivates learners and offers student-centered practice, all for only 15 to 30 minutes each class.

Students may also feel trepidation, and quickly lose heart, when faced with too many unknown words which they are expected to understand on their own, when the usual practice has been intensive dissecting of texts by the teacher. Consequently, teachers need to explain the different goals and expectations of extensive reading. In addition, students need to be taught how to pick appropriate materials. Texts with more than five unknown words per page can trigger frustration. Before reading, have students quickly scan and count the unknown words. If there are more than five, instruct students to exchange the text for an easier one.

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Finally, reading rate is important. Research suggests that reading too slowly obstructs comprehension. Time devoted to reading rate therefore supports extensive reading. Students do not need to become "speed readers," but increasing reading rate helps. "Word Flash" could be the ticket. You write words and phrases onto large flash cards. Start with three-letter items, and work up to 50 or more letters. In class, make sure everyone can see, and then flash the cards at students, giving less than a second to see it. Start with three-letter cards, and move up to longer phrases. Have students write or shout what they see. The activity builds recognition ability to increase reading speed. It can also make for a fun two-minute activity.

More than five unknown words per page can trigger frustration.

"Reading Sprints" is a second reading-rate activity. Give students a text appropriate for their level that requires 3 to 4 minutes to read. Then start students reading as fast as they can for one minute. Afterwards, students start over from the top, but this time for only thirty seconds. Then do it once more, but for only 15 seconds. Through repetition, students experience faster paces than usual, developing word recognition skills, confidence, and trust in their reading speed. It may even inspire them to read the rest of the article. Five minutes of "Reading Sprints" daily invigorates any class.

The Extensive Reading Classroom

The activities above are fun activities that bolster an extensive reading approach, but the meat of the approach is silent reading for 15 to 30 minutes a day, or longer. The classroom atmosphere plays a role in determining the effectiveness of this class time. The ideal classroom looks like a library with lots of books, magazines, newspapers, class reports, manuals, maps, brochures, and the like. If the room has a computer, use that, too. The more diverse the reading material, the more likely you are to have something for everyone. Also, organize books and reading materials by proficiency level to help learners quickly find appropriate texts.

Unfortunately, many teachers do not have such a luxurious resource to work with. In that case, transforming echoing cinderblock cells into a nurturing reading space might be the challenge. A cart or wagon that can be rolled into the classroom might provide the library shelf. You can cut down on the number of materials needed by conducting a reading survey to discover student interests and then bringing only relevant texts. Moving desks into squares or circles of four each might also improve the atmosphere, as would some posters and wall hangings. No matter how institutional the space may be, organize the students so that they feel comfortable focusing on their own reading material.

An important principle of extensive reading is marking it fun.

Reading Time

Remember that an important principle of extensive reading is making it fun. Students should choose their own texts and read for pleasure, not for grades. Avoid reading comprehension tasks. Rather than writing and filling out comprehension materials, the extensive reading time should be spent reading. The teacher should also read during this time to serve as a role model. Students should be free to get up and change their reading material. They might also need to ask a question, but try to avoid lengthy explanations. Also, keep voices low to avoid distracting readers. At minimum, give students 15 minutes for silent reading daily. Thirty minutes, if you can afford it, better develops student engagement with their texts.

Integrating ER with Assessment Needs

According to Bamford and Day' s principles, reading should be its own reward, but students want proof that they are making progress and administrators need grades. One solution is to have students keep reading logs, tracking the author, title, and number of pages read. This information allows them to set personal goals and highlight authors whom they might choose to read in the future. You could also ask them to summarize a reading occasionally, perhaps describing it to a fellow student. Discussing readings becomes natural and authentic information-gap activities. A short presentation on their favorite reading or author at the end of the semester could also serve for assessment.

Self-assessment also provides important information to both student and teacher. Ask students whether they enjoy reading more, if they feel more capable of choosing texts, and if they experience less frustration reading English.

These techniques should help you discover that giving students time to read and encouraging them to enjoy reading can lead to powerful gains in overall English ability and reading skill.

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Making Grammar Less Difficult

Training Notes

Edited by Douglas Margolis

Too much lecture about grammar can certainly make an English class boring and unhelpful to students. Even worse, too much explicit grammar teaching might be an inefficient use of class time, de-motivate students, and produce little ability to use language. Nonetheless, students who endure classes without any attention to grammar sometimes feel like they are missing important instruction. Communicative practice can sometimes feel disorganized to students and fail to convey a sense of progress, which also might de-motivate them. Thus, this column briefly looks at what makes grammar difficult and offers a framework for teaching grammar points that may help learners overcome the obstacles grammar poses.

What Makes Grammar Difficult?

Researchers have looked at a number of explanations for grammar difficulty, including infrequency, non-saliency, and complexity (see for example, DeKeyser, 2005). Second language acquisition theorists generally believe that more frequent structures, being ones to which learners are repeatedly exposed, should be less difficult. Likewise, structures that stand out, that is, salient forms, should be readily noticed and be less difficult. Complexity refers to the number of functions a particular grammar structure fulfills; more than one makes the structure more difficult.

Consider how this tripartite explanation for difficulty works with the 3rd person singular present tense form of verbs - a structure that is difficult for Korean learners to master in use - although for multiple choice tests like TOEFL, rarely a problem. This structure has all the attributes of difficulty mentioned above. First, its frequency is limited in that an inflection occurs only on the 3rd person singular and no other form for most verbs. Consider the following table:

Infinitive	To Study	To Teach	To Eat
I +	study	teach	eat
You (sing.) +	study	teach	eat
He, she, it +	studies	teaches	eats
We	study	teach	eat
You (plural) +	study	teach	eat
They	study	teach	eat

In the past tense, moreover, a special inflection does not mark 3rd person singular. Second, the meaning of this inflection is redundant, so not very salient. That is, it is not essential for understanding the meaning of the sentence because English sentences usually include the subject. The subject carries the information of the 3rd person singular, so interlocutors understand the meaning even if the speaker produces an incorrect verb form, and English learners may not notice the presence of this inflection when produced by fluent speakers. Third, the meaning of this *-s* inflection competes with the *-s* inflections that indicate possessive (e.g., John's, Jiyoung's) and plural (e.g., cars, trucks, toys). Moreover, to add to the learner's nightmare, the *-s* inflection on nouns make them plural, while on verbs it makes them compatible with singular.

My point is not to explain the third person singular present tense verbs, but to elucidate why learners could have trouble with some grammar forms. Current theory suggests that frequent, salient, and simple structures with one meaning should be easier for learners to acquire, possibly on their own and through comprehending input. Teachers then should especially focus on less salient forms, though not rare forms that students will hardly need to use.

A Framework for Teaching Grammar

The above discussion suggests that one agenda for teachers should be providing frequent exposure to difficult structures, making them more salient and offering ways to understand their complexity. Once a form has been identified as problematic for learners, in addition to considering frequency, saliency, and complexity factors, Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) suggest another three-part framework for teachers to consider: form, meaning, and use. For example, imperatives might sometimes cause problems. On the one hand, they seem straight forward, but they can be tricky:

(a) Help me!
(b) Somebody help me!
(c) *Somebody helps me!

The first two examples, (a) and (b), represent correct imperative forms. Example (a) shows a typical form with no expressed subject: *you* is understood as the subject. In (b), however, there is a subject and it is not *you*. To make matters worse, the verb form that accompanies the 3rd person singular subject in (b), i.e., *help*, makes an ungrammatical utterance, as in (c), if the inflected verb form (i.e., *helps*) is used to make it compatible with 3rd person singular subject (*somebody*). Ugh! Of course, as you know, the verb form is tenseless, an uninflected or bare infinitive form. Examples (b) and (c) help demonstrate this fact about the verb form, which is also evident when the *be* copula is used:

(d) Be on time.
(e) Be quiet.
(f) Don't be late.

Learners could easily confuse the uninflected verb form with the present tense form in sentences like:

(g) Go to the store and pick me up some bread, darling.
(h) Come in.
(i) Pass the salt, please.

The verb form might be confusing to learners and may represent some degree of complexity. Applying Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman's approach, teachers should introduce learners to the verb form and the understood *you* subject, making them aware that other subjects are also possible, such as *somebody, anybody,* and specific named addressees:

(j) Somebody fix this problem now.
(k) Don't anybody move.
(l) Albert, open the window.

Many aspects of the form will become salient with a list of examples. Yet dealing with form alone is not enough. Students need to map form to meaning and understand when the structure is appropriately used. For example, learners need to realize that the imperative form can have several meanings, such as the following:

Warning:	Watch out!
Invitation:	Come in.
Request:	Pass the salt, please.
Prohibition:	Don't walk on the grass.
Command:	Put your hands up.
Procedures:	Add two cups of water and boil.
Directions:	Turn left at the next intersection.

Regarding use, according to Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, students may consider the imperative form rude and avoid it. Students should know that native speakers frequently use imperatives, especially when they can assume cooperation. Nobody, for example, about to be hit by a golf ball would appreciate "Excuse me a moment. Could you duck please; a golf ball is flying toward your face." A concise "Watch out!" or "Duck!" would garner more appreciation.

Discussing the politeness issue may be especially important for Korean learners, who might confuse imperative form with informal language or language to younger people.

Activities for Teaching Grammar

Brainstorm lists of example sentences for the grammar structures you want to work on. Alternatively, have students search for the grammar structure in authentic texts or listen for it in dialogues and speeches.

With your list of examples, have students search for common features. What features change and why? A book like Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman's might further give insight about the form.

Then try to think about the meaning of the form. Is the meaning of the grammatical structure the same across all the examples that you found? Can you identify subtle changes in the meaning? For example, in progressive tense, a verb like *painting*, suggests that one is in the middle of completing the work, whereas a verb like *kicking*, suggests repeated action. The difference is subtle, but noticing these nuances might help learners.

Finally, brainstorm a list of uses or look at collocations. Discuss use and attitudes toward using the structure. This work should help learners to better grapple with the complexity of grammatical structures and efficiently make progress toward mastery.

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A Quote to Ponder

"Ultimately, if learners are to learn, then they have to do the learning for themselves."

David Nunan (1999), Second Language Teaching and Learning (p. 166).

Using Video to Promote Speaking Fluency

By Kyungnan Park

Communicative ability in English is more important than ever due to the change in standardized English proficiency tests such as the iBT TOEFL. These tests symbolize current trends. The new TOEFL format includes a speaking test and excludes a grammar section. This means it is impossible to score high if the test-taker has low communicative ability.

How can we help our students communicate fluently in English? How can our students get beyond stammering out a few memorized words and phrases and actually make sensible conversation? One method that has helped my students to accomplish native-like speaking fluency even in this EFL situation is massive input via movies.

Theory Supporting Movies

When students receive enough and proper English input via movies, they become equipped with various expressions through acquisition, not studying; this allows communicative ability to emerge. Instead of students putting together memorized expressions and unnaturally stammering out a few words, they are able to *engage* in natural interaction.

For acquisition of English, it is important for our students to be exposed consistently to sufficient and appropriate input. Both quantity and quality of input are important. In terms of the quality of the input, instead of reduced or tailored input, "full input," which is natural and authentic English, is effective for all students at different levels of English proficiency when presented with support geared to the level and age of the student. Movies and animations offer excellent input for this purpose.

Students are able to engage in natural interaction.

Movies offer excellent "full input," with varied content to stimulate our students' interest and cognitive levels. They are fun, not stressful. They offer rich contexts to support student comprehension. In addition, they allow for lengthy exposure over a long period, making acquisition more likely. Movies also expose the learner to various cultural features, such as pragmatic uses of language. They also help learners to see vocabulary in use, giving a richer understanding of words, idioms, and expressions. Finally, movies provide the classroom with an object to investigate, permitting the teacher to take on a facilitator role, instead of language model role.

Selecting Appropriate Movies

A difficult issue, however, is determining which movies will best serve acquisition goals. Four criteria for selection seem evident. One, movies should be interesting and appropriate for the students' age and cognitive level. Two, the movies should not contain sex or violence. Three, there needs to be ample conversations in a standard English dialect. Finally, teachers should choose movies covering different subjects and topic areas to ensure diverse input.

Training Notes

Edited by Douglas Margolis

The following DVD titles have been useful in my classes.

For Children

- Grade 1: *Timothy Goes to School, Caillou, Veggie Tales, The Jungle Book, Madeline*
- Grade 2: *James & the Giant Peach, Charlotte's Web, Beethoven, Brother Bear, The Rugrets Movie*
- Grade 3: *Shrek, Spy Kids, Home Alone, Stuart Little, Sinbad*
- Grade 6: *Finding Nemo, Lilo & Stitch, Jimmy Neutron, Atlantis, Inspector Gadget*

For Adults

Sleepless in Seattle, While You Were Sleeping, Pay It Forward, Goodwill Hunting, Rain Man, You Got Mail, One Fine Day, Shaw Shank Redemption, Usual Suspect, Green Mile, Forest Gump, Beautiful Mind

Use of Movies

Of course, simply playing movies will not help students efficiently acquire English. To achieve this goal, a number of strategies need to be employed, both while students are watching the movies and after viewing is finished.

While watching movies, for example, do not show subtitles. Encourage students to mimic characters and even consider giving prizes for the students who can mimic pronunciation, intonation, and gestures the best. Also, do not let students speak Korean during the film. The point is not to make them feel that speaking

Korean is inappropriate, but to encourage them to try comprehending the film through English, not via Korean translation. Moreover, if you can provide activities for students to do while watching the movie, this will help them interact with the content and focus their attention. For example, one activity might be to match characters with an action and a quotation. Regarding unknown vocabulary items, encourage students to guess their meaning from the context.

Some teachers may not be aware of the value of *mimicking*. Mimicking develops listening skills and facilitates native-like pronunciation of consonants, vowels, stress, rhythm, and intonation. It also maximizes the retention rate or acquisition of input. Mimicking is also an important strategy that children use for acquiring their native language and is believed to help learners acquire the structure that underlies the language. When students echo movie characters, for example, their attention to phonological data may represent a natural way to obtain semantic information and help them acquire the L2 in the same way L1s are learned. So try not to get upset if students mimic your instructions!

The success of the movie lesson plan also depends on what you do after the viewing. Organizing activities that promote interaction gives students an opportunity to practice language and interaction styles that they have just viewed. This practice may help promote long-term memory storage. One activity is to ask simple comprehension questions and have students summarize parts of the movie.

Movies provide the classroom with an object to investigate.

It is paramount for students to practice speaking sufficiently at discourse level. Practice (repetition and association) is one key to the formation of habits and children's practice is a key to language acquisition of the mother tongue as well. Below are four practice activities that go beyond merely summarizing the movie and help students to internalize vocabulary and expressions from the movie.

1) **Mimicking.** Have students try to mimic different characters. Award prizes for the best mimics.
2) **Role Play.** Replay movie scenes, muting the movie and allowing students to dub in the voices of the characters. Allow students to recreate scenes from the movie or create alternative endings and sequels.
3) **Discussion.** Choose appropriate topics according to the cognitive levels and areas of interest of the students and discuss character choices and behaviors in relationship to those topics.
4) **Presentation.** What is said in the discussion can be recorded in written form and shared with the whole class through a presentation as a follow-up activity. Teachers can provide tips for presentation skills beforehand and students can prepare a presentation about a scene, a character, or their interpretation of the movie.

Using movies as discussed above has been proven very effective to enhance my students' speaking skills. I would like to emphasize, however, that student participation during these activities is most important for successful language acquisition. Therefore, the movies must be carefully selected and the follow-up activities well planned.

Language skills are naturally enhanced by exposure to different aspects of the language, such as listening, speaking, reading, vocabulary, and grammar. Consequently, combining these movie activities with reading scripts and writing sequels helps engage more skills and should further advance students' language acquisition.

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A Grammar Recipe for ELT

By Nahm-Sheik Park

[Editor's Note: *The following is an abridged version of the keynote address delivered to the Global English Teaching Association's Annual Conference on December 2, 2006, at Chonnam National University.*]

This presentation focuses on some do's and don'ts of EFL grammar pedagogy, based mostly on my experience as a teacher of English over the last four decades. My so-called grammar recipe here is thus a list of largely subjective pointers on how to teach English grammar in the EFL context.

Step 1: Contextualize and Embed

My first suggestion for EFL grammar teaching today is thoroughly contextualize grammar points at every stage of instruction. I propose that teachers should embed grammar points in chunks of natural discourse, i.e., in authentic samples of spoken and/or written English. You can embed grammar in various ways. Take the following for example.

(1) Passivization and reflexivization embedded in arithmetical calculations.
- (a) 3 times 3 is 9: 3 *multiplied by 3 is* 9. → 3 *multiplied by itself is* 9.
- (b) 3 into 3 is 1: 3 *divided by 3* is 1. → 3 *divided by itself* is 1.

(2) Relativization and passivization embedded in alphabetical order.
- (a) C follows *B, and B* follows A. → C follows *B, which* (in turn) follows A. →→ A *is followed by B, and B is followed by* C. → A *is followed by B, which* (in turn) *is followed by* C.
- (b) X precedes *Y, and Y* precedes Z. → X precedes *Y, which* (in turn) precedes Z. →→ Z *is preceded by Y, and Y is preceded by* X. → Z *is preceded by Y, which* (in turn) *is preceded by* X.

Parenthetically, I believe it is best to keep grammar points below the threshold of consciousness. We can do so by focusing attention on the communicative message of the embedding discourse, not the grammar points themselves. In this way, the student experiences and internalizes the grammar point in question subliminally much as native-language learners apparently do.

Step 2: Localize to Maximize Pedagogic Effect

My second suggestion for EFL grammar pedagogy is strictly localize grammar points relevant to a specific context. Only deal with the absolute minimum of grammar involved in the context in question, always making sure that contextually extraneous points of grammar do not stand in the way. When dealing with the article *the* in *There is one law for the rich and another for the poor*, for example, we should confine our attention to the generalizing function of the definite article resorted to in the proverb here. We should not, in this context, bring up any other irrelevant functions of *the*, no matter how tempting it may be to show off our grammatical expertise. Incidentally, we would do well to remind ourselves here of the lesson implicit in the proverb that says *He teaches ill, who teaches all.* Grammar instruction should always be strictly context-specific. Following this advice will hopefully maximize pedagogic effect.

Training Notes

Edited by Douglas Margolis

Grammar instruction should always be context-specific.

Step 3: Use to Learn, Not Learn to Use

My third piece of advice on grammar pedagogy is to treat grammar acquisition as a matter of habit formation, rather than as a matter of rationalization. To this end, we need to expose learners to plenty of inductive data. The exposure here should ideally be sufficiently intense and sustained if the learners are to acquire grammar as a matter of habit by actually living and experiencing it. We should familiarize our students with grammar by getting them to use it in a wide variety of lively encounters with English. We should keep from imposing on them any deliberate analysis of grammar. Grammar is not something to be analyzed and explained. Rather it is something habitually and subconsciously put to use in actual communication. The corollary commandment here is: Use grammar to learn grammar, not the other way around.

Step 4: Drive Your Grammar

My fourth pedagogic pointer is that grammar is a good servant but a bad master. Some teachers and students think of grammar as the be-all and end-all of ELT, bestowing upon it pride of place in the entire pedagogic process. However, excessive preoccupation with fine points of grammar is often counter-productive in that it interferes with the natural flow of communication.

Grammar-dominant pedagogy is seldom conducive to fluency, as is amply demonstrated by the frustrating careers of many ELT practitioners in Korea.

Present grammar points in functional chunks

Admittedly, however, grammar can sometimes be a valuable pedagogic aid, say, in clarifying meaning. Word order, for one, can serve as a semantic guidepost. Two sentences composed of identical words may differ in meaning if the words are differently ordered. For example, *Mozart is nice to play on this violin* may have a slightly different meaning than does *This violin is nice to play Mozart on*. To the extent that grammar can shed light on such meaning differences, it can be a good servant. Such exceptional utility of grammar notwithstanding, my advice here is: Drive your grammar; do not let it drive you. Never let your communicative competence choke on an overdose of grammar. Never catch at the shadow of grammar and lose the substance of communication.

Step 5: Employ Functional Chunks

My fifth suggestion for EFL grammar pedagogy is employ functional chunks. Present grammar points in functional chunks of authentic language, rather than in microscopically analyzed units. Especially observe this principle for beginning and intermediate students. Functional chunks are communication-friendly in that they represent ready-made blocks of language of immediate utility to communication. Exposure to functional chunks of language arguably also affords the added advantage of facilitating acquisition of grammar as a matter of habit.

In dealing with the to-infinitive, for example, we should begin by exposing our students to such chunks as the following.

> *Wanna* eat? / *Wanna* come with us? / *Wanna* join us?
> *Gotta* go? / *Gotta* sleep? / *Gotta* see her?
> I'm *gonna* leave today. / I'm *gonna* quit. / I'm *gonna* talk to him.

