KOTESOL
대한영어교육학회

KOTESOL Proceedings 2016

Shaping the Future: With 21st Century Skills

Proceedings of the
24th Korea KOTESOL International Conference
Seoul, Korea, October 15-16, 2016

Korea Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
(Korea TESOL / KOTESOL)

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Published by Korea TESOL
KOTESOL Publications Committee Chair: Dr. David Shaffer

◇◇

Typesetting: Mijung Lee, Media Station **Printing**: Myeongjinsa, Seoul, Korea

For information on this or other Korea TESOL publications, as well as inquiries on membership and advertising, contact us at:

publications@koreatesol.org or **koreatesol.org**

ISSN: 1598-0472 Price: 25,000 KRW / 25 USD. (Free to Members)

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Foreword

The 2016 KOTESOL International Conference was held on October 15 and 16, 2016, under the theme of ***Shaping the Future: With 21st Century Skills.*** There were 197 presentations given over the two days, with Thomas Farrell and Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa headlining the conference as the plenary speakers. In this volume of the *Proceedings*, we offer 36 papers, written by invited speakers and presenters from South Korea, Japan, Thailand, the Philippines, the USA, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia.

What *are* 21st century skills? Acknowledging the fast changing world we live in, 21st century skills focus on learning how to learn, and knowing how to find the information we need among a plethora of sources. Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa opens this volume with a discussion on how to effectively teach and raise multilinguals in the 21st century. Todd Beuckens looks at how to incorporate technology inside and outside the classroom to maximize the effect of traditional learning environments. Burcu Tezcan-Unal and Kara Mac Donald define what the phrase “21st century skills” means to each. Both then focus on how English language teachers can incorporate teaching these skills into the classroom, with Burcu focusing on the changing role of the teacher and the structuring of activities, and Kara relating 21st century skills to popular communicative instructional approaches and putting these in the context of Korean students. Willy Renandya clearly articulates the major differences between intensive reading and extensive reading, while Robert Murphy presents brain-friendly ways to foster deeper understanding and autonomy.

The focus on “how” to shape our students’ future – and the future of English language teaching – continues with papers on how teachers have solved problems or issues in their classrooms: Norman Fewell and George MacLean talk about how to get students to write collaboratively online, Christopher Haswell focuses on using international students as teaching assistants, Damian Lucantonio looks at how to teach students to write an abstract, and Joanne McCuaig focuses on how to write a research paper.

Feisal Aziez, Alexander Nanni, and Nick Clements build on themes introduced by our invited speakers by focusing on project-based learning and the content-based classroom – *how* to teach students to learn English by working on projects in English, or by using content aimed at native speakers of English.

Christopher Miller, Amanda Maitland El Amri, and Jason Gold focus on keeping the students interested and engaged in the classroom by having them connect emotionally to the material being taught by using a variety of techniques in the classroom. Empowering the student is also important for Steve Urick, who looks at the factors necessary to successfully get students to bring music to the language classroom; for Carl Vollmer, whose students learnt to monitor their own language use by transcribing brief videos of conversations and thereby identifying positive points, problems, and opportunities for improvement; and for Kuniko Yoshida, Takayuki Kato and Yoshihiro Minamitsu, who detail their own learning curve in getting students to use learning logs to self-regulate their learning.

These are but a few of the papers that are contained within the pages of this record of the 2016 Korea TESOL International Conference. We hope you enjoy this volume of the *KOTESOL Proceedings*.

Maria Pinto & David E. Shaffer
Editors-in-Chief

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Proceedings of the Korea TESOL International Conference

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Plenary Speaker Session

Teaching and Raising Multilinguals

Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa
Harvard University Extension School, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

Teaching foreign languages is a complex task but one that can be facilitated with clear guidelines. There are ten key factors that influence successful bilingualism and multilingualism that teachers should know about in addition to the basic content pedagogical knowledge of language instructors. After twenty-five years of research and practice, the author highlights core pedagogical competencies shown to improve the probability of language learning in school environments.

Introduction

I have been researching multilingualism for the past 25 years and have watched my three children live and benefit from their many languages as they grew into adulthood. These are some of the lessons I have learned as a teacher, researcher, and mother.

There are at least ten key factors that influence foreign language learning (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2000).

Ten Key Factors Influencing Successful Bilingualism and Multilingualism

1. Timing (Windows of Opportunity)
2. Aptitude
3. Motivation
4. Strategy
5. Consistency
6. Opportunity and support (home, school, community)
7. Linguistic and historic relationship between languages
8. Siblings
9. Gender
10. Hand-use as a reflection of cerebral dominance for languages

1. The Windows of Opportunity

The first factor is timing, or the "windows of opportunity." If someone learns a foreign language from birth in the first window, they have no accent, and they are effectively learning two "first" languages. The second window of opportunity is between four and eight years of age, primarily because "little kids have little egos," while bigger kids and adults have bigger egos and become very conscientious of making mistakes in front of others. The third window is from about age eight or nine onwards, and the brain takes in and receives foreign languages the same way until death. This means that the neural processing of languages is the same for adults as for pre-adolescent children, however the social-emotional processing is very different.

2. Aptitude

The second factor exists in only about 10% of the population, and it is a person's natural aptitude for foreign languages. This is something a person is born with, and it can be measured with the MFLAT (Modern Foreign Language Aptitude Test; Carroll & Sapon, 1958/2002), though it is also evident in small children who take joy in playing with sounds and who are attracted to different languages. Howard Gardner agreed that foreign language aptitude could be considered a sub-element of language intelligence, and aptitude also falls within Mel Levine's linguistic neurodevelopmental construct.

3. Motivation

The third factor is motivation. There are two main pairs, the first is "positive vs. negative," and the second is "intrinsic vs. extrinsic." When combined, they provide a matrix of the theories of motivation:

	Positive	**Negative**
Intrinsic	intrinsic - positive	intrinsic - negative
Extrinsic	extrinsic - positive	extrinsic - negative

While humans can learn in any of the quadrants, there is a far higher rate of transfer of learning when a person learns positively and intrinsically. This means that a student can learn English because his parents are paying for expensive lessons or he needs to pass a class (extrinsic, negative), because he is forcing himself to do so (intrinsic, negative), or because he loves and wants to please his teacher (extrinsic, positive). But the best way to learn a language and be able to transfer its use outside the classroom and into the real world is if he wants to learn the language because he enjoys it (intrinsic, positive).

4/5. Strategy & Consistency

The fourth and fifth factors are strategy and consistency. This dynamic duo is key to language learning as choosing a good strategy and being consistent in its application are vital to successful foreign language learning. There are at least seven well-researched strategies, and none is superior, but some are easier to be consistent with than others (see Table 1).

TABLE 1. Strategy and Consistency Plans for Foreign Language Learning

Person, Place, or Time	Parent 1	Parent 2	Community	Plan
Person	Language A (some B)	Language B (some A)	Language A or B	The parents each speak their native language to the child.
	Language A	Language B	Language C	The parents each speak their native language to the child, who learns a third language from the environment.
	Language A Language B	Language A	Language A	Parent 1 always addresses the child in his or her non-native, second language.
Place	Language A	Language A	Language B	Both parents speak Language A to the child, who is only fully exposed to Language B when in school.
	Language A	Language B	Language C Language D	The parents speak their native language to the child, who studies in a third language. The environment is a fourth language.
	Language A	Language A	Language A	The parents speak their native language to the child. The child associates the second language with certain places, such as special classes or visiting relatives.
Time	Language A Language B	Language A Language B	Language A	The parents speak their native language to the child, except during specific times (such as meals or weekends), when they speak their second language to the child.
	Language A	Language B	Language A	Language B, which normally receives the least amount of exposure, is always used during story time.
	Language A	Language A	Language B	Language B is only used during special classes (religion, sports, after-school activities, etc.).

Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2008.

Person-based strategies (e.g., one-person, one-language) are much easier to be consistent with than time- or place-based strategies (as in “dinner time is English time and story time is Turkish time” or “the classroom is English and the playground is Spanish”). As consistency is one of the keys to foreign language learning, choosing a strategy that is easy to follow helps facilitate learning. If the teacher mixes languages, this slows down the learning process considerably.

Translanguaging, or conscientiously borrowing from one language to another, can be a part of a chosen plan, meaning strategies do not have to be simple, but they must be consistent.

6. Opportunity and Support

The sixth factor is opportunity. How many times a day does the learner have the chance to use the target language in an authentic context? Does the language exist naturally in the home, school, or within the community, or is it relegated to extra activities in contrived environments? Without regular use and rehearsal, language learning is stunted. People who live in environments in which multilingualism is the norm – where there are different languages on the television, in the stores, in the schools, and in the home (for example, Switzerland or Holland) – learn faster than people who live in monolingual environments and only hear foreign languages during classes.

7. Linguistic and Historical Relationship Between Languages

The seventh factor is the relationship between the language the student is learning and his or her native language (or languages). Language relationships can be either historical or linguistic. Historically related languages are those that "grew up" together. For example, French, Spanish Portuguese, Italian, and Romanian are Latin-based languages and effectively evolved over the same time period in a similar geographic region. It is easier for a person to learn two languages from the same language family than languages from different families. Linguistically related languages are those with similar grammatical structures. All languages have subjects, verbs, and objects, but they order them in different ways (see Table 2).

TABLE 2. Subject, Object, Verb Order in Selected Languages

VSO (verb - subject - object)	**SVO** (subject - verb - object)	**SOV** (subject - object - verb)
Arabic (ancient), Berger, Gaelic, Hawaiian, Hebrew, Irish, Maori, Masai, Swedish, Tagalog, Tongan, Welsh	Arabic (modern), Chinese, English, Finnish, French, German (and SOV in past tense), Greek, Guarani, Khmer, Indonesian, Malay, Russian, Spanish, Swahili, Thai, Vietnamese, Yoruba	Armenian, Basque, Korean, German (and SVO in present tense), Hindi, Japanese, Manchu, Mongolian, Navajo, Persian, Quechua, Turkish

Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2008.

Languages that share the same grammatical structure are easier to learn. English is easier to learn for a Vietnamese person, for example, than for a Korean, based on this finding. This is important for language teachers to know as they evaluate the progress of students from different language backgrounds in their classrooms.

8. Siblings

The eighth factor is the influence of siblings. Having a brother or sister increases the opportunity for authentic language use; however, one of the siblings can dominate the language exchange and reduce the learning of the other. Teachers can also have the mistaken belief that children from the same family learn language in the same way or with the same ease, and unfairly treat siblings that they may teach.

9. Gender

There is no proof that men or women are superior in foreign language learning, but there is evidence that women speak more throughout the life span than men (Leaper & Ayres, 2007). These facts create a dilemma for language teachers who may mistakenly believe that girls are better at learning a foreign language simply because they tend to use more words during class. While females tend to offer more evidence of language use, it does not necessarily mean they are better or faster at learning. Teachers must be conscious of this and give males in the class more time and opportunity to use language in class settings.

10. Hemispheric Dominance for Languages

The tenth factor than influences learning is hemispheric dominance for language. Ninety-five percent (95%) of right-handed people and 70% of left-handed people have Broca's area and Wernicke's area in the left frontal and parietal lobes, which leads many to falsely believe that language is in the left hemisphere. This is false. While Broca's and Wernicke's areas are key hubs for language and are normally located in the left hemisphere, the general networks for language are found throughout the brain, including in the right hemisphere for humor interpretation, prosody, and intonation (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2008). As teaching resources are developed for "the average" brain, it is highly possible that people who do not have the same brain architecture may respond differently to the tools available. That is, teachers should be aware that the 5% of right-handed people and the 30% of left-handed people who have these key language hubs in the right hemisphere may respond differently to teaching materials developed for the average learner.

In summary, the Ten Key Factors that influence successful bilingualism and multilingualism are supported by evidence in linguistics, neuroscience, and education: (a) timing and the windows of opportunity, (b) aptitude for foreign languages, (c) motivation, (d) strategy, (e) consistency, (f) opportunity and support (home, school, and community), (g) language typology and similarities; (h) siblings, (i) gender, and (j) hand use as a reflection of cerebral dominance all influence learning outcomes. Every language learner will have their own personal recipe and combination of these factors, meaning it is impossible to suggest a simple one-size-fits-all classroom structure. These Ten Key Factors are important to keep in mind, but there are other influences that can also be leveraged in favor of successful language learning.

ADDITIONAL INFLUENCES

In addition to the Ten Key Factors, additional circumstances can influence learning outcomes (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2008). It is clear that the time spent on language is of vital importance. The more rehearsal and practice an individual has with the language, the more proficient one becomes (Baddeley, Gathercole, & Papagno, 1998). Different people need different amounts of rehearsal before becoming proficient, however, so it is difficult to prescribe an exact number of rehearsals needed (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2014).

Language learners who have highly developed skills in their first language are more proficient in learning a second (or subsequent) language (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992). It is possible to project a new language learner's success based on their fluency (level of comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing) in their first language. This is likely due to a generally higher level of linguistic awareness as well as to the phenomena of "The Mother Tongue Dilemma," which relates to the quality of the first language and its impact on the second (Noormohamadi, 2008).

The more languages you know, the easier it gets to learn an additional one (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2008). This means that while going from monoligualism to bilingualism is rough, getting to trilingualism or multilingualism becomes easier and easier. This means that people who already know one foreign language are likely to learn an additional one faster than people learning their first foreign language. Additionally, it is clear that motivation and interaction with the target language are more influential in learning outcomes than the time dedicated to the language.

TEACHER FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE STUDENT LEARNING

The quality of the teacher is the single most important factor influencing student success (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Successful language teachers not only know English content and basic pedagogy or andragogy, but they also know pedagogical content knowledge (knowledge of how to teach English; Gudmundsdottir, 1991). Great teachers also work in settings in which they can discuss instructional issues with peers and exchange ideas (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Successful language teachers tend to use activity-based and thematic syllabi that frame language in authentic contexts (Lipson, Valencia, Wixson, & Peters, 1993). They also invite peer review and coordinator visits to receive feedback multiple times a year; they are open to evaluation and welcome advice. The most successful language teachers are those who explicitly acknowledge equal status of languages (Collier, 1995). The best language teachers are also knowledgeable about the students' home language and clearly understand the typical errors made by those speakers when learning the target language (Freeman, 2002).

In addition to foreign language-specific practices, great language teachers are basically great teachers in general. They apply formative evaluation and are creative in their use of portfolios, evaluations, and self-assessment tools, and involve parents and out-of-class experiences in their course design (Wang & Fu, 2006). They use ongoing assessments with multiple measures and do their best to integrate different-level language learners in a single setting. Great language teachers have high expectations of their students and students generally live up to those expectations (Stringfield, 1994). These teachers are sure to incorporate general critical-thinking skills into class exchanges, respect the students' home language and culture, motivate cooperative learning, and seek both social as well as cognitive development. A key element in teaching is that "The person who does the work is the person who does the learning" (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2014).

According to Sass (1989), students are motivated by

- Teacher enthusiasm
- Relevance of the subject
- Organization of course
- Appropriate difficulty level
- Active participation by student
- Variety of activities and methodology
- Personal link between teacher and student
- Use of appropriate, concrete, and clear examples

and foreign language classes are no exception. Great language teachers also tend to work in great learning environments.

Seven Observations of Good Multilingual Programs

There are several characteristics of successful multilingual schools (Dörnyei & Malderez, 1997; Peyton, 1997). First, successful multilingual programs start foreign language instruction early, normally in elementary school. Second, successful multilingual programs teach through coherent, well-articulated frameworks, which are careful to scaffold their learning developmentally. Third, successful multilingual schools typically enjoy strong leadership and have enthusiastic backing from key stakeholders. Fourth, successful multilingual programs teach languages as core subjects, (unlike the American tendency to make foreign languages electives). Fifth, successful multilingual school teachers receive rigorous preparation and are trained in managing students from different language backgrounds. They also make language a priority, giving it equal status with prestigious courses like math, physics, and core language. Sixth, good multilingual programs creatively use technology in the classroom to increase interaction with native language speakers. Seventh, successful multilingual schools offer support for heritage language, or the child's mother tongue.

Ten Additional Characteristics of Successful Multilingual Schools

In addition to the aforementioned school influences on language learning, there are at least ten more worth considering (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2008).

1. Successful multilingual schools ensure that language basics, including phonemic awareness, phonic fluency, age-appropriate vocabulary, text comprehension, and grammar are taught explicitly.
2. They emphasize good oral skills and encourage active, authentic language use by students.
3. Successful multilingual schools integrate the student's family in a positive way.
4. They use a variety of assessment tools and consider the product, the process, and the progress of the student.
5. Some of the most successful schools work within dual-immersion structures in which all students take pride in their home language while learning a second or third.
6. The most successful schools conduct linguistic and ethnic audits, and know their clients (students) well.
7. When possible, they hire staff that speak the home languages of the families they serve and make every effort to keep clear channels of communication.
8. Successful schools conduct regular teacher training to ensure that teachers keep an up-to-date toolbox of activities handy.
9. The best multilingual schools allow a portion of their budget to be invested in multilingual materials and media.
10. Successful multilingual schools do their best to create significant learning experiences which relate new information to prior knowledge and give students a certain level of autonomy (control and choice).

Finally, according to Ramirez, Yuen, and Ramey (1991), there are some simple "dos" and "don'ts" in foreign language teaching.

Teaching Practices: What to *not* do
• Teacher does most of the talking in classrooms (poor language teachers make about twice as many utterances as do students). Students produce language only when they are working directly with a teacher, and then only in response to teacher initiations. • Teacher provides only simple information recall statements. Rather than being provided with the opportunity to generate original statements, students are asked to provide simple discrete close-ended or patterned (i.e., expected) responses.
Teaching Practices: What *to* do
• Teacher should make classes student-centered and try *not* to speak most of the time, nor initiate the majority of the exchanges by asking display questions, but rather seek out student-initiated requests. • As students prefer to verbally request help only in small-group or one-to-one interactions with the teacher, teachers should call on students individually and approach them personally to offer support.

- Teachers should not only modify their own speech in response to students' requests (verbal or non-verbal), they should also request modifications of the students' speech.
- Sustained negotiation – in which teachers and students verbally resolve incomplete or inaccurate messages – should occur frequently.

CONCLUSIONS

Teaching and raising multilinguals is complex, but the rewards are well worth the effort. Teachers are reminded to think about the Ten Key Factors that influence successful bilingualism: (a) timing and the windows of opportunity, (b) aptitude for foreign languages, (c) motivation, (d) strategy, (e) consistency, (f) opportunity and support (home, school, and community), (g) language typology and similarities, (h) siblings, (i) gender, and (j) hand use as a reflection of cerebral dominance all influence learning outcomes. Additionally, teachers and learners alike should remember that the amount of time spent practicing languages is important, that the quality of the first language also influences subsequent language possibilities, and that the more languages one knows, the more one can know.

Teachers should be trained in pedagogical content knowledge in English instruction and work to create learning communities in which they can share insights with one another. They should learn to use thematic-based syllabi and authentic instruction, and be knowledgeable about the students' home languages. Great teachers use formative assessment with frequency, and they maintain high expectations of their students. They use appropriate examples and have a variety of tools with which to differentiate their instruction. They also display a high level of enthusiasm and passion for their teaching, which inspires their students.

These teaching guides, coupled with information about great school structures, offer the ingredients for successful language learning. When knowledgeable teachers put them into practice, language learners thrive.

THE AUTHOR

Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa, Ph.D., is currently an educational researcher affiliated with FLACSO in Quito, Ecuador, and teaches a course at the Harvard University Extension School entitled The Neuroscience of Learning: An Introduction to Mind, Brain, Health, and Education Science. She is a former member of the OECD expert panel to redefine teachers' new pedagogical knowledge thanks to contributions from technology and neuroscience. She is the former director of the Institute for Teaching and Learning (IDEA) and the director of Online Learning at the Universidad San Francisco de Quito.

Tracey has presented research in 32 countries around the world and has more than 27 years of teaching, administrative, and research experience. Her current research focuses on the integration of mind, brain, and education science into teachers' daily practice and professional development. Her latest book is *Making Classrooms Better: 50 Practical Interventions of Mind, Brain, and Education Science.*

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Featured Speaker Sessions

PUSH Your Lessons Beyond the Classroom

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This paper will look at how to incorporate technology inside and outside the classroom to maximize the effect of traditional learning environments. More specifically, this paper will highlight the P.U.S.H. project, which aims to help teachers *produce, use, share,* and *host* digital content that renders on multiple devices. To demonstrate the effectiveness of some free online tools, a look at practical applications will showcase the ease and effectiveness of some freely available SAAS tools. Finally, this paper aims to intrigue both advanced and novice technology users by offering practical tips that both early-adopters and technophobes will find useful.

INTRODUCTION

As technology has become a bigger part of both the teaching and learning experience for teachers and students, many free tools have become available online. These tools can help teachers extend their lessons from a traditional classroom setting to the digital world with ease and convenience not seen before. This paper will first showcase the PUSH Project, a grassroots movement that shows teachers how to share content online. It will also look at numerous free resources and demonstrate how to use them in five task-based projects that will showcase the utility of these digital resources.

THE PUSH PROJECT

All of the task-based projects in this paper follow the principles of the PUSH Project, a community outreach and professional development movement that aims to help teachers *produce, use, share,* and *host* their lessons online. With so many tools now at teachers' disposal, instructors can create, distribute, and share lessons like never before. The principles of the PUSH Project follow.

Produce Content

Teachers can create original content to their liking in various forms, be it audio, text, video, or images. With free online tools, teachers now have the power to produce specialized educational materials that best fit the needs of their students and interests, freeing them up from one-size-fits-all commercial products.

Use Content

The premise here is that teachers should eat what they cook. Teachers can create engaging content and then use it with their students immediately. Most importantly, they can iterate content as needed and shorten feedback loops to improve content as they use it. Unlike commercially available material, which often has a very slow feedback loop (or no loop at all), teachers use feedback from students and fellow teachers to improve content over time.

Share Content

In the era of cloud hosting and social media, teachers can share lessons and materials with fellow professionals and students around the world. For example, if one teacher creates an engaging lesson showing how to use the past tense, that teacher can then share it with hundreds, if not thousands, of fellow teachers covering the same topic.

Host Content

Ownership is a powerful motivating factor in life, and now teachers can have sole control and rights over the content they create. They do not need publishers or schools to help them distribute their content. They can host it online and share it as they please. For example, a teacher can create a textbook and then sell it as a digital copy or print copy on CreateSpace or Lulu and retain all the rights to the book. They can also create video, audio, and written content and host it on a variety of publishing platforms.

Free Content Creation Tools Online – From A to Z for Free

As mentioned earlier, there are many free tools at teachers' disposal these days – so many tools, in fact, that in the following sample lessons, there is one free tool for every letter of the alphabet (see Appendix). Starting with A (Audacity) and ending in Z (Zoom), this paper will show various tools that teachers can use to create engaging content. Some of the resources are free, meaning they never cost the user anything. Some of the tools are "freemium," which means that they may have limitations on usage, functionality, or availability. Regardless, all of the tools are initially free and easily accessible online. With this in mind, let's look at what teachers can make – for free – using various online tools.

WAYS TO USE FREE ONLINE TOOLS

Class with SAAS

A to F – Audacity, Blogger, Box, Canva, Drive, Dropbox, Evernote, Facebook, Forms

Teachers often only see their students a few times a week or maybe one hour a day at best, so teachers have limited time and space to highlight language. Using software, or *SAAS* (software as a service), teachers can use freeware to extend their learning environments. The most common tool for highlighting language is usually a blackboard, screen, or monitor for text, and live speech for audio in a classroom setting. Teachers can extend this practice beyond the classroom by creating a digital whiteboard and speakerphone that goes where the students go. Doing this has never been easier. With Audacity, teachers can create audio recording that students can access with their smartphones. Audio can be hosted as cloud hosting on Dropbox, Google Drive, or Box, or on audio hosting programs like audioBoom or SoundCloud. Furthermore, teachers can post classroom notes, assignments, or learning materials on Blogger for students to access with just the tap of a finger. To do this, all teachers need to do is create a class page on Blogger and post content and links for students to access. Students can then access content easily by bookmarking the class blog on their smartphones' home screen. With Evergreen, teachers can create notes from their lessons, create lesson plan archives, and email content to the class with ease. With Facebook, teachers can create a class group page to post content, send messages, or create an online community. To spruce up the class homepage on Facebook or Blogger, teachers can use Canva to create eye-catching visuals to give a class with SAAS some pizazz. Finally, with Google Forms, teachers can create tests, assignment submission forms, and class surveys to make their content interactive and analytical.

Private Digital Downloads

G to J – Gimp, Hot Potatoes, iTunes, Jing

We live in a world with a premium on Internet connectivity and easy access to content, most of which we view online, but sometimes teachers need to keep content private and away from the public eye. For example, company classes may require that content remain in-house only. Schools may offer access to content only on a protected server, or within a walled CMS like Moodle or Blackboard. Also, some teachers may work offline and need access to content with no Internet connection, as often is the case in rural areas and developing countries. Teachers can create downloadable content using the following free tools. For images, teachers can use Gimp to create cool visuals such as vocabulary cards, board games, worksheets, and posters. Using HTML, teachers can create fully functional websites that are downloadable for viewing offline. HTML also lets teachers create content that is displayable both in a browser window and as a printable PDF. With Hot Potatoes, teachers can make HTML-based quizzes in seconds that students can play on any computer with a browser. For audio, teachers can add images and text to recordings with iTunes, which allows students to read text, such as transcripts, as they listen to the content. Finally, with Jing, teachers can create screenshots or screencasts of activity on their computer. Jing is great for creating tutorials explaining how to complete tasks or write papers. It should be noted that Jing exports content as a SWF file, while Hot Potatoes exports as HTML files, both of which need a browser for viewing, but you do not need to be online to view them. Students can access the content by simply dragging the files over a web browser, like Chrome or Safari, on their computer.

Flip the Script with Gamification

F to R – FlipQuiz, Kahoot, LearnClick, MailChimp, NearPod, Online Quiz Creator, Quizizz, Quizlet, Prezi, Slides, Socrative

Many teachers these days are flipping their classrooms. This practice entails having students learn content away from class and practice content in class. There are many software tools that can facilitate this process. For displaying content, teachers can use Prezi or Google Slides to present content and subject matter. Students then can study content at their own pace out of school and then practice it in class. As noted above in Class with SAAS, teachers can create a class homepage where students can access lessons on their phones or computers. Teachers then can use interactive activities in class to practice content, assess needs, and analyze student performance.

Many SAAS applications make it easy for teachers to create engaging quizzes that reach students in novel ways. For more traditional, one-dimensional quizzes, teachers can use Online Quiz Creator, Review Quiz Maker, or Google Forms to create multiple-choice quizzes students can do on their computers or smartphones. With FlipQuiz, teachers can create a Jeopardy-style game show. With LearnClick, teachers can make interactive gap-fill activities that add engaging complexity to any text. Quizlet is perfect for teaching vocabulary in sequenced activities that walk students through a series of related tasks. The best of the bunch though are these three: Kahoot, Socrative, and Quizizz. Kahoot turns boring quizzes into razzle-dazzle game shows in minutes by using music, teamwork, competition, and imagery to engage students. Socrative lets teachers give quizzes and get feedback in real time, so they can target weak areas where students need help most. Quizizz turns quizzes into competitive events and gives teachers analytics and feedback tools in real time. With MailChimp, teachers can create email lists and send out lessons to students, such as links to the activities above, by creating newsletters that can reach hundreds of students for free.

Potent Printables

O to T – OneDrive, OpenOffice, Pinterest, QRStuff, Socrative, SoundCloud, Twitter

It is a digital world, but paper is still king! With the following tools, teachers can bridge the print and digital worlds by making paper content interactive and engaging. With OpenOffice Draw, teachers can make visually engaging worksheets using the drag-and-drop tool that allows teachers to easily manipulate images in a text document. Teachers can create PDFs that rival professionally produced content in commercial textbooks in mere minutes. They can then go beyond the power of traditional textbooks by linking content on the printed page with quizzes, surveys, videos, and audio online using QR codes. With QRStuff, teachers can create a QR code for material online. Teachers then can place the QR code on the text documents using OpenOffice Draw. Students then can access media from paper content using a QR reader on their phones. Students can download QR readers for free from the Apple APP Store or Google Play. For example, a teacher can create a story with some missing gaps for students to complete. The teacher then can record an audio version of the story (using Audacity) and upload it to SoundCloud. They can also link a bonus quiz on Socrative or Google Forms. Then, teachers can link the audio and quiz to the paper content using a QR code. Finally, students can access the media on the text document by simply opening up the QR app and pointing their phone camera lens at the QR code. The QR app will automatically open up the linked content on their phone. Once a worksheet is completed, teachers can then share it with fellow teachers and students around the world using Pinterest or Twitter. Another option for sharing content is the website TeachersPayTeachers, which is a market place for teacher-generated materials. One great feature on this site is that teachers can offer their lessons for free or charge for them, empowering materials developers to monetize their work.

Making MOOCs and More

S to Z – Screen-O-Matic, ScreenFlow, Tumblr, Teachable, Udemy, Vimeo, Weebly, Wix, WordPress, Xoyondo, YouTube, and Zoom

With MOOCs, which stands for Massive Open Online Courses, teachers can make a series of video lessons that students can access remotely at their convenience. First, teachers can create videos using a variety of screencast tools. One nice, free option is Screencast-O-Matic, which allows teachers to record activity on their computer screen. Educators can screencast narrations of slide presentations (PowerPoint, Prezi, etc.) or record themselves showcasing content on a text editor. Another powerful screencast tool for Mac users is ScreenFlow, which teachers can use for free for 30 days. ScreenFlow allows teachers to record activity on their computer screen and also comes with a powerful editing tool for creating engaging videos. For PC users, teachers can use Camtasia by TechSmith, which comes with similar features. TechSmith also offers the aforementioned Jing, which is free. Jing videos can be hosted on Screencast.com, another free tool offered by TechSmith. Of course, teachers can also take a more traditional route and film themselves in front of a whiteboard.

Once teachers have created the videos they would like to share with students, they can host them on YouTube, Vimeo, Wistia (not free), and even Tumblr or Facebook. For more ambitious teachers, they can create a course using Teachable or Udemy, which allow them to organize and structure lessons using their LMS platforms. Teachers can also create a private course site using WordPress, Wix, or Weebly to create a website that hosts and organizes the videos and lesson content to their liking. For creating synchronous learning environments, teachers can host classes with Zoom, which allows them to host live lessons online. With Xoyondo, teachers can conduct surveys, discussions, and scheduling polls to elicit when and what students want to study.

Conclusion

In conclusion, these five sample projects and 30-plus free tools are just the tip of the iceberg of what teachers can create for their students, schools, or themselves. Having some trepidation to pushing content online is natural for using new tools can seem daunting to people inexperienced in content creation. But in truth, creating digital content is a fun, creative process that can easily become addictive once teachers give it a try. To get started, teachers should try to do one new project a week, perhaps using the tools and modules above as training materials, and over time, they should see huge gains in their digital skill levels as well as increased engagement from students. It is all free, so there is nothing to lose except opportunity!

The Author

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Appendix

This is a list of very useful and free online tools and resources for every letter of the alphabet with short descriptions of the tools and links to find them online.

■ A Class with SAAS

Audacity | Audio Editing Software
Create, edit, and export audio files.
http://www.audacityteam.org

Blogger | Blogging Platform
Create blogs and class homepages.
http://blogger.com

Canva | Image Editing SAAS
Create snazzy images and use templates for social media content.
https://www.canva.com

Drive | Cloud Hosting
Store, save, share, and host all types of media files (audio, PDF, video).
https://www.google.com/drive/

Dropbox | Cloud Hosting
Store, save, share, and host all types of media files (audio, PDF, video).
http://dropbox.com

Evernote | Project Management
Make lesson notes, and create, organize, and share lesson plans and study assignments.
https://evernote.com

Facebook | Social Media
Create dynamic learning environments where students can access and discuss content.
https://facebook.com

Google Forms | Survey Tool
Create online quizzes and assignment submission forms. Analyze and aggregate entries.
https://www.google.com/forms/about/

- **Private Digital Downloads**

Gimp | Image Editor
Create, enhance, and edit images. Create templates.
https://www.gimp.org

HTML5 | Scripting Language
Create interactive media content with navigation.
http://www.w3schools.com

Hot Potatoes | Quiz Generator
Create HTML-based quizzes for online and offline viewing.
https://hotpot.uvic.ca/

iTunes | Audio Player
Play, organize, and enhance audio content.
http://www.apple.com/lae/itunes/

Jing | Screen Capture Tools
Capture images and videos of activity on your computer screen.
https://www.techsmith.com/jing.html

- **Flip the Script**

FlipQuiz | Mulitplayer Classroom Quiz
Turn class into a Jeopardy-style game show.
https://flipquiz.me/

Kahoot | Mulitplayer Classroom Quiz
Create engaging online quizzes where students compete in real time.
https://getkahoot.com

LearnClick | Online Quiz Maker
Generate cloze activities and use online or as paper versions.
https://www.learnclick.com/

MailChimp | Newsletter SAAS
Create mailing lists and send emails to large groups of followers.
https://mailchimp.com/

NearPod | Online Quizzes
Create interactive quizzes bases on slide presentation.
https://nearpod.com/

Online Quiz Creator | Online Quizzes
Create online multiple choice quizzes with self-grading features.
https://www.onlinequizcreator.com/

Prezi | Slide Presentation Software
Create dynamic slide presentations for any device.
https://prezi.com/

Quizizz | Mulitplayer Classroom Quiz
Gamify content using this engaging quiz creator.
https://quizizz.com/

Quizlet | Vocabulary Builder
Create word sets and build activities to instruction and review.
https://quizlet.com/

Slides by Google | Slide Presentation SAAS
Create, share, and host slide presentations.
https://www.google.com/slides/about/

- **Potent Printables**

Open Office Draw | Publishing Tool
Create games, worksheets, and more.
https://www.openoffice.org/product/draw.html

OneDrive | Cloud Hosting
Store and share files, particularly Microsoft Office, PowerPoint, and Word documents.
https://onedrive.live.com

Pinterest | Content Sharing
Find and share lessons by browsing collections of materials online.
https://www.pinterest.com/

QRStuff | QR Code Generator
Create images of QR Codes and link them to content online.
http://www.qrstuff.com/

Socrative | Quiz Publishing Platform
Give quizzes online and analyze results in real time.
https://www.socrative.com/

SoundCloud | Audio Hosting
Host audio online that students can access via a link or embedded player.
https://soundcloud.com/stream

TeachersPayTeachers | Content Hosting
Teachers can share lessons and organize content by level, topic, and age.
https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/

Twitter | MicroBlogging
Share lessons with like-minded teachers and students.
https://twitter.com

- **Making MOOCs and More**

Screen-O-Matic | Screencast SAAS
Record a video of an activity on your screen.
https://screencast-o-matic.com/

ScreenFlow | Screencast Software
Record screencasts on a Mac, and then edit and export the video.
http://www.telestream.net/screenflow/overview.htm

TechSmith | Screencast
Record screencasts with either Jing or Screenflow, and host on Screencast.com.
https://www.techsmith.com/camtasia.html

Tumblr | Micro Blogging
Create curated content related to a subject, and host it and share it online.
https://www.tumblr.com/

Teachable | Create Online Courses
Teachers can create, edit, modify, and publish online courses.
https://teachable.com/

Udemy | Create Online Courses
Teachers can create, edit, modify, and publish online courses.
https://www.udemy.com/courses/

Vimeo | Video Hosting
Post, share, and publish videos online.
https://www.vimeo.com

Weebly | Website Builder
Create a class homepage or lesson portal.
https://www.weebly.com

Wix | Website Builder
Create a class homepage and host content online.
https://www.wix.com

WordPress | Website Builder
Build a fully functional website on the world's leading web-publishing platform.
https://www.wordpress.com

Xoyondo | Scheduling Software
Schedule events, create polls, and make discussion boards.
https://www.xoyondo.com

YouTube | Video Hosting
Share videos with teachers and students around the world.
https://www.youtube.com

Zoom | Online Conferencing
Hold meetings, classes, and seminars online.
https://www.zoom.com

Communicative Instructional Approaches: A Framework for 21st Century Skills

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Teachers are encouraged to teach 21st century skills, but may struggle to identify exactly what skills they need to teach and how to design activities that will develop such skills. One way to approach 21st century skills is to view them as not necessarily uniform across contexts. Different contexts require distinct use of problem-solving, collaborative interaction, and personal communication. Students' current and future needs are also diverse. However, the communicative language teaching approaches already in use in many classrooms offer not only meaningful interaction for students but also the opportunity to develop problem-solving, collaboration, and effective communication skills for a target country and/or context-specific interactions. This article explores these communicative instructional approaches and how they can be used as a framework to build 21st century skills dependent on students' needs.

INTRODUCTION

There is recurring discussion of the need to prepare foreign language students with 21st century skills to compete in the information-age economy, which requires problem-solving, collaborative work, effective communication, and adjustment to ever-changing societies. Simultaneously, today's language classrooms aim to focus on communicative and cultural competencies. The idea is that students will be prepared to use their foreign language as a 21st century skill. Even though linguistic competency and cultural understanding are great assets, they are not always sufficient to operate effectively in multicultural and multilingual contexts. Analysis and evaluation are needed for problem-solving, while interpersonal and leadership skills are needed for collaborative and effective communication.

There are a variety of supplementary skills required to use a foreign language as a 21st century skill. So, what is it that is actually meant when educators speak of teaching 21st century skills? One way to look at the issue is to consider that 21st century skills are a broad set of skills that are not necessarily uniform across contexts as the application of multiple subskills varies. Even among countries where a common language is spoken, each regional area and local context requires specific linguistic, interpersonal, and sociocultural skills for one to effectively participate in that community. Therefore, teachers need to go beyond language and culture as a focus of instruction, even at lower levels, and incorporate activities that target specific linguistic, interpersonal, and sociocultural skills for the expected needs of the students. Teachers also need to offer problem-solving and analytical thinking activities to develop higher-order thinking skills.

There are a variety of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approaches already in broad use to offer meaningful interaction using higher-order thinking skills while focusing on skills for target country and context-specific interactions. Task-Based Instruction (TBI), Project-Based Instruction (PBI), Problem-Based Instruction (PrBI), and Scenario-Based Instruction (SBI) all foster meaningful, collaborative interaction that foster interpersonal and sociocultural skills while utilizing problem-solving skills. However, the needs of Korean students headed for corporate positions in Korea are not the same as for those hoping to later pursue graduate studies overseas or work for a multinational corporation in Asia, Southeast Asia, or beyond. Therefore, 21st century skills for foreign language should be understood as a set of interpersonal and higher-order thinking skills that are utilized in conjunction with linguistic and cultural competencies. The application of 21st century skills is context-specific as each sociocultural context has distinct requirements to operate effectively. In what follows, I describe how a variety of CLT and current instructional approaches provide a framework to foster 21st century skills in the classroom for a specific context, or several, depending on students' needs.

DEFINING 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

The term "21st century skills" describes a broad set of knowledge and skills that are understood as necessary to successfully and effectively interact across various domains in today's global societies. However, it can be difficult to label or list 21st century skills as the concept encompasses a wide range of elements. The term is widely used in education but may not be defined consistently. The term intersects with many common educational descriptors: *applied skills, cross-curricular skills, cross-disciplinary skills, interdisciplinary skills, transferable skills, cultural skills, non-cognitive skills, soft skills*, etc. While these different terms may not be synonymous, aspects of their definitions address many subskills that are described as 21st century skills.

Many of the above skills are reflected in Bloom's taxonomy, CLT approaches, and foreign language cultural competency frameworks. First, Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson, Krathwohl, Airasian, Cruikshank, Mayer, Pintrich, Raths, & Wittrock, 2001) outlines cognitive processes with knowledge and comprehension at the lower end of the scale and application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation at the higher end. Each cognitive process lies along a continuum from simple to complex, and concrete to abstract. The higher-order thinking processes (i.e., analysis, evaluation, application) at the upper end of the scale are part of 21st century skills. Second, CLT approaches incorporate meaningful communication, collaborative work, and higher-order thinking skills as part of the process and production phases of creating a tangible outcome. Twenty-first century skills are developed as a result of students participating in these activities. Third, some foreign language associations have developed cultural competency guidelines (ACTFL, 1996) that are in response to a need for students to perform effectively in multicultural and cross-cultural contexts. Implementing such guidelines in classroom instruction develops 21st century skills.

Consequently, 21st century skills can be understood as interpersonal and higher-order thinking skills that are developed through CLT approaches such as TBI, SBI, PBI, and PrBI. These can work in conjunction to foster meaningful, context-specific learning to build proficiency and assist students to meet real-life challenges. As a result, students build operational 21st century skills that are appropriate for their current and future needs. Therefore, one approach to describing and teaching 21st century skills can be that they (a) are not necessarily uniform across contexts, (b) require specific linguistic, interpersonal, and sociocultural skills for each community, (c) need to be taught by going beyond language content and surface-level culture, and (d) develop higher-order thinking skills.

IMPLEMENTATION

Localizing the Skills

Without question, the needs of Korean EFL students are distinct across K-12, university, and adult continuing education. Therefore, the approach to teaching 21st century skills to all Korean EFL students cannot be lumped together. The diverse social, linguistic, cultural, and political contexts in which students will interact requires distinct competencies and abilities. Students need to be engaged with relevant complex questions in meaningful situations within the classroom. The Situated Learning Approach (SLA) argues that cognition is best when situated within a context (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Therefore, SLA encourages students to contextually use linguistic and cultural knowledge for the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Providing students meaningful issues at their level allows students to use their language skills, their sociocultural competencies, and higher-order thinking skills.

Highlighting the Relevance of Context and Students' Needs

Many teachers in Korea, and worldwide, teach a variety of students. Sometimes teachers work across many institutions and schools. Yet even within the same institution or school, teachers encounter a variety of students. For example, a teacher in Korea may hold a full-time position at a university teaching general undergraduate English courses and teach English to elementary school children on the weekend. A full-time professor at a Korean university may teach general undergraduate English courses in combination with postgraduate seminar English literature courses. The needs of each of the student groups presented require the teachers to adjust for the needs of each class in addition to adjusting for students' individual needs. Much the same, I, for example, teach across contexts that require me to adjust the instruction of 21st century skills.

Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center

The Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) is a U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) school for culturally based foreign language education for branches of the military and DoD agencies. The institute offers instruction in foreign languages for DoD missions. Instruction is informed by the distinct needs of the different branches of service and the future jobs of individual students. This is logical. Train students for the expected contexts they will be in and the skills they will require. So, instruction at the institute is tailored by language, by regional context, by job, etc. One student who is to perform diplomatic translations for formal political events in one region of the world will not need the same skill set as one who will be boots-on-the-ground, interacting in local communities in an area of conflict.

It could be argued that the DLIFLC has a homogenous audience that are branches of the U.S. services. It could be argued an in-service EFL training program at Samsung, for example, has a homogenous group of corporate business professionals as a student group. Yet the Samsung group is not homogenous as the individuals come from different departments with different performance requirements and so on, while some form of standardized assessment needs to be present. The same holds true for the student demographic at the DLIFLC.

Cram Schools and Academic Preparation Institutes

Cram schools and academic preparation institutes are common in the U.S., depending on the region and community. Although highly distinct from the Korean context, parents within Asian heritage communities seek out-of-school academic institutes to provide support or a competitive advantage to their children. However, any parent who feels their child needs additional support may seek academic preparation schools or tutoring services. As a part-time instructor in a local cram school and academic preparation service, I readily observe that the distinct needs of students vary, both for foreign language and general academic subjects, and so do the 21st century skills addressed.

The skills that a high-functioning academic student relatively new to the U.S. needs may be focused on personal, interactional, and collaboration skills, since their academic and higher-order thinking skills are already at the expected level. The individual may be used to working independently in their home-country school system and not accustomed to dividing the workload with others and participating in group discussions and decision-making tasks. My role would be to introduce the students to strategies to negotiate the new situations, cope with ambiguity, and develop collaboration skills through classroom activities. Another student may have lived in the U.S. most of their life and is socioculturally well integrated into their peer community, but struggles with the academic English needed for high school as they speak another language in the home and with peers. Since they speak English, but not beyond a daily conversational ability, my role may be to assist the student to focus attention on the specifics of both vocabulary and grammar that will raise their proficiency level. The student may need to develop strategies to sharpen their skills if they are a typical global learner. Developing attention to detail is not only a foreign language skill but also one that can be applied when assessing and evaluating across any topic or domain.

21st Century Skills in the Korean Context

Although critical thinking, and by extension 21st century skills, is a directive in the Korean curriculum (Park, 2013), the local context influences and reflects how such goals are realized in the curriculum, textbooks, and classrooms. In many cases, English is taught as a subject in classrooms with relatively limited access to the integration of social, cultural, and higher-order thinking skills simultaneously. This is in large part due to the role of standardized testing in Korea. Despite increasing opportunities for exposure to English (e.g., overseas study, travel, and foreign media), English teaching in Korean schools usually involves large classes with students at multiple levels, a curriculum mandated from above, and the need to prepare students for the college entrance exam that effectively begins from the onset of schooling. The kind of flexibility fostered in some other national contexts can be limited because of rigid curriculum constraints and a focus on prescriptive grammar and standardized testing.

Nonetheless, there is a shift taking place in the Korean educational system as it moves from knowledge delivery to competency development, from academic excellence to student well-being and development, and from centralized and detailed prescriptions to more autonomous decision-making by teachers to respond to 21st century learning. However, such changes must be followed by a change in school practice, teachers' professional development, and the sociocultural view. Yet this change does not only require macro-policy implementation but can also be implemented through a micro-policy response. Within the lock-step curriculum assigned by the larger educational entity (e.g., the ministry of education, the corporate training unit), teachers, if actively and mindfully engaged, can provide activities (regularly or periodically) to develop higher-order thinking skills, foster sociocultural competencies, and allow for collaborative interaction to produce a tangible outcome. Also, such SLA and CLT activities may need to be differentiated (e.g., differentiated instruction) as in large classes the current and future needs of students will be distinct. Therefore, teachers may need to differentiate content, process, or product based on the students and groups defined. Twenty-first century skills can be taught in a wide variety of in-school and outside-of-school assignments with adaptation to the local context and students' needs. It is not one particular kind of English that is needed, but many, as the contextualized use of English requires an understanding of the situation and vernacular literacies because distinct domains require diverse linguistic and sociocultural skills (Wallace, 2002).

Conclusions

Korean EFL classrooms have long been teaching cross-disciplinary skills such as writing, critical thinking, self-initiative, group collaboration, and technological literacy, which are essential to success in education, modern workplaces, and adult life. However, these skills have also been important in the industrial and manufacturing periods of Korea. There has always been a need for the ability to plan logistically, interact well with others, and communicate effectively. These skills are not particular to the information age. Moreover, the information-based global economy is no longer new, and the skills needed in the previous manufacturing-based economies are not only still needed today but are already well incorporated in the realities of the global economy that brings multicultural communities in contact with each other face-to-face and via telecommunication for personal, academic, and professional purposes.

So, what is new? It could be argued that problem-solving, collaborative work, and effective communication are not new but rather more prominent because of the ease of multicultural interaction and cross-cultural communication in today's world. Previously, it was a smaller portion of the population that had multicultural and cross-cultural interaction and communication. The discussion of skills to effectively interact in the global community has now come into focus because of the social, economic, and political realities of today's societies. I see 21st century skills as not necessarily new but prominent in today's classrooms. We already possess the tools to teach such skills as CLT approaches, and current instructional frameworks foster these. However, the application of 21st century skills is not necessarily universal, and they are defined locally by individual students' current and future needs.

AUTHOR

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Should You Be Teaching Reading Intensively or Extensively?

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The purpose of this paper is to articulate more clearly some of the major differences between intensive reading and extensive reading. These two approaches to reading differ in terms of their theoretical orientations and pedagogical applications, and because of that, they produce differential effects on students' reading and literacy development. Although both forms of reading are important in improving students' reading proficiency, L2 teachers are more familiar with intensive reading and are more willing to invest more time in intensive than extensive reading. For a more balanced approach to teaching reading, teachers should become more familiar not only with the theoretical underpinnings of extensive reading but also the practical aspects of implementing an extensive reading program such as how to choose interesting books for the library, how to organize the borrowing system, how to monitor and assess students' reading, and how to build students' interest and motivation in reading.

INTRODUCTION

There are two main approaches to teaching reading in the L2 classroom: intensive reading and extensive reading (ER). Although both are important in facilitating L2 reading development, teachers seem to be more familiar with the former than the latter and are more willing to invest more time in intensive reading than extensive reading. This is despite the fact that in the past 20 years or so, the number of publications on ER that supports its implementation in ELT has grown exponentially. Both theoretical accounts and empirical research studies on ER have been catalogued by extensive reading archivists and can be freely accessed by both researchers and practitioners. Over 600 abstracts of extensive reading works (i.e., books, book chapters, journal articles, theses, etc.) are available at Extensive Reading Foundation (n.d.). Summarizing years of research about the impact of extensive reading on language learning, Bamford and Day (2004) conclude

> Good things happen to students who read a great deal in the foreign language. Research studies show they become better and more confident readers, they write better, their listening and speaking abilities improve, and their vocabularies become richer. In addition, they develop positive attitudes toward and increased motivation to study the new language. (p. 1)

The purpose of this paper is to articulate more clearly some of the key differences between intensive reading and extensive reading so that teachers can have a deeper understanding of these two forms of reading and become more confident in implementing them in their teaching. In the following sections, I discuss their differences in terms of learning aims, teaching materials, learning tasks and activities, roles of the learners and teachers, the theories of learning behind these two forms of reading, and their differential impacts of language learning.

AIMS OF LEARNING

Intensive reading is often defined as reading for detailed information. The main aim of reading is to help students extract information from a reading passage. As the process of comprehending a text is not always straightforward for L2 students, the aims of the lesson also include teaching students some language elements and comprehension-related skills and strategies. The aims of intensive reading can be summarized by the acronym LIST (Macalister, 2011):

L – Language goals. These refer to the teaching of unfamiliar words and expressions found in the text and complex grammatical constructions that may cause reading difficulties.
I – Idea goals. These refer to the teaching of the contents of the text, both the main ideas and important details.
S – Skill and strategy goals. These refer to teaching students skills and strategies that would help them read with greater comprehension (e.g., predicting, summarizing, and checking for comprehension).
T – Text structure goals. These refer to teaching students various text structures (e.g., compare-contrast, cause-effect) to help them read the text more efficiently.

Extensive reading, on the other hand, is reading for general information and is often associated with the enjoyment that one derives from reading. When L2 students read extensively, they choose to read easy and enjoyable materials in order to build their fluency in reading. The aim is not to teach specific language skills or comprehension strategies but to help them become fluent readers. According to the *Guide to Extensive Reading* published by the Extensive Reading Foundation (2011, p. 1), the main aim of extensive reading is for students to R–E–A–D:

Read quickly and
Enjoyably with
Adequate comprehension so they
Don't need a dictionary

In order to get the most benefit from extensive reading, students must read regularly and abundantly. Research shows that, while variables such as variety and availability of reading materials are important, it is the quantity of reading that correlates most highly with students' reading improvements and general language learning gains (Renandya, Jacobs, & Rajan, 1999). Thus, amount of reading is a key aim of an extensive reading program. Also, since sustained motivation is needed for students to read regularly over a period of time, increasing students' motivation is also an important aim. Students who are motivated are likely to read more, and students who read more tend to be more motivated, too. There is a reciprocal relationship between motivation and extensive reading (Day & Bamford, 1998).

Materials

Because of the different aims, the materials used in intensive reading and extensive reading differ a great deal. In intensive reading, the materials often contain language that is above (and sometimes beyond) students' current level of competence. The reading materials used in intensive reading tend to be short and dense in terms of content and language features. Students often have to read several times, often with the help of the teacher or a bilingual dictionary, in order to make sense of the surface meaning of the text and also to interpret its implicit meanings.

In extensive reading, the materials are generally less demanding. They may be just slightly above students' levels; but for weaker students who have had very little experience reading texts in English, the materials may also be at or even below their levels. Giving these students an opportunity to read very easy texts is a pedagogically sound practice. When they experience frequent success in reading, they become more confident and are likely to want to read more books. So, what is important to remember is that students need to be able to read a text with minimal or no help from others. If students read texts that contain a lot of unfamiliar language, they will not be able to read with sufficient speed and may not enjoy what they are reading.

Intensive reading materials are usually short, roughly about one or two pages long. The contents are not always interesting, partly because the students have no say in the selection of the intensive reading materials. More often than not, students find the topics of the school reading materials unappealing as they can't make meaningful connections to the contents.

In extensive reading, the materials tend to be longer (often a whole storybook) and more interesting in terms of contents. A variety of reading materials are made available, and students get to choose the materials they like to read. This way, students are more likely to read with ease and enjoyment.

Task and Activities

In intensive reading, teachers prepare a host of tasks and activities before, during, and after reading. In the before-reading phase, teachers organize various activities to arouse students' interest and motivation, and to get them to activate their schema by engaging them in prediction activities. In the during-reading phase, students are encouraged to take notes, make connections, visualize the text by building mental images, and monitor and evaluate their comprehension. After they have finished reading, they check their comprehension by responding to teacher-prepared comprehension questions. This can then be followed by some language-related practice such as vocabulary-building or grammar exercises. Because of the numerous activities that students have to do, some reading scholars (e.g., Field, 2002) have questioned the relevance of these activities in supporting students' reading development. While these activities are not without value, they should not take up too much instructional time. L2 reading scholars (e.g., Day & Bamford, 1998; Renandya & Jacobs, 2016) believe that reading is best learned through reading, and not through doing reading-related activities.

In contrast to intensive reading, the main, if not the most important, activity in extensive reading is reading. Students read their selections in any way they like. They can stop reading at any point and continue reading at a later time. They can also finish reading the whole book in a day (if it is a small book), a few days, or a week (if the book is longer). When they finish reading their selections, they should select new books to read. The teacher's job is to encourage students to do more reading and not give students "work" to do. In short, reading should lead to more reading.

Post-reading activities may be organized for accountability purposes, that is, to check if students have actually read the materials. However, we need to keep in mind that the main purpose of post-reading activities is to motivate students to read more books and should be designed in such a way that they are not seen as an unnecessary burden by the students. Activities should be cognitively and affectively appealing so that students develop positive attitudes towards reading and associate reading with enjoyable activities. After reading a selection, students can choose to do any one of the following post-reading tasks:

- Design a poster that captures the gist of the book.
- Roleplay the main event in the story.
- Describe the most exciting scene in the story.
- Draw a mind map depicting the plot of the story.
- Think of 5 adjectives to describe the book.
- Create a 5-line poem (haiku).
- Describe a scene that makes you laugh, feel sad, angry, etc.
- Change the ending of the story.
- Change the gender of the main character, and discuss how the story would develop and end.

ASSESSMENT

In intensive reading, students are typically assessed in terms of their ability to respond to comprehension questions. Some of these questions assess lower-level comprehension skills, such as recalling information explicitly stated in the text, and higher-level comprehension skills, such as inferring relationships of ideas not explicitly stated in the text and synthesizing information presented in the reading passage. Other questions are language-related and assess students' understanding of important words, phrases, and sentences found in the text. Thus, the assessment reflects the aims of intensive reading discussed above.

Since the aim of extensive reading is to nurture students' interest in reading so that they read more widely and enjoyably, the assessment usually focuses on students' level of reading motivation and the amount of reading they have done over a semester or whole academic year. To measure change in students' reading motivation, teachers can use Malloy, Marinak, Gambrell, and Mazzoni's (2013) *Motivation to Read Profile* questionnaire. This instrument, based on Eccles' (1983) expectancy value theory of motivation, assesses students' perception about their self-concept and the value they place on reading. Students who score high on these two variables are considered to have a higher reading motivation than those who score low. Teachers can also have frequent informal conversations with the students to gauge their level of motivation and to find out more about the types of books that they like to read and the kinds of after-activities that students want to do to boost their nascent interest in reading. Schools in Singapore, for example, regularly organize various school-wide activities (e.g., meet the author sessions, storytelling sessions, character dressed-up sessions, weekly or monthly assembly presentations) to get more students to read extensively.

One way to assess the amount of reading is to use a reading log where students record the titles and the number of pages (or number of words) of the books they have read. The number of books students should ideally read is not yet known, but extensive reading scholars suggest that students should read a book per week or every two weeks. Reading one book per week seems a lot, but since books for extensive reading are graded according to student proficiency levels, this suggestion is quite reasonable. Graded readers for lower-proficiency students are quite thin so it does not take a long time to finish reading a book. For higher-proficiency students, the books can be slightly longer but since their reading skills have improved, they can also read the book fairly quickly.

LEARNER ROLES

Good readers, according to Freebody and Luke (1990), make use of four roles to comprehend a reading text more effectively. The four roles are code-breaker, text participant (or meaning-maker), text user, and text analyst. As a code-breaker, students need to develop efficient word recognition skills so that they can read the text with ease and accuracy. As a text participant or meaning-maker, they should understand the text by making use of their prior knowledge and by making connections between sentences and between the various parts of the text. As a text user, they need to know the purpose of the text and how they should respond to the text. Finally, students play the role of text analyst in order to comprehend the text at a deeper level (e.g., to uncover the author's biases and subjective opinions on an issue). These four reader roles are usually taught in intensive reading so that students learn the language elements of a text, comprehend what they read, understand why it was written, and are able to approach the text with a critical eye.

In extensive reading, students are not explicitly taught these four roles. It is not that these roles are unimportant, but it is just that the aim of extensive reading is different from intensive reading. As students typically read highly readable texts (i.e., independent level texts), there is little need for students to "break the code," so to speak. Since students are already familiar with the language features found in the text, the aim of reading is to help them consolidate their previously learned language items and to give them ample opportunities to encounter familiar language in their reading. Through repeated experience with familiar language found in a wide variety of text, students can read faster, with greater comprehension and enjoyment. Also, students do not need to be explicitly taught to be a text participant, text user, or critical reader. These roles are expected to emerge naturally as students gain more experience in reading.

TEACHER ROLES

Teachers play vastly different roles in the two forms of reading. In intensive reading, teachers select reading materials for focused teaching of language skills, comprehension skills, and strategies. They also take an active role in organizing student learning in the reading lesson. In extensive reading, teachers don't really "teach" the students. Rather, their job is to create motivating environments for students to want to read more. They make available and accessible a wide variety of reading materials, help students select relevant and appropriate reading materials, motivate weaker readers to read very easy materials, encourage stronger readers to read more challenging books, monitor students' reading logs, and organize sharing sessions where students can discuss with other students the contents of the books they have read. A critically important role of the teacher in nurturing a healthy reading habit in the students is for the teacher to become a good model of a reader. By showing the students that they themselves are enthusiastic readers who read regularly, teachers stand a higher chance of motivating their students to read extensively in English.

THEORY OF LEARNING

The two forms of reading, intensive and extensive, are based on different learning theories. I summarize below the theoretical assumptions that underpin intensive and extensive reading.

In intensive reading, instruction follows the "reading to learn" principle (Extensive Reading Foundation, 2011). Students read a short text in order to learn about information of various types, including topics of general interest (e.g., human emotions, communications, relationships, etc.) or those related to their academic subjects (e.g., social studies, literature, and science). The reading theory that is often used to explain the comprehension process is that of social constructivism (MacLaughlin, 2012). According to this theory, the construction of meaning involves students making use of their prior knowledge (schema) in order to make sense of what is contained in the text. Comprehension is facilitated when students are able to make meaningful connections between what they know and what is in the text. Deeper comprehension is also possible when students read closely and use appropriate comprehension strategies, such as visualizing, questioning, connecting, etc. The social element of the theory suggests that students can extend and deepen their comprehension by interacting with other students. The opportunity to listen to different views from others enables students to monitor, revise, and also refine their comprehension.

The main theory behind extensive reading can be traced to Krashen's (2011) comprehension hypothesis. According to this theory, "we acquire language and develop literacy when we understand messages, that is, when we understand what we hear and what we read, when we receive "comprehensible input" (Krashen, 2011, p. 81). Students become skillful readers when they read a lot of reading materials that are easy to comprehend. After a period of time (anywhere between 6 to 12 months), students begin to build up a stronger linguistic base, which enables them to read more fluently (i.e., they can recognize words and read them in meaningful groups more rapidly) and with greater comprehension. Their general and topical knowledge also increases, which in turns helps them comprehend texts more effectively. Research shows that sustained exposure to comprehensible reading materials improves not only students' reading proficiency (Jeon & Day, 2016; Nakanishi, 2015) but also overall language proficiency (Renandya, Rajan, & Jacobs, 1999).

Impact on Language Learning

It is clear from the discussions above that intensive and extensive reading are based on different theoretical orientations and are implemented differently in L2 reading. Because of this, their impact on language learning is likely to be different. A summary of the impact of intensive reading and extensive reading on students' reading and language development is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparative Impacts of Intensive and Extensive Reading on Students

Intensive Reading	Extensive Reading
• Students can use a variety of reading strategies to help them comprehend texts at a deeper level.	• Students can become fluent readers, reading texts with ease and appropriate speed.
• They can become efferent readers and are skillful at extracting information from texts.	• They can become aesthetic readers and find reading personally meaningful.
• They become adept at answering comprehension questions.	• Their self-concept and value about reading may increase, which in turn nourish their reading motivation.
• They can perform well on traditional reading comprehension tests.	• They may develop a healthy and positive reading habit.
• They may develop negative attitudes towards language learning and stop reading once they finish school.	• They may become life-long readers who read not because they have to but because they want to.

Since both types of reading facilitate students' literacy development, one might ask why teachers tend to pay more attention to intensive reading than extensive reading. Renandya and Jacobs (2016) provides the following reasons.

- Limited resources. Some schools may not have sufficient resources to purchase books and other materials for extensive reading. Finding curriculum time for extensive reading has also been cited as the main reason for not implementing extensive reading. Brown (2009), for example, notes, "The main practical concerns regarding ER are to do with cost, lack of time, monitoring students' reading, managing the library of books, guiding students to choose appropriate books, and getting students engaged in reading" (p. 240).
- Longer time investment. The language learning benefits of extensive reading are not immediately observable. It may take six to twelve months of daily reading for students to see the impact of extensive reading. Because schools often feel the pressure of producing more immediate results, the delayed effects of extensive reading are not very appealing to them.
- Although many language teachers have an intuitive understanding of the importance of extensive reading, they may not be too familiar with the practical aspects of implementing a school-wide extensive reading program (e.g., how to choose relevant reading materials, how to monitor student reading, how to sustain students' motivation, etc.).
- Unlike intensive reading, extensive reading is not formally assessed. Thus, extensive reading is sometimes seen as lacking pedagogical legitimacy.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this paper is to spell out more clearly the key differences between intensive reading and extensive reading. The paper has shown that the two forms of reading are informed by different theories of learning and, as a result, have differential impacts on students' reading proficiency. Research shows that the two forms of reading are needed to facilitate students' long-term literacy development. Intensive reading helps students become strategic readers who can use their linguistic and cognitive resources to comprehend a text at a deeper level. Extensive reading helps students become good and enthusiastic readers, and enables them to reap numerous linguistic as well as nonlinguistic benefits, including improved reading skills, larger vocabulary, and perhaps more importantly, wider and deeper knowledge about the world. As we all know, people who read widely are more interesting to be with and are more able to relate and connect with other people.

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The Demands of the 2020 Job Market: Transferrable Skills and ELT

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The reason everyone goes into education is to have a powerful influence on the educational lives of the students … together [teachers and administrators] can make a difference. – Glickman, 1995

The present competitive working environments demand that learners be prepared with many skills that go significantly beyond accurate use of English and ICT (information and communication technology) skills. This paper will discuss the potential role of English language classes in fostering transferable skills, which new work environments will demand of employers. By cultivating these skills, language learners can gain competitive advantage in the next-generation job market. The paper will reflect on the extent English classes, teaching materials, activities, and assignments serve our learners' and the other stakeholders' needs. It aims to offer some food for thought to practicing teachers, curriculum developers, digital or print material producers, assessment specialists, and heads of departments.

INTRODUCTION

This paper reflects the author's synthesized understanding of the literature on 21st century skills in relation to what activities can be incorporated into English language teaching (ELT) classes to promote these skills. The paper focuses on required skills from the perspective of the learners' employability in the 2020 job market and targets ELT professionals who would like to create *a powerful impact* on and *make a difference* in shaping the future.

Arguably, there has been a close relationship between learning English as a foreign or second language and employability and/or improving career opportunities. What lies behind the majority of English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL) learners' motivation is financial, or academic, which in most cases relates to vocational or occupational goals. In other words, most learners have been studying English to improve their career opportunities either as students preparing for or excelling at higher education institutions wishing to find jobs upon their graduation or as employees whose occupations demand higher levels of English proficiency.

Becoming an effective user of English language has become even more important in order to increase one's chance for career moves when one considers the major changes that the Knowledge Era has brought with it. Hence, the purpose of this paper is primarily to attract attention to the expectations of the job market for the next generation and to offer some food for thought about the potential contribution that can be made toward meeting these expectations through English classes, teaching materials, activities, and assignments.

WHY 21ST CENTURY SKILLS?

Friedman (2005) states that the world has been flattened thanks to technology, which has made information widely accessible through an abundance of resources and extended global networks. These recent technological changes necessitate new skillsets for people to adapt themselves in a transforming society in terms of retrieving, assessing, and categorizing information as summarized in a recent OECD report (Ananiadou & Claro, 2009). The researchers also point out the significance of utilizing digital technology for generating new knowledge and ideas instead of passive consumption of it as another important aspect for players of the new era.

More often than not, the job market of the previous era (i.e., the Industrial Age) required people to be skillful at manufacturing (manual labor), whereas job seekers in the Knowledge Era should focus more on developing their skills at mento-facturing (mental labor) as explained in Marquart (2011). When copying the master and following instructions for routine manual work were sufficient to keep the same job for an entire career in the former age, the case is rather different for the latter (Kay & Greenhill, 2013). In fact, the actors in modern society engage in a lot more intellectual activities, working with much less concrete concepts when compared with those of the previous century (Ananiadou & Claro, 2009).

Figure 1 illustrates how skills necessary to perform jobs that require routine manual or routine cognitive work declined as opposed to jobs that require non-routine analytical thinking and non-routine interactive communication increased in the U.S. between 1960 and 2002 (Levy & Murnane, as cited in Kay & Greenhill, 2013). Professionals in the 2020s will need to be skilled at locating and understanding required information, selecting from an abundance of resources. Also, as the information has become a lot more accessible by the masses, making meaning out of the information and being capable of analyzing it based on the problems they are solving, and making decisions as well as saving and storing it for further use has been and will be essential (Ananiadou & Claro, 2009). In short, being skilled at *information literacy* is one of the key skills of the new era.

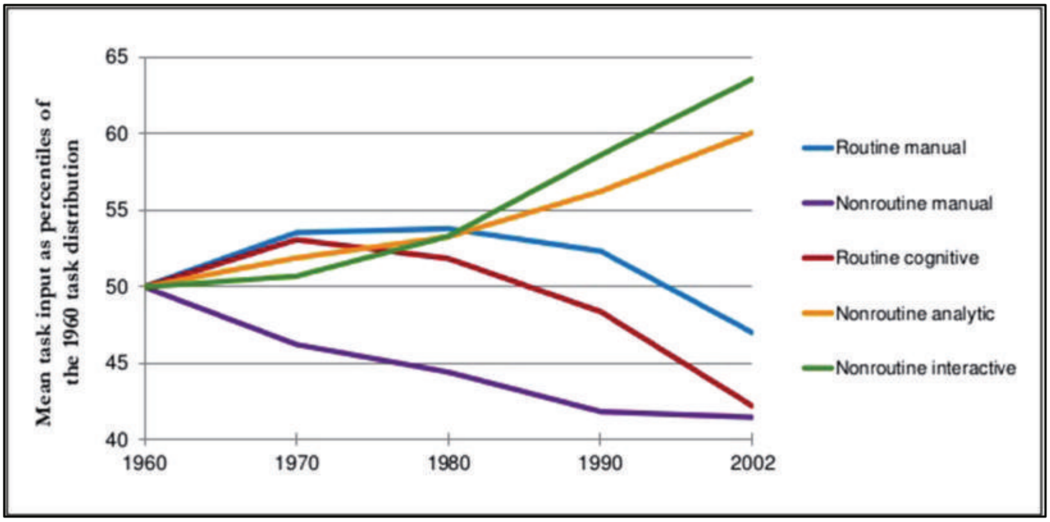

FIGURE 1. Decline in jobs requiring routine and/or manual skills and the increase in jobs requiring non-routine manual and analytic skills.

Manual jobs that could be digitized such as postman, farmer, and meter-reader are now considered as endangered jobs (Myers, 2015). On the other hand, the demands for jobs that require skills such as people management, complex problem solving, negotiating, and coordinating with others will increase according to another report by the same organization (Figure 2).

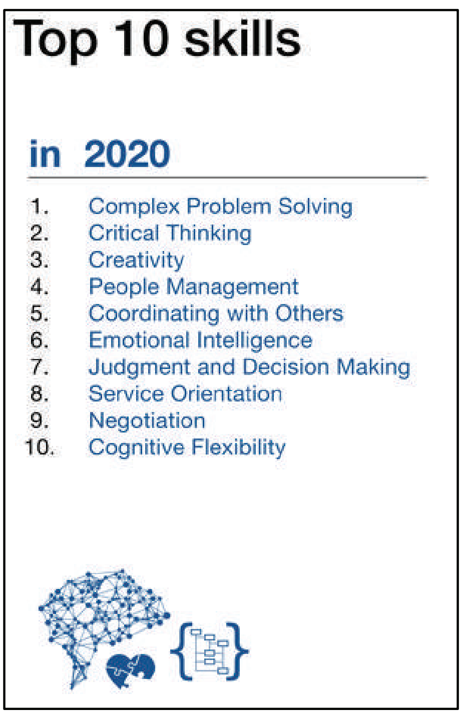

FIGURE 2. Top 10 Skills in 2020. (Adapted from Gray, 2016)

Once a problem has been solved through the effective use of information literacy, the need to present the outcome with the constituents efficiently will follow to create the impact (Ananiadou & Claro, 2009). A lot of the jobs of the 2020s will necessitate employees to be in close contact with clients, customers, and caretakers; in other words, jobs that can be categorized in the service economy will be on demand. For example, physical therapists, counsellors, cost estimators, and event planners are going to be amongst the most popular professionals. What skills, then, will these professionals need most? Apart from the technical and field knowledge to perform their jobs efficiently, they will need to refine their communication skills, a domain related to TEFL. Routine manual jobs that could be accomplished in solitude will be replaced by those in the service sector. Thus, listening to one's clients or co-workers actively, informing them accurately, giving them clear instructions, persuading, and negotiating with or motivating their team members will be crucial skills that should be cultivated. According to Kay and Greenhill (2013) and other scholars, people seeking jobs in the new era will need to possess interactive communication skills and critical thinking skills both in face-to-face and on virtual global work environments.

Friedman (2005) argues that the creation of "the flat world" will also necessitate restructuring old-fashioned hierarchical management, as this new environment has stemmed from having vast resources of information and powerful networks available, mainly thanks to technological developments and the impact of globalism from a political standpoint. Given this, another dimension of the required skills for job seekers is associated with their ability to foster a proper work ethic and collaboration in teams that have diverse cultural and personal backgrounds. Being able to reflect critically, giving constructive feedback, and being flexible and adaptable have been and will be amongst other crucial skills that will be required. How does this new management style manifest itself in the new workplaces? Well, first of all, employers will probably need to self-manage their time and interaction with (global) team members rather than being micro-managed by their supervisors. As an Apple executive described to Ken Kay (2011) the profile of a future employee, "If a person needs to be managed, they will no longer be employable." Therefore, managing oneself, that is, not needing someone to give them directions and to remind them of work ethics, will also be essential, as reiterated in the OECD report (Ananiadou & Claro, 2009).

Employers' Perspective

At this point, it is important to consider what educational institutions have been implementing to prepare students for the demands of the transforming professional world, and what the employers' viewpoints and observations are on the current state of young employees considering the new skills required in the transforming workplaces. In this section, I will illustrate some real-life situations based on personal and professional communications with friends and colleagues researching into or representing different sectors in different contexts.