Whatever awareness of grammatical structure that arises here should ideally result from incremental and gradual self-realization by learners exposed to sufficient amounts of these functional chunks. However, intermediate to advanced learners may sometimes be encouraged to do a conscious analysis of grammatical structure and thereby raise their grammar awareness. Such an analysis would, among other things, show that *wanna, gotta*, and *gonna* here have the underlying infinitive-marker *to* in common.

The final point I would like to make is that serious and deliberate grammatical rationalization belongs only in highly advanced or specialized EFL classes.

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Bringing Theater into the Classroom

By Hye-won Lee

When you think about theater techniques for English education, most English teachers think of role plays. With their real-life-like situations and non-threatening settings, role plays are considered to be an effective way to foster learners' communicative ability; hence, they are frequently used in the language classroom. However, role plays are merely one of many theater techniques, and not the only possibility for language education. Many other theater techniques exist that can be effectively used in the EFL classroom. This article will present justification for using theater techniques, explain four worthwhile techniques, and then offer three suggestions for ensuring effective implementation.

Why Drama for Teaching English?

Before presenting specific theater techniques, let us investigate how drama can be theoretically justified in the EFL context from linguistic, affective, and pedagogical perspectives.

From the linguistic perspective, theater techniques aid language acquisition in at least four ways. First, students receive input in narrative form, which is believed to be an aid to comprehension. Through the storytelling aspect of drama, learners can better comprehend the input, making it more available for intake and processing. Second, drama creates enjoyable practice opportunities, causing students to recycle newly learned and previously learned forms, reinforcing their presence in the interlanguage system. Third, drama also provides output opportunities, which help students obtain feedback about their current interlanguage system. Finally, the form-function mapping that is necessary for language acquisition is more likely to occur through dramatic enactment.

From the affective point of view, English teaching through drama is effective for reducing learners' anxiety. Through body movements, learners can relax not only their muscles but also their minds, and this will help to elicit the learners' full potential. Also, a theatrical approach can meet the needs of human beings as Homo Ludens, "Man as Player," a factor that can improve students' motivation for learning. Additionally, after performing a part, learners usually feel self-confident, which also aids is learning.

From a purely pedagogical standpoint, a theatrical approach allows teachers to pay more attention to individual students' progress and needs. This approach also helps teachers and learners focus on the process as much as the product, a point that can help the English education field in Korea. This learner-centered approach also fosters learner autonomy.

Imagination, Improvisation, and Dramatization

Actually, there is no set teaching recipe for a theatrical approach. Drama is an art and these techniques require creativity and innovation, not lockstep rigidity. For this reason, all techniques used in theater can be applied to the language classroom if they fit your English class and objectives. Therefore, it would be impossible to list all drama techniques here, so four techniques will be introduced.

Training Notes

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First, "imaginary work" uses the imagination to better understand the context of a drama and to help learners become absorbed in the situation. It is a good warm-up activity in the language classroom and it offers listening practice. Through their imagination, students can picture the background of the play and put themselves into the drama's scenes. For example, if a play happens in the forest, the teacher helps students to imagine the sights and sounds of the forest. Through this activity, students can connect what they do in the class with real life, and this helps them become ready to step into the world and use English.

Second, "physical improvisation" can be utilized in various ways in the EFL classroom. For example, while a teacher and other students are reading a passage aloud, students can express the content of the passage through body movements. Asher's (1996) Total Physical Response (TPR) is a similar technique. In this way, learners, especially at low-levels, can more easily understand the target language and reinforce what they hear through body movement.

Third, "tableau" is another technique that can be applied to English teaching. *Tableau* refers to a scene showing events and people from a story, which is presented by a group of actors who freeze in position and then later resume action. Like physical improvisation, body postures are used to understand the content. Furthermore, the teacher can ask students to explain what they are or how they feel in the role, thus expanding conversations from the common understanding of the drama. The teacher can also ask students in the audience to describe the scene made by their peers. In this way, learners can become more involved in the scene (McCaslin, 2000).

Finally, a fourth technique is "dramatization," the creation of a play from a story, which is always a fun way to liven up an English class. According to the teacher's aims, dramatization can serve as a one-class activity or become a whole-semester project that frames the course and is incorporated into the syllabus with a combination of other supporting techniques. When doing dramatization, the main component of success is selecting a story familiar to the students.

What to Keep in Mind

Let us discuss what you should keep in mind as a teacher when using this theatrical approach.

1) Be a facilitator! In the traditional language classroom, the teacher played the role of controller or organizer who made decisions instead of students. The traditional role expected teachers to manage and restrict students according to one's pedagogical beliefs. However, in the theatrical approach, a teacher is a facilitator or co-communicator. Too much teacher intervention or control limits students' infinitive potentiality and their language acquisition. So try to listen to students' needs and read their minds. Respect your students' opinions and flow with the class.

2) Be creative! As mentioned above, there is no set recipe to follow. Curricula employing theater techniques are available from teacher books, web sites, papers, training sessions, and conferences. However, the most valuable thing is to create your own curriculum to fit your teaching situation and your learners. Try to create worthwhile activities even using items that might at first look unsuitable. Do not be afraid of taking risks.

3) Be imaginative! Since theater techniques arose from drama, you yourself need to have an artistic perception and aesthetical viewpoint. In order to develop your sensibilities, you should occasionally appreciate artistic works such as music, paintings, and performances. You might also want to participate in a play as an amateur actor by joining an acting club. If you develop your imaginative faculties and entertain other people as an artist, your classes might become awesome works of art!

In the field of educational theater, a teacher is called either a teacher artist or an actor teacher. If you choreograph your English class, the whole semester can become an artistic work, an amazing collaboration between you as a teacher and your students. Why don't you become a teacher artist and bring the theater into your English language classroom?

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Teaching Segmental Pronunciation

By Tim Thompson

Correct pronunciation concerns most of our students, but many teachers only use tongue twisters and minimal pair drills to help them. These techniques may be helpful, but they are not enough. We need to think outside of the box and try new approaches. One area where adult learners can improve rapidly is the pronunciation of segmentals. Segmentals are the individual sounds that speech can be separated into and focused on. As English teachers, I believe it is our responsibility to teach methods for improving both segmental and suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation in our classes. Suprasegmental aspects such as language stress, rhythm, intonation, pitch, duration, and loudness are also critical for improved pronunciation, but for the purpose of this article, I will focus on segmental pronunciation.

Pronunciation and Motivation in Korea

Korean students can be taught to identify the differences between the sounds that aren't present in the Korean sound system. Learning to distinguish differences aurally can help students recognize individual, distinct sounds to better enable themselves to focus on producing them. Students may not realize that they sound different from the teacher or an audio tape. Dalton (1997) suggests that students convert unclear input into a similar sound in their own language. For example, the Korean sound system doesn't have an /f/ sound, so Koreans often substitute this with /p/ or even /hw/ when speaking L2 English. Through the use of teacher-directed contrastive analysis, students can develop a better understanding of the differences between their L1 and English.

> *We must teach our students how to work on pronunciation autonomously.*

Improvement with segmentals can lead to feelings of accomplishment and increased motivation. Vitanova and Miller (2002) cite a student who wrote: "I changed my wrong consonant sounds likes F, P, B, V and RL sounds into correct enunciation. I was very happy to hear that my American friends told me, 'Your pronunciation is getting better'" (p. 2). Conversely, segmental pronunciation mistakes can also lead to embarrassing misunderstandings such as asking for a *cap* but receiving a *cup*.

I teach a class of university seniors in which they make presentations on current event topics. The students are expected to ask questions following each presentation and critique one another on the quality of their presentations. Students with poor segmental pronunciation are disappointed when, due to their classmates having difficulty in understanding the presentation, they receive fewer questions and poorer evaluations from their peers. This hurts their motivation and reduces their eagerness to present.

Training Notes

Edited by Douglas Margolis

Pronunciation Teaching Strategies

Teachers have only a finite amount of class time to focus on pronunciation. Drilling phonemes can be useful for introducing certain sounds, but we can better serve our students by teaching them how to work on their pronunciation by themselves. Some strategies for helping students improve self-monitoring and self-correction include: critical listening, compiling learning portfolios, and utilizing CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning) resources.

Critical listening can be very useful for enabling students to recognize and correct their own errors. Once students recognize that a long /i/ sound requires that the mouth be stretched widely or the /f/ sound involves placing the upper front teeth against the lower lip and should not be vocalized, they can feel the difference when they speak and recognize the difference when they watch others speak. Watching others and focusing one's listening on specific areas of pronunciation serves to reinforce the forms that the students have been taught.

Students can also become more autonomous learners by compiling pronunciation portfolios and keeping records of their progress. Pronunciation portfolios can contain tongue twisters, diagrams of mouth and tongue positions, or any activity that pertains to pronunciation. Having these materials in written form allows students to go back and think about their mistakes as well as monitor their own progress.

CALL can be another important tool when attempting to help students become more autonomous by allowing them to hear their own mistakes and see segmental graphic representations. CALL benefits students by letting them study at their own pace in a semi-private environment as well as allowing them to build profiles which enable teachers to monitor their improvement (Nari, Cucchiarni, & Strik, 2001). Molholt, Lane, Tanner, and Fischer (1988) point out that when students both see and hear similar words they are more able to differentiate both segmental and suprasegmental aspects of the language and thus self-correct their own pronunciation mistakes.

Web sites such as Voice of America (http://www.voanews.com/english/portal.cfm) and Live365 (www.live365.com/index.live) are useful for students with advanced lexicons who are seeking improvement in their pronunciation. VOA offers radio and TV programs, webcasts, and podcasts in English for students to listen to. Live365 is the world's largest Internet radio network, featuring hundreds of streaming radio stations. Mimicking this carefully pronounced input can be useful once students have worked with their teachers to identify their weak points in pronunciation. The amount of variety allows students to choose topics that are interesting to them or target topical vocabulary in areas where they want to improve.

Fonetiks.org (http://www.fonetiks.org/) is a web site which is useful for beginners and advanced speakers. Beginners can drill minimal pairs and learn to differentiate between voiced and voiceless sounds. More advanced students might enjoy listening to the differences in pronunciation between various native speakers of English.

Finally, Sounds of English (http://www.soundsofenglish.org/) is loaded with information to help teachers teach pronunciation. It includes handouts, activities and exercises, and tips for teachers. This is not a site to simply send students to. In fact, teachers should not initially send students to pronunciation web sites, but should incorporate the technology into the classroom by holding classes in a language lab or using a computer connected to an overhead projector. This way, the teacher can control the activity and ensure that the goals of the lesson are met. It also ensures that students aren't overwhelmed and lose motivation to study and improve.

Conclusion

Helping our students take more control of their learning is an important "next step" in the learning process. There are a variety of methods for helping students recognize and alter their segmental pronunciation above and beyond drilling minimal pairs in the classroom. If we use listening- and writing-focused exercises to promote pronunciation training, we can step out of the box and make pronunciation training a more integral part of our English classes. By empowering our students and showing them how to take control of their learning, we are increasing their motivation and teaching them how to become more successful in and out of the classroom.

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A Quote to Ponder

"It is not just what the students learn in the few short months they are in our classroom that is important, but the skills they take with them after the class is finished that will determine how far they progress in the language."

Scott Miles, Sogang University, Seoul

KOTESOL Proceedings 2005, p. 104

Storytelling for Language Input

Training Notes

By Douglas Margolis

Why do dogs wag their tails? Friends, the answer is told in an ancient Mayan story from Central America reported by Hill (2000). The story would consume less than five minutes of class time. Telling stories is not just for boy scouts at a campfire. Storytelling is for everyone. Children, adults, even reticent and rebellious high school students love a good yarn. Storytelling attracts attention, reduces anxiety, and provides great input for EFL learners, too.

Why Storytelling for TEFL?

First, recognize that storytelling is not reading. You can include reading activities with storytelling, but storytelling involves performance, oral communication, and audience interaction. The most sublime storytelling is art and craft, although you don't need to be a master performer to succeed. This article presents a few tips on storytelling, but first we will consider why storytelling is a justified use of class time.

For starters, stories communicate culture. Allusions to folk tales, myths, and past shared cultural experiences comprise a major part of literature and authentic communications. When we share stories with our students, we build a foundation of background knowledge. Two, stories are input - authentic and meaningful. They are not metalinguistic grammar and vocabulary explanations whose benefit to second language acquisition is highly doubted by researchers. Rather, they are meaningful language communication that can facilitate input processing strategies and focus on form while time keeping students actively engaged in constructing meaning. Third, stories are highly adaptable. They can be simplified for beginner levels, made more complicated for advanced levels, and adjusted in other ways for children, adults, or other specific learning groups. Plus, stories pitched properly allow classrooms of multi-leveled students to obtain the input most appropriate for each person's own internal syllabus. Finally, stories provoke creative thinking and can be readily adapted for many tasks and learning objectives. So, how can you effectively incorporate storytelling into your classes?

Everyone loves a good yarn.

Picking & Activating Stories

The first and most important consideration when selecting a story is that you like it and can memorize it. Don't memorize it word-for-word, however; good storytelling requires that you make it your own. Sure, follow the general outline of the original, but characters and details are up for grabs. Alter, add, and subtract to your heart's content, so long as you can comfortably tell the story. Of course, avoid stories that are too familiar, lengthy, or complicated. They could cause you to lose your audience.

I like short, easy-to-remember stories, like "Why Dogs Wag Their Tails" (Hill, 2000) or "The Eagle Who Thought He Was a Chicken" (n.d.). These stories have formulaic lines and actions, which help learners catch the meaning. For instance, in the first story, a dog asks different animals if they would like to know the creator's secrets. Each time the action is pretty much the same: The dog asks the question, the animals respond, "Of course we want to know, Dog. Tell us quickly!" Then, always, just before the dog is about to tell the secrets, the creator comes and gives the dog a piece of his mind. The repeated structures make the story easy to remember and facilitate comprehension, plus repetitive lines make opportunities for audience participation.

In addition to formulaic structures, look for stories that can utilize movement and gestures. In the Eagle story mentioned above, for example, one of the characters repeatedly attempts to get the Eagle to fly and forsake his life as a chicken. At each attempt, the character commands, "Spread your wings and fly!" Mimicking the bird spreading open its wings reinforces the meaning with visual imagery.

In short, to make your stories effective: (a) remember them, (b) use voice, gesture, and pacing to build the energy, (c) create opportunities for audience participation, and (d) have fun!

How to Enhance the Educational Quality of Stories

Keep in mind your purpose for storytelling: increasing meaningful input. Doughty (2003) suggests that the most efficient and effective role for language instructors is helping learners process input and focus on form.

You can aid input processing with graphic organizers, time lines, and story replays. For example, give students a mind map that portrays the relationships of characters. As the students listen, they fill in the characters' names to complete the mind map. Alternatively, students could put story events in their chronological order. A story replay means repeating the story after students have completed a time line or graphic organizer to give them a chance to confirm their understanding and obtain additional information.

The often misunderstood "Focus on Form" (FonF) instructional technique is not the same as grammar teaching or following a grammar-based syllabus. Instead, as Doughty and Williams (1998) define the term, FonF refers to a brief directing of student attention to form with little or no disruption of attention to meaning. If your story emphasizes a particular word or repeats a sentence several times, vocabulary, grammar, or speech act will attract student attention to form. Both the dog and eagle stories mentioned above, for instance, spotlight offers and requests. Teachers can also increase FonF with pre- and post-story activities, such as a word search puzzle that builds word recognition of characters or important items in the story.

Good storytelling requires that you make it your own.

Another activity that aids both FonF and input processing is dictogloss (Swain, 1998). Dictogloss requires students to listen to a text - in this case one of your favorite stories - and then in small groups they attempt to recreate the text. This part of the activity is like dictation because students try to recall the details of the story. Hence they are very focused on form and input processing. After the group recreates the story as best as they can, they then discuss issues and themes - the gloss part of dictogloss.

The Truth about the Dog's Tail

The most important part of storytelling is to make it fun. Remember, the content is not the point. The finish line is not the point. Why the dog wags its tail is not as important as how you tell the story. Nevertheless, if you corner me at a conference sometime and ask, I'll tell you why dogs' wag their tails.

You don't need to be a master performer.

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Teaching English With Songs

By Akiko Otsuki

Many people may feel that English is too tough and onerous to acquire as a foreign language and thus quit before attaining their language learning goals. One of the reasons for this feeling derives from the experience of learning English through memorization of rules and vocabulary. Such a method often has the effect of heightening anxiety associated with learning English as a foreign language. According to Krashen's (1985) *Affective Filter Hypothesis*, this negative emotion works like a *filter*, preventing learners from acquiring input effectively. In the last issue of TEC, this column focused on the need for more input before students are pushed to produce language. This issue's column focuses on how to enjoyably increase input through songs.

As many teachers know, incorporating learning and teaching techniques such as listening to music and singing is a motivating way to counter the impact of the negative emotions described above and serve as an important approach to limiting the effect of anxiety on language learning. By mixing what many people consider fun and enjoyable activities with the learning experience, teachers can maximize both the fun and educational efficacy of their classes. In short, learning English through musical activities helps our students to enjoy their learning experiences as well as raise their self-confidence for performing tasks in the target language.

As such, positive emotions towards music can work to lower the affective filter, which motivates learners to better focus on what they are learning. However, introducing music in class as a pedagogical tool requires detailed planning that needs to take a number of considerations into account. What follows in this report are suggestions for teachers on selecting appropriate songs, making musical lessons practical, and successfully leaping the technical hurdles.

Selecting Appropriate Songs

The extent to which many teachers delve into songs may be very limited: (a) students hear the song with no script, (b) students fill in blanks with lexical items while listening to the song, and then (c) students sing the song together one or two times. When the song is well chosen, this type of lesson can be fun, teach valuable idioms and expressions, and even motivate students for ongoing learning, but all too often that's the complete repertoire of what teachers do with songs. And when students have a less superb aesthetic for music than their wise teacher, the song choices may not inspire students. Selecting songs and song activities is a critical step in making music an effective tool.

Training Notes

Edited by Douglas Margolis

First, consider all the possible ways to use music in your classroom. For instance, instead of the usual song routine described above, you could play music to add atmosphere to role plays, or use music for games, such as "musical chairs," "guess that song," and singing competitions. Music can also be a helpful device for remembering tough vocabulary or letters - "ABC" and jazz chants come to mind. You might want to quietly play some classical music to relieve stress during exams and practice activities. You can also use songs to open discussions about genres, lyrics, music styles, instruments, vocalists, stars, careers, time periods, and the like. So, don' t limit yourself to filling in blanks.

Moreover, if you incorporate music in many different styles, then students will probably forgive you for one or two comatose selections and come to appreciate your exquisite taste in music. However, you may want to hedge your bets by asking students to pick songs or bring several choices of their own from which the class can choose. Songs that are available at karaoke salons (*norae-bang*) may be especially popular and carry the additional benefit that students may be more likely to practice after class. Furthermore, look for songs with clear lyrics, repetitive lines, and not too many ideas to explain. Repetition will dish out much-needed input.

Practical Lessons With Music

Following the standard "pre-lesson," "during lesson," and "post-lesson" format can help avoid mistakes and ensure that students get the most out of the class.

Pre-lesson First, identify the aims of the lesson for which a song is to be selected. Appropriate aims include the reinforcement of (a) pronunciation, (b) vocabulary, and (c) grammar, as well as (d) culture-related content. Prepare handouts containing an appropriate list of words, phrases, and teaching points to help students focus on these aims. Begin the lesson by identifying a theme of interest to the class for which it is easy to incorporate the song in some manner.

During Lesson Have students participate in listening to and singing the song. Students could take notes, check the words they don't understand on a handout, or work in pairs to reconstruct the lyrics. Keep the lesson moving and enjoyable for students so as to motivate students to listen and sing along regardless of their reservations about their own musical talents.

Post-lesson Give students a chance to ask questions about the song. Adequate explanations should be provided for any linguistic and cultural points of the song. Also, teachers may prepare further questions, for example, "How would you describe the effect of this song," "What did this music make you think about while you were listening," and so on. An effective technique is to have students engage in practical exercises in small groups that underscore those key words and phrases they have learned.

Positive emotions towards music work to lower the affective filter.

Leaping the Technical Hurdles

Thanks to the availability of video and audio technologies in and outside classrooms, introducing music into language learning can be easily accomplished. This technology can be accessed in class by the teacher and students, and out of class for homework or autonomous learning. As with all educational technology, however, the teacher should always have a back-up plan prepared in case of emergencies, such as when there's a power failure, the equipment doesn't work, of you've grabbed the wrong tape. Arrive early and check your equipment, as it helps to calm nerves and guarantees smooth operation. CDs and digital formats are better than cassette tapes because you don't have to worry about rewind time.