The first two examples will exemplify how undergraduate program developers respond to the latest demands in the job market. At a conference I attended, the implications of Jacob and Khan's (2015) study conducted at Monash University, were shared. The study emphasized the importance of identifying the needs of communities and serving them in the healthcare profession. Thus, elective courses were designed to enable undergraduate pharmacy students to develop their communication skills as well as empathy and leadership skills in order to be prepared for today's professional contexts. Additionally, because employers in the healthcare industry would like young graduates to be able to solve problems and think "outside the box," these skills are also cultivated in these courses.

In several parts of the world, programs are being modified in order to foster undergraduates' skills to enter professional practice with more confidence and competence. An example of this approach was shared by a colleague and classmate of mine from the online doctoral program I am attending. He reported that they had recently adopted a Practice-Ready program in their college in the U.S. by adding a series of learning objectives that are related to business skills, communication skills, and professionalism (online discussion forum, 2015).

The following two examples represent employers' viewpoints, which derived from personal conversations: one with the sales manager of a petrol pumping company (private conversation, May, 2015) and the other from the CEO of a translation firm (private conversation, April 2015). Although the sectors are very different from one another, the complaints are very similar. Both executives emphasized the young graduates' lack of communication, problem-solving, and team-working skills as well as their lack of awareness of appropriate behavior, work ethics, and exhibiting the right attitude at the right time. One of them reported, "We see people coming to job interviews dressed casually, or unshaven with sandals," and the other stated that the majority of their employees lose jobs due to the lack of these skills, not because of technical incompetence or content-based inadequacy but because of the lack of people skills.

Evidence in the literature substantiates these personal views. For example, in his recent study, Robles (2012) identified soft skills such as communication, social skills, positive attitude, professionalism, flexibility, teamwork, and work ethics as being amongst the top ten skills that business executives require from employees.

Teaching 21st Century Skills and ELT

A report by Shirley (2016) lists the 16 skills that were identified as important for the 21st century. The ubiquitous 4Cs (communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking) are the core components to be cultivated. Six of the other skills are foundational – literacy, numeracy, ICT literacy, and cultural and civic literacy – whereas, the other six are associated with personal attributes: curiosity, integrity, persistence, adaptability, leadership, and social and cultural awareness. In my view, most of these skills could be nurtured in ELT classes. Most of the relevant literature encourages teachers to use project-based learning (PBL) to foster these skills (of which details are beyond the scope of this paper). However, PBL is a teaching methodology to measure some soft skills that are not possible to assess through standardized tests (Bell, 2011), so it is advantageous to find ways to implement PBL in the language classroom that are assessable. Other literature discusses issues related to educating and training teachers appropriately for the required skills. Undeniably, being a competent teacher is a prerequisite in any educational context. My point is that the domain of (English) language teaching offers a great platform for the practice and promotion of these skills with our students.

Being involved in ELT as a learner, a teacher, a teacher trainer, a materials producer, and as an academic coordinator for roughly 30 years, I believe that 21st century skills can be cultivated in language classes. Based on my experience in the contexts of English taught as a foreign language, I could argue that the time spent on the correct usage of grammatical rules or overly personalized practices in the classes of English as a second or foreign language may be shifted to allocate more time on things that matter more in the new era. In other words, the time wasted on the correct usage of the third person *-s*, prepositions, or the passive voice of perfect tenses and the like could possibly be spared. After all, 80-85% of academic and technical English is in the present tenses, including passives. Past tenses and past passives take up 5-10%; whereas, all other tenses and verb forms constitute only 5% (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002, p. 2). A fairly good command of the simple present and simple past tenses, with a good grasp of time expressions, knowledge of the most frequently occurring modal and semi-modal verbs (i.e., *can, will, would, have to, going to, used to*), being able to form *yes/no* and *wh*-questions, and some basic conjunctions (*and, but, so*) in order to sequence sentences are sufficient for communicative competence (Thornbury, 2005).

The preceding sections of this paper highlighted the increasing importance of 21st century skills. How can these developments affect a teacher's role in EFL/ESL classes? Arguably, it would be a huge waste of time if precious class time were spent on teaching rules that are readily available and accompanied by multitudes of discrete exercises to practice online. Instead, teachers could plan class time to foster skills such as working in teams, and solving local, regional, or universal problems through project work. Are English language teaching classes adaptable to this kind of a shift? I claim that they indeed are! Project work is actually nothing new for teachers of English. Perhaps we could tweak the topics; for example, instead of rather personalized projects such as making a poster/film about your family members in order to assess students' skills at using present/past tenses and basic descriptions, a more socially sensitive project could be undertaken. For example, we could assign less personal tasks to small groups such as conducting interviews with the older members of one's neighborhood to research their needs in order to plan a seniors-friendly town as a project. This kind of project would raise awareness, provoke critical thinking, and improve skills such as listening actively, working in groups, and managing time and resources efficiently. And learners could still practice the same tenses as in the personal projects – even learners at lower levels of language proficiency.

Another 21st century skill-friendly project that could be conducted by students of any level would be doing research on Internet safety for teenagers and designing a campaign or making a poster of do's and don'ts for teens. Instead of practicing imperatives via tasks such as classroom rules, or eating habits, a project on Internet safety would not only raise the personal awareness of learners but would also enable them to research the topic, gather data, and critically analyze and interpret them for a certain goal that is congruent with digital citizenship, which is another important 21st century skill.

Traditional educational contexts have highlighted individual success, mistake-free outcomes, and the passive use of knowledge, whereas the new era emphasizes collaborative success and a much more dynamic and interactive creation of knowledge, as well as experimentation and risk-taking (Kay & Greenhill, 2013), which welcome mistakes as part of the learning process. Therefore, insisting on the correct use of third person *-s* becomes a rather wasteful task, especially if the learner in question is in fact making an intelligent contribution to knowledge by means of thought-provoking tasks that require critical thinking. Why is this important in terms of employability, which is the focus of this paper? Well, critical thinkers are those who can analyze, interpret, compare evidence to distinguish facts from opinions, and make decisions based on their interpretations. They are those who can identify and solve problems based on data and evidence. And this is what the jobs in the future will require more than ever. That is why, perhaps, this paper offers food for thought to language teachers, head of departments, course designers, and materials and assessment developers.

Conclusions

It has been over twenty years since we began to talk about the importance of developing 21st century skills. Why we are still talking about it is probably because gaining skills requires a lot of practice, and a change of mindsets. It also requires teachers who prioritize these skills and create opportunities for learners to practice them. On the other hand, teaching skills also needs certain skills and practice. Liebtag and Vander Ark (2016) report the results of one study stating that "when surveyed, practicing teachers have said they do not feel prepared and that their professional learning is often no better" (p. 3). Giving quality formative feedback, reinforcing skills, and assessing them appropriately may not always be easy tasks for many language teachers.

This paper aimed to raise awareness of what skills could be incorporated into language classes, and to promote self-reflection on personal and teaching skills. It also calls for some mindset change and commitment to continuous learning to refine teaching skills if today's teachers (course designers, materials and assessment developers, and the other key players in the ELT profession) wish to contribute to their students' future employability prospects.

The Author

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Seven Brain-Friendly Ways to Foster Deeper Understanding and Autonomy, with a Summary of Fischer's Dynamic Skill Theory

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Deeper understanding. Sounds good, but what is it? – and how can we foster it in the classroom? Neuroscience is helping us remove the guesswork! Come hear about seven well-researched, cutting-edge tactics that greatly enhance understanding, autonomy, leadership, and students' feelings of ownership toward the teaching material. Learn how to implement them into your own teaching context. It will make your job easier – and your students will thank you for it!

INTRODUCTION

The term "brain-friendly" is, ironically, not as friendly as it seems. People in-the-know, namely *neuroeducators*, see this term as a big red flag. Books, articles, and presentations with "brain-friendly" in the title are typically pooh-pooh scoffed at by the neuroeducators of the world. Why is that? Is it that neuroeducators are too ritzy to lower themselves to such a pedestrian term? Well, while that *may* be the case for a few neuroeducators, as I see it, the main reason stems from a significantly different issue: the ubiquity of neuro-*bunk*. What is this??

If you are reading this paper with interest, chances are you've read other papers that relate neuroscience or psychology to education, and you probably have read passages or articles that had you scratching your head. *"Could this be right??"* you may have contemplated. Chances are, you actually *were* reading neuro-bunk. How can I say this? Well, on my very first lecture on my very first day at the Harvard Graduate School of Education at their Mind, Brain, and Education Summer Institute, our lecturer frankly told us that 80% of the magazine and web articles that cite neuroscience get the science wrong at some level – sometimes it's out of ignorance, and others times it's malicious and/or for the sake of profit margins. That was back in 2008. Not much has changed since then. Moreover, the term "brain-friendly," because it indeed sounds both friendly yet scientific at the same time, has become a *de facto* term of choice for many of the currently circulating neuro-bunk articles, neuro-bunk technologies, and neuro-bunk websites that proliferate the Internet (see also Crockett, 2012). So, I have a love-hate relationship with this term. Why did I use it in the title of this paper? I have two reasons: (a) to explicitly bring to light this red-flag issue, but also (b) to attempt to reclaim the utility of this term for the "good guys." After all, it is such a friendly and intuitive term.

In this paper, I will discuss, from the neuroELT perspective, the importance of Deeper Understanding (note the capitals). I will also be discussing practical strategies for the classroom teacher. I will rely heavily on my research regarding Fischer's Dynamic Skill Theory, a subject area that I have been experimenting with and writing on for several years. In this way, this paper has two functions: It works as a science-based "academic" paper, but perhaps more importantly, it is also meant to be a teacher's manual with direct practical applicability for classroom teachers. Seven *practical applications* will be on display for the language teacher, with easy-to-follow instructions.

If you are a language teacher, please share this content with your fellow teachers, and with administrators, if you feel so bold – and please do not hesitate to email me with questions and results of implementation in your classrooms. Teacher trainers such as I do our research, present, and write papers not really for money, nor for seeing our names in print – but most of us *do* crave feedback on our research, especially the demonstrated utility of it. Experimenting and sharing feedback is how we all get to grow *together*, and how we can co-create better pedagogical contexts for our students; it is how we make a difference in the world, together.

PART ONE

What Is NeuroELT?

Traditionally, applied linguistics has seldom looked to the brain for answers to its problems. Treating the brain as a "black box" has been the norm *since forever* (Dornyei & Murphy, 2010), and this was quite reasonable until the past few decades because neuroscience did not have the maturity to provide suitable answers to pedagogical questions (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2011, 2014). To be fair, neuroscience has made significant progress in the past few decades, but it can still be said to be in its infancy. Perhaps the black box syndrome is now a "*grey box syndrome*" instead (Dornyei & Murphy, 2010, p. 21). So, why even try to look to neuroscience for help? From the realm of applied linguistics, Schumann (2004) observes Long's stance from back in 1990:

> Long (1990) argued that any theory of second language requires the specification of a mechanism to account for the acquisition and development of second language (L2) knowledge and skills. (p. 1)

With such issues in mind, Kurt Fischer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education started up his Mind, Brain, and Education program (MBE) roughly two decades ago. The mission: to begin an on-going dialogue between the fields of psychology, neuroscience, and education. Being my mentor since my MA dissertation days, Fischer encouraged me to establish a similar undertaking, albeit with the "education" part of MBE refocused to "English language teaching," instead of broadly aiming at education. With his supervision, and with the help of like-minded colleagues, we started up what we now call "neuroELT," a niche field within applied linguistics.

What has neuroELT research accomplished since its inception? At the time of this writing, we have had 10 international conferences in Asia (Japan, the Philippines, Macau) and one soon to be in South Korea (2017), attended by thousands of teachers from around the globe. We maintain a website for continued collaboration and as a centralized source for neuroELT-related papers and presentation slide downloads (fab-efl.com). Our core members collaborated in giving birth to a sister organization, the MBE Special Interest Group within JALT (Japan Association for Language Teaching), a similar organization to KOTESOL. We are proud to say that "Mind, Brain, and Education" is now an officially recognized presentation genre within the JALT organization (an organization of approximately 3,000 members at the time of this writing). I hope a similar group can be created within KOTESOL – either an MBE group or a neuroELT group. Another substantial undertaking has been the establishment of our 50 Maxims for Teaching, which were primarily produced at the NeuroELT Lab at the University of Kitakyushu (Japan). The maxims are available for download at http://fab-efl.com.

How Does the Brain Learn? A Brief Introduction to Dynamic Skill Theory

Rooted in Piaget's work, Fischer has developed a detailed scientific explanation for the development of skills across different ages. Fischer named it "Dynamic Skill Theory" (DST), and it has been tested in multiple countries, including the United States, South Korea, China, and Japan (Murphy, 2009). DST is a complex constructivist theory; for this paper, I have taken the most salient points of DST and detailed them as concisely as possible.

For the sake of full disclosure, I should add here that I have discussed, presented on, and written about DST for many years – it has become integral to my lifework. So after all these years, inevitably, the following review of DST does not cover new ground if you have read my previous papers on DST. Some parts may be construed as a kind of self-plagiarism, and this is somewhat inevitable – there are only so many ways one can explain Fischer's DST without losing contextual integrity and overall coherence within the explanation. I have therefore liberally cited Fischer, and my own work, where appropriate.

Fischer strongly promotes the notion that students' performance levels radically change with *contextual support*; as most teachers will probably concur, clearly there are very real differences in the outcomes between the results of low-support contexts and high-support contexts – most good teachers know that personalized review sessions, student-appropriate scaffolding, and even adventurous endeavors such as "letting the students teach the class," will help students gain knowledge and confidence in the content in ways that boring lecture-type lessons or "memorize this chapter for the test" sort of tasks can. There is little to dispute here.

However, the big disputable question is which is the fairest time to evaluate – in times of low support or in times of high support? There are logical arguments for both camps. We can logically say that a low support context is closer to common, real-life situations, so the test should also be conducted in a low-support context. Indeed, most tests are conducted in low-support contexts (students sit down and write answers on their test papers without content-matched support just prior to the testing). However, if you want to see how much the student has accomplished over the term, and more importantly, what their true potential is, perhaps you may conclude that we should test students in a high-support context. That is to say that we should strategically prime them, have debates with them, and build up "hot thinking" regarding the subject, not only in the days leading to the test, but even on the test day, right before the test. Only in those circumstances can you truly "max-out" their cognitive potential regarding the topic. Somewhat ironically, both arguments' logic seems to be infallible. Let us take a closer look at DST before we attempt to answer this perplexing question.

What is the gist of dynamic skill theory? Fischer has mapped out how small "nuggets" of knowledge compound to form "bigger picture" understandings of the knowledge and then how that high level of understanding compounds with other "high-level understandings" to form a large, unified system of higher-level understandings (Figure 1).

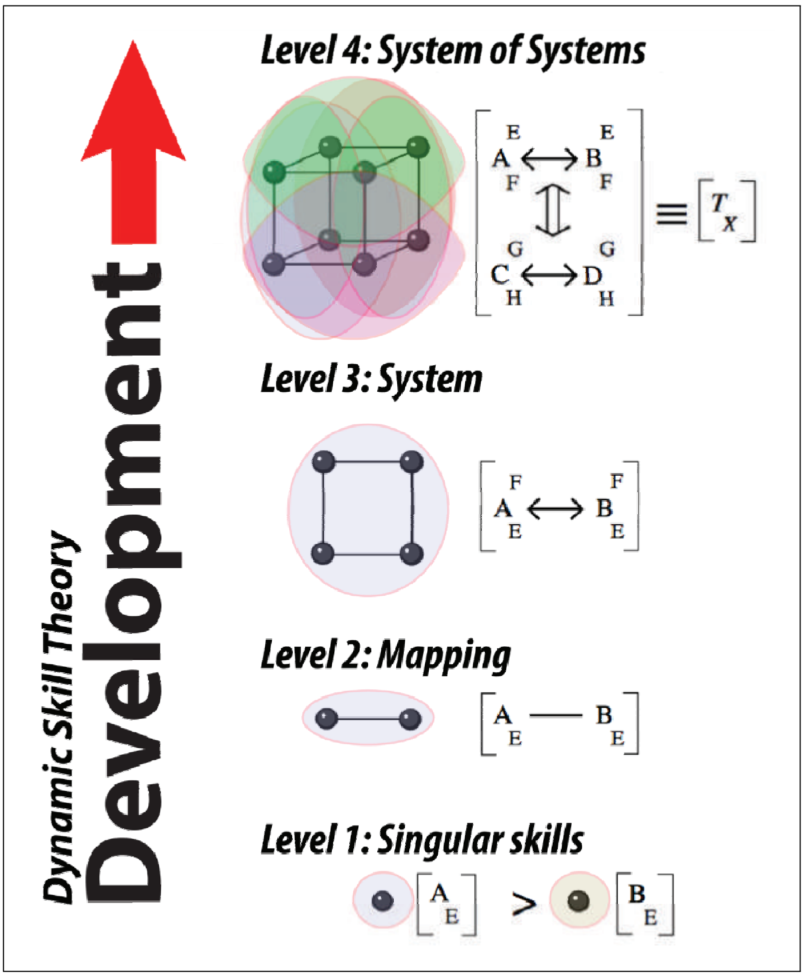

FIGURE 1. Four Levels of Cognitive Development (adapted from Fischer & Bidell, 2006, p. 324; Murphy, 2017)

The “single nugget” level of knowledge (or “singular skills”) is at Level 1, at the bottom of Figure 1. At any given time, several of these nuggets of knowledge will be in the mind of the learner, but none of them are connected logically; if a student were asked to make a logical connection (be it parity or disparity) between any two of the nuggets, they would not be able to do so. However, if the questioning process becomes a prompt for making this connection between those two nuggets (what we call a “mapping”), we should refer to this as the beginning of a “high-support context.” If the high-support context is successful, the logical bonding (i.e., mapping) between the two nuggets happens, and the student would now be thinking at Level 2 cognition, if only for a moment, as is often the case, especially with novices.

So, at Level 2, what we call the “mappings level,” two of those nuggets have made a significant connection (Figure 1): they are bound by logic in the student’s mind. Be it parity or disparity, the student is able to justify (discuss) their logic *logically*. It is foreseeable that a student who just barely makes a logical justification regarding the connection between the two nuggets will not be able to maintain that level of thought on their own for long; high support is still necessary to sustain that level of thought. However, upon repeated use of these skills, the student’s prowess in this area will begin to plateau (a sign of mastery at that specific level). Their brains will eventually become ready for the next higher level if the context is conducive to achieving the next level, *and* if they are indeed biologically capable of this growth. Note: both needs must be met for this to happen!

Level 3 (Figure 1) depicts four nuggets connected to form a squared system. This signifies a “systems level” of understanding. What does that mean? The student is now capable of logically making sense of multiple points of knowledge, in a singular sitting. The points are no longer separated thoughts – they work together as a single unit with a kind of synergetic bond. When a student arrives at any given level (such as Level 3) for the first time, it is typically what we colloquially call an “a-ha! moment” for them. As with Level 2, had this been accomplished only because of a high-support context, just as discussed earlier, this moment would be only a fleeting moment of brilliance. Only after multiple attempts will the student’s neuronal network be biologically capable of (in technical terms, “myelinated” enough for) sustaining thoughts at this level and “beat out” other networks in their race to the solution of any given problem. In time, and if the context allows for it, this particular network will become the dominant one, and the student’s demonstrated level of mastery will also plateau (they will demonstrate stabilized, not erratic, levels of mastery regarding the topic). Note, however, that because we are only human, even highly proficient people in any given skill area have “bad days” and “bad moments” when they won’t be able to reach the same heights that may be typical for them – especially when there is a lack of sleep and/or emotional crises.

The final level, Level 4, is what we call a “system-of-systems level.” This is a wondrous event. Complex *systems of ideas* are depicted by a single face on the cube in Figure 1, bonded with other complex systems of ideas, depicted by the other faces on the cube. They harmoniously work together and form this (metaphorical) singular cube of multi-colored super-complex understanding. As with any of the lower levels, a specialized high-support context will likely be required for the student to achieve this super-high level of brilliance, only to lose that brilliance when he/she is returned to a low-support context. It can be frustrating, but with ample support and ample time, the student's neuronal networks may eventually become biased enough to efficiently sustain this level of thought and understanding on their own.

We must now take this discussion one step further. The levels 1-4 discussed here actually represent only one tier of cognitive development in humans; in reality we have four tiers of development. The good news is, all four of those tiers follow the same patterns of development, so the logic is the same, making the biology of it rather easy to follow. Each tier goes from singular to a mapping, then from a mapping to a system, and finally from a system to a system of systems. How does this all fit together? What does it all mean? I have created a graphic representation of when each of the four tiers typically can first appear and how they relate to each other (Figure 2).

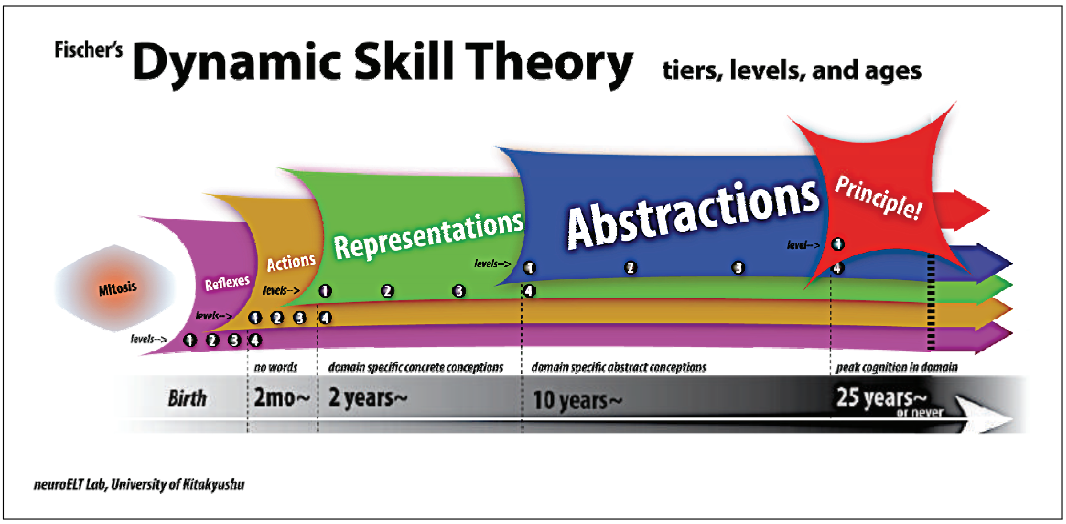

FIGURE 2. The four tiers of Dynamic Skill Theory, plus a possible "fifth tier" (principle) arriving at the end. (Murphy, 2017)

The lowest tier, the *Reflexes* tier, starts around birth, with non-connected single reflex networks. Then a mapping of two reflex networks occurs. Eventually, the brain creates a complex system of reflexes. Finally, when the timing is right and the context allows for it to happen, a super-complex network consisting of a system of systems of reflexes emerges. From around birth till around 2 months of age, this is the only type of cognition possible for us. Interestingly, the entire network of the system of systems of reflexes (level 4) is actually the first nugget of the *Actions* tier.

So, with this first nugget in the Actions tier, the same four-level process begins all over again, albeit on this brand-new tier (Figure 2). Look carefully at how the level numbers line up vertically – there is always a Level "1" hovering over the "4" on the tier directly below it. This signifies that those two actually occupy the same space; a Level 4 is always equivalent to a Level 1 on the tier above it – this is true for all of the tiers.

Regarding the Actions tier, two singular Actions networks bond to become a mapping of Actions. With the proper context and timing, several Actions networks will bond to become a system of Actions, and if all goes well, several different action sets bond to become a logically connected system of systems of Actions. Until around the age of two years, our highest level of cognition possible is within the Actions tier. Note, the existence of a higher tier does not exclude developments in the lower tiers, as graphically represented in Figure 2. At the age of two, we are literally a two-tier being. The next tier is where most teachers find more direct connection to their work; that is because this is when humans finally start to use words meaningfully, to represent their now-developing concrete thoughts. From here on, there will be progressively less meaningless babbling and parroting from the child – that is not to say that the babbling and parroting was meaningless for the development of the child! On the contrary, the growth during the babbling and parroting process is specifically what enabled the child to reach their next tier: *Representations*.

The Representations tier begins at the age of two and reins as the highest tier until around the onset of puberty. It follows the same pattern: single Representations (single concrete words), mappings (two word/two-idea "sentences"), systems (complex sentences and "paragraph-level thinking"), and then system of systems ("essay-level thinking").

"Essay-level thinking" (Level 4 in the Representations tier) is equivalent to the first nugget in the next tier – the Abstractions tier. Interestingly, this means that when this mega-complex network, a system of systems of concrete words becomes readily available to the student (around the time of puberty), and the student is able to make their first ventures into meaningful abstract thinking; it takes experience with that many concrete words, over that many years, to create this mega-complex network (a system of systems of concrete words) to arrive at their first truly abstract thoughts, such as the true meaning of "justice," or the conception of what "parenthood" actually entails (far beyond the simplistic physical properties that younger children see.)

The final tier (Abstractions) again follows the same four-level pattern from around puberty until well into adulthood. There are several interesting points for the teacher regarding this tier. My own work in this area shows that even though students may seemingly be using abstract concepts in their written work and in their discussions, they may not really be making the connections that they portray (Murphy, 2009). What does this mean?

The ability to write down or say an abstract word is not proof that an entire (mega-complex) network has been constructed within the student's brain. Moreover, even if such a mega complex network had been thoroughly established in that student's brain, usage of a buzz word is still not proof that that entire mega-complex network is actually being used at that moment. This has highly significant implications for teachers.

The skill required to write a word or to say a word is a rudimentary skill way down on the tier hierarchy. We must go all the way down to the level of a 4- to 6-year-old to find it! However, in some cases, the usage of buzz words, key concepts, and "deep sounding" phrases may bring on praise and perhaps even high assessment from the teacher. What this data is telling us is that such assessments may be premature.

Moreover, as discussed earlier, a high-support context will allow the student to rise to the occasion, but they need to be in the ballpark to be able to make that jump. How does that work out exactly? Fischer and Bidell (2006) worked out a table comparing potential emergence ages per context (high-support content vs. low-support context) and skill level (Table 1). My own work with Japanese students (Murphy, 2009) validates Fischer's (1980, 2008) findings (see Figure 2).

TABLE 1. The Potential Ages When the Skills Appear

Skill Level	*High-Support Context*	Low-Support Context
Single Representations	**2 years old**	2 - 5 years old
Representational Mappings	**4 years old**	4 - 8 years old
Representational Systems	**6 years old**	7 - 12 years old
Rep. System of Systems (*also* Single Abstractions)	**10 years old**	12 - 20 years old
Abstract Mappings	**15 years old**	17 - 30 years old
Abstract Systems	**20 years old**	**23 - 40 (or never)**
Abstract System of Systems (*also* Single Principle)	**25 years old**	**30 - 45 (or never)**

Adapted from Fischer, 2006; Murphy, 2009, 2017.

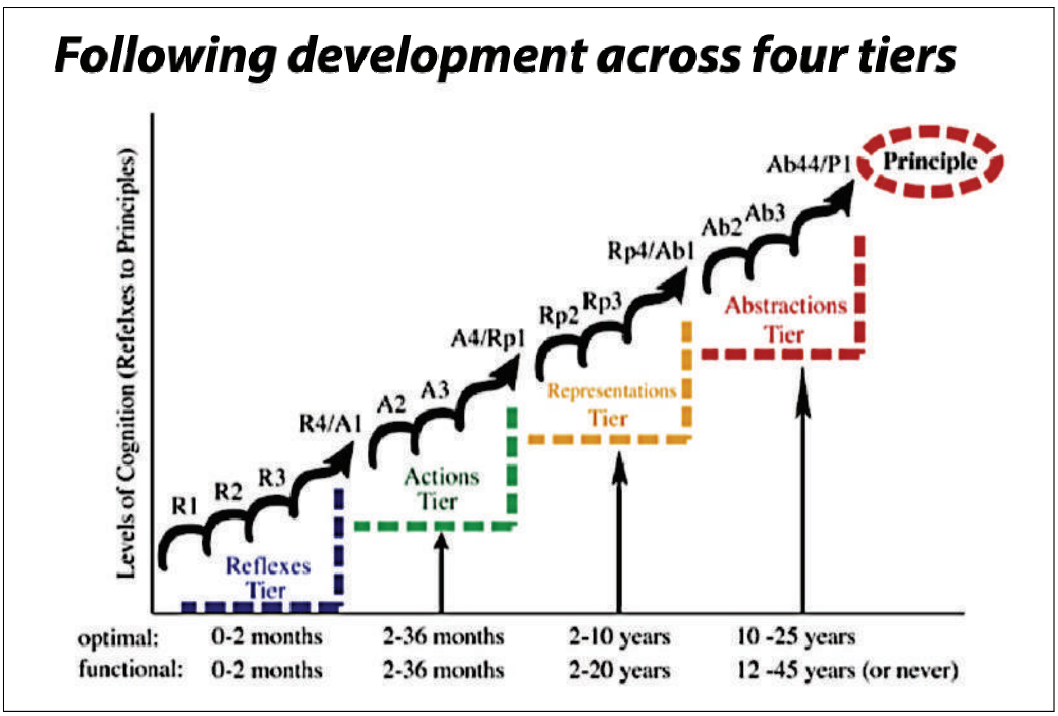

FIGURE 3. Following a Single Domain in Development (adapted from Murphy, 2009, 2017)

Regarding the data in Table 1, of particular interest to university-level teachers is the emergence of Abstract systems. Even in a high-support context, the earliest age at which such a complex network can appear biologically is from the age of 20. Moreover, the highest scientifically proven level, the system of systems of Abstractions, is only possible from the age of 25 and only when in a high-support context. It should be noted that it is extremely difficult to achieve this level of cognition even with superb expert support. Within the jargon laid down by Fischer and Bidell (2006), this extremely difficult-to-reach level of cognitive achievement is also sometimes referred to as the first *Principle* in the Principle tier [the *fifth* tier] (Figure 3).

Part Two: Practical Applications

Practical Applications 1: The Trinity of Assessment

Teaching with multi-modalities is not a new idea within education; it is nevertheless and excellent idea. NeuroELT extends this to assessment. What can multi-modal assessment look like? Well, that can take many shapes and forms, but here I would like to explain an easy-to-learn and easy-to-implement assessment strategy that I have named the “Trinity of Assessment” (Figure 4). Why is this worth mentioning?

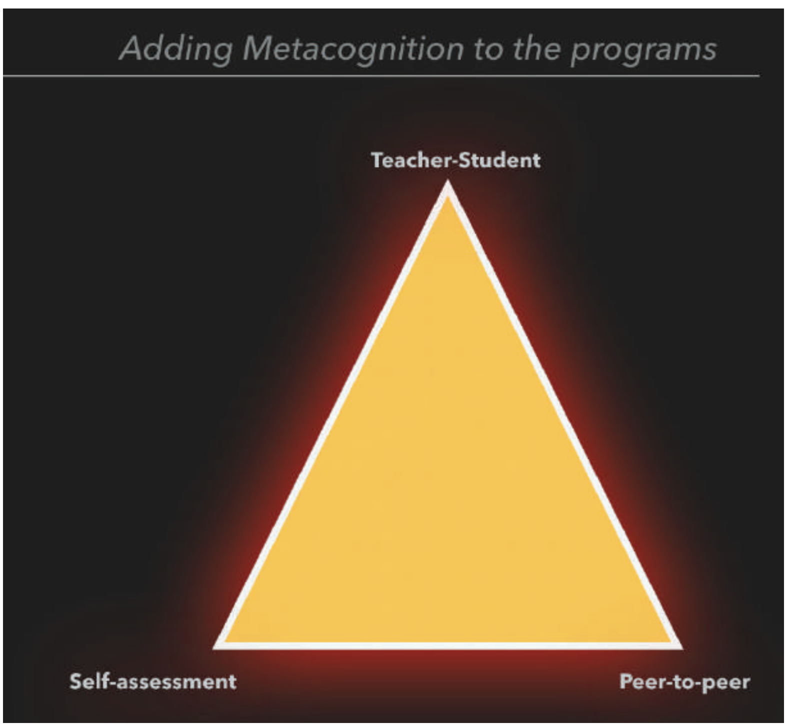

Figure 4. The Trinity of Assessment, led by a student-teacher co-created rubric.

At the top of the trinity figure is teacher-student assessment. This is probably representative of typical professional assessment found in almost any classroom. What is interesting is what resides on the sides and how they interconnect: self-assessment and peer-to-peer assessment. While none of these three forms of assessment are novel on their own, what is novel is the incorporation of all three forms of assessment for every major unit of study within the curriculum. Moreover, the assessment criteria (rubric) is expected to be co-created between the students and the teacher.

A concrete example from my own classroom: I have students do group presentations in their target language with target vocabulary once a month for two full semesters. This totals six group presentations per year. For each presentation, I (the teacher) use the rubrics that we co-create in class, the groups do peer-to-peer assessment of the group presentation (taking notes for advice), and they also self-assess (taking notes for self-improvement).

Admittedly, the first and second round of group presentations are typically not stellar, nor are their assessment skills very adequate, but after three or four attempts, the synergistic properties of the Trinity of Assessment begin to show their effects and not only do the group presentations markedly improve around then, but their assessments, and their notes regarding the presentations, become markedly more complex. By their fifth and sixth group presentations, not only are they no longer nervous about presenting, but their demeanor is more akin to TED talks, their content is far more complex, and even their composition skills show great improvement in complexity (as scientifically measured with Lectical analysis [Murphy, forthcoming].

Practical Applications 2: Student-Designed Tests

In neuroELT, for the sake of simplified/shorthand language to be used in professional development (PD) courses and seminars, we have developed 50 maxims that dynamically change along with the changes in science. Our current Maxim #5 is "*Understanding* is the synthesis and application of learning." Maxim #18 is "*Alignment* delivers us from chaos." (Murphy, 2015). These two maxims combined were the backbone of my recommendation for student-designed tests.

In my own classrooms, after each group presentation, I have each group work together to co-create a four-section test based on the presentation that they just presented to the class, in light of the Trinity of Assessment (ToA) rubric's results. In this way, they further the utility of the ToA rubric. More importantly, they are synthesizing their learning by designing a four-section test (all four sections must be of varying design and/or modality). Because they are co-creating this test, they are furthering their alignment toward the content being studied in a way that does not feel like traditional study. By this time, to them it is mostly a fun project that they are working on as a team.

When each groups' tests are designed, each group once again comes up to the front of the class and does a commercial-like promotion for their test design. Co-created rubrics are used to assess their test designs (ToA comes into play again), and after all the PR is complete, the students vote for the best test, based on the rubric scores they tallied up. The one voted "best test" is then really used in the next class as a 10-point test, providing real autonomy and real feelings of ownership of the material. Naturally each group wants to be voted "best test" not only for the glory and for winning in this game-like activity, but also from a very pragmatic reason – if their test is chosen, they have the best chances of getting the highest marks, the most easily. So, each group works remarkably hard to make the best possible test.

Practical Applications #3: Student-Negotiated Master Lists

As students in their groups prepare for their presentation, their textbooks have a work space for them to collectively list words and phrases that would be useful for their upcoming presentation (high support for presentation designing). When they fill that page up, I ask the groups to walk up to my desk, propose their presentation content, and explain to me which target words and grammar points they will be using for their presentation. This is an exciting moment for them, and then I give them advice by saying, "Well, if I were going to present on your topic, hmm... I may use words such as... "xxx, yyy, zzz,..." and I may use use phrases "aa a bbb," "cccc c cc ccc," etc. At this point, since the group is already in a high-support context due to all the energetic group work, my advice session feels like I am Santa Claus giving out presents at Christmas time. The students typically very enthusiastically write down most of my words and phrases. This goes on for roughly five minutes. I then tell them to return to their group seating, consider which of my words and phrases they might like to use, and then work out their master list. This is an Excel-like spreadsheet in their textbook that they use to combine their own words with the teacher's ideas. I do not force them to use any of my words, but seemingly as a matter of course, the students diligently combine their work with mine. It provides them with a sense of autonomy, ownership of the material, and perhaps most importantly, creates a boom in confidence – they now realize that they have mixed in words from the teacher, but by their choice. (From a teacher's perspective, this may seem trivial and completely inconsequential, but for the students' brains, this is what makes all the difference. It is not trivial at all!) It's an interesting dynamic that works remarkably well for rapport-building and confidence-building – not to mention a rise in vocabulary and an appreciation for lexical variety. This is something that I firmly believe would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to achieve by top-down, lecture-styled teaching.

Practical Applications #4: Allow Choices

This application is directly lifted from neuroELT maxim #13, "*Choices* fuel motivation," and it automatically also incorporates maxim #14, "*Prediction* is a tremendously powerful tool." When giving a student a study task, the idea is to not simply tell the student "You must do page 47 today." Instead, consider the goals of the day and integrate choices instead of mandates. They can be real choices that all lead to the same goal or perhaps have it set up so that, say, two out of the three choices are "false choices" – they are choices that nobody would actually pick. But what happens when given a choice instead of given a mandate? The brain churns out an answer to the internal question "Which option should I go for," and when it arrives at the answer, it now has a personal investment in the course of action that it has chosen to take. Internally, there are literal justifications that were made for that choice. So now on the outside, when prompted, the student typically justifies why "doing page 47" is the best thing, instead of complaining about "having to do page 47 because the teacher made me do it." The internal affect is utterly different. Once a teacher gets the hang of this "trick," almost any study task can be turned into these types of highly motivational choice tasks for the students. There is one caveat: If the students actually do request to do one of the "false-choice" odd-ball tasks, you must be prepared to follow through with that request (or else you will be destroying the student's autonomy that you were building up).

In a nutshell, Practical Application #4 can be about providing three equivalent tasks that reach for a common goal (but span across different modalities), or it can be set up so that there is only one "obvious choice" out of three – the other two are "false choices" that nobody will choose. Either set up is fine – as long as the students' brains are capable of making a choice, dopamine will be released because of the choice (Willis, 2010; Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2014), and the personal investment made by the student will begin a chain reaction toward the justification of the choice. I've witnessed many students happily and boastfully justify their choice to their peers. This approach, which is admittedly gimmicky (but only because of our understanding of how the students' brains works) is astronomically better than the traditional and hopelessly boring top-down ultimatum-like "You must do page 47!" teacher mandate.

Practical Applications #5: Differentiated Instruction

The "give them choices" application above is the perfect segue to *Differentiated Instruction* (DI). DI sounds intuitive, but it is often misconstrued, so I must make a few things clear. DI is about taking a single teaching goal and designing, say, three different routes to get to that single goal. The students get to choose which route they want to take to get to that single goal. For a language class this can mean there are three levels of reading passages: high, mid, and low. The student should be allowed (trusted) to choose the level-appropriate passage to reach that learning goal on their own. If rapport is well-maintained, I've found that students, in-time, actually do self-select level-appropriate material; they work out their own "Goldilocks zone," so to speak. In cases where this is clearly not happening with a student, a bit of teacher intervention may be required.

A common mistake with DI is to have three levels of reading, but the readings do *not* ultimately reach the same goal. So strictly speaking, this would not be a DI classroom, it would be a classroom with three concurrent lesson plans. This is not what we want happening. Figure 5 helps clarify these points.

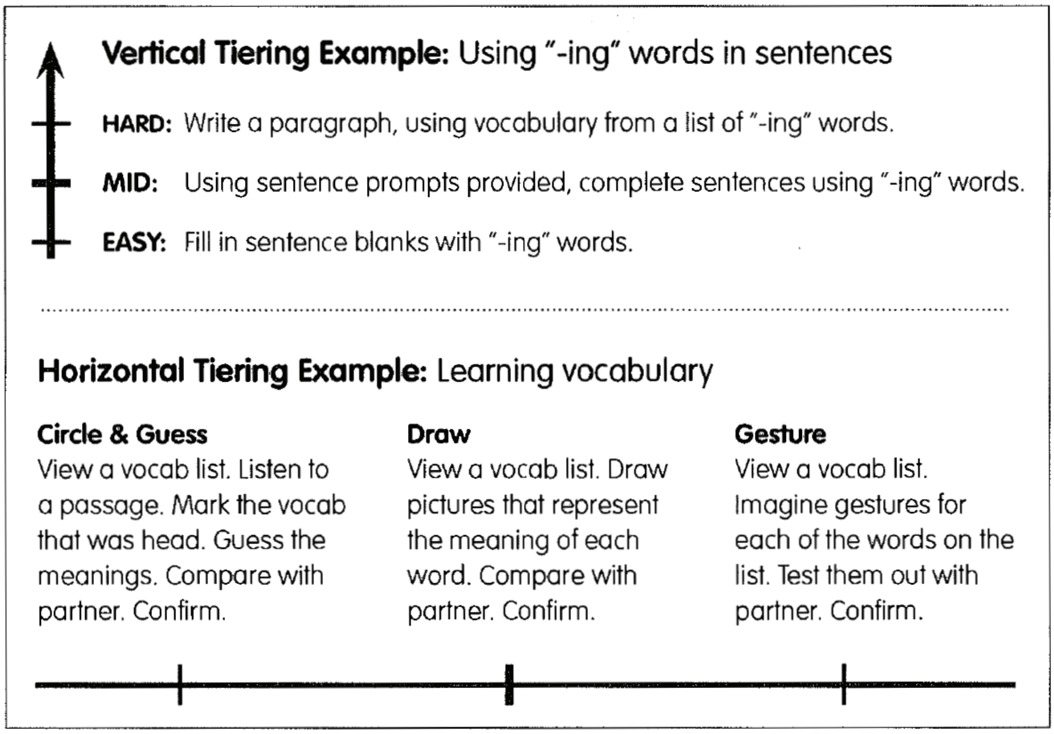

FIGURE 5. Two Ways to Tier DI Lessons. (Murphy, 2015)

The example provided above is level-based (or vertical) tiering. However, I often propose unorthodox DI: I propose horizontal tiering as well (Murphy, 2015). See Figure 5 for examples of horizontal tiering. It is possible to set up a variety of tasks that lead to the same learning goal and are roughly equivalent in difficulty. So, for some learning tasks, the teacher can set up vertical DI, while for some learning tasks, the teacher can set up horizontal DI instead. Either way, let me stress again that it is crucial to remember that the learning goal must not vary. If the learning goal varies per student, it is no longer a DI lesson. It will be a concurrent mess, and an unnecessary headache for the teacher without the strand of alignment that would naturally have kept the students' learning pointing in the same direction.

Practical Applications #6: Provide Solvable Mysteries

Number 6 is "Provide solvable mysteries." By now the keen reader will notice that all of these Practical Applications have significant overlap – and they should! Why? Because they are all based on what is natural learning for the brain. They are not based on arbitrarily placed learning points, which is what many curriculums end up being! For example, some grammar textbooks chunk grammar points pragmatically – but have they consulted a neuroscientist to see if those pragmatic-looking placements are pragmatic for the brain? This is a rhetorical question. Will that grammar book auto-magically be "brain-friendly"? This question is not a rhetorical question. All too often, textbook and curriculum designs are written for the tests, without a thought for how the brain works (Murphy, 2017); the test informs the curriculum and the curriculum informs the test, creating a potentially dangerous microcosm that has little to do with the real world.

How does this relate to Practical Application #6? It relates in two big ways. One, the brain craves “Aha! moments” because we get dopamine rushes (Willis, 2010, Murphy, 2015). So, having questions and “mysteries” embedded in the daily lesson provides “drug-like” excitement in the classroom (Helgesen, Kelly, & Murphy, 2017) that can be quite addictive. As in the above Practical Applications, setting up dopamine rush-inducing “Aha! Moments” for your students is “astronomically” more engaging than top-down mandates and ultimatums from the teacher. The second big way this relates is via real-world “Aha! moments.” The ultimate goal for teaching should be “preparation for real-world application.” Somehow, this ultimate goal too often gets lost in the hustle and bustle of classroom teaching and academic bureaucracy; we fall into ruts and lose sight of what we are teaching for. But by remembering to provide solvable mysteries (not too hard, not too easy) that ask the students how this learning content relates to real-word problems/applications, you automate the process of alignment, motivation, and dopamine rushes related to the learning. In many ways, this is the ultimate way to get students hooked on learning that particular subject for life. When they feel that dopamine rush and then realize how they can use this knowledge in the real world, it is a potentially life-changing moment for them. I recall this happening to me a few times during my school days. Why not systematically design them into our curriculums instead? (See Murphy, 2017, for a much deeper analysis of this topic and its implication.)

Practical Applications #7: What Is Number Seven?

Indeed, what is number seven? This one is on you! You’ve read all six of the Practical Applications. Now it’s your turn to come up with a Number Seven. During experimentation with the above six Practical Applications..., soon enough, I guarantee that you will come up with your own Number Seven! When you do, please share it with you colleagues, and please share it with me. My contact information is below. I am serious when I say I crave feedback. I’m seriously looking forward to hearing about your creations and how the above six ideas worked out for you!

Conclusions

In sum, brain-friendly teaching is not hard to implement once you get the hang of it. Many teachers that I know instinctively implement variations of the techniques discussed in the paper without direct knowledge of neuroELT. So, what is the purpose of neuroELT then? Do we really need it? YES!! Why? Because although great teachers may instinctively have a “bag of tricks” that they have developed over the years, neuroscience can finally assure them of their best decisions, help them re-design/re-think some of their other pedagogical techniques, while also providing potent science-based ammunition for teachers who want to fix bad teaching but until now could not put a finger on what was wrong with it. In this way, neuroELT helps teachers become better teachers and researchers in the widest of gamuts.

This paper only serves as a small introduction to the world of neuroELT. Please consider joining us by doing your own classroom research and/or participating in our international conferences. Information on our conferences and how you can get more involved can be found here: http://fab-efl.com.

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Presentations

Active Learning at Student Conferences

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By most standards, Japanese educational policies have contributed to a successful system that performs well on global achievement tests such as the PISA, (OECD, 2015). However, challenges have been identified recently that have led to calls for extensive reform. A focus on lecture-based teaching has left students lacking in skill sets required to tackle the problems posed by globalization and a changing employment structure (MEXT, 2013). Moreover, foreign language testing has shown poor results (ETS, 2016). Japanese young people need to become more dynamic and independent, it is felt, with stronger communicative skills to take on 21st century challenges. In this spirit, the A.C.E. Student Conference was formed in 2014. This paper will briefly place the event in the context of a reforming educational system, describe the guiding principles and operation of the event, and draw on participant data to give an assessment of its success.

INTRODUCTION

One must learn by doing the thing, for though you think you know it, you have no certainty until you try. — Sophocles, 5th Century BC

"What is truly needed in Japan is independent-minded learning by individuals in order to realize independence, collaboration and creativity." (MEXT, 2013, p. 1)

Japanese educational policies can be said to have contributed to a successful system that performs well on globally recognized achievement tests such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), (OECD, 2015). However, in recent years, a number of ongoing challenges have been identified by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports Science and Technology (MEXT) that have given rise to calls for extensive reform. Japanese education, it is felt, has been overly dependent on lecture-based teaching that relies on students memorizing "known" facts in classes that do not sufficiently promote independent learning skills, foster creativity, encourage collaboration, or build problem-solving abilities. A focus on teaching rather than learning has left students lacking in certain skill sets required to tackle the problems posed by globalization and a changing employment structure that no longer invests in employees as it did in the latter part of the 20th century (MEXT, 2013). Moreover, foreign language skills, seen as being increasingly important in a globalized environment, have shown relatively poor results, despite considerable investment, that fall far below official targets and increasingly behind other Asian countries (Educational Testing Service, 2016). To function effectively in a globalized environment, it is felt, Japanese young people need to become more dynamic and independent, with stronger communicative skills, and all parts of the educational system, from elementary schools to universities, are being encouraged to build environments that foster these abilities in their students.

Active Learning

In 2014, MEXT set out a goal for high school education that sought to "massively improve proactive and cooperative learning and instruction methods focusing on the discovery and resolution of issues, which is the basis of active learning" (MEXT, 2014, p. 2). For universities, they stated an intention "to promote a qualitative transition to active learning, where students can study while proactively cooperating with a diverse variety of people" (MEXT, 2014, p. 3).

Active learning, as an educational concept, has been an idea that has existed in one form or another for centuries, but the term has been variously, and somewhat loosely, defined as a pedagogical methodology. Predictably, there are numerous overlaps with other, similar learning theories from various areas of education. Bonwell and Eison (1991) define active learning as "instructional activities involving students in doing things and thinking about what they are doing" (p. 1). They give a short description of seven characteristics of active learning being as follows:

1. Students are involved in more than passive listening.
2. Students are engaged in activities (e.g., reading, discussing, writing).
3. There is less emphasis placed on information transmission and greater emphasis placed on developing student skills.
4. There is greater emphasis placed on the exploration of attitudes and values.
5. Student motivation is increased (especially for adult learners).
6. Students can receive immediate feedback from their instructor.
7. Students are involved in higher order thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation).

Bonwell and Eison (1991, p. 1)

These characteristics are broad and could embrace a wide range of approaches. Indeed, some Japanese educators have lamented a lack of clear directions for teachers in the directives from the Ministry of Education and feel that active learning is simply a loosely defined buzzword that lacks credibility. Asanuna (2015) complains that there "is no clear-cut explanation of what active learning is in the report of the Central Council of Education for the Ministry of Education and Science" (p. 2) and feels that the current popularity of the term is merely fashion, a Western concept that "sounds fresh for the Japanese masses" (p. 1). However, when MEXT has stressed the need for active learning, it has defined it as "autonomous and cooperation-based learning aimed at identifying and solving problems" (Japan Times, 2015, para. 3) also calling for "openness to society," expressing the need to provide more "open environments" for learning "so that learners can interact and form connections with society" (Japan Times, 2015, para. 4). These definitions clearly call for a move away from individual learning, where students learn by themselves at their own pace, to co-operative and collaborative learning, where they pursue learning goals while interacting with others. Some of the similarities and differences between cooperative and collaborative learning goals, drawn from a discussion by Mathews, Cooper, Davidson & Hawkes (1995), can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Similarities and Differences Between Cooperative and Collaborative Learning

Similarities	
Active learning is stressed Teacher acts as facilitator or coach Teaching and learning are shared experiences for both the student and the teacher Develop higher order thinking skills Accepting responsibility for learning, as an individual or group member Developing social and team skills Acknowledging diversity	
Differences	
Cooperative Learning	**Collaborative Learning**
Activities and roles are structured	Students organize themselves
Students receive training in how to interact	Students are assumed to have the skills to interact
Teachers monitor and intervene when appropriate	Teachers do not intervene
Students submit work for evaluation at the end of the process	The students are not asked to submit work for evaluation
Groups carry out formal monitoring on how well they are functioning	No formal instructions are given for monitoring

(From Mathews, Cooper, Davidson, & Hawkes, 1995)

Reflecting public opinion in Japan, the highly influential business lobbying group, Keidanren, recently published their own principles for reform, calling for an educational policy that promotes the following as “aptitudes and capabilities needed for the future” (Keidanren, 2016, p. 3).

- Individual ability to find and define problems and to seek out solutions independently;
- Ability to present one’s views logically;
- Ability to communicate in foreign languages;
- Liberal arts education; and,
- Respect for diversity and the ability to collaborate with others in executing projects.
- Science and engineering majors with broad educational background that includes humanities and social sciences; and,
- Humanities and social science majors with broad educational background that includes basic knowledge of advanced technologies and math and science.
- Ability to use information effectively, enabling individuals to gather and select high-quality information, and to use information to solve problems.

It is clear that, though MEXT may not have defined the concept of active learning as clearly as some teachers would like, it is what should not happen in classrooms that is most critical to the reformed system: students sitting passively whilst their teacher expounds at length on what they are required to memorize to pass an exam. Students should be involved in activities that push them to think about what they are doing, and to co-operate and collaborate with others to solve problems. Anyone who has spent any time working in the Japanese school system, particularly in middle or high school, will be familiar with the sight of highly teacher-centered lectures to which at least a portion of the students are inattentive or even asleep while information is imparted in monologue. In summary, The Second Plan for Educational Reform (MEXT, 2013, p. 2) identifies the following three key guiding concepts for reform:

- Creativity. A lifelong learning society that enables the further creation of new values through independence and collaboration.
- Independence. A lifelong learning society in which every person can develop his or her personal characteristics and abilities to actively explore and realize a fulfilling life.
- Collaboration. A lifelong learning society with mutual support, mutual enhancement, and social participation achieved by respecting personal and social diversity and maximizing each person's strengths.

A Realistic Problem-Solving Event

Teachers in Japan using English as a language of instruction are likely to be more comfortable with an active-learning approach, given its long history in Western education and the mass popularity of the Communicative Approach in theories of second language acquisition. One active-learning theory, with strong links to language learning, can be found in constructivism. This suggests that learners build an understanding of the world, and the language needed to participate in it, by experience. In other words, participants are more likely to build realistic models of society through participation and the subsequent ordering of their experiences (Mahoney, 2004). A constructivist view of pedagogy suggests that learning will be more effective when it stems from active agency in realistic situations. However, to what extent the language classroom can be said to be a realistic situation is highly moot, particularly in Japan, where most classrooms are monolingual and students are often shy to converse in English with their peers. Taking students out of the classroom and placing them in a formal conference setting with students from different universities can create an atmosphere with a greater sense of realism that increases positive pressure on students to use English. Extra-curricular events are also a great opportunity to connect overseas and domestic students, who might never meet in regular classes. By creating a multilingual environment, it is far more likely that English will be used as a working language. The majority of teachers who participate in ACE are acquainted through collaboration on Model United Nations (MUN) conferences in Japan and have seen the motivational benefits of such inter-university events (Adamson, 2016). However, a large-scale MUN is typically an intensely challenging undertaking that requires extensive preparation by participants, and many students doubt their ability to take part. This conference, it was hoped, would attempt to create an atmosphere in which some of the realism of an MUN event would be mirrored but at a reduced level of challenge and preparation. In summary, it was hoped that students with intermediate and higher levels of English would be attracted to the opportunity to demonstrate their English skills in solving genuine problems.

ACE Student Conference

ACE was formed in 2014 by instructors from Hannan University and Kinki University in Osaka, Japan. The acronym ACE stands for "active community engagement," and the original focus of this project was to involve students with volunteer and community projects in Osaka. However, in the second year, it was felt that the project might have greater popularity with a broader student base if the event was refocussed on career development. Since 2015, the purpose of the ACE Student Conference has been to engage students in active discussion in English with a view to creating innovative solutions to realistic business problems. It is intended to foster greater confidence and ability in communicating in English; develop better skills in reasoning, consensus-building, and leadership; and give students an opportunity to explore their creativity and design skills. Welcome opportunities exist for participants to interact with representatives from industry and business, to learn more about the current employment market, and potentially even for networking and job-hunting. Around 100 male and female participants, as well as a number of business representatives, student journalists, and advisors, join the event from a number of universities around Japan for two days of discussion, presentations, and feedback.

The event has a focus on realistic business problems. A number of well-known companies were approached and asked to present a genuine problem that their company is experiencing. In the last two years, companies have presented problems ranging from expansion into overseas markets, the need for new electronic products for an ageing generation, the challenges of ethical sales techniques in the pharmaceutical industry, and tourism issues related to sudden increases in the number of overseas visitors. Participants in the conference are given a certain amount of information in advance to research the problem and market, and in most cases, have a number of classes or extra-curricular meetings with their teacher to prepare ideas and strategies.

At the event, after an opening ceremony, participants come together in groups of about ten to create a solution to the problem the company has given them. Essentially, group work is collaborative. For the most part, students are left to form their working groups by themselves, although advisors will give feedback and advice when asked or when they feel groups are struggling. They are encouraged to speak in English. On the afternoon of the second day, they must pitch their solution to the company representative, as a group, using PowerPoint. The company representative then asks questions to the group and gives them feedback on their solution.

METHOD

Instruments

The main instrument used for data collection was a voluntary online questionnaire written in Japanese and English, and comprised of a number of close-ended multiple-choice questions of which five are reported here. The author also held two short debriefing sessions with participants from his university in interviews of about 20 minutes per group. Some insights gained from their comments are incorporated in the final discussion section.

Participants

Of those who answered the surveys, participants reported as 61% female and 39% male. Participants were all enrolled in universities from various parts of Japan and were in their late teens to early twenties. A small number of participants were overseas students although this is not considered in the data presented here.

Procedure

Participants were asked to participate in the survey, using their mobile phones, in two data collection sessions that took place after the opening and closing ceremonies. A larger number of respondents participated in the first survey. In the first two questions reported here, participants ranked the multiple-choice items in order of importance to them. The aggregate score shows the relative popularity of the item, and the number of participants who chose the item as being of greatest importance is also shown. Debriefing sessions of around 20 minutes took place both individually and in small groups, using both English and Japanese. Comments recorded in these sessions were used to gain insight into the survey results and the success of the event. The data collected is seen in Tables 1–2 and Figures 1–3.

TABLE 1. Motivations to Attend the Event

Motivations (73 responses)	Aggregate Score	First Choice (%)
Use English in an authentic environment	5.08	26.0
Meet students from other universities	4.75	21.5
Presentation skills	4.60	20.5
Learn about socio-economic situation in Japan	4.23	13.5
Hear other student's opinions	3.98	14.0
Hear opinions of company leaders	3.73	17.7
Hear opinions from foreign teachers	3.51	2.0

Note. Participants ranked seven items in order of importance to them. The aggregate score shows the relative popularity of the item. The percentage of participants who chose it as the main reason is also shown.

TABLE 2. Reported Value of the Event to Participants

Reported Value (45 responses)	Aggregate Score	First Choice (%)
Discussion with others	5.49	45.71
Learn about socio-economic situation	4.50	15.79
Industry knowledge	4.39	3.03
Problem-solving	4.38	11.76
Business vocabulary	4.27	11.76
Teacher's opinions	3.85	9.09
Nothing special	2.00	14.29

Note. Participants ranked 7 items in order of importance to them. The aggregate score shows the relative popularity of the item. The percentage of participants who chose it as the main reason is also shown.

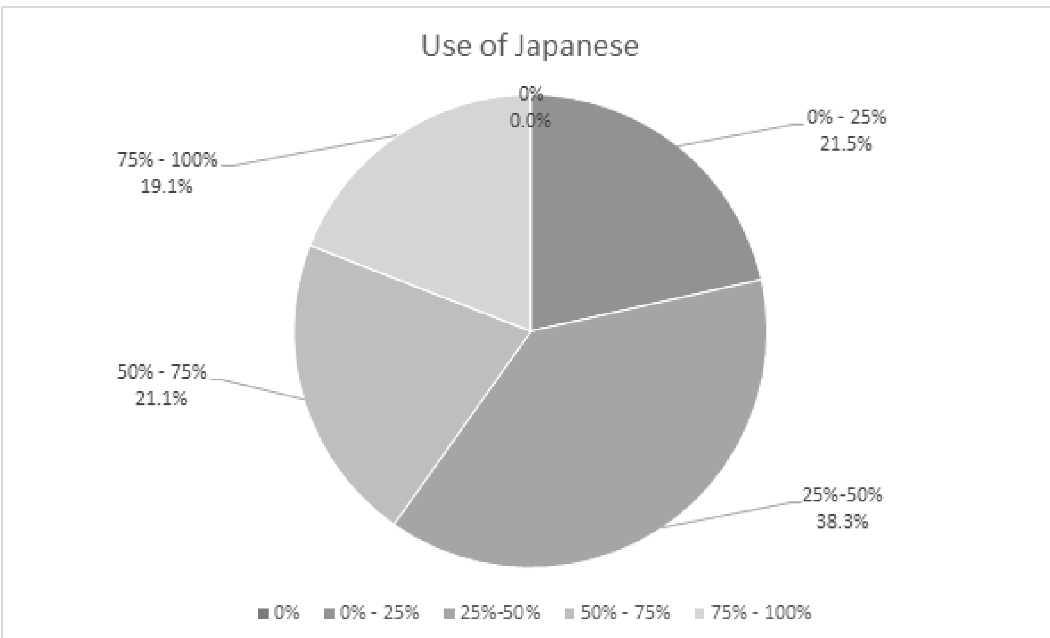

FIGURE 1. Use of Japanese. This figure shows the participants reported use of Japanese language during the two-day event.

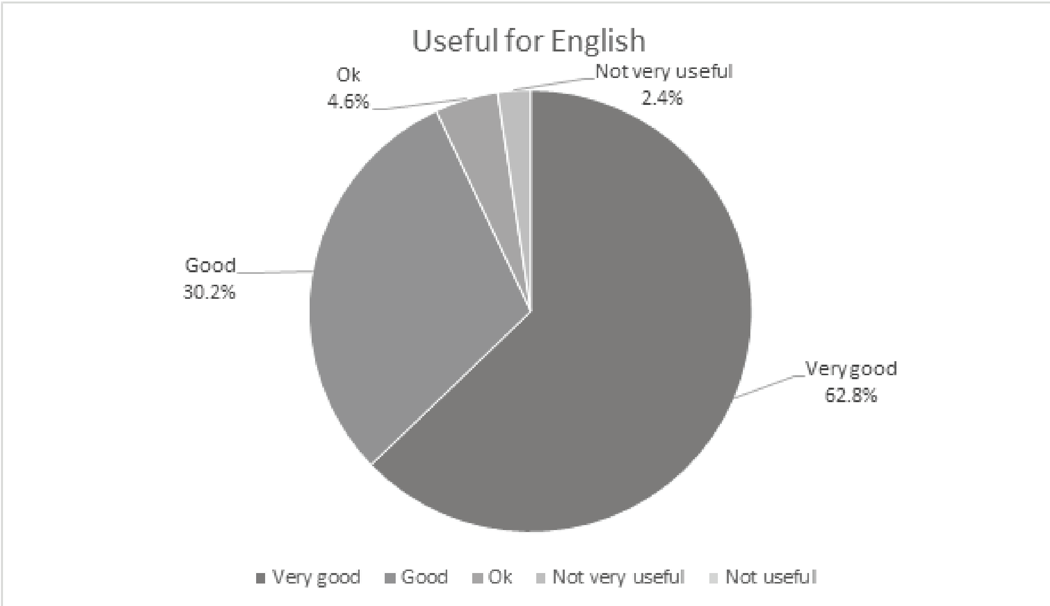

FIGURE 2. Useful for English. This figure shows how the participants assessed the event in terms of English study.

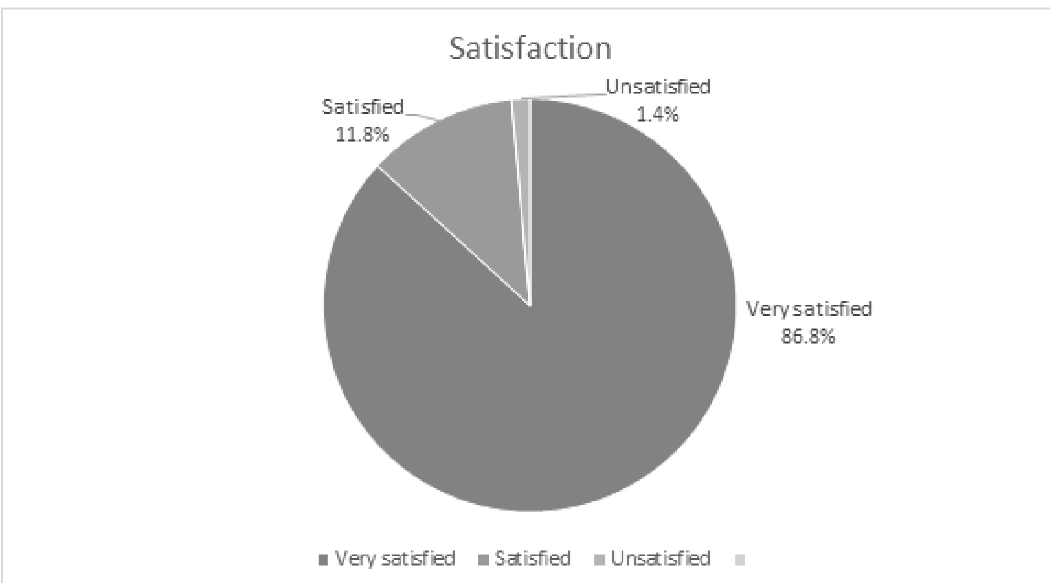

FIGURE 3. Satisfaction. This figure shows how the participants rated their satisfaction with the event in general.

Discussion

There is a clear weakness in the data from Tables 1 and 2 in that participants were asked to select from a prepared list of options rather than give open responses, which might have given more objective data. It is also possible that instructors, in promoting the event to their students, may have influenced responses in terms of what they might expect from the event. Nonetheless, it was considered extremely positive to the aims of the conference that participants showed a clear desire to communicate with others in English and reported that discussion was the most fulfilling part of their experience. Clearly, from the reported data and from observation and debriefing feedback, much of this discussion took place in English without intervention from advisors. Approximately 60% of the students said they spoke in English for more than half of the 16 hours or so that they were on campus. However, in debriefing, some students did express frustration that too much discussion took place in Japanese, that they wanted to use English more, and that some group members did not have sufficient ability or confidence to speak out.

The issues of language level and confidence are an ongoing management issue in events such as this. Participants with stronger language skills tend to control the discussion, not always successfully in terms of the quality of their ideas. Native speakers and returnees speak disproportionately with concerning implications of power, leadership, and control. It is a point of discussion among advisors whether more involvement of advisors would encourage or stifle communication in English, and whether stricter conditions of enrollment or placement of students according to level might improve the quality of experience for all. Data and discussion from students also seems to suggest that students envisage ACE predominately as an English-language event, rather than as a problem-solving event. Given the emphasis placed on non-linguistic skills by instructors, it suggests there may be a gap between the expectations in terms of what is being learned and whether the skills are transferable into L1. More research is called for to consider these issues to build a more successful conference.

Conclusions

There is a clear need in Japan to involve students in active-learning events that take university students out of classroom settings and into more realistic, motivating learning contexts where English skills can be practiced and improved. Students report a high level of satisfaction with such activities, and it is hoped that multiple skills are being practiced, although the precise types of motivation are likely to vary. As the ACE Student Conference looks to the 2017 event, we are hopeful that we can continue to satisfy our students and challenge them to push themselves to become stronger communicators, with creativity and a sense of independence, who are better able to solve the problems they encounter in life.

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Building a Post-secondary Saudi EFL Vocabulary Course

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This paper presents a stand-alone EFL vocabulary course delivered at a Saudi technical training college where English was the medium of instruction. As managers of the college's ELT department, we built, operated, and managed the course in line with best practices and theory to meet the college's English language learning needs, which were general EFL and technical ESP in nature. In presenting the course, this discussion addresses the value of lexis and training learners on the importance of multiword constructions to supplement traditional textbooks that do not always handle vocabulary appropriately (e.g., Hadley, 2013), the use of concordance programs to empirically select our content, and the use of a popular phone app to cultivate learner autonomy outside the classroom. Accordingly, this discussion provides a framework through which ELT professionals in similar roles and contexts could operate similar courses using the guidelines and theory we here sketch.

INTRODUCTION

The primacy of vocabulary in language learning has become conventional wisdom since being somewhat revolutionary in the 1990s when Lewis (1993) and Laufer and Nation (1999) were a part of a sea change moving lexis into the foreground of the field. One cannot attend a conference without a significant percentage of the talks and papers being focused on the acquisition of vocabulary. To wit, the focus on word learning has permeated all areas of the field from the business end with various word-learning apps such as WordEngine (Guy Cihi, personal communication, November 23, 2016) and PraxisEd (Scott Miles, personal communication, December 23, 2016) as examples par excellence to formal assessments publishing their own vocabulary lists (Cambridge Main Suite, 2016). In this paper, we describe a stand-alone vocabulary course that we designed within the post-secondary Saudi EFL context, not because of a Saudi mandate but via our own innovation governed by our understanding of best practices and relevant theory. The relevance of this undertaking is two-fold: (a) it illustrates how a program can enact a course such as ours where decisions are theoretically sound and in line with conventional best practices, and (b) it adds to the discussions surrounding the theoretical perspectives underpinning the process in which we engaged.

The Context

Beginning in 2013, Saudi Arabia opened a number of technical colleges under a collective initiative with English as the medium of instruction. These institutions were designed to have two concurrent ELT goals: (a) general EFL proficiency that was a mandated prerequisite to begin technical training (A2/B1 on the CEFR; Council of Europe, 2011), as measured by the Cambridge (KET/PET) and (b) technical ESP development with an aim to develop the content language within any number of technical fields. As managers of the ELT provision at one of these college's from 2014 to 2016 (two academic years), we designed, operated, and managed a stand-alone vocabulary course to help us attain these goals. The course and process supporting its realization allowed us to

- Develop low-proficiency learners' (A0/A1 on the CEFR upon matriculation – 80% of our students when the college opened) L2 lexicon through L1/L2 vocabulary support to build a bridge to subsequent multi-word lexical development (e.g., collocations and chunks);
- Supplement the vocabulary presented in our general EFL coursebooks for the purpose of helping students achieve success on their general English/foundation year exit assessments;
- Offer support to the college's technical training track by developing and teaching technical English lexical items;
- Standardize the vocabulary taught and assessed by EFL teachers while providing support to teachers through materials design and continuing professional development to the instructors;
- Underpin decisions made during the planning, operation, and management of the course with relevant theory while being cognizant of the realities on the ground and resources.

Underpinning Theory

Two trends from relevant studies and literature underpinned the design, operation, and management of the vocabulary course: (a) the complexity of lexis (vocabulary) and the inadequacy of textbooks in the field to handle lexis in their construction, and (b) the empirically established primacy of lexis in language and language learning.

The Complexity of Lexis and Vocabulary, and How Textbooks Mishandle Them

Lewis's (1993, 1997) Lexical Approach along with related viewpoints, such as Thornbury (2002), that called for a handling of vocabulary teaching that is cognizant of the complexity of lexis was the first underpinning theoretical trend. From these perspectives has come the call to supplement the lexis teaching offered by traditional ELT textbooks. Publishers' overemphasis on grammar while not doing enough with vocabulary size development has been noted by past research, such as Roemer (2004) and Hadley (2013). The Lexical Approach was of particular interest because of its offering of a framework to amend textbooks' lexical shortcomings. Authentic lexis, according to Lewis, was multiword and included constructions such as polywords, chunks, and fixed- and semi-fixed expressions. This extension from the single word meant that collocation was of the utmost importance in vocabulary instruction. At the pedagogical level, Lewis advocated for the use of lexical notebooks that were constructed with this complexity in mind. Lewis was not alone in this multifaceted view of lexis. Thornbury's five principles of vocabulary acquisition echoed and extended on the complexity found in Lewis' approach. For low-level learners, Lewis recognized that the L1 would be an appropriate tool to help the instructor teach lexis and its corresponding complexity. Indeed, the L1 was encouraged for abstract words (e.g., *freedom, brave*) and to help students notice polyword constructions. Theoretical linguistic perspectives, such as Hudson's (2008) Word Grammar, would justify this decision as the L1 and L2 forms at the word level are interconnected at the network level.

One prime justification for the special status afforded to collocated multiword chunks in language learning is the field of psycholinguistics. This is to say that, cognitively, many language theories posit that multiword lexical chunks are the fundamental units of language that are stored in our brains or mental lexicons (Dörnyei, 2009). Read and Nation (2009) note that this has led to the modeling of vocabulary knowledge as a "lexical network" (p. 9) of strings of lexical chunks rather than words or letters or some other size units. This has obvious implications for the value of the Lexical Approach. Lewis (1997) had already stated that "much of our mental lexicon is stored as prefabricated multiword chunks" (p. 20), while Nation (2001) states that this is only true for high-frequency terms, as "low-frequency items are not stored as chunked units" (p. 321) – a fact not relevant for low-level students who will not need to face low-frequency chunks for quite some time. Thus, and in broad outline, what the Lexical Approach truly entails is a proper match-up between the way our brains store language and the highlighting of the form of the language input for a learner. Dörnyei discusses an experiment along these lines that demonstrates that teaching formulaic sequences according to the Lexical Approach, in which learners were given "special formulaic training" in the chunking of language, resulted in the fact that "the experimental group displayed significant gains over the control group in terms of their fluency and their use of formulaic sequences" (2009, p. 298).

Empirical Evidence of Lexical Importance

Wilkens (1972) stated that "while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (pp. 111–112). It would take about two decades for empirical research to confirm the position held by Wilkens that language was essentially nothing without its lexical components. For us, the two trends of interest were (a) the strong positive association between lexis/vocabulary and proficiency, and (b) the demarcation of vocabulary size thresholds for the CEFR levels.

Laufer and Nation (1999) was of special interest to this project because it demonstrated that productive vocabulary size (by frequency bands) was strongly associated with overall proficiency among high school ELLs. Around this same time, Qian (1999) and Ransdell (2002) provided further empirical evidence of the strong correlation between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. Hulstijn, Schoonen, de Jong, Steinel, and Florijn (2011) found productive vocabulary size was the strongest factor in nonparametric models predicting (88% success) observed Dutch SL speaking proficiency levels (A2-B2). In a recent study, Matthews and Cheng (2015) observed that receptive vocabulary size (up to 3k) significantly accounted for 52% (r^2) of the variance in Chinese ELL performance on the IELTS listening exam. To think of this finding another way, more than half of the test takers' performance was accounted for by their receptive knowledge of the 3000 most frequent English word families.

Hulstijn, Schoonen, de Jong, Steinel, and Florijn (2011), in addition to uncovering the aforementioned relationship between vocabulary and speaking proficiency, found that it was possible to demarcate the vocabulary size boundaries between CEFR levels. The study posited that the B1 and B2 thresholds were at 4000 and 7000, respectively. This finding echoed past work that defined the vocabulary size ranges of the different CEFR levels. From Maera and Milton (2003), these were stated as: 0 < A1 1500 < A2 < 2500/2750 < B1 < 3250 < B2 < 3750 < C1 < 4500 < C2. Milton and Alexiou (2008) in later research found that these ranges were mostly accurate via empirical testing of ELLs and French learners of differing L1 backgrounds. L1 background did affect the findings. Spanish L1 French learners, to cite one example, had lower observed vocabulary-size means across the CEFR bands then their Greek counterparts (e.g., Greek L1: A1 = 1125.71 vs. Spanish L1: A1 = 894.44). This notion of CEFR having clear vocabulary size boundaries has developed further where any vocabulary-minded ELT professional can go to sites such as Cambridge's English Vocabulary Profile (2015) and assess the CEFR level of any given lexical item.

Presenting the Course: Overview and Considerations of Effectiveness

The Course Within the College's EFL Program

Our college had two "tracks" of instruction, a general EFL-focused foundation year (FY) track and a 90% general EFL + 10% basic IT track, that preceded technical training years. Both tracks had ELT curricula that included the stand-alone vocabulary course we are here describing. For both versions of the course, lessons were designed to progress through three sequential stages from a focus on single words to a consideration of multiword constructions since most students entered with low proficiency. Higher-proficiency students were streamed into sections where the polyword focus began almost immediately, especially in general EFL. Both iterations of the course met for five hours per week and followed an approach that mirrored Lewis' (1997) "Observe–Hypothesis–Experiment" approach where purposefully chosen words/lexical items were presented, practiced with teacher guidance, and then produced/processed in less-controlled student-centric tasks. Lexical notebooks were kept where students transcended mere L2–L1 translation and recorded words and later polywords with detailed information as per Lewis's (1993) model. Regarding assessment, weekly quizzes were given that served both formative and summative purposes. At trimester end, there was a final exam.

The Processes of the Course

The course grew out of three interconnected processes: (a) building the course, (b) its operation, and (c) its management. Processes "a" and "c" were identical for building the FY and technical training iterations of the course.

Building the Course

The process of building/starting our course and hypothetical ones in the future have the following steps: (a) conducting a theory-influenced needs assessment to identify the convergence of lexis and overall ELT goals; (b) convincing stakeholders using needs assessment data and theory; for example, using Hulstijn, Schoonen, de Jong, Steinel, and Florijn (2011) to demonstrate lexis's strong and positive relationship with language test achievement; (c) populating key roles such as lexis coordinator and the instructor handling the A2+ class; (d) preparing a semi-structured curriculum plan to allow for adjustment midstream; and (e) establishing teacher "buy-in" through comprehensive staff training that introduced the methods and theory supporting the course (e.g., how to build a lexis notebook).

Operating the Course

The operational process we developed was cyclical in nature with the end of the cycle driving into the beginning. First, the type/goal (general EFL vs. technical ESP, in our case) and level (single vs. polyword) of the lesson are identified. Second, the words/lexical items are purposefully chosen based upon the sociopragmatic function involved in the lesson objective rather than a random mix of words. In our case, the functions were taken from the Cambridge PET Handbook, such as asking for directions, interrupting someone politely, or filling out job applications. Additionally, it was necessary to confirm that a selected word was in both our coursebook and the PET/KET vocabulary list, or that a collocated phrase such as "low/high voltage" was in our technical materials and had a sufficient number of hits. Third, the lesson is constructed according to Lewis' (1997) aforementioned framework with activities whose effectiveness has been established by the literature; for example, cloze activities (Folse, 2000), and "the use of concordances, matching activities, and the development of collocation tables" (Nation, 2001, p. 336), along with the L1 translation of each vocabulary item. Fourth comes the establishment of assessment and feedback loops. Regarding the latter, we would survey the students every trimester and have the bilingual teachers conduct informal interviews in the L1 periodically while also seeking our teachers' opinions of the course consistently during our staff meetings. What is essential to the steps in this process is managerial control that also takes teacher and student voices into account.

One key aspect of the program we operated was the continuous training of students on how they should approach their lexical notebooks and learning of chunked vocabulary. Since low motivation for learning English was common among our low-proficiency Saudi students, and Nation specifically notes other failures of vocabulary learning that were “the result of low motivation” (2001, p. 113), we sought to increase learner autonomy outside the classroom through a phone app called Anki. Anki presents students with a list of lexical items that it prompts them to remember, while exposing them to authentic instances of the collocated chunks. Teachers were able to track Anki participation rates to ensure that students were exposed to the chunks we selected even outside the classroom. Scrivener notes that “‘chunk spotting’ is a great classroom (or homework) learning activity” (2011, p. 209). Spending time reviewing chunks of language on the Anki app was classed as homework and at least exposed our students to English outside the classroom – something that they may not otherwise have been inclined to do. It was hoped that this practice in chunking should be preparation for a solo career in learning English. If autonomy is to be valued, then of course, the classroom cannot be the only place where a language is learned. Also, given our students, materials were carefully screened for cultural appropriateness.

Another key operating guideline is that in building any vocabulary course, general or specific corpora must be referenced to avoid unaided intuition, which could be inaccurate. For example, Adolphs (2006) notes that “corpus studies have shown that native-speaker intuition can be unreliable when it comes to making judgments about language in use, and there are certain aspects of language that are simply not open to intuition, such as word frequency distributions” (p. 7). Concordance programs allow the rejection of totally unaided intuition-based judgments, and allow teachers and students to hone in on exactly what is needed to process the texts they are reading and studying.

Managing the Course

The management process of the course saw three concurrent steps that were interconnected. First was a comprehensive continuing professional development scheme. We operated one for our department as a whole and would periodically include sessions to support the course (e.g., the Lexical Approach or how to use the COCA to find collocations). Second was the establishment of good lines of communication that tied into the assessment/feedback component of the operational process. Third was a robust quality assurance program that checks both the learning and teaching, and the staff’s understanding of the vocabulary course’s content. We employed classroom observations and brief teacher journaling for these purposes, respectively.

Considerations of Effectiveness

Because of limitations on the ground and the singular focus of the college’s stakeholders on training, a true empirical approach (i.e., experimental or quasi-experimental design) to assess our course’s effectiveness was not possible. This reflection, therefore, relies on indirect but still credible evidence.

Our college was qualitatively and independently reviewed twice during the 2014–2015 school year (reports for the 2015–2016 school year are still unpublished). These were positive and pointed indirectly to the effectiveness of the course when it was run to serve primarily general EFL purposes. In the report from the first observation, the English curriculum was described as "well planned and thought out," and the department's management as "thinking creatively about how best to deliver quality." While this assessment was holist, the vocabulary workshop's contribution to this positive conclusion could be reasonably assumed since it was the only component of our EFL program that was internally developed and not suggested by our governing Saudi initiative. In a later institutional review of the college, the vocabulary workshop and its associated PD sessions and materials led in part to the reviewers to state that "management at curriculum level is effective" with their overt referencing of this innovation.

There were also quantitative data that pointed to the overall effectiveness of the general EFL instruction, and given our innovation's prominent place in it, we offer these as indirect support of its possible effectiveness without claiming true casualty:

- The Cambridge English Placement Test acted as pre- and post-term assessment for the first trimester of the 2014–15 academic year. It was observed that students had significantly and weakly-to-moderately (p = .03; Z = -2.926, r = .24; r^2 = .06) improved when analyzing the valid cases (N = 141) via Wilcoxon Signed Rank testing, a nonparametric equivalent of dependent sample *t*-testing.
- At the end of the 2014–15 year, our remaining (N = 71) students took the KET exam and our observed A2 or higher (pass) rate was 10% greater than the CoE average for the 2013–14 academic year (22% vs. 20%).
- In 2015–16, our student numbers were quite low, so empirical data was lacking. Nevertheless, 28% (4 of 13 A2 students) AD students who needed to attain B1 in the second year did so.
- Student performance on General EFL vocabulary workshop quizzes and finals consistently had a pass rate (score > 69%) of above 80% for both years.

Data on the effectiveness of the course vis-à-vis our college's ESP goals were divergent. Regarding the ability to pre-teach basic terminology for technical training in the foundation year, there was positive evidence as 97 out 141 students passed (pass > 69%, M = 80.5; SD = 15.67) the IT vocabulary section of their final exam (1st trimester: 2014–15 academic year). Informal dialogue with the IT trainers revealed that most students indeed recognized the terms in subsequent instruction. Despite this positive finding, it is important to remember how small a component of the course this was. In the technical training year, we observed that while students did at least grasp the collocations being taught (e.g., *low voltage, voltage source*), formative and summative assessments saw students performing poorly. Technical trainers also commented that they had to reteach terms that were supposed to be covered in the ESP vocabulary lessons. Additionally, AD students were unable to pass their mock final exit exams.

Conclusion: Implications Going Forward

In this discussion, we have described the journey from identifying the vocabulary needs/goals in a Saudi postsecondary EFL context and how we constructed a stand-alone course to meet these needs while being guided by relevant theory. This effort, in our view, has implications for others in similar contexts. Although there was empirical evidence that indirectly supported the effectiveness of the course, this was not a quantitative study seeking to claim causality. How this undertaking could and should affect similar programs in similar settings is presented in a manner similar to transferability in qualitative research (Creswell, 2009). Our goal is to spark dialogue and inspire.

The first implication is a purposeful course design and implementation process. Given difficulties that our low-proficiency students had with spelling and pronunciation, we found that A0 and A1 students may first be given single words rather than multiword chunks, as this alone proved a suitable challenge. In subsequent trimesters, students may gradually be exposed to multiword chunks after they have a suitable vocabulary size and meta-awareness of the importance and nature of multiword constructions. A related aspect to purposeful course design is accounting for the aforementioned deficiency of human intuition when selecting the teaching of multiword constructions (Adolphs, 2006). Therefore, we strongly recommend the referencing of corpora to construct and select the multiword lexical items being taught.

The second implication for others replicating our course is that it is necessary to give students some lessons on the value of using Anki and to make sure that this is followed up with some coaching and confirmation that it is being used consistently and properly. For example, to highlight a problem we faced, one student wanted to know how he could delete the old vocabulary items from his Anki app because he only wanted to concentrate on the current items. This necessitated a wider discussion with all the students on the value of continuously going over the older vocabulary as well, rather than only focusing on a single group of items at a time. So, students need to be introduced to the value of Anki and taught how to use it appropriately, or they may inadvertently misuse it in ways that undermine its pedagogical effectiveness.

The third implication of this discussion is the usefulness of the L1 in the vocabulary development process. Our experience through this course has shown that low-proficiency ELLs benefit from the use of the L1 in terms of efficiency and mapping already known concepts. We therefore recommend that others seeking to follow the design we have used not be afraid of using the L1 and reference this discussion and the associated theoretical positions supporting our decision to include students' native language.

The final implication is the importance of interconnection. The three processes of the course – its building, operation, and management – were thoughtfully and thoroughly interconnected. The various components of each process were also extensively interdependent. In sum, we planned everything as purposefully and extensively as possible. In our view, any future replication of our course would fail without this interdependency; it is therefore suggested as the keystone feature of the undertaking presented here.

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Students' Writing Anxiety: Causes and Effects of a Moodle-Based Writing Course

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This study aimed at examining the causes of writing anxiety among Indonesian students in paragraph writing classes and the effects of a Moodle-based writing course on their anxiety. With these goals in mind, this study collected data by means of the SLWAI (Second Language Writing Anxiety Index; Cheng, 2004), interview sessions, and questionnaires. The result of the SLWAI showed that only 3 students (5.8%) experienced a low level of writing anxiety. The interviews revealed that anxiety stemmed from difficulties in organizing ideas, linguistic difficulties, fear of being evaluated, low self-confidence, lack of writing experience, and difficulties in managing time. The second questionnaire indicated that learning in an online writing environment was a positive experience. The discussion revealed that a Moodle-based writing course was beneficial in reducing student writing anxiety.

INTRODUCTION

Writing in a foreign language can be a challenging activity for many learners. Studies have shown that it is hard to write in the first language, but it is even more difficult to write in a foreign language (Gilmore, 2009). This experience may make students feel more anxious, which can pose potential problems to their learning process (Chen & Chang, 2004). Not only may they feel pain in expressing their ideas through words, they may also find their study less enjoyable and less motivating.

In Paragraph Writing classes at Sanata Dharma University, the second-semester EFL students are given opportunities to practice their writing skills to compose English paragraphs well. The focuses are basically on analyzing and producing different genres of paragraphs; namely, descriptive, narrative, and argumentative genres. Based on an exploration of the learners' context, a number of Indonesian students mentioned that they found writing in English painful. For example, they avoided writing because they didn't want to make grammatical mistakes, and they felt that they were anxious because they did not have sufficient vocabulary to express their ideas and opinions. This made them suffer from writers' block when they were given a writing topic. In line with Cheng (2002) and Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert (1999), we know that this type of writing anxiety then affects students' writing performance negatively.

Teachers experiment with various strategies to deal with students' anxiety. One of them is using digital tools to help them manage the learning materials. Digital tools may create effective learning environments to overcome such anxiety.

Researchers have claimed that computer-mediated communication can help reduce anxiety (Greenfield, 2003; Sullivan, 1993; Warschauer, 1996; Zhang, 2011). Sullivan (1993) argued that this environment is less teacher-centered because it gives students more time to respond. Based on previous research, it could be assumed that the implementation of a Moodle-based writing course may provide a less-threatening writing environment and may even help the students cope with foreign language writing anxiety.

This study aimed at answering two questions: (a) What causes writing anxiety among Indonesian students in a paragraph writing course, and (b) What are the effects of a Moodle-based writing course on students' writing anxiety? With these goals in mind, after elaborating the theoretical framework and methods employed, the research discusses possible factors causing the students' writing anxiety and the students' opinions of Moodle-based writing projects on their anxiety. Finally, it concludes with major ideas and findings of the research.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section elaborates extensive literature related to the current study; namely, literature on foreign language anxiety, foreign language writing anxiety, and Moodle-based writing courses.

Foreign Language Anxiety

Studies on foreign language learners' anxiety that have been investigated (Carroll, as cited in Krashen, 1981; Gregersen, 2003; numerous studies in Horwitz & Young [Eds.], 1991) show how anxiety influences the process of learning language in various aspects. For example, Carroll (as cited in Krashen, 1981) notes a small negative correlation between test anxiety and accomplishment in intensive foreign language courses. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1991) suggest that anxiety may lead to student difficulties in understanding instructions. Furthermore, Gregersen (2003) elaborated that learners with language anxiety may find it hard to recognize their own errors effectively. In the Indonesian context, Marwan (2008, p. 124) found that "most learners have experienced a certain degree of anxiety in their FL learning. Factors like lack of confidence, lack of preparation, and fear of failing the class have become the primary causes of their anxiety." Furthermore, Anandari (2015) explains that students experienced a high level of anxiety when they had to speak English in public. These previous studies showed that EFL learners can experience anxiety easily when exposed to a foreign language environment.

Foreign Language Writing Anxiety

Studies have also discussed the nature of language writing anxiety or language writing apprehension (Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert, 1999). Writing anxiety or writing apprehension, named by Daly and Miller (1975), is defined in a variety of ways. According to Daly and Miller (1975), "[Writing anxiety] refers to a situation and subject specific individual difference associated with a person's tendencies to approach or avoid situations perceived to potentially require writing accompanied by some amount of perceived evaluation" (p. 327). In general, it is defined as the negative and anxious feelings that disrupt part of the writing process (McLeod, 1987). It relates to the tendency of people to approach or to avoid writing.

Furthermore, Scovel (1991) argues that anxiety can be classified into two categories: facilitative anxiety and debilitating anxiety. He states that "facilitating anxiety motivates the learner to 'fight' the new learning task" (p. 22). It is considered to be a positive factor because it encourages learners to increase their efforts. The latter, on the contrary, is a negative feeling that may pose harm to the learning process. Although Shanping and Qingyang (2015, p. 29) argue that "the distinctions between each pair of anxieties are not very clear," other studies suggest that anxiety affects students' writing debilitatively (Cheng, 2002; Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert, 1999).

Several studies have explored possible reasons for second language writing anxiety (Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert, 1999; Zhang, 2011). Some possible factors for foreign language learners' anxiety are the fear of not being able to express themselves clearly in their writing and the fear of being evaluated. In addition, according to DeDeyn (2011), learners do not only worry about their linguistic difficulties in expressing their ideas, but they also worry about others' judgement.

Moodle-Based Writing Course

Studies suggest that collaborative writing and digital environments help students reduce anxiety (Choi, 2013; Hussin, Abdullah, Ismail, & Yoke, 2015; Smith, 1984; Wu, 2015). Digital tools provide a learning environment that gives students the opportunity to extend their interaction and learning beyond the limitations of space and time (Kelly & McAnear, 2002). Oblinger (2005) adds that this generation tends to work in groups, spends more time studying, and follows advanced technology. Because we are teaching in an era when information is no longer rare, we must explore various activities to get the students to engage passionately in the learning process. In this case, technology offers a rich learning environment for students to gain knowledge independently. Students are able to explore information through digital tools such as web-based encyclopedias or videos. The current research used Moodle, a free learning management system, for it allows for the integration of graphic organizers and e-forums that were assumed to support student collaboration as well as autonomy. These tools are integrated because they play important roles in the writing process; namely, brainstorming, drafting, editing, and revising before publishing.

METHOD

Participants and Instruments

This research employed a descriptive study involving 51 students who were in the second semester of the English Language Education Study Program at Sanata Dharma University. This study obtained data from 11 male students and 40 female students who took the Paragraph Writing course in 2016. The data were collected by using several instruments: the Second Language Writing Anxiety Index (SLWAI; Cheng, 2004), interview sessions, and a questionnaire.

Research Procedure

To know the levels of the students' anxiety, this study distributed the SLWAI (Cheng, 2004) at the beginning of the semester. Four students who had the highest level of anxiety and four students who had the lowest level of anxiety were interviewed to further elaborate the factors of their anxiety. At the end of the semester, this study distributed a questionnaire to discover students' opinions of a Moodle-based writing course on their anxiety. To further analyze and elaborate the students' opinions, 8 out of 51 students who had the lowest and highest levels of anxiety were interviewed.

Findings and Discussion

Levels of Students' Anxiety Before Using Moodle

The results of the SLWAI (Cheng, 2004) were analyzed descriptively. A total score above 65 points indicates a high level of anxiety; a total score in the 50–65 range indicates a moderate level of anxiety; and a total score below 50 indicates a low level of writing anxiety.

Table 1. Description of the SLWAI

Anxiety Level	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
High	24	47.1
Moderate	24	47.1
Low	3	5.8
Total	51	100

The scores of the participants in this study ranged from 36 to 88, which can be broken down into three categories. As shown in Table 1, there were 24 students out of 51 (47.1%) who experienced a high level of writing anxiety and 24 students (47.1%) who experienced a moderate level of writing anxiety. Only 3 students (5.8%) experienced a low level of writing anxiety. The numbers shown in Table 1 are thought-provoking because Krashen (1982) claimed that learners with low anxiety are more successful. Due to the important role of this affective variable, it is vital that this research investigate the causes of student anxiety.

Causes of Writing Anxiety

The interview session involved 8 students (4 students with the highest level of anxiety and 4 students with the lowest level of anxiety). The questions were delivered to allow the students to narrate their experiences in facing writing anxiety. The causes of student anxiety in Table 2 were identified when the participants narrated their responses in the interview sessions.

TABLE 2. Writing Anxiety Based on the Interview

Issues Identified	HAS	Percentage (%)	LAS	Percentage (%)
Difficulties in generating and organizing ideas	4	100	0	0
Linguistic difficulties	3	75	2	50
Fear of being evaluated	2	50	2	50
Low self-confidence	1	25	1	25
Lack of writing experience in English	2	50	0	0
Difficulties in managing time	2	50	0	0

Note. HAS = High-Anxiety Students; LAS = Low-Anxiety Students.

Writing anxiety stemmed from multiple sources. Generating and organizing ideas in the written form can be painful for foreign language learners with high levels of anxiety. One high-anxiety student mentioned the difficulties of transforming ideas into paragraph form. He experienced difficulties in expressing the ideas in topic sentences and supporting sentences. Culturally speaking, Indonesian students tend to use the Asian rhetorical model (Wahab, 2006), whose development of the paragraph is not written in a direct manner. Due to this cultural difference, the student responded that he experienced difficulty in organizing the ideas. As a result, he had difficulties in other processes such as drafting and evaluating what had been written.

Another cause of anxiety was lack of linguistic knowledge in the foreign language. This finding is in accordance with Hyland (2003), who argued that "[students] themselves identify language difficulties, such as an inadequate grasp of vocabulary and grammar, as their main problems with English writing and as the main sources of frustration when being unable to express their ideas in appropriate and correct English" (p. 34). The linguistic issues mentioned in the interview can be broken mainly into grammar mastery, vocabulary inventory, punctuation errors, and figurative language. Although the lecturer had emphasized the importance of content, the students were still self-conscious of making odd sentences.

It was also evident that students were anxious due to the fact that they had to publish their works to be evaluated by their friends (their classmates). When they learned that they would be evaluated, they experienced excessive worry of others' judgements of their writing (DeDynn, 2011). They feared the possibility of being evaluated negatively by their friends. Some students compared themselves with others and felt that their skills were worse than others. In other words, they felt inferior in terms of writing in the foreign language, which led to anxiety. Some students experienced anxiety because they didn't have confidence in expressing their ideas. Interestingly, one low-anxiety student and one high-anxiety student mentioned that although they knew what to write, they felt insecure about their writings for different reasons. The low-anxiety student did not feel confident because she realized that her language use was not perfect. The high-anxiety student had a different reason for being unconfident: He felt his writing was inferior compared to other students' work.

High-anxiety students were also not confident about their writing because they didn't have much experience. One student preferred to express his ideas by speaking in a foreign language, and he only practiced writing when he had to or when he felt that he wanted to write. Another high-anxiety student mentioned a different reason: She felt that when writing in English, she was unable to use figurative language. She had to translate the figurative expression from Indonesian to English.

Another form of writing that made them anxious was timed writing that they experienced in their tests. The interview revealed that when they were under pressure, they couldn't develop their ideas well, let alone transform them into grammatical sentences. One high-anxiety student felt panic-stricken thinking about the theme, feeling that she needed more time. Moreover, another high-anxiety student experienced getting stuck. This student preferred writing at home because there she could manipulate the task within a favorable learning environment.

In all, difficulties in generating and organizing ideas, linguistic difficulties, fear of being evaluated, low self-confidence, and lack of writing experience in English contributed to student writing anxiety. As has been stated previously, because anxiety plays an important role in successful learning, some studies investigated ways to reduce anxiety. One of the methods that has been well documented is that of providing a digital environment (Hussin, Abdullah, Ismail, & Yoke, 2015; Wu, 2015). To help the students in the class to reduce anxiety, this teacher took up the challenge to implement online learning: Moodle-based writing.

Effects of Using Moodle-Based Writing Course

One way to reduce student anxiety was to offer them a different experience in the classroom. After the implementation of the Moodle-based writing course for paragraph writing, this study distributed a questionnaire and surveyed the students as shown in Table 3.

The data from the questionnaire revealed that doing online assignments was a positive experience. There were 49 out of 51 students (96%) who agreed that doing online assignments was a positive experience. Table 3 shows that 43% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they felt less anxious when they had longer to write on a forum/blog. Moreover, it revealed that when doing online projects, 60% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they were not afraid to share their work to others. They had a positive experience and felt less anxious as they strongly agreed or agreed that they could manage their time well when doing online projects (55%), that they were more organized (64%), that they could write longer (53%) and better (70%), that they could get insights from other references (64%), and that they got useful comments from friends (88%) and their teacher (96%). In accordance with the questionnaire, the interview also indicated that students mostly experienced advantages of a Moodle-based writing course. Although some technical difficulties appeared in the learning process, the interview showed that it helped them reduce writing anxiety.

The issues identified from the interview suggest that the Moodle-based writing course was beneficial in several ways. At first, there were four high-anxiety students who felt anxious when they discovered that they would be evaluated.

TABLE 3. The Effects of the Moodle-Based Writing Course

Statements	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Doing online writing assignments is a positive experience.	0	1.96	1.96	45.10	50.98
I feel less anxious when I have longer to write online than on paper.	1.96	15.69	39.22	35.29	7.84
I am not afraid to do online writing projects because my friends and teacher can read my ideas.	3.92	7.84	27.45	43.14	17.65
I can manage my time well when doing my online projects.	0	9.80	35.29	50.98	3.92
I feel that I am more organized when writing my work online.	0	3.92	31.37	52.94	11.76
I write longer on the forum/blog.	0	7.84	37.25	45.10	7.84
I can express my ideas better when writing on the forum/blog than on paper.	0	5.88	23.53	41.18	29.41
I gain insights from other Internet links to improve my writing.	1.96	3.92	29.41	56.86	7.84
I like to read the comments from friends on my blogs because they are useful for me in improving my writing ability.	0	3.92	7.84	49.02	39.22
I like to read the suggestions and comments from teachers because they are useful for me.	0	0	3.92	33.33	62.75

They were afraid that they would be negatively evaluated. But after receiving positive feedback to improve their work, they felt positive about the evaluation. As the data from the questionnaire suggested, the students found online feedback from their friends useful. The interview revealed that they had a better-than-expected response from peers, which made them more confident. Online evaluation made the process more effective, which was confirmed by Hussin, Abdullah, Ismail, and Yoke (2015).

One low-anxiety student mentioned that she enjoyed helping her friends revise their works. Another interviewee believed that responding to her friends' writings helped her develop her ability to evaluate her own writing. Another advantage of peer evaluation was that students became more aware of the errors in their sentences and learned how to fix them. To some extent, they experienced facilitative anxiety as they could deal with the anxiety and felt motivated to write better.

Giving them a sense of audience for their writings also challenged them to write better. It pushed them to write more meticulously. The interview revealed that they were excited when their writings were published to a wider audience. Publishing to a wider audience gave one low-anxiety student a sense of satisfaction for she did not only get feedback from her friends, but she also got ideas from her friends' work. She even mentioned that she shared the class blog on her social media so that more people could read it and post comments.

Moreover, in the era of technological innovation, online projects make it easier for students to explore sources through the Internet. Warschauer (1996) argued that technology boosted students' motivation because they thought computers enabled them to learn faster and better. He added that "students felt that they had control of their learning" (p. 19). Students in the Paragraph Writing class experienced the same thing. When they had problems they consulted the Internet. Another major advantage of the Moodle-based writing course was that students felt that doing online projects was useful because they could easily access other references that could help them write well. One high-anxiety student mentioned that when she was unsure about the order of her sentences, she would access YouTube (www.youtube.com) and Online Dictionary (www.onlinedictionary.com) to revise them. She thought that she had more opportunities to practice and learn English. Indeed, one advantage of digital learning is that students can access much information and become independent.

Online assignments gave them flexibility because they could do them anywhere and anytime. In writing assignments, they could manage their time in brainstorming, making an outline, and writing their first draft before the submission dates. Some students mentioned that they were more inspired when they were accompanied by music when writing. Some preferred to write at night. When they were in a more relaxed learning environment, learning became less threatening and could boost their desire to learn.

In sum, students felt that doing writing activities online gave them several benefits: receiving feedback and appreciation, giving constructive evaluation to their friends, publishing of their works, accessing more references, and adjusting the learning process to their learning styles. Although most of the students experienced positive effects of the Moodle-based writing course, a few students experienced difficulties in accessing the Internet due to a lack of a strong Internet connection. To make digital learning more fruitful, we should make sure that a Internet connection is available to all students.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has discussed the levels of student writing anxiety and its factors. It was found that writing anxiety stemmed from several different sources; namely, difficulties in organizing ideas, linguistic difficulties, fear of being evaluated, low self-confidence, lack of writing experience, and difficulties in managing time. After the implementation of the Moodle-based writing course, the students indicated that learning in an online writing environment helped them in getting useful feedback, in getting more references, in publishing their works, and in adjusting the writing process to their own learning style, which resulted in a reduction in their anxiety. In short, the results of this study support the argument that in relation to anxiety, learning in a digital environment can be one strategy to alleviate student writing anxiety.

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Nurturing Students' Social Awareness Through Project-Based Learning in Speaking Class

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The acquisition of affective skills in a student's life is sometimes left completely to chance. Some of these students are fortunate because they have affectively skilled parents from whom they may learn these skills. Others may not be so lucky. Therefore, instead of just leaving to chance whether students learn these essential life-skills as they grow up, it is better to teach them. Education practitioners around the world have attempted to include affective aspects in their pedagogical practices, including English language learning. One of the elements in the affective aspects is social awareness or social consciousness. This element expects students to be able to understand and respect others' feelings, opinions, and needs. They also learn to contribute to their community. This paper will describe the project-based learning activity carried out in speaking class in a private university in Indonesia in an effort to cultivate the students' social awareness.

INTRODUCTION

The acquisition of affective skills in a student's life is sometimes left completely to chance, apart from a few obvious instructions from their parents or teachers, such as telling them to say "please" or "thank you." Some of these students are fortunate because they have affectively skilled parents from whom they may learn, copy, and adapt these skills. Others may not be so lucky. Csóti (2001) highlights that some possible reasons for this may be because their parents may have lacked communication and social skills, and they pass that lack on to them; their parents may be socially skilled, but they fail to observe this behavior; their parents are socially awkward, so they may not have had the opportunity to observe positive social behavior; or they themselves may have particular problems that prevented them from developing appropriate social skills. Therefore, instead of just leaving it to chance whether students would learn these essential life-skills as they grow up, it is better to include these skills in pedagogical practices.

In the past, learning had been defined solely as an effort to reach cognitive objectives. Affective aspects in the learning process have been overlooked. Many argue that affective learning is a by-product of cognitive learning, and therefore, affective learning outcomes do not need to be independently specified, taught, or assessed because the affective domain is perceived as "messy and unpredictable" (Gano-Phillips, 2009, p. 8). However, for the last few decades, the urge for the inclusion of affective aspects in education has been growing. Educators and policymakers around the world have attempted to include affective aspects in the curriculum as well as in the teaching and learning process. In Indonesia, for instance, the term "character education" has been echoing across the country's educational institutions, signaling the current needs of the affective domains in the teaching and learning process.

Social awareness is one of the aspects of the affective domain and currently one of the most needed aspects. This is mainly due to the concern for the lack of social awareness in society, especially in the youth. A recent study conducted by Astin (1998, as cited in Greene & Kamimura, 2003) revealed a decline in the percentage of first-year students in the United States who voted in a student election and expressed interest in "participating in a community action program," "promoting racial understanding," or "becoming involved with programs to clean up the environment." Reformers there view students who lack this type of knowledge, understanding, and interest as "lacking sensitivity to the needs of others and a willingness to be active citizens" (Swift, 1990, as cited in Greene & Kamimura, 2003). This lack of social awareness of "college-aged" students also, according to Bickford and Reynolds (2002, as cited in Greene & Kamimura, 2003), may lead to social change. These cases are similar to those in Indonesia. Former social minister of Indonesia, Al Jufri, stated in *Republika Online* (Amanda, 2012) that he is very much concerned with the fact that the nation's social awareness has weakened. This can be seen from the cases of student brawls, race riots, and clashes between *kampongs* (villages), which create unrest in society.

On the basis of the above background, it can be seen that the need for nurturing students' social awareness is unquestionable. Consequently, the question of how to include this aspect in the classrooms arises. An effort, therefore, has been made, aiming at nurturing the social awareness of students in a speaking class in a private university in Indonesia. This paper will describe the project-based learning activity done in the speaking class and how it reflects aspects of social awareness.

Social Awareness

There are a number of definitions of social awareness. Commonly, *social awareness*, also known as *social consciousness*, can be defined as "the understanding of the activity of others, which provides a context for your own activity" (Dourish & Bellotti, 1992, as cited in Prasolova-Førland, 2004). In other definitions (Goldman, 1992, as cited in Prasolova-Førland, 2004; Gutwin, Greenberg, & Roseman, 1996) social awareness is defined as one's awareness of the problems within a society or community or social situation of other people. This means awareness of what other people are doing, who is around, and what is happening in the society.

The American sociologist Charles Horton Cooley (1907), in his article entitled *Social Consciousness*, argued that social awareness is inseparable from individual awareness. According to him, "mind is an organic whole made up of co-operating individualities" (p. 675). He compared this inseparability of social and individual awareness to the music of an orchestra, which consists of different sounds from different instruments but all of them are related. Just as an orchestra is an inseparable entity, he believed that there is no need to differentiate between social and individual awareness. Cooley also claimed that it is almost impossible to think of ourselves without referring to some kind of social group and vice versa.

This argument of inseparability between self- and social-consciousness is also supported by Rochat (2009), Schlitz, Vieten, and Miller (2010), and Sheldon (1996). Schlitz, Vieten, and Miller use the term *social consciousness* to refer to "conscious awareness of being part of an interrelated community of others" (p. 21). They believe that when defined this way, social consciousness refers to "the level of explicit awareness a person has of being part of a larger whole" (p. 21). It contains the level in which someone is aware of how he or she is influenced by others, as well as how his or her actions may affect others. It also includes an understanding that there are many factors affecting experience that become the basis of conscious awareness.

Schlitz, Vieten, and Miller (2010) added that they have identified five levels of social consciousness. The first level is *embedded*. They argued that, at this level, consciousness is shaped without conscious awareness by social, cultural, and biological factors and is a kind of pre-social consciousness. The second level is *self-reflexive*. At this level, people grow an awareness of how their experiences are conditioned by the social world through reflection and contemplative practices. The third level is *engaged*. Here, people are not only aware of the social environment, but begin to mobilize an intention to contribute to the greater good in some outwardly directed way. The fourth level is *collaborative*. People at this level see themselves as a part of the collective and begin to work with others to co-create or shape the social environment by collaborative actions, such as collective inquiry, social networking, and learning. The last level is *resonant*. At this final level, people report a sense of essential interrelatedness with others – a field of shared experience and emergence that is felt and expressed in social groups and that stimulates social transformation. An illustration of these levels can be seen in Figure 1.

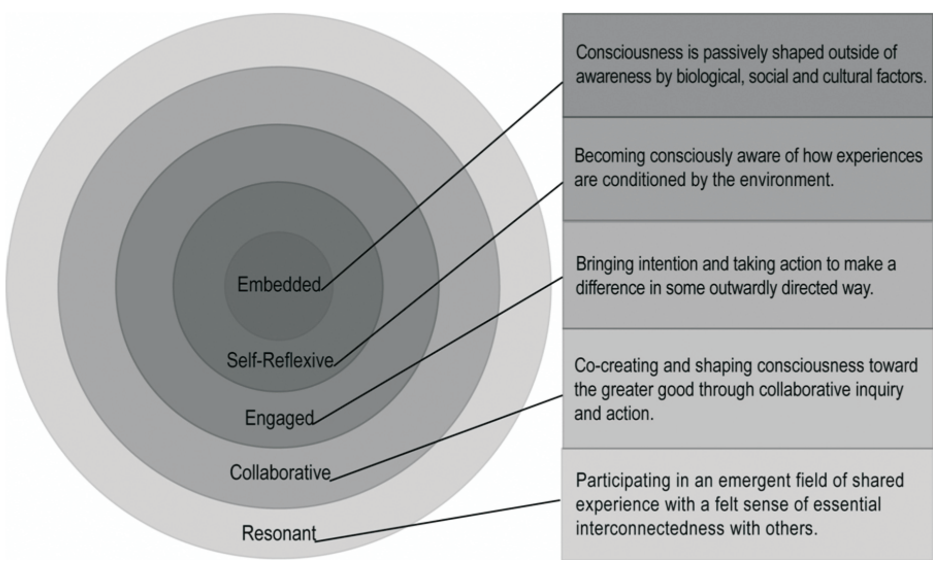

FIGURE 1. The Five Levels of Social Consciousness (Schlitz, Vieten, & Miller, 2010).

To sum up, social awareness for students helps them understand their role and function in the society in which they live. In the process of growing from early childhood to adulthood, students are developing their standards and attitudes about themselves, their family, their community, and the world. They are developing a concept of self. Therefore, it is important to try to include this aspect in the teaching and learning process; as well, these five levels of social awareness have been used as a contemplative basis to develop a project activity for a speaking class.

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

Although American educators such as John Dewey have promoted the idea of "learning by doing" for as far back as 100 years ago, the term "project-based learning" (PBL) has only emerged in the past few decades. There are two basic events that sparked the emergence of PBL, according to the Buck Institute for Education (BIE; 2003), an American institute that focuses on PBL. First, research in neuroscience and psychology has extended cognitive and behavioral models of learning – which supported traditional direct instruction – to show that knowledge, thinking, doing, and the contexts for learning are connected to each other. Second, the world has changed, which means that schools must now adapt to a new century. It is obvious that students need both knowledge and skills to succeed, and the features of PBL, which allow students to plan, collaborate, and communicate, will help these students learn civic responsibility and master their new roles as global citizens.

There is no one standard definition of PBL. However, BIE (2003) defines standards-focused PBL as "a systematic teaching method that engages students in learning knowledge and skills through an extended inquiry process structured around complex, authentic questions and carefully designed products and tasks" (p. 4). Richards and Schmidt (2010) define project work in the teaching and learning process as an activity that focuses on the completion of a task, and much of the activity is usually conducted outside the classroom; and Thomas (2000) describes it as "realistic, not school-like" (pp. 3–4). According to some project-based learning handbooks, projects are often defined as complex tasks, based on questions or problems that require students to be designers, problem-solvers, decision-makers, or investigators. Projects give students the opportunity to work and apply their knowledge autonomously and produce authentic products or presentations (Boss & Krauss, 2007; Patton, 2012; Thomas, 2000). In language teaching, project work is thought to be an activity that promotes cooperative learning, reflects the principles of student-centered teaching, and promotes language learning through using the target language for authentic communicative purposes (Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

Although there are various explanations of the steps involved in PBL, according to Richards and Schmidt (2010), project work commonly involves three stages: classroom planning, carrying out the project, and reviewing and monitoring.

Classroom Planning

In the classroom planning step, students and teacher discuss the content and scope of the project, and their needs. Designing projects is not a simple task. To ensure that the time spent on projects is worthwhile, teachers need to consider a framework that will help them think through the standards, skills, and other objectives that the PBL project is to achieve. One example of such a framework is the "simultaneous outcomes" model, provided by the National Academy Foundation (n.d.); see Figure 2.

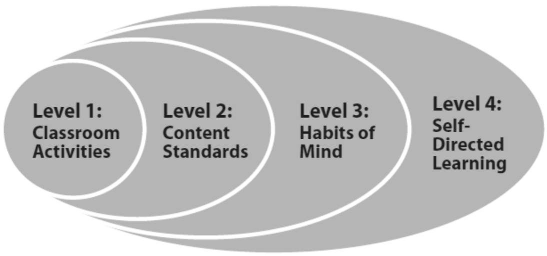

FIGURE 2. Simultaneous Project Outcomes.

When designing a project, this framework shows how teachers can create projects that can operate on several levels at the same time. A good project should combine opportunities for students to engage in classroom activities (Level 1), which address content standards (Level 2), while helping them to develop habits of mind (Level 3), and the ability to be responsible for their own learning (Level 4). A more detailed elaboration of how to employ this framework will be given in the section on the description of the project.

Carrying Out the Project

In carrying out the project, the students move out of the classroom to complete their planned tasks (e.g., conducting interviews, collecting information). How can teachers ensure that their students will succeed in their project work? Some of the answer lies in how well the teacher provides the students with the support needed to complete the task. "Project scaffolding" refers to the time, tools, and training students need in order to succeed during the risky business of project work (National Academy Foundation, n.d.). There are some key scaffolds that teachers must consider when implementing classroom projects: structure, content, training, oversight, documents, tools, and time. More detailed explanations of these scaffolds will be given in the section below on the description of the project.

Reviewing and Monitoring

Reviewing and monitoring activities usually include presentations, discussions, and feedback sessions by the teacher and participants and can be both during and after the project. The evaluations of a project should be based on the intended outcomes set at the beginning of the project.

Benefits of PBL

Project-based learning has been shown to be effective in increasing student motivation and improving students' problem-solving and higher-order thinking skills (Stites, 1998, as cited in Boss & Krauss, 2007). In project-based learning, students are required to investigate open-ended questions and apply their knowledge to produce authentic products. It naturally promotes students' own choice, providing them with the chance for active learning and teamwork. This view is also supported by Thomas (2000) who stated that project-based learning is student-driven to some significant degree and gives them "a feeling of authenticity" (p. 30). Lindsay (2006, as cited in Boss & Krauss, 2007), a teacher who has been using the project approach for a decade while teaching at international high schools around the world, stated that projects often generate unexpected benefits. She reports, "I never fail to be thrilled at the absolute delight the students get from these projects and how the learning outcomes are usually far higher than initially expected" (p. 20). In her experience, she discovered the following examples of the "extra learning" that occurs beside the intended content of the project:

1. Students develop good communication skills to break through cultural misunderstanding and find consensus.
2. Students develop good inquiry skills, which foster a sense of wonderment at the differences in the world.
3. Students learn to be flexible with their working hours because they know other people are relying on them to meet their deadlines.
4. Students develop a fuller understanding of how the world works and that it does not just revolve around them.
5. Students achieve the feeling that, through communication with and understanding of other people, individuals can do something about changing the world. (Lindsay, p. 20)

On this basis, project-based learning seems to be one of the most suitable approaches to help teachers nurture students' social awareness. It allows students to plan, collaborate, and communicate, which help them learn civic responsibility and master their new roles as global citizens. Project-based learning allows students to explore beyond classroom walls, in the real world. It supports students to interact not only with their classmates but also with other people in real-life situations.

Description of the Project

Some classes that must be taken by the students of the English education department of the university are speaking classes. English speaking skill is taught every semester from the first to the sixth semester. The speaking class discussed in this paper is one in the third semester, which is Speaking 3. In this class, one of the intended competencies stated that the students are expected to be able to give opinions about occupations, and describe and compare occupations. So, instead of taking the commonly discussed occupations (e.g., police officer, teacher, soldier, civil servant) in a made-up situation, students were asked to go out into the real world and find an “uncommon” occupation. Following the three steps of project-based learning (Richards & Schmidt, 2010), the steps of the project activities are described below.

Classroom Planning

In the classroom planning step, the activity was planned and designed by considering the four elements in the simultaneous outcomes framework: classroom activities, content standards, habits of mind, and self-directed learning. In the first step, students were involved in classroom activities (Level 1) that were engaging and aligned to the next three outcome levels. The classroom activities were intended to prepare students with the skills needed for the project. Firstly, the students were divided into groups that they would be in for the project work. They were then told that they were going to do a project of creating a documentary video of an “uncommon” occupation in the society where they lived and that they had to narrate the story in their video. After that, they discussed in groups what occupation they were going to take as their subject. After the discussion, they had to go out and survey the available occupations where they lived. However, the students could still change their subject if they found a more interesting occupation during the survey. Before going out into the real world, they learned and practiced the expressions commonly used to describe, compare, and give opinions on occupations – the content standards (Level 2). The other outcome level addresses the habits of mind (Level 3), in this case, the aspects of social awareness. Ultimately, the project hoped to promote self-directed learning and the skills students can transfer to all aspects of their life (i.e., self-managing – teaching students to organize their own time and resources; self-monitoring – teaching students to evaluate their own progress and work quality; self-modifying – teaching students to make their own changes and adaptations).

Carrying Out the Project

In this phase, the project groups started to do their project outside the classroom. They went to the people who had occupations that they thought were interesting. Some examples of the occupations documented by the groups are tire-patcher, cooked-snail seller, stone-breaker, and *jenang* candy-maker. The students asked for the subjects’ permission to document their activities. The students also conducted some interviews of the subjects. There were several essential scaffolds that were considered when carrying out the project. They are elaborated in the table below:

TABLE 1. The Essential Scaffolds

Scaffold	Description	Activities
Structure	Critical organizing features of the project that determine who does what and when.	• Students were divided into groups of four. • Each team was asked to investigate different occupations, but they all had to create a documentary video. • Students decided the role of every student in the group.
Content	Any classroom activity that covers the foundational topics, concepts, and standards that students need to know for the project.	• Students learned and practiced the expressions commonly used to describe, compare, and give opinions on occupations.
Documents	Handouts to help explain and organize the project.	• Students were given documents that included project guidelines, calendars, deadlines, and check sheets.
Tools	The technological resources necessary to produce the required products.	• Computers, video editing software, video cameras.
Training	Explicit skill-building for students in group work and all required production areas.	• Students learned how to edit videos using Adobe Premiere. • Students discussed the possible obstacles they would face in the field and how to deal with them.
Oversight	Structured times for teachers to meet, motivate, and mentor student teams.	• Students were informally interviewed about the progress of their project and problems they encountered in the field. • Project groups gave progress reports to the teacher halfway through project.
Time	In-class opportunities for students to meet, research, produce, exhibit, and evaluate.	• Students presented their video work. • Teachers and peers gave feedback.

Reviewing and Monitoring

In the final step, each group prepared and delivered an oral presentation describing what happened during the project: their plan, the steps of their project, the problems they faced, and how they felt after meeting the project subjects. After the presentation, the students showed their documentary video recording of their subject's activity. The videos included the students' narrations and interviews. After each presentation, since this was conducted in a speaking class, the teacher wrote a formal evaluation of their language and delivery based on a speaking and presentation rubric. From the review, it could be seen that besides learning the linguistic aspects in giving opinions on occupations, and how to describe and compare occupations, the students also learned aspects of social awareness.

The evaluation and the students' reports indicated that the students seemed to gain one of the objectives of this project, the habits of mind, which are four of the five levels of social awareness (Schlitz, Vieten, & Miller, 2010) from the project – all but the first level, which was already embedded in the students' personality. The first level that they gained from the projects was *self-reflexive*. As stated before, at this level, students grow awareness of how their experiences are conditioned by the social world through reflection and contemplative practices. In this study, for instance, some students confessed that through this project, they could feel other people's condition and how hard their work was. They stated that this made them think how lucky they were and how they should have been more grateful. The second level was *engaged*. Here, students are not only aware of the social environment, but begin to mobilize an intention to contribute to the greater good of the society. This can be observed in one of the students' videos where the students helped the cooked-snail seller in selling her product. This, to some extent, shows their intention to contribute within their ability. The third level was *collaborative*. At this level, students are expected to see themselves as a part of the collective and begin to work with others to co-create or shape the social environment by collaborative actions. Through this project, students worked together, and they had to learn their part in their group. In these groups, the students also practiced their ability in self-directed learning – self-managing, self-monitoring, and self-modifying. The last level is *resonant*. At this final level, students showed a sense of essential interrelatedness with others. Through this project, they could share experiences that were felt and expressed in different social groups by going into the real world and documenting those occupations.

Concluding Remarks

In the process of growing from early childhood to adulthood, students are developing their standards and attitudes about themselves, their family, their community, and the world. They are developing a concept of self and social awareness that is essential to help them understand their role and function in the society in which they live. Therefore, it is important to try to include this aspect in the teaching and learning process. In order to do so, project-based learning seems to be one of the most suitable approaches. It allows students to plan, collaborate, and communicate, which help them learn civic responsibility and master their new roles as global citizens. Project-based learning allows students to explore beyond classroom walls, in the real world. It supports students to interact not only with their classmates but also with other people in real-life situations.

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Comparing Two Qualitative Teaching Evaluation Data Collection Methods

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Sweeping changes in the ways universities are organized and administered worldwide have led to a rise in accountability where student evaluation of teaching administered through end-of-semester surveys is widespread in tertiary education. One of the main purposes is for teachers to improve their teaching through utilizing the results of both quantitative and qualitative data produced. However, teachers need to value the new knowledge gained from learner comments. This study involving 220 students over eight semesters compares two methods of gaining qualitative written comments from students in communicative English language classes in a private university in Japan: Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) surveys and a structured pro forma called the "Stop, Start, Continue" (SSC) method. Results found that as students are more engaged in providing feedback, SSC gets fuller data from students that the teacher can then use as feedback for class improvement and ongoing teacher reflection.

Introduction: Purposes of Evaluation

Student evaluation of teaching has become ubiquitous, and it is claimed that measuring teacher performance through surveys is used "in almost every institution of higher education throughout the world" (Spooren, Brockx, & Mortelmans, 2013, p. 1). In the literature, there are three primary functions, or pathways, for the collecting of student evaluation of teaching surveys (SETs; see Richardson, 2005), reflecting different needs. Firstly, university administrators need student feedback for quality assurance, accountability, and human resource purposes, reflecting the need for "determining competence of teachers in order to assure that services delivered are safe and effective" (Stronge, 2006, p. 4), and it is seen as being summative. Secondly, teachers use student-generated, growth-oriented feedback diagnostically to help them improve, or innovate, their teaching. Thirdly, prospective students use feedback from previous students to help them make decisions about the selection of courses and teachers. A fourth purpose, frequently noted in Asia and Australia, (Goh & Koh, 2013), is the need to reduce student attrition, which is costly for the school in the difficult transition from school to university, so evaluation serves to fulfill customer-centric expectations. The content of university education must change to meet diverse students' abilities and knowledge with more consideration required to make education more attractive (Yamamoto, 2005).

Therefore, evaluation has an accountability-oriented function contributing to the mission of the program, the school, and the total educational organization, but it should also be improvement-oriented, contributing to the personal and professional development needs of the individual teacher. Blair and Noel (2014, p. 879) note that assessment by students "can be a driver of improvement," but getting the balance between school goals and individual teacher professional growth and improvement is very difficult (Stronge, 2006).

EVALUATION FOR TEACHING IMPROVEMENT

This study considers the perspective of student evaluation for teaching improvement. Increasingly in tertiary education, student feedback is seen as having a major role in delivering quality, meaning teaching that satisfies the primary consumer, the student. Such evaluation should reflect the complexity of teaching and provide valid data about competence while helping teachers improve the caliber of their work. Evaluation needs "utility" (Stronge, 2006, p. 9), whereby useful, informative, timely, and influential information is provided to ensure that findings are valid and reliable, but the quality of data is determined by the appropriateness of the procedures used to gather it. Due to the ease of collection and publication as statistical data, and because "many individuals at various levels of decision making [are] lost without numbers" (Svinicki, 2001, p. 17), student evaluation of teaching is carried out with SET surveys or ratings forms using fix-ended questions given to students to fill out in classes towards the end of the school semester.

The evaluation form used in this study is typical and utilizes a Likert-type 1–5 scale anchored from "very poor (1)" to "very good (5)" with questions including specific teacher characteristics about teacher enthusiasm, way of speaking, receptivity to the students, and the use of blackboard and AV devices. The scores on these questions are then used to generate a statistical report for summative, administrative purposes. There is a final global characteristic of "overall satisfaction" of the course and "effectiveness" of the instructor. The form includes an open-ended section (on the back of the form) for comments to add context and detail to issues that arise in the quantitative data to inform teaching.

Open-ended, qualitative data allows students to provide written comments to explain the scores that they assign for closed-ended items and to draw attention to topics that were not addressed in the closed-ended part of the form (Nasser & Fresco, 2002), or to identify reasons for statistical results that may be different from researcher assumptions (Grebennikov & Shah, 2013), or because they represent researchers' preconceived framework, by allowing students a greater freedom of expression. Ideally, the qualitative and quantitative data should complement each other (Grebennikov & Shah, 2013). Therefore, qualitative data from students' comments can provide useful insight into aspects of courses that learners find important. Learners can specifically comment on teaching aspects that are only generally touched on or measured in generic SET instruments.

Open-ended data must serve as the catalyst for improvement and require a mechanism for communicating both "why" and "how" to change. Centra (1993) suggests that truly significant improvement is likely to take place only if the evaluation fulfills four conditions (see Figure 1).

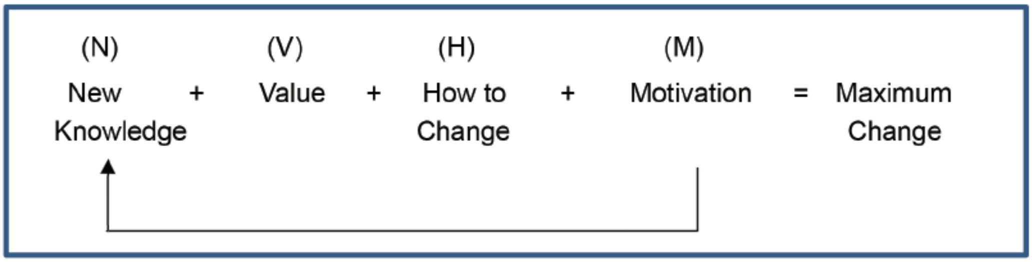

FIGURE 1. The NVHM Model for Change. (Centra, 1993)

When evaluations are used, maximum change occurs when teachers receive new knowledge and the loop signifies that teachers are motivated to seek new knowledge that they value as a further spur to change, and the feedback loop is closed when students are informed about any actions resulting from their input. One key principle for teachers is how much teacher growth is engendered in evaluation. For improvement where the formative focus is on diagnostic feedback, teachers need credible data as to enable the potential for growth. Brockx, Van Roy, and Mortelmans (2012) suggest that students should be a "commentator" (p. 69) on aspects of teaching and courses that students find important.

As an alternative to SET surveys, the "Stop, Start, Continue" (SSC) method has been widely used in the business world (see Institute of Grocery Distribution, n.d.) but seems to be under-utilized in feedback in tertiary education. In this form of open-ended data collection, students are asked to reflect on things the teacher should stop doing, things the teacher should start doing, and things the teacher should continue doing.

As little research into the use of SSC in English language education has been carried out, the purpose of the present study is to compare two methods of gaining qualitative data from tertiary students studying English as a foreign language (EFL) as a compulsory subject. As noted earlier, the most widespread method of gaining student-driven, open-ended data is from questions at the end of a SET survey administered at the end of the semester, while the second method is the "Stop, Start, Continue" (SSC) method of gaining qualitative feedback from learners.

RESEARCH PURPOSE

While universities collect huge amounts of quantitative data, little research has been conducted into what students offer in terms of qualitative feedback. This research compares data gained from eight classes over eight semesters through both SSC and SET surveys in an attempt to discover whether feedback generated from the SSC would yield more useful data that teachers can utilize for teacher improvement than data provided by the open-ended comments on SET surveys.

METHOD

The SET Survey Administration

The setting for the study was eight classes of first-year students majoring in business management, economics, or law, and who were taking "native," compulsory English as a Foreign language (EFL) classes once a week by the author for a single semester of 15 weeks at a Japanese private university. An overarching, theme-based "communicative" approach is written into the "native" English curriculum, where learning of English is encouraged by negotiation of meaning through pair or group work that often involved information-gap activities with collaborative, scaffolded interaction. Students completed an obligatory SET survey in week thirteen of the sixteen-week syllabus.

As the institution requires SET to be administered in only one class of each teacher's class load, collection therefore took place over eight semesters. While evaluation in one class may reduce student cognitive overload caused through the requirement to fill in the SET survey in all classes, the chances of being required to fill in the survey in many classes is still high. Subsequently, the scores from each teacher on their one class are norm referenced to give each teacher a ranking, and at a later "faculty development" meeting – to which all tenured teaching staff were expected to attend – the two full-time teachers who ranked first and second outline in a presentation why they feel they had gotten high scores in terms of student satisfaction.

In the SET survey, students were required to agree or disagree with twenty statements utilizing a Likert-type scale anchored from 1 to 5. On the back of the computer-readable quantitative data, the students were asked to fill in with pencil their responses to three open-ended questions, which asked:

1. What was good about the class?
2. What was unsatisfactory about the class?
3. What are your opinions or suggestions about the class?

While all 222 students responded to the Likert-scale questions, 134 students left the open-ended questions completely blank, meaning that 88 students responded to the qualitative data.

The SSC Administration

In week fourteen, 220 students attending the same eight classes over eight semesters were asked to take home and complete the "Stop, Start, Continue" evaluation form. Rather than students filling in blank boxes, the students were invited to contribute up to four examples on four lines in each of the three categories. Therefore, the students were asked to comment on:

1. A few things that the teacher does in class that are not working (should stop doing).
2. A few things that would be beneficial for the teacher to start doing.
3. A few things that the teacher is doing well and should continue doing.

As this survey was administered for research purposes rather than for institutional enhancement purposes, participation was voluntary and un-coerced in accordance with ethical practice. The form comprised English and Japanese language versions, and students could freely choose either version. Filled-in responses were received from 133 students, of which only six responded to the English language version.

Data Analysis

After the data was translated into English, it was "unitized," whereby student responses were analyzed to reveal patterns in the data using a keyword analysis with categories generated by the statements made by the students. A content analysis of the responses was carried out and the results totaled and displayed in tables to "see the general drift" of the data by showing distributions (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 253), identifying themes and isolating data by the number of occurrences.

Results and Discussion

As the SET survey administration was a compulsory requirement, each student in the class completed the form, but the author decided that it was ethical that participants should be free to withdraw from research at any point (Richardson, 2005). While the number of responses, 133 of 220 participants, appears disappointing, on the SET survey, 149 out of 222 students chose not to respond at all to the qualitative data, responding to the less cognitively challenging quantifiable Likert-scale items. As participation in SSC was voluntary, it can be assumed that students were more willing to give constructive feedback; there were fewer blank comment boxes and fewer single-word replies of "nothing," meaning they had no opinion, insight, or motivation to contribute.

Table 1. Comparison of the Number of Responses to Qualitative Data on the Two Questionnaires

"Stop, Start, Continue" Survey Response	Number of Responses n = 133	Number of Responses n = 222	Student Evaluation of Teaching Survey Response
The teacher should stop doing	95	51	What the student thinks is unsatisfactory
The teacher should start doing	110	33	Any opinions or suggestions about the class
The teacher should continue doing	213	79	What the student thinks is good about the class
Total number of responses	418	163	Total number of responses

Note: 220 "Stop, Start, Continue" surveys were administered, and responses received from 133 students.

Looking at Table 1, the 222 respondents of the SET survey made 163 comments in the qualitative questions in total, while the 133 respondents out of 220 who accepted the invitation to write their views on the voluntary SSC generated 418 comments. Arguably this data alone is encouraging and supports Hoon, Oliver, Szpakowska, & Newton's (2015) findings in which SSC provided more (and richer) data than other open-ended methods.

Table 2 breaks down the data further and shows the 51 comments made on the "unsatisfactory" data of the SET survey and the 95 comments on what the teacher should "stop doing" on the SSC. As noted earlier, a constant comparison meant winnowing data so that overall categories emerged for overlapping themes such as "class tasks." Within that category, subtle differences meant new sub-categories were needed such as "greetings" or "warm-up cards" and "shadowing," which may mean little to the reader but which aids the teacher's self-evaluation of their own performance and beliefs. The paucity of data on SETs may be indications that students filling out SETs are unsure of the purpose that undergirds evaluation and do not wish to be harsh on teachers. What is apparent is that the number of student responses of "nothing," meaning "no opinion" is proportionally fewer with the SSC and that the data is arguably more meaningful.

TABLE 2. Comparison of What the Teacher Should Stop Doing, or Was Unsatisfactory

	"Stop, Start, Continue" Survey	***n* = 133**	**Student Evaluation of Teaching Survey**	***n* = 222**	
Stop	Nothing (No opinion)	33	Nothing (No opinion)	30	Unsatis-factory
	Class Tasks (Concerning greetings, warm-up cards, shadowing, conversation practice, homework, find someone who...?, walking around classroom, asking students)	21	Teacher Language (No Japanese translation, talking English too much, too difficult)	7	
	Class Pacing (Concerning class speed, time too short, class stating time)	14	Class Pacing (Concerning class speed, class too easy, waiting time too short)	6	
	Teacher Language (Language too fast, slow, difficult, not in Japanese, too much English, vocabulary)	11	Class Management (Concerning difficult-to-read writing, hard for shy students, class cramped)	3	
	Classroom Management (Concerning blackboard writing, class size)	7	Teacher Skills (Concerning teaching style, choosing students, poor Japanese language skills)	3	
	Teacher Skills (Concerning narrow range, ridiculing students, teacher competency)	3	Classroom Tasks (Concerning homework)	2	

	Evaluation (Concerning “points” for participation)	1			
	Other (Class is good now)	3			
	Total	95	Total	51	

Note: 220 “Stop, Start, Continue” surveys were administered, and responses received from 133 students.

The results of Table 3 below again show that the SSC yielded fuller data, with 110 comments compared with 33 on the SET survey. While the results provide data for teacher reflection, teachers can gain insight into and knowledge of our students’ learning experience. Some students would like the teacher to stop some class task, questioning the practicality of greetings, warm-up cards, and shadowing. Their reasons include time, usefulness, and the problem that girls and boys are unwilling to interact together on some tasks. However, the language teaching context emphasizes communicative language teaching tenets that see language learning as a replica of active authentic language use. Activities that involve the learner as an active participant who interacts with the language, his/her peers, the resources, and the teacher are used. However, students place an emphasis on mechanical, discrete learning skills influenced by previous teaching styles such as grammar and pronunciation practice, and can see little benefit for some tasks. As teachers, results from SSC remind us that for students who inhabit many freshmen classes at Japanese universities, there is a need for a standpoint that accepts that thinking and feeling is very much rooted in students’ mother tongue, something that teachers tend to overlook.

Table 3. Comparison of What the Teacher Should Start Doing, or Opinions and Suggestions

	“Stop, Start, Continue” Survey	***n* = 133**	**Student Evaluation of Teaching Survey**	***n* = 222**	
Start	Class Tasks (Concerning “more” group-work, listening, speaking, movies, music, handouts, writing, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, games)	26	Nothing (No opinion)	22	Opinions or Suggestions
	Nothing (No opinion)	21	Class Tasks (Concerning difficult content, homework, more test strategies, using English in pair work)	6	
	Teacher Language (Concerning Japanese use, English use, translation, explanations, easier language)	18	Teacher Language (Japanese text)	1	

	Class Pacing (Concerning class speed, more time during activities)	14	Class Pacing (Class faster)	1
	Teacher Skills (Concerning equal participation, learning Japanese, how to teach, answering)	12	Teacher Skills (Stop favoritism)	1
	Classroom Management (Concerning using AV, changing seats, curtains, equal numbers of students)	9	Class Evaluation (Reduce homework weighting)	1
	Class Evaluation (Small test at start of each class)	7	Other (Class is good now)	1
	Other (Class is good now)	3		
	Total	110	Total	33

Note: 220 "Stop, Start, Continue" surveys were administered, and responses received from 133 students.

Finally, in response to what was "good" in the class, there were 79 comments from 222 respondents in the SET survey, while in the SSC, the 133 students gave 213 comments related to what the teacher should "continue" doing.

TABLE 4. Comparison of What the Teacher Should Continue Doing, or What Was Good in Class

	"Stop, Start, Continue" Survey	*n* = 133	Student Evaluation of Teaching Survey	*n* = 222	
Continue	Class Tasks (Concerning, pair work, greetings, warm up, pronunciation, walking around, homework, finding things in common, conversation, active learning, etc.)	157	Class Tasks (Concerning communication chances, Pair work, making friends, pronunciation, conversation, walking around the room, warm-up)	32	Good
	Classroom Management (Concerning writing lesson content on board, equal participation, name cards, fun lesson, class outline in Japanese)	18	Class Pacing (Concerning narrow focus, easy to understand, much practice time, easy to remember)	16	
	Teacher Language (Concerning use of voice, asking students questions, using English)	18	Classroom Management (Concerning fun, interesting, appropriate homework, teacher choice, students have to participate, variety)	16	

Nothing	10	Teacher Language (Concerning clear explanations, clear voice, good pronunciation)	8
Other (Good as now)	9	Nothing	6
Class Evaluation (Concerning attendance points, test hint)	3	Teacher Skills (Concerning teaching carefully)	1
Total	213	Total	79

Note: 220 “Stop, Start, Continue” surveys were administered, and responses received from 133 students.

The comments relate to the author’s own classes, so the data is not meaningful beyond that context for improvement. However, there is sufficient data to encourage critical self-reflection, to encourage a “movement towards a self-judgment couched in terms of ‘How well do I do it?’” (George & Cowan, 1999, p. 2). While caution should be taken not to over-interpret the comments, as they are perhaps not representative of the whole class, they have value as reflection on practice or “performance” (Schön, 1983, p. 61). A classroom teaching can become “repetitive and routine,” the opportunity to reflect may be missed, leading to teachers becoming “selectively inattentive to phenomena that do not fit” (p. 61) perceptions of their own knowledge.

Grebennikov and Shah (2013, p. 615) note that “anecdotal evidence suggests that many students write comments when they are either quite happy or quite frustrated about something.” While studies indicate that closed-ended survey items may not cover issues that are really important for students, educators should realize that if students choose to write positively or negatively about a learning experience in an open-ended comment, it must be of importance to them. However, the lack of response (primarily) on the SET is a cause of concern. It may be that students are, in fact, responding many times to the same questionnaire as there are over one hundred faculty, each teaching at least five classes, so the chances of students receiving the same form multiple times is high, allowing students to get “evaluated-out” and “fatigued” by unrealistic demands. Dunegan and Hrivnak, (2003, p. 284) refer to this as “cognitive overload at the end of a semester,” which occurs when evaluation is applied just before or even during end-of-semester testing. At this time, students are preoccupied and obviously concerned about looming test results, which may impact on their future.

How to Use Learner Data

The fuller SSC data can encourage reflection and lead to worthwhile significant changes in module design and delivery prior to the arrival of the next cohort. Each implementation of the survey in this study provided the author with data for reflection as part of the cyclical nature of evaluation. Teachers need to show and inform students of changes made due to constructive feedback and carry feedback over from one semester to the next, announcing at the beginning of a new course that they are trying a new approach based on comments of previous students. Failure to share feedback means the evaluation process has become a ritual that administrators and teachers engage in because it is expected and not because it is valued.

Sharing data is to be encouraged where comments have evolved and where students' needs seem to be changing as time passes concerning, for example, "class pacing," or for teacher/learner dissonance in comments on, for example, translation of text and language into the learners' mother tongue, an increased use of grammar (see Table 3), and the desire for some students to have "class tests." Some suggestions may challenge or compromise instructor beliefs about the tenets of "communicative" teaching, such as a learner wish for high emphasis on mechanical learning skills influenced by previous teaching styles, and it may be necessary to explain to learners about the teacher's views on practical learning environments.

Displaying data can also show where the students are in the class in relation to each other, show conflicting messages about, for example, level of difficulty and degree of homework, and can encourage learners to consider others' learning needs. Concerning task degree of difficulty, this may reveal the need for less emphasis on receptive, reading, and listening knowledge and more on productive knowledge through increased language output and task scaffolding. It may also reveal student "self-enhancement" factors where learners blame dissatisfaction or perceived learning failure on external, teaching-style factors to maintain consistent positive self-images. Data where students wished for bilingual texts, or for "clearer blackboard writing," may be examples for class discussion. Teachers need to tell students of changes made due to constructive feedback, or carry feedback over from one semester to the next and announce this at the beginning of a new course in which they are trying a new approach based on comments of previous students. Otherwise, the evaluation process becomes a ritual that administrators and teachers engage in because it is expected – not because it is valued.

Conclusion: Implications for Future Practice

It may be that having four lines in each category on the SSC was too daunting a task for some, while for others, it may have restricted their responses. As noted earlier, the author considered voluntary participation to be ethical, but instead of institutional research, making SSC part of the formal teaching and learning process could increase student responses (see Richardson, 2005). Conversely, though, students may feel that it is more of an institutional demand and less of a response to an individual teacher. Learners need proof of the link between evaluation and instructional improvement; otherwise, the process is not worth the trouble. Implicit in evaluations is the assumption that students fill in anonymous instruments honestly and (importantly) willingly.

We need to consider learner motivations to respond in official SETs, so students could be encouraged to keep a diary to promote a source of stable course evaluations. A "one-minute paper" (Svinicki, 2001) encourages students to give quality feedback, while students have little opportunity to learn the skill of giving feedback and never receive feedback on *their* feedback. Through this constant reflection, students will question what is beneficial and what has not helped in their own learning. They thus become more critical observers of their own learning. Auerbach (2001) adds that issues important to students will emerge more readily in an atmosphere where they feel a sense of ownership, and discussion with learners to sensitize them to evaluating their own learning and the conditions that contribute to learning are important in developing their ability to learn more effectively. Of crucial import is that the teacher can encourage comments through early feedback, which improves later feedback as students learn that their comments are taken on board and that feedback does make a difference.

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Discourse Markers and Interactional Questions: Making Conversation More Authentic

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Conversation is the central use of language in society, but conversation as a teaching target often carries with it connotations of triviality compared to such genres as academic English or other ESP classes. However, conversational language is nuanced and genre specific, although many of the conventions of conversation are not open to casual introspection by native speakers. This paper will examine two areas that are highly salient to naturalistic conversational language usage: (a) discourse markers such as *well, you know*, and *I mean*, and (b) interactional question strategies whereby questioners employ such strategies as embedding questions within ongoing commentary, asking question strings, and providing exemplar answers to signal that the questions are interactional in nature rather than purely transactional.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the traditional four skills of language learning, alongside reading, writing, and listening. However, the term "speaking" covers a wide variety of different language activities that are not equivalent. Making a speech of a presentation before an audience is a different activity from the kind of speaking that takes place in an oral proficiency interview (OPI), which is different again from the kind of speaking that takes place in a role play. All three of these genres – OPI, presentation, and role play – are canonical activities used in language teaching programs around the world to evaluate students' speaking skills in the target language. However, these activities present some problems when it comes to judging the speaking abilities of learners in a more general sense. Firstly, it is by no means clear that the ability to perform well in one of these genres will mean that the learner can perform well in any other speaking genre. In a parallel with the written language, the ability to write an academic term paper in the target language does not automatically mean that the learner will be able to write a piece of creative writing or compose a business email. Similarly, a competent delivery of a pre-written and extensively rehearsed oral presentation does not mean that the learner will be able to perform well in the more spontaneous environment of an interview. The second issue is the fact that interviews, presentations, and role-plays are actually quite rare activities outside the language classroom, making up a tiny fraction of the amount of spoken output that people engage in during the course of daily life. In actuality, the most common form of spoken output that people engage in every day is the genre of conversation, and the ability to engage in conversation in the target language is surely a common aim of all language learners. It is to the genre of conversation that I will now turn.

CONVERSATION

Despite the centrality of conversation in daily life, conversation as a genre presents certain problems for language learners and teachers. One main issue is the perception of conversation as a trivial, not wholly academic subject: "The spoken language has been downgraded and has come to be regarded as relatively inferior to written manifestations" (Carter, 2004, p. 26). Although conversation meets all of the criteria for treatment as a specialist field within the ESP paradigm alongside such other more prestigious fields as English for academic purposes (EAP; see Campbell-Larsen & Cunningham, 2009), conversation classes are more often to be seen as falling under the heading of General English. In addition, although such skills as academic writing are seen to require extensive instruction and practice, conversation has often been perceived of as a naturally emergent skill. Widdowson (1978, p. 51) highlights a common (but erroneous) view that once linguistic skills have been acquired in reasonable measure "communicative abilities will follow as a more or less automatic consequence." Despite the time that has elapsed since Widdowson wrote this, in my experience, the view persists that if a learner cannot participate in conversation in the target language, it is due to a shortfall of grammatical and lexical resources, to be remedied by further grammar and vocabulary exercises.