Conclusion

Indeed, when planned and conducted properly, incorporating music into foreign language acquisition may prove to be a great pedagogical technique. However, there is very little research into how and what kind of songs should be introduced into the language learning classroom. Certainly, future studies are needed to ascertain what particular songs are appropriate for foreign language acquisition.

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Negotiation & Silence

Training Notes

By Douglas Margolis

If you haven't experienced the frustration of trying to elicit student participation and discussion and getting at best only monosyllabic responses, then you probably haven't been teaching for long. This article discusses several ways and benefits of eliciting student participation and "negotiation," and also offers some, perhaps surprising, reasons to respect student silence.

Benefits of Negotiation Strategies

The notion that students should practice speaking their L2 is not that old in the history of language teaching. Not too long ago, vast geographic distances between people of different languages made speaking irrelevant for learners. Teaching typically followed Latin and Greek models where L2 grammar and vocabulary were presented for L1 translation. Language learning was an academic exercise to facilitate comprehension of foreign language written texts with little expectation of oral language use. Until fairly recently, student output was either irrelevant or something needing careful control so as to avoid bad language habits. Not until Swain's (1993) Output Hypothesis did communication and interaction gain respect. Swain tended to agree with prevailing opinion that language is acquired via input, but argued that output served important roles. In fact, Swain (1998) identified three roles for output: (1) to help students discover the gaps in their L2 knowledge, (2) to focus student attention on form through meta-linguistic discussions, and (3) to force students to formulate and test hypotheses about how their L2 works. Feedback from interlocutors became evidence for determining whether or not the hypotheses needed to be rejected or modified.

In the 1980s and 1990s, a lot of research activity focused on the nature and benefits of interaction. This research suggested that when students "negotiate" meaning, they advance their language acquisition.

Don't be afraid of silence.

Negotiating meaning meant modifying output when needed to clarify and facilitate comprehension among interlocutors.

These findings created heightened interest in negotiation strategies that might aid both interaction and input processing. Training students to enlist these strategies may make them more efficient language learners. For example, three negotiation techniques are (a) requesting clarification, (b) confirming understanding, and (c) checking comprehension. The table below provides an example of each. Using such negotiation strategies increases turns in addition to improving communication. So modeling these negotiation strategies and encouraging students to use them may boost the effectiveness of your classes.

Negotiation Type	Sample
Confirmation Request	S1: It was so exciting. I feel thrilled all day. Very interested. S2: *Really. What made it exciting?*
Confirmation Request	S1: I did not finished my homework and I don't have time to study English today. S2: *Oh, so you are saying that you feel depressed today?*
Comprehension Check	S1: I'm from Donghae. *You know where Donghae is, right?* S2: Actually, I don't. Where is it?

Lyster and Ranta (1997), however, suggest that negotiation of meaning may not be so helpful and instead advocate "negotiation of form." By negotiation of form, they mean to emphasize error correction. Thus for example, Lyster and Ranta would prefer negotiating the tense errors in the above examples.

Other Ways to Elicit Student Output and Negotiation

Negotiation strategies are not the only way to increase your students' communication practice. Some teachers find their students refuse to speak no matter what. In this case, reviewing and possibly changing one's teaching habits may yield better results. For example, classroom observers often note that teachers do not wait long enough after asking questions to give students a chance to formulate their responses. Increasing "wait-time" can greatly improve participation. Don't be afraid of silence. Students need the time to process what they have heard, consider their response, and then formulate the output. Give them this time. Teachers who don't wait long enough often answer their own questions or constantly call on the same students.

Another tactic for obtaining better participation is to ask referential questions instead of display questions. Referential questions are the ones to which you do not know the answer. Display questions are the typical classroom questions where teachers merely ask students to display their knowledge.

A third inhibiter to participation is unclear questions and instructions. If students don't understand what is expected, they clam up and wait for clues. Tape yourself and check to see if you understand your own questions and instructions. Many teachers are surprised after taping themselves by how unclear they are. Using visual aids and writing on the chalk board can also promote understanding, reduce anxiety, and improve communication and participation.

Moreover, give students planning time before activities. Ask students to write down concepts and key forms that you expect might be needed for communication tasks. This preparation primes students' memory and activates schema.

The Value of Silence

We should not be afraid of silence. Tsui (1996) suggests teachers sometimes exhibit an "intolerance of silence" that is culturally based. That is, Western teachers sometimes demand student participation inappropriately. Although the research on silent periods remains inconclusive, there is a lot of evidence suggesting that students do undergo a silent period, and that this phase is an important part of language development. During this time, students integrate input and develop the long-term memory structures that will facilitate future processing.

Moreover, Allwright (1980) reports on a study where he found that the student who participated the most made the least progress. He concluded that this student's participation may have been helpful for the other students who observed and overheard the dialogue, but not for the one speaking up. Foster (1998), also adds empirical support that suggests interaction and speaking up may be overblown. In her study, the class where negotiation was encouraged scored better than the control group, but she discovered that most students did not negotiate at all, and that the interaction of a couple students skewed the data.

So even if the silent period argument proves untenable for adult learners, keep in mind that students do need processing time. Forcing students to participate, moreover, can unnecessarily heighten anxiety and decrease participation. If your class remains too reticent, even after trying the suggestions outlined above, then maybe focusing on input and input processing strategies is the best course of action. In that case, stories, songs, and dramas that provide rich input without the pressure of output may best help your students' acquisition.

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Input & Comprehension

Training Notes

By Douglas Margolis

You take a deep breath and say, "Good morning, everyone. How was your weekend?" One meek student's voice emerges from the sea of hesitant eyes and responds - obviously meaning that she had been bored: "I was boring all weekend."

You smile. Should you correct her mistake? Should you take time from your well-prepared lesson plan to discuss the difference between *bored* and *boring*? Or, should you overlook the error and be thankful that at least one student understood the question and felt courageous enough to respond? Good teaching depends upon these moment-to-moment decisions.

This issue, Training Notes aims to prepare you for these moment-to-moment decisions by exploring the topic of input and considering ways to facilitate student comprehension of spoken language. We begin by distinguishing the terms *exposure*, *input*, *intake*, and *uptake* to clarify issues raised in the literature and help you navigate the field's discussions of these topics. Then, we turn our attention to several input processing techniques.

Making Sense of Terminology

According to Gass (1977), "The concept of input is perhaps the single most important concept of second language acquisition" (p. 1). Defined by VanPatten (2002), *input* is language with some kind of communicative intent that is heard or read by learners. Some theorists distinguish between *input* and *exposure*, referring to all available target language in the communicative situation as *exposure*, while using *input* to denote only the subset comprehended by the learner. But not all input actually enters the student's mind - or language processing center(s). Some is neglected while other parts are acted upon by the learner - that is, noticed, attended to, or recognized. Chaudron (1988) considers this subset of the input to be *intake*. Intake ultimately drives the language acquisition process.

Good teaching depends upon moment-to-moment decisions.

Uptake, on the other hand, has been used in the literature in a number of different ways. First, it has been used interchangeably with *intake*, contributing to confusion and imprecision in the field. Second, it has been used to refer to what students self-report to have learned. Third, *uptake* has been used to categorize student responses and repairs after error feedback. Due to the ambiguity of the term, we avoid it here.

Gass (1997) offers a model of second language acquisition where the enhancement of input, by modification and negotiation, facilitates comprehension and eventually leads to intake. This intake fuels a process of hypothesis formation and testing which feeds the integration stage, which helps learners advance their target-language proficiency. The bottom line in this model is that input is a necessary condition for acquisition. Output may also have utility, but there is disagreement about whether or not it is necessary.

Input Modification

One implication of Gass's model is that teachers should aim to increase *intake* via input enhancement, an area of great interest to a number of researchers. Gass recommends that attempts to make input more salient can help students notice and attend to it, but also warns that directing student attention is not enough; students must do something with the input.

At any rate, input modification and simplification has been the object of a number of studies. Chaudron (1988) suggests that not all input simplification strategies are equal. Two types of simplification - using less specific vocabulary and more basic grammar, for instance - have been found to make texts more, not less, difficult, perhaps because meaning becomes more general and abstract. Whereas elaboration strategies, adding explanation and redundancy to the text to clarify meaning, has been found to aid comprehension. One reason that authentic materials may seem more effective might be the tendency to elaborate rather than simplify.

Modifying spoken language may also take the form of slower speech or exaggerated pronunciation. Rather than these strategies, however, students may be better assisted by adding more frequent and longer pauses, which give students more processing time.

Focusing on Form

Input modification can aid comprehension, offering students more processing time for attention to form. But students need to comprehend meaning before they can attend to form, according to VanPatten (2002), suggesting that teachers face a triple challenge. First, we must ensure that learners comprehend meaning. Second, we must find ways to enhance form to make it salient to learners. Third, we must motivate them to attend to and notice the form features of the input, without ruining the communicative context.

One way to face this conundrum is to use material that is familiar to students and topics or issues for which students possess a degree of background knowledge. For this reason, L2 input about Korea and Korean culture may be more worthwhile than texts about English culture when language development is the objective. Moreover, scaffolding - pictures, charts, graphs, etc. - also serves as important input enhancement by facilitating meaning comprehension. Another technique is repetition.

Repeating a song or radio broadcast, for example, might feel like a waste of time, but if done appropriately, it can greatly add to student intake. One worthwhile technique, contrary to the way I was taught, would be to provide the input with subtitles or other meaning aids first, and then repeat the text with only the target language. Given that the students would already understand the meaning, the second and third repetitions can increase student focus on form, especially if students are given different listening tasks to maintain interest and motivation, such as listening for a particular form, detail, or main idea.

Further, according to Chaudron (1988), sensitizing students to rhetorical forms and patterns can aid input processing. He suggests that students particularly have trouble distinguishing main ideas from details and examples, and therefore, recommends that teachers guide students to recognize elaborations, paraphrases, and different rhetorical levels.

Enhancing written texts to highlight particular forms is simple; for example, one could **boldface** a particular item to make it more salient. For spoken texts, however, teachers need to develop equivalent highlighting techniques, such as specifying the target form before listening to the input, writing the key form on the board, or pausing the input right before or after the key point.

Another technique that can help draw student attention to form is *shadowing* - quietly mimicking the speaker. *Spoken Mirror*, a game where partners try to verbally reflect each other, also leads to noticing form.

An important language-learning benefit of the classroom, according to Gass (1997), is the teacher's power to direct attention. But remember, students must comprehend meaning in order to have processing space for attending to form. Beware, too much attention to form, may become focus on formS, and invoke your students to say they feel boring.

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'Round & About KOTESOL

June 2005. Sheilagh Hagens, (Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter, Member-at-Large) hangs her shingle on the wall after completing her Masters of Education in TESOL from Brock University in St. Catherines, Ontario, Canada. Her thesis is on the attitudes of Korean English teachers towards Konglish and a proper awareness of Konglish by learners and teachers alike. Congratulations to Sheilagh!

July 4. Dr. Robert Snell (Busan-Gyeongnam Chapter) and his wife Jeong A embarked on the journey into parenthood with the birth of their daughter, Elizabeth Maru. We hope that Robert's new concern with domestic affairs will not dampen his interest and involvement in global issues.

July 8. David D. I. Kim (National 2nd Vice-President) adds his name to the ever-growing list of KOTESOL lifetime members. David's contribution has already been lengthy and it seems destined to continue for many years to come.

July 25. Dr. Yeon-seong Park (Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter, Advisor) published "W.H. Auden" (Chonnam University Press). The book on the English poet was coauthored with Daesoon Bom and is written in Korean.

July - Aug. Adriane Moser (Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter) returned from North Carolina, USA, for her annual pilgrimage to Korea's summer conferences. She was busy giving presentations on metaphor in storybooks for second language learning at both the KATE International Conference and the KNU - Daegu-Gyeongbuk KOTESOL Conference and attended still others.

Aug. 17. Dr. Joo-Kyung Park (Research Comm. Chair, Former National President) smiles as she has removed the annual worry of remembering to renew her membership dues when expiry date rolls around. The secret: lifetime membership! Dr. Park has devoted many years of service to KOTESOL already (since 1993) and is sure to devote many more.

[Compiled by David E. Shaffer]

Assessing Student Writing

Previous "Training Notes" have examined techniques for identifying problems with traditional achievement tests. Performance exams - interviews, role plays, essay tests - present even more difficult challenges. Unlike multiple-choice tests, for example, where scoring is dichotomous, performance tests are more prone to rater biases, misjudgments, and other errors. In this article, we focus on ways to minimize such errors while assessing student writing.

Common Rater Biases

Rating problems stem from a number of causes, one of which is grading fatigue, where earlier graded papers receive different treatment from later papers. No teacher wants to be unfair in this way, but as we all know, grading many papers can readily exhaust the eyes and dull the mind.

Another cause of bias is disagreement and familiarity. Although teachers try to avoid grading students based on positions with which they disagree, this bias can be difficult to avoid. Topics and politics with which we are more familiar will inevitably be easier to understand. We might try to compensate by being more lenient on students with unfamiliar or disagreeable positions, but doing so is more an acknowledgement of a bias then a solution to the problem; it means that the scores are based on factors other than student performance.

Our own orientation may be an even more difficult bias to overcome. For example, while some teachers focus primarily on grammar when grading papers, others focus on content, while still others focus on organization. These differences in rater orientation can lead to very different assessments of an essay exam.

Performance tests are more prone to rater biases.

In these and many other ways, writing assessment suffers from rater error, which lowers the reliability and validity of test scores. If you doubt our words, test yourself. Read and grade ten student papers, but write your grades and comments on a separate sheet of paper. Two weeks later, grade the same essays again, and then compare your original scores with the second set. How do they compare? Whatever differences exist is rater error. Since we are all prone to such error, one way to reduce it is to use a rating scale when we mark our essays.

Analytic vs. Holistic Scales

Although many rating scales exist, the two most dominant in second language writing are holistic and analytic scales. Holistic scales are designed to yield a single score that reflects the overall impression of the rater, whereas analytic scales decompose the text into several individual components such as content, organization, vocabulary, mechanics, and language use.

Training Notes

By Douglas Margolis & David Ellis

While both types of scale examine similar features, the holistic scale forces raters to decide on a single overall "holistic" score while the analytic scale forces raters to assign individual scores based on several writing criteria. Which type of scale is better is a matter of debate, but whichever you choose, beware that they both face two potential problems.

First, scale levels (e.g., Excellent, Good, Poor, etc.) are not always clearly distinguished, so choosing the right level can become very difficult. Therefore, the more effort you give to clearly specifying the characteristics of each scale level, the easier it will be for you to decide an appropriate grade when it comes time to mark the papers.

Second, different testing contexts require different scales. For example, a placement test scale designed to group students by proficiency is probably an inappropriate scale for students in the same writing class because the group is too homogeneous. Thus, adapting whatever scale you use so that it matches the context will ensure that your scoring will be both more appropriate and accurate.

In short, using a scale to grade papers helps minimize biases, but you will also need to remind yourself to choose/design an appropriate scale for your context, and then stick to it while grading.

Other Bias Busters

Being aware of rater biases and using an appropriate scale to minimize them is a great start to more successful grading. However, here are a few other tips that might help you achieve even more reliable and valid scores.

First, quickly read all the papers and sort them into three groups based on your initial impressions. Doing so will not only help you use relative performances to pinpoint criterion performances, but it will also help you become familiar with the essays before marking them. Moreover, it gives you the opportunity to confirm your initial impressions once you do start grading.

Second, mark no more than ten papers at a time when assigning grades, and no more than five when having to make extensive comments as well. Doing so will help avoid grading fatigue, which can negatively impact your consistency.

Finally, check yourself from time to time to ensure that you are not letting a particular type of error prejudice your overall assessment of the paper. Otherwise, you may end up permitting an unreasonably low grade due to a minor mistake conceal the student's true ability. We hope that following these few simple tips will help you grade your papers more consistently and accurately.

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Suggested Reading

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'Round & About KOTESOL

March 30-April 2, 2005. Dr. Kyungsook Yeum (National President) was the KOTESOL Representative to the TESOL Convention held in San Antonio, Texas, USA. In addition to many of the presentations offered, she attended Affiliate meetings, the Annual Business Meeting (ABM), and the Town Meeting. *For details see her report on page 31.*

April 5-9. Sharon Morrison (Conference Comm. Chair) was the KOTESOL Representative to the IATEFL Conference held in Cardiff, Wales, UK. She attended many Associates' meetings, great plenaries, and many other presentations. *For details see her report on page 30.* Also attending the Conference was Sean O'Connor (ConComm Technical Director) who served as a member of the technical team at Cardiff. In addition to assisting at the Cardiff Conference, Sean gained some insights into the technical workings of another major international conference.

April-May. Louisa Kim (1st Vice-President) and **Jake Kimball (Nominations & Elections Comm. Chair)** have had their names added to the growing roll of lifetime KOTESOL members, indicating that their participation in and contributions to Korea TESOL will be long-term.

May 16-20. Dr. Robert J. Dickey (Long-term Planning Comm. Chair) was in Hanoi, as a consultant for the British Council (Vietnam), meeting with senior government officials and local consultants concerning language and government. As a public administration expert, over the next year he will be developing an intensive four-week content-based English language training curriculum for mid- and senior-level Vietnamese government officials.

May 21. Tory Thorkelson has been re-elected to the position of **Seoul Chapter President**. See *Who's Where in KOTESOL* for the full list of the new officers.

June 5. Jason Renshaw (Young Learners SIG, Facilitator) had bestowed upon him the title of "proud father" with the birth of his son, James (Jae-min) Dennis Renshaw. The 3.6-kilogram young learner and his mother are both doing well.

Developing Worthwhile Achievement Tests *Part 3: Reliability Analysis*

Training Notes

By Douglas Margolis

Last issue we discussed methods for analyzing individual items on achievement tests in order to identify and fix problems and improve the quality of your tests. This time, we will explore techniques for estimating the reliability of your tests. We begin with a few key definitions.

Reliability, Achievement Tests, NRTs, & CRTs

Reliability analysis examines the value of a test as a measuring instrument. Measures like thermometers and rulers are reliable; that is, a tape measure will always provide the same measurement for the length of a wall that hasn't been changed. Language tests, unfortunately, are not so reliable. Due to poor questions, confusing instructions, uncomfortable testing conditions, and even student lack of sleep, the test results cannot always accurately reflect student ability. Consequently, teachers should estimate the degree of reliability of the test in order to know how much trust to place in the results.

Brown (1996) distinguishes achievement tests from other types. To him, achievement tests are not comprehensive of all language ability, but aim to measure the degree to which students have mastered specific course objectives. That's why the first step to developing effective achievement tests is explicitly stating the objectives to be learned and tested.

Unlike NRTs (norm-referenced tests), such as TOEIC, TOEFL, and the SAT, achievement tests are CRTs (criterion-referenced tests). Both measure student ability, but NRTs aim to spread out student scores in order to compare students' relative ability, whereas CRTs, like driver's license tests, aim to measure the degree to which a student has mastered a particular objective. Due to space limitation, our focus in this article is CRT reliability analysis. For information on NRTs, see Brown (1996).

Reliability Analysis Strategies

There are three main strategies for estimating reliability: 1) test-retest, 2) equivalent forms, and 3) internal consistency. The first requires administering the same test two times, and then examining the scores to see whether or not they are similar. If the tests were given near the same time and the student ability had not changed, these two sets of scores should be the same, or nearly so.

Unfortunately, some students tend to remember test content, which leads to different scores on the test the second time around - a test effect that can undermine test reliability. To avoid this test effect, the equivalent, or parallel, forms method was devised. This method uses two different tests that are considered equivalent. Student scores from the two forms are compared. The more the scores are alike, the higher our estimate of test reliability. Giving a test twice, or two tests on the same material once, requires a lot of class time and may cause too much stress for both students and teachers. Thus, the third approach is more common because it permits estimating test reliability with only one form and only one test administration.

Internal Consistency of Achievement Tests

There are several NRT internal consistency strategies that calculate a reliability coefficient. This number ranges from 0 to 1. Zero indicates a test with absolutely no reliability while one reflects a very reliable test.

CRTs, however, present problems for reliability analysis. First, the NRT reliability formulas assume a normal distribution and a spread of scores. Achievement tests, however, hopefully have skewed distributions with homogenous scores, meaning that all the students score high. If the students have all learned the course objectives and the test truly measures mastery of course objectives, then we should expect a result of all high scores. Using NRT reliability formulas with such a result, however, could greatly underestimate the reliability of the test. To counter this problem, Brown and Hudson (2002) explain a number of methods designed specifically for CRTs. Here we will present the One Administration *Kappa Coefficient* technique.

Step One: Determine a cut-point

Decide what score will represent student mastery of the objective. For example, 80% is required to pass the written exam on most driver's license tests. On language achievement tests, 70% might be an appropriate cut-point.

Step Two: Calculate the z-score of the cut-point

$$z = \frac{c - .5 - M}{S}$$

c = Cut-point
.5 = a constant adjustment factor
M = Mean of the test scores
S = Standard deviation of the test scores

Step Three: Calculate the K-R21

The K-$R21$ is an NRT reliability formula. We use it here as an intermediary step to obtain our CRT reliability coefficient.

$$K\text{-}R21 = \frac{k}{k-1}\left(1 - \frac{M(k-M)}{kS^2}\right)$$

k = the number of items on the test
M = Mean of the test scores

S^2 = Standard deviation of the test squared

Step Four: Use the z-score and K-R21 to obtain the approximate CRT reliability

This step is the most disappointing because you will need to consult a table of values in Brown and Hudson (2002, p. 175). You use your cut-point *z*-score to determine the proper row in the table. The *K-R*21 result gives you the proper column. The intersecting cell gives you the *Kappa Coefficient* for your test.

For example, for an achievement test with 50 items (*k*) and a cut-point of 75% (c), a mean score of 85% (*M*), and standard deviation of 2.5 (*S*), you should obtain the following:

Step Two

$$z = \frac{c-.5-M}{S} \qquad z = \frac{.75-.5-.85}{2.5} \qquad z = -.24$$

*NOTE: Use the absolute value of the z-score, i.e., disregard the negative and round off to the nearest tenth. Thus, in this case, our result will be .20.

Step Three

$$K\text{-}R21 = \frac{k}{k-1}\left(1-\frac{M(k-M)}{kS^2}\right)$$
$$= \frac{50}{50-1}\left(1-\frac{.85\,(50-.85)}{50 * 6.25}\right)$$
$$= 1.02\left(1-\frac{41.78}{312.5}\right)$$
$$= 1.02 * .866$$
$$= .88$$

Step Four

Consulting the table in Brown and Hudson (2002, p. 175), we use the z-score of .20, giving us the third row, and the *K-R*21 of .90 (rounded to the nearest tenth) to put us in the last column, obtaining a .71 *Kappa Coefficient* - the reliability of our hypothetical CRT.

The .71 *Kappa Coefficient* means that our achievement test is fairly reliable, although the test does not measure student ability with 100% consistency. Therefore, we should seek ways to improve this test. Generally, we would be more satisfied with a result closer to .90.

Final Thoughts

Keep in mind that reliability estimates are linked to a particular group. That means that the reliability can change when the test is used on different students and for different purposes. Checking the reliability each time you administer a test helps to make sure that you are assessing the students fairly.

To improve the reliability of a test, add more items, revise poorly written items, and make sure instructions are clear.

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Developing Worthwhile Achievement Tests *Part 2: Item Analysis*

Training Notes

By Douglas Margolis

Last issue we discussed methods for improving the quality of achievement *tests.* This time, we will explore techniques for analyzing the quality of your tests *items.*

Four ways to assess the quality of your achievement *tests* are *pilot testing, item analysis*, *reliability analysis*, and *validity analysis.* Pilot testing involves trying out the test ahead of time on a sample group that is similar to your students. The pilot group's experience helps you identify confusing instructions, errors, and items with more than one answer.

Item analysis involves using student performance on the test to assess each item's difficulty and ability to discriminate between students with high and low competency. We will address techniques for item analysis below.

Item Facility

Interviews and role plays make excellent achievement tests for conversation classes. They also take up a lot of time and require special tools and techniques for reducing bias in rating judgments. For this reason, teachers might want to supplement them with pen-and-pencil tests. Questions on such tests are called *items* in the testing literature in order to encompass all the possible tasks that students might be required to perform on a test. *Item facility* is a measure of the difficulty or ease of test items.

$$\text{Item 1} \qquad \text{IF} = .40 = \frac{40}{100} = \frac{\text{(number of correct student answers)}}{\text{(total number of test takers)}}$$

Item facility (IF) equals the number of students who responded correctly to the item divided by the total number of students who took the test. For example, if forty students answered the first item correctly, out of a total of one hundred students, then the IF equals .40 or forty percent.

The IF is always a number between zero and 1.00. Low numbers mean difficult, and high numbers mean easy. Thus, when the IF is less than .30, the item may be too difficult for the test takers. Likewise, when the IF is higher than .70, the item may be too easy. An item with an IF of .50 is one that was not too difficult or too easy.

The IF is useful to know for organizing easy items at thebeginning and progressively more difficult items toward the end of a test. Also, a test with items that are too difficult may greatly discourage students, so teachers can use IF values based on previous student performance to select appropriate test items for future versions of the test. Moreover, IF values identify students strengths and weaknesses. Items with high IF values, for example, denote student strengths and low IF values indicate areas that need review and additional instruction.

For multiple-choice items, high IF values might indicate that distractors are not distracting students or that the item is cuing students to choose the correct answer, thus denoting the need for revision.

Item Discrimination

Alone, however, the IF does not provide enough information to assess the quality of an item. Knowing whether the item is difficult or easy will not inform us about whether or not it helps us distinguish students with the ability we want to measure from students without that ability. The *B*-index is one measurement to help us make this distinction.

> ***"The next time you give students a test, check out the IF and ID of your test items."***

First, you need to decide a cut-point for the test. For example, you might decide that 70% is the criterion score that students must obtain to pass the test. Thus, scores below 70% would denote novice students (in regards to the ability being measured) and scores equal to or above 70%

would identify students who have mastered the ability being measured. Now, with this information, you separate the students into two groups, novices and masters. Then, you calculate the IF of each item for each group separately.

The *B*-index equals the IF of the masters minus the IF of the novices. For example, if, after separating our 100 students into novices and masters, we find that the IF of item 1 for the masters equaled .50, while the novices' IF equaled 0 (i.e., none of the novices answered the item correctly), then the *B*-index = .50.

$$B\text{-index} = \text{IF}_{\text{masters}} - \text{IF}_{\text{novices}}$$
$$.50 = .50 - 0$$

The *B*-index can range from negative one to positive one. A negative *B*-index means that the novices answered the item correctly more often than the masters did, thus indicating that the item needs revision or should be thrown out. A positive *B*-index means that the item distinguishes masters from non-masters. A *B*-index of zero indicates that the item is not distinguishing between the two groups; novices and masters are performing the same on the item.

You can use *B*-index values to identify problems with your tests and items that need to be thrown out. In this way, you can make your tests not only more fair but also better measurements of the skills and abilities that you want to test.

Figure 1. Sample of Item Analysis Using Excel

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Name	Q1	Q2	Q3	...	Score	
2	Shenan	1	0	1	...	98	Masters
3	Robert	0	0	1	...	88	
4	Mitsuko	1	0	1	...	80	
5	Iliana	1	0	0	...	79	
6	Millie	1	0	1	...	75	
7	Kimi	0	1	1	...	70	
8							(cut-point)
9	Kazumoto	0	1	0	...	69	Novices
10	Kako	0	1	0	...	65	
11	Joji	0	1	0	...	60	
12	Jeanne	1	1	0	...	60	
13	IF	0.50	0.50	0.50			
14	ID	0.42	-0.83	0.83			

So, the next time you give students a test, check out the IF and *B*-index of your test items. After students take the test, use a spreadsheet program, and enter "1" if the student answered correctly, "0" if they answered incorrectly. After the data is in Excel, you can easily calculate these item analyses. See Brown (1996) for more details.

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'Round & About KOTESOL

Nov. 14 - Louisa Kim, 1st Vice-President, gave birth to a darling 3.3-kg, 50-cm baby girl named Laetitia Camille (Hee Yune in Korean). Both Louisa and "Letty" are doing fine.

Nov. 6 - Aaron Jolly became the new President of Daejeon-Chungnam Chapter with the resignation of the former president, Oo-Sheek Suh, at the regular Chapter meeting. The Chapter has become quite active in recent months, holding their second symposium of the year on Nov. 27, with four more planned for next year.

Nov. 20-22 - Phil Owen, International Affairs Comm. Chair, represented KOTESOL at the 30th JALT Conference in Nara, Japan. At the Conference, Phil manned a KOTESOL information booth, discussed English in Korea at the International Forum, and represented KOTESOL at the PAC meeting. A new agreement with JALT was also signed. (See Phil's article in this issue.)

Dec. 11-12 - National Leadership Retreat was held in Daejeon at the Yujin Hotel. As part of the Retreat, the first meeting of the new National Council took place on the afternoon of the 12th.

Developing Worthwhile Achievement Tests *(Part 1)*

Training Notes

By Douglas Margolis

Unfortunately, a glance at some of the tests to which students are subjected might turn up numerous unfair and poorly designed questions. You know the kind: questions with two correct answers or questions that nobody could answer.

Given the social and economic overemphasis of exams, some teachers prefer to avoid tests altogether. Indeed, if tests are poorly constructed, interpretations made from the results will be faulty. Worse, bad tests may create anxiety, damage motivation, and build student resentment.

Not testing students, however, would also be a mistake. Tests, after all, if well constructed, may provide a measurement of progress for both students and teachers. In addition, tests can provide an indication of student needs. Good tests even help motivate and concentrate student attention on language learning objectives. Thus, teachers who exploit student expectations with well-designed tests may promote effective and efficient language learning.

Achievement Tests

The testing literature typically divides tests into four types: placement, proficiency, diagnostic, and achievement (Brown, 1996). Our focus is pen and paper achievement tests.

Interviews and role plays make excellent achievement tests for conversation classes. They also take up a lot of time and require special tools and techniques for reducing bias in rating judgments. Teachers might want to supplement them with pen and paper tests.

Achievement tests are not comprehensive of all language ability; instead, they focus on the specific learning objectives of the course. The first step then is explicitly stating the objectives to be learned and tested. One learning objective for an early-level class, for example, might be: "Students will know how to use action words related to playing in a playground: run, jump, skip, hop, shout, tag, roll, kick, bat, throw, catch, shoot, etc."

Once you explicitly state your learning objectives, you are ready to write test and item specifications.

Test Specifications

Davidson and Lynch (2002) recommend that teachers first write "test specifications" before test "items." Test specifications are a blueprint that depicts the architecture and plan of the test. Test items are the actual questions and tasks that students must complete. Good specifications help teachers to target the specific ability that needs to be measured, making sure that the test measures what it is supposed to measure.

For example, a listening test for intermediate students who have been working on pronunciation problems might include an item type that measures ability to discriminate between phonemes, particularly /p/ and /b/, /f/ and /v/, /l/ and /r/, and /i/ and /I/. The test might also include item types for measuring ability to identify the gist and other components of listening.

Once the objective is identified, the next step is to explain how the objective will be measured. Davidson and Lynch (2002) suggest describing the prompt and response attributes. The prompt attributes are what students see and respond to. The response attributes are how students should respond. For example, if we want to test student sound discrimination using multiple choice items, the following might be acceptable prompt and response attributes:

Prompt Attributes

Students will hear a series of three minimal pair words in a row, such as "fill, pill, pill" or "pill, fill, pill." They will be given four choices that are combinations of the minimal pairs and be required to select the one that was spoken.

Sample Item: Teacher says, "sheep, ship, sheep."

A. sheep, sheep, sheep
B. ship, sheep, ship
C. sheep, ship, sheep
D. ship, ship, ship

Response Attributes

Students must listen carefully, distinguish the appropriate phonemes, and circle the correct option.

Putting It Together

With a blueprint of the test, you now generate a variety of items that fit your specs. Brown (1996, Table 3.1) offers a helpful checklist for evaluating test items, including the following:

1) Does the item format correctly match the purpose and content of the item?
2) Is there only one correct answer?
3) Is the item written at the students' level of proficiency?
4) Have ambiguous terms and statements been avoided?
5) Have negatives and double negatives been avoided?
6) Does the item avoid giving clues for answering other

items?
7) Are all parts of the item on the same page?
8) Have biases been avoided?

Brown also recommends having a colleague look over the test items before using them. Developing good items is not easy, but with clearly articulated item specifications, the process becomes more efficient.

Interpreting Test Scores

If students score badly on your tests, don't be too quick to assume that they are bad students. Instead, evaluate the quality of your test: Are there questions that everyone got wrong? Are there questions where the best students answered incorrectly and the worst students responded correctly? If so, you have evidence of bad items.

Brown (1996) offers several item analysis techniques that can help you assess test questions in order to improve your tests. In part two, next issue, we will cover item analysis techniques and ways to construct reliable and valid achievement tests.

Improving test reliability and validity can yield tests that add structure and a sense of progression to the course, motivate students, impart a feeling of accomplishment, and make the class time more effective and efficient.

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Correcting Oral Errors

Training Notes

By Douglas Margolis

While teaching English in Korea, many students expressed a desire for error correction. Chaudron (1988) observed that both students and teachers believe that error correction is a central task of language instruction. In spite of their belief, however, teachers need to carefully consider error correction issues, such as when and how to address errors.

But Wait! Should Errors Be Corrected?

Truscott (1999) raises a number of objections to oral error correction. For example, he questions whether teachers can properly understand the student error and worries that corrections based on misunderstanding may confuse rather than enlighten. He also argues that the act of correction itself is complex and may improperly consume class time. On top of that, Truscott suggests that error correction requires consistency, in order to avoid confusing students, and that consistent treatment of error is difficult. Ultimately, he believes that if teachers are to correct errors then the corrections need to be tailored to student needs and personality. Attempting to properly correct errors then may waste class time and take away from a communicative focus on meaning.

For students, Truscott identifies three additional problems with error correction, namely, noticing and recognizing the correction, understanding and accepting it, and somehow incorporating it.

Truscott's argument is persuasive. Error correction is fraught with danger. Instead of agreeing with Truscott's conclusion to stop correcting errors, however, I prefer to examine when and how error correction might be made beneficial.

When to Correct

Chaudron (1988) suggests that teachers have a number of options regarding the timing of feedback. For instance, the student's utterance could be interrupted and the error corrected immediately. Alternatively, teachers could wait until the student completely finishes the speaking turn and then provide feedback. A third approach, possibly exhibiting more sensitivity to maintaining communicative focus, delays error correction until the last five or ten minutes of class. Similarly, teachers could take notes regarding errors and address them through activities and instruction during other class periods.

Delaying error correction may be a less satisfying approach for those students who express desire for error feedback, yet it could be a more effective use of class time. The important point for teachers is to recognize that options are available and that different circumstances may require different choices.

How to Correct

More complicated than the issue of timing is the multiple questions associated with how teachers provide error feedback. For example, should teachers correct students individually or in a group? Should teachers provide error correction in written or taped form? Should teachers ask students to correct their own mistakes or have peers provide corrections? Should errors be explicitly identified or implicitly suggested?

Lyster and Ranta (1997) identify six different types of error correction techniques: 1) explicit correction, 2) clarification requests, 3) metalinguistic clues, 4) elicitation, 5) repetition, and 6) recasts.

"Explicit correction" refers to specifically indicating that the student's utterance is incorrect and providing the proper form. Students should thus be aware of their mistake and their focus of attention shifts from meaning to form. "Clarification requests" indicate to the student that her or his utterance has not been understood and that a reformulation is needed.

"Metalinguistic clues" denotes a technique that indicates to the student that an error has been made, but without providing the correct form. For example, the teacher might question, "Is that the right way to express the past action?" "Elicitation" is an error correction technique that appears similar to metalinguistic clues, but is distinguished by requiring students to supply more than a yes or no response. In this technique, the teacher may provide a partial utterance and expect the student to finish it. For example, if a student had incorrectly said, "Yesterday, I go to the zoo," the teacher might respond with: "Yesterday, I ...."

> *"Without understanding the serious implications involved, teachers could...cause more harm than good."*

"Repetition" is a technique of repeating what a student uttered using intonation to indicate the error. "Recasts" are restatements of the learner's utterance with the incorrect form repaired. A number of researchers have found Recasts to be the most common error correction technique, but Lyster and Ranta (1997) question their effectiveness because students may not be aware that an error was made or corrected.

Continued on next page.

Where'd Y'all Come From?

Word Whys

By David E. Shaffer

The second-person plural pronoun (2pl) in English is a slippery subject. Each week, at the conclusion of the popular 1960s TV sitcom, The Beverly Hillbillies, Jethro beckoned us to watch again the next week with the signature expression "Y'all come back now, ya hear? "Y'all," a reduced form of "you all," used as such, suggested that it was an uneducated, substandard substitute for the standard "you." But how firm a hold does "you" actually have on the 2pl position?

English used to have different words for second-person singular and plural pronouns, and none of them were "y'all," "yous," or "you'uns," some of the 2pl alternatives to "you" that are used today. The problem began back in the 14th century when the plural form "you" began to be used as a singular form to address superiors instead of "thee" and "thou," and went on to replace "ye" as the sole second-person pronoun, both singular and plural. The problem created was that of not being able to differentiate between singular and plural pronoun forms. There is evidence that during the 17th and 18th centuries there was an attempt to disambiguate the two with different verb forms, e.g., "you is" vs. "you are." This did not, however, catch on, and the problem persisted.

The desire to distinguish singular "you" from plural "you" gave rise to the Jethro use of "y'all" as the plural form in the U.S. South, especially in the lowlands. In the Appalachian and Ozark Mountains, "you'uns" ("yunz"), a reduced form of "you ones," is popular; In the northern reaches of Appalachia and northern cities, "yous" ("yuz"), from "you" + plural suffix "-s," and "yunz" ("yinz") are commonly heard.

You might think of these plural-"you" forms as American aberrations of the "pure" English used on the other side of the Atlantic, but that would not be completely appropriate. "You'uns" quite likely made its way to the New World via Scottish immigrants whose dialects of English contained this form. Irish immigrants likely transported "yous" to North American, and Australian, shores from Irish English.

What about "y'all"? Well, sanctioning of its non-reduced form, "you all," can be traced back to the 15th-century King James Version of the Bible: "But as for you all, do ye return" (Job 17: 10). Other 2pl forms used in the US are "you lot" and "you guys."

Just as 2pl "you" expanded to also become the second-person singular form, it seems that some of these plural alternatives of 2pl "you" are, by analogy with 2pl "you," becoming regarded as also being singular forms, just as "you" is a singular form. This has given rise to even more explicitly plural 2pl "you" alternatives for further differentiation. In the U.S. South can be heard "all y'all" (All y'all are invited to the party). In Ireland and Ameriica one hears "yous all" (Yous all better be back by six). And "yous guys" is associated with Hollywood gangster movies of 1930s Chicago. Alternatives to 2pl "you" abound, and they are likely to continue to propagate so long as "you" continues to be commonly used as both the singular and plural forms of the second-person pronoun.

Hope y'all come back next issue. See yous then. You'uns have words for which you want the whys and wherefores?

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Continued from previous page.

Teachers should experiment with and be aware of as many techniques as possible.

Scratching the Surface

After thinking about when and how to correct student errors, another important issue is what students should do with the feedback. Some writers suggest that students should keep "error logs" that record their mistakes and provide a space for practicing corrections. Having students write about their errors in journals, discuss them with peers, or reflect upon them in self-evaluation essays are several techniques to support incorporation of the correction.

Unfortunately, this article only scratches the surface. See Chaudron (1988) for an in-depth overview of error correction research. Dealing with errors is complicated. Without understanding the serious implications involved, teachers could, as Truscott (1999) warns, cause more harm than good. Consider all the options and be careful.

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Teaching English Through English: Mythical or Mighty?

By David E. Shaffer

Teaching English through English (TETE) is an approach that many practitioners have a definite opinion on. Some praise it as the best way to conduct ESL/EFL classes; others criticize it as being inappropriate and ineffective.

TETE employs "Classroom English," i.e., English used by a teacher in a classroom situation for teaching the lesson and for classroom activities outside the lesson. It is "teacher talk" in the ESL/EFL classroom - simplified speech used to accommodate the level of the students and to provide an additional source of L2 input for learners.

Classroom English has been honed for social, personal, and organizational uses of language in the classroom (checking attendance, physical classroom conditions, organizational activities, using visual aids and equipment, dividing up the class, error correction, checking understanding, interruptions, control and discipline), as well as for formal presentation of the lesson (Willis, 1981). This technique is pedagogically sound in that it increases the amount of English that the learner is exposed to during the course of a lesson, and the language is highly contextualized with numerous associated extralinguistic signals and previous learner experience to aid in comprehension. It is authentic L2 communication and interaction in the classroom.

Reluctance to adopting TETE often comes from those who misconstrue it as necessarily an English-only policy. This it is not.

The ultimate goal of TETE is to be able to use only English in classroom instruction. But in the case where the teacher and class share the same L1, reaching this goal is generally envisioned to occur at intermediate to advanced proficiency levels with learners who had TETE instruction at lower levels. English-only need not be forced upon lower proficiency learners from the beginning of TETE instruction (Gardner and Gardner, 2000). (It should be noted here that in 2001, a Korean government directive called for English-only English instruction at the elementary school level. It should also be noted that the directive has not been adhered to for a variety of reasons.) Most forms of TETE champion using as much English in the classroom as the students will have a relatively high likelihood of understanding with attendant gestures and other contextual clues. But TETE also recognizes that some things in some situations can be better communicated when explained in the learners' L1.