The genre of conversation is intuitively understood by all adults, but teasing out the various components that define the genre is a far from easy task. Cook, (1989, p. 51) gives the following list of characteristics of conversation.

- It is not primarily necessitated by a practical task.
- Any unequal power of participants is partially suspended.
- The number of participants is small.
- Turns are quite short.
- Talk is primarily for the participants and not for an outside audience.

The genre of conversation is further defined by Nunan (1987):

> Genuine conversation is characterized by the uneven distribution of information, the negotiation of meaning (through, for example, clarification requests and confirmation checks), topic nomination and negotiation by more than one speaker, and the right of interlocutors to decide whether to contribute to an interaction or not. In other words, in genuine communication, decisions about who says what to whom and when are up for grabs. (p. 137)

From these two definitions, it will become clear that many classroom speaking activities violate the genre norms of conversation, precluding actual conversation from occurring in the classroom. The first factor is the presence of a non-participating overhearer (the teacher) and the fact that this non-participant often selects group membership and the topic of talk. The teacher also signals onset and termination of the talk and occupies a privileged position vis-à-vis the speakers in that he or she has the right to intervene, judge, and correct the talk of the speakers. The first, second, and fifth of Cook's (1989) points above are therefore often overtly or tacitly negated in the typical classroom speaking environment. It is also the case that the rights of interlocutors to contribute or not as mentioned by Nunan (1987) are also negated in the typical classroom.

To overcome these obstacles to naturalistic spoken interactions happening in the classroom, learners must be habituated to a different interactional model. The teacher must provide a period of time for the learners to engage in speaking without any directions from the teacher as to topic, group membership, goals to be achieved, and so on. The learners must learn to form groups, initiate conversation, and negotiate topics, and all of the other participatory actions that underlie conversational interactions regardless of what language is being spoken. In the author's experience, this can take a prolonged period of time, and the rationale for the activity must be explained clearly from the outset. Once learners have accepted their responsibilities as interactants and equal participants, more focus can be given to some language points that characterize conversation. Two of these, discourse marking and question formation, will be outlined below.

Discourse Marking

Spontaneous spoken interaction is characterized by the frequent occurrence of certain words and phrases. These are words such as *well, you know, I mean, like*, and *actually*. They are often referred to as *discourse markers* (see Schiffrin, 1988) or *pragmatic markers* (see, for example, Erman, 2001) or *smallwords* (see Hasselgreen, 2005). The frequency of these words can hardly be overstated with McCarthy (2010) finding the common markers *you know, well*, and *oh* to be in the top 40 of words in corpus analysis of spoken English.

These markers do not contribute to the propositional content of any given utterance but rather serve to shape the interaction in various ways, such as using *well* to indicate non-straightforwardness in response to *wh*-questions (Schegloff & Lerner, 2009), using *actually* to show that expectations have been met or unmet (Swan, 1980), or prefacing turns with *oh* to indicate a change of state (Heritage, 1984). Despite the frequency of these markers in spontaneous conversation, in the author's experience, the speech of many learners is characterized by the complete absence of these markers. Seeing as they do not contribute to the propositional content of the utterance, it may be felt that their inclusion is optional, but Hasslgreen (2005) reports that the absence of discourse markers contributes to a perception of disfluency, whereas the inclusion of discourse markers creates an impression of fluency. However, teaching discourse markers is problematical as the most common discourse markers are extremely polysemous and thus difficult to explain clearly to learners. Nonetheless, inclusion of discourse markers is vital if learners are to progress to a more naturalistic language interactions.

TEACHING DISCOURSE MARKERS

The importance of discourse markers can be demonstrated to learners in several ways. One way that has been successful for the author is to compare marking in English and the learners L1, Japanese in this case. A student can be instructed to ask the teacher about last weekend's activities, the question being asked in Japanese. The teacher responds in Japanese with an account of a social event, the account being devoid of any Japanese markers. The student is then instructed to ask the same question, again in Japanese and the teacher repeats the previous answer, but this time using a variety of Japanese discourse markers such as *ma, eto*, and *yappari* (corresponding roughly to *well, I mean*, and *of course* in English.) When asked to indicate by a show of hands which version was preferable, the unmarked or marked version, the students almost unanimously vote for the marked version. The exercise can then be repeated, this time in English, with the question being answered devoid of markers and then answered with a full range of markers. The students readily appreciate the difference between the two versions.

In addition, video of spontaneous spoken interactions can be taken from such sources as YouTube that show discourse markers in use. Transcripts can be made of sections of talk, and students can identify the discourse markers and try to account for the meaning in each case. Videos from the students' L1 can also be shown that highlight the ubiquity of discourse markers in all languages. Furthermore, language learning videos, either in English or the students' L1, can be sourced. Many of these video dialogues are shorn of discourse markers, and this further highlights the unnaturalness of marker-free speaking.

Of course, raising awareness of discourse markers is only the first step. The goal is for learners to be able to actually incorporate the markers into their own spontaneous language use. This necessitates that the teacher closely monitor speaking activities, remind the learners constantly of the need to include markers, and intervene directly to promote marker usage. The Appendix shows a transcript of classroom interaction recorded and transcribed by the teacher. The target of the activity was to practice creating interactive questions that consist of a question, one or two exemplar answers, and a general extender such as *something like that* (see Overstreet, 1999, for an account of these expressions and their functions in English discourse). The sequence unfolds over several iterations of the same question and answer adjacency pair. In the first iteration of the pair (lines 01–07) the question is asked and answered, but the teacher immediately comments that Student 2 has forgotten to use discourse markers in her answer (Line 08: OK and you forgot the discourse marker *well*). The students then embark on a second iteration of the sequence (Lines 14–16), but this time the teacher interrupts the answer to point out (lines 17–25) that Student 2 has used the marker *I mean* in turn initial position and goes on to suggest that the markers *well* and *actually* are more appropriate as turn openers, marking, as they do, both non-straightforwardness in answering and an answer that runs counter to the expectations encoded in Student 1's question. The teacher also uses this space to comment that Student 1's use of *and so on* is more characteristic of the written form of the language and that the general extender *something like that* is more appropriate in this case (lines 24–25). The students then proceed to a third iteration of the sequence in lines 27–31, this time making full use of the appropriate markers.

By these means, learners can gradually become habituated to using discourse markers in their spontaneous speaking. The process takes time and the learners often progress through a stage of quite self-conscious marker usage, with the markers being uttered slowly, clearly, and marked off from the surrounding talk by pauses. This is in contrast to naturalistic marker usage, where the markers are spoken more quickly and quietly than the surrounding discourse. However, with persistence and repeated focus on marker usage, learners do, in the author's experience, proceed towards more naturalistic use of discourse markers.

Questions in Interaction

The ability to form questions in the target language is one of the core skills that learners acquire in their studies. However, focus is usually given to grammatical aspects of question formation as stated by Basturkmen (2002):

> Where questioning is concerned, instruction in the communicative classroom has typically entailed learners in extensive practice of question–response sequences, rather than offering them insights into how questioning is realized in interactional sequences, or making references to the strategies that underlie questioning, so they could become more aware of sophisticated language use. (p. 5)

A basic distinction that is often made in the grammar of questions in English is the difference between *wh*-questions and *yes/no* questions. However, from the point of view of pragmatics, a different binary distinction is relevant. Firstly, there are *transactional questions*, that is, questions whose primary function is to supply unknown information to the questioner. Questions of this type are such items as "What time does the movie start," "Have you already paid," "Where is the remote control," and so on.

The second type of questions are *interactional questions*, that is, questions whose function is more connected with phatic concerns, creating and maintaining social relations, proffering topics, and generally contributing to progressivity of the interaction. In language classrooms, it is transactional questions that are generally foregrounded. Canonical classroom activities such as gap-fill exercises and the like are mostly concerned with changing the epistemic status of the questioner. Similarly, the canonical textbook instruction for pair work activities is "Now ask your partner." The focus here is usually on deploying some piece of grammar or vocabulary correctly rather than launching a naturalistic conversation. Strings of questions might be grammatically themed, for example, on present perfect questions of the type "Have you ever...?" but topically unrelated, for example:

1. *Have you ever broken a bone?*
2. *Have you ever been abroad?*
3. *Have you ever lost your wallet?*

Such question lists do not necessarily lead to any kind of expansion, and students may proceed through the exercise in a minimal way, attending to the grammar forms as a measure of successful completion of the exercise.

In addition to the kinds of transactional questions found in many materials, there is also the basic classroom discourse structure outlined by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). This describes classroom interaction in terms of IRF, that is, initiation by the teacher, response by the student, and feedback by the teacher. The questions asked in this situation are not interactional nor are they transactional in that the person asking the question (the teacher) already knows the answer to the question, and the feedback may praise or criticize the answer on grounds of lexico-grammatical correctness rather than truth conditions of the proposition contained in the answer.

The results of these phenomena are that students may be habituated to seeing questions as solely transactional in nature and thus engage in question sequences that are more akin to interviews than conversations. The following transcript of spontaneous student interaction, recorded and transcribed by the author, illustrates this transactional type of speaking.

Excerpt 1

01. S1: What did you do weekend? Last weekend?
02. S2: Part-time job.
03. S1: Oh! What, what, what's job?
04. S2: Convenience store.
05. S1: Where? Where?
06. S2: Near my home.
07. S1: Seven Eleven?
08. S2: No, Circle K.

These kinds of exchanges are typical of spontaneous conversation attempts by lower-level speakers in the author's experience. One speaker asks a series of stand-alone questions; the other speaker provides a minimized response to each question with no attempt at elaboration. Although a short series of question-and-answer turns would not create too many problems, if the interaction continued along this trajectory for an extended number of turns, it would become stilted and forced.

Questioning in interaction is not always of the simple stand-alone question type followed by a minimal answer. As Gardener (2004) states,

> Sometimes, however, questions are sequentially more complex [...] it has been noted that some questions are prefaced by other actions, most usually other questions or statements. (p. 246)

The occurrence of question strings (often composed of a *wh*-question followed by a *yes/no* question) is observed in daily conversation. These question strings seem to serve as a general indicator that the question is seeking an expanded, not minimized, answer in order to promote progressivity in the interaction. The following examples are taken from The British National Corpus (Davies, n.d.).

Excerpt 2

(SP:PS01B): Well, what what do you think erm,

(SP:PS01G): (unclear)
(SP:PS01B): Are you worried about how much money it's gon na cost ya/

Excerpt 3

(SP:PS01U): And er (pause) I says to him, I says (pause) you know, wha-- what do you think? Do you think it's worth (pause) doing?

In addition to these question strings, questions are often supported by prefaratory commentary. Gardener (2004, p. 246) explains that "the most common reason for doing the prefaratory work is to provide background information that makes the question comprehensible." It may also be a further cue that the answer is expected to be expanded, not minimalized. Following on from these observations, the following typology of expanded question turns is proposed.

1. Question strings. For example,
   - How was the party? Did you have a good time?
   - What time did you get up? Was it late?
2. Questions with supporting commentary, the question either pre- or post-comment. For example,
   - I'm not really that interested in sport. I played tennis a bit at school, but that's about it. Were you in any clubs at school?
   - Have you ever eaten Malaysian food? There's a new Malaysian restaurant that's opened downtown, and I was wondering what it's like.
3. Questions with example answers. For example,
   - What would you do if you won the lottery? Like, buy a big house or a sports car or something?
   - What time do you usually get home? Six, seven, something like that?

By utilizing these kinds of question formation strategies, learners can add a more sophisticated speaking style to their repertoire and move away from the mechanical, interview-style question-and-answer sequences typified in Excerpt 1 and proceed to a more nuanced and interactive style of speaking that aids progressivity.

CONCLUSIONS

The ability to engage in conversation in the target language is one of the central goals of language learners, but conversation consists of more than simply making grammatically correct utterances in sequence. Conversationalists engage in a complex process of turn production to co-construct meaning, forming their utterances in response to what has just been said; signaling their attitudes and reactions to their own or other's utterances; or projecting their expectations about what will be said subsequently, maintaining a sense of open-ended progressivity. The two items highlighted here, discourse marking and question formation (and there are others, such as repair strategies and preferred responses to assessments), will, in the author's experience, help learners to construct turns that are more interactive and naturalistic than many typical classroom interactions.

Using markers and asking more complex questions will enable learners to start to engage in the most familiar, but in many ways most difficult, genre of speaking: conversation.

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APPENDIX

Transcript of Classroom Interaction

01.	S1:	What time do you usually go to bed on weekends?
02.		Eleven o'clock or twelve o'clock or something like
03.		that?
04.	S2:	About one one thirty something like that
05.	S1:	Oh great.
06.	S1:	[Laughs]
07.	S2:	[Laughs]
08.	T:	Ok a:nd (.) you forgot the discourse marker We::ll.
09.	S2:	Ah:: [Matta] ((Oh Again))
10.	T:	[Okay] one more time
		((Lines omitted))
11.	T:	Okay same question, this time use a discourse marker
12.		in your answer yeah?
13.		((Lines omitted))
14.	S1.	What time do you usually go to bed on weekends?
15.		Eleven o'clock twelve o'clock and so on?
16.	S2.	I mean [about]
17.		[Uh uh↓]We::ll Ha ha OK. One more time
18.		question. start with well yeah okay? So and because
19:		she gave you a time but it's not your time you can
20:		say well actually=
21:	S2:	=Oh
22.	T:	That's a good way to start it. She says eleven or
23.		twelve, you say well actually one. That's a way.
24.		Okay so kay one more time (.) and so on it's a more
25.		spoken style (.) something like that.
		((Lines omitted))
26.	T:	Okay right one more time. Question.
27.	S1	What time do you usually go to bed on weekends?
28.		Eleven o'clock, twelve o'clock something like that?
30.	S2:	Well actually about one or one thirty something like
31.		that.

Get Them to Ask You: Making Self-Introduction Lessons More Student-Centered

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The self-introduction lesson is a standard part of the assistant language teacher's experience in Japan, yet they often contain an unreasonably high amount of teacher talk with little to no chance for the students to participate. The author presents several activities he has developed or modified to reverse the ratio of student–teacher talk time so that a self-introduction can become far more student-centered. This serves three educational goals: The teacher can check the students' levels, get the students to practice speaking and listening (reading and writing are optional additions), and help to build a bond between the new teacher and his/her students.

INTRODUCTION

The self-introduction lesson is a common starting point for many EFL teachers. While it is a fun way for teachers and students to get to know each other, the self-introduction lesson is frequently very teacher-centered with reduced student talk time. This lesson plan reverses much of the teacher-student talk time ratio and still accomplishes the same educational goals stated above.

SUMMARY OF A SAMPLE LESSON

The lesson begins with the teacher writing his/her name on the board and encouraging students to repeat the name and greet the teacher. It is recommended that the teacher not reveal too much personal information at this point as the lesson will provide opportunities for this later.

This lesson plan operates on a simple concept: Show a flashcard to students, and let them say the lexical item in the card in front of the teacher. The students are given a chance to speak English and the teacher can conduct a basic check of the students' levels. The vocabulary presented is basic and should be previously known to the students, even small children.

The first set of flashcards consists of four countries' flags, including the flag of the teacher's home country. Flashcards should be presented individually with the teacher prompting students to identify the flag. If students make a mistake (i.e., using L1 names for countries), the teacher can correct the error through shadowing. The foreign teacher can involve the local teacher by handing the flashcard to them and have them repeat the item with the students repeating after the local teacher.

After the four flashcards are presented to the students, the foreign teacher should encourage students to guess which flag represents the teacher's home country. The students can decide in groups or as individuals. When a flag is selected, the teacher can then reveal the correct answer and praise the students who guessed correctly.

This process will be repeated with the other sets of flashcards (sports, hobbies, favorite foods, and favorite school subjects). Students will again be given the chance to guess the answers.

The second part of this lesson has the students telling the teacher about themselves. The same questions about favorite foods, hobbies, etc. can be asked in student-student pairings. At the junior high school level, students can be given a worksheet to do this. With elementary school students, this interview session will be conducted verbally and most likely in their L1. The students can then present their answers to the foreign teacher.

A third, optional, part has other student-centered activities that follow the above pattern of the students asking the teacher questions and guessing the answers in a group.

The above activities create a self-introduction lesson that decreases teacher talk time, increases student output, and gives students a sense of control as they make choices and debate with each other as teachers and students get to know each other.

RATIONALE

The teacher should not burden the students with too many lexical items during this lesson. Not only will it place unwanted pressure on the students, it can also create a negative first impression of the teacher. The self-introduction lesson should contain four items in four or five different categories. The four items are all related and belong to the same topical category (countries, sports, food, etc.). Similar to Sweller's (1994) observation that proper instructional design can reduce learner difficulty, this lesson breaks down the cognitive demands placed on the students into manageable (and fun) bits.

As the teacher presents the four items to the students, the students are given a chance to vote on which item corresponds to the teacher's personal information (country of origin, favorite food, etc.). Within a narrow range of ideas, the students can consult with classmates and make a group decision. Although much of this group discussion will be primarily in the students' L1 (particularly with younger/newer learners), the principles of cooperative learning as described by Tuan (2010) still apply here. Cooperative learning encourages both individual accountability and positive interdependence.

The students now have an opportunity to exert agency and make decisions that increase their understanding of an unknown (their teacher). As Harmer (2007) explains, increased student agency increases motivation and furthers their curious drive to learn more about the new item or situation. With further rounds of flashcards being shown, the students can continue to consult with their peers and make guesses about the teacher’s personal information.

The second part of the first section has the students creating sentences and questions for the teacher (orally, for elementary students; and written, for junior high students and above). The students are now given more creative control over the learning process as they can create questions to ask to the teacher. The grammar taught in the *New Crown* textbook series (Takahashi, Hardy, Negishi, Hedai, & Mikami, 2006) is used in the partial questions and covers all three years of junior high school, and so some of the grammatical structures may be unfamiliar to first-year students. While some Japanese teachers have expressed concern about this, it has been this author’s experience that many students could understand the grammar independently or with a quick L1 translation by the Japanese teacher.

In the second section, the teacher sets up the activity and then pulls out, creating a completely student-dominated environment. The students, working in groups, can write statements about themselves with little to no teacher support. The teacher can then check students’ levels and conclude the lesson by having the students reveal their personal information, usually in an interview or game format.

These three steps follow the present-practice-produce (PPP) method, as described by Richards and Rogers (2014), with the teacher giving information, letting students “play” with it, and then releasing the students to create on their own. Another progression in this self-introduction lesson is that it begins with the students talking about the teacher and ends with the students teaching the teacher about themselves, thus opening up both parties to a year-long learning relationship.

THE AUTHOR

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Lessons Learned in the Content-Based Classroom: Using Authentic Text to Maximize Learner Development

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Students love great content; instructors love to teach it. Few would deny the inherent appeal of authentic content-based courses in fields such as film, literature, philosophy, or political science. For EFL professionals, the challenge in creating a strong content-based class lies in not only selecting the right kind of authentic materials, but in packaging and organizing them in such a way as to maximize the skill development of EFL learners. This paper overviews the key issues in the teaching of authentic materials that have been uncovered in the research literature and provides a case study of one such course in the College English Program at Seoul National University.

INTRODUCTION

Within the field of English as a foreign language (EFL), the notion of using authentic content as the core platform for learner development has a certain romantic appeal for both students and instructors. If we can just find the right kinds of native-level materials, and teach them in the right way, students will then use their innate language learning ability to almost autonomously develop on their own. Rationally, of course, most of us would reject the premise of authentic content as some kind of magic bullet, but ultimately it's not easy to shake off its underlying allure, and with good reason. Research has demonstrated that most students prefer authentic content to dry, rote, form-focused EFL textbooks (Lee, 1995). Students naturally take a certain pride in struggling with and understanding native-level content, which can potentially lead to a higher level of internal motivation both within and outside the classroom, one of the key extralinguistic aims of great texts (Berardo, 2006). Moreover, authentic content represents the target language itself, not some derivative version of it. While some researchers argue that simplified forms of native-level texts can be of great use in the classroom (Guariento & Morley, 2001), students who venture into the "real" world of native-level English speakers will encounter a system that is almost maddeningly complex, difficult, and full of contradictions that in no way reflect the previously taught forms from school – or the forms are buried so deeply that they are rendered virtually inscrutable and therefore, in a sense, meaningless.

What are we to do about all of this? For the past several years, I have struggled with these issues as an instructor in the College English Program (CEP) at Seoul National University (SNU) in Seoul, Korea. Like any other EAP (English for academic purposes) program, the CEP is divided between beginning-, intermediate-, and advanced-level courses. The beginning and intermediate levels tend to use form-focused textbooks as their platform, but almost all of the advanced-level courses are content-based; their curriculum is almost entirely instructor-designed for these courses and utilizes native-level sources. For reasons that are somewhat mysterious to me, I am almost compulsively drawn toward these advanced-level courses; they have been the primary focus of my work at SNU and probably always will be. I have made many mistakes in both the design and implementation of these courses – too many to enumerate in their entirety here, quite frankly – but little by little, course by course, semester by semester, I've learned some very important lessons along the way. I imagine I'll never stop learning them.

In this paper, I will seek to demonstrate how authentic content can be mined so as to maximize learner development. I will begin by overviewing some of the key findings uncovered by previous researchers in this area and will then use a course I've taught called "Advanced English: Prose" as a way of exemplifying the background theory. I will then conclude with some final lessons that I have realized from my experience with content-based learning.

Authentic Content: Background, Issues, and Key Aims

In spite of the debate that surrounds his theories to this day, the work of Krashen (1982) remains seminal amongst EFL professionals. A number of his hypotheses have direct applications to modern-day EAP courses and have laid a clear foundation for content-based instruction. His distinction between language *learning* and language *acquisition*, for example, has direct parallels with CLT (communicative language teaching), and can also be used to justify the emphasis of content over rules-based (or form-based) language instruction. Also crucial is the Input Hypothesis, which posits that the best and most natural method for moving one's interlanguage (or "*i*") to the next stage (or "*i*+1") is "that the acquirer understand input that contains *i* + 1, where 'understand' means that the acquirer is focused on the meaning and not the form of the message" (p. 21). As we shall see, the prioritization of meaning over form, as well as the importance of selecting authentic content that is just beyond a student's current capabilities (i.e., *i*+1) have represented two major themes in the literature for the past 30 years.

In addition to the theoretical underpinnings, though, it's not difficult to appreciate the basic appeal of authentic content. Day (2004) wrote, "If authentic texts are seen as natural, interesting, relevant, and pedagogically sound, simplified texts are generally considered to be just the opposite: stilted, unnatural, unreal, bland, and a pedagogic dead-end" (p. 106). Berardo (2006) echoed this sentiment when he stated, "The language in non-authentic texts is artificial and unvaried, concentrating on something that has to be taught," resulting in content that is repetitively structured to emphasize a certain grammatical form (p. 62). Clarke (1989) summarized the issue as follows: "There should be [...] a shift of focus, away from the forms of the language and towards its meaning potential, a shift from linguistic competence to communicative competence" (p. 84).

Breen (1985) posed three basic questions to further clarify the content-based approach: "What is an authentic text? For whom is it authentic? And, for what authentic purpose?" (p. 66). Like some of the best questions, Breen's take time and consideration to answer sufficiently. Before I attempt to do so, though, I'd like to begin by stating that I am using the word "text" in a fairly rudimentary manner: it refers to the reading content of a classroom. Broader conceptions of text are possible, of course – we could, for example, define "text" to include any content that is used to assist student development, but that is beyond the scope of this paper. With that in mind, we might consider Lee's (1995) definition of authentic text to answer Breen's first question: "A text is usually regarded as textually authentic if it is not written for teaching purposes, but for a real-life communicative purpose, where the writer has a certain message to pass on to the reader" (p. 324). In other words, according to Lee and many other researchers, a text can only be authentic if its original intention was to serve as a vehicle for meaning, not to teach something about the rules of the language itself. In countries such as the United States or Canada, this idea has been widely implemented in the high school system, where non-native English speakers have accelerated their learning curve by studying subjects in mathematics, social studies, and science through the vehicle of native-level English texts (Oxford, 1993). "Tertiary CB-ESL offers a useful way to link the various language skills (reading, speaking, etc.) in meaningful communication. It moves away from the study of a language as merely a set of structures or symbols, and toward the acquisition of communicative skills related to content," writes Oxford (p. 90). This kind of philosophical approach has been mirrored very closely in the EFL environment as well. In countries such as South Korea and China, for example, there has been a growing interest in international high schools that focus on English-language content-based instruction over the past 10 years, and this trend will most likely continue in the future.

The answer to Breen's (1985) second question ("For whom is it authentic?") is potentially more problematic. To the non-native speaker, an "authentic" text might not appear to be authentic at all. Lee writes that "authentic materials can appear 'unauthentic' to learners, just as unauthentic materials can appear 'authentic'" (p. 323). There are a variety of possible reasons for this. One might be that the writing itself might be incomprehensible for the learner, that is, well beyond the "*i*+1" realm. Another reason might be a cultural gap between the original text and the background of the learner. In this case, the text might be well within the learner's comprehension level, but so culturally specific that the message doesn't carry the conceptual weight that it was originally intended to deliver. "Indeed, if we are aware of the learners' frames of reference, then considerations of a text's authenticity become a relatively misty matter," writes Breen (p. 62). To demystify the process, the learner's background is obviously of crucial importance during the text-selection phase.

Ultimately, though, the authentic material needs to serve a greater aim: the development of the learner. This is where instructors often encounter the most serious pitfalls in content-based course design and implementation. The first is the selection of the text itself. The writing needs to not only contain strong ideas and insights for the student to grapple with, it also needs to manifest strong rhetorical clarity and technique. Authenticity does not necessarily equate to quality, and as Day and Bamford (1998) write, "can be poorly written, uninteresting, hard to read, and can lack normal text features such as redundancy and cohesion" (p. 57). Moreover, the text needs to be both suitable and exploitable (Nuttall, 1996). A text is suitable for students if it is interesting and has the potential to serve their needs. A text is exploitable if it has strong rhetorical features that can be used to develop students' language skills. Breen (1985) writes that "a relative distinction can be made between texts which represent rich examples of the target language in use and those texts that may serve as the *means* through which learners can gradually uncover the conventions that underlie the use of the target language" (p. 63). Breen's point should not be overlooked. Authentic materials have enormous potential to teach the structure and form of the target language; they are not simply a source of meaning, as has been previously suggested. Next, the text needs to have the potential for independent and original interpretations. Breen writes that teachers need to consider "how the learner – as learner – may go about interpreting any text in his or her own particular way" (p. 63). This is sometimes a challenging proposition. Many students have wonderful and original insights in response to a given text but don't yet have the language skills to quite encapsulate their thoughts. Somehow, the text needs to serve as a vehicle for students to develop their own unique and authentic voice within the confines of the target language. Roberts and Cooke (2009) address this issue when they write, "Some critics argue that the insistence in CLT on authentic materials can produce curricula that are too narrowly functionalist and that do not provide affordances for learners to be themselves in the new language" (p. 622). Students need the chance to breathe in the target language, so to speak, and to develop their "self-expression and authentic voice" (p. 622). Finally, the instructor needs to create a clear relationship between the course texts and the course tasks. The tasks need to represent some kind of real-world function in the social, professional, or academic world, depending on the scope of the course. As Clarke writes, "A central procedure in the attempt to achieve learner authentication of task has been the principle of engaging the learner's interest by relating the task to his own life and by providing a purpose for undertaking the activity" (p. 83). Or, as Lee posits, "The task content should be related to the authentic materials selected, so that learners can use them as a springboard for the task." The tasks, and how students both express and complete them, thus represent the ultimate "purpose" that Breen alluded to in his third question.

Content-Based Course at SNU

SNU offers its students a wide range of advanced content-based courses, including film, literature, drama, culture and society, and prose. Naturally, the course content and tasks tend to be EAP in their focus. As part of the syllabus design, instructors are expected to fulfill certain guidelines for these courses (e.g., students are expected to read a certain number of pages for text-based courses such as literature or prose, and are expected to write a certain number of words), but for the most part, instructors have a great deal of choice and agency in the design process. Thus far, I have taught film, literature, culture and society, and prose. Finding the best and most appropriate method for teaching each of these courses has, to be honest, been an experimental process. I've learned the importance of creating clear, straightforward guidelines for students and properly scaffolding the course content. Early in the process, I realized on a number of occasions that I had essentially hung my students out to dry with certain course tasks. On some conscious or unconscious level, I believe that I essentially thought to myself, "Oh, they're smart. They'll just kind of figure it out," perhaps taking Krashen's (1982) ideas about input theory a bit too far. So I floundered a bit in the beginning. Little by little, though, I evolved, which I think has had more to do with my students than anything else. In the CLT environment, students are almost the best source of teaching teachers how to teach.

CASE STUDY – ADVANCED ENGLISH: PROSE

In order to limit the scope of my analysis, I am going to focus on one specific course called "Advanced English: Prose" (which emphasizes nonfiction reading and writing) as a case study for the ideas that I have discussed so far. I have taught this course every semester I've been at SNU since first joining the CEP in 2013. I think this is because prose itself is so seminal in the world we live in; our entire worlds are filled and shaped by prose; it is impossible to avoid it. The vast majority of human communication takes the form of prose, but it is implemented with enormous variation – in law, in academia, in journalism, in the creative arts. If you're going to study language, you really have no choice but to study prose. And so, like a bad cold, I just can't seem to shake this course.

Course Content

Choosing a suitable text, or texts, is always a challenge for any instructor. We have to balance our passion for certain authors, books, or essays with the practical realities of our students' backgrounds, skills, and expectations. For my course, I ultimately settled on using *The Norton Reader: An Anthology of Nonfiction* (Brereton, Bizup, Fernald, Goldthwaite, & Peterson, 2012). *Norton* is, of course, widely used in university programs of English-speaking countries around the world. It is, in a sense, battle-tested and has strong validity and acceptance in academia. Moreover, it's native-level, and all of its essays are intended to deliver a certain message or range of ideas rather than teach students something about the form and structure of the English language itself. As a single package of prose, it fulfills virtually every requirement for authentic content that I have previously outlined.

Course Structure

Every text needs to be exploited to maximize its potential, and it has taken time for me to crack the code of the *Norton Reader*. I didn't have to choose *Norton*, of course. I could have pulled my content from a mishmash of sources and packaged it into my own course reader, but this poses its own challenges: copyright issues and time constraints being first and foremost. So *Norton* it is, and will continue to be.

As a caveat, though, one of the main disadvantages of an anthology like *Norton* is that it has far too much content for students to possibly read for a semester-length class, so selecting the right kinds of essays is essential. *Norton* is roughly divided between expository and narrative nonfiction essays. Because of this, I have roughly divided my course in the same manner. The first half of the semester focuses on expository writing, and the second half focuses on narrative writing. Within expository writing, *Norton* is particularly strong in moral philosophy as well as the philosophy of science. As a result, students read essays about a range of moral issues, including the ethics of torture, philanthropy, hate speech, and governance, as well as texts that delineate the scientific process. Like many EAP programs, my students come from a wide range of academic disciplines and therefore have an equally wide range of interests; the range of essay topics is meant to account for the anticipated range of student backgrounds and interests. Still, the topics are all very modern and immediately accessible for the vast majority of students. Jonathan Rauch's (2012/1995) "In Defense of Prejudice," for example, argues that hate speech should be protected and allowed as a form of free speech, and criticizes university safe spaces as a supporting example. This kind of topic transcends cultural boundaries; although written by an American and for a Western audience, the topic is one that is instantly recognizable by students in Asia and has been part of the public discourse for quite some time. Every student, regardless of background, can offer some kind of opinion about a topic like this; there is present some kind of pre-existing schema as a reference point.

In my early days of teaching this course, I included Martin Luther King, Jr.'s (2012/1963) "Letter from Birmingham Jail" in the syllabus, not fully realizing how much American history would be needed to fully understand the text. It finally dawned on me that between three and four weeks of background instruction was required to appropriately scaffold this kind of text, or close to 25% of a full semester. This was simply not a viable option. "Letter from Birmingham Jail" is a brilliant piece of prose and moral philosophy, but including it in my syllabus would have meant spending a great deal of class time on background information at the cost of analyzing the rhetorical technique and style of prose itself. Essentially, it would have changed the fundamental nature of the class. Hence, it would not have served the greater aims of my students.

To conclude the section on course structure, the second half of the semester focuses on nonfiction narrative writing. *Norton* has a number of strong nonfiction essays that are considered canonical (such as George Orwell's, 2012/1936, "Shooting an Elephant") and which I have made a point of including, but I've also tried to make up for some of *Norton's* weaknesses by supplementing it with other texts. Travel writing, for example, is always a favorite of students, and everyone who takes the course has some kind of travel story to share as a way of utilizing pre-existing schemas, but this is one area where *Norton* is not particularly strong. To fill in the gap, I've brought in an excerpt from Bill Bryson's (1998) *A Walk in the Woods*, and I've brought in several other narrative excerpts and essays as well. All of the texts have worked quite well, not just for the stories themselves but also as the subjects of rhetorical analysis, which leads to the ultimate goals of the course. Ultimately, my students are expected to both identify and utilize the techniques that are studied in class.

Course Tasks

For EAP courses, "real world" tasks typically entail analytical writing or oral assignments, and I've tried to keep this in mind with my syllabus design. Furthermore, the tasks should naturally arise from the content, and the course should be designed so that students know precisely how to achieve the required outcomes.

Reading and writing obviously go hand in hand, so most of the course tasks are writing based. Students are required to write one expository essay and one narrative essay during the semester. The expository essay is a critical analysis of one of the essays from the first half of the semester. It is persuasive in nature and should include a thesis statement, supporting examples, and outside research. The writing background of my students probably represents the greatest variation in skill level. Some students enter my course with a strong knowledge of essay fundamentals, while others have not done much writing beyond basic paragraph or report writing. I've learned along the way that I don't need to keep throwing new reading at the students every class, that taking time away from reading to reflect on the fundamentals will actually yield much greater long-term benefits. One of the challenges of using authentic reading for non-native speakers is that in the real world, writers rarely follow the formulas and structures that are taught in school – even for analytical essays. At first glance, some of the expository essays in my class appear to be almost stream of consciousness in form; it takes time, patience, and clarity to find the structure. For non-native English speakers, though, using a simple top-down formula to structure an essay can not only be of great assistance, it can also be liberating. By following the basic pattern of a five-paragraph essay, students can spend the majority of their cognitive resources to developing their core premise and finding their voice – key aims of the expository writing assignment. Over time, I've found that returning to the basics has resulted in a notably higher level of performance.

I do like to give students a creative outlet for the end of the semester, though, which is the purpose of assigning the narrative essay. Whereas the expository essay is meant to critique one of the authors from class, the narrative essay is meant to be completely original – a world unto itself. Still, the course is structured so that the task naturally arises out of the content. All of the content is meant to teach lessons in style and technique – lessons that can hopefully be applied to students' own original stories. In general, I've found that students have enjoyed the narrative writing process very much and have needed much less guidance from me; they already know themselves and their stories, and they've often surprised themselves with what they find in their voice as well.

From Input to Output

A key challenge of a content-based course like Advanced English: Prose is in how to utilize the course texts so that students can not only understand the central ideas and identify rhetorical techniques, but also use them themselves. I have therefore made it a priority to use the texts as a way of highlighting rhetorical forms that are common to academic writing and to expect students to use them themselves.

I'll start with the thesis statement as an example – the crucial engine that guides any well-written paper. A good thesis statement should be strong in both content and form. It should not only express the central argument of the paper but embed within itself clear signals that it is, in fact, the thesis statement and not something else. Consider this statement by Stephen Jay Gould (2012/1980) from "Darwin's Middle Road":

> Charles Darwin, as the principal saint of evolutionary biology, has [...] been presented both as an inductivist and as a primary example of eurekaism. I will attempt to show that these interpretations are equally inadequate, and that recent scholarship on Darwin's own odyssey towards the theory of natural selection supports an intermediate position. (p. 559)

We can see here many features of a strong thesis statement. Gould clearly lays out two possible sides to the debate that he is presenting, then uses the expression "I will attempt to show" to signal that his thesis is forthcoming. Finally, he makes his own claim in a straightforward and highly transparent manner. As one other example, consider Michael Levin's (2012/1982) thesis from "The Case for Torture":

> It is generally assumed that torture is impermissible, a throwback to a more brutal age. Enlightened societies reject it outright, and regimes suspected of using it risk the wrath of the United States. I believe this attitude is unwise. There are situations in which torture is not merely permissible but morally mandatory." (p. 359)

In this case, we can see Levin utilizing a rhetorical concession ("It is generally assumed") to acknowledge the opposing side to his argument; he then clearly signals and clarifies his central claim for the reader. Students should be expected to not only identify but also utilize techniques and signals like these in their own expository writing.

Texts are almost infinitely exploitable; they represent a rich source of language data that can be used as the basis for students to apply toward their own writing. Little by little, page by page, learners can work within the content and structure of the texts to find their own authentic voice.

CONCLUSIONS

Content-based learning is not a purely functionalist approach toward language teaching. In great texts, content and form exist as a single entity: the content is the form, and the form the content. Sometimes, the lessons aren't always learned easily and immediately. As Breen (1985) writes, "The guiding criterion [of content-based instruction ...] is the provision of any means which will enable the learner to *eventually* interpret texts in ways that are likely to be shared with fluent users of the language" (p. 63). To teach and utilize authentic content in the EFL environment is to engage in the long game. By struggling with the content, students do, in fact, manage to find their way over time and learn to teach themselves. It's rare to see immediate progress in students as is typically seen in form-focused courses, and in some ways, this kind of approach is a leap of faith. I'm glad that I've taken it.

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Integrating Online Collaborative Writing and Communication in EFL: Interaction, Feedback, and Group-Based Learning

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Since the turn of the 21st century, there has been a gradual shift away from lone computer use and a convergence towards web-based collaboration. In response to the popularity of social networking platforms, high-tech developers have come to the realization that user preferences favor the human inclination of socialization as opposed to seclusion. As a result, platforms now often include a web-based collaborative option. These additions to the repertoire of educational tools have caught the interest of scholars in search for effective ways to enhance learning. Although collaborative learning is an age-old concept that has been deliberated in much detail (e.g., Vygotsky, 1934/1987), its application with web-based tools introduces a new environment with incalculable possibilities. In this study, an online collaborative project encompassing writing and communication was undertaken by Japanese university EFL learners. The element of peer feedback and assessment was integrated into the project as well.

INTRODUCTION

Collaborative web-based tools expand educational opportunities beyond the classroom for peer-to-peer interactive learning. In the past, writing assignments essentially involved the element of seclusion with a writer working in isolation. Moffett (1968) described the ideal learning environment for writing as a place isolated from the discourse of others. Since then, collaborative writing has been found advantageous for students by offering opportunities to participate in the negotiation of meaning, sharing resources, and resolving issues throughout the writing process (McAllister, 2005). Attempts to introduce writing activities that involve collaborative input have often been hampered by logistical barriers. For example, the physical restrictions of turn-taking while writing a shared document are conceivably demanding, especially in instances when multiple parties partake in its creation. In this sense, much has remained the same with collaborative written input, even though the evolution of writing tools have improved astronomically since the days of pulp to desktop computing. Most recently, the addition of simultaneous online editing is groundbreaking in terms of expanding the possibilities of collaboration. Embedded features in online platforms that allow interactive communication and the simultaneous creation of documents add a new dimension. Accessibility to web-based tools provides students with the means to work efficiently on group projects despite geographic or logistical barriers.

As collaborative writing projects have increasingly become the focal point of discussion (e.g., Arnold, Ducate, & Kost, 2009; Elola & Oskoz, 2010; Miyazoe & Anderson, 2010), the need to further explore potential benefits for students in different environments arises. This study will explore the use of online communication and collaboration writing among Japanese EFL university students. A comparison of individual and collaborative English writing output along with feedback from participants may provide some insight into potential advantages and possible pitfalls in the utilization of these applications.

RESEARCH ON COLLABORATIVE WRITING

Ede and Lunsford (1990) define collaborative writing as consisting of three distinct features: (a) substantive interaction through all stages of the writing process, (b) shared decision-making and responsibility for the written product, and (c) the creation of a written document. Additionally, the framework of the writing process in its drafting and stages of revision adds the element of negotiation. Participants interact throughout this process and contribute to planning, generating ideas, and deciding on aspects such as vocabulary, text structure, editing, and so forth.

Researchers exploring collaborative writing have found a variety of beneficial aspects for learners. For instance, Villamil and De Guerrero (1996) state that collaborative writing tasks require students to utilize social skill sets such as accountability, cooperation, and community. Likewise, Smith and MacGregor (2009) mention social skill utilization in areas involving decision-making and conflict management. Swain (2000) describes collaborative dialogue as a beneficial element that takes place when speakers are engaged in problem-solving while carrying out writing tasks. This description was soon updated by Swain (2006) with the more inclusive term of "languaging," defined as a broader scope of communication to essentially share thoughts, knowledge, and ideas in the course of completing complex tasks. In terms of the quality of feedback from such communicative interaction, a study conducted by Nelson and Murphy (1993) on low-intermediate ESL learners revealed that peer assessment responses were similar to those of trained raters in identifying organizational, development, and topic sentence problems. As for the end result of the collaborative writing process, Mulligan and Garofalo (2011) describe student essays as being more carefully organized, richer in content, and containing fewer basic errors than those written independently. Similar results were found in an investigation conducted by Storch (2005) of advanced ESL learners. In her study, essays written collaboratively received higher ratings and generally had a higher level of grammatical accuracy than those done in isolation. Shehadeh (2011) concurs with Storch in his description of collaboratively written works as being superior in content, organization, and vocabulary compared to those written individually. In a study examining a general learning environment integrating Google Suite applications, Lin and Jou (2013) found enhanced development of critical thinking skills among participants.

Although much research highlights positive aspects of collaborative writing, several scholars have mentioned areas of concern. Ferris and Hedgcock (2014) state that peers may mistakenly provide incorrect feedback. Zhang (1995) found that students tend to have a distrust for the peer feedback that they receive and prefer teacher feedback instead. In a study conducted by Mendonca and Johnson (1994), it was revealed that only a small portion of suggestions by peers were actually included in the final written draft. Responses from an investigation conducted by Coyle (2007) indicate that some students felt uncomfortable in changing the written work of other students. Murau (1993) found that although participants in her study were positive about the helpfulness of peer feedback received, many felt anxious, embarrassed, and uncomfortable in showing their work to others. As for the quality of feedback, findings from a study conducted by Connor and Asenavage (1994) describe peer input as being mostly surface-level responses. In a study comparing self- and peer revisions, Suzuki (2008) revealed that despite more episodes of negotiation among peers, the occurrence of actual text changes was twice as high with students who were writing independently. Adding to these concerns, the element of social interaction seems to play a role. According to Nelson and Murphy (1993), learners who were perceived as having interacted collaboratively were more likely to have their comments utilized in the written draft than those who were perceived as being less sociable. Finally, the integration of modern technologies does not necessarily equate a positive impact in the educational environment. In fact, Zheng and Yano (2007) contend that technology often results in complications for learners and teachers alike.

Recommendations for Collaborative Writing

The aforementioned studies present a landscape with mixed results. Inconsistency in findings may be due to a variety of factors such as differences in research design and participants in the study. Nevertheless, any insight received foretells possible obstacles and directs us to a more desirable path. Cote (2006) recommends a gradual introduction to the collaborative writing process with revising sample essays as a class activity, providing models of written work, and having reflective discussions on writing and revision. When initiating the collaborative writing activity, Cote advises teachers to provide clear guidelines and an editing checklist, and to closely monitor the entire writing process. In their study of web-based collaborative writing, Bikowski and Vithanage (2016) emphasize that teachers should be supportive throughout the collaborative writing process and help students realize the long-term benefits of such tasks. In addition, they recommend that teachers provide students with a clear rationale from the beginning, allow the freedom to choose topics, allot time for reflection about the collaborative process following completion of the activity, and identify personality types to ensure cohesion in groups. Likewise, Storch (2004) expresses concern about the pairing of individuals in groups. She describes four characteristics in interactional collaborative group relationships: collaborative, dominant-dominant, dominant-passive, and expert-novice. Pairs with collaborative and expert-novice characteristics tend to negotiate collectively and utilize shared knowledge. Pairs exhibiting dominant-dominant and dominant-passive forms of behavior often fail to transfer shared knowledge with one another. Storch advises that careful monitoring is necessary at the early stages of collaborative writing projects, and teachers should change student pairs if dominant-dominant and dominant-passive characteristics are observed in behavior. As for the frequency of changing groups, McAllister (2005) advises that permanent groups may offer more benefits for learners. After observing collaborative student writing and interaction in both permanent and changing groups, she concluded that students in permanent groups tended to offer each other more detailed feedback as time progressed while those in changing groups tended to make superficial comments to each other.

METHOD

Participants and Data

Utilizing a variety of web-based tools with a primary focus on Google Docs, an intercollegiate collaborative writing project was undertaken in two EFL classes at two Japanese universities: Meio University and the University of the Ryukyus. In total, 51 students took part in the two-month project. The students were enrolled in EFL classes taught by two instructors: one from each university participating in this study.

Prior to the collaborative online writing assignment, individually written samples were acquired from students to assess proficiency levels and to provide a means of comparison for the study. Students were also gradually introduced to an array of web 2.0 tools; specifically, the Google Suite of applications.

Before being assigned to groups, student English proficiency levels were assessed from scores on the GTEC (Global Test of English Communication) exam and an essay assignment. Students were then ranked accordingly – from intermediate to advanced levels. Based on suggestions on the optimal number of participants per group (e.g., Dobao, 2012; Pfaff & Huddlestone, 2003), teams of four students were assigned to work collaboratively on writing assignments. Placement in groups was a random selection requiring two advanced-level students and two intermediate-level students to be in each group. As an intercollegiate project between two public universities, groups were evenly divided with two students from each university. Students enrolled in the same classes were not assigned in the same group whenever possible.

Instruments

One of the primary web-based tools utilized in the collaborative project was the Google Docs writing application. The Google Docs platform allows multiple users to work simultaneously on documents via an online environment. Document viewing, creation, and editing may occur in real time from a multitude of users from virtually any location. Online storage and sharing options provide users with access to documents at any time. Embedded chat and comment tools add optional instantaneous or delayed communications between collaborators. Finally, tools utilized to collect data included questionnaires, interviews, peer feedback scores, chat logs, and writing samples.

Procedures

Communication channels consisted of Google Communities, Gmail, and integrated chat and comment tools in Google Docs. As noted by Storch (2005), it is important to have students adequately prepared to successfully engage in collaborative writing beforehand. In preparation, the participants were given several weeks of instruction and a variety of web-based assignments that required the use of various Google Suite applications. These assignments consisted of pair and group collaborative tasks. This provided students with essential training and practice in using an enclave of web-based tools. Several weeks later, the collaborative English writing project was initiated. The first writing assignment consisted of individual descriptions of "Interesting Local Places" in approximately 200 words. The writing assignment helped identify language proficiency levels for group placement. Moreover, the assignment would later provide insight into differences between individual and collaborative output.

All writing assignments were "shared" with open access to group members and class instructors. The instructors took precautions to avoid potential problems in group member alignment in terms of interactional collaborative group relationships (Storch, 2004). Finally, a system of color coding was utilized to identify the written contributions of each participant.

For the collaborative writing assignment, the topic "Ways of Improving Tourism in Okinawa" encouraged interest and discussion among the participants. The initial individual writing assignment, "Interesting Local Places," was a precursor to the collaborative topic and provided students with some content and opportunities for reflection. In the collaborative assignment, students were instructed to create a written document of approximately 600 words. They were given a period of two weeks to complete the assignment.

A questionnaire was administered to participants at the conclusion of the writing project. The items in the questionnaire consisted of seventeen 6-point Likert-scale statements that inquired about perspectives relating to individual and collaborative writing. Additionally, statements concerning the use of online writing and communication tools were also included in the survey. Interviews were conducted on a random selection of participants and limited to a set of open-ended questions. Among several measurements, peer feedback scores included the amount and quality of contributions from each of the members. Based on these results, groups were then classified as being either fully or partially collaborative in terms of effort and contribution among their members. In terms of communicative discourse, chat logs were examined to gain an overall determination of the extent of interaction among members within each group. As previously mentioned, individual writing samples were available from each of the participants as well as from the collectively created essays. Two EFL instructors independently scored all writing assignments on a 5-point scale rubric that assessed content, organization, grammar, and mechanics. The combined average from the raters served as the final written score.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An assessment of the collaborative writing assignments revealed slight improvements in all areas evaluated: content, organization, grammar, and mechanics. In comparison with the individual writing assignments, the collaborative writings displayed higher accuracy in terms of grammar and mechanics while adding improved clarity in written descriptions (see Table 1).

TABLE 1. Student Scores Individually and by Group

Item	Individual		Group	
	Mean	*SD**	Mean	*SD**
Content	3.90	0.29	4.03	0.18
Organization	3.76	0.51	4.02	0.33
Grammar	3.88	0.27	4.07	0.16
Mechanics	3.62	0.50	3.83	0.15

Note. Scores are on a five-point scale. * *SD* = standard deviation

It should be noted that improvements "overall" were in reference to the majority of participants. There were some exceptions. For instance, ratings from two groups were quite dissimilar from others in terms of observed improvements. Assessments of individual writing assignments were rated higher for most group members in those two particular groups. Further inquiry with interviews, peer feedback scores, and chat logs revealed that collaborative interaction among those groups was either minimal or non-existent. Aspects in relation to English proficiency, personalities, and possibly unfamiliarity in using the Google Suite may have impacted the extent of collaboration for some. Several less proficient L2 learners indicated that lack of confidence in writing skills was a deterrent in their participation in the assignment. As for aspects of the human element, one student remarked about being uncomfortable in working with others as a reason for his limited participation with the group. Finally, technophobia was mentioned as a hindrance for several of the students.

Responses from the questionnaire were positive in many aspects in terms of perspectives toward the writing assignment. As for a general inquiry into group work, the majority of students (88.2%) indicated a preference for working in groups. In regard to the "enjoyment" of writing collaboratively, those indicating such a preference consisted of 66.5% with 23.5% selecting a neutral response. In a more direct inquiry into preferences for writing, either individually or collaboratively, responses shifted to a more even distribution of division with participants indicating the following: individual (39.2%), collaborative (27.4%), and neutral (33.3%). In terms of comfort in working with others from outside of class, nearly a quarter of the responses (25.4%) were negative while slightly more responses (29.4%) were positive. Interestingly, the majority of responses (45.1%) were neutral. As for comfort in communicating with others outside of class for an assignment, the majority of responses (41.2%) were negative with significantly less positive responses (15.7%). Neutral responses totaled 43.1%. There are accustomed routines and norms of Japanese group behavior (Peak, 1991) that may have influenced the reluctance to communicate beyond the in-group. This may be an obstacle to consider in collaborative projects that attempt to go beyond the classroom.

In regard to undertaking the writing assignment, communication with other group members was necessary. In terms of the feedback received from partners, the questionnaire results indicate limitations in this regard. Merely, one third (33.3%) of the participants received feedback from their partners. Likewise, nearly an equal number of responses (33.4%) admitted not providing feedback to their partners. As for whether reluctance to participate was due to language ability, an inquiry into informing partners of errors revealed that 38.2% of the students admitted discovering writing errors from others but failing to inform them. In contrast, only 19.6% of the students took the initiative of informing their partners when errors in writing were discovered. As mentioned earlier, sociocultural variables in terms of in-group behavioral norms may have had some impact on the findings in this project. Japanese students strive to foster group harmony (e.g., Sengoku, 1991). Accordingly, the task of identifying errors of other group members seems to place students in an uncomfortable position in retrospect.

The overall consensus from the participants in regard to the helpfulness of the writing project was overwhelmingly positive. In terms of being beneficial for language learning, the participants responded positively (80.4%). As for helping the participants gain a better grasp of technology, responses remained positive (64.7%). Although responses in rating the assignment as difficult (56.9%) may indicate the challenges faced for learners in engaging in an unfamiliar environment, the positive responses in terms of the project for learning both language and technology are encouraging. Finally, an inquiry as to whether students would want to participate in a similar project in the future was likewise encouraging with the majority of the responses (66.7%) being positive.

CONCLUSIONS

The recent transformation of simultaneous and intermittent online editing is groundbreaking in terms of expanding the possibilities of L2 writing collaboration. Embedded features in online platforms allowing interactive communication and the simultaneous creation of documents add a new dimension. Accessibility to web-based tools provides students with the means to work efficiently in group projects despite geographic or logistical barriers and collaborative writing has the potential to expand exponentially in the near future.

This study explored the use of online communication and collaborative writing among a select group of Japanese EFL university students. A comparison of individual and collaborative English writing output along with feedback from participants has provided some insight into some of the advantages and potential pitfalls in the utilization of these applications. The activities in this project were designed with the intent of enhancing awareness of available web-based tools and stimulating interest in collaborative task-based writing. In these regards, the project met its goals. The overall improvements observed in collaborative over individual writings are promising. The majority of participants responded positively in the questionnaire to inquiries concerning the use of web-based tools and collaborative writing as well. Certainly, there were exceptions to the enthusiasm displayed for the project, and the underlying reasons remain a concern for any L2 collaborative writing assignment: language skill levels and confidence; personalities and interrelationships, and technophobia. Although steps were taken to minimize such interference, language instructors must be prepared to continually adjust and adapt assignments for the environment of each class setting. As noted by Kesler, Bikowski, and Boggs (2012), collaborative technologies are now at the point of rapid change and teachers must adapt to these changes to use them more effectively in class and to guide their students as well. In addition, the potential of collaborative online technologies outside the classroom should also not go unnoticed. Collaboration involving writing and communication may expand opportunities (e.g., Hewitt & Scardamalia, 1998), especially for EFL learners in L2 utilization. Despite these promising technological developments, the human element must always be a primary matter of concern as we strive to improve the balance between technology and pedagogy in second language learning.

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Key Factors to Maximize Student Attention: Emotion and Interest

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One of the biggest challenges teachers face is the various factors that affect student learning but that are largely outside of direct control. However, research has shown that there are two key factors within the purview of the teacher that are at the core of effective schooling: student attention and student engagement. Vital determinants to maximizing these areas revolve around student emotion ("How do I feel?") and student interest ("Am I interested?"). This paper will explain more about these factors and suggest some practical recommendations that teachers can utilize immediately in their classes.

INTRODUCTION

Among the biggest challenges teachers face are the various factors that affect student learning but that are largely outside of direct control, such as students' health, amount of sleep, time allocated to studying and homework, club and part-time job responsibilities, home situation, etc. However, research has shown that there are two key factors within the purview of the teacher that are at the core of effective schooling (Marzano & Pickering, 2013). They are student attention and student engagement, which encompass motivation, interest, effort, enthusiasm, participation, and involvement.

To maximize these two areas in their model on learning, Marzano and Pickering identify several factors, among them student emotion ("How do I feel?") and student interest ("Am I interested?") as crucial determinants that teachers must be cognizant of as positive responses to these two questions correlate to improved student attention and engagement in the classroom. The following sections will explain more about these two factors and suggest some practical recommendations for teachers to utilize in their classes.

MAXIMIZING STUDENT ATTENTION FACTOR #1: EMOTIONS ("How Do I Feel?")

In every situation, the emotions we feel influence our behavior. Likewise, emotions also affect our students' level of motivation in the classroom, and beyond. "Learning, attention, memory, decision-making, and social functioning ... are profoundly affected by ... emotion" (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007, p. 3). In the 1980s, linguist and educational researcher Steven Krashen coined the term *affective filter* to explain the higher success rate of learners with low stress compared with the slower language acquisition for learners with high stress. He explained that anxiety and low self-image created a mental block that filtered out new learning, and that “the best [teaching] methods supply comprehensible input in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear” (Krashen, 1982, p. 11). Krashen observed that students get into a stressed state if a lesson is tedious, not relevant, confusing, or anxiety-provoking, but students who felt at ease in their learning environment had higher levels of attention and memory.

In more recent years, thanks to the rapid advance of neuroimaging technology (fMRI, EEG, etc.) researchers have been able to scientifically discover the physical structure in the brain that correlates to Krashen’s affective filter – the amygdala. Neuroimaging studies show how stress and pleasure influence the way the brain filters sensory input. For students who are in a stressed state, the information they are learning doesn’t get through their amygdala to the higher-thinking and memory centers of the brain, and thus doesn’t get processed, associated with previous knowledge and experiences, or stored for later recall effectively (Willis, 2006).

Thus when students are in a state of positive emotion, they are more likely to be motivated and engaged with the task at hand. Conversely, if student emotions area negative, they are less likely to pay attention and engage in activities, especially those that are challenging or require an element of risk-taking. For optimal learning to occur, teachers should strive to provide students with a physically safe and secure environment, as well as have their mental well-being fostered (Skinner, Kindermann, Connell, & Wellborn, 2009).

A student’s answer to the first question (“How do I feel?”) consists of three factors. First, the student’s level of energy – if low, the student most likely will not attend to what is occurring in class. Second, the demeanor of the teacher – if negative or an overly serious affective tone is established, students are more likely not to pay attention in class. Finally, the student’s perception of acceptance by the teacher and peers – if the student does not feel welcome, accepted, or supported, their level of attention and engagement in classroom activities will decrease. Several strategies to effectively leverage the above factors are to (a) use effective pacing, (b) incorporate physical movement into lessons, (c) use enthusiasm and humor, and (d) build positive teacher–student and peer relationships.

The next section will briefly explain each of these strategies and provide some example activities to aid in utilizing them.

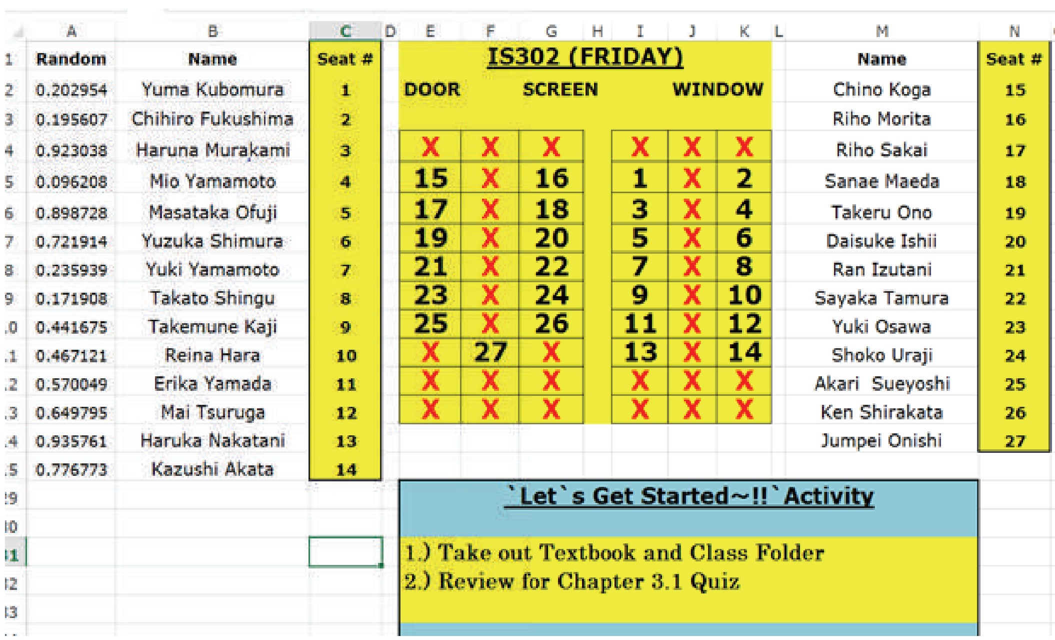
Use Effective Pacing (Level of Energy)

Pacing is the rhythm of the classroom, the extent to which a lesson maintains its momentum. It is a basic, but often overlooked, aspect of keeping students’ energy levels high, and it is a critical determinant of attention. If the pacing of a class is too slow, student energy drops and attention wanes, but if it is too fast, students can become confused and frustrated (Marzano & Pickering, 2013). Thus, to help achieve the correct balance, teachers must be cognizant of their pacing, especially with regards to two general areas: handling administrative tasks and group work.

Administrative tasks are often those that occur at the beginning and end of class, such as entering the classroom, seating, collecting homework, reviewing last class's lesson, and getting students organized into groups. In all of these situations, routines should be established and put in place as soon as possible to maximize efficient pacing. The first day of class often provides the best time for this, as students are most impressionable. Routines take some time initially to explain and instill into students, but in the long run, they are effective because they save time and energy throughout the semester and/or academic year. Below are some practical examples of ways to streamline administrative tasks in the classroom.

Entering the Classroom: Seating Chart and "Let's Get Started!" Activity

When students are allowed to choose their own seats, often the wrong students tend to sit in the wrong places – friends together, genders together, "good" students in the front of the classroom, "bad" students in the back of the classroom, etc. To circumvent this, it behooves the teacher to make sure their students will be integrated, and often. The easiest way to do this is to establish the routine of a changing seating chart, which is displayed on the screen/board for students to see immediately upon entering the classroom. Furthermore, teachers can also use this as an opportunity to let students know what materials they should take out and what they should review to be prepared once class begins (see Figure 1).



Random	Name	Seat #
0.202954	Yuma Kubomura	1
0.195607	Chihiro Fukushima	2
0.923038	Haruna Murakami	3
0.096208	Mio Yamamoto	4
0.898728	Masataka Ofuji	5
0.721914	Yuzuka Shimura	6
0.235939	Yuki Yamamoto	7
0.171908	Takato Shingu	8
0.441675	Takemune Kaji	9
0.467121	Reina Hara	10
0.570049	Erika Yamada	11
0.649795	Mai Tsuruga	12
0.935761	Haruka Nakatani	13
0.776773	Kazushi Akata	14

IS302 (FRIDAY)

DOOR		SCREEN			WINDOW
X	X	X	X	X	X
15	X	16	1	X	2
17	X	18	3	X	4
19	X	20	5	X	6
21	X	22	7	X	8
23	X	24	9	X	10
25	X	26	11	X	12
X	27	X	13	X	14
X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X

Name	Seat #
Chino Koga	15
Riho Morita	16
Riho Sakai	17
Sanae Maeda	18
Takeru Ono	19
Daisuke Ishii	20
Ran Izutani	21
Sayaka Tamura	22
Yuki Osawa	23
Shoko Uraji	24
Akari Sueyoshi	25
Ken Shirakata	26
Jumpei Onishi	27

`Let`s Get Started~!!`Activity

1.) Take out Textbook and Class Folder
2.) Review for Chapter 3.1 Quiz

FIGURE 1. Example of Seating Chart and Beginning-of-Class Routine. Students enter the classroom, find their name and seat number, then look at the classroom layout representation to find their desk. They then look at the "Let's Get Started!" Activity to know what to take out and have prepared before the start of class. The random column feature in Excel allows teachers to easily change student seats and partners before each class.

Beginning of Class: Warm-Up and Review Activity

Instead of immediately delving into the day's lesson, it is often a good idea to devote a few minutes to warm-up and review activities in order to foster the students' emotional state and allow them time to transition from whatever they were doing before class to your classroom environment. One way to do this is to use warm-up questions. These serve several purposes: students get a chance to (a) think and talk in English before the lesson begins, (b) break the ice and get to know a bit about their new seating partner, and (c) get engaged by talking about themselves and sharing relevant or interesting information. The warm-up questions can start off simple, with questions about their weekend plans, their interests, any worries/stress they have that they would like to share, etc. After a few classes, the teacher can change up the questions to make them more specific or detailed, depending on the level and interests of the class (see Figure 2).

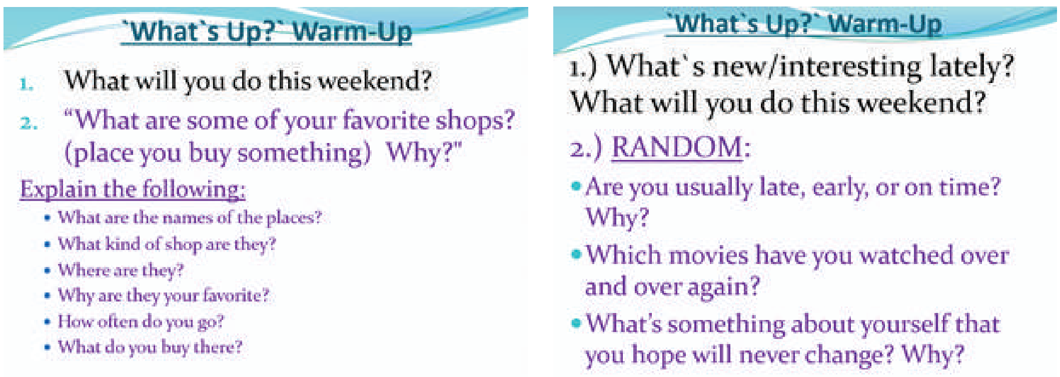


FIGURE 2. "What's Up?" Beginning of Class Warm-up Questions.

Following the warm-up, teachers can transition to a short reflection/review of the prior class. The slide in Figure 3 has students use their class materials (which are already out on their desk, thanks to the "Let's Get Started!" Activity) and memory to discuss what was done in the previous class as well as which aspects of it were interesting or difficult for them.

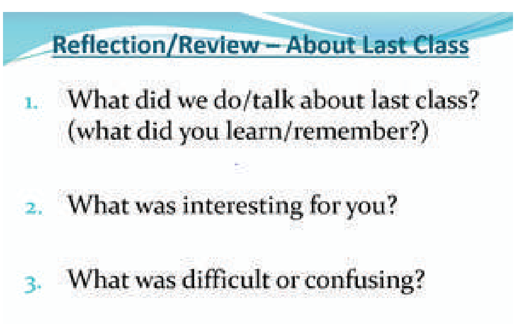


FIGURE 3. Beginning of Class Reflection/Review Slide.

These activities/routines can aid in establishing a solid pace and make for a smooth starting point to begin that day's lesson.

Incorporate Physical Movement (Level of Energy)

The second way to keep student emotions high is by incorporating movement into class lessons. Generally, students tend to sit too much in class. When we sit for more than twenty minutes at a time, our blood tends to pool in our lower extremities, away from our brain. Oxygen is essential for brain function, and enhanced blood flow is what increases the amount of oxygen transported to the brain. Thus, physical activity is a reliable way to increase blood flow (and hence oxygen) to the brain. "By getting up and moving, we recirculate that blood. Within a minute, there is about 15 percent more blood in our brain. Not only does the movement increase cognitive function, but it also helps students use up some kinesthetic energy ... so they can settle down and concentrate better" (Sousa, 2011, p. 38).

Furthermore, the part of the brain that processes movement is also the same part of the brain that processes learning, so it is doubly beneficial for the teacher to always look for ways to get students up and moving (Jensen, 2005). One way to do this is to structure lessons around twenty-minute or less "lesson blocks" instead of one class-period-long lesson. This allows teachers to break up their lessons and have alternating sitting and standing activities. For initial learning, teachers utilize individual or pair (sitting) activities. Afterwards, for rehearsal and practice, either put students into squares (their pair and the pair behind them) or randomly into new groups of three or four, and then tell the groups where they should stand in the classroom while they discuss the given activity (e.g., "Group 1, back window; Group 2, back door, ..."). Once the allotted time has passed, students thank their group members and return to their seats for the beginning of the next (seated) "lesson block."

Another effective way to keep student energy levels high is to use (energetic) background music in the classroom. "Background music is used to provide a welcoming atmosphere and help prepare and motivate students for learning tasks. Music can energize lagging attention levels or soothe and calm when necessary.... Certain music will create a positive learning atmosphere and help students to feel welcome to participate in the learning experience. In this way, it also has great affect upon students' attitudes and motivation to learn" (Brewer, 1995, Welcoming and Attention, para. 1). This use of music can be effective before class starts as students gradually trickle into the classroom (especially for early morning classes), during individual work such as writing, reflections, or during group discussions or project work time.

Finally, it's not just students who don't move enough in the classroom – teachers also tend to stay near the front of the classroom too much. In doing so, maximal engagement with the class is greatly hindered. Teachers should try to move throughout their classroom to interact with all students, show their enthusiasm, and exert authority by actively re-engaging students who are beginning to lose focus. Instead of stopping a lesson to chastise a student who isn't paying attention, the teacher can simply walk towards and stand behind the student while continuing their lesson. Very quickly the class and student will realize the problem, and the wayward student will return to class. This can be done without ever having to yell or break pacing.

Using Enthusiasm and Humor (Teacher's Demeanor)

Two ways to help teachers establish a positive demeanor is through enthusiasm and humor. Brophy (2013) states that "students take cues from the teacher about how to respond to school activities. If you present a topic or assignment with enthusiasm ... your students are likely to adopt this same attitude" (p. 248). Teacher enthusiasm can also raise students' curiosity and motivate them to find out what excites their teacher about the subject.

Likewise, most teachers know of the positive benefits on the environment and teacher–student interactions when humor has a place in the classroom and is encouraged. Jonas (2010) explains that "using humor to improve classroom instruction is not only supported in research, but it has been proven successful" (p. 27). Humor provides more oxygen to the bloodstream, releases "feel-good" endorphins in the blood, and helps create a positive classroom climate by fostering bonding and community-building. "When teachers use humor, students feel better about the content, the teacher, and perhaps even themselves" (Marzano & Pickering, 2013, p. 32).

Thus, teachers should use enthusiasm and humor when possible. For enthusiasm, teachers can use movement to show their excitement as well as give personal examples and explain what is cool or interesting about what they are teaching. For humor, teachers can use self-directed humor (making fun of oneself by sharing past mistakes as opposed to making fun of students) as well as funny pictures, comics, headlines, quotes, movie clips, or other media entertainment in lesson plans.

Build Positive Teacher–Student & Peer Relationships (Perception of Acceptance)

If a student does not feel welcome, accepted, or supported in the classroom, their level of attention and engagement will be low. Ladd, Herald-Brown, and Kochel (2009) found that students who were rejected by their peers were less likely to participate in classroom activities, but if students were accepted, they had much higher rates of engagement. Conversely, happy students have been shown to achieve higher academic performance, and their motivation to study lasts longer. Neuroscientific evidence shows that warm, responsive relationships and interactions between the teacher and students help them to learn and to self-regulate their emotional behavior (Rose, McGuire-Snieckus, & Gilbert, 2015). Thus, anything a teacher can do to help students become familiar with one another will help create a positive atmosphere.

Some strategies teachers can use to achieve this are (a) explicitly making an effort to learn student names as soon as possible, (b) sharing some personal details, (c) giving opportunities for students to share their own personal information and experiences, and (d) celebrating students' birthdays.

Learn Student Names as Soon as Possible

It can be challenging to memorize hundreds of student names off of class rosters, which often don't include a picture of each student. In order to help learn their names more quickly, on the first day of class teachers can have students come up to the whiteboard/chalkboard in pairs and write their name above themselves. (If the classroom doesn't have a whiteboard/chalkboard, it's possible to use mini-whiteboards or poster paper.) If a student has a nickname they prefer, they can write this name on the board as well. Next, take a picture of the two students together under their names using your (smartphone) camera, while telling the class your homework for next class will be to learn all their names. Afterwards, study the pictures during your free time and right before class.

This activity works well for a number of reasons: Not only the teacher but the students as well get to see the names of all their classmates, and it also introduces some humor. Students tend to be initially shy but good-humored about this (since they are in pairs), and it can be fun seeing their nicknames, handwriting style, or funny poses for their picture (see Figure 4). Most importantly, students are often impressed that their teacher is making such an effort to learn their names quickly (even if the teacher can't remember every single student name for the following class "quiz!").

FIGURE 4. Whiteboard Student Name Pictures. Handwritten names, handwriting, and picture poses are all helpful for remembering students' names.