It is important for the EFL instructor to realize that TETE is to be instituted on a gradual basis. This can begin with an easy-to-understand imperative accompanied by a gesture, e.g., "Quiet" with a vertical index finger raised to the lips. As learners progress in their English proficiency, the Classroom English used may become more complex, e.g., "Cheolsu, come here, please" with accompanying gesture and "Why are you late, Jina?" After repeated use of individual expressions, the gestures can be dropped and the expressions will still be understood. Learning takes place in the classroom without a textbook, without a test, and possibly even without the learner being aware of it.

Classroom English is motivating to the learner because they realize that they are using English for genuine communication in real-life situations. With this heightened motivation, the learner takes more interest in the English class, and the learning atmosphere is improved for both learner and teacher. TETE is not mythical in its effects, but mighty.

Critics also cite fossilization as a possible undesirable byproduct of TETE. They claim that fossilization of learner English may arise from ungrammatical or unacceptable input from teachers who are poor English speakers and from teachers failing to recognize or correct student errors. With the variety of English input that students have today - multiple teachers, audio and visual materials, radio, TV, videos, etc. - the harmful effects of flawed input from a single person would be minimal.

It is also a myth that fossilization is caused by the teacher failing to correct the learner's every mistake. Teachers have long been selective in error correction, paying particular attention to only certain types of errors. Some even suggest that the concept of fossilized errors itself may be nothing but a myth (Bygate, 1988; Gass & Varonis, 1994).

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EFL practitioners can be confident in the benefits of the TETE approach and begin implementing it in their classes, if they haven't already. Introducing it gradually and at a difficulty level appropriate for the class will increase learner motivation and confidence, and at the same time, raise the confidence and proficiency of teachers. TETE creates a win-win situation for all.

The Author

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Eliciting Questions in the ESL/EFL Classroom

by Mark Messer

I have always encouraged my students to ask questions, but they have often hesitated to do so. Perhaps they have wanted to avoid drawing attention to themselves; haven't wanted to look stupid; have never studied in a setting where asking questions was encouraged or expected; have found it particularly difficult to phrase their question; or may not have been able to ask the question before the class moved away from the topic, even if they might have been comfortable asking a question and could have expressed it well.

While some students do get through their coursework by listening to lectures, taking notes, and reading texts, in doing so, they hardly realize their potential. Asking questions in class allows students to sharpen and personalize their understanding of the lectures and texts. Of course, asking questions is an essential tool for language development both in and out of the classroom.

To help students learn to ask anyone questions, with or without preparation, and to do so comfortably, without hesitating, I offer the following four activities.

Level One—Becoming Comfortable Asking Questions

Preparation: Have the students help you make a list of English question words and phrases. Include the standard question words like "who," "what," "when," "where," "why," and "how," as well as other question structures like "do you," "did he," "was it," "has she," "can you," etc.). Write these on the board. Show the students how to ask questions using the words or phrases on the list.

Activity: With the students gathered around you, select one and have him/her ask you a question. At first, allowing the students to ask about any topic may make it easier for them to think of questions quickly. After you respond, have the next student in the group ask you a question. Continue in this fashion until everyone has asked at least one question. If you're working with a small group, go around more than once.

Variations: Choose a student to answer the other students' questions; give students limited time to ask each question, award points to individuals or teams for every question asked, and give prizes to the winners; or divide the class into groups and choose one student from each group to answer the other students' questions.

Level Two—Posing Follow-Up Questions

Preparation: Ask the students if they know what a follow-up question is. If not, inform them that it is a question usually asked for the purpose of clarifying or expanding upon a previous response (or question).

Activity: Using the basic format of Level One, have one student ask you a question. After you respond, have each of the remaining students ask you a follow-up question.

Variations: Give the students a particular topic to ask about. Make it as broad or narrow as it needs to be to generate discussion.

Level Three—Asking Text-Appropriate Questions

Preparation: Write a brief (perhaps 5-minute) speech or presentation on a topic of interest to the students. Prepare a summary (or an outline) of that presentation and give it to the students in advance. If the presentation contains difficult vocabulary, include a list of those words with the summary.

Activity: Make your presentation in class. Open the floor to questions, allowing the students to ask them in any order, but requiring them each to ask at least one question.

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Level Four—Interviewing an Outsider

Preparation: With input from the students, select an English speaker to invite to the class. Depending on how advanced the students' language skills are (and depending on other factors), this might be someone you (or they) know well, like a friend or a student from a more advanced class. You might also ask the students to help think of someone from the community to invite, someone in whom they have a particular interest, like another teacher, a business person, or someone else who works in a place where they need to speak English (a government employee, a museum tour guide, or a flight attendant).

Activity: Invite the special guest to join the class to make a brief presentation, or simply to be interviewed by the students. Ask the students to interview the guest using questions they have prepared ahead of time, questions they think up on the spot, or both.

Potential Pitfalls: Though you should encourage your students to form their questions without considerable delay, rushing them may only encourage them to think so far ahead of their turn that they don't listen to (or benefit from) what the other students say.

The Author

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Fostering Effective Group Dynamics in Elementary School Classrooms

by Jakyung Song

Training Notes

edited by Douglas Margolis

"Min-su is useless for our group. Please change our group member!"

During group work, it is not unusual to hear this kind of complaint from students. Another common problem is that some students dominate and others don't participate. Moreover, some students, as a result of their low proficiency, give up and rely on more capable group members to complete the task.

Despite these potential problems, the current Korean 7th National Curriculum encourages teachers to utilize collaborative group work (Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development, 1998). Elementary school teachers frequently do make use of group activities, but typically only perceive them as practice opportunities, not valuable learning time. In fact, group work helps resolve many class management issues, builds class cohesiveness and motivation, and most importantly, provides students with valuable opportunities for student-centered learning. Therefore, taking a little time to consider how to avoid problems encountered during group work can improve teacher effectiveness.

Problem 1: "We Don't Want You in Our Group"

First of all, we have to deal with Min-su. Nobody wants him in the group. What do we do? A basic condition for increasing group effectiveness is to promote a collaborative atmosphere, but the group blames less capable members for reducing the quality of their product. The group's rejection can injure the rejected student's self-esteem, as well as hurt collaboration.

To counter this problem, before group work, explain to students why collaboration is important. For example:

* "Think about G.O.D & S.E.S. If they don't all work together, and equally contribute, their performances would not be enjoyable."
* "Your friends can give you good ideas."
* "You can give your friends other good ideas."

In addition to teaching students to value collaboration, modeling how to collaborate can help. We should also reward students who collaborate well. For instance, give bonus points for teams who work well together, have students vote for a best helper, and award a prize for the best collaborating group.

Finally, have students evaluate their group performance. Ask them to record, for example, one idea they learned from each group member. (Use the "Group Work Self-Assessment" form following this article for a model.)

Problem 2: Non-Participation and Domination

Non-participating and dominating students also damage collaboration. When one student monopolizes, the others will do nothing.

To solve this problem, first, vest each member with his/her own role and duties, such as, recorder, timekeeper, chairman, and painter. Then, explain their role and let them work. To avoid monotony and achieve higher levels of participation, rotate roles regularly. In this way, all students regard themselves worthy and take charge of their group work.

Second, use a bell or musical instrument to indicate speaking turns. Every minute, for example, ring the bell as a signal for the next member to begin speaking. This technique may seem too controlling where groups already collaborate effectively, but where domination and non-participation is common, it can help to break the negative relationship pattern.

Third, after work, have students reflect about their contribution to the group. Read students' records and comment about them. For example, "Good job, but try to participate more actively" or "Great work, but give other friends more chances."

Problem 3: Low Proficiency

Sometimes, lack of participation arises due to students' low English proficiency. In many classrooms, relatively non-proficient students give up when assigned proficiency-based group work. Too great of a demand on their weak English skills can lead to failure and discouragement. How can we encourage them?

Think about non-proficiency based activities that encourage English practice, but whose outcome is not solely based on English ability. For instance, students could make a poster that practices writing an English word or phrase, but also requires drawing and artistic expression. Card guessing games or board games are two other examples. These activities can be accomplished regardless of individual English proficiency level. Their results are influenced by other factors like drawing ability, the roll of a dice, and luck.

Think about non-proficiency based activities that encourage English practice

Students are easily absorbed and excited in non-proficiency based group activities. Even a less proficient student might become an unexpected winner or enthusiastic collaborator. As a result, all students can increase self-confidence.

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Furthermore, getting all students engaged in such activities may promote unconscious learning, because students try to use English to proceed with the task. Therefore, it is worth investigating several non-proficiency based activities.

For more info about group work, check out Dornyei and Malderez (1999).

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Group Work Self-Assessment

*** Let's think about my group work!**

Group Name			**Your Name**	
Group Members				
What did I learn from my friends?	**Friend's Name**	**Something I learned**		
How did I help my friends?				
What's my contribution to the group?				
How much did I work actively?	**Circle: Too much / Properly / Too rare**			

- **Next group work I will…**

  1.

  2.

  3.

First Encounters with English

by Youngmi Park

I've just realized that I made a few mistakes speaking in English today. Fortunately, I don't worry about making mistakes anymore. I now know making mistakes is a necessary part of language learning. However, I can't help feeling desperate, whenever I count the years I've struggled to learn English. Sixteen years! The only thing I'm sure about language learning is that time doesn't guarantee language proficiency. That's why the first encounter, and indeed, every foreign language learning experience, needs to be motivational and engaging to convince students to make the long term commitment necessary for success.

Training Notes

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Quality Not Quantity

Van Lier (1996) suggests that the first encounter with English mush emphasize quality of exposure over quantity. He defines quality of exposure in terms of "linguistic access," which is the student's degree of familiarity with and ability to comprehend the text. He believes quantity of exposure, if not accessible, is useless.

My first English teacher, however, only focused on quantity of language without considering students' characteristics and ability. For example, when I had difficulties even in writing the alphabet, my first English teacher forced the class to write down the whole text of each lesson again and again, and then required students to memorize it. Her class was always full of tension because she punished students who didn't write neatly. She stuck rigidly to this writing-memorizing approach, which, admittedly, resulted in our ability to write letters neatly and recite the text accurately. However, this English encounter had a negative effect on my foreign language attitude. The teacher sometimes became so angry at my untidy writing that I often felt anxious and scared. I hated English. The memorizing activity also contributed to this feeling. Although I memorized every line of the book, I didn't have any chance to use this knowledge, and often wondered what the point was. For a few years after that, I studied English only for exams and made no commitment to English until much later in life when I was instrumentally motivated as an English teacher. My teacher failed to engage us because she was focused on quantity rather than quality of exposure.

Teaching For Outside Class Learning

Van Lier (1996) also believes that the important language development occurs between, not during, lessons. If students are not motivated to learn outside the classroom, language development doesn't occur. Now I wish my first English teacher had been patient with our mistakes, I would have felt safe in class and possibly began to like English, resulting in more practice outside class. If she had emphasized quality of input, maybe I would have enjoyed speaking in English inside and outside the classroom. English might have become more interesting and pleasurable to me, and, therefore, more worthwhile to learn. In which case, I think I might have invested more time outside the classroom to seek out English practice opportunities and increase my exposure to English.

Application to Teaching

The experience of my first teacher weighed heavily upon me when I began to teach young elementary school students. Thanks to my own bitter experience as a learner, I wanted to be more careful, especially when teaching to write letters. Thus, I prepare writing activities for young children based on the following three rules:

1. Wait until students are ready. If it is the first time for them to write English letters, don't demand too much. Forcing students to copy letters again and again only increases student anxiety.

2. Let them write what they like. Writing "A" through "Z" can be very boring. Instead, they can find a lot of letters in their own names, friends' names, and the names of the things they see everyday. Students' ongoing learning can be triggered by these memorable letters.

3. Don't forget, children are kinesthetic learners. Their hands, feet, and bodies can be pencils. Playgrounds, floors, or blackboards can be used like notebooks. Use your imagination to discover various ways to make letters, so that students learn the shapes *and* experience great fun.

All teachers were once students. In addition to my three rules for teaching elementary children, our own learning histories are good references for our teaching. In my case, I found my first encounter with English discouraging, demotivational, and a negative influence upon many years of my English language learning. That's why I consider first encounters with English as the most significant event in language learning. Of course, language learning is affected by a complex interplay of many variables, but I believe that successful language learning depends on learners' first impression about language because that is the starting point. We teachers must be careful to make sure we start students off on the right path.

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Welcome Dr. Peter Nelson as the new KTT Coordinator!

Inspirational Teaching

Training Notes

edited by Douglas Margolis

by Douglas P. Margolis

Motivation is More Than Classroom Management

Many teachers regard motivation as a tool to get students to listen, to pay attention, to care about our teaching. Many of us may only care about motivation to reach that kid who sits in the back of the classroom and disrupts his peers with occasional cynical remarks, or that other student who always tends to have his head crushing a book as he peacefully snores at his desk. Understanding motivation might change the behaviors of these students, but teachers need to consider the effects of motivation not just to avoid problems, but because language learning is a long and tedious process that tends to discourage and ultimately defeat most people who undertake it.

Zoltan Dornyei (2001) writes that the vast majority of language learners endure a process of accepting different degrees of failure. Even if students cling to their dreams and push toward perfection, they face an arduous road. Patience is essential. Language learning demands the ability to endure frustration, humiliation, and confusion. For these reasons, even the best of students benefit from teachers' efforts to motivate.

Conceptualizing Motivation

Exactly how to motivate, however, depends on how we conceive "motivation." Behaviorists define motivation as the anticipation of reward or fear of punishment. For example, promising students a cookie or an 'A' in exchange for particular behavior. Dogs and rats often are effectively trained in this way, but unfortunately humans don't always abide by this model. Cognitivists suggest that humans are motivated by various needs and drives. For example, if a student missed lunch, by Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, until hunger is dealt with, concentration on English will be limited. Bandura's self-efficacy theory provides another take on motivation. From the self-efficacy model, if a student believes that her or his actions have a bearing on the outcome of a task, then she or he will be more likely to expend effort. For example, students who receive 'A' grades often thank their teachers for it. By the self-efficacy model, however, teachers should emphasize that the 'A' is the result of the student's own efforts, not a gift from the teacher.

From Psychology to Our Classrooms

These perspectives don't exhaust the discussion on motivation theory, but they identify relevant concerns for instructional design, i.e. rewards, needs, and self-efficacy.

Teachers need not spend lots of money to bribe their students with candy, but giving and receiving rewards (including candy) is fun at every age. I teach adults. Last semester I gave out an award each class for impromptu speech: "Topic Master Champion of the day." Several students gave impromptu speeches, the class voted a champion, and the winner received a certificate produced with MS Word and regular photocopy paper. It took all of five minutes to make and cost me nothing. At first, I thought it trivial to the students, but one day I forgot the certificate and discovered their disappointment. Rewards motivate.

Perhaps the most difficult and easiest way to motivate students is to remain silent.

Regarding needs, students must feel safe in the classroom. When teachers know student names and histories, students feel more comfortable and more readily become engaged. So spend time in "real" conversations with students. Doing so also makes English less of an academic exercise. At the same time, however, be careful not to let one or two students dominate or be perceived as favorites, else other students may feel slighted.

One of the most important needs of students, though, is the need to feel that class is worthwhile. If the teacher looks or acts bored and disinterested, how can one expect students to become enthusiastic? Thus, the most important class preparation is to find a personal connection to the topic. Discover the love and exude enthusiasm.

Perhaps the most difficult and the easiest way to motivate students is to remain silent. Once discussions begin, and you're dying to express your point of view, don't. Even when students turn to you for advice and perspective, the more you turn it back to them, the more participation increases. Of course level and age differences affect how teachers must handle classes, but to the greatest extent possible, turning control over to students increases their engagement and self-investment.

One reason that teacher silence promotes student motivation is that student talk increases their experience of success in communicating in the foreign language. The more they succeed, the more their self-efficacy grows.

Another way that teachers motivate students is via our expectations. Expect the best from our students and they can succeed. Communicate these expectations to them. When students express negative expectations, challenge them.

The Author

Douglas Margolis teaches at the International Graduate School of English in Seoul and is an in-country Tutor for the University of Birmingham MATESL Program. He also coordinates KOTESOL Teacher Training and edits this column.

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English Only? No!

Training Notes

edited by Douglas Margolis

by So-hee Kwon

How can we help a Korean beginner learner of English to understand the meaning of the word, "friendship" or any abstract word? Please keep this question in mind while you read this article. My focus is the reasons why we need to use Korean in English class and what we can do with Korean, especially, in vocabulary teaching.

The need for Korean as an aid to vocabulary teaching

So, what can we do to help the beginner? Nobody, surely, can show the realia for the word, friendship. A few teachers, hopefully, can mime out the word. Some teachers might possibly give an English definition ("feeling or relationship between friends") but there is scant likelihood that beginner students will understand "feeling" or "relationship," meaning students will still be left in the dark. A few really creative teachers, with good technical resources and time to sift through videos, might find a useful video clip that demonstrates "friendship," but how can we ascertain whether or not students really understand the term? Given abstract terminology, what can we do? I say using the Korean counterpart (in this case, "*woojeong*") can save time and energy, and reduce stress. Moreover, Popovic (2002) argues that judicious use of the first language (L1) in the EFL classroom is justified because EFL students are likely to need translation skill. In other words, according to Popovic, using L1 and translation is authentic to the needs of EFL students. In addition, she reasons that use of L1 promotes proficiency and builds student confidence while reducing anxiety.

Now, "English Only" advocates might suggest that I can introduce the word, "friendship," in contexts so learners can be more exposed to the word naturally and eventually acquire the meaning. This approach sounds reasonable and pedagogical until we think about the reality of so-called context. Nation (1997) ascertained that second language learners needed to know at least 3,000 high frequency English words to get to the threshold level where they can start to learn from context. Until students reach that threshold level, there is not much point in expecting context to aid comprehension. Thus, while I agree that words should be presented in context, beginners still face understanding and comprehension on a word by word basis.

Ways to use Korean to aid vocabulary acquisition

Back to the drawing board, then, how can we help the beginner to learn 3,000 words effectively and efficiently? I am not saying that using Korean is the only way. I want to point out, however, that Korean can be an additional tool for the purpose. In the paragraphs below, I will focus on four techniques for making the best use of Korean to take the beginner to the threshold level.

Technique one: use Korean as a motivation trigger. That is, give learners English counterparts for the Korean words they like or want to say. Students often struggle to express ideas in English for which they haven't yet acquired the terminology. Make time in classes for students to present Korean words and work together as a class to discover appropriate English translations.

Technique two: say the Korean counterparts for English words which are difficult to conceptualize with pictures or realia. As with the word, "friendship," if students seem to not understand English explanations, rather than wasting a lot of class time, just give the Korean translation and move on. This approach helps everybody to both understand the word and avoid feeling like class is bogging down.

Technique three: use Korean for comprehension checks. For example, make vocabulary flashcards, which have English on one side and Korean on the other. Students can flip through a deck of cards and quickly test their own comprehension or teachers can quiz students using the opposite language to check student understanding.

Technique four: play word games to challenge students. For example, say a Korean word or expression and then ask students to come up with the English translation, or the opposite word in English.

Surely, we need to keep in mind that we shouldn't overuse the mother tongue in teaching the second language as Atkinson (1987) has warned. At the same time, however, we shouldn't get stuck on the "English Only" slogan and forget the fact that we have "Korean," a well-made tool for learning and teaching English.

Now the beginner has got the meaning of the word "friendship" and we can move on.

The Author

So-hee Kwon taught English for three years at the United Language School until this year when she began the Master program at the International Graduate School of English. Before teaching, she worked for the Research & Development Department of Jaenung Inc. as a researcher.

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Challenges in Oral Testing

Peter Nelson

Training Notes

edited by Douglas Margolis

Korean teachers and students at all age and proficiency levels are more acquainted and comfortable with receptive forms of testing English (Listening, Reading) than active forms (Speaking, Writing). This inclination traces its roots to factors prevalent in the 1960s to 1980s, including few good speakers of English and the emphasis on grammar and reading. Yet with the widespread introduction of Communicative Language Teaching in Korea in the 1990s, and recent changes by the government for the teaching of English, the demand for interactive testing techniques has grown substantially. There is, however, a lag in responding fully and well.

In particular, there is a wide gap in competent oral testing in public and private schools, either by Korean teachers of English or by native speakers. Reasons for this are well known: large class sizes, little contact with individual students, lack of training and, for Korean teachers, hesitance based on perceived mis-pronunciation or inability to judge speakers competently. Added to this combination is what is known as the teacher's paradox: the better we know our students, the less objective we are in evaluating them. Sophisticated organizations like Cambridge University's Local Examinations Syndicate reduce these problems by having two highly trained examiners test students individually, neither of whom has met the test takers before. Moreover, they follow detailed procedures to assist them in their evaluation.