Sharing Personal Information (Teacher)

As I am a teacher of English in a non-English-speaking country, my students are keen to know more about me, the person who will be their teacher for the rest of the semester or academic year. When we share information about ourselves, students are more able to relax and also relate better to us, based on shared or similar life, interests, or experience points. Thus, on the first day of class, I share a self-introduction PowerPoint that includes information and pictures about my home country, city, family, motivation for becoming a teacher, past job experiences, and cities I've lived in in their country, as well as interests such as travel, movies, and music. Each of these points gives students a chance to relate to me and for us to have something in common that they can then ask me about later in the semester. This also aids in lowering student affective filters more quickly, and tends to lead to higher student attention and engagement in subsequent classes (see Figure 5).

FIGURE 5. Sample Teacher Self-Introduction PowerPoint. Discovering information about the teacher at the beginning of a course aids in lowering the students' affective filters more quickly.

Celebrate Student Birthdays,

Lastly, a simple, yet surprisingly effective, activity related to emotion and acceptance is to celebrate student birthdays. On the first day of the semester, I usually collect student information (email address, nickname, etc.) including their birthdays. Before every class, I skim this information for student birthdays. If there are any, I'll put them into a simple Birthday PowerPoint, and at the end of class (before going over the homework), I'll announce and show the student's name and birthday on the birthday slide. The first time I do this often results in a collective gasp from the class since they're shocked that the teacher knows (and cares) enough about their birthday to celebrate it publicly in class. As a final touch, I ask the student to share one thing they will do or would like to do for their birthday and then give them a small gift of chocolate.

I have found this to have an enormous positive effect on classroom emotion and mood, and students tend to warm up to me, as well as to each other, much more quickly. Students can also feel pride and happiness when all their classmates cheerily wish them "happy birthday" (see Figure 6).

FIGURE 6. Student Birthday PowerPoint Example. This end-of-class activity can have an enormous positive effect on classroom emotion and mood.

FACTOR #2: INTEREST ("Am I Interested?")

Even if students are engaged emotionally and respond positively to "How do I feel," they may still fail to pay attention to an activity because they don't perceive it as interesting. Thus, the second key factor that influences attention is the student's interest – in the lesson and in us, their teacher.

Schiefele (2009) summarized much of the research on interest and made a distinction between *situational interest* and *individual interest*. With situational interest, the situation itself captures the student's attention, while individual interest relates to their often longer-term and intrinsic disposition toward a specific topic. The two forms of situational interest include triggered situational interest, which involves capturing a student's attention, and maintained situational interest, which involves holding a student's attention over time. Both of these are important to the classroom teacher, whose challenge is to catch and hold student attention over an entire class, semester, and academic year.

Several strategies to increase the chance that students will have a positive response to "Am I Interested?" are to (a) begin every lesson with an interesting "hook," (b) ensure variety, and (c) use novelty and unusual information in your lesson plans.

Begin Every Lesson with an Interesting "Hook"

Teachers shouldn't solely be preoccupied with the content that "has to be covered" when making their lesson plans, but should start with finding something genuinely fascinating about it. A "hook" can be anything – a question, quote, picture, video, etc. – as long as it engages students' curiosity/interest, though it is often best if it connects somehow to the students' or teacher's own life experiences. "Ideally, a lesson plan shouldn't be considered finished – or even started – until one has pushed oneself to find the deeply energizing force at the heart of the matter" (Eyster & Martin, 2010, p. 178).

One way to do this is, before starting a new chapter, unit, topic, or theme, use a warm-up activity. This can be a question that relates the upcoming topic to the students' own experience or knowledge, or simply a (relevant) interesting picture that will pique curiosity and get them engaged and discussing the topic (see Figure 7).

FIGURE 7. "Before We Get Started" Warm-up Activity for a Business English Lesson. The first slide is for a unit on great ideas/business products; the second is for a unit on advertising and marketing. In each, students are asked to connect what they know, and their interests and preferences, to the question or picture. For the second slide, students were also asked what the picture is showing (e.g., marketing), whether they think it is effective/good, and why.

Ensure Variety in Your Lesson Plans

Variety is best known as "the spice of life," and is also a key component for maintaining student interest in the classroom as it is enlivening and boredom-relieving. Furthermore, it gives teachers a rich range of options with which to design and optimize a lesson. To utilize variety, teachers should try to mix up the teaching style and activities each class. For example, alternating between sitting and standing activities; and between individual, pair square, and group work for students; as well as alternating the mode of teaching, such as lecturing, student discussions, projects, watching videos, and playing games. Furthermore, teachers can also make sure that the method they use to call on and engage students is unpredictable to keep students on their toes and paying attention.

Use Novelty and Unusual Information

The human brain is particularly receptive to novelty and change, as well as to sensory input about things that arouse curiosity. “Student curiosity is the driving force that underlies many theorists’ suggestions for motivating students” (Brophy, 2004, p. 227). People naturally tend to seek out environmental variability, and teachers can take advantage of this fact by incorporating novelty and unusual information into lesson plans.

Ways to do this include changing the classroom environment (moving desks around, etc.), changing classroom routines, rearranging student seating on a regular basis, and changing up student partners or group members often. Furthermore, teachers can insert into lessons interesting or thought-provoking pictures, quotes, strange facts, etc. related to the topic at hand; use interesting videos related to the topic for a more in-depth look; and include supplemental materials in addition to a set textbook (websites, articles, other texts, etc.).

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the first factor in maximizing student attention corresponds with positive emotions and how students answer the question “How do I feel?” The three factors that affect this are students’ energy level, the demeanor of the teacher, and students’ perception of acceptance by their teacher and peers. Effective pacing, incorporating student and teacher movement into each class, using enthusiasm and humor, and fostering positive peer and student relations are helpful strategies to positively influence and maximize this factor.

The second factor in maximizing student attention corresponds with interest and how students answer the question “Am I interested?” Some strategies to positively influence this factor are the use of interesting hooks at the start of lessons, and incorporating and interweaving variety, novelty, and unusual information throughout each lesson.

The more successfully teachers integrate these two key factors of emotion and interest into their lessons and classroom, the more likely students will become and remain attentive throughout. These two psychological phenomena are unique in that they are directly under the control of the teacher (compared to various other learning factors). Utilizing these factors/questions can help make classrooms places of learning, high energy, positive feelings, and even fun.

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The Benefits of International Students as Teaching Assistants

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The role of internationalization is emphasized heavily in the decision-making of education ministries worldwide. However, the role of students is often underemphasized, particularly the role that internationally active students can play in the process. This paper reports an investigation of international students and their experiences of working as teaching assistants (TAs) at an internationalized university in Japan. Participants reported personal and institutional benefits that should be of interest to other institutions interested in improving their engagement with internationalization of the education industry: in an era of increasing global interaction and the use of English as a lingua franca, student experiences can have a lasting effect on them and their respective universities. This paper concludes that more can be done to ensure that beneficial effects of professional service are maximized and carried forward into future generations of students.

INTRODUCTION

Much is made throughout the Asia Pacific region regarding the role of internationalization in policy decisions of tertiary education institutions. To this end, universities are incentivized to think more about how their university appears on the scales of internationalization and should therefore be maximizing their potential opportunities to improve in this area. For the process of internationalization to benefit all stakeholders in the system, there has to be a coordinated effort to utilize all parts of the system. No single university, faculty, course, teacher, nor student can promise successful internationalization, but a coordinated effort between these parties is the only way that the process will succeed. Recent press reports in Japan have suggested that the country's policy of internationalization is a failure, going so far as to recommend the resignation of university presidents in the aftermath of the recent fall in university rankings among Japanese universities (Rafferty, 2016), but such calls are both premature and lacking in an understanding of what is actually happening in university internationalization. Any institution intent on internationalizing is cognizant of the metrics of university rankings; all internationalizing universities are changing, adapting, succeeding, and failing in real time. This requires patience, the acceptance of the fact that so many institutions are reaching for the untouchable top–100 status, and that top–250, or even top–500, status may soon become the more reasonable goal.

This paper aims to provide an insight into a practical solution to a conceptual and policy-related problem. An increase in the number of international students on campus means, in practical terms in an Asian context, an increase in the number of students from other Asian countries in the student population. The concurrent focus on English as the language of intercultural communication means an increase of Asian-accented English in use on campus, among both students and faculty. A significant portion of both World Englishes and Asian Englishes research highlights such a confluence as a problem, as prestige varieties of English are valued over Asian varieties in Asian contexts (Ahn, 2014; Garrett, 2009; Kirkpatrick & Zhichang, 2002; Shim, 2002; You, 2008), leading to the possibility of negative opinions connected to Asian-accented English. The employment of international students as teaching assistants could address issues related to university internationalization but requires greater research focus than has previously been available.

Research Background: Team-Teaching

There has, in fact, been very little investigation of team-teaching as an area of university teaching, especially in relation to the positions of international students. The study of “international TAs” tends to be focused on the US context and international graduate students teaching undergraduate seminar courses (Bengu, 2009; Fletcher-Larocco, 2011; Gorsuch, 2012). Analogous classroom team-teaching role studies in Asia have focused on recent graduates working as assistant language teachers (ALTs), in team-teaching (TT) programs as Japan’s Japanese English Teacher (JET) system and the Republic of Korea’s English Program in Korea (EPIK) system. The EPIK program publicizes itself as having “the goals of improving the English-speaking abilities of Korean students and teachers, developing cultural exchange between Korea and abroad, and of introducing new teaching methods into the Korean education system” (EPIK, 2013, para 1). Importing experience from overseas is also an aim of university internationalization.

There is, however, serious potential for TT programs to become badly misaligned. The consensus with TT research is that there are many potential advantages, but there must be adequate communication between all relevant parties, in particular, the teacher in charge and the assistant. The possible criticisms are numerous, including methodological, cultural, and administrative concerns (Carless, 2006; Gladman, 2007, 2009; King, 2011; Miyazato, 2009). For these pitfalls to be avoided, two things can currently be done: The first is to have the teacher or administrator in charge be made aware of these problems and work to eliminate or mitigate them; the second is for the TA(s) in the classroom to do the same. TA programs cannot be arranged effectively without an appreciation of the available literature on TT and a plan in place to address them.

The studies referenced suggest that there are significant problems with current team-teaching programs as they are being implemented in Japan and Korea. The problems highlighted by these studies are the lack of time, before, during, and after the course; communication between the classroom instructors; and an inequality of bargaining position regarding class activities. What is necessary in any attempt to mitigate these problems is to approach them as the multifaceted issues that they are: Teachers are concerned with actions in class with regard to their students but must also consider how they should act with the assistant.

Teachers are also concerned with how interactions with the assistant are viewed by the students; they concern themselves with their projected image. Assistants are concerned with their actions in class but also how they are evaluated by both teacher and students. The students are concerned with how to react in a situation where there are two people in attendance who are tasked with educating them. The problems in the system stem from such complexity.

Current Study

The research location, hereafter referred to as University A, is one of the most highly internationalized universities in Japan, with over 45 percent of its students coming from outside Japan, and operating a dual-language policy requiring students to take much more than the national average of their courses in English along with a greater emphasis on EFL. In all, the university is the archetype of how MEXT is encouraging and incentivizing Japanese universities to reform and is, therefore, an excellent research location for this area of study. This study included ten former TAs from outside Japan and investigated their experiences as teaching assistants at University A. Participants first completed an online survey and were then interviewed using Skype (as none of them lived locally, but were in locations throughout Asia, Europe, and North America). To protect their anonymity, little demographic information can be provided, but I can report that they were evenly split between male and female participants, and none of them used English as a first language.

This current research project is part of a larger effort to investigate university internationalization from various perspectives. In 2011, I investigated the opinions of students at University A, comparing the domestic students' opinions of the use of English on campus with the opinions of students in other universities, while also comparing the opinions of the international students with students of the same nationality studying in domestic universities in their home countries (Haswell, 2014). The findings suggested that the activity of studying overseas in an international university placed the international students in a far more stressful situation linguistically than for the domestic students. This was due to their misgivings about the English language performance of other Asian students at the university. This study was followed in 2014 by an investigation of the attitudes of teachers at the same university (Haswell, 2015) regarding the ways they observed the students at University A interacting. The findings of the 2014 study were that there were personal and institutional benefits of increasing the number of international students on campus, which would please policy-makers, but that it was only experienced in full by motivated students who made the most of the opportunity, reinforcing the conclusions of previous research (de Wit, 2011; Knight, 2011) that merely increasing the number of international students on campus does not guarantee an increase in institutional internationalization, however such a process is defined.

FINDINGS

Reported here are the findings of the 2016 study as they relate to university internationalization, in particular, the TAs comments about how the TA program affected the language use of the university and its students. (Due to space constraints, further reporting of other aspects is not possible here, but I invite any questions about replicating this study elsewhere, expanding the research field into other universities where TAs are used.)

The former TAs recognized the sociolinguistic aspects of their presence on campus and even noted the effect that it could have had on the students. The following responses were given in answer to the question “Do you think having international TAs helps in classrooms where English is used as the medium of instruction (e.g., EFL classes, or in lectures or seminars taught in English)? If so, how?”

> Especially, I think it is really effective in language classes to have someone foreign, not from your own country, especially for Japanese people. Having class that require communicative things, however much you tell them only use English, they are always speaking Japanese. So having foreign students as TAs, even if they don’t speak to you, they know you are around – I feel like they are trying a little harder with a foreign TA. (TA1)

> In my opinion, for EFL classes, having international TAs are very necessary. The main reason is not only because of language barrier, it’s also because of culture differences. TAs are students too so they can gain trust and can communicate with students easier. For lectures or seminars taught in English, it depends. I think for those classes, beside English ability and communication skills, a certain knowledge is required and the role of TAs can be more complicated. (TA5)

> Definitely, I think it does. For the English classes, it can help if you are a tool to practice, who otherwise would not want to have a chance to practice. In the lecture classes, and especially for first-year students, you kind of become a translator and help them. (TA2)

> Maybe it makes a slight difference if they are international students, and if these students didn't show they can speak Japanese, it will be an urge for the Japanese students to try speaking English with foreigners. But for Japanese students, it makes in their mind that we share the same culture and share the same values, so it’s not really pushing them to approach foreigners. I think that’s the only difference. Skill wise, I think it's the same. (TA6)

These comments suggest an in-class environment that, drawing from the TAs experiences, can be positively affected by the presence of TAs. The suggestion that the domestic students receive support from the people in the classroom who are also students at the university, albeit tasked with a more responsible role in class, means that TAs can form a connection that is more supportive than that of student and teacher.

When asked if they felt that their role could be expanded, with the question “Do you think that TAs should be expected to do more in class? If so, what do you think could be done to help TAs become an integrated part of the teaching in university classrooms?" the majority agreed, with some caveats:

> Now I think I should have done more. I feel that a TA can do a little bit more, especially during English lessons. Sometimes you are just standing there, passing the mic around and taking attendance. I feel like, just once in a while, they could answer a few questions, or be a part of a group. (TA1)

> I strongly agree to have more of a role in class, as they can have better discussions and working together, tasks together; it will make the experience for the students and the TAs richer. There will be more effective learning, more effective teaching, and more interaction together, both inside and outside of class. They are able to do more conversation work together in groups. In that way, it will enrich the experience for the students and also for the TA. (TA8)

> For that, it depends on the professor. Some professors do give a lot of opportunity to their TAs, and I've been lucky for the most part that my professor has given a certain responsibility. I think that's a very important part: TAs are something beyond people who print the papers for you. It's an important part, but as a system, I think that all professor should maximize their resources, and become an expert in that area. It's a good idea that the university advises the lecturers to use TAs. There does need to be a certain level of balance of what is demanded, and it doesn't overwork the TAs, but I think they should advise the professors. (TA2)

> Well, I think TAs should be expected to be more responsible, and try to be more actively participate in classes' activities. They can propose ideas to help class being run smoothly or having interesting activities to help students become closer. Furthermore, it would be helpful if they have a basic knowledge about the content of lessons before each class. What could be done to help TA become an integrated part of the teaching: I think TAs also should be given more authority to speak up and have occasional feedback session or more like meeting with the teacher about class and students. Besides 90 minutes of each period, it would be helpful if TAs are given materials of class at the beginning of the week or the month so that they can have some preparation. Also, I believe teacher and TAs should communicate more so that they can support each other effectively. (TA6)

One former TA highlighted a problem with a policy change to expand the role of TAs with this comment:

> Generally speaking, they can be expected to do more if it's clearly explained. Usually, communication between the teaching staff and the TAs is really poor, and you're not really ... the professors may think that it's clear, but sometimes you think what are my tasks, how far should I go. They can do a lot. In the end, being a TA is very context-specific. (TA10)

In response to these comments about the TA's role in class, I propose that receiving feedback from former TAs is an important method of forming a positive cycle of review and improvement in the TA system. The recommendations that stem from these comments are focused in the area of providing TAs with support, specifically from the instructor in the room. The former TAs interviewed in this study were happy to volunteer the opinion that they could do more in the class if the aims of the class and course were communicated to them. Assistants requesting more information about their role to better support the aims of the course is a finding that is consistent with other TT research findings. International university TAs will require context-specific guidance, including issues related to mixed ethnicity classes, but with an investment of time and effort, these courses can become better calibrated to achieve the aims of the university.

Limitations and Future Research

While this study was limited to a single cohort from a single location, it trialed a methodology that can be expanded quickly to gather more testimony from others participants in the university system, specifically those connected to the TA programs. Future research should also encompass the domestic student population and their representatives in the respective programs. It will be interesting to hear if their experiences are similar to those of their international student colleagues.

Conclusions

While university internationalization does not necessarily need TA programs to be involved, there are clearly large potential benefits available in connection with such a collaboration. In fact, to not utilize the human resources available on campus is, I propose, a waste of time and money: Universities invest a great deal in their recruitment efforts; recruiting international students as TAs can help to offset this investment. The recommendation from this study is that students from all strata of the population attending international universities should be encouraged to participate in the TA program of their respective universities. Students in the courses being assisted by these TAs should thereby be inspired by the professional attitude and personal benefits engendered by their participation.

TAs are more than list-makers and print-providers, they are positive role-models of proficient English use at a time when such images are of great value to internationalizing institutions throughout Asia. TAs are the image of the university that the universities spend money to project, they are living advertisements for university activities and, better than rhetoric, they are manifest examples of the very students that universities, by their adherence to the rationale of government policy, are duty-bound to produce. For this reason alone, increasing the exposure of the domestic population to the students that they have painstakingly recruited to support their on-campus efforts should be encouraged.

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Writing an Abstract: A Genre-Based Approach

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The purpose of this paper is to show how EFL university students can be taught to write an abstract for a research paper or conference presentation. A brief overview of research in genre theory will be given (Freak & Swales, 2011; Martin, 1985; Martin & Rose, 2003; Swales, 1990, 2004; Swales & Freak, 2004). Following this, criteria for a genre-based rating scale will be explained and then presented. Drawing on genre theory, the rating scale has been designed as a teaching and evaluation instrument for teachers and students, making explicit each stage of the abstract. Teaching suggestions are then given, focusing on modeling, explicit teaching, and peer evaluation. The paper concludes with a discussion examining the role of a genre-based approach. The paper aims to give a clearer understanding of the structure of an abstract and some practical ideas of how it can be taught.

GENRE: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

In this paper, the teaching approach taken to write an abstract is underpinned by the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory of language (Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Hasan, 1985), in particular the concept of genre (Martin, 1985). In addition, the work of Swales (1990, 2004), Swales and Freak (2004), and Freak and Swales (2011) in analyzing abstracts and research papers within the theoretical framework of genre, is considered to be of particular importance.

The term *genre* refers to text types and how different types of texts are organized in different ways to achieve different social purposes (Martin, 1985). Within this theoretical framework, an abstract is considered to be a genre. It is argued within this theoretical framework, that if students for whom English is a foreign or second language are unfamiliar with the sociocultural norms of the genre, then these norms need to be made explicit through the teaching approach (Lucantonio, 2009, 2014). This is referred to as explicit teaching (Gibbons, 2002; Lucantonio, 2009, 2014).

According to Martin (1985), a genre can be defined as a staged, goal-oriented, social process. The term *staged* refers to the steps the text moves through to achieve its goal. Martin (1985) refers to these steps as *generic structure*, and they are commonly referred to as the *patterning* of a text (Lucantonio, 2009, 2014). The term *goal-oriented* refers to the purpose of the text. According to Martin and Rose (2003), texts typically move through certain stages to achieve a goal or to reach a conclusion, and are patterned or organized in different ways to reflect their different social purposes. It is argued that EFL students may not be familiar with the sociocultural norms associated with this patterning. Therefore, they not only need to know what information needs to be included in an English abstract, but also how the information is structured or organized to achieve its goal (Lucantonio, 2009, 2014). The term *social process* represents the process of how meanings are created and exchanged in society (Martin & Rose, 2003). Genres, then, are not a static collection of structures and formulas. According to Eggins and Slade (1997), they are negotiated interactively in society according to sociocultural norms that have been institutionalized over time, and therefore represent an important social process.

As genres are an interactive social process, they are comprised of both obligatory and optional elements (Eggins & Slade, 1997; Halliday & Hasan, 1985). The obligatory elements are those that are recognized as the defining features of the genre, and the appearance of these elements in a specific order corresponds to our perception that the text is either complete or incomplete (Eggins & Slade, 1997). They are likely to occur most of the time (Lucantonio, 2014). Optional elements are those that are not necessarily defining features. They can be omitted or added depending on the writer (Lucantonio, 2014). In teaching the genre of an abstract, it is therefore important to make explicit the elements that are compulsory and the elements that are optional, as well as the specific order in which the elements occur (Lucantonio, 2014).

Unpacking the Abstract: Making Criteria Explicit

An abstract is a kind of summary of the research paper. However, it is argued in this paper that not all summaries are the same in that different summaries have different goals. Drawing on genre theory and the work of Swales (1990, 2004) and Swales and Feak (2004) in analyzing research papers, six sequentially ordered steps have been identified in the generic structure of abstracts written in English. These six steps, as well as additional information considered important for students when writing an abstract, have been incorporated into the design of the rating scale (see Appendix). Step 1 and Step 6 are considered to be optional elements. These are marked in the rating scale by brackets. Step 2 through Step 5 are considered to be compulsory elements. It is argued that these steps and the order in which they occur are necessary for the abstract to achieve its goal in a way considered socioculturally appropriate in English. It cannot be assumed that EFL students would be familiar with the six steps, reflecting English language sociocultural norms. Therefore, it is further argued that these steps need to be explicitly taught.

Step 1 of the criteria focuses on the general background information of the research. However, the step is regarded as an optional element and can be omitted. Background information describes the “who, what, where, when and why” information of the research paper (Lucantonio, 2009). Describing what research has been done in this field or on this topic is common in this section. References are often used. As background information affects the current research, the information is usually expressed in the present tense.

In Step 2 of the criteria, the purpose of the research needs to be clearly stated. This is considered to be an essential element of an abstract. In addition, the research question(s) or hypothesis can also be stated in this step. The present tense is usually used to state the purpose of the research. Also, the use of the present infinitive is commonly used when stating what the research intends to do or achieve. While stating the purpose of the research is considered to be an essential element of an abstract, it is often problematic for students to express this clearly.

The next compulsory element refers to the method used in the research. This is Step 3 of the rating scale. The most important issue here is to describe the steps or the procedure that the research moved through in order to achieve its goal. The past tense is commonly used to do this, as the research procedure is now finished. While the participants and the materials involved in the research may also be mentioned here, the main issue is providing a step-by-step description of how the research was done. Sequential discourse markers are commonly used to do this, such as *first, following this, then, next, finally,* and other such markers that indicate the order in which the procedure was carried out. While this is not considered to be a linguistically complex task, how a procedure is described needs to be made explicit to students, as it is often a problematic issue.

In Step 4, the results of the research need to be briefly stated. This step refers to what the raw data shows or showed. Either the present tense or the past tense is commonly used to do this. Brief interpretations of the data are a feature of Step 4. These can be highlighting statements using expressions such as *as a result, as can be seen*, and *the results show*. These can also be summary statements, indicating what the results show and using expressions such as *increase/decrease/no change*. The use of comparatives and superlatives (*fastest/faster/slower, most/more/less effective*), and other such summary statements are common. The focus here is on what the data shows or showed, not why it is important.

In Step 5 the conclusions of the research are stated. This is usually a brief account of why the data of the results section is important (or not) for the goals of the research. As it is a generalized account of what was learned in the research, the present tense is often used. Concluding statements such as *in conclusion* and *it can be concluded* are a feature in this step. Also, highlighting statements similar to those in the results section, such as *as a result, as can be seen*, and *the results show*, are often used. However, the focus here is not on what the raw data shows but rather on interpreting the results. In this step, the writer states why the research has been successful or not in achieving its goals.

The final step of the criteria is Step 6, in which the contributions of the research to the field or to the topic area are stated. While this is common in many abstracts, it can be omitted and as such is considered to be an optional element. The contributions move away from the specific results of the research towards the broader field or area of research. This step states why the findings are important (or not) for the field and the degree to which the specific research contributes to the general research area. As it is a generalized statement, the present tense is commonly used to do this.

The six steps of the criteria needed for an abstract have been incorporated into the design of the criterion-based rating scale. In addition, important information relating to non-personal writing and syntactical grammar has also been included. The rating scale represents the main teaching tool for teachers and the evaluation instrument for students. It makes explicit the kind of information students need to include in an abstract, as well as the order in which it needs to occur.

NON-PERSONAL WRITING: RESEARCH VS. RESEARCHER

Drawing on the work of Halliday in SFL (1985), non-personal writing has been identified as an important grammatical feature in the register of scientific texts. In SFL, the grammatical item of theme, which roughly equates to the grammatical subject of a sentence, sets up the message of a text. It is through the message that the logical development of a text occurs. In scientific English, this typically occurs through non-personal writing. Through the use of non-personal items in the subject position of a sentence, the writer is able to focus on the research, rather than the researcher. Typically, scientific texts are developed by non-personal reference to what is happening in the research, rather than personal reference to the researcher. Within this theoretical framework, personal reference items in the subject position, such as *I* or *we*, have little value in the logical development of a scientific text. If students hope to write in an appropriate register, it is important for them to understand the role of non-personal writing in scientific and academic texts.

Grammatical reformulation exercises focusing on the subject-verb-object (SVO) sentence structure can be a useful tool in helping students to write in a non-personal register. Reformulation exercises can be constructed that focus on eliminating the personal subject of a sentence (*I* or *we*) by placing the object in the subject position, and then changing the verb from the active to the passive voice. Exercises such as these readily demonstrate to students how personal reference in the subject position can be eliminated and why this is important in the logical development of a scientific text. To illustrate this, the sentence *I/We measured the speed* could easily be reformulated as *The speed was measured.* Exercises such as these help students recognize that scientific texts are typically developed through non-personal writing, which tends to focus more on the research than on the researcher. They also demonstrate the reasons why this style of writing is more appropriate to the register of written scientific and academic English. The issue of non-personal writing has also been included in the design of the criterion-based rating scale.

STUDENT PROFILE

The students that the teaching approach described in this paper has been applied to are students undertaking a graduate level, five-week scientific English course focusing on how to write a research paper in English, of which writing an abstract is an important part (Lucantonio, 2014). Of the five-week course, the first two weeks are given over to the task of writing an abstract. It is the intention of this paper to deal only with the abstract and not the other sections of the research paper (Lucantonio, 2014). The students are all EFL or ESL master's course students in science and engineering faculties. However, writing an abstract is considered to represent an important interdisciplinary activity at both graduate and undergraduate levels. Hence, the issues presented in this paper are considered equally relevant for a wide range of university students, at both undergraduate and graduate levels, not just those involved in science and engineering courses.

Teaching Approach: Modeling, Joint Negotiation, and Independent Construction

The genre-based teaching approach used in this paper contains the three basic phases of modeling, joint negotiation, and independent construction (DSP Literacy Project, 1989). The cycle draws on several key concepts from Sociocultural Learning Theory (SLT; Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). These include the issue of scaffolding, which requires the teacher to break down the complexity of the task into manageable chunks. According to Gibbons (2002, 2006), scaffolding is the temporary assistance by which a teacher helps a learner know how to do something, so that the learner will later be able to complete a similar task alone. It should lead to independent learning (Lucantonio, 2009, 2014). The construction of an abstract is considered a complex task for EFL learners. However, the complexity level of the task can be broken down with different degrees of teacher scaffolding, which can be varied according to the different linguistic abilities of the students (Lucantonio, 2009, 2014). In this paper, the issue of scaffolding is realized in the user-friendly descriptions of the six-step criteria, as well as the three-point evaluations required for the genre-based rating scale.

The modeling phase is usually the first stage of the learning cycle (DSP Literacy Project, 1989). In this phase, a model of the target genre is introduced to the learners. If the learners are to construct a particular genre, they first need to become familiar with its purpose and genre features (Lucantonio, 2009, 2014). In this phase, the teacher concentrates mainly on making the generic structure or patterning of the abstract explicit to the learners. Students analyze model texts written by previous students, evaluating the generic structure according to the criteria in the rating scale. They identify the main stages of the abstract, focusing on discourse markers used to signal the different stages. Students then give a rating of 3 (excellent) or 2 (so-so) or 1 (needs work) for each stage of the abstract, based on the criteria in the rating scale. Once this has been done, attention is given to the genre's key grammatical features of tense and non-personal writing, as described in the rating scale. Students are then asked to write their own abstract for homework, again following the criteria in the rating scale. This guides them into the next phase of the pedagogical cycle, the joint negotiation phase.

In the joint negotiation phase, the learners begin to move away from analyzing model texts and move towards constructing their own. In this phase, students peer-evaluate each other's abstract and rate them according to the criteria in the rating scale. They do this with the assistance of the teacher, who moves from group to group around the classroom, checking and assisting on an as-required basis. In SLT, this is known as the co-construction of language (Gibbons, 2002, 2006; Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). An important feature of the joint negotiation phase is that the teacher scaffolding is being gradually removed. Greater responsibility is handed over to the learners for the construction and evaluation of their own text. Following the peer evaluations, the students are then asked to rewrite their drafts for homework and have them ready to hand in to the teacher in the next class. This leads them into the final phase of the pedagogical cycle, the independent construction phase.

In the independent construction phase, the learners reach the point where the scaffolding is removed. In this phase, learners construct the target genre without assistance from the teacher (DSP Literacy Project, 1989; Lucantonio, 2009, 2014). In this phase, the practice and preparation are over. It is now time to see how well the students can independently perform the task of writing an abstract, after the modeling and joint negotiation phases have been completed. This represents the final step of the pedagogical cycle. The students' abstracts are collected and then evaluated by the teacher, based on the criteria in the rating scale.

Conclusions

A genre-based approach can help students write abstracts in a way considered to be socioculturally appropriate. By making the criteria of the genre explicit through a criterion-based rating scale, students can understand what information needs to be included and how the information needs to be arranged. This is useful for students from an EFL or ESL background, who may not be familiar with the sociocultural norms of writing an abstract in English. Through the use of a genre-based pedagogical cycle of modeling–joint negotiation–independent construction, students become familiar with the genre features, then use that knowledge to co-construct their own genre, and finally, independently write their own. By making the criteria explicit, the complex task of writing an abstract is unpacked and demystified for students (Lucantonio, 2009, 2014). This is empowering for all students, particularly those from a foreign or second language background.

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APPENDIX

The Criterion-Based Rating Scale

Key
(   ) = Optional element
3 Points: Excellent. Clearly stated and/or well expressed (easy to understand)
2 Points: So-so. Possibly stated but not clear (quite difficult to understand)
1 Point: Needs work. Not stated and/or poorly expressed (very difficult to understand)

(*Step 1): States the *background information: what* research has been done in this area from the past leading up to the present situation; references often used; "*wh-*" information; 1-3 sentences; *present* tense.
Excellent (3) **So-so (2)** **Needs Work (1)**
|________________________|________________________|

***Step 2:** States the *purpose* of the research: *what* the aim or goal of the research is; states the research question or hypothesis; 1-2 sentences; *present* tense.
Excellent (3) **So-so (2)** **Needs Work (1)**
|________________________|________________________|

***Step 3:** States the *method* used in the research: *how* it was done; the procedure or steps used; also participants and materials; 1-2 sentences; *past* tense.
Excellent (3) **So-so (2)** **Needs Work (1)**
|________________________|________________________|

***Step 4:** States the *results: what* the raw data show(-ed) (increase/decrease/no change); 1-2 sentences; *past* or *present* tense.
Excellent (3) **So-so (2)** **Needs Work (1)**
|________________________|________________________|

***Step 5:** States the *conclusions: what* the data means and *why* it is important for the research (successful or not); 1-2 sentences; *present* tense.
Excellent (3) **So-so (2)** **Needs Work (1)**
|________________________|________________________|

(*Step 6): States the *contributions* of the research: *why* the findings or conclusions of the research are important for the general research area; 1-2 sentences; *present* tense.
Excellent (3) **So-so (2)** **Needs Work (1)**
|________________________|________________________|

*Avoids personal reference (e.g., does not use "I / we").
Excellent (3) **So-so (2)** **Needs Work (1)**
|________________________|________________________|

*Uses grammar accurately and appropriately (S-V-O).
Excellent (3) **So-so (2)** **Needs Work (1)**
|________________________|________________________|

Let's Face It! Using Facebook in the English Language Classroom

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Following the principles of the TPACK Framework (Koehler & Mishra, 2009) and the Blended Learning Framework (Horn & Staker, 2014), this study reports findings on integrating Facebook, a social networking site (SNS), in facilitating English language classes at a private university in Manila, Philippines. It aimed to investigate how students respond to the use of Facebook in the English language classroom and how they utilize it in developing their English language skills. Research participants include freshman, sophomore, and senior students enrolled at English classes in the first semester of the academic year 2015–16. Research data come from surveys, students' wall posts, students' reflections, and individual and focus group interviews. Results suggest that despite some technological limitations, students view and respond positively to the use of Facebook as an alternative platform for English language learning and as an innovative and strategic tool in integrating technology into the traditional language classroom. Pedagogical implications for English language teachers, educators, and researchers are offered in the light of these results.

Introduction

The influx of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has revolutionalized the teaching of English to ESL/EFL learners (Cequena, 2013). If students before were used to traditional in-class English language learning delivered within the walls of the classroom, today, the scenario has dramatically changed with the rise of modern technology. Twenty-first century students now carry portable and handheld electronic and smart gadgets such as laptops, tablets, phablets, netbooks, iPads, phones, and other devices and use them every day when doing their school and personal tasks. This "24/7/365 fingertip access" to information allows students to navigate the information superhighway, stay updated, and connect interpersonally in virtual spaces with anyone, anytime, and anywhere. This trend extends to the academic world; in fact, in the last decade, research has shown how the World Wide Web or the Internet and other communication technologies have supported meaningful educational experiences (Arnold & Ducate, 2006; Belz & Kinginger, 2002, 2003; Garrison & Anderon, 2003; Lord, 2008; O'Bryan & Hegelmeier, 2007; Sykes, 2005; among others) to students deemed "digital natives" (Prensky, 2001, 2006).

These technological innovations are continually reshaping, redefining, and revolutionizing the phases and pathways of educational landscapes across many parts of the globe. Hence, with this technological advancement dominating and permeating globally, it is imperative that the teaching of English, especially among English as second language (ESL) students, must be interactive, responsive, and relevant to make language learning more challenging and meaningful to the learners. The World Wide Web or the Internet's features of interactivity, connectivity, and ubiquity make it a good platform for an alternative classroom engagement to trigger some 21st century skills, namely, critical thinking and problem-solving collaboration and communication, global awareness, and information literacy (Dohn, 2009). Today, educators can utilize social networking sites (SNS) such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, Google Hangouts, Blogger, and Tumblr as platforms for enhancing students' English language skills. Among these sites, Facebook is the most widely used domain by students for their virtual social activities.

Facebook is a SNS that boasts more than 100 million members, and it is one of the fastest-growing and best-known sites on the Internet today (nyVerdana.com as cited in Blattner & Fiori, 2009). Established by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004, Facebook is a powerful learning tool that is not only built off of synchronous and asynchronous technologies that have transformed learning but also extended the reach of communicative tools (Blattner & Fiori, 2009). Facebook has a variety of interactive features that students can use. Students can create their own profiles, upload photos and videos, post on their walls, share information, and join in groups as online communities, among others. Selwyn (2007) stated that Facebook has quickly become the social network site of choice by college students and an integral part of the "behind the scenes" college experience. Thompson (2007) added that the adoption rates of Facebook in universities and colleges are remarkable (i.e., 85% of college students whose college has a network within Facebook have adopted it). Furthermore, Pempek, Yermolayeva, and Calvert (2009) reveal that Facebook enables teachers to provide constructive educational outcomes in a variety of fields. Hew (2011) furthered that Facebook allows teachers to practice a differential pedagogy, in the best interests of the students.

Several studies have already explored the pedagogical benefits of integrating Facebook in a language classroom (Ghani, 2015; Low & Warawudhi, 2016; Madge, Meek, Wellens, & Hooley, 2009; Miron & Ravid, 2015; Schroeder & Greenbowe, 2009; Selwyn, 2007; Shih, 2013; Stewart, 2008; Yu, 2014; Yunus & Salehi, 2012). These studies have established the pedagogical potentials, benefits, and implications of integrating a SNS, particularly Facebook, in the classroom. This study aims to contribute to these ongoing dialogs and explorations, to contextualize the use of Facebook in the Philippine ESL classroom, and to respond to Prensky's (2006) challenge: "It's time for education leaders to raise their heads above the daily grind and observe the new language that's emerging." Following the tenets of the TPACK Framework (Koehler & Mishra, 2009), which urges researchers to consider the complex interplay of the three primary forms of knowledge: content (C), pedagogy (P), and technology (T), and their intersections in the language classroom context, the authors have drawn implications from these intersections: PCK (pedagogical content knowledge), which refers to the knowledge of pedagogy that is applicable to the teaching of specific content that a teacher intends to teach; TCK (technological content knowledge), which refers to the knowledge of the relationship between technology and content; TPK (technological pedagogical knowledge), which refers to the components and capabilities of various technologies as they are used in teaching and learning; and finally TPACK (technological pedagogical content knowledge), which is the intersection of the three components characteristic of true technology integration in the classroom. Furthermore, this study is anchored in Horn and Staker's (2014) Blended Learning Framework, employing one of the four models, the Flex Learning Model, which integrates technology into a regular face-to-face or in-class setup.

Research Questions

The main purpose of this study is to determine the pedagogical viability of integrating "closed" Facebook groups in the ESL classroom. Specifically, the study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What are students' attitudes towards Facebook as a learning tool in the English language classroom?
2. What features of Facebook and Facebook groups do students use in their English language learning?
3. What are the advantages and challenges in using Facebook groups in the English language classroom as perceived by students?

Method

Participants

The study was conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2015–16, which lasted approximately five months. The participants were 100 freshman and sophomore undergraduate students taking compulsory English subjects (ENGN11A – Study and Thinking Skills and ENGN13A – Speech Communication) at the Lyceum of the Philippines University, Manila, Philippines. These students were majoring in accountancy and in multimedia arts. Their English levels ranged from intermediate to upper-intermediate, based on their TOEIC scores on the listening and reading sections of the test. The authors created Facebook groups for each of the four classes, and students were required to be members of those groups. The Facebook group name was given to each class, and they joined the group individually. The authors acted as the group administrators and approved students' requests to join. As a classroom extension, the students were required to participate actively in the online activities such as responding to polls related to the lessons, posting responses to prompts, commenting on the teachers' and classmates' posts, replying to comments, tagging classmates to reply to posts, and uploading and downloading files, among others. The group-chat feature was also used to establish connection among members of the group. Occasionally, students sent PMs (private messages) to ask questions or clarify something. All this was done to encourage students to practice what they had learned in the class and to solve the so-called "three-hour problem" of learning English weekly.

Instruments and Data Analysis

The research design of this study is descriptive qualitative. The authors utilized surveys, students' reflections, wall posts, individual interviews, and focus group discussions to gather data from the respondents. Before and after using the class Facebook groups, the students responded to two surveys via SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey.org). The pre-FB-group survey aimed at exploring students' background and experience on using the features of Facebook and Facebook groups and their demographic profiles, while the post-FB-group survey explored the respondents' experiences and perceptions about using the group in the class. Individually, students were also asked to submit their reflections about how the class Facebook group affected their English language learning in the class. Students' wall posts were also analyzed to identify students' activities and participation in online discussions. Finally, the authors posted an invitation for individual and group interviews on the FB groups' walls, and 15 students agreed to be interviewed at the college office during their free time.

For the analysis of the demographic data, frequency and percentages were used. As for the open-ended survey questions and interviews, students' views were codified and categorized as emerging domain themes and analyzed accordingly. Students' reflections and Facebook wall posts were analyzed and used to give meaning and support to the other data.

RESULTS

Frequency of Facebook Group Access

TABLE 1. Responses to "How often do you access our class' Facebook group?"

Response	No. of Responses	Percentage
Whenever I get Facebook notifications	51	51
Every day, even if I don't get Facebook notifications	44	44
The day before the next English class	3	3
Every week	2	2
Not at all	0	0

One-hundred students participated in the study for a period of one semester (five months). Table 1 shows the frequency of student access to the class' Facebook group. A majority of the students (51%) indicated that they accessed the group every time they were alerted by the notification feature on Facebook; others (44%) reported that they visited the group automatically even without notification alerts in order to check if there were class announcements. A small percentage stated they accessed the group a day before the next English class (3%) or every week (2%). Having mobile gadgets such as cellular phones and tablets, free campus Wi-Fi connection, and free data connection from telecommunication networks allowed students to stay online most of the time and get connected and updated with the online group. This happened despite some concerns about poor Internet connection on campus or at home and lack of Internet-ready gadgets for some students. Others reported that they were willing to access the class' Facebook group regularly but could not to do so due to a high volume of school tasks.

Facebook Group Activities

Facebook, as the world's largest SNS has a wide array of features that allow its users to perform online activities using their electronic devices. When students were asked about their activities when they accessed the group, they reported a total of 711 responses (see Table 2). Of these responses, 12.9% of their responses indicated that they visited the group primarily to see if there were announcements from the teacher such as a lecture file to be downloaded, a weblink to be accessed, a task to be completed, or a project to be submitted. Other responses indicates that students accessed the group to "like" their teacher's and classmates' posts (12.2%), which is also a means of looking for updates and to scan or skim some wall posts. These first two activities can be categorized as passive activities by the students because they do not necessarily have to perform anything. Responses also included seeing posts (10.7%), which is also another way of checking information.

TABLE 2. Responses to "What do you do when you access our class' Facebook group?"

Response	No. of Responses	Percentage
Check announcements from the teacher	92	12.9
Like posts	87	12.2
Comment on my classmates' posts	76	10.7
See posts	76	10.7
Comment on my teacher's posts	66	9.3
Submit assignments or tasks	66	9.3
Reply to my classmates' comments	54	7.6
Tag my teacher or classmates	41	5.8
Reply to my teacher's or classmates' comments	34	4.8
Post random thoughts and/or photos	32	4.5
Share some links, photos, or posts	32	4.5
Chat with my classmates	31	4.4
Start a discussion	19	2.7
Chat with my teacher	5	0.7
Total	711	100

In contrast, the other reported activities can be categorized as active activities because students had to do something to fulfill or accomplish certain tasks. These include the following: commenting on posts (9.3%), submitting tasks (9.3%), replying to posts or comments (7.6%), tagging the teacher or classmates (5.8%), replying to the teacher's or classmates' comments (4.8%), posting ideas or photos (4.5%), sharing links, photos, or videos (4.5%), chatting with classmates 4.4%), starting a discussion (2.7%), and chatting with the teacher (0.7%).

A Facebook group's homepage contains the group's name, cover photo, share button, notifications section, and other features for adding people, sending messages, managing the group, editing group settings, removing the group from "favorite" lists, and creating a new group. For each group, the Facebook group page shows the interface of the group. On the left side are the links for newsfeed, events, favorites, groups, pages, apps, friends, interests, events, and payments. On the right side are the functions to add members to the group, a description of the group, tags, group chats, recent group photos, and suggested groups. In the center is the main activity area for all of the group's members. Here, any member can access the discussion, the members list, events, photos, and files. Below, the member can write a post, add a photo or video, and create a poll. The "more" button allows the members to sell something, add a file, create a photo album, create a document, and create an event. Other features allow members to do the active and passive activities mentioned above. The area where members can write is called the "wall," and the written idea, or uploaded photo or video is called a "post." Posting an idea can be more specific as the wall allows the member to add photos or a video to the post, tag people in the post, add what the member is doing or feeling, and indicate the member's location. Once the idea is successfully posted, other members can use any of the three buttons under the post: "like," comment, or share. Facebook also indicates how many people have "seen" the post. Other options with the post allow any member to save the link, turn off notifications for a particular post, turn off commenting, pin or unpin a post, refresh a shared attachment, delete a post, or start a group chat. On top of this, any member can chat privately with any member or send a private message to others (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. A screenshot of the Facebook group page of one of the four classes in this study.

Table 3 illustrates Facebook features that the students commonly used when they accessed the group. Of the 474 responses, 329, or 69.41%, can be categorized as active activities performed by the students. These include the following: commenting (18.8%), posting (12.9%), replying (11.8%), downloading (6.8%), uploading (4.6%), tagging (4.2%), sharing (3.8%), chatting 3.5%), and editing (3%). Meanwhile, 145 responses, or 30.6%, can be categorized as passive activities conducted when they accessed the group (liking posts, 20.5%; seeing posts, 10.1%).

TABLE 3. Responses to "What Facebook features do you commonly use when you access our group?"

Response	No. of Responses	Percentage
"Like"	97	20.5
Comment	89	18.8
Post	61	12.9
Reply	56	11.8
"See"	48	10.1
Download	32	6.8
Upload	22	4.6
Tag	20	4.2
Share	18	3.8
Chat	17	3.5
Edit	14	3.0
Total	474	100

These data reveal how students utilized the available Facebook group features in performing online tasks and activities as part of their English language learning beyond the regular class hours outside the classroom. It further shows that students used these functions to accomplish both active and passive tasks – they complement one another for successfully carrying out activities virtually with or without teacher or peer assistance.

Learner-Perceived Benefits of Class Facebook Groups

Students' reflections, as well as the results of the survey and individual and group interviews, revealed that all of them liked the idea of having a Facebook group for the class as a virtual classroom extension outside the campus. When asked about the benefits of using Facebook groups in the course, reasons why they liked it, and what challenges they encountered in using it, students reported a variety of responses, as shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4. Responses to "Students' Perceived Advantages of Using the Class Facebook Group"

Response	No. of Responses	Percentage
Facilitates easy and fast information dissemination, class updates	61	36.3
Facilitates online communication and interaction with my teacher and my classmates	36	21.4
Promotes academic sharing and collaboration	16	9.5
Reinforces learning and enhances class participation	15	8.9
Helps develop English communication skills	14	8.3
Serves as a classroom extension	13	7.7
Is easy to access	10	5.9
Facilitates file sharing	3	1.8
Total	168	100

Of the 168 responses, 36.3% (61 responses) indicated that Facebook groups facilitate easy, convenient, and quick information dissemination among students. By accessing the group anywhere via Internet-ready electronic devices, students can get notifications and updates about the class seamlessly, without having to meet physically with the teacher. Thirty-six (21.4%) responses showed that Facebook groups act as an online platform to facilitate teacher–student and student–student interactions. Fifteen responses (9.5%) suggested that Facebook groups can promote sharing and collaboration among students. By using features such as sharing, tagging, posting, commenting, replying, and chatting, teachers and students can easily establish online dialogs, forums, brainstorming sessions, and discussions about various topics, and accomplish tasks by communicating with one another. Fifteen responses (8.9%) pointed out that Facebook groups can increase class participation and reinforce learning through continuous engagement among members. For instance, after class dismissal, the teacher may create a poll about a previously discussed concept in the class and invite students to respond to the question in their free time. This method engages the students to reflect on the lesson, provides an opportunity for passive students in the class to participate, and extends the discussion for further understanding of ideas. Other feedback indicated that Facebook groups can develop the communication skills of the students (8.3%, 14 responses), particularly writing skills because students are given opportunities to post their ideas on the "wall"; respond to polls; engage in discussions via comment threads; and comment on posts. Depending on the guidelines agreed upon by the class, the teacher can ask the students to avoid posting or commenting using slang expressions or colloquialisms to help them develop formal writing skills. Some students also reported that Facebook groups serve as a good classroom extension beyond the physical classroom (7.7%, 13 responses), as an accessible platform for learning anytime and anywhere (5.9%, 10 responses), and as a quick channel for file transfer and sharing (1.8%, 3 responses).

Challenges in Using Class Facebook Groups

As with any other educational undertaking, integrating class Facebook groups into a traditional English language classroom also comes with challenges and limitations. When students were asked what challenges they encountered while using the groups for the entire semester, they reported varied answers (see Table 5). Of the 56 responses, 50% complained about a weak Internet connection on the campus or at home. This was addressed by the university's continued efforts to increase the Wi-Fi connection on the school premises and by encouraging students to use the university's e-library. Fifteen responses (26.7%) echoed a similar concern about difficulty accessing Facebook when logging in, downloading and uploading files, which could also be attributed to weak Internet access. Thirteen responses (23.2%) indicated that students did not have any Internet connection at home; thus, they could not participate actively in the online discussions or comply promptly with the online tasks or assignments. Some students shared that they had to go out of their house and go to a computer shop just to do the online tasks, which required them to spend extra money and extra time.

TABLE 5. Responses to "Challenges Encountered by the Students in Using the Class Facebook Group"

Response	No. of Responses	Percentage
Weak Internet connection	28	50.0
Difficulty in accessing Facebook, consumes extra time	15	26.7
No Internet access at home	13	23.2
Total	56	100

DISCUSSION

This study explored the educational value of integrating Facebook groups into the English language classroom by identifying how students used this media in performing classroom tasks online, how they viewed its relevance and usefulness to their English language learning, and what challenges they encountered in using it. Consistent with the findings of Low and Warawudhi (2016), this study revealed the pedagogical potential of using Facebook groups in managing large classes and in providing enhanced engagement among teachers and students beyond the physical classroom via virtual spaces. Because of its ubiquity and popularity among the learners, Facebook acted as the online rendezvous for the teachers and students; and since everybody was using Facebook, it was easy for the teacher to create an online community and ask the students to join and become members. Hence, the findings illustrate that Facebook groups can serve as a class management system that allows the teachers to create an exclusive virtual space, design it like an online meeting room, and use it as an extension of the physical classroom. Facebook groups act as a point of convergence where teachers and students connect with one another at any time and place with the power of the Internet.

The results of this study also corroborated those of Shih (2013): Integrating Facebook using a blended learning model such as the flex model based on Horn and Staker (2014), which combines face-to-face or in-class instruction with off-line or out-of-class interaction, can help increase students' interest and motivation in a lesson and assist them in doing their classroom tasks. Because the teacher can upload learning materials as review tools, post useful websites for enhanced input, and communicate with students for consultation, the learners feel connected and engaged with the happenings of the class; thus, continuity of learning may occur. Various Facebook features such as "post," "upload," "download," "comment," "reply," "share," and "chat" allow the teacher and the students to access and share files quickly and easily.

Consistent with Miron and Ravid (2015), this study found that the use of Facebook groups for educational purposes was favored by the students because they appreciated the idea of using a social tool as a means for learning, where they could freely share their opinions and apply the lesson concepts learned in the classroom. This also resonates what Yu (2014) found in the context of university-level learning in Taiwan, where she also utilized Facebook groups to facilitate student participation from in-class to online class discussion. Selwyn (2007) emphasized that this active participation and collaboration among students on Facebook reflects a good model of learning.

Although Madge, Meek, Wellens, and Hooley (2009) argued that the use of Facebook is solely for social purposes and sometimes for informal learning, we believe that careful teacher design can capitalize on the "social power" of Facebook, and educators can tap its features to provide an educational dimension that can co-occur with its social function. Selwyn (2009) may view this as intruding into students' social spheres in order to use Facebook for educationally "appropriate" or "valid" purposes, yet we cannot discredit its pedagogical potential as the participants in this study found it to be helpful and useful in their learning process. Other concerns remain to be addressed: concerns pertaining to the availability of infrastructure, readiness and willingness of teachers to innovate their pedagogies, capability of the students to participate, flexibility of the curriculum, and appropriacy to the learning context.

While integrating an SNS such as Facebook into the language classroom may or may not appeal to other educators, we believe that it can be a feasible means to engage our modern learners ("digital natives" belonging to Generation Z), address their changing needs and nature, and connect with their dynamic, fast-paced, and mobile lifestyle. We have digital learners; hence, we have to digitize our teaching, if that is one effective way to provide them with a useful and meaningful language learning experience.

The findings of this study must be set against its own limitations: The area of inquiry is only that of class Facebook groups, which is only one of the communication mechanisms available to the students to explore and utilize while they are online. The data showed the concurrent use of other Facebook features among the participants, with students referring to private messaging and chatting. Students' use of the class Facebook groups is part and parcel of the face-to-face mode of interaction in the classroom, and such use should be seen as only partial accounts of larger conversations taking place among students and their teachers about their studies. This may raise "important questions about how universities will articulate their teaching with students" (Kitto & Higgins, 2003), how educational leaders acknowledge these innovative strategies (Prensky, 2006), and how we can harmoniously blend our time-tested pedagogies with the emerging models of teaching and learning.

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Emotional Literacy: A Necessity for Teachers, Parents, and Students

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The skills connected to emotional literacy have been associated with social, academic, and professional success. According to its originator, Claude Steiner (2003), emotional literacy "is to enable people to work together cooperatively, free from manipulation and coercion, using emotions to bind people together and enhance the collective quality of life" (p. 17). This paper will discuss the form, function, and strategies for achieving emotional literacy. It will also provide suggestions on how to develop and use emotional literacy strategies with those children who appear to be unresponsive to the more traditional methods of classroom management. However, all of the strategies reported in the paper could be useful to teachers, parents, and students of any age. The theories and strategies explored in the paper will endeavor to advise individuals on how to be aware of their emotions and make their emotions work for them instead of against them.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional literacy emerged in the 1970s thanks to psychologists and educationalists such as Daniel Goleman, Claude Steiner, and Howard Gardner. Over the next decades, it has become increasingly important to teaching and professional contexts. The requisite balance of EQ and IQ to be successful has been described as being 20% academic grades and 80% emotional intelligence (Click, 2002). Thus, emotional literacy skills are a necessity.

English classrooms that are based on communicative language teaching are an ideal place for the development of emotional literacy. It is already known that language is often learned best when "real," authentic communication is engaged in during lessons. It is not then a huge step to consider the possible incorporation of emotional literacy techniques and routines into the language classroom. The inclusion of such techniques will, according to Steiner (2003), enable individuals to comprehend and deal with their emotions, discern the emotions of others, and aid in identifying the emotions that create a sense of empathy with those around us. From this process of recognizing and understanding our own and others' emotions comes the ability to understand others. The understanding gleaned throughout the emotional literacy process is argued by Steiner to create an environment where individuals are able to work more cooperatively. Steiner advocates that emotional literacy is particularly beneficial for those who find that their emotions are often "out of control" or "too tightly reined in." Those participating in emotional literacy training will, according to Steiner, (a) speak about emotions and what causes them, (b) develop their own empathic intuition capacity, and (c) apologize for the damage caused by their emotional mistakes (p. 11). Thus, emotional literacy activities tend to focus on identifying and managing emotions, recognizing emotions in others, and enhancing and repairing relationships.

The consequences of not developing the emotional literacy of our students, according to Sherwood (2008), are that the children act out negative emotions such as anger, grief, low self-esteem, and bully behaviors. Moreover, in adolescence, these behaviors are thought to emerge as maladaptive behaviors and cognition connected to depression, addiction, aggression, and self-harming. They may also lead to the psychopathology connected to "cutting," anorexia, and bulimia. These behaviors and flawed cognition would arguably impede learning. Embedding emotional literacy in the classroom would allow children who are being labeled as "difficult" or "bad" to identify, understand, and explore their emotions, which would lead to more cooperative behaviors. Sherwood (2008) argues that so often traditional behaviorist classroom management strategies seek to punish the child who is already feeling bad rather than attempting to calm and heal the child. Emotional literacy training, however, is not just for the emotionally troubled children. It is for all children – for students and for every participant of the educational process.

For the purpose of this paper, I have included the more creative techniques that would fit readily in the language classroom, and simple strategies that can be applied across many different age groups. The techniques that will be discussed here are storyboarding, the six-second pause, circle time, role-playing, journal writing, and mood meters.

The Six-Second Pause

The six-second pause was an emotional literacy strategy identified by a group of neuropsychologists. The psychologists were able to identify the fact that it takes up to six seconds for the emotion-producing part of the brain to connect with the rational part of the brain. Thus, a six-second pause can help an individual avoid simply reacting to any strong emotions that they are feeling. Therefore, the six-second pause will allow for a much calmer, wiser response.

According to Goalbook (2016), it also takes up to six seconds to recognize compassion on the faces of people with whom we interact. Therefore, it could be useful to learn that we need to slow down a little in our classroom to engage in personal interaction and take the six seconds to more accurately recognize the emotions that others are producing. According to Goalbook, students can create the six-second pause by "recalling 6 math facts, naming 6 friends, or thinking of 6 favorite foods." According to Goalbook, the student's emotional response to the situation will become interrupted and his analytical (e.g., logic and reasoning) response is then activated. The six-second pause is a simple concept and could be introduced as a classroom management tool and thinking routine into almost any level classroom or culture. The six-second pause is a very useful emotional literacy strategy contributed by the field of neuropsychology.

Circle Time

The thinking and sharing routine of “circle time” can also be adopted as a classroom routine. The name “circle time” is more synonymous with elementary school classrooms and is often used as a bonding activity and to celebrate the pupil’s positive achievements during the day. It is an ideal time to administer what Steiner (2003) calls “positive strokes.” Positive strokes are where we actively praise a student’s behavior or success in their activities. They can also be used for students to acknowledge their emotions, whether via an emotion-appropriate “mask,” “puppet,” “role-play,” “paper-bag drawing” or “hand drawing,” “mood meter,” or “emotion cards” (Maitland, 2013). The circle time activity can form a routine in any part of a day.

A similar activity with a more age-appropriate name is equally valuable in a high school or college environment. Circle time is a chance for people to voice their emotions about the day’s or classes’ events (Roffey, 2006). It is an opportunity to feel heard. It is also an opportunity for the class to recognize and address the emotions of others, including false emotions (e.g., where pupils appear to be attempting to demonstrate happiness, but it is obvious that they are faking it for the group or teacher). It is also important to recognize insincere apologies and interaction. Generally, in circle time, everyone has an opportunity to speak, although no one is forced to speak. Circle time can be developed in a multiplicity of ways; however, the most important aspect of it is that the students develop a positive self-esteem, uniting their rational mind and their emotions, and in doing so, they become able to identify the physical messages they receive and connect them with emotional events. The students also learn to recognize and respond to the emotions of others, and can identify their own strengths and weaknesses. In short, this and other emotional literacy activities prevent the repression, denial, and exclusion of feelings that sometimes take place in the more traditional classroom (Sherwood, 2008).

Storyboarding

Another way of building emotional literacy strategies into the school curriculum is to encourage students to use storyboarding techniques. This idea was adopted by Tew (2007). As an example, students can attempt to form perceptions of events that are described in speech bubbles. These speech bubbles can encourage an increased understanding between teachers and students. The teacher can introduce one simple frame and its dialogue. The teacher can model the task and thinking process required of the students. The students then attempt to consider opinions, frame of mind, and attached behaviors of the characters or people in the stories. One example described by Tew (2007) was a dialogue of a student arriving late for class (Table 1). It explored the teacher’s emotions and then the student’s. It then encouraged the students to explore how the late student could have responded differently to gain a different response and a more healthy relationship with the teacher. The students may also create their own storyboards of events. They can then explore the different outcomes of the interaction in the storyboard frame and even finish off the stories with alternative endings. The storyboard process can enable students, teachers, or parents to develop a wide repertoire of communication strategies that will facilitate interaction in personal and professional lives.

TABLE 1. Storyboarding Dialogue and Emotions

Teacher: *Why were you not in class?* Student: *I was taking my IELTS exam.*		
Behavior	**Teacher**	**Student**
Thinking	Student is neglecting my class and disrespecting me.	I needed to do my IELTs, it's really important.
Feeling	Hurt and angry.	Misunderstood and under pressure.
Behaving	Annoyed with student and cold. Deducts participation marks from the student.	Student misses more classes because if she attends, she will be punished.
Task: How could you alter this interaction to create a better understanding and more effective communication between the teacher and student? (From Tew, 2007)		

This activity can easily be adapted for literacy and English classes. It can even be extended to include student role-plays of the different interaction frames and alternative endings or dramatic sculpting activities when the actors pause and the audience attempts to improve body language and provide different dialogue. The activity allows for the growth of communicative competence and emotional literacy.

The technique requires only prepared storyboards and no special artistic talent. It could be described as a useful visible thinking routine as well as an emotional literacy technique. According to Tew (2007), the act of exploring alternative endings through storyboarding and role-play enables students to develop a wide range of emotional responses to situations. It also allows them to consider what might be the most favorable behavioral and emotional responses. Moreover, it gives students the practice of developing verbally optimal responses to the different social situations so that they are fully prepared. The students can then transfer this cognitive process to many other social situations, further developing their confidence and sensitivity in their interactions with others.

Creative Play

Another way of building emotional literacy strategies into the classroom is to use techniques such as role-play, journal writing, and creative writing. Clay and plasticine play can also be useful according to Sherwood (2008). Students can act out situations and engage in dramatic sculpting as suggested by Winston (2012). In dramatic sculpting, they will be able to imagine and practice the potential social responses they may utilize in future social interactions. As with the storyboarding activities, they will eventually be armed with a bank of responses for a wide range of potential social situations. Journal writing encourages the development of intrapersonal skills and catharsis of negative emotions. Children acquire the chance to escape to new places, the opportunity to try out new roles, to feel more emotionally powerful. These emotional literacy experiences are also offered by the reading of novels, and watching and discussing appropriate videos.

Clay and play putty have been used in the specific circumstances where children are encouraged to identify their “bad feelings” and then create the “bad feeling” using the clay or play putty (Sherwood, 2008). The bad feeling can then be destroyed. This process is usually completed several times until the negative feelings have diminished. These activities can be included in a specific “nurturing group,” where children are encouraged to vent their feelings, or during art classes. The process may also be carried out in a “time out” corner, where art materials can be left and the child can privately work through and remove the difficult or strong feelings, and then go back to the class to work more productively (Sherwood, 2008). It may also be possible to connect the literacy events to art activities; for example, have the child find words and phrases to describe the bad feeling. The child could also write about the events that triggered the bad feeling.

Mood Meter

Another emotional literacy tool is the mood meter (Cristakis, 2013). There are many examples of mood meters to be found on the Internet. I have always utilized meters that use words and emotional vocabulary, but it is also possible to use masks, emoji, and puppets for a child to represent their emotions. These items can be stuck onto charts in the form of stickers or be chosen from a selection at certain times of the day. They can be stuck on as stickers or be used to engage in conversation about a student’s mood. The mood meter creates a starting point for discussion with the child about how and why they feel a particular way. The addition of puppets and masks allow students to talk in a manner in which they feel safer or more comfortable to speak (Maitland, 2013).

Conclusion

Emotional literacy is a necessary and teachable skill. The process of learning emotional literacy marries well with English teaching and the educational situation. Emotional literacy strategies are arguably relatively simple to teach. They do however require consistency and modeling by teachers, parents, stakeholders, and students. In this light, I would recommend the use of the emotional literacy strategies and scaffolds of storyboarding, the six-second pause, circle time, role-play, journal writing, creative play, and mood meters. In using these scaffolds and strategies, students, teachers, and parents can identify their own and others’ emotions and give support. They can also develop the ability of providing esteem-raising comments and positive strokes, and develop skills in adjusting their emotions; thereby, ameliorating negative emotions and increasing positive emotions. The consequences of using emotional literacy strategies will inevitably be increased personal and professional success, and happier, more cooperative school and work environments.

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Measuring the Effectiveness of Overseas Intensive English Programs

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Many, if not most, universities in Japan have partner relationships such as study-abroad programs, research exchanges, and summer intensive language programs with universities overseas. These relationships are often heavily promoted to prospective students as part of the seemingly never-ending emphasis on "globalization" in Japan, but are they actually beneficial to students? The research in this paper uses quantitative and qualitative assessment measures to gauge the effectiveness of two summer intensive English programs on offer by Shizuoka University of Art and Culture in the summer of 2015. Results indicate that many students showed measurable improvements in various aspects of their spoken production.

Introduction

For many students, just being in a new and exotic place ensures a positive experience. There is nothing wrong with that per se. However, it should still be incumbent on a university to make an effort to monitor and ensure the quality of the programs it promotes to its students. The authors suspect that the programs on offer have been of limited value in terms of actual language improvements.

In addition, a new Shizuoka University of Art and Culture (hereafter, SUAC) curriculum established in 2015 allows students to earn graduation credits for completing short-term intensive language programs overseas. This option has, as intended, resulted in an increase in the number of students taking programs during spring and summer vacation periods.

Nine students from the Department of International Culture chose to participate in the two university-sponsored programs in the summer of 2015. Seven of them agreed to assist with this research project. Of these, six studied in England and one in Canada.

Aims

Although other English skills could be affected, it is mostly their communicative competence that students hope to improve by traveling abroad. Accordingly, the goal of this project was to assess students' spoken production, both before and after participation in a program, in order to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent (if any) did students' spoken production improve during the program?
2. In what specific area of spoken production were the largest improvements experienced (pronunciation, fluency, grammatical range and accuracy, lexical range and accuracy, natural language usage)?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Osborne (2008) offers a simple definition of the difference between quantitative and qualitative assessment: "quantitative criteria [are] how many things the second language learner can do in the target language and qualitative criteria [are] how well he/she can do them."

Fluency is a notoriously difficult concept to define. Iwashita (2010) assesses fluency quantitatively, and notes that "some researchers focus solely on the temporal features of speech ... others look exclusively at the automaticity of language use" (pp. 35–36).

Probably the most comprehensive effort to define and measure oral fluency was carried out by Freed, Segalowitz, and Dewey (2004). They identified nine separate ways to measure oral fluency: Related to the fluidity of speech produced were (a) speech rate, (b) hesitation-free speech runs, (c) filler-free speech runs, (d) fluent runs, (e) repetition-free speech runs, and (f) grammatical-repair-free speech runs. The three further measures were total words spoken, duration of speaking time, and longest turn.

For the current study, nine measures for fluency is unrealistic. The intention is to measure various aspects of spoken production, such as pronunciation, grammar, and lexis, so a more general measure of fluency would be more appropriate. However, if any of these other aspects are noticed, they will certainly be commented on.

Du (2013), used samples of students' spoken production produced during casual conversation rather than during a formal assessment situation. This was due to recommendations by Lennon (1990) and Olynyk, D'Anglejan, and Sankoff (1990) that the language produced by students during a spoken interview is not a representative nor favorable sample because of the duress involved.

Pronunciation, lexical choice, and natural language use are often best assessed using qualitative measures. Analysis using thematic charts can be a useful tool when assessing these skills as it allows researchers to notice patterns in raw data.

Thematic charts are a type of qualitative data analysis allowing researchers to take detailed notes on various aspects of students' speech, sort that data into categories, and attempt to identify patterns. They are practical and flexible, and encourage comparisons to be made. Other benefits of using thematic charts with qualitative data are that they "permit[s] within and between case searches: ... *thematic* categories and patterns *across* different cases, *associations* between phenomena *within one case*, [and] *associations* in phenomena between groups of cases" (Spencer, Ritchie, & O'Connor, 2003, p. 210; emphasis theirs).

Levis (2005, p. 370) notes "two contradictory principles" in the assessment of pronunciation, nativeness, and intelligibility, and how a recent move toward the latter often makes assessment more challenging.

Regarding lexical choice, the words students choose in any interaction will largely be words they have acquired and can use automatically. Rossiter (2009) notes that choice of lexis exerts a significant influence on perceptions of L2 fluency. Rossiter also points out that inappropriate lexical choice by learners can leave a negative impression with native speakers. Granger (2009) found that learners of English have a tendency to overuse certain adjectives, such as the word *important*.

Collentine's (2004) comparative study of students who studied at home and some who studied abroad provides evidence that study-abroad students achieved higher degrees of semantic density in their narratives, which, according to Fillmore (1979), constitutes an indicator of fluency.

Trenchs-Parera (2009) found that, after studying abroad, students in her study demonstrated dysfluency patterns more similar to those of native speakers; for example, they used lexical fillers rather than self-repetitions, pauses, and non-lexical fillers; and therefore appeared to be more fluent and confident about their L2 proficiency.

Recent research suggests that it is reasonable to assess some aspects of learners' spoken production with quantitative measures and others with qualitative measures, and that a combination of both may result in robust findings. The next section of this paper will explain the methodology of our study and outline in detail the measures we chose to assess our students' spoken production.

METHOD

The assessment measures used in this study included a pre-departure and a post-return interview, each with the two authors. Both authors used an outline with the same sets of questions (Appendix A) of increasing complexity for both interviews, and all interviews were recorded for later analysis. The questions were used as a guideline rather than strictly adhered to in order to encourage natural conversation.

Another important tool was a thematic chart designed by the authors (Appendix B). It was hoped that the use of a thematic chart would allow analysis of the students' spoken performance before and after their program, the identification of patterns in students' English, and a determination of whether their time overseas had altered those patterns in any way. It was hoped that comparing and contrasting the two authors' comments would reveal patterns that might not otherwise become apparent. It was further hoped that a higher level of detail could be achieved in the analysis of the data.

Finally, the authors gave each student a pre-departure and post-return score based on the IELTS speaking band descriptors. The four criteria used by IELTS are fluency, grammar, lexis, and pronunciation. These scores have been collated in Appendix C. The individual scores given by the two authors were averaged to give each student a final pre-departure interview score on the IELTS speaking band. Post-return, this process was repeated. All interviews were carried out within a few weeks of student departure and return dates.

RESULTS

The pre- and post-study interviews attempted to document improvement in fluency, and by extension, pragmatic competence. It may be unrealistic to expect dramatic L2 development from a one-month program. However, the authors hypothesized that a detailed pre- and post-trip analysis of students' language and IELTS scores could help them identify any language developments.

Listening repeatedly to recordings of the pre- and post-study-abroad interviews while simultaneously writing analytical comments into the thematic chart yielded a variety of noteworthy observations. While major improvements in students' English ability were neither expected nor seen, several minor but significant changes were evident.

Student 4 used quite a staccato style before her summer experience, and more natural, connected speech after returning. After the summer abroad, Student 4 was able to produce utterances like "I liked hanging out with Student X. It was cool!" In her pre-departure interview, she frequently paused mid-sentence and never produced anything so natural sounding.

A number of students made noticeable improvements in their use of "natural" English. This was observed in three out of seven students by both authors. Examples of natural phrases used post-return were "I went to London twice and the second time..." and "I like Harry Potter, so I wanted to go to...." Both authors interpreted these as clear signs that small, but significant, improvements had been made.

However, by far the most obvious transformation was in fluency, defined as "speech that is natural and normal, including native-like use of pausing, rhythm, intonation, stress, rate of speaking ..." (Richards & Schmidt, 1992). Specific changes noticed were in increased use of colloquial expressions, willingness to speak at length, and a reduction in the amount of time spent searching for answers. This was observed in five out of the seven students by one author, Researcher 1, and in four out of seven students by the other author, Researcher 2. This seemed to be particularly, but not exclusively, true when the students were speaking about their overseas experiences. In particular, the authors noticed that students spoke continually for several connected sentences without prompting, with rhythm and intonation that had not been observed in those same students pre-departure.

Another significant improvement that was noticed by Researcher 1 was a reduction in the use of Japanese "katakana" pronunciation of English words by students 2, 4, and 7. Katakana English, the fitting of English words into the Japanese sound system, like "miruku" for *milk*, is common for English teachers to encounter in a Japanese educational environment. However, anecdotal reports suggest that Japanese students can often confuse listeners when they try to use "katakana" pronunciation abroad. This could have encouraged the students to adjust to more widely understandable pronunciation, for which they may have noticed natural language model input from their surroundings. Student 4 was observed to have made progress in her pronunciation. She was able to correctly pronounce the word *McDonalds* in English (rather than the Japanese "Macudonarudo") after her summer abroad.

The authors also noticed an improvement in the use of prepositions by Student 1 (pre-departure: "I want to go London"; post-return: "I went to

London"), in article use from Student 2 (pre-departure: "I go to British pub"; post-return: "I went to a pub with my friends"). A greater variety in the use of adjectives from Student 5 was also found. She produced sentences such as "I had an amazing time," "The teachers were great," and "The campus was beautiful" in the post-trip interview.

It is worth reiterating that of all the improvements noticed through the use of the thematic chart were relatively minor. In fact, for Researcher 1, in just two cases were they judged to be significant enough to warrant a jump in students' IELTS scores for any of the four criteria of fluency, grammar, lexis, and pronunciation. In both cases, the jumps in IELTS band score were in fluency. This is in contrast to Researcher 2, who found a total of nine discrete areas that warranted a jump in student IELTS scores. In fact, Researcher 2 found that Student 5 had jumped a full point on three of the four criteria (fluency, grammar, and pronunciation) and a half point on lexis. This discrepancy could be explained by the fact that Researcher 2 is less experienced with the IELTS criteria and may have been overly generous in assigning scores. It should also be noted that Researcher 2 interviewed most students first for the pre-departure interview. Some students may have been excessively nervous initially, and they may have then performed better for Researcher 1 when their affective filter was interfering less.

The average of the pre-departure IELTS speaking band scores was 4.4 for the six students who studied in England and 4.7 on the post-return interview. Five of the six showed improvement on their overall score, with Student 5 making a full half-point overall jump from 4.6 to 5.1. The student who studied in Canada showed negligible improvement, scoring 4 on her pre-departure interview and 4.1 on her post-return interview.

Discussion

The small number of students participating in this research and the fact that only one of the students who went to Canada participated limited the authors' ability to make any definitive statements about the greater effectiveness of one summer intensive English program over another. Even so, the data collected does allow the authors to state with confidence that many of the students made noticeable improvements in their spoken English.

The students whose fluency improved had all studied in England. However, this does not necessarily mean that the program in England was superior. Many confounding factors could have affected this result. For example, the students in England started from a higher point (average IELTS speaking score of 4.4) and the sample size of only one student in Canada makes comparison difficult.

While this study did not directly attempt to measure the effect of the intensive English program experience on confidence, knowing most of these students well and having taught many of them allowed the authors to note positive changes in them post-return. Both authors have independently observed that Students 3, 5, and 7 all appear more confident since their return. In class, all students, particularly Students 3 and 5, have been more likely to ask questions unprompted, take longer turns when speaking, and seem less concerned with minor errors that do not interfere with communication.

CONCLUSIONS

The road to acquisition of a foreign language is long indeed, and the research described in this paper looks at just a small slice of that journey as a small number of students experienced it. As anyone who has taught or studied a second or foreign language knows, there are no shortcuts or secrets that can take the place of lots of hard work. Many learners often get frustrated with their seeming lack of progress (as some in this study did). As both researchers and English teachers, it was satisfying to be able to find areas in which a number of students did actually make measurable gains in their English ability and to point those improvements out to students.

Summer intensive language programs and study-abroad relationships are often an important part of a university's marketing strategy, and universities have a responsibility to monitor quality. The two English intensive programs on offer by SUAC in the summer of 2015 did seem to help students improve their spoken production as multiple students showed improvement. Even so, the exploratory nature of the research and the limited sample size makes definitive statements impossible. Further research in this area utilizing similar assessment measures and a larger sample size may be able to produce more definitive results.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

Part 1

A. Where You Live

Where do you live?
Do you like living there? (why/why not?)
If you could change one thing about it, what would it be? (why/why not?)

B. Your Hometown

Where's your hometown?
What is the best thing about that place?
What time of year is best to visit your hometown?

C. University

What is your major?
Why did you choose that major?
What do you like about this college?
Is there anything you dislike?

D. Shopping

Do you enjoy shopping for clothes?
Would you rather shop in department stores or in small shops? (why?)
When do people usually shop in your country?

Part 2

Talk about a job you would like to do in the future. You should say:

What it is.
Why you would like to do it.
Explain what skills you need to do this job.

Part 3

A. Employment Situation

Please compare employment patterns today with those of several decades ago.
How do you think things may develop in the future?

What is the situation in your country regarding equal opportunities for all?

B. Unemployment

How would you describe the unemployment situation in your country?
Do you consider unemployment benefits in your country adequate?
How much responsibility should the government take in supporting the unemployed?

Appendix B

Thematic Chart

Student	Student 1 Pre-departure Interview		Student 1 Post-Return Interview	
Criteria	Researcher 1	Researcher 2	Researcher 1	Researcher 2
Pronunciation	Clear at all times. Quiet if unsure. Enunciates every syllable clearly. I sink.	Mostly clear and understandable. No katakana English.	No katakana. Clear syllables as above. I sink. Sird floor. (3rd)	Some katakana influence on words. Slow. Clearly enunciates most words.
Fluency	Quite high thinking time throughout to access vocabulary and grammar. Quick response time for some basic phrases (shopping). Long pauses in extended speaking.	Lots of stops & starts. My mother said I have to... travel book. Takes long time to think before speaking. Fairly long pauses.	Seemed much more eager to speak. Thinking time seems lower. Started anecdote without prompting.	I was little nervous (missed article). When I go back Japan I don't want to go back Japan. Often takes a long time to answer.
Grammar	Some past/present errors: want/wanted. Tell this university. When I Junior High School student. I would be in Aichi. This job. I am not good speak.	I want to speak many people. (no preposition). Modal verb usage: I practice speaking.	Although..., but... I have to (past) I used (correctly used past) Is/am (used incorrectly for past) In bathroom not, don't shower curtain. Especially I want to go New Zealand.	Reading was little bad. Listening is very improved. People are (were) very kind. Better preposition use: I went to Bath. We stayed in London
Vocabulary	Japanese English: depato, kombini Slow to access: building, people, English communication class, flight	Did not understand "Do you commute?" Flight attendant Ground staff	Praying/playing (misunderstood). Almost good experience (mostly). I heard that topic (meaning opinion). My next to person,	Some difficulty finding words.

	attendant, heavy physical job. Understood but difficulty in answering and explaining opinion.		one hours.	
Natural	Grammar and vocabulary weakness does not prevent her from getting the message across.	Sometimes uses Japanese. Corrected herself: better in past – better now.	Maybe, but... I went to London twice and the second time... I like Harry Potter, so I wanted to go to...	Two times. Trains. Lots of self-correction & checks.
Strategy	Actually,... But In Japan,... I think..., I don't think... Japanese people don't want to...	*Nan to iun daro* (How should I say this?) Did not ask for clarification/repetition. (Sorry? Excuse me? etc.)	Yorkshire pudding? What's...? (to ask) Is this main dish?	Misunderstood question. No attempt to check. Sometimes uses Japanese. Repeats/corrects herself frequently.
IELTS Band	Fluency: 4 Lexis: 4 Grammar: 4 Pronunciation: 5	Fluency: 4 Lexis: 3 Grammar: 4 Pronunciation: 6	Fluency: 5 Lexis: 4 Grammar: 4 Pronunciation: 5	Fluency: 4.5 Lexis: 4 Grammar: 4 Pronunciation: 6

APPENDIX C

IELTS Speaking Band Scores

Participating Student (Country Visited)	Pre-departure Score	Post-return Score
1 (England)	4.25	4.6
2 (England)	3.8	3.8
3 (England)	5.4	5.5
4 (England)	4.2	4.6
5 (England)	4.6	5.1
6 (England)	4.2	4.3
England Average	4.4	4.7
7 (Canada)	4	4.1

A Quick Refresher on How to Write a Research Paper

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This paper is a refresher to academic writing at the graduate level for EFL instructors intending to further their education with a graduate school program. For those who have not done academic writing in many years, this paper will cover some of the basics, including how to organize a paper, the particulars of writing (hedging, signposting, and transition statements), how to use tables and figures, and some writing do's and don'ts. The author is writing from a British graduate school perspective and as such, some of the advice will be specific to graduate programs in that region. One should always be sure to check the particulars of their program to ensure that the proper guidelines are being followed.

INTRODUCTION

Firstly, a research paper, for the purpose of this article, refers to *action research* rather than *experimental research*. The former typically contains the following three elements: first, it is observation driven, usually of a classroom interaction or discourse; second, there is often no control group, instead only one or more classes are observed; and lastly, the process of teaching or learning is generally the focus: It is the process that is of interest to the researcher. This differs from experimental research in that the latter is often theory driven to test a specific method, having both an experimental group and a control group with the focus of the research being the product: the product of teaching.

One model of action research in L2 classrooms, as suggested by Richards and Lockhart (1994), involves three steps. The first is the *identification of a problem*, be it a failure or a lack of something occurring, or negative attitudes towards, for example, learning English. The second step involves an *observation of a classroom event*, which could be a teacher–student (T-S) event, a student–student (S-S) event, or the presentation of material in the class. The third step is the *modification of classroom behavior*, wherein there is a change in the T-S event, the S-S event, or the presentation of the material.

For example, the Action Research Checklist (Richards & Lockhart, 1994), involving five steps, can be used to approach one of the above-mentioned scenarios. First, identify a problem, such as the teacher talking for most of the class with minimal student input. Next, a data collection method is chosen, such as recording the classroom lesson to look for the percentage of teacher talk versus student talk; the kinds of interaction where the teacher dominates would be of particular interest. The data is then analyzed and an implementation plan is developed, such as introducing more student-centered tasks by moving towards activity-based learning and away from teacher-based explanations. Repetition of the data collection, analysis, and implementation to fine-tune the lesson, is carried out until an ideal is achieved.

In the next section, paper organization is explained, including the basic components of a table of contents, along with some general advice. Again, this is written from the perspective of an EFL instructor conducting research in their classroom, using the definition of *action research* previously mentioned.

Paper Organization

A research paper will contain the following six sections for the table of contents: Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Results and Discussion, Conclusion, and References. Each of these sections will be discussed as to what is included in it, along with general suggestions.

First, the Introduction section sets the stage for the problem being reported in the paper. This includes a brief explanation of the aim and focus of the paper. Doing so, assists with narrowing the range of the topic and helping the reader to know what the paper covers. It contains general information about a field of research to provide the reader with a setting for the problem to be reported. More specific statements about the aspects of the problem, already studied by other researchers, are given so as to indicate a gap in the research, thereby allowing one to raise questions about or to extend previously gained knowledge in some way. This is the rationale for further investigation of the topic and the motivation for the study. Finally, very specific statements about the purpose or objectives of the researcher's study and an outline of the paper are included.

Next, the Literature Review section gives details of research studies that have been carried out in this area and are reviewed in a critical manner. This is achieved by working with the sources to explain what they researched and their methodology and findings, and then relate those findings to the context of the current study. One needs to identify what is missing from these studies, describe the gap, and explain how the present research will fill that gap. In addition, any new terminology should be introduced and explained, but this can also be done in the Introduction. Overall, the Literature Review is the theoretical background to understand the presentation and discussion of the results of the study, and as such, these two sections are interrelated. At the end of the Literature Review section is where the research question or questions are first introduced. The questions do not need to be complex; they should be something that the researcher can prove/disprove within their teaching context. The aim of the research question, or the way to express those aims, dictates the methodology to be used in the study; the instruments need to be able to measure what one wants to measure, and this is supported by the theory one provides.

Thus, the Methodology section can include a restatement, if already mentioned in the Literature Review section, of the research question. This restatement would be the breakdown of the question into its measurable components. The goal of the methodology is replicability; therefore, a recipe style of reporting is needed so that others can attempt to reproduce the study in their own teaching context. It also includes the rationale behind the choice of methodology and the instruments used. "Without research questions, the researcher will flounder; with them, they will be guided in terms of data needed, data collection methods and data analysis" (Sunderland, 2009, p. 9). Finally, any unforeseen problems that occurred during the study are discussed along with how they were dealt with.

Looking at the example in the introduction of this paper, the topic studied by way of action research would be teacher talking time (TTT). The aim of the research would be to find opportunities for students to speak more in class and to reduce TTT. One potential research question could be "How can teachers enhance the quantity and quality of student verbal communication in South Korean adult EFL classrooms?" This is a broad question that would need to be further broken down into specific, measurable components.

Next, the Results and Discussion section reminds the reader of the research questions, provides the findings from the study along with an interpretation of them, and then relates these to the current literature cited in the previous section of the paper. This is the "time to shine" by expanding on what the findings could mean in the context of the research. It is important to ensure that no grandiose statements of fact are claimed, as any findings are specific to the teaching context researched. Lastly, this section can be separate or combined, it depends on the paper and the type of research. In many cases "the combination of the two sections works better because it allows for an ongoing theoretical commentary and theoretical framing" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 284). Not only that, it also takes up less space!

The Conclusion section is a restatement of the original aim and/or hypothesis of the paper. It reviews the most important findings, and there is the possibility of revisiting the research questions. It will also include the main limitations and implications of the study, along with recommendations for further research. Finally, if applicable, any practical applications of the findings are also explained in the conclusion.

Lastly, the Reference list contains all of the sources cited throughout the paper; it is not a reading list nor a bibliography. As such, if a work has not been mentioned directly in the paper, it should not be included in the reference list. It is important to follow the guidelines of the institution as to which format is required. There are many free, open-source reference management programs available online (e.g., Mendeley, Zetero) that are very useful.

Having outlined the basic structure of the paper, writing conventions are covered next. These include hedging, signposting, and transition statements, all of which add clarity to the flow of the argument within the paper.

Hedging, Signposting, and Transition Statements

Hedging, signposting, and *transition statements* are used to organize the paper and to ground the claims being made. Firstly, hedging, is a qualifying of the claims regarding the findings of the study; there are no outright statements of fact: This proves... (X). The findings of the study are content specific; that is, they are only applicable to the researcher's specific teaching context. There is the possibility that certain aspects could be applicable to other's contexts' but specific wording is needed to explain it, such as *it appears/seems that; could; may; might be; perhaps; from personal observation/experience; from my teaching context/situation/classroom setting*. Using this type of wording ensures that broad generalizations are not being made based only on findings that are specific to the researcher's own classroom.

Next, signposting and transition statements assist with the organization of the paper to add clarity to what is presented. The language is formulaic and appears redundant but is necessary, particularly when composing works of great length, such as a dissertation of 15,000 words. Signposting is the logical linking of ideas within a paragraph and from one paragraph to the next. This makes it easier for the reader to follow the logic, reasoning, or rationale, within the paper. This can be used throughout the paper and is particularly useful when explaining previous research, methodologies, and findings, and linking the discussion to the literature review. For example, when explaining theories, the following language could be used: *Three reasons for X could be, first, ...; second, ...; and third, ...*. Then, a more detailed explanation of the three components is included along with either an example, a rewording, or further linking of its importance as it relates to the argument in the paper. The language could include *The first CC, could mean that ... and this is important because ...; The second, DD, might demonstrate..., this is influential due to ...; Lastly, the third explanation, EE, informs readers that... potentially resulting in ...*. It is important to keep the language clear so that the reader can focus on the content of the paper.

Transition statements are the movement from one discrete point to another within the paper itself, and they usually appear at the end of a section. In other words, they are an explanation or tying in of ideas that leads the reader to the next main point. There should be no surprises in the paper; the reader should clearly see where the paper is heading. Instead, the surprise should be the findings, the explanation, and the applicability of the results, based on the research presented.

USING TABLES AND FIGURES

Tables and figures should be used sparingly in papers; that is, only when they would visually assist with comprehending the information provided. Both need to be properly placed and explained. The basic process is to introduce the table, explain the contents and how to read it, put the table or figure in, and lastly, explain the significance of the table or figure as it relates to the paper. Including tables and figures does not reduce the paper's basic word count, they should not be used as a word-count shortcut. Finally, be sure to include clear labels as clarity is paramount: number and label tables above the table, and for figures, below the figure.

Next, an overview of various do's and don'ts for essay writing is introduced. Some are self-explanatory while others are given additional explanation. These are some of the more pressing suggestions, but there are, of course, others to take into consideration.

Do's and Don'ts

Below are some of the general do's and don'ts of writing at the graduate level for a master's degree. As previously stated, this is written from a British postgraduate perspective and as such, other institutions may have different guidelines; the researcher should always confirm with their graduate school about the school's particular requirements.

Essay Writing: The Do's

- Make sure you understand the question and that you answer it fully. This includes answering all parts of the question and not modifying it in any way.
- Try to use original sources whenever possible.
- Write critically and analytically. One way to achieve this is by always trying to support a claim with some sort of "evidence," be it data, reference to the literature, or a logical explanation or argument.
- Make sure referencing is clear and consistent throughout the essay.
- Avoid long footnotes. In fact, try to avoid footnotes altogether; the rationale being that if it is important enough to be there as a footnote, then it should be in the paper itself.
- Always introduce a quotation by building it into your argument.
- Be sure to introduce any tables or figures; explain the content and its significance.
- Use quotations from the literature to support the points you are making. Try not to use a quotation to make the point for you.
- Put lengthy tables, figures, etc. in the appendices and not in the main body of the essay. If you use appendices, make sure you refer to them in the main body of the paper.
- Make sure there is a clear structure. There needs to be a clear beginning, middle, and end. You may want to describe the structure of the essay in the Introduction section.
- Try to write in a reader-friendly fashion. Explain the structure of the essay in the Introduction. Use plenty of markers to structure your discourse: signposting and transition statements.
- Make sure you plan your essay before you start to write; you can always change the plan later.
- Explain key terminology. This is usually best done in the Introduction section.
- Always use quotations marks at the beginning and end of a direct quotation, and be sure they are always fully referenced.
- For longer quotations, use block quotations. A block quotation does not need to have quotation marks. The longer the quotation, the more critical to your work it needs to be.

Essay Writing: The Don'ts

- Avoid unsupported claims.

- Avoid long quotations; paraphrase part or all of it. The longer the quotation, the more important it needs to be to your argument.
- Don't write a purely descriptive essay. Try to write critically; for example, compare the work of different authors or researchers. Try to build an argument that runs throughout your essay.
- Don't go off the point of the paper. Keep to the questions or topic in hand.
- Don't repeat yourself in the main body of the essay.
- Avoid one sentence paragraphs.
- Don't use Wikipedia for definitions.

While not an exhaustive list of the requirements for writing at the graduate level, this is at the very least a foundation to begin writing a research paper. While many conventions of academic writing have been presented, it is important to ensure that the author's "voice" is heard throughout the paper, that the literature, methodology, findings, and discussion are all working to support the argument throughout the paper.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special "thank you" to Dr. Crayton Walker at the University of Birmingham for his guidance, and to Dr. Stephen Pihlaja and Sarah Harrison for their suggestions.

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Towards a More Brain-Friendly Lesson

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With the increasing popularity of terms such as *brain-friendly* and *brain-based education*, educators need principles to draw on for enriching materials and lessons that align with our current understanding of the mind and brain. This article provides seven principles articulated by Helgesen and Kelly (2015). Following this, the author illustrates how he has incorporated these precepts into his professional practice.

Introduction

The brain is quite an amazing organ. There are over 100 billion nerve cells in a single brain alone. That is over thirteen times the current human population. Those 100 billion nerve cells in turn combine to produce over 100 trillion synaptic connections, which is over five times the current U.S. national debt. Thus, teachers have a need to concern themselves with making the most of this intricate organ to foster greater learning among our students.

This article will detail the following seven strategies for building a more brain-friendly learning environment, initially articulated for an ELT audience by Helgesen and Kelly (2015): (a) add emotion, (b) give learners choice, (c) factor in more novelty, (d) activate the senses and provide for kinesthetic opportunities, (e) provide learners with a challenge, (f) personalize topics, and (g) provide learners with opportunities to foster greater creativity. While these strategies may promote greater student outcomes, it is important to note that there is no guarantee of more successful student outcomes through employing these strategies alone. One may consider the analogies of an alcoholic beverage or a massage. While both may tend to help you relax, if there are other intervening factors, such effects can easily be mitigated.

Helgesen and Kelly's Seven Principles

Principle 1: Emotion

A variety of ELT educators have advocated for making learning materials as engaging as possible (see Willis, 2010; Krashen, 2013). Emotion can help to facilitate dopamine release, which plays a role in the two "essential Ms" of education; namely, memory formation and motivation (Achor, 2010).

Helgesen and Kelly (2015) – hereafter, merely "Helgesen and Kelly" –

recommend a variety of methods for eliciting emotion, even from relatively insipid standard educational materials. Their strategies include having various games to determine turn-taking sequences during a reading activity, such as rock-paper-scissors or flipping a coin. While performing a dialogue, learners could read the topic with more emotion, or they could re-read a dialogue with readers changing the emotions of the characters. When there are opportunities for choice concerning activities in a coursebook, learners can rate their level of interest in the activities in advance and then choose the items they are more interested in. Beyond such relatively superficial changes, Kelly (2015) recommends the use of stories. This can include instances of appropriate self-disclosure from the teacher or facilitation of self-disclosure via story-telling among students in a discussion activity (Sandy & Hampton, 2016, provided a powerful illustration of this technique).

Personally as an educator, I have employed a variety of techniques to elicit emotional responses from students. These ideas are not my own, yet are a core and authentic part of my practice. Although there are some dangers (see Kohn, 1999), reward systems are used frequently, such as a point system used for example when a student recognizes teacher errors deliberately placed in learning materials. Games can also elicit emotions; “pop my balloon” is one example. In this game, learners answer a variety of questions pertinent to the lesson’s objectives. Instead of accumulating points, the team that answers correctly can take points away from another team. When one team has lost all their points, an opposing team has won the privilege of popping the balloon of the losing team.

Principal 2: Choice

According to Rock (2009), choice stimulates the reward systems of the brain. However, Helgesen and Kelly stress that too much choice can be overwhelming and that it is best to cap choices for any given decision at two or three.

Helgesen and Kelly offer a variety of options for exercising this principle in the classroom. For example, if a group of learners finish an activity ahead of other students, they could choose among a series of teacher offered options, such as recycle the task, move on to the next activity, or engage in free discussion until other learners complete the activity. For certain types of activities, the teacher can give the option of working alone or in pairs.

In my current teaching–learning environment, I utilize the principle of choice in a variety of ways. Majority decision decides what the appropriate temperature should be before the class begins. If students earn enough points (for use in a classroom token economy), they can choose their own reward. Nearing the end of the unit and prior to a department-wide curriculum mandated exam, I often provide students, near the end of each class, with the option of either reviewing or engaging in structured discussion tasks (which could become free-talking activities if the particular class demonstrates appropriate maturity to engage in unstructured discourse in English). Also, when students are studying materials, such as worked examples (see Clark, Ngyuen, & Sweller, 2006) for appropriate paragraph structure, I often provide a series of options for students to choose from.

Principle 3: Novelty

As Medina (2014) notes, we don't attend to things that are boring. This may be one of the major implicit challenges all teachers face. As one of my instructors during my initial teacher training program stressed; good teachers must strive to find a balance between continuity and variety.

There are a variety of strategies a teacher can employ to ensure that there is a healthy amount of novelty in the classroom. Helgesen and Kelly provide a principled suggestion; namely, do one activity that is out of the coursebook every lesson. Additionally, they suggest consulting *Cambridge Handbooks, Oxford Resource Books for Teachers,* and Heibling's *Resourceful Teacher Series* (see http://www.helblinglanguages.com). Better organization can also help teachers maintain a sense of novelty. If a teacher has detailed records of previous lesson plans and prepares meticulously at the start of a unit and semester, a teacher can reduce excessive repetition of activities, thereby decreasing student boredom. Videos, when used appropriately, provide a break from routine. For example, in my class when introducing the mechanics of proper body language for a unit on public speaking, I show Michael Bay's famous speech walkout video (CNET, 2014) as an example of what can go wrong if the presenter is not adequately prepared. Additionally, a judicious use of any and all manner of gimmicks can add some novelty to the classroom. I make use of board games, dice for deciding order, and balls to determine who is speaking during a given activity.

Principle 4: Use Many Senses and Kinesthetic Motion

According to Medina (2014), multi-sensory teaching contributes to better learner recall and enhanced creative problem-solving ability. As each sense is located in different areas of the brain, a multi-sensory approach to teaching can help facilitate deeper connections for learners. Likewise, motion can literally provide more oxygen to the brain. If we sit for 20 minutes at a time, there is a build-up of blood in the lower parts of the body. Moving for merely one minute results in a 15% increase of blood (which also means enhanced oxygen flow) to the brain (Hegelsen, 2014).

There are a variety of opportunities to address these inter-related principles in the classroom. Helgesen and Kelly recommend employing five minute energy breaks periodically. The classic "find someone who" can be a good way to review previous material and incorporate physical motion. A tactile-friendly form of review could be a simple matching activity, where students move strips of paper for matching purposes. For lower-level learners scrambled sentences is a similar activity. Helgesen (2015) provides a simple review activity which can both elicit emotion and get students moving. A teacher tosses a balloon up in the air, students bat it around until either the balloon falls or the teacher yells "Stop." The student closest to the balloon at that time needs to answer a teacher prompt.

Principle 5: Challenge

Csikszentmihalyi (1997) reminds us of the need for positive stress to facilitate success. As Helgesen and Kelly state, "Too easy and they get bored. Too difficult and they give up" (p. 34). The latter authors provide minor tweaks that can help to facilitate a further sense of challenge, such as asking students to discover two additional pieces of information that extend beyond the constraints of the coursebook, to facilitate various forms of competition, or to provide lower-level learners with a two-minute challenge in which students only speak in English for two minutes, refraining from using their mother tongue.

In my experience, framing the issue can get students to challenge themselves. For example, prior to letting students engage in a creative writing activity that requires utilizing a series of rhetorical techniques (such as chiasmus or anaphora), I ask how many students intend to apply for a prestigious university (at my school the majority of students). I then challenge them to write a Seoul National University-level (or even Harvard-level) piece of writing. Students are a little more receptive to the task at hand when framed in such a fashion. Time pressure can also add a sense of challenge. For example, who can complete a task within a given amount of time; or who can produce the most writing in a fixed period of time. Of course, a teacher must have clear goals during this activity as such an activity may serve as a fluency development activity, but may lead to a trade-off with accuracy.

Principle 6: Personalize

For this section, personalization needs to be distinguished from personalized learning. Here, for purposes of this article, "personalize" will be used in the more popular sense often associated with marketing. One definition of "personalization" is "the process of tailoring [content] to individual users' characteristics or preferences" (Rouse, 2007, para. 1). There is research supporting the claim that personal experience increases memory (Caine, Caine, McClintic, & Klimek, 2009). Personalization requires some degree of customization by the teacher but can contribute to a more engaged student body. Helgesen and Kelly note that typical ELT activities such as dialogue, pair work, or group work can be personalized. They further note that personalization is ideal for further recycling an activity. For example, after students have completed a coursebook exercise, the students can re-write elements of the activity (such as a dialogue) to reflect their own personal experience or background knowledge.

In my experience, having a working knowledge of aspects of popular culture and local culture is vital to establishing rapport with students. Hence, my teaching materials are littered with references to Korean popular culture and American popular culture that students are familiar with. In part, this awareness is fostered by intuition and simply seeing how students react. However, I also make use of surveys on student interests as well. Storytelling and safe forms of self-disclosure also provide opportunities to build in deeper forms of personalized expression (see Maley & Peachey, 2016, for examples of storytelling in the classroom, especially page 92 featuring an activity attributed to Christine Baldarelli, entitled "Personal Event Timeline").

Principle 7: Creativity

Creativity has been, perhaps with a degree of hyperbole, touted as the "premier skill of the 21st century" (Fogarty, 2016). Guilford (1967) lists four main characteristics of the creative process: (a) fluency, producing lots of ideas; (b) flexibility, producing various ideas; (c) elaboration, strengthening pre-existing ideas; and (d) originality, producing novel ideas. Constantinides (2016) lists six characteristics of creative people: lateral thinking, flexible thinking, high productivity, high originality, the ability to find a variety of solutions, and independence of view.

There is much teachers can do to cultivate a greater degree of creativity in learners. Helgesen and Kelly recommend adding novel shifts to traditional activities. For example, instead of simply reading dialogues, students can act out dialogues (with and, sometimes, without words), or read them with a different tone of voice. Helgensen and Kelly also suggest allowing students to draw an answer rather than provide the answer in written form. Maley and Peachey (2015) provide a useful, and free, resource on opportunities for cultivating a creative orientation in learners, as well as teachers (see especially Constantinides' contribution, "Creating Creative Teachers"). One basic way to get learners to think creatively is to engage them in activities that are extensions of traditional brainstorming exercises, such as "unusual uses" (Constantinides, 2016). In this activity, learners try to generate as many non-traditional uses as possible for a given object, such as a pen.

Putting the Principles into Practice

In my classroom, I have used metaphor-based activities to help get learners to change perspective and reinforce learning objectives. Rick Wormeli's (2009) *Metaphors and Analogies: Power Tools for Teaching Any Subject* is a valuable resource to explore the possibilities for using metaphor in the classroom. Inspired by Wormeli's inspiring text, I have engaged students in simple, yet powerful, metaphor mapping activities to reinforce key learning concepts. For example, while teaching the structure of a body paragraph, I had students consider questions that appear almost riddle-like on the surface; one example is "how is a body paragraph like a living room?" After a brief discussion, I reveal my answer. After continuing the process one or two more times, students are then challenged to provide their own metaphor about the content/concepts in question. In my experience, provided that the activity is properly scaffolded and modeled in advance, students are able to generate novel, rather impressive metaphors.

Conclusions

This article has summarized a list of key principles for teaching in a brain-friendly manner. The principles and activities in and of themselves are something nearly all experienced teachers will have encountered at one time or another. However, when viewed more comprehensively, these principles, if utilized in concert, can help a teacher upgrade his or her lessons. For the author, simply spending 20–30 minutes free-writing prior to planning a lesson and considering the possibilities inherent in using this framework has proved fruitful to discovering novel opportunities to put the aforementioned principles into action. It is the author's hope that interested readers will take the time to discover the possibilities of this brain-friendly framework for themselves.

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Project-Based Learning in Intensive EAP Courses at a Thai University

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Project-based learning (PBL) is gaining recognition as an effective and engaging approach to teaching. This paper introduces several conceptualizations of PBL and explains its integration into the curriculum of an intensive English for Academic Purposes center at a Thai university. It then introduces a video news report project and discusses it in terms of Thomas' five criteria for PBL: centrality, driving question, constructive investigations, autonomy, and realism. The benefits of PBL extend beyond language. Students engage with meaningful regional and international issues in an academic context, developing their 21st century skills as they communicate with their teacher and peers about the material, collaborate with classmates to achieve their goals, critically evaluate sources of information in order to reach their objectives, and create new content. PBL is a flexible approach to language education, and the content of this paper is relevant to educators in a wide variety of contexts.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, project-based learning (PBL) has gained wide acceptance in a variety of educational contexts (Martin, Lopez, & Martinez, 2014). Researchers have noted diverse benefits of this approach, including the cultivation of in-depth knowledge and the incorporation of educational technology. Whereas many traditional teacher-centered approaches to education rely on memorization, PBL is student-centered and requires learners to conduct an in-depth investigation of a given area (Grant, 2011). PBL is also conducive to the effective use of educational technology, allowing teachers to fully integrate technology into the curriculum and move beyond the use of ICT as an "add-on" (Richards, 2005, p. 60) to traditional approaches.

PBL aligns well with current educational goals, including the development of the 21st century skills of communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. Larmer and Mergendoller (2010), who are affiliated with the Buck Institute for Education, note, "PBL is an essential tool for preparing students to reach 21st century educational goals and succeed in the 21st century" (p. 1). Communication skills are developed through peer and teacher critique, the presentation of findings, and interaction with the wider community. In this approach, "students live and learn in the real world" (Boss & Krauss, 2007, p. 6), conducting research and gathering information from the community and other sources. Collaboration skills are developed through group elements of projects. Researchers have noted increased ability to cooperate as a benefit of PBL

(Beckett, 2002). Critical-thinking skills are developed by tackling real-world problems, problems that can be approached in multiple ways and that have multiple possible answers. Studies have found that PBL is effective in improving students' critical thinking, and it may be particularly effective in improving low-performing students' critical thinking (Horan, Lavaroni, & Beldon, 1996). Creativity is cultivated through students' autonomous investigation. Whereas teacher-centered education often prescribes an approach and leads students through a set procedure, PBL allows autonomy. Students can improvise; they are not required to stay within the bounds of a fixed approach or procedure. Teacher-centered education can punish creativity; PBL rewards it.

This paper introduces the theory behind PBL and compares several sets of criteria that have been used to assess PBL. After discussing the various criteria, the paper describes a project that is currently in use in an intensive English for academic purposes program at a Thai university. It then evaluates these projects in terms of Thomas' (2000) five criteria for PBL.

Literature Review

While PBL has been applied across the curriculum, it is particularly well suited to language education as it aligns well with current theory in language instruction, particularly the communicative approach and content-based language instruction. The communicative approach de-emphasizes grammatical forms and aims to develop a "functional communicative L2 competence in the learners" (Dornyei, 2009, p. 162). In PBL, students use real-world resources and interact with each other, with teachers, and often with members of the wider community. This provides opportunities for the development of communicative skills and encourages grammatical accuracy to the extent that it is necessary for clear communication. That is, PBL provides ample opportunities to students to produce comprehensible output (Beckett, 2002).

Content-based language instruction aims to teach language through content. Beglar and Hunt (2011) explain that content-based language instruction is based on the belief that "a focus on real-world content and the understanding and communication of information through language is the key to second language learning" (p. 93). Well-chosen content boosts motivation and broadens students' knowledge. Stoller (2002) observes that "through content-based instruction, learners develop language skills while becoming more knowledgeable citizens of the world" (p. 107). Additionally, challenging real-world content can enhance motivation. A major advantage of content-based language instruction is that students are not "forced to plod through" (Brown, 2001, p. 233) dull grammar or skills-focused classes. Instead, they are challenged to use language to engage with cognitively demanding ideas.

Content-based language instruction is based around the principles of "automaticity, meaningful learning, intrinsic motivation, and communicative competence" (Brown, 2001, p. 236). The principles of automaticity, meaningful learning, and intrinsic motivation are closely related to the principles guiding PBL, and the principle of communicative competence is closely related to the communicative approach to language teaching. These approaches to language instruction are highly compatible: “By integrating project work into content-based classrooms, educators create vibrant learning environments that require active student involvement, stimulate higher-level thinking skills, and give students responsibility for their own learning” (Stoller, 2002, p. 107).

There are similarities across the various definitions of PBL. The recurring points are largely consistent with Thomas’ (2000) five criteria: centrality, driving question, constructive investigations, autonomy, and realism. One explanation of this similarity is that Thomas’ “widely cited” and “comprehensive” (Condliffe, Visher, Bangser, Drohojowska, & Saco, 2016, p. 3) review was published earlier than any of the other works included the Appendix except Ravitz (2000). The Appendix includes several sets of criteria for PBL. The criteria have been quoted verbatim.

Many sets of criteria for PBL emphasize that projects should be central to the courses into which they are integrated. For example, Thomas (2000) speaks of the “centrality” (p. 3) of projects in PBL courses, Boss and Krauss (2007) describe projects as the “centerpiece” (p. 12) of the curriculum, Larmer and Mergendoller (2015) write of “sustained inquiry” (p. 1), and Ravitz (2000) calls for “in-depth inquiry” that occurs “over an extended period” (p. 293). These theorists indicate that projects in PBL are completed over a significant portion of the course in which they appear and require sustained effort from the students. The projects may include several components, which are submitted or presented at various points throughout the course. As Larmer and Mergendoller (2010) explain, “In 21st Century Project Based Learning it is the project that is the main course – it contains and frames curriculum and instruction” (p. 3).

Another commonality among the various sets of criteria is the idea of the driving question, the question that compels students to engage with the critical concepts in a particular area. Thomas (2000), Krajcic and Blumenfeld (2006), and Grant (2005) explicitly mention the role of the driving question, and Larmer and Mergendoller (2015) mention the “challenging problem or question” (p. 1) around which PBL is structured. As PBL focuses on real-world issues, the driving questions are of necessity somewhat broad.

In order to formulate a meaningful response to the driving question, students participate in constructive investigations. Thomas (2000) defines investigation as “a goal-directed process that involves inquiry, knowledge building, and resolution” (p. 3) and further specifies that in a PBL project, “the central activities of the project must involve the transformation and construction of knowledge (by definition: new understandings, new skills)” (p. 4). Boss and Krauss (2007) express a related idea, explaining the role of PBL projects in “taking learners places they couldn’t otherwise go and helping teachers achieve essential learning goals in new ways” (p. 12). Similarly, Martin, Lopez, and Martinez (2014) observe that a PBL project “is consistent with desired learning outcomes” and “builds upon previous knowledge/experiences” (p. 1). These theorists agree that a PBL project not merely reinforces existing knowledge or skills; students must develop new knowledge or skills in order to complete the project.

The criterion of autonomous learning also appears frequently in literature on PBL. Thomas (2000) lists “autonomy” (p. 3) as one of the five criteria for PBL. Ravitz (2000) also includes a degree of autonomy in her criteria, indicating that PBL should be “student self-directed to some extent” (p. 293). Additionally, Larmer and Mergendoller (2015) suggest that “student voice and choice” (p. 1) is an important component of PBL, both in the selection of the project and in its implementation.

PBL projects relate to the real world, not solely to academics. The criterion of “realism” (Thomas, 2000, p. 3) appears in various forms, including “real-world activities” (Boss & Krauss, 2007, p. 12), “authentic, situated inquiry” (Krajcic & Blumenfeld, 2006, p. 2), and “authenticity” (Larmer & Mergendoller, 2015, p. 1). Martin, Lopez, and Martinez (2014) provide three related criteria: “[PBL] is engaging and oriented to the real world, it is ill-structured and complex, [and] it generates multiple hypotheses” (p. 1). The realism of PBL projects extends to the students’ sharing of a “public product” (Larmer & Mergendoller, 2015, p. 1) with an authentic audience. All of these descriptions indicate that projects in PBL are “not school-like” (Thomas, 2000, p. 3). Students are exposed to real-world material and interact with it in authentic, not contrived, ways.

While all of the definitions of PBL included in the Appendix are serviceable, this article will discuss a project used in intensive EAP courses at a Thai university in terms of Thomas’ (2000) five criteria. Thomas’ (2000) criteria have been chosen because they are clear, simple, and encompass the major elements of the other conceptualizations of PBL. The following section will introduce a project that is currently part of the curriculum of an EAP program at a Thai university.

Example of PBL in the Language Classroom

Outline of the EAP Course Project

PBL is highly conducive to language learning and is particularly well aligned with the communicative approach. This section illustrates the application of PBL in language learning by briefly outlining a project that has been implemented in an intensive English for academic purposes course a Thai university. The students in the course have achieved a B1–B2 level of proficiency on the CEFR and are preparing to begin their studies in the English-medium liberal arts program at the university. Because the students plan to enter a liberal arts program, the cultivation of 21st century skills is also an aim of the course.

At the beginning of the ten-week term, each student in the class is assigned a country that is a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The students choose a recent event or development in that country, research that development, write a short text that integrates information from several news sources, and create a six-minute news report about the event. In order to create the news report, students draft a script and record a four-minute video of themselves explaining the issue in detail and comparing it to the situation in Thailand. They also interview an expert about their topic, often an academic from the university or from industry, and edit parts of the interview into their explanation. Each student is assigned a teacher as an advisor, and the teacher guides the student’s progress throughout the term. At the end of the term, the teachers from each class select the two videos that excel in terms of content, editing, and language. These videos are screened in an auditorium, and the students vote to select the best overall video.

Assessment of the EAP Course Project

As discussed in the literature review, Thomas' (2000) five criteria for PBL encompass the critical points raised by other theorists and are presented clearly. For this reason, the media project will be assessed using these criteria. The media project meets the criteria of centrality, driving question, constructive investigations, and realism; however, it does not completely satisfy the criterion of autonomy.

This media project meets Thomas's (2000) criterion of centrality. The criterion of centrality (Thomas, 2000) indicates that a PBL project should be a major focus of the course in which it is implemented. The aim of a PBL project is not to reinforce learning that has already taken place; it is to drive the course forward and provide students opportunities to meet the learning goals of the course. The media project incorporates many elements of the course, including compare-and-contrast writing, citations and references, speaking and listening skills, and 21st century skills (especially communication, critical thinking, and creativity). As students work on the various components of the project throughout the term and meet with their advisor regularly, the project also represents a significant time commitment.

The criterion of driving question is also met. Thomas (2000) claims that projects in PBL center on a driving question that pushes students to engage with key content in a given field. In the case of this project, students are asked what important events are currently underway in an ASEAN country. This encourages them to learn more about the countries neighboring Thailand and to develop their general knowledge as well as their content knowledge. The students are given freedom in how they select and investigate the driving question in that they can focus on a timely issue of their choice; however, their freedom is constrained in that they are assigned an ASEAN country. This will be discussed in terms of the criterion of autonomy.

The project also meets Thomas' (2000) criterion of constructive investigations, which indicates that PBL projects should require students to develop new skills and knowledge in order to complete the project. In this regard, PBL projects are distinct from projects undertaken in many non-PBL contexts to reinforce prior learning. The media project requires students to develop both language skills and content knowledge. The project integrates speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Additionally, students learn and apply the compare-and-contrast rhetorical pattern, referencing while developing their knowledge of the ASEAN region.

The criterion of realism requires that students engage in projects that are similar to real-world activities (Thomas, 2000). The media project requires students to engage with real-world issues in order to answer the driving question. They also engage with the community by finding and interviewing an expert on their chosen issue, and they present their final product, the video, to an authentic audience. The use of real-world materials, contact with the community, and the final screening of the videos to a real audience enhances students' motivation, leading to higher-quality projects.

According to the criterion of autonomy, students should have significant choice and responsibility regarding their topic, their investigation, and the outcome of their project. While the media project allows students to decide which issue they would like to address, who they would like to interview, and what to include in the video, students are not given the freedom to select the ASEAN country on which their project centers, nor are they allowed to write about issues that are more than a few months old. These limitations on student choice were imposed after several students submitted plagiarized work. Limiting students' choice of country prevents them from selecting the same country and issue as friends in other classes, and insisting that students write about an ongoing issue prevents them from plagiarizing projects completed in previous terms. Students do have autonomy in some aspects of the project, but their autonomy is constrained in others in order to encourage academic honesty.

Conclusions

This paper has introduced PBL, discussed its relationship with communicative language teaching and 21st century skills, reviewed relevant literature, and provided an example of an application of PBL in language education. The benefits of PBL are becoming more evident, and language teachers in a wide variety of contexts can apply this approach to enhance their students' language skills, engagement, and motivation.

The Author

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APPENDIX

Comparison of Criteria for Project-Based Learning

Boss and Krauss (2007, p. 12)	1. Projects form the centerpiece of the curriculum − they are not an add-on or extra at the end of a "real" unit. 2. Students engage in real-world activities and practice the strategies of authentic disciplines. 3. Students work collaboratively on problems that matter to them. 4. Technology is integrated as a tool for discovery, collaboration, and communication, taking learners places they couldn't otherwise go and helping teachers achieve essential learning goals in new ways. 5. Increasingly, teachers collaborate to design and implement projects that cross geographic boundaries or even jump time zones.
Condliffe, Visher, Bangser, Drohojowska, and Saco (2016)	1. Driving questions to motivate learning 2. Target significant learning goals 3. Use projects to promote learning 4. Dedicate significant time to PBL
Grant (2005, p. 38)	1. Driving question or problem 2. Production of one or more artifacts as representations of learning
Krajcic and Blumenfeld (2006, p. 2)	1. They start with a driving question, a problem to be solved. 2. Students explore the driving question by participating in authentic, situated inquiry − processes of problem-solving that are central to expert performance in the discipline. 3. Students, teachers, and community members engage in collaborative activities to find solutions to the driving question. 4. While engaged in the inquiry process, students are scaffolding with learning technologies that help them participate in activities normally beyond their ability. 5. Students create a set of tangible products that address the driving question.
Larmer and Mergendoller (2015, p. 1)	1. Challenging problem or question 2. Sustained inquiry 3. Authenticity 4. Student voice and choice 5. Reflection 6. Critique and revision 7. Public product
Martin, Lopez, and Martinez (2014, p. 1)	1. It is engaging and oriented to the real world. 2. It is ill-structured and complex. 3. It generates multiple hypotheses. 4. It requires team effort. 5. It is consistent with desired learning outcomes. 6. It builds upon previous knowledge/experiences. 7. It promotes development of higher-order cognitive skills.
Ravitz (2000, p. 293)	1. In-depth inquiry 2. Over an extended period 3. That is student self-directed to some extent, and 4. That requires a formal presentation of results.
Thomas (2000, p. 3)	1. Centrality 2. Driving question 3. Constructive investigations 4. Autonomy 5. Realism

Peer-Led Study-Abroad Preparation

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The number of Japanese students studying abroad has steadily increased from 23,998 in 2009 to 52,132 in 2014 (JASSO, 2016). Despite this increase, little is known of the students' intercultural experience through pre-study-abroad orientation. This study aims to explore the intercultural competence of Japanese university students as they prepare themselves and their peers for an upcoming sojourn. Findings from this study suggest that Deardorff's (2006) components of attitudes of openness, curiosity, and respect and cultural knowledge could be monitored through reflections on peer-led intercultural pre-study-aboard orientation. It is hoped that the results from this study will encourage further study of a transformational approach to study-abroad orientation through knowledge-creating, learner-centered, self-regulated activities.

INTRODUCTION

A better understanding of failures and successes during study abroad can provide improved training to boost intercultural skills and the likelihood of positive outcomes (Ruben, 1989). Historically, understanding of the study-abroad experience was limited to linguistic outcomes comparing study-abroad groups and at-home groups (Coleman, 2013). A recent turn beyond linguistic gains has focused on the intercultural outcomes of studying abroad (Allen, 2013; Byram & Feng, 2006; Jackson, 2011). Aldred and Byram (2006) and Dweyer (2004) provide an emerging understanding of the intercultural experience of study-abroad participants during and following their sojourn. Despite the importance attributed to intercultural training programs and study-abroad orientation, there is a lack of research focus on pre-departure orientation (Brown, 2014; Ruben, 1989). This study aims to monitor the intercultural competence of future study-abroad participants during their pre-departure orientation.

The lack of understanding of intercultural competence during pre-departure orientation and intercultural training can be attributed to the nature and time available for the orientation. In regards to the nature of the orientation, study-abroad administrators and coordinators may often use a transactional approach during pre-departure orientation sessions. Through a transactional approach students are treated as passive empty vessels for cramming in information (Jackson, 2008). Both Jackson (2008) and Brown (2014) describe how pre-study-abroad programs can be inadequate because they are focused on logistics (e.g., travel arrangements, packing advice, banking) and a short introduction to the host culture. Additionally, Henze (2007) mentions the lack of time available for study-abroad preparation in language classes. Foreign language instructors may feel that they do not have adequate time in class to help prepare a portion of their students for their upcoming study abroad.

Jackson (2008) calls for a transformation in study-abroad orientation and intercultural training. According to Jackson (2008), "It is imperative that students have a stake in the shape and focus of their own preparation" (p. 222). Facilitating more autonomy in preparation may help address the concerns of the top-down nature of orientation and training, and the lack of time in the classroom for preparation activities.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Intercultural competence has been described as the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately across cultures (Byram, 1997). Deardorff (2006) describes intercultural competence as the ability to interact successfully across cultures. Both Byram (1997) and Deardorff (2006) describe the necessary attitudes, knowledge, and skills to facilitate appropriate, effective and successful interactions between cultures. Deardorff (2006) provides a process model of intercultural competence (Figure 1) that conceptualizes the relationship of these components of attitudes, knowledge, and skills to communicate successfully across cultures.

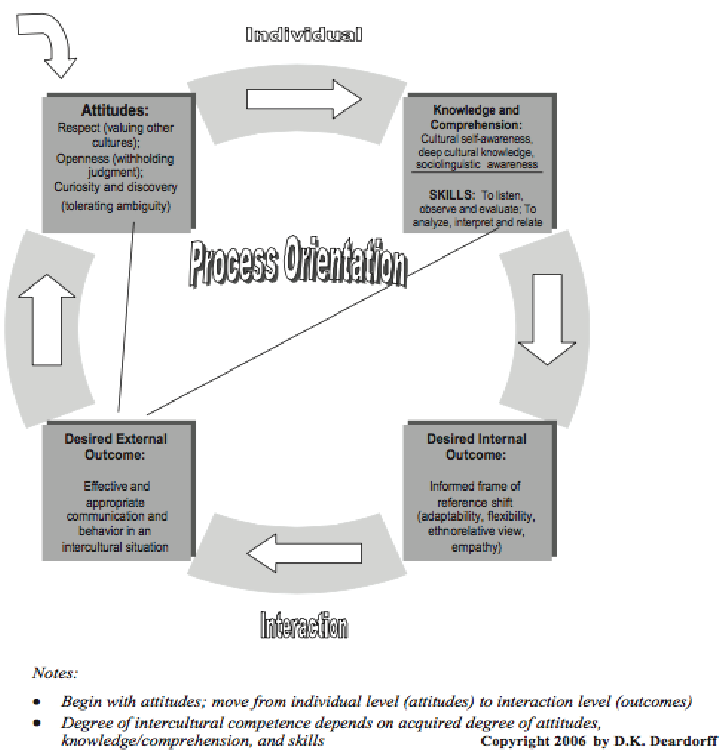

FIGURE 1. Deardorff's (2006) Process Model of Intercultural Competence.

At the starting point of this lifelong process for intercultural competence are the attitudes of openness, curiosity, and respect. Attitudes demonstrate a willingness to communicate with and value others, leading to further development of knowledge and skills to communicate across cultures. Culture-specific knowledge and deep cultural knowledge facilitate the intercultural speaker's understanding of how one's culture shapes identity. This cultural self-awareness, culture-specific knowledge, and deep cultural knowledge can lead to the development of the skills of observing, listening, evaluating, analyzing, interpreting, and relating. However, Deardorff (2006) mentions how one need not possess this knowledge and these skills to have successful interactions across cultures. Appropriate attitudes, in some cases, may be enough to facilitate a mutually successful interaction.

Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence (Figure 2), describes the same attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed to communicate effectively and appropriately across cultures. Byram's (1997) model does not conceptualize intercultural competence as a process. Rather, Byram's (1997) model allows for assessment of intercultural competence within each interaction.

	SKILLS Interpret and relate (*savoir comprende*) Interpret and compare	
KNOWLEDGE Of self and other; of interaction individual and societal (*les saviors*) Knowledge as opposed to information	EDUCATION Political education Critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*)	ATTITUDES Relativizing self-valuing others (*savoir etre*) Not of tolerance but for openness and curiosity
	SKILLS Discover and or interact (*savoir apprende/ faire*) Acquire new knowledge and apply in real time Communicative linguistic competence in one or more languages	

FIGURE 2. Byram's (1997) Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence.

Because of Deardoff's (2006) focus on attitudes as the necessary precursor to develop intercultural competence, Deardorff's (2006) process model of intercultural competence was considered an appropriate framework/model for us to monitor intercultural competence within the experience of pre-study-abroad students preparing to study abroad. Additionally, Deardorff's (2006) model provides a clear idea of the process of intercultural competence. This visual conceptualization can be useful for instructors and students to monitor and visualize their intercultural development.

Participants and Method

For this study, a weekly seminar course was selected to facilitate the pre-departure training. The title of the seminar course was “Study Abroad.” Third-year students (n = 6) planning to or interested in study abroad selected this seminar course (Table 1). Three students began this semester abroad, while three students would physically be in class for the first semester. Two of these three students would start their study abroad from the second semester, while one student did not have immediate plans to study abroad. The six university students are enrolled at a university that ranks 1st regionally, and 12th nationally in terms of study-abroad participants (JASSO, 2016). The students in the seminar were selected based on convenience, specifically the ability to cover 15 weeks of study-abroad orientation with current and future sojourners. Pseudonyms have been given to protect the participants’ identity.

Table 1. Participant Background

Pseudonym	Gender	Study-abroad Location	Duration	In-class Preparation
Shintaro	M	Australia	1 year	None
Miku	F	Australia	1 year	None
Yuki	F	Canada	1 year	None
Saya	F	Ireland	3 months	1st semester
Maya	F	England	1 year	1st semester
Kosuke	M	None	None	1st semester

The weekly seminar classes were team-taught. The first forty-five minutes of each seminar class involved study-abroad preparation activities, while the latter forty-five were made up of discussions based on Chapter 1 from Michael Byram’s *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Weekly topics were selected based on Jackson’s (2008) description of topics that are most likely to cause difficulties while studying abroad: “differences in communication styles, cultural values and behavior, culture shock, racial awareness, and identity change” (p. 222). In each class, students took part in activities described in previous research on pre-study-abroad and intercultural training.

The first activity that the students took part in was researching the host country. Jackson (2008), Roberts (2003), and Roberts, Byram, Barro, Jordan, and Street (2001) describe the importance of researching the host country prior to departure. In connection with researching the host country, Hardy-Gould (2013), Jackson (2008), and Ladd (1990) highlight the importance of engaging in ethnographic studies while in the target culture. At the end of the first semester, all students gave proposals for their study while abroad or in Japan.

Additionally, the seminar students led interviews with current and former study-aboard and working-holiday participants. Jackson (2008) and Jarman-Walsh (2015) mention the benefits of activities with current and former sojourners. Students also participated in experiential learning activities through role-play and the contrast culture method (CCM). These activities derive from intercultural training and study-abroad research (Fujimoto, 2004; Hiratsuka, Suzuki, & Pusina, 2016; Jackson, 2008).

Each week, the students engaged in readings in English and Japanese, and discussions in Japanese on communicative competence and issues in studying abroad. Jackson (2008, 2013) lend support to reading on common issues in study abroad as a part of preparing for study aboard. After class, the students reflected on activities in a Google Form. Students answered in Japanese to the following questions: (a) “What was interesting?” and (b) “What did you learn?” However, the students used English while researching the host country and in experiential learning activities.

Results

Participant reflections were coded by the authors using Deardorff’s (2006) process model of intercultural competence. A majority of responses from the post-activity reflections were coded within the attitudes of curiosity and discovery. This section will provide examples of post-activity responses in the categories of attitudes, knowledge, and skills (see Table 2). Additionally, a fuller description of the context of the reflections will be provided.

Table 2. Deardorff’s (2006) Components and Examples

Components	Example
Attitudes: Respect (Valuing other cultures)	*(I learned that) it is not good to impose one’s own values on others. Also, I thought it was important to respect the feelings of the other party.* (Maya)
Attitudes: Openness (Withholding judgment)	*It required much more thought to speak with someone from a different culture. I understood how others may not have the same values or criteria toward communication.* (Kosuke)
Attitudes: Curiosity & Discovery (Tolerating ambiguity)	*He (Shintaro) also mentioned that he does not feel homesick. I wonder why some people do not feel homesick.* (Maya)
Knowledge: Cultural Self-Awareness	*There was a difference in culture. I think so many differences stem from birth. I did not think much when I communicated with someone of a similar culture, but when I talked with someone of a different culture, I really wanted the conversation to end quickly.* (Maya)
Skills: To listen, observe, interpret, analyze, interpret, and relate	*It was interesting to look at the situation from the outside. The consultation session allowed us to hear the other party’s opinion. It was kind of surprising the advice that the other person provided. The idea in the role-play was interesting and it was interesting that a surprise could happen in a conversation.* (Kosuke)

During the first five weeks of class, students researched different aspects of the country of their choosing. The participants presented their research to the seminar for the second, third, fourth, and fifth classes. Reflections from participants demonstrated curiosity about aspects of cultures not normally accessed by them through media. One participant, who planned on studying abroad in Ireland, chose to research South Korea instead. Through this activity, she demonstrated an interest and curiosity in researching more about Ireland and the European Union:

> *I realized that Busan would be a better place to study for me than Seoul. (I chose to research South Korea, but I regret that I did not choose Ireland, I chose South Korea because I really like Korea.... Now I think I should look into more EU-related issues.* (Saya)

Another participant, who planned on studying abroad in England, chose to research England. She mentioned the benefits of this research:

> *I think it was good to study about the country before going. I learned stuff I did not know before like the Bill of Rights.* (Maya)

Skype Interviews

Prior to our three interviews with current study-abroad participants in South Korea and Australia during our seminar, students and teachers brainstormed possible interview questions together using a collaborative word-processing program, Google Docs. Questions covered issues of daily life, studying, living situations, and language development. Reflections following the Skype in-class interviews demonstrated a theme of curiosity concerning the ability of current study-abroad participants to cope with living within a different culture. The following reflection demonstrates the curiosity toward coping with living in another environment:

> *I wonder how she became so accustomed to life in Korea. Perhaps that is something that happens with time. Also, (it was interesting that) she said that she has adopted the non-verbal communication in Korea.* (Kosuke)

Additionally, the following reflection highlights a heightened sense of motivation based on the advice from the participant in Australia:

> *It was interesting to hear Shintaro mention that he does not feel stress. It seems like the perfect environment for him. He also mentioned that he does not feel homesick. I wonder why some people do not feel homesick. He gave us advice to work on our listening skills. I got motivated to practice listening more.* (Maya)

In-Class Discussions

In addition to interviews with current sojourners using Skype, current and former study-abroad participants were invited to come and talk with our students in class. Prior to each discussion, seminar participants brainstormed questions to ask students from South Korea, China, and a Japanese student who recently completed a working holiday in Australia. Following the discussion, seminar participants, current and former study-abroad students, and the working holiday participant reflected on their experience through Google Forms. The authors monitored attitudes of curiosity and an interest in one's ability to change perspective. The following comment demonstrates a curiosity in the cultural, geographical, and historical differences between Japanese, Koreans, and Chinese:

> *Although there are many foreign exchange students from my Asia, there is a big gap between Koreans, Chinese, and Japanese due to geographical, cultural, and ethnic differences even when viewed on a global scale. I would like to know about the changes and differences over time.* (Kosuke)

The following comment shows a curiosity in the ability of our Chinese guest to change their perspective of Taiwan through studying abroad in Japan:

> *I learned that Taiwan is not recognized as a country by China. Although, K. had originally thought that Taiwan was a part of China, I was happy to know that one might recognize that there previous thinking was wrong or can change through studying in Japan.* (Saya)

Additionally, the former working-holiday participant highlighted a benefit of participating in the discussion with future study-abroad participants. This discussion appears to have helped her reflect on the change that occurred in her because of living abroad:

> *To the students who will study abroad from now, study abroad will change you and your feelings. I learned that other people are interested in the impact of returning home and the intercultural experiences. Additionally, I was able to analyze the change that occurred in me after my working holiday.* (Ayano, former Japanese working-holiday participant)

Experiential Learning

During this seminar, students participated in experimental activities through role-plays and the contrast culture method (CCM), an intercultural training method developed by Stewart (1966). CCM is different from role-play because there is no script. It allows participants to experience cultural difference and then process what they have experienced. These experiential activities gave the seminar students a chance to experience interacting with others with both different values and different forms of non-verbal communication. Following the role-play on non-verbal communication, participants mentioned the stress of communicating with others with different non-verbal communication norms. The following comments demonstrate the knowledge of culture and how it affects one's communication style:

> *There was a difference in culture. I think so many differences stem from birth. I did not think much when I communicated with someone of a similar culture, but when I talked with someone of a different culture, I really wanted the*

conversation to end quickly. (Maya)

It required much more thought to speak with someone from a different culture. I understood how others may not have the same values or criteria toward communication. (Kosuke)

In the CCM experience, students had an opportunity to experience interacting with someone with different values. Themes of curiosity about the perspective of others and attitudes of respect were monitored through reflections following class on Google Forms. The following comment highlights that curiosity in the perspective of others:

It was interesting to look at the situation from the outside. The consultation session allowed us to hear the other party's opinion. The advice that the other person provided was kind of surprising. The idea (CCM) was interesting and it was interesting that a surprise could happen in a conversation. (Kosuke)

The following comment demonstrates an attitude of respect towards the feelings of others:

(I learned that) it is not good to impose one's own values on others. Also, I thought it was important to respect the feelings of the other party. (Maya)

In short, reflections from students demonstrated attitudes of curiosity, openness, and respect for other cultures. Additionally, some comments demonstrated knowledge of other cultures and an emerging understanding of how one's culture affects and shapes their identity. Finally, current and former sojourners demonstrated the desired internal outcome of an informed frame of reference shift through adaptability and flexibility.

DISCUSSION

This study suggests that emerging attitudes and knowledge can be monitored through the following pre-departure activities: researching the host country, discussions with current and former study-abroad participants, and experiential learning activities. Both Deardorff's (2006) and Byram' (1997) categories of attitudes and knowledge were monitored. Additionally, this study suggests that skills of adaptability and change of perspective can be observed among current and former sojourners. Current study-abroad participants and former study-abroad and working-holiday participants demonstrated a positive attitude towards talking with future study-abroad participants about their experiences. Deardorff's (2006) categories of desired internal outcome and desired external outcome were not monitored among pre-study-abroad participants. This study does not imply that participants do not possess the necessary skills for successful intercultural interactions. Rather, these skills were unable to be observed through the study design and data collection methods.

Going forward, future studies may find it helpful to include students in the self-assessment of intercultural competence. Deardorff's process model can paint a helpful picture for students and teachers of the lifelong process of developing intercultural competence. Additionally, Byram's (2000) models for self-assessment of intercultural experience can provide a useful tool for participants to assess their own ability to interact effectively and appropriately across cultures. Self-assessment of intercultural competence can provide another perspective outside of linguistic development to view a study-abroad experience.

CONCLUSIONS

This study provides a limited glimpse of the development and assessment of intercultural competence through peer-led, pre-departure training activities. A more longitudinal study would provide a better understanding of the effects of transformational, rather than transactional, pre-study-abroad orientation. This is evident from the intercultural competence monitored among current and former sojourners. Including self-assessment and a more diverse collection of data might better inform the teacher and student of the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that the student possesses. Finally, including more sojourner-centered, knowledge-building activities may foster a better study-abroad experience for future study-abroad participants, host families, local communities, host-institution students, and study-abroad administrators.

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Using the Power of Visual Design to Improve Student Learning

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Making great language learning materials is not only about the content but also how that content is presented. Research has shown that visual design influences both student comprehension of the materials and motivation to use the materials. This paper reviews some basic principles of visual design and discusses some of the common visual elements of language learning materials in hopes of offering some best practices regarding visual design with an eye towards improving student outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Making great language learning materials is not only about the content but also how that content is presented. The visual design of the learning materials is the conduit through which meaning is created. Good visual design aids learning; bad visual design impedes learning.

As noted by Norman (2004), people are much more likely to engage with material objects that they are attracted to. Whether household objects, cars, clothing, or learning materials, things that are designed well, and are visually appealing, are more likely to create positive emotions in the user. Positive emotions foster learning, and negative emotions hinder it (Reschly, Heubner, Appleton, & Antaramian, 2008). In terms of educational materials, good visual design may not necessarily motivate a student to study, but poor visual design of materials can, and does, demotivate students.

In addition to positive emotional reactions, visual design has been shown to improve recall of the content (Diemand-Yauman, Oppenheimer, & Vaughan, 2010; Gasser, Boeke, Haffernan, & Tan, 2005; Lewis & Walker, 1989; Mayer, 2009; Nedeljkovic, Puskarevic, Banjanin, & Pincjer, 2013; Schriver, 1997; Smiley, 2004;) and aid in the comprehension of documents (Diemand-Yauman, Oppenheimer, & Vaughan, 2010; Garofalo, 1988; Gasser, Boeke, Haffernan, & Tan, 2005; Hoener, Salend & Kay, 1997; Jones & Kleckova, 2009; Katzir, Hershko, & Halamish, 2013; Lewis & Walker, 1989; Mayer, 2009; Nedeljkovic, Puskarevic, Banjanin, & Pincjer, 2013; Plass, Heidug, Hayward, Homer, & Um, 2014; Romney, 2004; Sanocki & Dyson, 2012; Schriver, 1997; Smiley, 2004; Walker, 2001).

Specific to language learning materials, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) have noted that if learning materials "look boring and scruffy they will be treated as such" (p. 126), and Kelly (1998) has stated that "layout is just as important as, no, even more important than, content" (p. 4). Unfortunately, in the experience of this author, most teacher-writers are unaware of visual design and simply use whatever the default settings their word-processing software are set at. It requires no great leap of logic to understand that language learning materials are different than business letters in content and therefore should have different visual design.

Visually designing documents can be a complicated, nuanced process requiring years of study and experience. However, if teacher-writers can familiarize themselves with some fundamental principles of visual design and understand some of the basic elements of a document, they can greatly improve their language learning materials and help increase student learning outcomes. This paper seeks to outline some of the principles and elements, and offer best practices for teachers creating their own language learning materials.

General Design Principles

A good place for any teacher-writer to begin is with an understanding of some of the fundamental principles of visual design.

Contrast

Contrast is when two or more things are noticeably different from each other and is one of the most powerful visual design elements. Using contrast in a document catches the attention of the user, creates interest, and can help organize the document. Contrast can be created with text in many different ways, including by using different sizes, colors, or even different typefaces. Figure 1 shows some of the ways that contrast can be easily created.

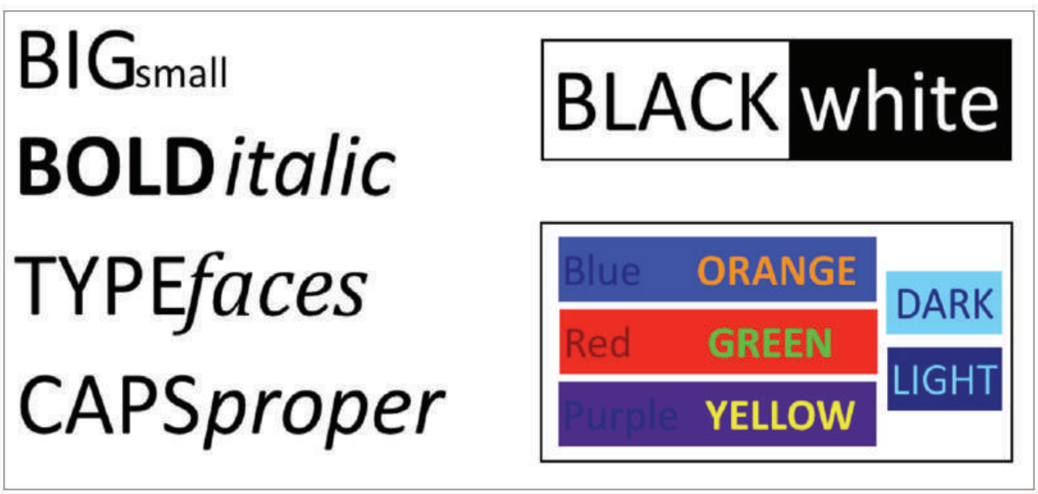

Figure 1. Contrast Examples.

In terms of language learning materials, teacher-writers should use contrast to make important elements of the document, such as instructions, stand out. Students will naturally notice, and pay attention to, these important items if they are highlighted with contrast.

Alignment and Proximity

In document design, alignment is the deliberate placement of objects on the page, and proximity is the notion that things that go together should be placed next to each other. These principles organize and unify the document and show relationships between the various objects on the page.

Unfortunately, many teacher-writers ignore these principles and simply let the computer place objects on the page for them. Take for example the document in Figure 2 created using the default settings in common word processing software. It is unclear visually which paragraph the photographs accompany. The photograph could be related to either the preceding or postceding paragraph.

FIGURE 2. An Example of a Document with Unclear Alignment and Proximity.

However, as the example documents in Figure 3 show, careful alignment of the photographs to their proximate paragraphs immediately demonstrates the relationship between the two document objects and helps the user quickly make sense of these relationships.

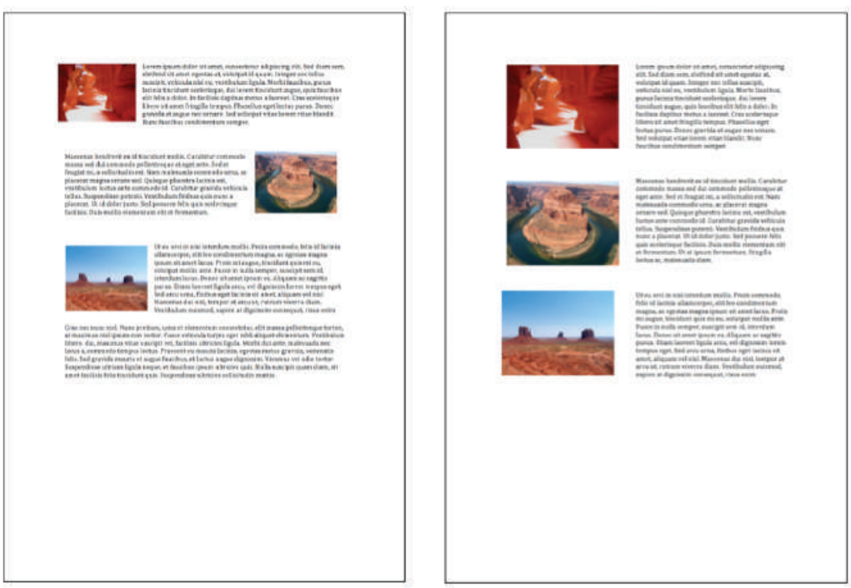

FIGURE 3. Example Documents with Improved Alignment and Proximity.

Teacher-writers should take control of the alignment of objects in their materials and organize them so that things that go together are next to each other.

Repetition and Consistency

Repetition is an element of the document repeated two or more times and consistency is repeating those elements in the same way across the document or series of documents. Repetition helps unify the different parts of the document, and consistency unifies all of the materials over the course of a semester or year. Consistently repeating certain elements of the materials makes them easier for students to quickly find them on the page and understand the relationship of one element to others. For example, if activity instructions are always in bold type using the same font, whenever a student sees text presented this way, they will be able to swiftly recognize that text as activity instructions and not, for example, part of the language currently under study.

Repetition and consistency are important over the entirety of the course as well. Just as students will easily notice the activity instructions on a single handout if they are presented in the same way, they will also quickly comprehend activity types if presented the same way week after week.

Teacher-writers should also attempt to have all of the documents with consistent visual design for an entire course. Jones and Kleckova (2013) have noted that often teachers will use visual consistency of their teaching materials week to week, but will have a completely different design for the exam. This can create confusion and frustration for the students and potentially lower their exam scores.

Teacher-writers should create materials that repeat the visual design throughout the document and should consistently repeat the design week to week for not only the lesson materials, but also homework, exams, and even administrative documents such as syllabi and calendars.

Document Elements

There is more to a document than just words on a page. Understanding three of the essential elements of any document is key to improving their visual design.

Typeface (Font)

Typeface, commonly referred to as *font*, is one of the most powerful design elements of a document and one that many teacher-writers completely ignore. They simply open a new document in their word processor and begin typing. This may be a holdover from the typewriter era as changing the font required an expensive physical adjustment of the machine.

It is difficult to recommend a specifi c typeface that is best for educational materials; however, research has consistently shown that the typeface that is easiest to read is the typeface that is most familiar (Beier & Larsen, 2013; Felici, 2003; Gasser, Boeke, Haffernan, & Tan, 2005; Hoener, Salend, & Kay, 1997;

Misanchuk, 1992; Walker & Reynolds, 2003). This of course begs the question: Which typeface are students most familiar with? Without extensive surveying of students, it is difficult for a teacher-writer to know which typeface her students are most familiar with, but if she is writing supplementary materials to accompany a commercially published textbook, the best typeface to use would be the typeface employed in the textbook.

The typeface used in the textbook is often listed on the copyright page along with other information related to the design of the textbook, such as image acknowledgements. If the typeface is not listed, then teacher-writers can utilize a website such as Indentifont (www.identifont.com) or ThatTheFont (www.myfonts.com/WhatTheFont) to discover the typeface used or at least come up with one that is a close approximation.