It is perhaps unrealistic to expect teachers of English to follow measures like these. However, there are others we can consider to improve our ability to judge students orally, beginning of course with reading books on test design and attending seminars on the subject. Two in particular are highly recommended and available in Korea: Adrian Underhill's Sound Foundations (Heinemann, 1994) and Nic Underhill's Testing Spoken Language (Cambridge University Press, 1987). These works respectively provide in user-friendly language an understanding of speech components as well as appropriate means to test them, and are therefore a useful beginning to a complex, important area of language teaching.

Practical Considerations

Once the teacher is familiar with conceptual aspects of oral testing, there are other, practical considerations that deal with techniques, frequency of occurrence, marking systems and so on. For example, there is a wide range of possibilities for types of elicitation: interviews, information gap exercises, discussion between two students, role play, oral reports, questions and answers, responding to instructions, reading aloud and translating from Korean into English. Choosing among them is important and is somewhat related to the classroom situation faced. In small classes, for instance, the teacher may be able to interact with students on a one-to-one basis, using techniques like a short interview or an oral report. In larger classes the teacher may choose group based alternatives such as role play or discussions in which two or three students participate while the teacher evaluates.

Evaluation categories is another area that should be considered. On earlier versions of the Cambridge First Certificate of English (FCE), for example, examiners tested students in terms of fluency, grammar, prosody, pronunciation, vocabulary and quality of answer. These may be suitable for college and perhaps high school students in Korea, but inappropriate for elementary and middle school students who are at early stages of language learning. In the latter case, simpler measures such as understanding the question and giving a response that indicates comprehension and relevance may be preferred.

Performance criteria are also items to consider. These may include the length of utterance, the response time, speed of speaking, ability of the speaker to initiate speech instead of just responding to it, flexibility in speaking on different topics, and repetition, if any, by the teacher before the student understands what is expected and responds.

It is important to emphasize that not all oral exams need to be part of a student's grade. They can be used for diagnostic purposes for an individual or group, as in checking for pronunciation. They can be used to rank students, to isolate errors, or to provide feedback generally. They can even be adapted for peer assessment.

In the author's classroom, for instance, students have two ten-minute, private interviews per semester. They are first put at ease by light conversation, then select a topic chosen at random from a dictionary. During discussion on that topic, they are evaluated using the FCE categories mentioned above. At the end they are shown their individual scores, which are useful for feedback, but they are given a final score based on the performance of all students in the class.

Our Contribution

Oral testing is an increasingly important part of our work as language teachers, yet many are not familiar with test design and proper implementation. We should become aware of the many facets of oral assessment, especially the purpose of the test itself and its suitability for our students. We must also be willing to experiment with different techniques, and ensure students know beforehand how they will be tested. By becoming more informed we enlarge our role while enabling learners at all levels to become better speakers of English.

Dr. Peter Nelson teaches in the Department of English Education at Chung Ang University in Seoul. Dr. Nelson is active in KTT as a speaker, writer and trainer. This article is drawn from articles and lectures given for KOTESOL. *He would like to thank Dr. Cha Kyung-whan, David Kim, and Jim Gongwer for their helpful suggestions.*

Top Down & Bottom Up Listening Instruction (Part 2)

By James Ranalli

Training Notes
edited by
Douglas Margolis

Editor's Note: This is the second of a two-part series.

Last issue, I focused on top-down instruction and pointed out that teachers should be paying more attention to what goes wrong during listening lessons, and less to what goes right. When students make errors, these become opportunities for microteaching, helping students identify the cause of their errors and gain new understanding of English to improve their listening ability.

There are four basic stages to microteaching: (1) monitor and diagnose trouble spots; (2) "task-ify" the trouble spots; (3) rewind, replay, elicit, and prompt; and (4) now they say it.

Stage 1: Monitor and diagnose trouble spots
Microteaching involves going back to those points in the tape where learners had trouble. One simple method is that as soon as you've stopped the tape, let them check and discuss their answers in pairs. In addition to adding a cooperative and communicative element to the lesson, this approach gives the teacher time to move around and check student papers to see how they've done. Don't rely on student verbal responses.

If you find that a majority wrote nothing for one particular question, or they all wrote wrong answers, you know you have a candidate for microteaching. Another alternative suggested by Cauldwell (2000) is to actually let students control the tape recorder during a listening activity. They will stop and replay the parts that most need microteaching.

Stage 2: "Task-ify" trouble spots
Now that you've found a problematic section of the script, cue up the tape to that section again and turn the problem into a task. This can mean simply replaying the sentence or sentences a few times in succession, and having students write down what they think they hear. They compare and consult with each other, adding more words and revising their hypotheses each time.

Another approach is to create short gap-fills on the board. For example, in one of my lessons students often have trouble with the following part of the tapescript:

I went to South Africa last year. I was doing some research for Fairweather Travel. I'd never been there before.

It's easy to see where the problem lay: the last sentence's contraction, representing the past perfect, is particularly difficult to catch. So on the board a quick gap-fill can help. I blank out a number of words, mostly unstressed function or "grammar" words. In this sort of "task-ifying," the trick is to zero in on the problem area while making the task instructive and challenging, through the proper number and placement of gaps.

Stage 3: Rewind, replay, elicit and prompt
Next, rewind and replay the selected portion of the tape a few times and elicit from students the missing words. You can use prompts and hints to guide them, for example: "The first letter is w." "What word does it sound like?" "Does that make sense here?" "Is the grammar OK?" "Does that change the meaning?"

Obviously, phonological issues are causing problems in the above example and the teacher must point them out. Specifically, there is elision of the sound /d/ in "I'd" when it meets the sound /n/ in "never"; in other words, /d/ tends to disappear in this position. Students couldn't hear the sound, so they interpreted the sentence without it. In feedback on the gap-fill, some suggested the misheard word might have been I've, but clearly the present perfect doesn't work here. Some eliciting, prompting and microteaching can help clarify.

Clearly, microteaching will involve not just listening skills but also grammar and phonology, because many of the grammatical words which create fine distinctions in meaning (e.g. auxiliary verbs) are often unstressed and take on different forms in the stream of speech. Field (2000) has noted that "just because a word is known, does not mean that it will be recognized when it is heard." That's why teachers should be familiar with, and able to explain, what happens to the sounds of English in fast, spontaneous speech.

Stage 4: Now they say it
We're not finished yet. Before moving on to another trouble spot, the teacher can have the students reproduce the target sentence or sentences, trying to imitate the fluent speaker's intonation, stress and connected speech. They start slowly and then speed up, finally trying to match the speed of the tape. This sort of practice can be extremely gratifying and a big confidence builder for learners.

It's important to stress, however, that the passages chosen for microteaching should not be long. Two or three short sentences, or one longer one, should be the maximum. I would also recommend focusing on only a few trouble spots in any particular lesson. Usually three or four is a good number.

To sum up, microteaching offers a simple but effective means of incorporating work on bottom-up processes into your listening lessons. Try it!

The Author
Jim Ranalli coordinates training and development at Yonsei University's Foreign Language Institute. He has trained

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Teaching Young Learners

This is the first in a series of articles specifically related to Young Learner issues and is aimed at Young Learner teachers and teacher trainers. In light of the fact that the most recent generation to undergo English education is freshly out of diapers, it is only natural that KOTESOL court this ever growing but underserved segment of ELT.

This of course begs the question, who are young learners? There is considerable debate over what age group constitutes young learners. To date, two groups of learners make up young learners: Very Young Learners (VYL) under 7 and Young Learners (YL) 7-12. Teenagers, who are not quite adults but no longer children, can be classified as well. For lack of an accepted, politically correct term I refer to them as Young Adults (YA).

The reason for this three-tier distinction is that each group has unique learning abilities that must be catered to in different ways. Jean Piaget's stages of intellectual development also justify this YL division (Pre Operational (2-7), Operational (7-12) and the critical stage of Formal Operations (12-adult)).

Being that this is the first instance of a new column devoted to Teaching Young Learners, I wanted to write something special to demonstrate that teaching young learners can be just as serious and academic a context as teaching adults. I wanted this column to trumpet the message that young learner teachers can be competent and professional and that the YL field itself is worthy of our attention.

After brainstorming, I decided to introduce you to Lev Vygotsky, the Russian psychologist, and his Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). I drew up a mind map to include related concepts such as Krashen's Input Hypothesis (*i*+1), interlanguage, scaffolding, cooperative learning, and whole language learning. I wanted to wrap it all up in a neat, little, easy-to-understand package of social constructivist theory. That idea will have to wait for another day. Instead, I will relate a story about one of my earliest YL breakthroughs!

Show, Not Tell

My introduction to YL was a common one. I marched into class and started to teach a group of eight year olds. With the best of intentions, I got up in front of the board and *tried* to TEACH! Naturally the little miscreants crawled under the table, fell off their chairs, wandered around looking for an adventure. This scenario went on for some time. The straw that broke this camel's back was when I got *dong-chim*ed. If you are unfamiliar with this *dong-chim* practice, it is a devilish ritual perpetrated by Korean children in the spirit of proctological fun. To be honest, I lost my temper and acted much like a two year old myself. Anyway, my breakthrough came when the 'doctor' took his seat and the others followed suit.

In hindsight, it was a critical lesson in the dynamics of social interaction. Since there is a bit of a gap between what children can accomplish with and without our help, the trick is in giving just the right amount of support necessary to get them to the next level (*i*+1). By watching and learning from adults or peers, children build up a stock of cultural know-how, of thought, discourse, and behavior. In a ZPD nutshell, children's social development stimulates their cognitive development.

How has that changed my own teaching and learning? Well, my beliefs about my role as teacher changed. I no longer cling to the traditional role of teacher. A coach is a better portrayal. However, passing that baton of power to students was easier said than done. Luckily for me, classroom chaos is a thing of the past. My students now spend more time on-task and less time probing personal body parts. Of course, classroom management is not so simple. But transforming my role as teacher was a catalyst for further positive change.

Another way ZPD has changed my professional life is in my pursuit of cooperative development. Learning is a collaborative process. General advice and teaching tips, networking, and relieving job related stress are all borne of collegial interaction. The larger issue is one of mentoring. And ZDP need not be restricted to the realm of children. Learning and growth do continue beyond infancy and adolescence.

Young Learners

by
Jake Kimball

A salesman I am not. But do let me share with you some opportunities for personal and professional development. Spearheading this new wave of interest in YL is the Young Learners Special Interest Group. It is open to all KOTESOL members. Exciting plans in the works include a possible YL Symposium, a newsletter or journal, teacher training sessions, and an employment database. To find out more, visit with us in October or go to http://www.kotesol.org/younglearn/. Also of interest is the TESOL E-List at http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/~tesl-l/.

Contact KOTESOL if you have a specific topic interest or if you would like to contribute. Your thoughts and comments are gladly welcome. If Lev Vygotsky and Social Constructivism pique your interest, go to http://pdts.uh.edu/~ichen/ebook/ET-IT/social.htm for additional information and classroom applications.

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native-speaker and Korean English teachers on the Cambridge CELTA and DTEFLA courses and at the Seoul Teacher Training Center.

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Top Down & Bottom Up Listening Instruction (Part I)

By James Ranalli

Training Notes
edited by
Douglas Margolis

Editor's Note: This is the first half of a two-part article about teaching listening skills.

Field (1998) observed that "teachers focus on outcomes of listening, rather than upon listening itself, upon product rather than process." This means there's a tendency to focus on the answers, rather than on how students arrived at them. While producing correct answers is important, especially in an exam-driven educational system, the important focus for learners should be on the processes of listening. That is, how is it possible to listen to the strange sounds of a foreign language and make meaning?

Another tendency in teaching listening is that wrong answers are generally swept under the rug. (One writer has summarized current listening methodology as "give the answers and move on.") The fact is, however, that wrong answers are usually more instructive than correct ones. To really teach listening, says Field, "teachers need to follow up on incorrect responses in order to determine where understanding broke down."

Top-down versus bottom-up

Part of the problem is that listening exercises nowadays tend to focus too much on top-down processing. Before students listen, they are usually prompted to make predictions and to use pre-existing knowledge about the world, the context/ situation, the topic at hand, and so forth, in order to make logical guesses about what they are listening to. With this "schematic" knowledge they can fill in any gaps in their perception and avoid straining to hear every word.

Now this is good – and necessary. Learners must exploit top-down knowledge when they listen. For this reason, teachers should build up student tolerance of ambiguity, helping learners to be comfortable making guesses and filling in gaps without a hundred percent certainty. Fortunately, many listening materials currently in use support this type of practice.

Moreover, top-down listening is also advanced by giving students practice at listening for different purposes, such as listening first for gist and then again for detail or inference.

The problem with top-down listening practice, however, is that too often the other half of the equation, bottom–up processing, gets left out. Bottom-up processing is the nuts and bolts of listening. It refers to the way we perceive individual sounds, hear them in words and phrases, and chain these words and phrases into propositions that carry meaning. When people listen, they use both top-down and bottom-up knowledge in combination to make sense of what they hear. It follows, then, that learners will need practice in *both* types of processing to become good listeners in the target language.

Where to start – reworking the basic listening procedure

The first step, according to Cauldwell (2002), is that "teachers should be provided with the skills of observing and explaining the features of fast speech." This means that we may need a bit more training in phonology. (An excellent resource for introducing yourself to connected speech, as well as other fundamentals of phonology, is the book *Sound Foundations* by Adrian Underhill, published by Macmillan-Heinemann.)

Teachers should also become familiar with other non-phonological characteristics of fast speech. Field (1998) and Cauldwell (2000) have identified some of these:

* hesitations, repetitions and false starts
* long, loosely structured sentences
* turn-taking features
* ellipsis
* non-standard grammar

This knowledge increases understanding of spoken English and can help teachers identify where students are having problems.

The next step is that we should not shelter our students from authentic listening material, as so often happens, on the grounds that it is "too difficult." ELT listening texts that have had the "warts and all" of natural spoken English sanitized out of them may make for problem-free listening activities, but they are not preparing learners for real-life interaction. The challenge for teachers is to find authentic or semi-authentic materials, which are appropriate to the students' level and which offer challenging but achievable tasks.

Next, we need to give attention to the process of listening. This means focusing on the steps that one goes through while listening, which varies depending on purpose and content. For example, attention changes depending on whether we are listening for specific information, like directions to the post office, or merely entertaining ourselves watching a soap opera. Helping students think about their attention and how they apply it to different listening tasks may help them better negotiate meaning.

Finally, avoid sweeping student mistakes under the rug. You don't need to emphasize that students made a mistake, but look at errors as learning opportunities. Something was misunderstood or not heard properly. Direct student attention back to the trouble spot and do some "microteaching," a topic that I'll cover in more detail in the next issue.

see Training Notes on page 15

Membership Spotlight

edited by Jerry Foley

Now our spotlight on members goes to David Kim, employed in the Department of English Language and Literature at Konkuk University in Seoul. His hometown is Toronto, Canada, but presently he is residing in Suwon. David has attended the University of Toronto, Canada, receiving a Bachelor of Science degree, and Chung Ang University in Seoul, for a Master of Arts degree, both degrees in the field of psychology.

David D. I. Kim

Having been involved with KOTESOL since 1995 David Kim has/is served/serving in various capacities: KOTESOL National Research Committee member; Seoul Chapter Research Advisory Committee member; Conference Chair for the KOTESOL Kyonggi-Seoul 1999 Regional Conference and the Second Annual Seoul-Kyonggi-do 2000 Conference; Symposium Chair at the Eighth Annual International 2000 Conference and Publisher's Exhibit in Daegu; Research Chair for KTT (KOTESOL Teacher Training); and Facilitator for the Research SIG (Special Interest Group).

While he has certain ideas of what teaching, learning, and research are all about, David says he feels approach/methodology fashions come and go, but the foundation for being a good educator is based on three principles: teach, motivate, and learn. That is, he believes as professional educators "we are expected to adroitly impart knowledge, and provide training, related to our subject area expertise; however, sadly enough there is little expectation for teachers to motivate and encourage students." He also believes, "we should continually strive to engage in the process of learning ourselves, not only to better our teaching, but also to better ourselves." He suggests one effective manner of learning is to conduct research in an area of interest to the educator.

Following his own advice, he has been actively conducting language education research in Korea. His research interests are varied, covering teaching/learning issues related to culture and language, psycholinguistics, teaching methodology, language testing (e.g., English pronunciation), and investigating learner characteristics in language acquisition, to name some. His research findings, and other writings, have found their way into the *Korea TESOL Journal* and *KOTESOL Proceedings*, as well as *The English Connection*.

David is married and his wife's name is Myung Shin. Samuel, their son, for the most part is said to be a "bundle of joy," but as all infants are, is a "terror" at times. David has many hobbies and is engaged in several extracurricular activities, some of which are playing with their son of 13 months, strumming a tune or three on the guitar, and watching movies. As to plans for the future, he hopes to continue conducting language learning/teaching research in Korea.

For travel experiences David Kim says that he has been all over North America, both Canada and the USA, and various countries in East Asia, such as Japan, Hong Kong, Bangkok, etc. He has not been to Europe as of yet, but it is on his "Places to visit" list.

As a closing comment David Kim wanted to add: "I feel pleased and honoured to be associated with many wonderful people in KOTESOL. It makes the labour of teaching bearable."

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Cross, D. (1999). *A practical handbook of language teaching.* Harlow, Essex: Longman. [Ch. 6 (Oral Work: Elicitation Techniques) lists a wide variety of methods.]

Harmer, J. (1991). *The practice of English language teaching.* Harlow, Essex: Addison Wesley Longman. [Ch. 6 (Introducing New Language Structure) provides a general model for new language forms, while Ch. 7 (Practice) considers specific techniques and drills.]

Scrivener, J. (1994). *Learning teaching.* Oxford: Heinemann. [Ch. 11 (Toolkit 2: Activities, Lessons, Courses, People) indicates how Cuisenaire Rods (small colored blocks of wood or plastic in different lengths and colors) can be use to illustrate syllable stress and stress errors.]

Underhill, A. (1994). *Sound foundations: Living phonology.* Oxford: Heinemann. [Pages 160-166 show how finger correction exercises are useful for identifying errors in connected speech.]

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The Author

Jim Ranalli coordinates training and development at Yonsei University's Foreign Language Institute. He has trained native-speaker and Korean English teachers on the Cambridge CELTA and DTEFLA courses and at the Seoul Teacher Training Center.

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Teaching to the brains of children: Benefits of language games and activities

Gerry Lassche

Training Notes

edited by Douglas Margolis

Go into any ELT bookstore and the first thing to meet your eyes are the myriads of colorful materials, all marketed for the teaching of youngsters. Parents and teachers alike are encouraged to ply games and activities on the children in their care. Many lesson plans seem to be exclusively composed of activities which emphasize language as play, almost in an effort to distract the children from the realization that they are learning.

Learning & Brains

Strong support for the use of games comes from the field of neuro-physiology, which studies how the brain functions. Children's brains are still developing even well after they are born. A brain is made up of nerve cells, called neurons, which connect to each other in particular ways. Children actually have twice the number of neurons at birth then during adulthood. Neuro-physiology tells us that a new experience helps to create a new pattern of neurons and those neurons that fail to establish connections eventually die off.

Ever wonder why your students can't sit still? Brain researchers have found that activities which stimulate physical movement actually facilitate the number of neural connections. Montessori (1912) intuited that children are instinctively motivated to move, because their brains require physical stimulation in order to grow better. Activities, then, that encourage free movement coupled with a sense of familiarity and fun, that are challenging but yet not failure inducing, are perhaps a practical realization of these findings.

The best kinds of learning experiences are ones that help children to make multiple associations. For example, instead of learning a "B-A-L-L" is the sound /ba:l/, children can learn that it bounces, it's colorful, you can play games with it, and it can float on the water. These multiple associations are created when teachers follow a principle Montessori (1912: 167ff) suggested, that one should "educate the senses." Strikingly, the TESOL Standards for Young Learners (TESOL, 2001) endorses the same approach: Materials should be developmentally appropriate, involving play, interaction, variety, and engagement of the five senses. These multiple associations make neuronal connections stronger. As Aesop taught, one stick is easily broken, but a bundle tied together remains strong.

From Brain Research to Foreign Language Learning

What do these ideas suggest?

First, it is essential that children be provided opportunities to exercise their "wings". Games and play allow children to hypothesize about learning, while encouraging the movement that is so important for their physical development, a process which in turn helps their brains to develop more neuronal connections. Games which are multi-model and engage many of the senses at once, are bound to be successful at advancing language development, as well as intrinsically motivating (TESOL, 2001). Thus, integrating into the syllabus cooperative games, which emphasize communicative exchanges, probably makes the regular classwork more effective.