For teacher-writers making stand-alone materials that do not accompany existing published materials, student familiarity with the typeface may be of less concern. For L2 learners, especially those who do not use a derivation of the Latin alphabet for their native language, the main issue is legibility. Legibility is the distinctiveness of individual letter shapes. Many teachers feel that because their students are novice L2 users, that a simpler typeface is easier for them to read. However, if the letter shapes are too simple, the students cannot correctly identify the letters, and therefore the words. Romney (2004) discusses a grammar activity that the students were unable to complete because they were unable to differentiate between the lowercase "L" and the uppercase "I" as the two letters are indistinguishable in the typeface (Helvetica) of the materials. So in the case of stand-alone materials, teacher-writers are advised to use a typeface with high legibility. Perhaps the best class of typefaces are the so-called "Schoolbook" typefaces such as Century Schoolbook, which are specifically designed to aid novice readers (Shaw, 1989). Other typefaces with good legibility are screen typefaces created to be read on low resolution computer screens (Bringhurst, 2004), such as Georgia or Verdana.

A final consideration is the size of the text. Less skilled readers benefit from larger text (Carter, Day, & Meggs, 2006; Katzir, Hershko, & Halamish, 2013; Pettersen, 1989), so care should be taken not to make the letters too small. Text for adult readers is usually set between 9 and 12 points (Carter, Day, & Meggs, 2006), and teacher-writers should use the higher end of the scale.

Whitespace

Perhaps one of the most underutilized document elements in self-produced learning materials is the empty space, or whitespace, on the page. Again, many teacher-writers seem to simply open a new document, begin typing, and let their word processing software make decisions about whitespace.

Whitespace is important because it makes "the page look accessible, unthreatening, and manageable" (White, 2002, p. 7) and is one of the key design elements that affects motivation. We cannot say that students will be motivated to use materials that make effective use of the empty space, but research has shown that cramped documents with little whitespace are demotivating, and that the lack of whitespace can impact comprehension (Hartley, 1994; Misanchuk, 1992; White, 2002).

Figure 4 compares two documents: one with little whitespace and one with significant open space. Of course, it should be noted that these two examples do not contain the same amount of text. In fact, one of the principle reasons that teacher-writers do not make effective use of the empty space in the document is that they have filled it up with content (Hartley, 1994) as they feel that empty space is wasted space (White, 2002). It is admirable that teacher-writers are trying to minimize their ecological impact by trying to conserve paper, but care should be taken because in the quest to save trees by using less paper, the usability of the document, and therefore the students ability to learn from it, may be decreased. Teacher-writers should try to leave as much empty space on the page as they can.

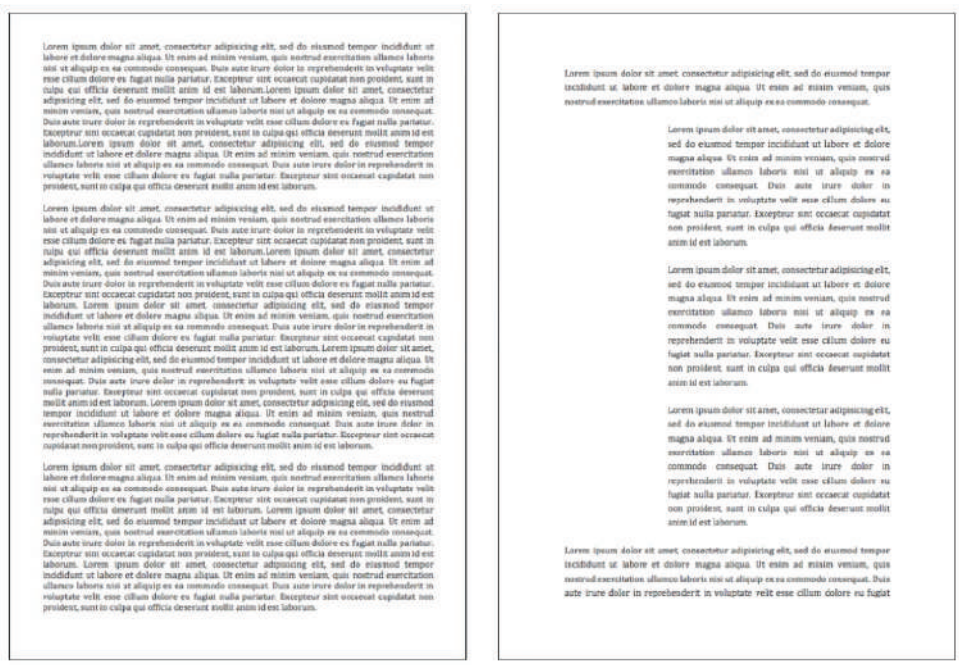

FIGURE 4. Contrasting Examples of Document Whitespace

Graphics

In instructional materials, graphics can be anything that visually conveys information, including photographs, illustrations, clipart, maps, charts, graphs, and even icons. Although graphics are a very powerful way to activate multimodal learning (Mayer, 2009), teacher-writers should be careful with graphics as they can be a distraction that suppresses learning (Clark & Lyons, 2011; Peeck, 1987; Romney & Bell, 2012; Evans, Watson, & Willows, 1987).

Romney (in press) has proposed a four-point typology for how images are used in language learning materials. He suggests that graphics can be either instructional, strongly or weakly supportive, or decorative. Instructional graphics are integral to the learning activity; that is to say, the students must use the graphic to complete the activity. For example, students must look at a map and give directions to their partner. Supportive graphics are images that support the learning in an indirect way, for example, a photograph of a celebrity accompanying a reading passage about their life. Strong supportive visuals stimulate the students' interest and activate their schema. Weak supportive graphics are those that are connected to the learning activity, but usually in a nonspecific way, and often are so generic that they are unable to stimulate interest or activate schema in a useful manner. For example, a scripted conversation in a business English textbook might be accompanied by a generic photograph of business people sitting in a conference room. The photograph would reveal nothing about the topic, situation, or context of the conversation. Finally, decorative images are those that are not connected to the learning activities in any way and seem to be included just to make the materials more attractive.

Teacher-writers should consider using graphics in their materials, but only if they contribute to the learning. Both instructional and strong supportive graphics are recommended, but weakly supportive and decorative graphics should be avoided. As Misanchuk (1992) notes, "If instructional facilitation is not highly probable, then concern for both the economics and the potential for distraction dictates that graphics should not be used in instructional materials" (p. 239). Figure 5 shows two examples of a teacher-made handout: one with weakly supportive and decorative images included, and the same handout with no graphics.

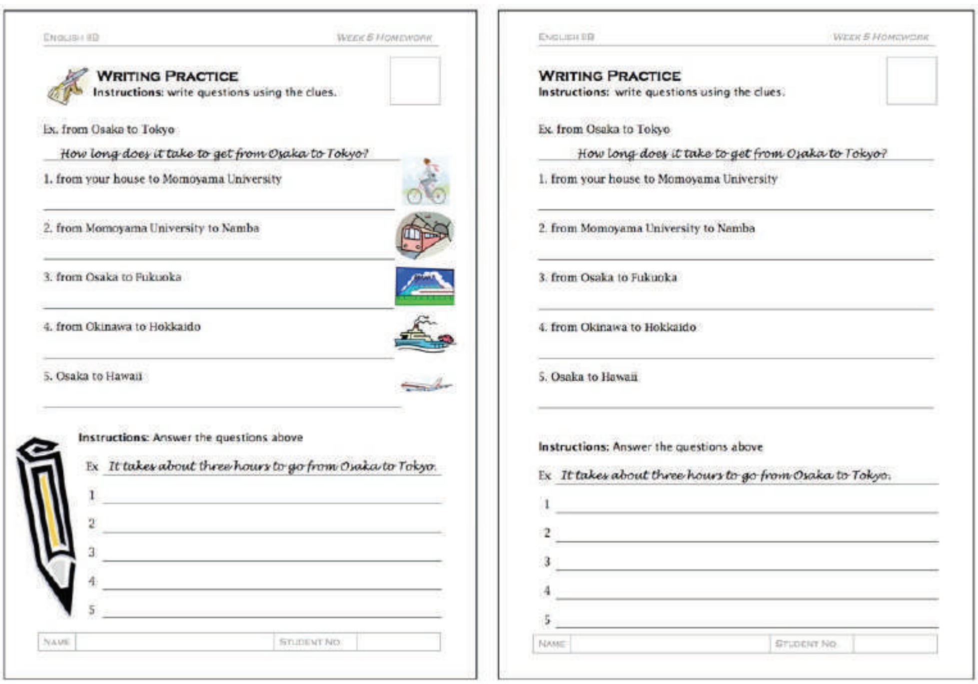

FIGURE 5. Identical Handouts With and Without Non-contributing Images Included.

Best Practices

In summary, here is a list of best practices for harnessing the power of visual design to improve student learning.

- Use contrast to highlight important things.
- Use alignment and proximity to connect objects together.
- Use repetition within a document and across documents for the entire course to help students easily find things.
- Use the same visual design for learning materials, exams, and administrative documents such as syllabi.
- Use the same typeface as the textbook for supplementary materials.
- Use a typeface with good legibility for stand-alone materials.
- Use larger text sizes.
- Leave as much empty space on the page as possible.
- Use only instructional and strongly supportive graphics.

Conclusion

Visual design is all around us, and once teacher-writers begin to see it, they will notice it everywhere (Williams, 2008). For any set of language learning materials – or any document, really – it is not just the information that is conveyed that is important but also how that information is delivered. Teacher-writers should be aware of the various visual design elements of their learning materials and should take an active part in controlling them instead of just using the default settings on their word processer. Teacher-writers are encouraged to experiment with the various design principles and document elements discussed in this paper in order to find solutions that best fit their contexts, best serve their students, and best express their intentions.

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English-Medium Instruction from the Learner's Perspective

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Although the number of English-medium instruction (EMI) courses offered at universities in Korea and Japan has been rising, many of the EFL students who take these courses face major linguistic challenges. Teachers are often required to scaffold classroom materials and activities to facilitate student comprehension of the content. In designing these materials and classroom activities, student feedback can be an invaluable resource in helping teachers modify and improve EMI courses. This exploratory research examined student reactions to the methodology used in two English content courses at a small liberal arts university in Japan. Student responses to pre- and post-course surveys as well as weekly classroom surveys were analyzed to ascertain the effectiveness of the teaching materials and activity types used. Results suggest that scaffolding content can be particularly effective for students in EFL contexts like Korea and Japan.

Introduction

Content courses at the university level in both Korea and Japan are increasingly being taught in English as part of a global trend toward teaching "in English" rather than "teaching English." Much research indicates that content-based instruction (CBI) and English-medium instruction (EMI) are effective language teaching approaches (Grabe & Stoller, 1997). The body of evidence, a strong global demand, and a growing recognition of English as a lingua franca (ELF) – suggests that EMI will only increase. Research also suggests that varying techniques and activity types, as well as modifying language, is good practice in EMI classrooms (Peregoy & Boyle, 2012). While the theoretical evidence is encouraging, asking students in EFL contexts how they view EMI courses and how they actually respond to them can provide valuable feedback for educators. This paper reports on a research study that analyzed feedback gathered from students in EMI courses. The authors qualitatively analyzed the effectiveness, from the students' perspective, of two content courses taught in English at a small liberal arts university in Hamamatsu, Shizuoka, Japan. A total of sixty-three students enrolled in the two courses took part in this study. Pre- and post-course surveys were administered to compare students' responses on a number of questions. In addition, weekly student surveys were taken to assess student reactions to the lecture content and classroom activities used in each lesson. Results suggest that activities that scaffold course content are particularly effective for students in an EFL context.

BACKGROUND

A number of recent changes have increased the necessity for L1 Japanese speakers to develop better productive English skills. A saturated market and aging population has forced Japanese companies that once focused solely on domestic sales to expand overseas, where English is often the lingua franca. Second, those with practical English skills have come into increasing demand to handle the influx of overseas visitors to Japan in recent years. This demand is only expected to increase in anticipation of the 2020 Summer Olympics to be held in Tokyo. These conditions have combined to exert pressure to improve English education in Japan, particularly at the tertiary level. Companies need graduates with productive English skills, and universities in Japan are evaluated in part based on their ability to produce top-quality graduates. In short, producing graduates with high-level English skills makes them more likely to find employment, thus improving the university's reputation, which in turn, makes it easier to attract new students.

In the past, however, Japanese university students have not performed well on international measures of English. One of the main criticisms of English education in Japan has centered on how English instruction in junior and senior high school focuses too heavily on developing the reading and listening skills that will prepare students to take the national center exam and other university entrance examinations. As a result, by the time students enter university, their productive skills often lag far behind. Moreover, Japanese university students have also been thought to lack critical-thinking skills in English (Long, 2003). The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has acknowledged that Japanese students need to develop higher-order critical-thinking skills in English in order to become productive members of a global workforce (MEXT, 2016).

A number of Japanese universities have responded to MEXT's reforms by introducing EMI courses into their curricula. It is hoped that in addition to being effective in developing the productive and critical-thinking skills of students, EMI courses might also be attractive to international students in Japan, the recruitment of whom has become increasingly vital as a supplement to the dwindling numbers of university-age Japanese. As many international students do not have the Japanese ability to take mainstream courses, EMI courses are thought to be a way of providing them with university-level content while they are studying in Japan.

Although EMI courses may be appealing to university administrators and policy planners, many Japanese students struggle when taking them (Toh, 2016). Student unfamiliarity with the usually more learner-centered approach of EMI courses that is required to develop critical-thinking skills can often be frustrating for both students and instructors. Teachers often have to adjust the lecture speed, limit the amount of content, or adopt various other measures in order to ensure that their students are actually benefitting from the course. Students can be intimidated not only by the difficulty of the content, but also by being encouraged to ask questions or prompted to offer their opinions in English. Moreover, international students taking EMI courses are usually more proficient, and while they can help motivate their peers, their fluency, and confidence can be unnerving for some Japanese students who are less self-assured. As the above suggests, class levels tend to vary, which creates challenges in setting the level of difficulty of an EMI course. Setting the bar too high could cause lower-level students to drop the course. Aiming too low may result in the content not meeting the expectations of higher-level students, who may be expecting something similar to a university-level course overseas. With so many factors to consider, it seems reasonable to gather student opinions concerning the content, degree of difficulty, and the techniques and activities used in an EMI course. It is hoped that the data provided in this report will demonstrate that student feedback can provide valuable input as instructors try to find the right balance between degree of difficulty, maintaining student interest, and desired learning outcomes.

Theoretical Background

In designing an EMI course to be learner-centred and to provide as much comprehensible input as possible, it can be useful to refer to Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Reber, Reber, and Allen (2009) define this as "the difference between what a learner can do without help and what he or she can do with help." The general idea is that someone more skilled or knowledgeable, often a teacher but also perhaps a more knowledgeable peer, will be able to help a student achieve more than they could otherwise.

Scaffolding, or "providing assistance to students to help them achieve what otherwise would be too difficult for them" (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976, p. 90), is a similar concept that is perhaps better known in language teaching circles than Vygotsky's concept of a ZPD. Unlike ZPD, scaffolding does not specify the pairing of a more knowledgeable and less knowledgeable peer. One way to scaffold material is to break it up into smaller, more manageable tasks or activities, and present it to students with clear objectives and support. Scaffolding is a "bridge used to build upon what students already know, to arrive at something they do not know" (Benson, 1997, p. 126). Ideally, teachers should have an understanding of the student population's prior knowledge and abilities before grading course material. In the authors' context, there are no prerequisites required before taking EMI courses. As a result, the students in the courses are often of dramatically different levels, and some are clearly not prepared for an EMI course. In particular, the specialized content can be intimidating for some students, causing them to become discouraged. This makes the scaffolding of content and frequently checking to see if content is understood all the more critical.

However, it should never be enough simply to design an EMI course, scaffold the content via some creative activities, and put it on autopilot. Equally important is monitoring how students respond to the course. Getting feedback directly from students can be helpful to teachers in many ways. It can give the instructors input as to how well students understand the content, how effective certain activity types are, and whether certain tasks are achieving their desired aims. Collecting data can also provide instructors with useful information on student expectations of an EMI course before it begins and their reflections after it ends. All of this can be very useful to teachers in designing and revising classes to make them ever more effective at reaching course goals.

METHOD

Surveys were administered in the first and last classes of two 90-minute, 15-week EMI courses in the spring semester of 2016. The respective courses were a Survey of British Literature course of 41 students and a Global Studies course of 22 students. Many of the questions were five-point Likert-scale type, others offered a list of answer choices prepared by the instructors, and some were open-ended. Some of the questions students were asked included why they were taking the course, their level of interest in English-medium courses, their willingness to actively participate in class, the expected and actual levels of difficulty, and the expected and actual effectiveness of various types of activities. The pre- and post-course surveys were designed to help the instructors extract valuable data by comparing student's prospective expectations of the EMI course with their retrospective comments.

In addition, during the last five minutes of most classes, students were asked to write comments on a blank piece of paper about that day's lecture. Student comments were anonymous and were accepted in either English or Japanese. At the end of the course, both the pre- and post-course surveys and eleven weeks of student comments were analyzed for feedback on how the course might be improved.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On the pre-course survey in the Survey of British Literature course, responses to the question asking students why they were taking the course showed that 33% were taking it because of an interest in literature. Twenty-nine percent (29%) claimed they were taking the course mainly because it was conducted in English. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of the students chose "no reason" as a response, suggesting little deep thought went into their decision, or that the course simply fit their schedule. Interestingly, zero students chose the option "because it will help prepare me for overseas study." The post-course survey showed similar responses to the same question, with 37% saying they took it because of an interest in literature and 30% because it was in English. Again, no students responded that they took the course expecting it to help prepare them for studying abroad. This was mildly surprising because the university actively encourages students to study abroad and, the EMI courses are promoted to students as a way to help them prepare for overseas study.

In response to the pre-course survey question asking about the expected level of difficulty in adapting to a course taught completely in English, 41% expected it to be quite difficult or very difficult to adapt to. On the other hand, 40% expected it to be not difficult or just a little difficult. Nineteen percent (19%) responded that they thought the course would be "somewhat difficult." Responses on the post-course survey indicated that a similar percentage of the students, 38%, found it quite or very difficult. Also similar to the pre-course survey result of 40%, 37% found the course not difficult or just a little difficult. On the pre-course survey, 13% responded that they expected the course to be "somewhat difficult," while

25% found it to be so on the post-course survey.

Another question asked students which of the four skill areas they anticipated would improve the most in the course. Sixty-seven percent (67%) thought their reading would improve the most, while the remaining 33% thought their listening would improve the most. No students chose either speaking or writing in the pre-course survey. These results are perhaps unsurprising, however, given that it was a lecture-based course, one might have expected the responses to be reversed. In fact, the post-course survey results were almost identical, with 65% claiming their reading improved the most, and 35% saying listening improved the most.

The surveys also asked students about their interest in taking more EMI courses if they were available. On the pre-course survey, 80% of the students answered either "yes" or "very much so." On the post-course survey, 89% gave the same answer. Asking such a question to students enrolled in an EMI course may seem a bit like preaching to the choir; however, the response indicates that there is clearly at least some demand and that an expansion of EMI courses may be warranted.

In the authors' experience, many, if not most, courses at Japanese universities consist of an instructor lecturing for 90 minutes, often extemporaneously. This may be acceptable for students studying in their native language, but it is clearly unsatisfactory for EMI courses in Japan. Good pedagogy for EMI courses in EFL contexts necessitates the scaffolding of content and varying activity types, many of which require students to actively participate. Therefore, we also asked students their feelings about lecture courses that required active participation, which are still relatively rare in Japan. On the pre-course survey, 52% said they "enjoy" or "very much enjoy" actively participating in classes. On the post-course survey, those who answered they "enjoy" or "very much enjoy" jumped to 81%. This result suggests that students can quite easily adapt themselves to courses that expect them to move out of their comfort zone and more actively participate.

Another question on the post-course survey asked students to rank the usefulness of the various materials and activity types used in the course. Overwhelmingly, the most positive responses were for the lecture notes handouts. These handouts served as note-taking guides for the lectures, with question prompts and hints about important information. Forty-three (43) out of forty-four (44) respondents, or 98%, indicated that the lecture notes handouts were "very helpful." The lecture notes handouts were quite detailed at the beginning of the semester and became less so as the semester wore on. This was one way in which the scaffolding that was provided to students was slowly taken away as they became more and more capable of completing tasks without it.

Finally, the post-course survey also had space for students to write comments about which aspects of the course they found to be either positive or negative. Many useful comments were received and some patterns emerged from the data. One frequent refrain was that the pace was too quick; instructors should go slower and repeat or rephrase important information. Similarly, some students felt that, while it was generally good to have multiple activities, there were often too many crammed into one lesson. This was helpful because, in an effort to reduce boredom and present material via different modalities, instructors can sometimes be too ambitious, using so many activities in a lesson that it ends up overwhelming students rather than aiding their understanding. Many comments also referred to how the use of video was helpful in bringing course material to life and for listening practice. Another frequent comment was an appreciation for making the lesson goal clear at the beginning of every class. Some important take-aways from the comments included the following: slow down and recast information frequently; continue scaffolding the content and use various activity types but scale back the number of activities per lesson; continue the creative use of video and video-based tasks in class and clearly articulate weekly lesson goals so students know exactly what they are expected to get out of the lesson.

Regarding weekly feedback, eleven weeks of student comments were broadly categorized into positive or negative comments about course content and how students felt about their individual contributions. There were 265 student comments in total, 57% of which were related to the delivery of the course content, concerning either the lecture or classroom activities. Regarding course content, positive comments were mostly related to students feeling a sense of achievement at being able to understand the content, how they enjoyed a particular classroom activity, or comments about the course content in general. Negative comments usually focused on the difficulty of a lecture or activity, or that they had trouble following the lecture presentation.

Forty-three percent (43%) of the weekly comments were related to student contributions in class, often about their ability to understand or their reactions to the course content itself. Positive comments usually regarded students feeling that they were improving in English, whereas negative comments evinced a lack of confidence in their English skills, or how they felt their English was inferior to their peers.

Students also commented positively or negatively about the way content was delivered, either positively commenting that they enjoyed some aspect of the class, or negatively commenting that the lecturer went too fast or that they had trouble following the lecture. Concerning comments on lectures, 17% of the total were positive comments about the lecture, often stating that students found the lecture interesting. Fifteen percent (15%) of the overall comments were negative, of which 55% indicated that the content was too difficult, 25% stating that the lecturer spoke too fast, and 15% noting that the text on the lecture slides was difficult to read (Table 1). All of this data will be very useful to instructors in improving future iterations of the courses. Adjusting content, speaking more slowly, checking for confirmation, rephrasing or recasting information, adapting lecture slides, modifying classroom tasks and activities, and reducing the number of activities per lesson are all possible ways to address the legitimate concerns of students.

TABLE 1. Negative Lecture Comments

Comment	Percent of Responses
Too Difficult	55%
Spoke Too Fast	25%
Slides Hard to Read	15%
Other	5%

Note. Negative lecture comments were 15% of total comments.

At times, comments were contradictory: Some students stated a particular lecture was too difficult, while others indicated that it was quite easy. This reflects the different levels and perceptions of the students who took the course. While a global review of comments provided valuable feedback in terms of how to modify the course overall, reviewing the comments on a weekly basis was also extremely informative. When several students commented that the lecturer spoke too fast on a particular day or that the content of a particular lecture was too difficult, it served as a strong indication that specific, targeted adjustments were necessary and as a clear sign that the instructor needed to review how the material was being presented.

Twenty-four percent (24%) of the total comments concerned positive or negative remarks on classroom activities and assignments. These comments provided insight into what kind of classroom activities the students found useful in scaffolding content. The majority of the students reacted positively in general to the classroom activities used, likely because they served the dual function of scaffolding the content and allowing students to participate actively in class and practice their English. Out of a total of 64 comments, 43% of the students made positive comments about the group discussions and 14% mentioned the videos. Seventeen percent (17%) of the students responded that the reading assignments were overly difficult (Table 2).

TABLE 2. Comments on Classroom Activities

Comment	Positive Comments (%)	Negative Comments (%)
Reading (Homework) Assignments	2 (3)	10 (17)
In-class Assignments	3 (5)	1 (1)
Class Discussions	27 (43)	7 (11)
Videos	8 (14)	1 (1)

Note. Total = 64.

Of the total student comments, 115 consisted of reflections on how students felt about the content or how they rated their performance. Of these comments, 11% were comments about how they felt their English improved, while 21% were comments that their English wasn't good enough, either in comparison with their peers, or in terms of their personal expectations. Whether these negative comments were an indication that students felt either discouraged or motivated to improve is beyond the scope of this paper but may be an interesting topic for future study.

Of comments in this category, 60% were student reactions to the course content. Positive comments were mostly related to students commenting directly on what they had learned that day. It was interesting to find that, as students got used to the course content and lecture style, there was a gradual shift from negative comments about their inability to understand to neutral comments about the content of the lecture. This could be an indication that what students initially perceived negatively as a lack of understanding was just as likely a reflection of their unfamiliarity with the more learner-centered style of the EMI courses and the expected critical-thinking skills that were implicit in the classes.

Conclusions

The goal of this exploratory research study was to discover directly from students in an EFL context how they respond to EMI courses. The instructors learned a great deal from the data collected, not least to empathize with students and what they face when they take EMI courses for the first time. The valuable information gained from the student responses will be of great help in improving future EMI courses. Student responses clearly showed which classroom activities were well-received, which were not, and perhaps more importantly, why. This data will serve as a guide for instructors as they adjust the difficulty of the lecture content, activities, and speed of presentation.

The student feedback has also been useful in guiding the instructors in a more macro sense as they reconsider not only individual lesson goals but also overall course objectives. While the methodology used by individual teachers in designing EMI courses will undoubtedly vary greatly, collecting feedback from students before, during, and after the course has been an invaluable resource. This project has been instrumental in helping the instructors reflect on, and more clearly define, the learning outcomes they hope to accomplish in teaching their respective EMI courses.

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An Exploratory Study of the Social Experiences of Koreans Living Abroad

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This study examines the social experiences of Koreans who have lived abroad. Through analyzing semi-structured interviews with a grounded theory methodology, I arrive at a framework for understanding the common purpose, among the participants I interviewed, for living abroad, which was to build an identity through acquiring linguistic skill and academic achievements. I also describe some of the barriers to accessing the social experience vital for a successful stay abroad.

INTRODUCTION: IDENTITY AND CULTURE

In recent years, there has been growing interest among Koreans studying English in the relationship between language learning and identity (Cho, 2013; Kim, 2007; Ko, 2008; Park, 2011; Park & Lo, 2012; Shin, 2014; Vasilopoulos, 2015). This study also examines issues of identity among Koreans living abroad, though I consider identity in a somewhat different sense. For the purposes of this study, identity is viewed as an adaptive construct. As Baumeister (2011) has remarked, "human selfhood is largely an adaptation to the demands of the social environment, which in the case of humans includes culture" (p. 54). To put it in Bourdieu's (1986) terms, the demands of the social environment require various species of capital: symbolic (prestige, honor, attention), economic (money), cultural (competencies, skills, and qualifications, such as a university degree), and social (resources that can be gained from a social network; p. 244). These can all be seen as facets of the identity a person works to build, an identity which, in the case of this study, seems to be one of the main reasons for investing time, money, and energy in living abroad.

Bourdieu's (1986) concept of cultural capital has come to applied linguistics research through Pierce's (1995) seminal article on investment and identity, where she states that "if learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital" (p. 17). Since then, the fields of applied linguistics and language education have seen lively interest in the concept of investment. Shin (2014) explained that "linguistic investment" in English among young Koreans studying abroad gives them an advantage in the competitive job market (p. 100), and Park and Lo (2012) noted that English allows Koreans to gain the linguistic capital to construct "cosmopolitan identities" for a globalized world (p. 149).

Along such lines, this study examines how Koreans living abroad go about acquiring that capital, which is a vital resource to them as they attempt to meet "demands of the social environment" (Baumeister, 2011, p. 54) back in Korea. To that end, this study seeks to address the following questions:

- What is the experience like, subjectively, for Koreans living abroad?
- What do they seek?
- How do they go about attaining that?
- What are the elements of that process?
- What sort of theoretical frame can describe that process?

METHOD

Participants

Eight Koreans who had each spent at least a year living abroad in an English-speaking country were interviewed in English (see interview questions in Appendix A). As shown in Table 1, the participants brought with them a variety of experiences. Notable among them is Paul, who, although Korean, grew up in Indonesia. Names have been changed for the sake of anonymity.

TABLE 1. Participant Details

Name	Years Abroad	Country Visited	Purpose
Alice	2002-2009	England	Fine Arts Studies
Amy	2014-2016	Australia	Working Holiday
Cindy	2009-2010, 2015	Canada, Poland	Study, Work
Erin	2013-2016	America	Bachelor's Degree
Kathy	2009-2013	Australia	Parents Moved
Paul	2015-2016	Korea	Military Service
Stacy	2015-2016	Australia	Internship
Tom	2013-2016	America	MA TESOL

Participants were gathered using flyers on a university campus in Korea and from among students I had known while teaching English in the United States.

Procedure

Analytically, I relied on grounded theory, a tool for investigating social processes. Charmaz (2006) describes grounded theory as a set of "systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves" (p. 2). This entailed collecting and transcribing interviews, marking lines of talk in the interviews with abstract labels called codes (e.g., "seeking identity through experience"), categorizing those codes to find patterns, and writing memos comparing the codes and categories, until a theory emerged from the data to interpret the process being observed. Grounded theory methods can be used to analyze a variety of qualitative data, but in this study, I analyzed semi-structured interviews. As Sharan Marriam noted in an interview with Kathryn Roulston (2010), interviews give a view on a interviewee's "feelings, opinion, perspective, understanding of an experience" (p. 178). I used the conventions in Bucholtz (2007) as a transcription guide (see Appendix B), and the software RQDA (Version 0.2-8; Huang, 2016) for coding the data.

Seeking Identity Through Experience

Using the grounded theory methodology, one code category arose to capture the goals of these sojourners: seeking identity through experience (Figure 1). The aim of participants seemed to be to construct an identity through the experience of working or studying abroad. Sojourners brought with them a set of interconnected personal resource modules (Figure 1.1), assets which they needed to achieve their identity goals, and which also for some led to an adjustment in their communication styles (Figure 1.4). However, they needed to channel these resources through the conduit of social capital (Figure 1.3), a resource that was difficult to acquire because of the barriers to that experience (Figure 1.2), which they had to somehow pass through.

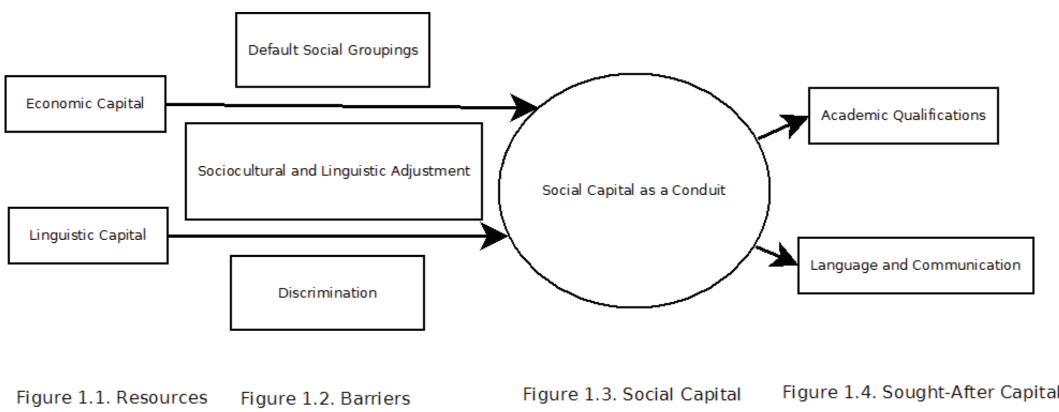

FIGURE 1. Seeking Identity Through Experience.

Let's now consider the range of identity goals these sojourners expressed that motivated them to live abroad. Based on the interviews I conducted, the decision to live abroad was often part of a greater aspiration. Tom, for example, expressed an interest in learning English as a dream he had since childhood. Most of the participants in this study mentioned that they wanted to practice "real English" with native English speakers. Tom gave the reason that learning language in authentic contexts seemed "more productive" since it was easier to remember words, whereas for Stacy, it helped her learn slang and encouraged her to watch English movies with her English-speaking friends. Yet Paul mentioned an advantage of conversing with other non-native speakers, saying that whereas talking with a native speaker was "always like kind of a little stressing," with his

Thai friends in Indonesia, “it doesn’t matter like we all make mistakes, but we’re still having conversation.”

In addition to seeking this linguistic capital, some participants expressed interest in seeking other forms of cultural capital, such as Alice, who wanted to attain an academic degree in art overseas. Stacy sought the credentials of having worked as an intern in a company overseas – in her case, in Australia. She mentioned that despite the low pay, the experience was vital, stating, “i thought that um that experience can’t like you know buy with money? (1) so it was really precious opportunity. so I don’t care about money. so I came I decided to go there,”

They also brought with them some personal resources relevant to achieving this capital and therefore their identity goals. Skill in English was, of course, very helpful to them when interacting with friends, teachers, and many others in the host country. In addition, their identity as Koreans helped some of them make social connections. Talking about a friend she made in Australia, Amy said, “i think we could get along easily as he was interested in korean culture.” Similarly, Alice found in her Korean identity a topic for conversation with her landlord in England, who was interested in Korea.

The human connections (Figure 1.3) that sojourners needed to make were the crucial element for them to channel their personal resources into the capital of linguistic skill and academic qualifications (Figure 1.4). In this study, I found that the social capital the sojourners acquired (that is, the connections they made) opened avenues for investment in cultural capital (such as language skills and academic degrees), demonstrating “the fungibility of different forms of capital” (Portes 1998, p. 4). In other words, in order for them to transfer their time, money, and abilities into the experience they sought, they required social capital as a conduit.

This fungibility is demonstrated most strongly in Cindy’s case. She mentioned that although many other Koreans in Vancouver lived in the same area downtown, she was “willing to pay 200 dollar more for my private space” away from them, thus forcing herself to integrate with the local people, and saying that she had “just one” Korean friend while living there. Having the means to invest more money in her living situation gave Cindy different options as far as the people with whom she was able to associate, which, consequently, gave her social opportunities conducive to learning English.

In addition to the benefit of a network of English speakers as a source of opportunities to practice English, as Cho (2013) noted in her study of Korean MA students abroad, “supportive networks” (p. 143) are vital for academic success. In the present study, this is most salient in Tom’s discussion of his life as a graduate student in the United States:

Tom: from: social things made a: mess my academic things.
Neil: oh really.
Tom: because like as i mentioned, like that time i i don’t have uh friend and then i felt lonely and then like i like uh: i can’t concentrate (1) like i i can’t keep going to study from there,

Finding these connections was not a given, though, and the participants I interviewed needed to find means to access this social experience. Tom, for example, tried attending and volunteering at local festivals and diversity fairs in his town. Yet while he was able to practice English authentically at the festivals, they didn't end up giving him enduring social contacts, perhaps because of the fleeting nature of the interactions. In contrast, Erin's homestay experience allowed her opportunities to communicate with her host mother and sister while cooking, shopping, and watching movies together. Stacy, Alice, and Cindy used Internet sites to meet up with groups and, from there, find some friendships. In some cases, they were able to multiply the social capital acquired through these meet-ups by being introduced to friends of friends. Considering this, Internet services appear to be very helpful to the sojourner, who might otherwise have an impoverished, isolated experience, in gaining the social connections vital for practice using English as well as for psychological support.

BARRIERS TO SOCIAL EXPERIENCE

Paralleling the findings of Bae and Panuncio (2010), the participants interviewed in this study mentioned several barriers that threatened to marginalize them (Berry, 1997). The suffering of sojourners who are unable to make social connections while living abroad was noted by previous researchers, such as Ward and Rana-Deuba (2000), who report that among other factors, "loneliness" and "dissatisfaction with the quality of host and co-national relations were significant predictors of psychological adjustment problems" (p. 303).

Finding locals with whom to interact was a challenge. One reason I found was that, although they were geographically situated in foreign countries, the default social groupings in which the sojourners found themselves were isolated from the local native English speakers. For example, when Stacy first moved to Australia, she was working at a Korean company with Korean coworkers and mostly Korean roommates as well, prompting her to move to another place to seek more locals to interact with. Erin said that she felt "bored" in the small, tight-knit Korean community in her city in the United Styates, and Tom mentioned that as a student at a language center in the U.S., "you can't meet some native university student well."

Yet joining an established social network was difficult. This is best illustrated by Tom, who, speaking of his MA class in the U.S., said, "so when i mm entered that course, uh most of people uh got a each other already. so kind of like uh (1) i can't uh make a friend uh easily." Kathy mentioned that while in Australia, her Korean classmates seemed to be "trying to ditch" her. When asked to speculate, she said, "well i don't understand, but i think like i'm guessing, that they could feel more included by excluding me." Recounting her interactions with people in London, Alice said that they often asked how long she would be staying, implying that they were less willing to make friends with someone who might be leaving the country soon.

They also recalled experiencing discrimination. For example, while Cindy was in Poland, she mentioned a few occasions of racially oriented insults she heard from strangers she passed on the street. In addition, Stacy expressed frustration at the predictable responses she heard when she told someone that she was Korean:

> some australians? like ask me, where are you from, and when when i say (1) i'm from korea, and they're always like north or south. something like that. so oh my god you're so stupid! have you met north korean before, and they would say no i was joking but sometimes it's i'm <u>sick</u> of it you know,

Kathy told a few stories about how she was bullied, but she insisted that it was because of the immaturity of those high school classmates, and not racism. She fared better after moving to another city, about which she said, because of the higher population of Koreans, "it was like more understanding about culture."

Differing sociocultural norms were a source of awkwardness that presented the sojourners with another barrier to experience. Stacy, for example, talked about personal space and greetings:

> in like. western countries. you guys when like greeting and stuff [pretty] different. you guys hu:g and ki:ss sometimes like so but at the first time i was like – oh how can i do that. or something like that. you know? so it's feel weird,

Erin talked about difficulties communicating her needs to her host family, explaining that "in <u>our</u> culture, even we feel something bad, we usually don't talk um to older people directly." For reasons such as this, Amy found that when communicating with other Asian people, "we can like understand [each other more] easily than like western cultures." Factors such as these may have inclined some of the sojourners to prefer spending time with people with similar communication preferences, preferences which, as Amy pointed out, can correlate with a person's nationality.

Also, as would be expected, to the extent that sojourners' English was limited when they arrived in their host countries, they had trouble adapting socially. Kathy, for example, had trouble understanding her teacher's instructions in Australia. She relied on a classmate to interpret for her, yet this put strain on their relationship. Thus, linguistic capital (Figure 1.1) was a resource Kathy needed to channel through social capital (Figure 1.3), in this case her classmates, in order to gain the capital of academic qualifications (completing her schoolwork) and more linguistic skill (from spending time with English-speaking friends; Figure 1.4).

Tom went on further to describe academic difficulties, describing entering graduate school without much support as going into a "jungle." He also suffered from diminished self-confidence, saying that at that time, he felt that he was not his true self, but that he was "shy" and "like a coward."

CHANGES IN COMMUNICATION STYLE

Aside from the linguistic skills and other achievements they gained, some other enduring changes seemed to have occurred in the sojourners. As Kim (2007) points out, "changes in sociocultural surroundings resulting from immigration have the potential for gradual habitus reorganization" (p. 128). Namely, some participants reported changes to their communication habits. Erin mentioned that although she still considers herself introverted, she became more straightforward out of necessity, saying that “in america like i’m alone, so you – i need to express my feeling and yeah.” Tom recalled a story of how, after losing the confidence to keep up with his classes and interact well with classmates, a change of environment with new friends led him to become “more open hearted. and then more act– active.” As he said,

Tom: so i couldn’t uh follow the some class. and then i couldn’t uh interact my uh classmate? (1) but (1) but uh after that <first school name>? like when i went to the other like kind of second graduate school?
Neil: <second school name>?
Tom: yeah. from there? i met a lot of friends. i i made a lot of friend and then (1) uh (1) like across country? (2) my character was back.

Yet communication habits acquired while living abroad at times led to awkwardness when returning back to their native countries, an issue that could be considered reverse culture shock. Below, Cindy describes a situation in which a communication habit she acquired in Canada led to a situation back in Korea that she considered awkward. Telling a story about how she tried to express appreciation to a bus driver for safe driving, she said,

> and when i get off, i wanna say thank you. like i did in canada. (1) but like i did once, (1) and everybody looked at me weird, and like oh i think i should not do it. (1) and it make me feel very awkward. (2) i think (1) it’s a good habit to have, (1) but here people looks (1) at me, i dunno weird?

She went on to talk about how this led to a readjustment of her communication habits, giving the example that she was less willing to have a conversation with strangers she met at a dog show. This is similar to Vasilopolous’ (2015) finding that English learners returning to their native Korea struggle to find a community in which to maintain the L2 identities they’ve developed (p. 73).

CONCLUSIONS

As these interviews reveal, the great investment of time, money, and energy Koreans make to live abroad, to seek experience leading to the acquisition of capital embodied in the forms of linguistic skill, job experience, and educational attainment, is not guaranteed to pay out a great return. Insofar as that, this study confirms Shin’s (2014) assertion that “acquiring linguistic capital and leveraging it to gain class privilege is a venture that is difficult” (p. 102).

This study approaches the issue of Koreans living abroad from a certain perspective, though. First, as it seeks to describe the experience of living abroad as the sojourners themselves see it, it could be considered phenomenological (Roulston, 2010, p. 77). Also, as with all such research, interpretation plays a role (Charmaz, 2006, p. 130), and my subjectivity as an American native speaker of English inevitably colors that interpretation. In addition, participants may have been reluctant to share some negative experiences or perspectives with me. As such, in the future, a wider picture might be gathered through collaboration among researchers from different backgrounds. Future research could also benefit from ethnographic methods, since, as Bucholtz and Hall (2008) suggest, ethnography can help us understand the social worlds of our participants more fully (p. 160).

This paper underscores the need for sojourners abroad to build social connections in order to acquire the linguistic skills and academic qualifications they seek. Teachers working with students planning on a stay abroad may consider the potential barriers to this social experience, as described above. In that, I hope this study can be helpful for teachers working with such students.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

Initial questions I asked the interviewees included the following (adapted from Charmaz, 2006, p. 30–31).

1. Tell me how you came to live abroad.
2. What contributed to that decision?
3. How would you describe the person you were then?
4. Who were the people you often talked to in English?
5. Who was the most helpful to you? In what way?
6. Did anything happen that made your relationships with those people closer or more difficult?
7. Did you have any communication difficulties?
8. How have your views changed since then?
9. What do you value in yourself now? What do others value?
10. Anything else you haven't thought of that occurred to you?
11. Anything I should understand better?
12. Anything you want to ask me?

In later rounds of interviews, I asked questions following up on codes that had begun to arise in the data.

1. How would you describe how you got along with those people?
2. What were the comfortable and uncomfortable aspects?
3. How could you tell if someone was reaching out or keeping distance?
4. Why did they behave that way?
5. How did you reach out or keep distance?
6. What are some difficulties you had adjusting?
7. What made it hard to connect with people?

APPENDIX B

Transcription Conventions

Adapted from Bucholtz (2007, p. 804).

.	end of intonation unit; falling intonation
,	end of intonation unit; fall-rise intonation
?	end of intonation unit; rising intonation
–	self-interrupted intonation unit
underline	emphatic stress; increased amplitude
:	lengthened syllable
(1)	pause, measured in approximate seconds
( )	unclear transcription
< >	transcriber comment; redacted identifying information

Using Transcription Activities to Promote Noticing

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Helping students discover places for improvement in their language use not only promotes self-monitoring but also allows for student autonomy. The following article details an activity used in an immersion course at a private high school in Japan as a way to promote self-noticing of improvements that had been made and places where improvement is still needed. The activity involves the use of videos of students' conversations from class with an accompanying task of transcribing the conversation and reflecting on the results. This activity was found to be particularly useful in terms of students noticing areas for improvement in their conversation ability.

INTRODUCTION

Being able to notice and become aware of language features found in input has been shown to play an important role in language acquisition (Schmidt, 2001). While the act of noticing alone is not sufficient to claim acquisition, it is also known to be one of the first steps towards acquisition. As teachers, our goal should not be to expect activities to guarantee noticing, but rather, as best as possible, to utilize activities that provide the opportunity for noticing. By providing high school students with video of their own conversations, students were able to receive input from their own conversations and notice their own use, or lack of use, of certain communication features presented in class. Based on the video students received, they were assigned the task of transcribing portions of the conversation while marking features emphasized in class, along with reflections by the students about their performance in their conversation.

CONTEXT

The transcription activity to be detailed in this article has been implemented in an immersion course at a private high school in Japan. The course in which the activity is used is a first-year high school communications course, which meets for three of the students' seven hours of English study per week. The immersion course involves a year of studying abroad that begins four or nine months after starting the school year, depending on what country the students will be studying in. Upon returning from their studies abroad, the immersion course begins to include content courses, such as history, and science in English, with the third and final year almost entirely conducted in English. As such, the English courses in the first year of the program need to be quite intense in order to prepare students in a short period of time. It also means that students tend to be highly motivated as English will play a vital role in their ability to succeed while abroad, and after returning to Japan.

The first-year English program includes a writing course that focuses heavily on grammar and vocabulary acquisition three times per week, an art class taught in English once per week, and the previously mentioned communications class three times per week. Since the writing course covers an extensive range of grammar and vocabulary, the design of the communications course is to counterbalance this with an emphasis on extensive oral output and communication strategies. Hesitations, gestures, manners, and how to be subjective in conversation are all points of emphasis in the communications course and are intended to help students become more aware of various aspects of communication outside of commonly considered linguistic features.

The core concept of the communications course is the use of Pryde's (2016) GDFC model for communication. In this model of communication "G" stands for "general," a basic statement about a given topic. "D" stands for "details," where more information is given about the general statement. "F" stands for feelings, meaning that students then need to state their opinions, thoughts, or feelings about the given topic. Finally, "C" stands for "conclusion" (or "Q" for "question" is also possible) as a means to finish a speaking turn. In action, combining all of the parts, we can observe the following speaking turns: I went to the baseball game last night. (G) / The final score was 9 to 8. (D) / It was a really exciting game with lots of action. (F) / I really want to go watch one again soon. (C). The use of the GDFC model helps students to extend their speaking turn as well as encourages them to include more personal information in conversations. Being able to incorporate the GDFC model is often challenging for students. Therefore, creating the opportunity for students to recognize their own use of GDFC through watching the video of their own conversation is one reason for the use of the transcription activity.

Another influence in using the transcription activity was to replace a reflection activity that had previously been used in the course. The reflection activity involved students having a conversation in class and at the end of the conversation assess their partner on a scale of one to four on the categories fluency, interest, vocabulary, grammar, and GDFC. Students would do two rounds of the conversation assessment and then be assigned a reflection for homework based on the assessments they received from their conversation partners. While the opportunity to receive feedback from classmates was valuable, it was found that the assessments were too vague and that students were unable to give their classmates more specific advice for improvement. In addition, students were often found unwilling to be critical of their classmates and would give full marks on all but one category, expecting that the reflection would be written about the lower-marked category. The reflection was not completed in class in order to maximize the opportunity for output during class. However, this also led to challenges since the assignment would often be due a week after the class in which the assessments were completed. This meant that if students finished the assignment the night before it was due, they were trying to remember conversations they had almost a week previous, which was not likely to produce the results being targeted by the assignment. Thus, consideration was given to a new assignment that would promote students to notice points to improve in their speaking as well as be completed at any point before the due date. This led to the decision to further explore the possibility of using student self-transcriptions in the classroom.

Literature Review

After considering the possibility of using transcriptions as a reflection activity, previous research in the area was necessary to understand how to implement the use of transcriptions in the classroom. After searching for related research, two issues became apparent. First, there is not a lot of research involving students completing transcriptions, and second, all research involving transcriptions targets grammar, rather than the communication strategies targeted by the communications course. Although the current collection of research is valuable, there is still more to explore with regard to implementing transcriptions in the classroom.

Lynch (2001) used student self-transcription as a way to promote noticing of errors from conversations in class. Lynch found that transcriptions played a positive role in the classroom and aided students in creating more accurate speech. Stillwell, Curabba, Alexander, Kidd, Kim, Stone, and Wyle (2010) used student self-transcriptions of presentations to promote noticing as well as improvements in fluency, accuracy, and complexity. The use of transcriptions was found to be positive in terms of noticing and improved accuracy, while fluency complexity results were less conclusive. Mennim (2012) had students transcribe and then work in small groups to revise errors made during in-class presentations. Mennim found that having students complete the transcriptions and then working together to revise errors was a positive addition to the classroom and gave support to students not needing to be completely reliant on teachers for error correction.

These three studies, while not targeting the same aspects of communication as the communications course, provided a roadmap for how to implement transcription activities in the classroom. One uniting result from all three studies was that transcripts were a positive addition to the classroom, which allowed for confidence in being able to successfully implement transcriptions in the communications course. In addition, all three studies limited the amount of transcription to be completed by students, either by time (Lynch, 2001; Stillwell et al., 2010) or by length (Mennim, 2012). Limiting the amount of transcription was necessary to consider because it ensures that each student’s work is controlled and relatively equal to other students. This was valuable within the context of the communications course because while some students had conversations lasting around two minutes, others spoke for over six, thus asking for a full transcript would be unequal and take a considerable amount of time to complete. Thus, it was decided that two minutes of the conversation should be transcribed because all students had conversations of two minutes and it was shown to be a reasonable amount of time in the previously mentioned studies.

In order to cover all of the aspects targeted by the communications course, some changes from these three studies was needed. The first necessary change was that with only fifty minutes in one class period, it would be challenging to have students complete the transcriptions in class and still stay within the course goal of trying to promote as much output as possible. As such, within the communications course context, completion of the transcription and accompanying reflection was done as a homework assignment. The biggest difference between the transcriptions and those used in the previous research was the use of video rather than audio. The use of video allowed students to notice aspects of communication covered in class that would not be represented using audio, such as eye contact, and gestures.

TRANSCRIPTION ASSIGNMENT

GDFC Transcription

The first section of the transcription assignment involved students watching their video, transcribing the content of the conversation, and indicating which parts of GDFC were used. The following example from a student's assignment is based on a conversation about where students would like to go for a trip:

1 A: Where do you want to go? [Q]
2 B: Ah... I want to go to Hawaii. [F]
3 A: Hawaii!?
4 B: Yes. Because I've ever been there but I'm 10 years old, so just a little. I heard we can meet Mickey. [G&D]
5 A: Mickey?
6 B: I heard it's like fun. [D]
7 A: I know I heard once on TV. It's like a resort? [G]
8 B: Yes, resort and has pool. [D]

While it would be easy to point to grammar errors found in this conversation, there are also many encouraging signs in terms of the communication strategies being used. For example, in Turn 3, Student A shows interest in Student B's response by repeating "Hawaii" in order to encourage further information. The student that completed this transcript recognizes the parts of GDFC, although it should be noted that they did not label the questions in Turns 3 and 5, but this student only labeled "Q" for the initial question and nowhere else, so they may not have understood that the assignment required all questions to be labelled. It is also possible that the student was unsure of how to label Turns 3 and 5 because they are comments that encourage further conversation rather than questions looking for more information. Through recognition of the parts of GDFC, students are able to consider their own speaking and weaknesses or strengths that exist.

Positive Points

The second section of the transcription assignment is for students to reflect on their conversation and write a paragraph about what they did well in the conversation. This section was added to the assignment because, similar to previous research (Kikuchi, 2013), students often voiced negative opinions about their English. In order to emphasize the positive improvements made by students, this was found to be a valuable section of the transcription assignment.

Comments in this section usually fell into two categories: specific points from the conversation or comments about improvements in English. Regarding the transcript above, Student A commented:

> I did well on using connection for not stopping conversation.

This shows that the student noticed that they were using an effective strategy in Turns 3 and 5 to continue the conversation and avoid prolonged silence. Through this, it is possible for each student to find concepts covered in class in their own speaking. More broadly, improvements in overall English ability are often used in this section of the conversation. This can be observed in the following comment:

> First time I couldn't talk smoothly and stop talking but now I can keep conversation more long. I'm happy like that.

Such comments support that through this assignment students are able to monitor their English ability and realize improvements that they have made during the school year.

Points for Improvement

The third and final section of the transcription assignment requires students to write a paragraph in which they comment on what they could improve in a subsequent conversation with a plan for how to achieve such improvement. Having a specific plan was added in order to avoid answers such as "I want to improve my English," which is frequently voiced by students but does not provide a clear path to achievement. This section is designed to help students reflect on where weaknesses exist in their communication ability. While it is hoped that the focus is on communication skills taught in class, there is not a limitation placed on students. Thus, comments about grammar are acceptable although they are not specifically targeted by the communications course.

Comments in this section vary considerably, but provide positive signs of noticing of issues in communication as well as unique plans for studying. An example of a response that includes both communication skills as well as language form is rare but produces the following example:

> I always said the same word over and over again so the person I'm talking will be bored ... I should use pronoun.

This example provides a clear example of noticing that the act of transcribing is well suited to produce. Without listening to their own conversation, the fact that the same word was repeated over and over might go unnoticed. However, through the transcription assignment, this student was able to notice that many of their utterances could have been simplified using pronouns, showing a focus on form. In addition, being more interesting and giving consideration to how your message is received was covered in class as a communication skill, and this student also noticed an issue in their conversation by worrying about being boring in communication. This type of noticing speaks volumes to the potential value of using transcription assignments in the classroom.

CONCLUSIONS

Noticing is a valuable part of the language learning process, and being able to provide opportunities for noticing is a beneficial goal for teachers. This study has provided an example of an activity using student self-transcription to assist noticing. It was found that the use of the transcription activity was a positive addition to the classroom and gives support to similar findings of Lynch (2001), Stillwell et al. (2010), and Mennim (2012). The findings of this study still cannot be afforded much weight because of the exploratory nature of the research and its limited context. Further, more rigorous study of student self-transcription should be undertaken, particularly in terms of how much of that noticed by students is incorporated in subsequent communication. Through use of the presented transcription activity further consideration can be given to the value of student self-transcription and further the activity resources of the language teacher in a broad range of contexts.

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Foreign Language Anxiety and Nonverbal Behavior

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A number of prominent scholars have commented that foreign language anxiety (FLA) is one of the best predictors of language learning achievement, yet most studies have been constrained to traditional methods of inquiry (i.e., surveys, interviews, observations). Just over ten years ago, that changed when Tammy Gregersen introduced a method that compared the nonverbal cues of high-anxious to low-anxious students within the context of a speaking exam. Such a method can be particularly appealing for ELT instructors who are limited or unable to communicate in their students' L1. This article presents a synopsis of a study that replicated Gregersen's (2005) method in a Korean university teaching context. The findings were largely inconsistent with Gregersen's results, prompting the author to tentatively conclude that speaking exam pedagogy has a dramatic impact on a student's FLA prior to and during the exam period.

INTRODUCTION

In February, 2015, an article was published that recounted the story of a man who had graduated with a degree in civil engineering from a prestigious private university in Seoul and had found employment with a major conglomerate in 1990. Rising through the ranks of his company, he was later deployed to Kuwait to fill a managerial role on a major construction project in July, 2008. Ten days later, he returned to Korea citing acute mental and physiological symptoms. Soon thereafter, he was diagnosed with gastroenteritis, which had been evidently triggered by stress. Despite receiving a promotion to department manager, entries in his dairy revealed that he was vehemently reluctant to return to Kuwait because of his inability to speak English. His lack of self-confidence had reached a point where he pondered early retirement confiding this grim passage in his diary: "I feel like I'm suffocating" (*Chosun Ilbo*, 2015, para. 5). Sadly, the man took his own life.

What emerged from the fallout of this tragedy was a dispute between the man's family and the company transgressing levels of Korea's judicial system. Eventually, the Supreme Court "ruled that an office worker who committed suicide due to acute depression over his inability to learn English is eligible for compensation from his company" (*Chosun Ilbo*, 2015, para. 1). This is the first article to shed light on the sinister repercussions of an affective malady that Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope (1986) call *foreign language anxiety* (FLA) – "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning, arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128).

As a country that has consistently ranked among the top countries for suicide rate per capita among all the countries that the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) publishes data on (OECD, 2015), scholars have taken a keen interest in the rigors of Korea's education system and its effect on mental health (Jeon, 2016; Lee, F., 2011; Lee, J., 2011; Lee & Lamers, 2013; Lim, Ha, & Song, 2014). As I continued to gain teaching experience in Korea in the public school system and later on at the university level, I was surprised at the number of students who confided their feelings of contempt towards learning English in Korea's education system – public schools and academies alike. There was a general consensus among the students that the methods teachers used did not adequately prepare them to gain skills in basic conversation, let alone succeed on a speaking exam. The results, evidently, were the three hallmarks of FLA theory: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002).

While a number of prominent scholars have commented that FLA is one of the best predictors of language learning achievement, the first step in addressing the issue is to identify students struggling with the affective malady (Gregersen, 2005). Gregersen's study catalogued nonverbal cues of anxious and non-anxious students within the context of a speaking exam. Such a method can be particularly appealing for ELT instructors who are limited or unable to communicate in their students' L1. For my master's thesis, I replicated Gregersen's (2005) study in a Korean teaching context but was unable to produce findings consistent with Gregersen's study. The intent of this article is to provide a short synopsis of the study, and then elaborate on the findings and how this has led me to rethink the merits of FLA theory in general and Gregersen's (2005) method in particular.

INVESTIGATING FLA THROUGH NONVERBAL CUES

Though FLA has been investigated through correlational studies (e.g., Hewitt & Stephensen, 2011; Phillips, 1992), diaries (e.g., Bailey, 1983), and interviews (Tóth, 2011), nonverbal cues are characterized as "spontaneous, harder to fake, less likely to be manipulated, and hence more believable" (Knapp & Hall, 2009, p. 14). Just over ten years ago, Gregersen (2005) introduced a method to analyze nonverbal cues in a language learning context. Within the context of a beginner-level French course at an American midwestern university, the four most anxious and four least anxious students were identified through their scores on the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), a 33-item survey designed by Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope (1986) that is widely used in ELT research to quantify FLA. The prevailing line of thought is that the higher a student scores on this scale, the more anxious that student is when learning a foreign language. Next, the students participated in a video-recorded speaking exam; they "had been given general parameters of what the exam would entail but they were not supplied with the test questions prior to the exam period" (Gregersen, 2005, p. 390).

To analyze the data, three raters recorded the number of occurrences of various facial expressions including brow behavior, blinking behavior, smiling behavior, and facial activity. Recognizing the importance of eyes in nonverbal communication, Gregersen went to an elaborate length to quantify both the duration and quantity of four different types of gaze behavior: eyes closed, gaze up, gaze down, and gaze at teacher. In the last category, she provided a qualitative description of posture and body movement through descriptive analysis of what she calls body-focused adaptors (e.g., knee shaking or hair grooming), object-focused adaptors (e.g., fidgeting with a pencil or a cell phone), speech-dependent gestures, and head movement. Table 1 is a synthesis of her findings.

TABLE 1. Summary of Gregersen's (2005) Findings

	Low-Anxious Students	Anxious Students
1. Facial Expressions	Greater frequencies of facial activity, brow behavior, and smiling behavior in terms of both frequency and duration.	Greater frequencies of blinking behavior.
2. Gaze Behavior	More eye contact with the teacher in both frequency and duration.	Less eye contact with the teacher often directing the gaze away, at times more frequently and in longer duration.
3. Posture and Body Movement	Slight forward lean towards the teacher, no body-focused adaptors, very few speech-dependent gestures, relaxed body position and posture.	Frequent grooming gestures, adjusting of clothing, rigid body position, frequently crossing and uncrossing legs.

Evidently, "the raters agreed on the duration and frequency of the criteria 91% of the time" (Gregersen, 2005, p. 391), which led her to the conclusion that "the evidence gathered ... demonstrates that the nonverbal behavior of anxious and non-anxious foreign language learners differs when they participate in a high anxiety-provoking situation such as an oral foreign language exam" (Gregersen, 2005, p. 393). To that end, the research question formulated to guide my study was "how do the nonverbal cues compare within the context of a speaking exam?"

THE STUDY: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

As Hewitt and Stephensen (2011) remark, "Replication studies are very much on the rise at the moment, but even so, they are still fairly scarce (p. 172). Through analysis of nonverbal cues of Korean students learning English as a foreign language, one of the goals of this study was to contribute to the reliability and validity of Gregersen's findings. Broadly speaking, this study mirrored the procedure in Gregersen's study. First, the class completed a translated version of the FLCAS shown in Appendix A (see Walker, 2016, p. 53). Next, the four most anxious and four least anxious students were asked to have their speaking exams video-recorded; all of the students agreed. For the final step in the process, the author trained two raters to quantify facial and nonfacial cues using the instruments in Appendices B and C, respectively (see Walker, 2016, pp. 60–61).

In Gregersen (2005), "two cameras were rolling throughout the exam: one focusing on a head shot, the other on a full-body shot" (p. 390). In another study, however, MacIntyre and Gardner "found that anxiety increased and performance decreased most immediately after the introduction of the video camera" (as cited in Ellis, 2008, p. 696). Therefore, in this study, it was determined that one camera would be a less intrusive means to gather data on nonverbal cues. As an alternative, I used an iPhone 4 camera, which was the best available at the time. In an effort to not distract students in the exam, the iPhone 4 was placed on the windowsill approximately 2-3 meters away from the student.

Because of this modification, it was not possible to go into elaborate length over certain nonverbal cues. In Gregersen (2005), there is extensive data published on gaze behavior that measures both direction (i.e., gaze up, gaze down, and gaze directly at the teacher) and time of each gaze. As the raters and I tried to replicate this method in the pilot study, we quickly came to the conclusion that Gregersen (2005) must have been using a high definition camera with perfect lighting and had access to a large screen TV to accurately analyze the data on gaze behavior in this detail. Trying to follow Gregersen's (2005) study, it took over eight hours to evaluate one gaze behavior from one of the students. Because her findings did not explain the value of going to such elaborate lengths to evaluate gaze behavior, I decided to condense gaze behavior into two categories: (a) gaze at the teacher and (b) gaze away from the teacher.

Another modification pertained to the design and delivery of the speaking exam. In Gregersen (2005), we are told that "students had been given general parameters of what the exam would entail, but they were not supplied with the test questions prior to the exam period" (p. 390). While it is not clear whether the teacher provided some kind of exam review, this does did not appear to be a method appropriate for the beginner-level students in her study. As an alternative, this study employed Burgess and Head's (2005) suggestions for speaking exams for beginner-level students. In this study, the teacher conducted a thorough exam review that not only detailed the kinds of questions that would be on the exam but also provided sample answers that would score full points.

The research question formulated to guide the study was as follows: How do nonverbal cues of high-anxious and low-anxious students compare within the context of a speaking exam? These modifications aside, every effort was made to remain faithful to the methods for data collection and analysis from Gregersen's (2005) study. After identifying the four anxious and four least anxious students based on scores from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) designed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), students were asked if their speaking exams could be video-recorded. All eight students agreed.

Like Gregersen, three people viewed the video then quantified the nonverbal cues by placing checkmarks each time they observed specific nonverbal cues. The nonverbal cues were arranged into two separate pieces (i.e., recording instruments) of paper containing two tables. Table 2 (facial cues), included the following categories: smiling behavior, blinking behavior, facial activity – "frequency of facial muscle tension, twitches, grimaces, and contortions" (Gregersen, 2005, p. 391), and brow behavior – "frequency of brows being raised or coming together" (p. 391). To analyze gaze behavior, raters were asked to count the number of occurrences of a student gazing away from the teacher. For each second the student gazed away, the markers were asked to record a checkmark in the category “Gaze Away from the Teacher” on the observation instrument. Table 3 (nonfacial cues), included the following categories: body-focused adaptors, object-focused adapters, speech-dependent gestures, and head nodding.

RESULTS

Tables 2 and 3 (taken from Walker, 2016, pp. 44–45) present a summary of the findings in this study in relation to the results reported in Gregersen (2005).

TABLE 2. Summary of Findings for Facial Cues

Nonverbal Cue	In relation to Gregersen (2005)	Explanation
Facial Activity	Consistent	High-anxious students conveyed less movements such as grimaces, contortions, and twitches than their low-anxious classmates.
Brow Behavior	Consistent	High-anxious students conveyed more occurrences where they lowered/raised their brows than their low-anxious classmates.
Smiling Behavior	Inconsistent	High-anxious students smiled more than their low-anxious classmates.
Gaze Away from Teacher	Inconclusive	The most anxious student in the study, Student 1, constantly gazed away from the teacher. Therefore, it was not possible to get an accurate assessment given the methods employed to collect data. Removing Student 1 from analysis, the mean for the three remaining high-anxious students was lower than the mean of the low-anxious students, which is inconsistent with the findings reported in Gregersen (2005).

TABLE 3. Summary of Findings of Nonfacial Cues

Nonverbal Cues	Gregersen (2005)	Explanation
Body-Focused Adaptors	Consistent	High-anxious students conveyed more occurrences that included crossing arms, grooming hair, clenching knees, and tapping feet.
Object-Focused Adaptors	Consistent	High-anxious students conveyed slightly more occurrences where they fidgeted with objects that included an umbrella, backpack straps, pens, and pencils.
Speech Dependent Gestures	Inconsistent	High-anxious students conveyed less occurrences where they used gesture to bring emphasis to their verbatim.
Head Nodding	Inconclusive	This type of gesture is commonly used to respond to yes/no questions. Because these types of questions were used only for follow-up questions, they could not be asked in a consistent manner. Therefore, some students did not have an opportunity to respond to these types of questions.

In answer to the research question formulated to guide this study (How do the nonverbal cues of high-anxious and low-anxious students compare within the context of a speaking exam?), the summaries of findings show consistency in analysis of four nonverbal cues: facial activity, brow behavior, body-focused adaptors, and object-focused adaptors. Quantitative analysis of the other four nonverbal cues was either inconsistent or inconclusive. A careful look at the descriptive data showed that Student 1, the most anxious student in the study, appeared to be an outlier. His behavior was vastly different from the other seven students in the study. He was unable to respond to questions, mumbled his responses, and avoided eye contact. Aside from this student, raters were unable to clearly identify the other high-anxious students in the study based on their nonverbal behavior. In summary, there was insufficient evidence suggesting that clear differences exist in comparing the nonverbal behavior of anxious and non-anxious students within the context of a speaking exam.

Given the inconsistency of the results relative to Gregersen's (2005) study, it would seem that the speaking exam review might have played a pivotal role in the shaping of the results. In Gregersen (2005), "beginner-level students were given general parameters of what the exam would entail but were not given the questions prior to the exam period" (p. 390). In contrast, this study included a thorough speaking exam review and produced findings where only one of the four high-anxious students demonstrated nonverbal cues consistent with the high-anxious students in Gregersen's (2005) study. In both studies, it would seem that students want to succeed on the speaking exam. However, when students are not briefed on the exam's contents and marking scheme, they have less control over the outcome. As reported in other studies (e.g., Melincavage, 2011; Ross, Reynolds, & Geis, 2000; Walding, 1991), people who are put into this position are more prone to experience mental illness such as depression, anxiety, and thoughts of suicide. Though it may be premature to draw any firm conclusions, it would seem as though students who produced high scores on the FLCAS assessment are no different. The pedagogic implication here is that students who are briefed on the speaking exam's contents prior to the exam period can channel their affective energy towards succeeding on the exam rather than devoting their attention to worry over what will or will not be on the exam.

Discussion and Conclusions

Reading reports of suicide (e.g., *Chosun Ilbo*, 2015) and hearing testimonials on the rigors of EFL in Korea's education were the impetus for my master's degree dissertation. I hypothesized that Gregersen's (2005) method shed light on the issue. Yet, the experience of reviewing literature and analyzing data for this dissertation resulted in a curious sensation of dissonance. One camp subscribes to the FLA theory, positing that it interferes with language learning, some (e.g., Hauck & Hurd, 2005) going as far as to say that teachers should engage their students in anxiety reduction techniques. The other camp (e.g., Sparks, Ganschow, Artzer, Siebenhar, & Plageman, 1997) argues that differences in language learning tend to be attributed to linguistic aptitude. Though spirited and illuminating, this ideological debate (see Horwitz, 2010; Sparks & Ganschow, 2007) ignores the complexity of human beings. Thinking of Student 1, the most anxious student in the study, there are no methods or research instruments that could offer firm conclusions on whether his performance/behavior could be attributed to FLA, aptitude, or perhaps some combination of the two.

In Gregersen's (2005) study, the raters were trained and had evidently "agreed on the duration and frequency of the criteria 91% of the time" (p. 390). Yet, when this study's raters and I attempted to quantify the nonverbal cues, there were issues with inter-rater reliability for the topics of gaze behavior and smiling behavior. Regarding the former, some of the students wore glasses, which made it painstakingly difficult to quantify the direction and duration of their gaze. Did Gregersen ask the students to remove their glasses? Or perhaps, she used a special kind of lighting and high-definition cameras that would allow her and her raters to accurately analyze not only the number but the duration of gaze behavior? In the absence of this information, it is hard to accept Gregersen's (2005) inter-rater reliability measure of 91% as credible. Exactly how much time and money was devoted to the collection and analysis of these nonverbal cues? In this study, it took in excess of twenty hours for the raters and I to quantify the nonverbal cues of one student. By the time we finished tabulating the nonverbal cues for all 8 students in the study, we could not help but conclude that our time and energy could have been better spent elsewhere.

Rather than devote more time to the investigation of FLA, it would seem as though more research is needed in examining what kinds of speaking exams native teachers use to evaluate their students and what is done prior to the exam period. At my current university, I have relied much on the expertise of the wisdom from two of the more experienced native English professors. Though these two teachers use the same textbook to teacher freshmen conversation classes, I was somewhat surprised to see that each teacher had a different means for evaluating their students speaking. Constrained by time, one teacher evaluated students by means of what he called "paired conversation." In this format, he observes two students having a conversation on pre-selected topics. A different teacher from the same department prefers to evaluate his students in a one-to-one speaking exam format. While both formats have pros and cons, it would be interesting to see what the teachers do prior to the exam period. How much of the contents do the students know prior to the exam period and what effect, if any, does this have on the students' FLA?

While I am not dismissive of the man who purportedly took his own life over his failure to learn English or the peculiar behavior of Student 1 in this study (i.e., the most anxious student in the study), we teachers in the ELT community, and those who have devoted their academic careers to FLA research in particular, would do well to first consider the pedagogic decisions that lead to FLA; that is, whether students have been briefed on the contents of the exam and performance expectations. I submit that this would be a better use of time as opposed to involving ourselves in the intervention and management of our students' affective domain.

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APPENDIX A

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

(Adapted from Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986)

Student Number: ___________________

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.
   (나는 외국어 수업에서 외국어로 말할 때 불확신하다)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.
   (나는 언어 수업에 실수하는 것을 겁내지 않는다)
   [Attitudinal scale same as for item 1; therefore, omitted here and for following items.]