Second, almost *all* children arrive in the classroom already knowing that they can learn. Remember, these are the same children that, without any formal training, have learned to speak their mother tongue in far less time than we as adults could learn a second language. It seems that, as Montessori noted, it is in school that children develop inefficiencies in their learning strategies. Realizing this, then, teachers would do well to spend more time observing what children are actually doing (Montessori, 1912: 72ff), and capitalizing on what one sees by expanding learning moments. This creates what Schwartz (1983: 87) calls the heterogenous classroom where children pursue learning facilitated by their teachers according to their own individual directions, a characteristic of the "Children's House" schools Montessori developed.

The ancient book of Proverbs, in chapter 22:6 says: "Train up a child in the way *he* should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Children have wings of their own. The more we let children develop their own personal strengths and independent brains, the more likely they will value and remember what we teach them. Fulfilling heterogeneity and self-directed, independent learning principles at all times is perhaps idealistic, but it does represent a standard that teachers and parents alike can strive towards. So don't feel guilty about using games for language teaching. Give the children room to fly!

The Author

Gerry Lassche is a lecturing professor at Ajou University's Graduate School of Education in Suwon. He is a founding member of KOTESOL Teacher Training, a past National Second Vice-President of KOTESOL, and a frequent lecturer at conferences and teacher training events. His email address is glassche@yahoo.ca

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Tips For Using CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning)

Training Notes edited by Douglas Margolis

Douglas Paul Margolis

As the capabilities of computers increase, more teachers are discovering ways to use them to reach students and—hopefully—advance learning. For the purposes of this article, CALL is defined as *any* application of computers for the sake of language learning, including the use of basic computer tools such as MS Word, PowerPoint, and Excel; CD and DVD language learning programs; and web-sites and online activities, such as chat rooms, bulletin boards, and even email. This article points to the variety of applications teachers might consider, discusses potential, and offers some web and text resources for further exploration.

You can integrate CALL into your lessons without a computer in the classroom.

CALL with *No* Computer

The first step to lesson planning, of course, is to analyze your student needs and determine your learning objectives. This article focuses on the next step, exploring possibilities for achieving those objectives. One point to realize, however, is that you can integrate CALL into your lessons without a computer in the classroom.

For example, assign computer tasks for homework. Take advantage of student motivation to use computers. The Internet provides a wealth of online drills and practice activities (see for example www.professorenglish.pe.kr). In addition, access to authentic English web sites can provide lessons on culture or communicative practice on any topic imaginable. In my reading courses, for example, I usually give students a scanning activity that involves visiting several web sites to obtain posted information. Some sites provide interesting calculators and quizzes, such as a calorie counter at WebMD (www.webmd.com), which students can use to obtain real information relevant to their lives.

Teachers can also assign projects that entail using online sources to create PowerPoint presentations, web sites, or newspapers. Students can use cut and paste methods to collect and arrange English materials and thus avoid typing. These applications of computer technology promote collaboration and immerse students in English (Pennington, 1996; Teeler, 2000).

Email, discussion boards, and chat rooms also provide excellent homework opportunities.

Email, discussion boards, and chat rooms also provide excellent homework opportunities. Peer—peer, or student—teacher, these technologies engage students and create an archive of writing practice that can be used to track progress. They also can save paper, help organize student work, and facilitate a more personal exchange between student and teacher.

CALL in the classroom

CALL can be employed in the classroom even with only one computer. This computer can be used by small groups of students rotating for short periods of time, or, with a beam projector, it can be used for class presentations. Alternatively, students can be assigned to serve as computer information gatherers and play a resource role for the class.

If more computers are available, small groups or pairs can be assigned to work in teams to tour sites, gather information to solve puzzles, trek the Internet on treasure hunts, or tackle almost any task.

Problems with CALL use

Effective deployment of CALL activities, however, requires advance preparations. First, you must know what kind of computer and internet access is available to your students. Are their computers up-to-date or old and slow? Find out about their internet connections, browser types, and computer skills. If students are lacking in skills and equipment, then you will need

continued on next page

Related Online Resources

http://www.professorenglish.pe.kr	*My web site (work-in-progress)*
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/langc/CALL.html	*The Virtual CALL Library*
http://www.lerc.ritsumei.ac.jp/callej/	*CALL EJ Online Journal*
http://edvista.com/claire/internet-esl.html	*The Internet for ESL Teachers*
http://www.kamall.or.kr/inter_conf/inter_conf_home.html	*Korean Association of Multimedia Assisted Language Learning*

Training Notes: Tips For Using CALL
by Douglas Paul Margolis

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to limit your use of CALL to basic items or build computer training into your instruction plan.

Another concern is time management. No teacher wants to increase their workload with hours of emailing to students. The secret is to automate tasks. Your browser and email programs should permit you to filter email into separate folders. Create folders for each of your classes and then create a filter that moves the student email directly into the folders. In this way, you can keep your inbox free and work on student mail as you want. In addition, if you create template emails for responding to students, you can speed up your responses and reduce your typing time. Another method is to cut and paste common themes. Students still receive personalized responses, but you reduce your workload.

Finally, start slow. You don't need to dive into every computer possibility available. Try a little at a time. Collaborate with colleagues. Explore different possibilities. Evaluate, adjust, and evaluate again….

The Author

Douglas Margolis teaches at Dong Seoul College near Sungnam City. He is a KTT co-coordinator and a frequent KOTESOL speaker. He is also the editor of the Training Notes column and welcomes submissions and suggestions by email. He may be contacted at: dpm123@teacher.com, (031) 720-2245.

Additional Resources

Dede Teeler's *How to Use the Internet in ELT* (2000), Mark Warschauer and Richard Kern 's *Network-Based Language Teaching: Concepts and Practice* (2000), and Carol Chapelle's *Computer Applications in Second Language Acquisition* (2001) are three of the more current books on this topic that might help you, but you can also go online and find helpful information there. Check out the text box on the previous page for web site addresses that can give you a place to start (all current as of 14 February 2002).

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Self-Assessment*

by Peter Nelson

One of the newer teaching techniques in Korea is self-assessment, a procedure whereby students examine their own work to identify areas in which they do well and those where they need improvement. This technique gives students autonomy over their learning. The good news is that self-assessment procedures can be taught to students at all levels, from elementary school through college. In addition, self-assessment activities can utilize the four communication skills. Moreover, teachers can use self-assessment as one tool in the grading process. Given this potential, self-assessment deserves attention.

In communicative language teaching, students are viewed as active participants in the learning process and encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. Self-assessment is one technique that meets these criteria. It helps students become more conscious of themselves as learners and helps them apply awareness of their learning needs to new areas of study. It promotes self-esteem and self-confidence, which are vital for personal growth. Moreover, critical thinking and decision-making skills are also encouraged by self-assessment. Most of all, it increases participation and motivation through evaluation and interaction.

For the teacher, self-assessment provides another source of information regarding student abilities. Although some may think students will assess too generously, and therefore cannot be trusted, research suggests students are often harsher on themselves than they should be. Rather than downplaying students' intrinsic abilities, then, self-assessment enables the teacher to maximize student abilities while concurrently obtaining information on individuals and the class as a whole.

There are several steps to implementing self-assessment correctly. First, students must be able to distinguish different levels of performance. This is best achieved by the teacher first outlining the concept of goal setting, and then discussing its particular importance to proficiency in communication. The teacher needs to give students models and appropriate measures for their level. Middle school students, for instance, might have English writing goals that include punctuation, basic grammar, and sentence coherence. The teacher could show students samples of properly and improperly punctuated sentences to focus their attention.

The next step is to give them previously written student papers (names removed!), highlighting those features to be discussed in relation to class goals. Students can evaluate these papers in pairs or small groups, using examples provided by the teacher to determine their quality. Simple marking criteria, such as Poor, Average and Good, are sufficient to get them speaking to one another and explaining their evaluations. Used in this manner, the papers are a prompt to enhance verbal and critical thinking skills, while teaching students the assessment process so they will be able to apply it to their own work. In addition, the teacher may rotate the papers and ask new groups to compare them, or even ask individuals to explain their assessments.

Once students can evaluate other people's work and make decisions regarding good or poor practices, they are ready for self-assessment. This preparation process can be done over time, but the teacher must convey the importance of student responsibility and participation, as well as remind them that they are capable of accurate assessment of the limited areas of focus.

Teachers should also tell students that the purpose is to help them do better in class by improving their ability to identify their own strengths and weaknesses. Having introduced the topic in this way, ask them to compare their own work with previously read papers. Alternatively, if they have already completed several writing tasks, they can review earlier work and make choices about which is the best. Follow up by asking students to justify their choices. In addition, when assigning new projects, have students think about or discuss their perceived strengths and weaknesses for the upcoming work.

What the teacher does after self-evaluation depends on a number of factors, including time available and age or level of students. Teachers might ask students to review their own evaluations later in the semester, aiming to identify progress. They might have students work in pairs or small groups to evaluate each other in order to have students compare their self-assessments with evaluations from their peers. This technique might help students develop more collaborative approaches to learning. Another extension would be to give students evaluation sheets to complete periodically and keep as a form of diary to check progress on a regular basis and support goal-oriented efforts. The common thread to these alternative strategies, however, is that students see a meaningful purpose to the exercise, as this will increase their motivation to continue.

Training Notes edited by Douglas Margolis

Self-assessment is an additional technique for language acquisition. When used correctly, it not only increases class participation but also enhances individual confidence, self-esteem, critical thinking, motivation and sense of empowerment. In this article, we've focused on self-assessment for writing, but the principles can be applied to speaking, listening, and reading as well.

The Author

Peter Nelson, Ph.D., is an instructor in English Education at Chung Ang University in Seoul. He is active in KTT and is a frequent speaker and writer on the teaching of culture in Korea.

*Teachers looking for self-assessment activities should consult Jennifer L. Ballard's *Fundamentals of TEFL for Elementary School Teachers* (undated), published by TTI International (Teacher Training Institute).

Maximizing Student Talk Time Using Small Groups

Training Notes
edited by Douglas Margolis

by David P. Ellis

> "You have two ears and one mouth, so you should listen twice as often as you speak."

This proverb is important for EFL conversation teachers to consider as we try to maximize Student Talk Time (STT). Foreign language learning, like sports, requires guided practice or "coaching". Teachers who coach rather than preach are better able to help their students acquire oral proficiency. This article explores how teacher-coaches can form and use small groups to maximize STT.

Groups of Four

In large classes, using groups is essential to give all students opportunities to speak. Recognizing various group sizes are possible, I find groups of four most effective for maximizing STT. First, groups of four create three unique pairs, thus enabling quick partner changes during pair work with minimal class disruption. Second, they are small enough to encourage shy students to speak, yet large enough to avoid isolation of individual students. Finally, groups of four allow teachers ample time to observe group interaction and provide feedback later.

Grouping Options

Group dynamics are a common concern of teachers. For example, to avoid domination behavior, one solution is to group students according to levels. By doing so, higher level students can be challenged by similarly advanced peers while lower level students can participate without feelings of inferiority suffocating them. In addition, since stronger students tend to need less supervision, teachers can devote more time to lower level students.

While grouping similar level students is often desirable, there are circumstances when it is not. For example, if playing a game with the whole class, mixing levels creates parity among teams. At other times, appointing more advanced students as "team captains," responsible for assisting other group members, is also desirable. For example, when groups will report their ideas to the whole class, captains can provide necessary and appreciated leadership to lower level group mates. This role may be daunting to some at first, but as time passes, students become more comfortable with it and even enjoy it.

A third possibility is to let students choose their group mates. Because of the level of comfort it creates, this technique can be advantageous in the beginning of a course. A fourth possibility is grouping students by personality type. For example, group outgoing students together and let them fight over who gets to speak next. In turn, group quiet students together and let them agonize over who has to speak next. Finally, another possibility is to group students by gender. For certain topics (e.g. defining the perfect date), same gender groups can be effective and fun. As you can see, there are many ways to group students. Take advantage of all group variations to prevent tedium from setting in. Additionally, keep a detailed record of who is grouped with whom throughout the course to facilitate group management.

Error Correction

Untimely error correction diminishes group work effectiveness. Therefore, teachers should avoid disrupting or discouraging free flowing discourse by intermittently injecting comments into ongoing discussions. Conversely, if teachers never provide feedback, then group effectiveness also wanes. To solve this dilemma, I recommend teachers actively (but unobtrusively) listen to the group conversations and take notes. By doing so, teachers can provide meaningful feedback toward the end of class. General feedback is advantageous because teachers do not single out individual students (a potentially distressing situation), yet are still able to focus students' attention on accuracy as well as fluency. Furthermore, feedback given at the end of class permits students to digest it between lessons and ask further questions later if necessary.

Equally important to feedback itself is the quality of the feedback. Since we are trying to maximize STT, we must ensure our feedback is concise and applicable to the broadest audience possible. To accomplish this, note common denominators among the groups during your observation time. Since groups usually work on the same task, trends in their misspoken English will emerge. Focus on these common areas and address only a few points each class. Finally, try to include positive feedback too. For example, some of your more advanced students may use expressions unfamiliar to your lower level students. By mentioning such expressions in your feedback, you achieve two notable objectives: 1) your lower level students learn new, useful expressions; and 2) the students who used the expressions receive positive reinforcement and reassurance they are using idiomatic language correctly. Finally, you can gauge how beneficial students consider your feedback by noting whether they take the time to write down your comments. If they do, you know your students consider your feedback meaningful rather than too easy, too difficult or too esoteric.

A lot more can be said about how using groups can help teachers maximize STT. For teachers interested in more information, a short list of resources is included below. Good luck.

The Author

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Training Notes
edited by Douglas Margolis

Improving Listening Ability

David D.I. Kim

A recent study by Kim and Margolis (2001) found that Korean university students, on average, have had less than 220 lifetime hours of English listening and speaking exposure in a formal setting (school, language institutes, and private tutoring combined). As such, they argue that this amount of exposure is insufficient for Korean university students to have developed proficient English listening ability.

Studies have shown that novices to foreign language learning require a period of time to become accustomed to reception prior to production (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982; Nunan, 1998), a silent period. Although some commentators would disagree about the effectiveness of a silent period, most teachers would agree that attention should be given to the development of listening ability.

Good listeners not only receive meaning, they also recognize small increments of sound differences, filter out extraneous noises, fill in gaps, make guesses, connect ideas to their personal experience and knowledge, and ascertain inferences and implications, amongst other tasks. For this reason, the development of listening ability requires attention to pronunciation, awareness of processes and strategies, as well as substantial quantities of input and practice.

Input and Practice

Activities that increase English input and exposure while providing overall listening practice include Read-Alongs, Transcription, Video-viewing, and Sing-Alongs. These activities could be conducted in class, however, assigning them as homework would direct students towards a more efficient use of their study time.

A Read-Along task involves listening to readings of English material by a native speaker (live or prerecorded) while reading aloud with the corresponding text. The passages may be dialogues, prose, or other material that might interest the student. This activity, when assigned as homework, allows the students to work through the readings at their own pace, permitting as many repetitions as desired. Having students keep a personal record of the dates and time they engaged in this task (or providing a sign-in sheet at the audio lab) provide a basis for grading.

The Transcription task involves transcribing a song, speech, or other spoken material, preferably not more than three or four minutes in length. Unlike dictation exercises, students can listen to the material as many times as needed to ensure accurate transcription. Further, this activity could be utilized as a diagnostic tool that assists students in identifying specific phonemes and structures that require special attention. Assigning different segments of the English material tapes should reduce copying of other's work.

Videos and Sing-Alongs are fun activities that can be assigned as homework or integrated into class time. The point of these activities is to increase authentic English exposure, so playing a video all the way through would be appropriate. Nevertheless, shorter videos with not too much dialogue might be more beneficial to students, depending on their level. Student interest should guide the selection of materials.

Metacognitive Processes

Activities that help students reflect about listening skills and their development can guide them to more useful practice and may lead to insights that can make listening exercises more efficient. For example, many students worry too much about catching the meaning of every word in conversation and audio material. Native speakers, however, make guesses and fill in the gaps using context to aid them.

One activity useful for metacognitive processing is the language-learning journal. Students can write about their frustrations with listening, and/or describe what they do when they listen to Korean conversations, and/or identify different types of listening tasks. Another activity is small group discussions about listening, which students could do in Korean. The important point is to engage students to think about and analyze the processes involved in listening.

Strategic and Procedural Steps

Textbooks that focus on listening skill development, such as *Strategies in Listening* (Rost & Uruno, 1995), *Active Listening* (Helgesen & Brown, 1994), and *Tactics for Listening* (Richards, 1997), provide specific strategies and procedures involved in listening as well as activities that focus on each. Some of these strategies help students better guess meaning, reduce anxiety, and increase their tolerance of ambiguity, which frees up mental energy for listening.

To sum up, a principled approach to language teaching requires specific attention to listening tasks. Each of the three areas mentioned above, input and practice, metacognitive process, and strategic and procedural steps, deserves attention.

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Writing for the EFL Student

by Jim Gongwer

There are four inter-related components required for an EFL writing program: 1) building confidence and motivation, 2) simplifying the writing process, 3) utilizing proper grading techniques, and 4) providing feedback for student work.

Training Notes
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Confidence and Motivation

The first step in teaching writing is establishing motivation and self-confidence. Simple directions, proper grading, and feedback are key. Also, allowing students to focus on topics of special interest is important. Moreover, the more you provide students with tools for expressing their ideas, the easier their words flow. Furthermore, keep in-class writing tasks short. This, plus use of realia and current events, can help engage students.

Simplifying the Writing Process

Writing involves preparation, free-writing, and revising, but our students may be unaware of and mystified by the process. The preparation stage of writing seems especially neglected and walking students through the process can improve their writing and self-confidence. Preparation includes brainstorming, collecting information, and organizing ideas.

Brainstorming Activity

Prep: Write "classmate" on the board.

Instructions:

1) Students write words, without stopping.

2) There are no wrong words. Avoid turning on the mind censor. Bad words (shit, sex, condoms etc.) are acceptable. Explaining this brings laughter and freedom to the students.

3) Spelling is not important. Again, to avoid the mind censor.

4) If students can't think of a new word, they should repeat writing the same word until the mind gets tired and discovers a new one.

5) Don't erase or cross out words. Again, avoid the mind censor.

6) The professor may also write words on the board. Slipping in a bad word helps break the ice and proves the point that anything goes.

7) After two minutes stress all pencils down.

After Brainstorming

Read words that students have written and make comments on the interesting ones. Emphasizing how each word has the potential of a great sentence, can relax students. Repeat the same two-minute drill using, for example, "Mother" (any word will do). Once again, stress all words are OK. The pencil should not stop writing. Doing brainstorm activities will increase student creativity and give them resources for writing.

Collecting information

Collecting information is an important part of the writing process. Often the information may be internal feelings. Collecting information from newspapers, other students, family members, the internet, or strangers on the street, also yields material. To make information collecting most effective, students should know in advance what they are seeking.

Organizing Ideas

Another preparation skill that students often need to develop is organizing. Students can use their brainstorm lists and the information they collected from other sources to organize ideas into related categories. If they can group words into three or four main topics, they might also think up several new words that go with each topic. One activity is to practice re-organizing the words several times into new categories, exploring different possible relationships. Breaking the preparation stage of the process into these simple steps makes writing less intimidating and facilitates clear prose.

Utilizing Appropriate Grading Techniques

Grade only four aspects of writing. For example, a beginning assignment might focus on capital letters, subject, verb (presence or absence) and final punctuation. Announce the four criteria when you assign the task. These criteria are the only aspects graded. If these are correct then the paper is 100%!! The student is very pleased and looks forward to the next writing assignment.

The next writing exercise may or may not stress four new criteria depending on the students' ability. Keeping the grading to no more than four criteria per task is critical for maintaining student confidence and clarity of expectations.

Feedback for Student Work

Feedback is very important for writing. Drawing upon students to provide feedback to their classmates increases the teacher's effectiveness. For example, before students submit work for grading, let students peer edit the papers. If the peer editors are graded as well, students become effective editors. The important point is to focus attention on the writing criteria for the assignment. At the same time, editors can be encouraged to communicate their reactions directly to the author.

Group feedback also is effective. For example, write on the board or prepare a handout with some student errors and ask for class discussion on how to improve the writing. Another important activity is to recognize and read both the creative papers, even if not grammar perfect, and the really well written papers.

Keep It Simple

In summary, a successful writing curriculum includes positive reinforcement via appropriate grading and feedback, easily implemented steps that help students learn the writing process, and attention to motivation and confidence building. For more

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TDSIG Returns with a Roar

by David Ellis

The Teacher Development Special Interest Group (TDSIG) reconvened on Saturday, June 16, at Hannam University in Daejeon. Spearheaded by Jennifer Lalonde, KOTESOL National 2nd Vice President and interim TDSIG Facilitator, teachers traveling from cities as far as Gwangju and Busan participated in the four-hour action-packed event.

Jen was supported by Robert Dickey, a former TDSIG coordinator himself, who also made a 30-minute presentation about ongoing professional development. He discussed not only the importance and relevance of professional development during his presentation, but also provided online sources for attendees to investigate to promote their own individual professional development.

Following this presentation, the group discussed a range of issues, all of which were centered principally on defining the difference between teacher development and teacher training. Recognizing teacher training abounds through mediums such as conferences, workshops, seminars, lectures and so on, the group attempted to distinguish teacher development from teacher training. Following robust brainstorming sessions, the group then tried to synthesize teacher development and training into a cohesive and synergistic unit. Among other activities, teachers reflected on their own teacher development, using a series of six questions as the catalyst. The ensuing discussion was particularly compelling, enjoyed by all. The meeting concluded around 5pm, with several of the attendees sharing dinner together prior to their departures.

Opinions varied and healthy debate ensued throughout the symposium, all in attendance agreed the meeting was energizing as well as informative. The group was particularly excited about the prospects of sharing professional discussion in a way that differs from other mediums of professional training. Invigorated by the exchange of ideas, the group plans to meet again, either the first or second weekend in September. In addition to such face-to-face interaction, the group also plans to pursue active participation in TDSIG online. Ultimately, the objective of the TDSIG is to provide an additional yet unique resource for KOTESOL members.

PAC Column

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Han, Dickey (2001) and their colleagues have been drawn into a debate on how to best implement an "immersion-like" teaching program mandated by their university president at Kyongju University. The faculty responded to the challenge by developing a number of courses on a language as content basis (such as Hotel Business English and Korean to English Interpretation), taught in either English or Japanese in which their students could at least cope. To make the program even more attractive to faculty and students, the use of grading curves was curtailed, class-sizes have no longer have minimum cut-offs and much flexibility is provided in the use of L1.

New terms are also being created to explain innovations in teaching method and analysis. Dickey coined the phrase "foreign language medium instruction" to define "that type of instruction where 'content' is a substantive academic course, rather than a support ... or a means to introduce language learning" (forthcoming mentioned in 2001: 9). The nouns landscape, cityscape and seascape refer to the wide view of a place. In Asia many new forms of English are being spoken, therefore an "English soundscape" is a new term that refers to the wide variety of English that can be heard in a particular place or region such as Asia (McMurray, 2001: S4). The term "change" should be distinguished from the more specific term "innovation." Change means to make different in an unplanned or natural way, whereas innovation is deliberate and planned. Language teachers have led many innovations into the 21st century such as task-based learning; team-teaching; teaching of English at elementary levels; introduction of computer-based testing; dropping of entrance examination requirements; proposing of English as a Second Language in Asia; and the partnering of professional language teaching associations. We can look forward to doing more.

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What's Up In KOTESOL

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Don't hesitate. Do it now! Email: <dpm123@teacher.com> (my personal email address) or drop by our web site (www.kotesol.org/ktt), or give me a call at 031-720-2245.

During these summer months, many KTT volunteers are vacationing, so if you try to make contact, please be patient. We hope everyone has a safe and pleasant summer.

Teaching Culture

By Peter Nelson

Training Notes
edited by Douglas Margolis

In an important discussion of language ramifications, H. D. Brown (1980) observed "Second language learning in some respects involves the acquisition of a second identity.... Second language learning is often second culture learning" (p. 129). The implication of his observation for teaching is that we need to somehow address cultural issues. In this article, I present one way to do so. It is based on an excellent article by Scott Berlin (1998) written earlier in this publication.

The Iceberg Approach

Introducing the concept of culture is greatly simplified by making an analogy to an iceberg. Most students know that floating icebergs have a small component above the waterline, and a larger (approximately 70%) hidden portion below. By drawing an iceberg on the blackboard or OHP showing this distinction, you can then say that all cultures can be compared the same way. In your drawing, the portion above the water line can be considered the visible culture. This consists of artifacts and behaviors that are easily recognized as belonging to that culture. Examples include houses, schools, clothing styles, foods, language, music, ceremonies, ways of greeting and so on.

After listing a few visible culture examples, ask your students to name more. Write their responses on the blackboard above the waterline.

Your second task is more complex because, like icebergs, the bulk of culture consists of characteristics that are not readily observable or understood. You can label this part of the drawing the hidden culture, and explain that it comprises both attitudes and embedded values. Examples include religious beliefs, ethics, customs, gender role expectations, and ideas about self. The important thing to emphasize is that understanding hidden culture requires careful observation and an open-minded perspective. Remember that being immersed within our own culture means it can be difficult to understand another culture's values and attitudes.

Eliciting examples from students can be challenging, but you can assist by linking aspects of visible culture with its more obscure features. For example, religions worldwide include visible churches and temples, yet religious practices are diverse and give different meanings to believers. Food selection is partly determined by location and climate, but eating customs reflect cultural values. Asians generally use chopsticks to reach food from common dishes, and may include alcoholic drinks at meals. In contrast, Muslims in Arab countries frequently use their fingers (right hand only) for reaching and holding foods, and do not drink alcohol. Even forms of greeting reflect underlying values: Asians bow to show respect and acknowledge social or family hierarchy. North Americans, however, emphasize equality by shaking hands and looking directly at the other person.

Going Beyond the Iceberg

Having introduced comparisons among cultures, it is useful to give students a paper for writing. The top half is used for examples of visible culture, and the bottom half for hidden components. Organize the class into small groups, asking students to fill in the sheet. If possible, get them to associate visible characteristics with recognizable beliefs and values. This linking activity encourages students to discuss their knowledge in English, and also provides useful examples for later conversations. Finally, tell them to compare their work with other groups in the class, and to keep their paper for later usage.

Another worthwhile activity is using weekly class time for student discussions of foreign places they have been to or would like to visit. If possible, students can bring clothing, records, books or memorabilia from other countries, or have them discuss foreign films and music.

Student Discussions About Culture

Min & Jung (2000) suggest that Korean students will most likely need to explain and describe Korean culture in future, real life communications. They therefore conclude that students need to practice discussing Korean culture more than talking to each other about cultures with which they are not familiar. One class exercise, for instance, is to get students describing Korean history, artifacts and monuments in English, as they would to a tourist.

Furthermore, a good book for initiating discussion is Min Byoung-chul's Ugly Koreans, Ugly American, which compares conflicting values and practices between Koreans and North Americans. Two other excellent sources for expanding your repertoire of culture activities are Tomalin & Stempleski (1993) and Valdes (1986).

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Empowering Students With Learning Strategies

by Douglas Paul Margolis

Developing learner autonomy by teaching learning strategies can increase learner effectiveness. Three particular areas where Korean students might benefit from a learning strategies approach are the following: 1) managing emotions, 2) developing compensation skills, and 3) improving social interactions.

Managing Emotions

Brown (1980) wrote "meaningful language acquisition involves some degree of identity conflict as the language learner takes on a new identity with his newly acquired competence" (p. 105). This conflict arises as self-esteem, ego, and motivation face the inevitable errors and frustrations of language learning. Students who can manage their emotions well will more likely make progress. One of the simplest strategies for reducing anxiety, though many people ridicule it until they've used it, is deep breathing. If students are aware that deep breathing can help relax them, they might discover that one calming, deep breath could be enough to help them produce the proper response when they feel tense. Oxford (1990) also identified meditation, progressive relaxation, and the use of music and laughter as other strategies for lowering anxiety. Adult students often report that a glass of wine before language class makes them more comfortable and open to learning and practice. (But not too much!)

Additionally, students need to tap into the power of positive thinking. Barrett (1992) suggested identifying negative thoughts, writing them down, and throwing them away. Or burning them! Then, have students replace the negative thoughts with positive ones, such as: "I can learn English," "I am smart enough," "I'm making good progress," etc.

Developing Compensation Skills

Communicating in a foreign language always requires some effort to compensate for unknown or forgotten words and expressions. Korean students often freeze and withdraw from the communication when they face an unknown item. Windle (2000) suggested that cultural reasons contribute to this behavior. Regardless of the cause, however, this strategy tends to break down the interaction and stop communication altogether—which does not help in learning the new language. Therefore, providing students with strategies that maintain the interaction and facilitate communication will increase their practice time and reduce their frustration.

For overcoming limitations in speaking and writing, Oxford (1990) offered the following strategies: switching to the mother tongue, asking for help, using mime or gestures, changing the topic, adjusting or approximating the message, coining new words, and using circumlocution or synonyms. In addition, other strategies might include using metaphors, associations, common experiences and stories to convey the missing knowledge. The more strategies for compensating that students know, the more likely they can talk their way out of a pinch.

Teachers can also increase student compensation skills by promoting creativity. One way is to emphasize divergent thinking. Instead of questions that demand one correct answer (convergent thinking), give students tasks that have no single correct answer, but many possibilities (divergent thinking). Asking students for ten possible dialogues in a given situation, or ten ways to greet people, or ten ways to apologize exemplify this approach. Another technique is to **not** give students translations, transcripts, or "answers" all the time. Instead, help guide students to interpret texts as they see appropriate and let them face multiple, probable interpretations, rather than one correct answer. The idea that there is only one correct answer in second or first language communications is wrong and debilitating.

Improving Social Interaction

Many students try to learn foreign languages alone, divorced from social interaction. While independent study is necessary, students can't develop communicative competence without interaction. Thus group and pair work in class are important. Also, discussing group dynamics is helpful. One activity to focus on group dynamics is "**the fishbowl**." "The fishbowl" is like a role play, but instead of a performance, the students in the center are working through a task or problem. The rest of the students watch the interaction. Afterwards, students comment about the group dynamics of the people in the fishbowl. The teacher can help the discussion by asking questions like, "who talked the least?" "Who talked the most?" "Who facilitated the process?" And "who helped to keep the group on task?"

Training Notes
edited by Douglas Margolis

In addition, physical games can develop interaction skills. For example, "**Untie the Knot**," and "**Blindfold**." "Untie the Knot" is a game where people put their hands into the center of the group and grab the hands of two different people. Then the group tries to untangle the knot without anyone letting go. To succeed, the group must cooperate. "Blindfold" is a partner game, where one person is blindfolded and led around the room by the other. The blindfolded person is forced to rely on the seeing person for information. Games such as these focus student attention upon interaction, reliance upon others, and cooperation skills. They are also fun, reduce anxiety, and break the ice.

Conclusion

In sum, learning strategies are an important way to empower students and make their study time more efficient and effective. Given that research today generally suggests that language teaching does not produce a linear and predictable development of language skills by students (Skehan, 1996), learning strategies training is one way that teachers might be able to produce desired results.

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Reading for Fluency

by Joshua A. Snyder

Teachniques

edited by Stephanie Downey

As teachers of English as a foreign language, we are often approached by students asking about the best way to study English. When asked this question, I first tell my students to develop a program of study that suits their own needs and interests. I then tell them to follow that program regularly, thirty minutes a day from Monday to Friday, for example. Then, if the student in question has basic conversational competence, I usually advise him or her to go to the library to choose an English book and to read that book cover to cover, using a dictionary only as a last recourse. To benefit most from reading, students must be instructed in what I like to call "reading for fluency."

"Reading for fluency" is very different from the reading exercises with which most Korean students are familiar. The short difficult passages found in TOEIC examinations may serve a purpose, but achieving fluency is not it. Equally difficult passages used in high school and university English classes taught by Korean instructors who translate phrase-by-phrase and clause-by-clause likewise do very little to improve one's overall communicative competence in English.

"Reading for fluency" entails quick reading using a dictionary only when the meaning of a sentence is completely unclear due to an unfamiliar word. When we learn our native language as children, our brains are forced to guess meanings of unknown words from the context of what is being said. This is one way in which we learn to think in our mother tongue. Reading without constantly consulting a dictionary and by guessing at the meanings of new words will help our students think directly in English. This is a skill that is sorely needed by our Korean students.

Students in Korea have precious few opportunities to practice their English skills. A book, be it a novel or a work of nonfiction, offers students a wealth of real language to digest. By carefully selecting a written work, students essentially have the opportunity to interact with a master of the English language. It should be stressed that reading is not an entirely passive process. It is an interactive process that requires active participation on the part of the reader. Reading is in effect communication between a writer and a reader.

It is important to remember that language is a whole, and that working on reading will simultaneously improve speaking, listening, and writing skills. It is impossible to compartmentalize the various skills involved in learning a foreign language. In Korea's recent zeal for communicative language teaching, it is not wise to abandon the written word. The various skills complement each other, and reading will help our students' speaking, listening and writing.

Perhaps the most important advice we can give to our students is that they approach their chosen book not as a difficult task to be completed, but as something to be enjoyed. They should choose a book that reflects their own personal interests or tastes. Korean students have surely been exposed to books translated into Korean from English or another language. They should be advised to recall a book that they particularly enjoyed, find it in English and try reading it anew. It is very important that the book stimulates interest so that pleasure can be taken in reading it. Truly any book, as long as it provides the reader with enjoyment, will be of help. My Korean teacher told me she read *Little House on the Prairie* in English for hours on end late into the night out of sheer enjoyment. It is that type of enthrallment that should be aimed for in reading for fluency.

Our goal as teachers of English as a foreign language should be not only to offer our students excellent classroom instruction, but also to offer them the tools they need to improve their language skills on their own. Instructing highly motivated students to read for fluency is an excellent way to do just that. So please advise your students to go to the nearest library or well-stocked bookstore, browse through the section dedicated to foreign language books, and choose a book of interest. Tell them to then take it home and start reading it without their dictionary. If it turns out to be boring, they should take it back and choose another. The most important thing is that the student enjoys the reading, so he or she should be ready to try out several different books. Following these steps will result in a steady increase in English fluency.

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Teaching Stress, Intonation and Rhythm

Training Notes
edited by Douglas Margolis

By Peter Nelson

There are probably as many ways to teach pronunciation as there are teachers. In this article, I would like to present highlights of a KTT workshop focusing on stress, intonation, and rhythm. The procedures and accompanying materials below are suitable for all teaching levels from a conceptual standpoint, although teachers must adapt them to class levels and special conditions.

Introduction to Students

I. Stress patterns
When discussing the notion of stress in English, it is important to orient students to your forthcoming activities. Students must understand that, unlike Korean or some syllable-based languages, English stress placement is vital because it has several functions. These include clarifying meaning, adding emphasis, and conveying new information considered valuable to the speaker. Students must also realize they may construct utterances that are grammatically and syntactically correct, yet be misunderstood—or not understood at all—because their stress placement is incorrect.

Surprisingly, class size is often not a decisive factor

Some examples identify the wide-ranging functions of stress placement. You can describe the weather, placing special emphasis on a descriptive adjective, as in “December is a COLD month.” This sentence readily shows students how individual word stress conveys meaning from speaker to listener. Another example, “It was a DARK and SCARY night,” shows how the stressed words create a more frightening picture than simply rendering ‘dark and scary’ in the same tonal pattern as other words in the sentence. Finally, the simple verbal exchange:

A: I heard you bought a *used* car yesterday.
B: No, it was a *new* car.
A: Was it a *new* blue car?
B: No, a new *black* car.

(and so on) shows how new, important information is heavily stressed, while repeated information (and therefore ‘old’) has the special stress removed.

II. Intonation
This is the application of voice characteristics to utterances, especially tone, volume and pitch. Although English is not a tonal-based language (as is Chinese), voice patterns can and do occur with extensive variation and complexity. It is therefore important to indicate how tonal variations can be used to convey attitudes and feelings.

A simple example is provided by writing the word “hello” on the blackboard, then asking your students to pronounce it. Most will use the well-known intonation pattern, a strong utterance with second syllable stress and steady pitch, emphasizing a greeting. Yet you can mention that British speakers alter the intonation to change the meaning. “Hel-*lo*,” with a falling pitch, indicates “you are sexy” when addressed to another person. However, “hel-*lo*,” with a rising pitch, conveys confusion, and may be uttered by the speaker to himself. Hence tonal variations, even for single words, may convey differences in feeling or attitude.

III. Rhythm
This is the incorporation of ‘thought groups’ within identifiable patterns common to both speaker and listener. English is a stress-timed language, meaning that approximately equal length thought groups, each with marked stress patterns, are uttered within approximately equal periods of time. Knowing the pattern of pauses, word stress and word group composition is important for comprehension, but is difficult for non-native speakers to master.

To convey the notion of thought groups, put a 10-16 digit number on the blackboard, then ask students to read it to a partner. Most cannot do this in one breath, so they ‘break it’ into segments that have meaning to them. Telephone numbers, for example, are usually grouped by country code, city code, prefix and number, as in 82-2-820-3630. If students read the pattern differently, say 8-22-8-20-363-0, the resulting utterance sounds unreal if not uncomfortable. Similarly, put the sentence “I went to the store to buy some rice for my family” on the blackboard. You might mention that this breaks naturally into three thought groups: I went to the store—to buy some rice—for my family. Any other combination, e.g. “I—went to the—store—to buy—some rice for—my family, sounds awkward and unnatural. In these simple examples, then, you show the importance of rhythm.

Specific Class Exercises

The decision about which materials and techniques to use for teaching pronunciation depends on several factors. These include the teaching level of the class, materials provided, time allotted, audio equipment available and so on. Surprisingly, class size is often not a decisive factor except for feedback or testing, as you can get students to work in pairs or recite what you say. The exercises below are divided into warm-up and on-going activities. I assume that language lab equipment is not available. But you should provide some information handouts and allot adequate time to practice.

I. Warm-up exercises
After introducing the notion of pronunciation, illustrate simple sounds to give students the feel for stress placement. Beginning exercises might focus on one-syllable words, using your hand to show not only stress placement but also pitch changes. Hence words like man, growth and hand can quickly identify your purpose and are easy for students to recite. You can then use two-syllable words (e.g. paper, happen, mother) to show both initial stress placement and pitch changes. Use multi-syllable words (e.g. original, apartment, disappoint) to finish.

An extended exercise is to introduce thought groups, enabling students to grasp both rhythm and stress timing. In this exercise you provide increasingly complex sentences, pausing briefly between thought

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Wired

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Discussion

Some teachers may be leery of conducting their own evaluations of web-site programs. The novelty of the technology, the complexity of its design (the bells and whistles), and the hype that has accompanied its emergence, may seem intimidating: "I am not qualified," some might say. "Why bother to question the packaging?" others may query.

In answer to these misgivings, the literature suggests that most web-based programs do not proceed from pedagogically-based models. If teachers desire respect for their work, and to be regarded as professionals for what they do, they need to continuously search for pedagogical "best practices." Respect is earned.

Second, many eminent language researchers, including David Nunan and Donald Freeman, seem quite open to the idea of increased teacher autonomy. If they support it, why not give it a try?

Third, teachers should share their assessments with fellow teachers and their administrators. Such assessments could serve as the points of departure for much-needed, faculty-wide investigation of educational procedures and policies for their classrooms, as called for in the government-led education reform initiatives.

Fourth, familiarity with conducting evaluations may also encourage more reflective teaching, leading to more quality learning moments in the classroom.

And finally, it is helpful to remember that most things that appear to be difficult at first get easier and better with practice.

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groups, to show collocation and breath control. Hence, phrases like "We decided to walk across the park"; "From the western side, Mt. Sorak is spectacular," and "Because it's hot, I won't walk to work, but instead, will drive my car," illustrate well the natural rhythm. It is important to emphasize, however, that while written English often uses punctuation to delineate thought groups, speakers of course do not have this luxury, so they frequently use minute pauses as substitutes for commas, semicolons and other forms of punctuation.

A third warm-up exercise is showing students how intonation variations convey meaning. This is best done by explaining how utterances ending in a rising pitch often suggest interest and politeness, whereas, a falling pitch for these same utterances frequently conveys disinterest and possible lack of courtesy. Hence, "Let me do it for you," with a *rising pitch* suggests help and assistance, but the same phrase with a *falling pitch* indicates discourtesy and perhaps coldness on the speaker's part. Related phrases: "I'll help you now"; "I'm busy right now," and "How can I help you?" also convey the connection between pitch changes and meaning.

II. Ongoing exercises

These are frequently listed in pronunciation textbooks and are too numerous to identify here. Several, however, are especially useful for beginning students:

Stress:

- Heavily stressed words for specific information (e.g. "Where are *you* going tonight?")
- Heavily stressed words for correction (e.g. "He lives on *Front* Street, *not* Fort Street")

Rhythm and Intonation:

- Chants and rap lyrics
- Poetry and sonnets
- Limericks and humorous ditties

In sum, pronunciation exercises can be fun and implemented in a light, yet meaningful way. Three important books you may consider are: Judy Gilbert, *Clear Speech* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), Linda Lane, *Focus on Pronunciation* (Longman, 1993), and Adrian Underhill, *Sound Foundations* (Heineman, 1994). These combine a theoretical foundation, simple exercises, and evaluation techniques.

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