3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.
   (외국어수업 들을 때 지적될 까봐 긴장된다)

4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.
   (선생님이 외국어를 할 때 말을 다 알아 듣지 못할 때 긴장이 된다)

5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.
   (외국어 수업을 더 수강해도 괜찮다)

6. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.
   (수업시간에 수업과 관계없는 생각을 하곤 한다)

7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.
   (다른 학생들이 나보다 언어능력이 더 났다고 지속적으로 생각한다)

8. I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.
   (나는 외국어수업 중 시험을 봐도 부담 없이 편안하다)

9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.
   (외국어 수업중 미리 준비안하고 말 해야 할 때 당황한다)

10. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.
    (나는 외국어 수업 점수가 안 나올 까봐 걱정이 된다)

11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.
    (사람들이 왜 그렇게 외국어 수업에 목을 매는지 이해할 수 없다)

12. In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.
    (외국어 수업중 너무 긴장되어서 이미 알고 있던 것들도 생각이 안난다)

13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.
(외국어 수업시간에 자원해서 대답하는 것이 창피하다)

14. I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.
(원어민과 외국어로 말하는 것이 긴장되지 안된다)

15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.
(선생님이 고치는 것을 못 알아 들을 때 속상하다)

16. Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.
(외국어 수업 전에 잘 준비했는 데도 긴장이 된다)

17. I often feel like not going to my language class.
(나는 가끔씩 외국어 수업에 빠지고 싶다)

18. I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.
(나는 외국어 수업에서 말할 때 자신이 있다)

19. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.
(나는 내 언어선생님이 내 실수를 모두 고칠 까봐 겁이 난다)

20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.
(외국어 수업중 지적될 까봐 가슴이 두근거린다)

21. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.
(외국어 시험 공부를 하면 할 수록 내용이 더 헷갈린다)

22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.
(외국어 수업 준비를 완벽하게 해야겠다는 부담감이 없다)

23. I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.
(나는 항상 다른 학생들이 나보다 외국어를 더 잘한다 생각한다)

24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.
(다른 학생들 앞에서 외국어로 말하는 것이 굉장히 신경 쓰인다)

25. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.
(외국어 수업 진도가 너무 빨라서 뒤처질 까봐 걱정된다)

26. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.
(다른 수업에 비해 외국어 수업이 더 긴장되고 더 떨린다)

27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.
(외국어 수업중 말할 때 긴장되고 혼란스럽다)

28. When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.
(나는 외국어 수업 갈 때 확신에 차 있고 편안하다)

29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.
(나는 선생님의 말을 단 하나라도 알아 듣지 못 했을 때 긴장이 된다)

30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.
(외국어를 하기 위해 배워야 하는 규칙의 개수에 나는 부담감을 느낀다)

31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.
(내가 외국어로 말할 때 다른 학생들이 비웃을 까 겁이 난다)

32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.
(나는 원어민들 사이에서 편안 할 것 같다)

33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.
(내가 미리 준비하지 못한 것을 선생님께서 물어 보시면 긴장된다)

(From Walker, 2016, p. 53)

APPENDIX B

Instrument to Record Facial Cues

Date of Analysis: _________ Participant No.: ________ Duration: ________

Instructions for Collection

(1) Facial activity – Count the frequency of facial contortions, grimaces, and muscle tension.
(2) Brow behavior – Count the frequency of occurrences when the student raises or lowers his eyebrows.
(3) Smiling behavior – Count the frequency of smiles.
(4) Gazing away from teacher – Count the frequency of occurrences when the student gazes away from the teacher.
(5) Comments – Write a note when the student conveys the behavior: Does he convey the behavior while speaking, or when listening? As well, feel free to note any nonverbal cues you deem as peculiar, abnormal, or unique about the student.

(1) Facial Activity	**(2) Brow Behavior**	**(3) Smiling Behavior**	**(4) Gaze Away from Teacher**
(5) Qualitative Observations			

(From Walker, 2016, p. 60)

APPENDIX C

Instrument to Record Nonfacial Cues

Date of Analysis: _________ Participant No.: ________ Duration: ________

Instructions for Analysis

(1) Body-focused adaptors – Count the frequency of movements in the arms, legs, and feet. Do not count movements in the fingers, but do note this in comments if it is a salient cue.
(2) Object-focused adaptors – Count the number of occurrences where a student touches or fiddles with an object such as a pen or pencil.
(3) Speech dependent gestures – Count the frequency of gestures used to compliment verbal pronouncements.
(4) Head movement – Count the frequency of head shaking or nodding. Specifically, when a student's head moves from side to side, count that as one movement.

(1) Body-Focused Adaptors	**(2) Object-Focused Adaptors**	**(3) Speech-Dependent Gestures**	**(4) Head Movement**	
			Nodding	***Shaking***
(5) Qualitative Observations				

(From Walker, 2016, p. 61)

Speaking of Storytelling: Narrative Descriptions of *Just for Laughs* Skits

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In civilizations across the world, a good portion of conversation revolves around stories being told in one form or another (Kiernan, 2010). Experience happens narratively: Life is not just a collection of random experiences, but rather how it is interpreted and re-interpreted, told and retold (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Despite this, a good number of ELT teachers remain reluctant to include content that helps students develop these skills. Expanding on Jones's (2001) conscious-raising approach, this article introduces a student-centered method that tasks students to describe the narrative events of a *Just for Laughs: Gags* skit. At the midpoint of the semester, students completed a Google Form that included two open-ended questions: "What is your favorite part of the course?" and "Can you offer any suggestions for improvement?" By analyzing relevant themes in the data, this study aims to identify pedagogic strategies on how language instructors can teach skills in storytelling.

INTRODUCTION

Although the term "narrative" is often associated with good literature, a large portion of conversation and everyday talk revolves around stories told in one form or another (Kiernan, 2010). In English language teaching (ELT), "students who regularly hear and share stories become more intimate with their language – developing, expanding, and increasing language skills while interacting and communicating" (Fitzgibbon & Wilhem, 1998, p. 24); in other words, stories "provide students with a more comprehensive and diverse array of data available for processing" (p. 26). Experience happens narratively: Life is not just a collection of random experiences, but rather how it is interpreted and re-interpreted, told and retold (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). If all this is true – that "the world is full of storytellers" (Wright, 1995, p. 16) – then "language teachers would be wise to devote at least part of their syllabus of the teaching of these skills" (Jones, 2001, p. 155).

Despite this, many teachers remain reluctant to incorporate storytelling skills into their language syllabus. Teachers from Taiwan in Tsou's (2006) study, for instance, reported having little prior experience with integrating storytelling into their language teaching. Specifically, they lacked experience locating appropriate stories, and lacked the cultural and language abilities to handle storytelling in English. Even for experienced teachers, Carlstrom (2013) rightly points out, "the desire to try something new is often squelched by the perceived limitations of the environment and participants" (p. 95). Perhaps unsurprisingly, Fitzgibbon and Wilhem (1998) observed that there is "a lack of statistical and theoretical data describing storytelling contributions to concept formation, memory and retention, and enhancement of evaluative and other critical-thinking skills" (p. 28).

In this article, a method that incorporates *Just for Laughs: Gags* (JFLG), a silent comedy where actors play good-natured pranks on unsuspecting bystanders, is introduced as a means to teach skills in storytelling. To evaluate the students' perspectives on this method, students were asked to provide their opinions on the use of this method at the midpoint of the semester. In this exploratory study, Korean students at a midsize university in Seoul anonymously completed a form on Google Docs that solicited their responses to two open-ended questions: "What is your favorite part of the course?" and "Can you offer any suggestions for improvement?" In review of the data, the aim of this study was to identify what language teachers can do to teach EFL students skills in storytelling.

Literature Review

One of the first articles to catch my attention was Jones (2001), which adapted Willis & Willis's (1996) conscious-raising approach to help students identify features of narrative analysis (see Labov, 1997). Jones's approach included "activities [that] encourage [students] to think about samples of language and draw their own conclusions about how language works (Willis & Willis, 1996, p. 63). The activity Jones (2001) chose was a picture story taken from *Storylines* (Fletcher & Birt, 1983). It features "an overweight middle-aged man who attempts to lose weight by jogging, only to meet with several disasters" (Jones, 2001, p. 158).

Jones (2001) employs the following procedure: (1st) review vocabulary; (2nd) ask students to imagine the main character is their uncle, and relate the incident to their partner; (3rd) observe and provide feedback on grammar and vocabulary; (4th) verbally narrate the conversational transcripts of the two versions of the story; (5th) ask students which version is more interesting and engaging; (6th) ask students to complete a questionnaire that focuses on Willis & Willis's (1996) conscious-raising model.

This method allows students to take an active role in their learning rather than being subjected to traditional methods of instruction, methods that most would agree are a cornerstone of Korea's Confucian-based education system. Though insightful, there are a few limitations. First, it is becoming increasingly rare to see classrooms that are not equipped with projector and Internet connection. Thanks to YouTube, Vevo, and other online streaming services, teachers not only have an abundant variety of content to choose from on demand but won't have to burden themselves preparing printouts prior to the class. Perhaps more importantly, video input in some cases can be better suited to show simultaneous actions and certain verbs that are difficult to illustrate in a static 2-D image.

In addition, the success of student-centered activities such as Jones's (2001) method depends on the students' willingness to participate. In classes where there is high energy, students tend to show confidence and enthusiasm in the material and are less reluctant to make mistakes in front of others. In classes where this is not the case, the students are guarded, reluctant to interact with others outside of their social circles. This causes social factions to form, so-called cliques, further damaging the classroom dynamics. One remedy has been to arrange students in a seating plan, yet this limits opportunities for students to interact with others and develop a broader set of communication skills.

Narrative Descriptions of *Just for Laughs: Gags* (JFLG)

For the past two years, I have been using *Just for Laughs: Gags* (JFLG) skits, a popular silent comedy television series that feature actors playing good-natured pranks on unsuspecting bystanders, as supplementary content to teach skills in storytelling in an English Conversation course at a midsize university in Seoul. The course included two 1-to-1 speaking exams (i.e., a midterm and final) whereby the students would have to describe the narrative events of a JFLG skit and a presentation whereby the students would have to give a narrative description of a JFLG skit, then pose three related conversation questions. Each class, students worked through activities in the coursebook and were tasked to the narrative events of a JFLG skit for their partner. The procedure was as follows.

At the beginning of each class, two suits from a standard deck of playing cards were used to arrange partners: There were 13 red cards and 13 black cards totaling 26 cards, one card per student. Next, each student had to find their partner who had the card with the corresponding number. For instance, a student with a 7-red card would have to find the student who drew the 7-black card. Next, students greeted each other with a game of rock-paper-scissors. The person who won would be known as Person A, while the person who lost would henceforth be known as Person B. Person B was required to return the cards to the teacher so that the same process could be repeated the following class and no cards would be misplaced.

Once students located their partners, they were asked to rearrange the desks. The desks were arranged in pairs with one desk facing the front of the room, the other facing the back of the room. While the students were rearranging the desks, the teacher queued a JFLG skit on YouTube. After the desks were arranged, Person A sat in the desk facing the front of the classroom while Person B sat in the desk facing the back. The intention here is that Person A would be able to watch, then subsequently describe, the contents of the JFLG skit to Person B within a space of 2-3 minutes. In Jones's (2001) approach, Labov's (1997) six elements of narrative analysis are used to draw the students' attention different parts of a story. Confined by time, students were asked to include the following of Labov's (1997) elements in their description:

- **Orientation**: Usually introduced near the beginning of the story, this feature orients the listener to the time, place, and behavioral situation of the story. In a JFLG skit, this includes familiar places (e.g., parks, swimming pools, grocery stores, shopping malls), people (police officers, construction workers, firefighters), and a wide array of props.
- **Remarkable event(s)**: This feature describes the sequence of events.

- **Reaction**: This feature describes how characters respond to the remarkable event(s). Examples include emotional reactions or long, drawn-out changes that take place over the course of the story.

After including these elements in the JFLG description, Person B was encouraged to ask follow-up questions on the video or find ways to continue the conversation. The intention behind this task was to provide students with opportunities to develop their storytelling skills so that they would be able to describe the narrative events of a JFLG skit within the context of a 1-to-1 speaking exam.

Data Collection and Analysis

This task continued over the course of seven weeks and was also incorporated into a speaking exam, which was audio-recorded. While the data from those exams lend valuable insight into the quality and accuracy of the students' narrative descriptions, the data presented in this paper focuses on student perceptions (n = 26) of the method described above. At the midpoint of the course, students were asked to complete a Google Forms document that was comprised of two open-ended questions: "What is your favorite part of the course?" and "Could you offer any suggestions for improvement?" The link to the Google Form was made available online through a link available only to students enrolled in the class. Students were informed that their comments were anonymous, and they were reminded that their feedback would be used to try to make improvements to the course. In order to have the data quickly processed, students were asked to leave their comments in English. Drawing on Nagatomo's (2014) method, the responses from these two open-ended questions were uploaded into a qualitative data software program called HyperResearch (ResearchWare, Inc., 2003). Next, the data was coded to identify recurring themes.

Results

The answers to the two open-ended questions that asked students what they liked or disliked about the course lend useful insights into storytelling pedagogy in general and JFLG skits in particular. Because the survey was completed anonymously, the participants were assigned a number. On Google Forms, all of the responses are automatically time-stamped. Therefore, the first student to complete the survey is designated at Student 1; the second student to complete the survey was designated as Student 2, and so on.

What was your favorite part of the class?

When asked what they liked most about the class, the data revealed two common themes. First, there were a couple of people who expressed their satisfaction with the JFLG presentations.

> I've always loved the part when student do their *Just for Laughs* video presentations, because even though we major in English Literature, there [are] not many classes that we can do presentations [...] Even though it is not really familiar for us to speak in English in front of the class, it is quite challenging. Furthermore, I am definitely sure it encourages us in many ways. Plus, it feels like we are actually using English instead of learning English which also gives us a bit of confidence as well.
>
> (Student 13, 2016.05.08 at 22:10)

> I love presentation as a task. It was a little bit hard to prepare, but it was a good opportunity to [speak] in front of many people.
>
> (Student 7, 2016.05.07 at 23:55)

Students were randomly assigned dates for their presentation. The student who happened to present first did a superb job in describing the narrative events of his JFLG skit in ways that were entertaining and informative. His smile was radiant, which demonstrated levels of confidence and charisma. His PPT was replete with animations and carefully inscribed translations of complex vocabulary. Though there were some grammar mistakes in his presentation, his interest and enthusiasm was impossible to ignore. After providing a brief context statement, his conversation questions were specific to his selected JFLG skit. Perhaps most importantly, he set a performance that other students could follow. Based on this result, it would be worthwhile to arrange a presentation schedule where the strongest students present early on in the semester. Previously, the order of the presentations was determined by pasting the alphabetically listed names from the attendance list into a random list generator online (e.g., Random.org, 1998–2017).

Overwhelmingly, however, the students' favorite part of the class had less to do with storytelling or JFLG and more to do with interacting with fellow classmates. Of the 20 students who completed the anonymous survey, 14 directly cited the effectiveness of the cards to determine partners. Below are some of their responses.

> Every week I could meet many people and talked with them.
>
> (Student 4, 2016.05.05 at 18:28)

> It is interesting to have conversation with partners that change every time.
>
> (Student 9, 2016.05.08 at 15:33)

> It was absolutely cards! I really enjoy meeting different people class by class.
>
> (Student 12, 2016.05.08 at 19:07)

> Choosing partner [by] drawing cards.
>
> (Student 16, 2016.05.09 at 3:02)

In classes where students had the option to choose their seats and their partners, their motivation and enthusiasm for the course content was stilted. At times, the students would resort to conversing in Korean instead of working on the speaking task at hand. By randomly arranging students through chance (i.e., drawing cards), the evidence cited above shows that these pedagogic challenges ceased to exist. Though it takes 2–4 minutes for students to draw a card, find their partner, and move their belongings, it would seem as though this method went a long way in shaping the group dynamics of the class.

Directing attention at the literature, I came across Hadfield (2013), a resource that contains 87 activities designed for students to interact with each other. With activities that range from *Guess My Name* to *Inter-class Debate*, this book can appeal to a broad range of age groups and proficiency levels. Though much has been written on how these task-based methods could facilitate L2 acquisition, it seems unlikely that students would be willing to engage in these types of activities or even the method described in this article if they are not comfortable with each other. If the classroom dynamics are not conducive to learning (i.e., students appear tentative, shy, or reluctant to interact with others), teachers may want to consider arranging students into partners by random means, such as the method described in this study.

What are your recommendations for improvement for the course?

Though students were satisfied with the content and methods used in class, there were some legitimate concerns. First, students grieved over whether the methods used in this course were appropriate for a beginner-level English conversation course.

> This class is [a] basic English conversation class. There should be marking standards in exams that differ from other level conversation classes.
> (Student 15, 2016.05.16 at 2:01)

> The course should [be] lower level than intermediate English conversation, but I think it wasn't. (Student 18, 2016.05.11 at 0:20)

At the university where this study took place, students majoring in English language and literature are required to take Intermediate Conversation while English Conversation is an elective class intended to be an introductory course. What tends to happen, however, is that there are a number of advanced-level students who take the class with the intention of boosting their GPA. This puts less proficient students, the same students that the class is intended for, at a disadvantage. It would seem that it would make more sense to have English Conversation as the compulsory class and Intermediate Conversation as an elective. At the time of this writing, this proposition is under review from the department.

The second theme showed that the students had difficulty on the speaking exam. The speaking exam was comprised of two parts. In Part 1, students were tasked to describe the narrative events of one of three possible JFLG skits. In Part 2, students were asked to explain and give examples of vocabulary and grammar taken directly from the textbook. For example, one of the questions included the following: In Unit 1, we saw the word “impeccable.” Can you explain what this means and then use it in a sentence? The evidence presented below shows that the students had difficulty with the JFLF skit description in the exam.

> Well the midterm exam, especially the part describing narrative of the video, was kind of hard though. (Student 3, 2016.05.04 at 14:23)

> I like this class so much. But there is one thing that made me so sad. It was midterm's part 1... you might consider reducing it to two videos next time. Three was too much... Anyway I'm really enjoying your class so I want you to know that you are really great teacher. (Student 12, 2016.05.08 at 19:07)

> As a student of intermediate conversation class last semester, I felt this mid-term exam was a bit more difficult and hard to prepare than the one in the intermediate conversation class. Last semester, only 1 script for part one was enough. But for this time, I had to prepare and memorize all 3 scripts only for part one. I thought that was too much for conversation class for beginners. I would be thankful if you consider about this.
> (Student 16, 2016.05.09 at 3:02)

Much like the first theme identified, the evidence cited above suggests that the students found the JFLG skits to be beyond the scope of an introductory conversation course. In defense, however, the content needs to be challenging so that students can be ranked fairly on the university's bell curve. That said, I think that more time could have been spent on reviewing key points and grammar items prior to the exam. For instance, the coursebook, *Touchstone 3* (McCarthy, McCarten, & Standiford, 2014) features linguistic items that can be applied to most JFLG skits. In the JFLG skit titled "NASA Satellite Falls on Car" (*Just for Laughs: Gags*, 2011), there are linguistic items I overheard a student use in class:

1. Phrasal verbs on p. 69, as in "They *picked up* the hood of the car."
2. Relative clauses on p. 67, as in "The man, *who* was walking on crutches, dropped his books."
3. Adjective endings with -*ed* and -*ing* on p. 110, as in "The bystander was totally *surprised* and *embarrassed*."

Through in-class observation, students did not appear to have any difficulty identifying these items in completing the fill-in-the-blank exercises in the textbook. However, fewer students were able to correctly use these items within the context of a speaking exam.

One of the key pedagogic issues was in selecting the JFLG skits that fell within the linguistic capabilities of the students. Some of these skits, such as the one cited above, are incredibly complex. In the skit cited above, there are nine different actors and a number of simultaneous actions. In order to accurately describe the events of this skit within the space of a two- to three-minute speaking exam, students would be required to know a number of complex grammar items and vocabulary. On the contrary, the JFLG skit titled "Toxic Water Fountain" (*Just for Laughs: Gags*, 2015) features one main actor and some basic props: a sign, a water fountain. It would seem that a skit like this might be more in line with the students' proficiency at this level. In either case, Burgess and Head (2005) suggest, language teachers should review contents of the speaking exam prior to the exam period. During this time, I would add that the teachers should review key vocabulary and grammar items specific to the selected JFLG skits.

CONCLUSIONS

In the introduction of this article was stated that "students who regularly hear and share stories become more intimate with their language – developing, expanding, and increasing language skills while interacting and communicating" (Fitzgibbon & Wilhem, 1998, p. 24); in other words, stories "provide students with a more comprehensive and diverse array of data available for processing" (Fitzgibbon & Wilhem, 1998, p. 26). Based on this experience in using JFLG skits to teach students skills in storytelling, these observations are consistent with this study. Throughout the semester, students were actively engaged in the material, constantly asking questions, and participating with much enthusiasm in class.

To reach the aim of this study (i.e., to discover what language teachers can do to help students develop skills in storytelling), students were asked to anonymously answer two open-ended questions on a Google Forms survey. The first question asked what students like best about the course. Interestingly, it was revealed that the themes identified in the data did not include the use of JFLG skits explicitly but rather opportunities to interact with a different classmate each class and opportunities to use English in meaningful conversation. The second question investigated suggestions for improvement to the course. Here, the students were quick to point out the difficulty in describing the JFLG skits within the context of a speaking exam and that this task seemed unsuitable for a beginner-level conversation course exam.

We return to the original research question: What can teachers to do teach students to describe the narrative events in JFLG skits? First, it would appear that teachers can create a fun and engaging learning environment by arranging the students into pairs by random means each class. Drawing cards is one example. Tasking students to describe JFLG skits was a popular addition to the class. When watching the skits, it was not uncommon to see students smiling and laughing, and positive reactions to L2 input, which Forman (2016) calls "language play" – pedagogic applications in ELT that encourage students to intertwine humor with L2 input. Based on this experience of using JFLG skits to teach students skills in storytelling, it is suggested that teachers take the following into consideration:

1. As Goldstein & Driver (2014) remark, teachers would be wise to vet any videos before using them in class. Because some skits involve censored nudity and religion (e.g., often, there is an actor who dresses as Jesus Christ), JFLG skits are no exception. For the presentation, students were encouraged to avoid videos that included this content not because of the students level of maturity but rather because I wanted to avoid any potential conflict with the university's Christian values.

2. Select JFLG skits that are within the capabilities of the students L2 proficiency. As a general rule of thumb, the more actors involved in a skit, the more complex it is to describe. Other skits that students find difficult to describe are ones that involve simultaneous actions, specifically ones that involve stagehands whose role is to rearrange props while the bystanders are being distracted by the actors (e.g., *Just for Laughs: Gags*, 2015).

3. Perhaps most importantly, the evidence cited in this study indicates that teachers would be wise to review key grammar and vocabulary prior to the exam and select JFLG skits within their students' L2 proficiency. The linguistic items that were identified in the coursebook, *Touchstone 3*, included phrasal verbs, relative clauses, and adjective endings with *-ed* and *-ing*. Though students seem to have little difficulty identifying these items on multiple-choice TOEIC-style exams, accurately uttering them in narrative descriptions of JFLG skits remained a challenge. Therefore, teachers would do well to explicitly show students how these linguistic items are used in JFLG narrative descriptions.

It is hoped that this article will inspire teachers to find ways to incorporate skills in storytelling into their course syllabi. The method introduced in this article is just one idea. From Labov's (1997) elements of narrative analysis to some of the more finite parts of language, such as relative clauses and adjectives ending in *-ed* and *-ing*, this article serves as a small contribution to a part of a larger vision: to help students become better storytellers.

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Using an Audio-Visual News Project to Develop a 21st Century Skill Set for EAP Students

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Students transitioning into university education need to develop the required research skills for independent learning as well as the critical faculties to source accurate information. Second language learners face added problems in doing so in a non-native language and in possibly having to deal with different cultural approaches to assessing information. Navigating information online demands a new form of literacy. The need for EAP students to develop a 21st century skill set necessitates that EAP programs understand and provide their students with a level of digital literacy.

This paper outlines how a multimedia project has been used on a pre-sessional course at a Thai university. This project aims to increase digital information and multimedia literacies, and in doing so, serves as an entry point for students in selecting and citing information academically. Students produce six-minute video reports on a recent news story from a Southeast Asian country. Initial news sources are carefully scaffolded to give students an introduction to critically accessing online information, specifically through the medium of online journalism. The project is used to introduce students to the idea of citing sources, verifying information, and critically assessing its authenticity. These skills help foster a skeptical and critical approach to online information that will enable students in their progress through tertiary-level study. A rubric has been developed to grade the research as well as the technical and ESL skills required by students to obtain the learning outcomes for this project.

Introduction

For EAP courses to best prepare students for tertiary-level study, they must remain relevant and in touch with changes in education. Traditionally, EAP courses focus on academic writing and reading. For many EAP courses, these skills are backed up with listening and speaking skills. The course content is often of an academic standard similar to the higher levels of a standardized proficiency exam such as the Academic version of the IELTS test or an institution's own admission criteria. These skills are deemed central to preparing a non-native-speaking student to function in tertiary education where English is used as the language of instruction. Further to this, Scarcella (2003) argues that an understanding of academic English is a necessity for any school student as a pathway to socioeconomic success and that a learner cannot effectively function in an educational setting without it.

The advent of mass Internet access has created new forms of literacy and a demand to teach them. Dudeney, Hockly, and Pegrum (2013) describe the idea of digital literacy as a catch-all term for the competencies needed to "participate in digitally networked post-industrial economies and societies" (p. 2), a definition born more out of necessity rather than a clear understanding of what it describes. If digital literacy encompasses the skills that have developed because of our online working and social lives, then 21st century skills have a wider remit to include ideas such as cross-cultural communication and awareness, and civic and environmental responsibility. This paper concerns a multimedia news project in which project-based learning has been used as part of an EAP course to develop digital literacy and 21st century skills, one intended aim of this project being to use online research on a regionally specific news story as an instruction to academic research.

The Framework for 21st Century Learning created by the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) defines required learning skills that include information literacy and media literacy. Students therefore must develop the ability to navigate online information, to critically assess it, and be able to respond, not just through speech and writing but with media creation tools (P21, n.d.). The framework defines information literacy as the ability to do the following:

Access and Evaluate Information

- Access information efficiently (time) and effectively (sources).
- Evaluate information critically and competently.

Use and Manage Information

- Use information accurately and creatively for the issue or problem at hand.
- Manage the flow of information from a wide variety of sources.
- Apply a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of information.

(p. 21, n.d.)

The way in which 21st century students can access information is constantly developing. A user-generated site such as Wikipedia is made possible as it is written and edited by volunteers; this type of user-generated content has driven Web 2.0 and greatly democratized content production; however, the change in content production seen in the 21st century creates a whole new set of problems for university students sourcing information. In a world where anyone can write an encyclopedia or be a journalist, how do students decide which facts are legitimate?

The sourcing and critical analysis needed of information has changed greatly with mass online access; however, Rotherham and Willingham (2010) argue that this alone does not necessarily require a new skill set. Indeed skills such as critical thinking and intercultural awareness have long been important; Rotherham and Willingham humorously question whether Plato's different levels of intellect should now be considered 3rd century skills. They further argue that what has changed is that the critical analysis of information, although long part of the education offered to any cultural elite, is now vital and that both collective and individual success is reliant on having such skills.

The project described in this paper was conceived as an entry point for an EAP student's critical analysis of online information. By focusing on online news reporting, students are encouraged to verify information by finding multiple reliable sources reporting the same facts. With the amount of misinformation and indeed disinformation available online, this would seem a vital skill to develop in EAP students. What constitutes a “reliable” source is becoming increasing difficult with Twitter, or whichever social media platform may supersede it, being the distribution platform for breaking news. What constitutes news and rumor can become blurred when a citizen journalist or indeed anyone is able to anonymously post information online without the journalistic fact-checking or integrity expected of an established media organization. Lewandowsky, Ecker, Seifert, Schwarz, and Cook (2012) comment that “the Internet has placed immense quantities of information at our fingertips, but it has also contributed to the spread of misinformation. The growing use of social networks may foster the quick and wide dissemination of misinformation” (p. 108).

For the purpose of the project described in this paper, it seemed more advantageous to focus students on analyzing information from websites of established media organizations and not allow students at this stage to engage with social media as a news source.

Educational Context

Students work on the project during a ten-week semester of a pre-sessional course at a Thai university, aimed at preparing students for an English liberal arts program. The students are studying at the second level of a four-level course and have been placed via their TOEFL score as well as their writing and speaking abilities that have been assessed by instructors teaching on the program. At level two of the program, the students’ English abilities would equate to an IELTS 5.0 or Common European Framework user level of B1.

The Project

The project entails student’s production of a six-minute news report on a recent news story from an ASEAN member country. The video is divided into two three-minute sections: an on-camera report and an interview with an individual with some level of expert knowledge. For example, a student might choose an environmental news story in an ASEAN country such as Indonesia and interview an environmental studies professor at the university. Students must provide three distinctly different sources for their research and orally cite these in their report with the stipulation that these sources must be from a reliable content provider. Students use mobile phones or digital cameras to film the project and edit on freely available downloadable software such as iMovie for OSX or Windows Movie Maker on PCs. These are entry-level editing software with an intuitive learning curve. The project does require students to have some access to this technology such as a smartphone, tablet, or laptop, though the department does have a limited number of cameras to loan students if needed. It is possible to complete the whole project, both filming and editing, on an iPhone or iPad. Throughout the project, students have an instructor who is their project advisor. This advisor checks on the students’ progress and provides feedback throughout the semester.

Objectives

The project consists of various objectives:

- To help students practice their English language speaking skills via the activity of a television news report.
- To introduce them to a basic approach to online research by verifying their sources, finding multiple sources, and developing digital literacy for sourcing accurate information.
- To introduce the concept of citation and therefore of plagiarism if information is used without citation.
- To build students' autonomy, confidence, and responsibility for their learning process.
- To develop intercultural awareness by learning about issues concerning countries in the same geographical region (ASEAN member countries).
- To develop multimedia production and presentation skills, and information processing, critical thinking, and organizational skills.

Procedure

Students work individually on their own project though collaborating with each other on technical issues such as camera work or sound recording. To scaffold the project, students are given handouts in the form of Google online worksheets to introduce the idea of citing information and choosing reliable sources. Students are randomly assigned a country that is a member of ASEAN, and they can choose any news event that has occurred in that country over the six weeks prior to the project start date. All sources must be in English and no blogs, forum posts, or social media posts are allowed. This may seem backward-looking at a time when Twitter has become the platform of breaking news; however, for the focus on this project as an introduction to sourcing and analyzing the reliability of information, it is more suitable to focus on established online news sources.

TABLE 1. English Language Newspaper for Each ASEAN Country

ASEAN Country	English Language Newspaper
Singapore	*The Straits Times*
Malaysia	*New Straits Times*
Indonesia	*The Jakarta Post*
Philippines	*The Daily Tribune*
Cambodia	*The Phnom Penh Post*
Laos	*The Vientiane Times*
Vietnam	*Vietnam News*
Brunei	*The Brunei Times*
Myanmar	*The Myanmar Times*

As an introduction, students are given a list of links to an English language newspaper in each ASEAN country (Table 1). Once a student has found a news story and checked its appropriateness with their advisor, they must find two further sources reporting on the same news event. Students are encouraged to use advanced search filters on Google, such as searching by time or location, and are given advice by their instructors on which key words to select for the most successful search results.

Over the course of the semester students have three further advisories with a total of eight hours of classroom time spent on the project. Students must find three reliable sources reporting on the same news story. They must explain the five W's of the story (who, what, when, where, why), first in writing and then on camera, in the context of a news report. In this report, students must orally cite sources of information. This has since developed into students giving APA citations in the credits at the end of their news report. Completed videos are shared via YouTube or uploaded to Google Drive, which allows more privacy settings for students who do not wish for work to be displayed publicly. The most impressive projects are showcased on a YouTube channel.

Equating the Project to a Framework for Digital Literacy

Table 2 is Dudeney, Hockly, and Pegrum's (2013) table of literacies that has been used to assess the criteria of this project.

Table 2. Framework of Digital Literacies

Language	Information	Connections	Redesign
Print literacy			
Hypertext literacy	Tagging iteracy		
Multimedia literacy	Search literacy Information iteracy Filtering iteracy	Personal literacy Network literacy Participatory literacy	
Gaming literacy Mobile literacy		Intercultural literacy	
Code literacy			Remix literacy

Adapted from Dudeney, Hockly, & Pegrum (2013, p. 6)

At the most basic level of complexity there is print literacy, still very much the cornerstone of education. It is typically taken for granted that students know how to use a book. Knowledge of how to navigate print literacy ranges from the basics of how to use a table of contents and index to more sophisticated skills such as defining key words and topic sentences. As these are basic skills, they are not considered learning objectives for the project. The second stage of language digital literacy involves the use of hypertext, the fundamental building blocks of the Internet, how as users people navigate from webpage to webpage. A comparable level of information digital literacy is then tagging online information, for instance, collating information simply by bookmarking websites in a more complex method using aggregators such as RSS. It could be argued that a similar level of connective digital literacy would then be sharing links with others through social media platforms. Again as these skills are fairly entry-level skills for Internet use, the project does not concern itself with actively testing these skills.

Of more interest for developing specific 21st century skills that may be lacking in pre-sessional EAP students are the skills listed as multimedia literacy (Table 3).

TABLE 3. Multimedia Literacy Skills

Information	Project Example
Search Literacy	Using accurate search terms for news stories. Searching in English instead of L1.
Information Literacy	Finding and understanding multiple sources and critically evaluating them.
Filtering Literacy	Using advanced Google search methods (e.g., time, location, etc.). Omitting unreputable sources (e.g., blogs, forums, etc.).

Dudeney, Hockly, and Pegrum (2013) describe filtering literacy as the ability to "reduce the digital flow to a manageable level" (p. 22). Indeed, a frequent problem for an EAP student can be the limitations of accessible language in their use of search terms so that they only get the most standard results for searches. Filter literacy should teach a student to look beyond the immediately accessible information through the use of technology such as advanced search, choosing varied and reliable RSS feeds, or by news alerts specifically tailored to certain information sources. In a more rudimentary form, this video news project attempts to teach a certain degree of filter literacy by requiring students to find multiple sites with the same news story from established news sources. All of these three literacies – search, information, and filtering – are covered by the project learning outcome: to introduce them to a basic approach to online research by verifying their sources, finding multiple sources, and developing digital literacy for sourcing accurate information.

Remix Literacy

Another part of Dudeney, Hockly, and Pegrum's (2013) framework that is of particular interest regarding this project is the concept of remix literacy. Technological advancements – from desktop publishing to our current situation where there is a smartphone app for almost any creative task from creating a sample-based piece of music to video, photography, design, etc. – have created a remix culture where, according to Hafner (2015), "amateur creation of cultural artefacts – often remixes, mashups, or parodies based on the creative works of others – have proliferated" (p. 486). This is no longer plagiarism; instead, creative works are repurposed for a new creative reason. Dudeney, Hockly, and Pegrum (2013) claim that remix literacy is being able to sample and modify existing texts for new purpose and also to interpret, respond to, and build on others' work on digital networks. Indeed, these skills are most probably much more natural to the age group of students being taught (17–20 years old) than they are to the instructors teaching them. It is interesting to bring this remix literacy into the EAP classroom and the relationship repurposing media has with the campaign against educational plagiarism.

It may send mixed messages to students: on one hand, warning of plagiarism and teaching citation, and on the other, promoting remix literacy and the repurposing of existing work. In practice, however, these two concepts can sit together quite naturally in the classroom. Dudeney, Hockly, and Pegrum write that with remix culture, students can learn to both critique existing work and build on it with their own creativity. Concerning copyright legality, this is an example of "fair use" as the copyrighted material is being used in an educational context. The concept of fair use states that "copying of copyrighted material done for a limited and 'transformative' purpose, such as to comment upon, criticize, or parody a copyrighted work can be done without permission from the copyright owner" (Stanford University Libraries, n.d., para. 1). Other categories that fall under fair usage are commentary, criticism, news reporting, research, and scholarship. Therefore, within the confines of this project, remix literacy and a deterrence of plagiarism coexist quite naturally. Students making their news-report videos cannot travel to the country they are reporting on and, therefore, repurpose TV news footage and photographs for their own news report. At the same time, students must provide oral and written citation for the factual information communicated in their video.

Concerns

As I have previously stated, second to practicing and developing students' English speaking skills, the main purpose of this project is to introduce research and promote a critical analysis of information. For this purpose, social media, blogs, and forums are excluded from being potential sources; for the purposes of this project, they are considered unreliable. The fact that new media does not have the same filtering process as old media forms of journalism is both a curse and blessing. It seems backward-looking, to some extent, to focus on the new media versions of print-based media and ignore social media platforms such as Twitter or Facebook. A 2015 Pew Research Centre survey found that 63% of surveyed users of both Twitter and Facebook used them as their primary news source and that 59% had followed a recent news event via social media (Barthel, Shearer, Gottfried, & Mitchell, 2015). The frontline of news media has very much shifted to these social media platforms.

Another concern regards the reliability of the selected "reliable sources." All of the selected English language news sources are websites of print newspapers from each ASEAN member country. These media sources operate under national censorship laws. According to the most recent 2016 World Press Freedom Index report by Reporters Without Borders, none of the ASEAN member countries are rated above 130 out of 180 countries on an increasing scale of press censorship (Reporters Without Borders, 2016). All of the ASEAN countries are described as having "difficult" to "serious" problems with press freedom. This situation creates difficulty in accessing unbiased and factual reporting from these countries and therefore conflicts the aims of the student project.

Even without censorship, Lewandowsky, Ecker, Seifert, Schwarz, and Cook

(2012) argue that the mainstream media can often subvert information or misinform its audience and that even what is generally considered a solidly reliable news source might "sometimes unavoidably report incorrect information because of the need for timely news coverage" (p. 110), a situation that has only intensified with the constant churn of the news cycle. Overall, this project cannot lead students to find a consistent form of truth; it can only attempt to engender a critical analytical approach to information.

Creating a Rubric to Grade the Project

A grading rubric must balance the achievement of various learning objectives necessitated by the course. For example, students at this level of the pre-sessional program where this project is conducted, would be expected to have English speaking skills similar to an IELTS speaking band 5.0, transitioning to a band 5.5, as referenced on the public version of the IELTS band descriptors (British Council, n.d.). Several rubrics had been created for specific course assessments; however, this project offered a new challenge for the instructors in that the creative and technical aspects of video production had to be graded and a rubric was needed to standardize grading.

Smith (2016) discusses the complexities of grading creative work and developing a suitable rubric: each example of work being an individual expression and unique to the "individual performer, the performer's skills set, and his or her professional goals" (p. 1). Although the academic skills are paramount to the project, the technical aspects of the project and creativity also have to be assessed. The primary objective of this project is developing the English skills of students as it is aimed at non-native speakers. As I have previously stated, the main objective is to practice and develop speaking skills, and introduce the concept of reliable sources and citation. The course is an EAP pre-sessional course, not a media or communications course. It would seem unfair to grade students to harshly over the technical aspects of media production; however, a basic technical standard is required such as audible sound and focused camera work. This has been reflected in the rubric and the possibility for a student to fail if these aspects of their project are subpar. The rubric, created to balance these various skills, is included in the Appendix.

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APPENDIX

Rubrics for Grading Project Work

TABLE 4. Rubrics for Grading Project Work: Research

Merit	• The project provides three **distinctly different** sources. • The written work is of a high standard for the course level. • The written work references **multiple sources**. • Questions are open questions and logical.
Pass	• The project provides three different sources. The sources are not the **exact same** report published on different websites. • The written work includes both the news report and compare-contrast sections with required word counts: 400 and 150. • The written work is of an adequate standard for course level. • The written news report **references at least one** source. • Questions are open questions and mostly suitable.
Fail	• Less than three sources are provided. Sources are inadequate, off topic, and/or duplicated. • Either of the written sections is omitted or under the word count. • The written work or finished video contain a substantial amount of material that is **off topic or irrelevant**. • The written work is of an inadequate standard for the course level. • **No reference** is made to any sources. • Questions are closed and/or mostly off topic.

TABLE 5. Rubrics for Grading Project Work: Presentation

Merit	• Pronunciation is generally clear and correct. Speech has a natural rhythm. • Eye contact with the viewer is maintained throughout. • **Three sources** are referenced.
Pass	• The student's presentation can be easily followed and does not cause too much strain on the viewer. There are some pronunciation errors and speech rhythm might be unnatural. • Eye contact with the viewer is maintained most of the time. • **Three sources** are referenced
Fail	• Throughout speech is mumbled or unclear and causes considerable strain on the listener. Numerous pronunciation errors cause difficulty in communication. • The student reads from script. • **Little or no eye** contact with camera. • **Less than three sources** are referenced.

TABLE 6. Rubrics for Grading Project Work: Production

Merit	• Throughout the first half of the news report the student has creatively used images and video clips to increase the viewers' knowledge. • The entire video is **under** 7 minutes. • Filming locations are selected creatively and logically. Blank backgrounds or visually interesting ones, **not** bedrooms, canteen or coffee shops. • The student has found a **suitable** interviewee for the expert subject. Someone who provides insight into the situation not just opinion. • Sound is **clear throughout**. • Picture is **mostly in focus**.

	• Interviewees respond in a professional manner and have detailed knowledge on the topic as it pertains to Thailand. • Interviewees have expert knowledge of the topic.
Pass	• There are **two** interviews. Interviewees are clearly indicated with name and position. • The entire video is **under** 7 minutes. • There may be some sound and picture glitches, but they do not interfere with the viewers' understanding. • Sound is **mostly audible**. • Interviewees have knowledge of the topic as it pertains to Thailand and are professional.
Fail	• The interviews are with **students**. • The interviewees are clearly uninformed about the topic. • The entire video is **over** 7 minutes. • No name or position is given for an interviewee. • There is only one interview. • The interview is conducted partly in Thai without journalistic necessity. • Sound is **completely inaudible**. • Interviewees have little knowledge of the topic and lack professionalism.

Workshop Reports

Online Tools for the Assessment of Vocabulary in Use: An Overview

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This workshop featured three online programs that are particularly beneficial for the study of vocabulary use in writing: Tom Cobb's Vocabprofile, Mark Davies' BYU Concordancer, and ETS' Criterion. The presenters started by briefly explaining the underlying aspects of vocabulary knowledge that each tool was designed to address. Attendees were then asked to complete tasks relating to these word knowledge aspects, using nothing but their own intuition. The attendees' results were then compared to those generated by each corresponding online tool and brief discussions as to possible applications of these tools in both research and teaching followed. Finally, the presenters highlighted the use of each tool in their own research and fielded questions from the audience.

Introduction

Following the theme of the 2016 Korea TESOL Conference, "Shaping the Future: With 21st Century Skills," this workshop aimed to introduce educators and researchers to three different online tools used in EFL vocabulary research. The first, a concordancer developed by Mark Davies, is used to generate lists of collocates for user-selected items using various corpora as its source material. The second, Tom Cobb's Vocabprofile, is a vocabulary profiling tool designed to determine the frequency of words found in a given text. The third, ETS's Criterion, is a writing evaluation tool that acts like a simple word processor for students, yet provides teachers with detailed error reports based on students' written samples.

Background on the aspects of vocabulary knowledge that each tool was designed to assess was given prior to having attendees perform tasks meant to illustrate the difficulty of performing these procedures without the aid of computer-based programs. After each activity, participants compared their results to those generated when using the associated online tool. Differences between the two were discussed as were the possible uses of each tool beyond the purposes outlined by the activities. Next, the presenters outlined how they used each of these tools in their own research projects. Finally, attendees were asked to complete a survey as the presenters fielded any remaining questions.

Workshop Procedure

All of the aforementioned tools rely upon corpora in some form. Therefore, this workshop began with a quick review of corpus linguistics and its relation to aspects of word knowledge proposed by Nation (1990). Essentially, a corpus is any collection or database of language containing extracts from various forms of media (Schmitt, 2000). The items within these databases are tagged and categorized based on source, part of speech, word form, genre, etc. Programs designed to search these databases by scanning for particular words themselves, some aspect of these words represented by the metadata, or both, are called *concordancers*. When a corpus is small, only a few written words, it is easy to use your intuition to make inferences about any particular word found within it. However, when these collections reach the millions (as in the case of The British National Corpus [BNC], American National Corpus [ANC], and The Corpus of Contemporary American English [COCA]), and in some cases the billions (The Bank of English [BoE]), it becomes increasingly difficult to rely solely on your intuition to make any meaningful observation about the language found within it. For this, we routinely rely upon corpora and concordancers to do our bidding.

The first tool presented, a concordancer created by Mark Davies of Brigham Young University (found at http://www.corpus.byu.edu), is geared towards the assessment of one particular aspect of vocabulary knowledge: collocation. *Collocation* refers to the notion that words occur together in speech more often than chance alone dictates and with some degree of exclusivity (Nation, 2013). These pairings can be grammatical/syntactic, where a dominant word is combined with a grammatical word (*sit down*), or semantic/lexical, where two equally weighted words occur together (*earn money*). In order to illustrate the difficulty of compiling lists of collocations using only intuition, workshop attendees were asked to do exactly that for the word *trump*. After a few minutes, they were presented with two lists of collocates for this word that were created using the BYU Concordancer. The first list used the BNC (time period: 1980's – 1993) as its source material and the second, the News on the Web corpus (NOW; time period: 2010 – present). Differences between the lists were discussed, highlighting in particular how the frequency of collocates has a tendency to change over time. Following the discussion, the presenters demonstrated how to access and use the program before finishing with a brief description of how it was used in their research to create lists of collocates for target words that were then used for comparative analysis of student's mastery sentences (Gallacher, 2016).

The second tool, Vocabprofile, created by Tom Cobb of the University of Quebec at Montreal (found at http://www.lextutor.ca), is designed to analyze the frequency of words found within a given text. It does this by breaking down the text's vocabulary into 1,000-word frequency bands, academic words, and "offlist" vocabulary found within the corpora of your choice. The lexical frequency profile (LFP) it produces "shows the percentage of words [used] at different vocabulary frequency levels in writing – or, put differently, the relative proportion of words from different frequency levels" (Laufer & Nation, 1995, p. 311). LFPs have provided valid and reliable measures of learners' vocabulary size in their writing (Laufer & Nation, 1995) as well as general language proficiency (Morris & Cobb, 2004). They have also been instrumental in determining the appropriateness of texts and other written materials for EFL learners (Nation & Waring, 1997), where it is largely agreed that between 95% and 98% coverage of the vocabulary within a text is needed for comprehension (Laufer, 1989; Bonk, 2000; Hsueh-Chao & Nation, 2000; Webb & Rodgers, 2009; Van Zeeland & Schmitt, 2012).

After reviewing the background information for the second tool, participants were asked to analyze a short passage and identify words that they thought were outside of the most frequent 2000. They were also asked to identify any proper nouns and consider whether they would pose any difficulty for EFL students. After completing the activity, the Vocabprofile program was demonstrated and its results for the given passage discussed. The presenters then described how they used the tool in their research to analyze the frequency of vocabulary used by students in their written compositions (Gallacher, 2015, 2016) and to ascertain the appropriateness of TED Talks for a first-year Japanese university audience (Lampert, 2016).

The third tool, ETS's Criterion, is a paid online writing evaluation service (found at http://www.ets.org/criterion). There is a lot of debate as to how EFL instructors can best serve their students when providing feedback on written work (Truscott, 1996, 2007; Ferris, 1996; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Chandler, 2003). For the sake of this presentation, a coded approach to student self-correction was adopted. For the activity, participants were asked to correct a short paragraph using a very simple code. After a couple of minutes, discussion as to the effectiveness of this kind of correction and the implications for the teacher were discussed. With that in mind, the tool was demonstrated.

Criterion has a number of features, but of particular interest to this demonstration was its ability to recognize and describe grammatical and syntactical written errors. In theory, students submit their work and have the instant feedback from Criterion help them determine errors that may distract from the essence of their writing, while instructors receive reports on the types of errors their students are making so they can address them as they see fit. The presenters demonstrated how the data gathered from this software allowed the instructor of a first-year university writing class in Japan to identify types of grammatical and syntactical errors being made by his students. These errors were then taught before each subsequent writing assignment in the hope of lessening the frequency of occurrence in future writing tasks. The data the system produces is beneficial as a means of measuring various forms of intervention within the classroom (Long, 2013).

To conclude the workshop, attendees were asked to complete a short questionnaire asking for feedback regarding the professionalism, knowledge of content, usefulness, and overall rating of the workshop from their perspective. With a turnout of 20 people, we are happy to report that on a scale of 1 to 10, ten being the highest, the workshop received a mean score of 8.73 on the "overall" score. As it turns out, there were a few members of the audience that felt that despite the workshop being informative and professional, the contents did not appeal to their particular field of interest.

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Managing a Student-Centered Conversation-Based Lesson: Report on a Professional Development Workshop

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Communicative language teaching requires that students produce their own, creative language. However, conversation-based lessons can sometimes lose focus. How can the teacher use reflective practice to focus their lessons? This report summarizes the proceedings of a workshop titled "Managing a Student-Centered Conversation-Based Lesson," conducted on October 15th at the KOTESOL 2016 conference. The workshop began at 1:30 in the afternoon and lasted for 80 minutes, with approximately fifty instructors participating. Using the example task of "giving directions," this workshop was split into three sections. The first part of the workshop focused on a simulation of a classroom, with co-construction of the task among "students" and "teacher." The second part of the workshop focused on exchanging ideas, techniques, and strategies between teacher-participants. The final part of the workshop focused on interaction type and length, the usage of time, and questions for reflective practice.

Introduction: The Growth of TESOL and the Need for Training

Teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) is a fast-growing field. The International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL; 2016) reports 118 separate organizations (including KOTESOL) hosting conferences, events, and publications for teachers in the TESOL field. While an exact number of TESOL instructors worldwide is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain, it can be said with certainty that the number is large and growing.

The high demand for English language education worldwide should be matched by quality of instructors. KOTESOL and organizations like it offer opportunities for instructors to improve as teachers through the presentation and sharing of ideas, and exposure to the most recent research in their fields. This year's KOTESOL conference made a special appeal for workshops aimed at newer and less-experienced TESOL instructors of which, given the rapid growth of the field, there are many. The workshop described here sought to answer that appeal. It is the goal of this report to summarize this interactive workshop, iterate the theories from which it was conceived, present topics for future workshops, and present the reflective practice content in a way that will allow readers to engage in some of the same activities undertaken during the conference.

Research Background

Many of the guiding lights for this workshop's structure and questions came from the same field of reflective practice that the KOTESOL 2016 plenary speaker, Thomas Farrell presented during his presentation. Since the conference, the author has attempted to supplement the research background work with the works of Farrell in the hopes that readers interested in his session might find more voices in the field to further their own exploration of the topic.

Simone Galea, in an argument for the constant reinvention and non-conventionalization of reflective practice, relates Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*, in which "reflection is metaphorized as a shadowy dark unclear cave but a necessary place through which the acquisition of knowledge becomes possible" (Galea, 2012).

The modern practice of reflective teaching is most commonly attributed to John Dewey's writing in *How We Think* (1933). There, Dewey defines "reflection" as "turning a topic over in various aspects and in various lights so that nothing significant about it shall be overlooked – almost as one might turn a stone over to see what its hidden side is like or what is covered by it" (p. 57).

More recently, Farrell (2015) has stated that "it is necessary for *each* teacher to define for themselves the concept of reflective teaching" and that "there are said to be three major types, or moments, of reflective practice" (p. 4). These types are as follows: reflection-in-action (in the classroom), reflection-on-action (after the class), and reflection-for-action (planning for the future, outside of class time).

Whatever the "true" origin and nature of reflective thought and practice, the essential point for this workshop was the application of reflective practice to pedagogy, specifically in the field of TESOL, and the exploration of *each* participating teacher's definition of reflective practice. For this reason, the questions that inspired this workshop were about the learning of language specifically and English circumstantially.

Goals of the Workshop

The goal of the workshop was to introduce techniques for managing a conversation-based, student-centered EFL (English as a foreign language) learning environment to newer, less-experienced practitioners. EFL instructors often lack local support groups to help them adjust to new teaching environments, and there is a definite need for increased collaboration in many EFL programs (Farrell, 2015). This workshop aimed to provide a model of collaborative support.

The example activity used was the collaborative construction of a task for "giving directions" around a fictitious town. At different points in the introduction and co-construction of the task (with workshop participants filling the role of students), the presenter offered alternative methods for elicitation, including captain-led group brainstorming, board races, and interactive mingling activities.

Though there was an emphasis on using time constructively, one of the goals of the workshop was to avoid what Galea (2012) describes as "a lesson consisting of nothing more than a series of steps that need to be followed according to pre-established boxes of time" (p. 247). Alongside the construction and execution of the task was an emphasis on active reflective teaching practice, wherein teachers become *aware* of *how* and *why* tasks take more or less time. Time, being an immutable factor, ought to be considered not as a series of "boxes" to occupy, but rather as another tool that a conscious teacher can use to their advantage in communicating the goals of their lesson.

Summary of the Workshop

The workshop took place in the afternoon, with around fifty KOTESOL conference-goers attending. In the eighty minutes allotted, a sample task of "giving directions in the target language" was given, and co-construction of the task (between the participating instructors and the workshop leader) was completed in the first section of the workshop titled "Designing the Task" (see Appendix A). Pedagogical concerns and small-group discussion made up the following sections of "Noticing Comprehension" and "Student Autonomy and Overall Strategies."

Participants were asked to begin by organizing themselves into groups of three or four, and nominating a captain to lead discussion and present their ideas to the whole group. Once in groups, the workshop leader modeled how to share the details of his current work environment: the number and age of students he currently teaches, the time and length of his classes, and his feelings and attitude leading up to the beginning of an "average teaching day."

Participants were then asked to engage in an active mental modeling of their work environment on an "average teaching day." They were specifically asked to shut their eyes, imagine their classroom on that day, the number and age of the students, the time and length of the class, and most of all, to engage with their personal feelings and attitude as that class began.

After this mental model was (hopefully) constructed, the workshop leader asked participants to open their eyes, and for group captains to lead discussion on what each participant saw in their mental model. Captains were instructed only to keep a time limit of fifteen minutes. At the end of fifteen minutes, the workshop leader asked captains to share their method for keeping time. Captains varied in their degree of strictness: some kept a stopwatch running and kept each group member close to equal time, whereas others only glanced at a nearby clock and let the discussion move more or less organically. Building off of this information, the leader asked all participants to then discuss their usage of time in the classroom, specifically as either an *active* or *passive* part of their lesson plan.

As an exercise in active reflection, participants were then asked to role-play as "students." The "students" were given two hand-outs; one a blank diagram of an imagined town (Appendix B), the other a concise summary of the presentation's main points and strategies (Appendix A). The "students" and "teacher" then proceeded to fill-in the map of the imagined town together.

As the workshop entered the second section, the simulation was occasionally halted to allow groups to discuss techniques for active reflective teaching and modifications or alternative strategies to the ones presented. Again, in the spirit of cultivating a creative space in which teachers of varying experience might share and learn from one another, the announced purpose of these discussion breaks was to practice collaboration and revision, and to lean away from the idea that teaching is a craft to be mastered, for as Edwards (2006) puts it, “attempts at mastery – increasingly inscribed in discourses of standards and targets – only point to the inability to master” (p. 276).

During the third and final section titled “Student Autonomy and Overall Strategies,” the workshop leader presented participants with a table listing types of classroom interaction and amount of time for each (see Table 1).

Table 1. Interaction Time as a Percentage of Class Time (Blank)

Student-to-student interaction (pair work, group work, presentations)	
Student-to-teacher interaction	
Student-to-class interaction (individual presentations, speeches, etc.)	
Individual work	
Teacher-to-class interaction (lecture, instruction, etc.)	

Participants were asked to write out an estimation for how long each type of interaction lasted in an average class that they were teaching. Discussion in small groups followed, with encouragement from the workshop leader to compare their numbers and discuss differences in class type, pedagogical techniques, and ideas about the role of the teacher. Elicitation of several participants’ answers yielded a respectably large range: Some teachers estimated their teacher-to-class interaction (e.g., lecture, instruction, etc.) as taking up nearly 40% of class time. Most participants placed their own teacher-to-class interaction at around one-third of class time, while a few estimated that they spoke less than 10% of the time in their class. Upon further investigation, it appeared that instructors speaking for only 10% of the time were part of a program that encouraged “flipping” the classroom, wherein students “take over” the classroom activities.

The workshop leader then presented the participants with the same table, filled in with values taken after examining a video recording of the leader’s classroom (see Table 2).

Table 2. Interaction Time as a Percentage of Class Time (Example)

Student-to-student interaction (pair work, group work, presentations)	35%
Student-to-teacher interaction	20%
Student-to-class interaction (individual presentations, speeches, etc.)	15%
Individual work	10%
Teacher-to-class interaction (lecture, instruction, etc.)	20%

Following this, the workshop leader encouraged participants to film their classrooms in the future and compare their estimation of interaction length with the actual lengths as an on-going exercise in reflective practice.

Finally, there was a conscious attempt in presenting three explicit questions for reflection in the concluding remarks to provoke the sort of self-reflection that would make explicit the usually tacit teaching maxims that “function like rules for best behaviour” (Richards, 1996, p. 286) and “also guide a teacher’s classroom actions just like metaphors” (Farrell, 2015, p. 69). In Farrell’s case study work (2015), he found that one teacher was able to “uncover her unconscious assumptions about teaching and learning” (pp. 72-73) through an active examination of her tacit teaching maxims. The questions included in the workshop were as follows:

1. Do you teach the same way that you learn?
2. Have you completed your tasks yourself?
3. Could you complete your tasks in a second language?

In the final minutes of the workshop, the participants were invited to openly discuss these questions, with an emphasis that no “final” answer could truly be reached; as teachers reflect on their practice, their metaphors and maxims might change. With that change comes a renewed opportunity to reflect once more, pointing again to Edwards’ assertion that mastery is ultimately elusive.

The goal of these questions (and their unusual, somewhat personal nature) was to introduce novel approaches to reflective practice for the teacher and to “disturb and disrupt acquired images of herself as a teacher and to explore how this touching differentiates her reflective practices” (Galea, 2012, p. 257).

Conclusions

In highlighting interaction type and duration, the workshop leader intended to make “time” an explicit factor in reflective practice. A further development of this activity might be transcription of the filmed interactions, with the goal of differentiating exploratory talk and final draft talk (Barnes, 1976) and/or display-type and reference-type questions (Long & Sato, 1983).

Above all, it was the goal of the presenter to dismantle the “routinization” of reflective practice by introducing methods subject to constant revision and by encouraging a meta-awareness of reflective practice processes, the purpose of reflective practice, time as active or passive in the classroom, and the perspective of the teacher-as-learner. It is the hope of the author that this report serves as a useful reference to instructors interested in further readings on reflective practice methodology and history.

The Author

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Appendix A

Workshop Handout

October 15th, 2016
Saturday 1:30-2:55 pm, Room B17 8

Managing a Student-Centered Conversation-Based Lesson

This handout is meant to summarize and supplement the presentation on the topic of "Managing a Student-Centered Conversation-Based Lesson." It will list the ideas provided during the workshop, as well as leave room for notes on more ideas that came out during discussion periods.

1. Designing the Task
   Complexity: lexical items (what we teach), modality of instruction (how we teach), structure of task environment (where we teach)
   a. Lexical items: What do the students already know? (elicitation techniques)
      i. Board race (ABC fill-in, categories, opposites)
      ii. "Captain"-led group work
      iii. Association games ("post office → mail" or noun-verb collocations)
      iv. Partner-work and "class share-out"
   b. Modality of instruction
      i. Town map on the board; matching hand-outs
      ii. Students fill in the map with known lexical items
   c. Structure of the task environment
      i. Using portable furniture to recreate a "downtown"
      ii. Role-play stations: Student B looks for hospital; student A plays police officer, doctor, postmaster
      iii. Conversation stations: rotating in clockwise fashion, students move from point to point collecting information for info-gap activity (ex: "What are the opening hours of the ______?")

2. Noticing Comprehension
   Noticing: (1) Student-to-student interaction, (2) students' hypothesis-making, (3) student-teacher interactions
   a. S-to-S: Are students using their L1? Are "captain's" fulfilling the role you defined? How fast are students completing your tasks? What kind of interaction is the classroom environment encouraging?
   b. Students' hypothesis-making: Does the task make room for guessing? Are guesses rewarded? Do students have a reason to move beyond the original task (i.e., keep producing language)?
   c. S-to-T: Have you spoken to each group or pair? Have you modeled the roles you are giving them? Are you sitting or standing? Are you using time aggressively or constructively? Have you asked students how much time they need for a task?

3. Student Autonomy
   a. Time management: How much time do you spend on each of the following activities:

Student-to-student interaction (pair work, group work)	
Student-to-teacher interaction	
Student-to-class interaction (presentations, etc.)	
Individual work	
Teacher-to-class interaction (lecture, instruction, etc.)	
Other:	
Other:	

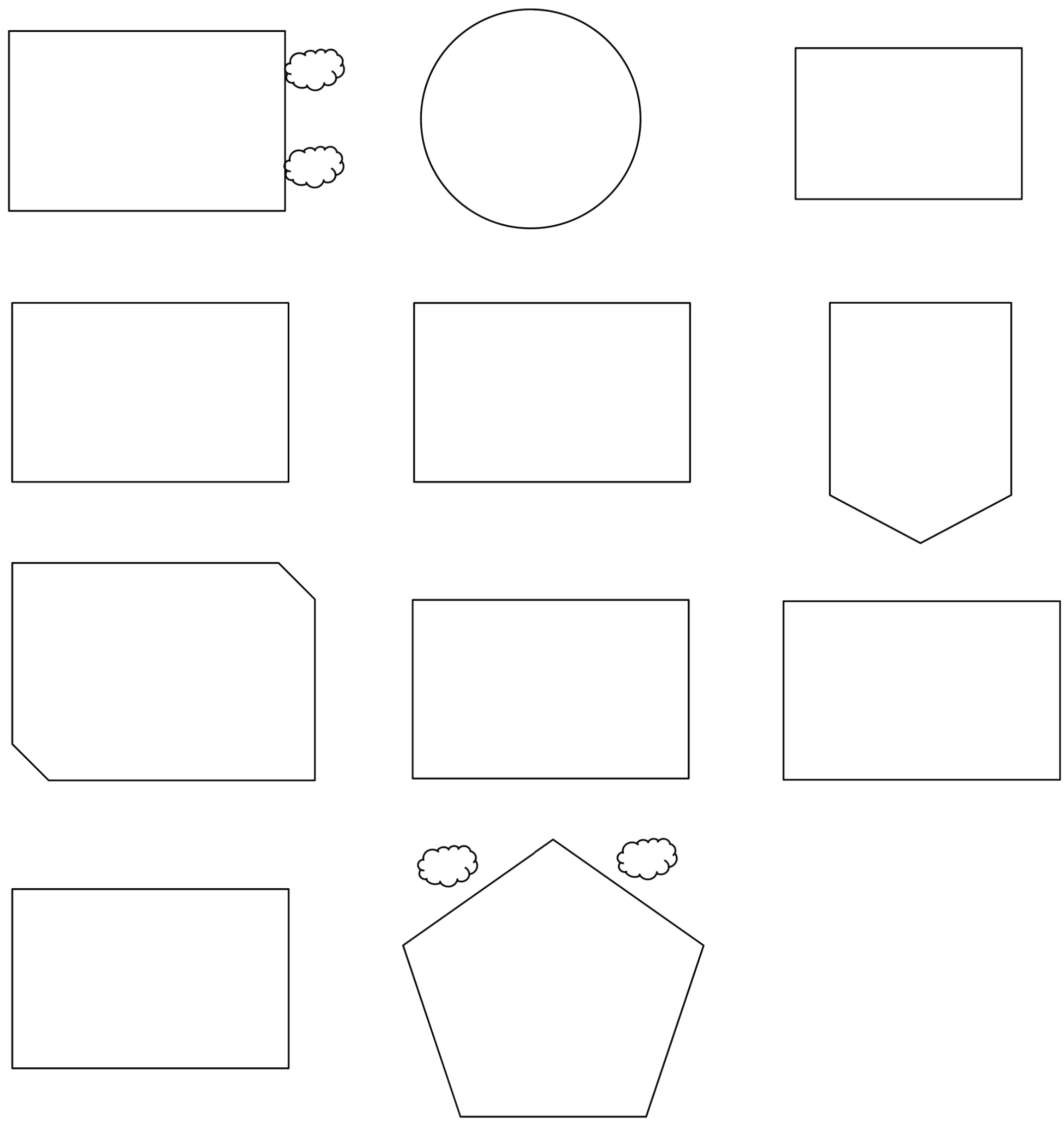
   b. Autonomy strategies
      i. Specific T lectures at the beginning of the term focused on autonomy and examples of it; repetition of "autonomy" as a classroom theme
      ii. Homework assignments on time management & keeping a schedule
      iii. Asking students how much time they want for each activity
      iv. Having students generate the lexical items, rearrange the classroom environment, and write their own guiding questions to keep the conversation moving
      v. Reserve one unit topic towards the end of the school year for students to choose
      vi. Minimize teacher talk time and utilize peer correction as feedback
      vii. *If available*: use video recording equipment (iPads, apps) for student projects so that they can *see and hear* themselves speaking English

4. Overall Strategies
   a. Group work
      i. Change groups often
      ii. Change captains often
      iii. Model the role of the captain
      iv. Ask them how much time they want for each activity
      v. Jigsaw technique: "color" groups read/share/discuss a unique piece of information. Then, "number" groups share their unique piece of information.
   b. Pair work
      i. Check that Ss understand their role ("A raise your hand")
      ii. Change partners often for small tasks; less often for larger ones
      iii. "A open, B close" – book info-gap activity; peer quizzing
      iv. Swap A and B roles, if one role is using the target form and you want both to practice it
   c. Time limits
      i. 30 seconds to form groups
      ii. 30 seconds to elect a captain
      iii. 2-4 minutes for discussing comprehension questions

5. Conclusion
    a. Do you teach the same way that you learn?
    b. Have you completed your tasks yourself?
    c. Could you complete your tasks in a second language?

APPENDIX B

Blank Town Map



Using Music in the Language Classroom

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This article examines the use of music and songs in the language classroom. The rationale for the use of music is discussed. The author provides three factors that a practitioner should consider in creating or adapting music-related activities. An example is given of how a teacher can make changes to an activity to make it appropriate for their classroom.

Introduction

Many teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) use music in the classroom. There is also a moderate amount of literature in the area of second language acquisition (SLA) that describes activities using music. While such activities are relatively common, the rationale behind them is not always made clear, and not all activities will be effective in any given learning environment. An EFL instructor can increase the possibility of successful music-related activities by paying attention to the particulars of the learning environment, fostering student involvement, and articulating clear objectives.

Literature Review: Rationale and Pedagogy

As Engh (2013) points out, not much research has been published on the relationship between using music in the EFL classroom, and its theoretical undepinnings. Engh provides support for the use of music from first language acquisition (FLA) and SLA theories, suggesting that the "melodic musicality of speech is not only significant to FLA," but can also have a positive effect in terms of lowering affective barriers and increasing motivation for second language learners (p. 117). Engh points to sociological reasons for using music and sees cognitive science as offering insights into the usefulness of music in the EFL classroom.

With regard to cognitive science, there have indeed been fascinating developments in research on music, language, and the brain recently, but there is a lack of research that relates directly to the use of music in second language (L2) learning. Mithen's (2006) exploration of the evolution of music and language in human hominid ancestors includes an account of music processing and examines the relationship between emotions and music, but the relationship between music and L2 learning is not addressed. Similarly, Patel (2008) provides useful information on such topics as the links between speech melody and music, and connections between non-periodic rhythm in music and speech, yet one is hard pressed to find evidence in his work to suggest that the use of music in instructed language-learning environments will lead to positive results.

While both practical and theoretical, Murphey's (1992) rationale for using music in the language classroom is perhaps the most convincing. On the theoretical side, Murphey points out that song "appears to precede the development of language in children" and offers that the same pattern may exist in human evolutionary history (pp. 6-7). He argues that songs are useful in language learning because of their effects on short-term and long-term memory. According to Murphey, songs are also valuable because of their social nature. Songs are useful because of their popularity, their potential for varying interpretations ("appropriation" by students), and their ability to stimulate relaxation (1992, p. 7). In addition to cognitive and affective reasons, Schoepp (2001) argues that there are linguistic reasons for including song-based activities: songs provide ample examples of colloquial language, including phrases and idioms that are common in conversational uses of language (p. 2).

Compared to research providing a rationale for the use of music in the language classroom, articles on activities and pedagogy are plentiful. For example, Cullen (1999) deals with song dictation, Upendran (2001) focuses on teaching phrasal verbs through the use of songs, and Haskell (1998) presents a method for using songs for student presentations. There are two books that focus primarily on music-based language learning activities: Murphey (1992) and Griffee (1995). Saricoban and Metin (2000) is an example of an article that offers general recommendations for using music in the classroom.

Effective Activities: Three Considerations

In choosing and adapting activities for use in the classroom, practitioners should pay attention to three important considerations. First, the particulars of the learning environment must be considered. Questions to be considered include what kind of music students are interested in and what kinds of music students have a positive image of, what students' values and expectations about learning are, what technology is available at the learning environment, and what the students' level of proficiency as a group is.

Second, fostering student investment in activities is critical. Students will not fully benefit from activities unless they undertake them willingly and with a positive attitude. Teachers need to ask themselves questions such as the following: How can I create or adapt an activity so that the students will be motivated to do it? How can I present the activity so that students can understand it clearly and develop interest in it? From the students' perspective, what obstacles are there to the successful completion of an activity? How can I make the activity more enjoyable?

Third, objectives for an activity should be made clear. For example, if an activity is preparation for another component of the class, this should be made clear to students initially. The benefits an activity offers must also be explained; if student agency and investment is a goal, students must have a clear conception of why they are doing a particular activity.

In Practice: Applying the Three Considerations to a Song-Based Activity

Consider the following homework activity, which is described only in general terms. The activity is for university-level students of English as a foreign language.

English Song Activity

1. Students find a recording of a song with English lyrics.
2. Students find the lyrics on the Internet and print them out.
3. Students check unknown words in the lyrics, using a dictionary, and mark them.
4. Students listen to the song while reading the lyrics.
5. Students fill out a report form.
6. The lyrics and report are turned in together.

First, let us consider how the particulars of the learning environment may affect students' performance on such an activity. For one, the teacher would need to make sure that all students have access to the technology and materials necessary for the assignment. For this activity, access to a computer, a printer, and songs in English is necessary. While the university may provide access to a computer and printer, finding English songs may be more difficult for some students and the teacher may need to suggest the use of YouTube or other free online resources. Also, the teacher should consider students' attitudes toward Western popular music. If negative perspectives about Western music are common in the teaching environment, the activity may need to be abandoned. Further, are students proficient enough to understand the main idea of simple pop songs in English? If students lack the language ability necessary for a basic understanding of the songs they choose, they will likely not enjoy the activity, and it will not be effective.

Second, how can the activity be structured in order to get students to buy into the process? In the activity described, a very useful element is included: student choice. The fact that students can choose a song that appeals to them will help make the activity more enjoyable. Beyond this, the teacher might help familiarize the students with the activity by doing it (or a slightly altered version) in the classroom before assigning it as homework. In this way, students will become familiar with the process involved and will be unlikely to have trouble completing the necessary steps. Furthermore, they may develop positive feelings about the activity before being assigned it as homework.

The final questions that should be considered are (a) what are the objectives of the activity and (b) how can students be made aware of them? If the activity is part of an extensive listening course component, the instructor can explain the tenets of extensive learning to the class before undertaking the activity. In this case, finding an easy song with few new vocabulary items should be a goal. If, on the other hand, vocabulary acquisition is the goal, the teacher can set a minimum for the number of unknown words. For example, students can be told to select a song that has at least twelve unknown words or phrases. In either case, the report form should be tailored to match the objectives of the activity. For example, if working on writing skills is not an objective of the activity, a simple form with space for only short answers should be used. If this is not done, some students may mistakenly infer that the teacher wants them to write in depth about the song.

Conclusions

In this way, a practitioner can fine-tune music-related activities for their classroom, so that the activities are more likely to be successful. Three things that should be considered are (a) the conditions of the learning environment, (b) fostering student investment, and (c) providing clear objectives. It should be noted that these considerations sometimes overlap. For instance, as mentioned above, expressing clear objectives for an activity to students can help foster student investment in the process. This is because when students know why they are doing something, they are more likely to have positive feelings about the work involved. Furthermore, these considerations are by no means exhaustive of the factors teachers can consider in the process of creating and adapting activities. Nevertheless, careful consideration of these factors followed by a teacher's adaptation of music-based activities can substantially improve their appropriateness for a particular classroom.

The Author

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Effective Ways to Talk About Diversity and Difference in Korean Classrooms

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By teaching a course intended to help Korean students who want to live abroad or engage with the growing numbers of non-ethnic Korean residents of Korea, a practical framework has been developed for discussing diversity and difference appropriately in a mono-cultural EFL environment with special focus on sensitively addressing stereotypes, prejudices, and “isms.” English educators can find this very difficult, either being fearful of addressing the topic or too intent on molding opinions based on cultural assumptions. There is a way to discuss these issues in Korean EFL classrooms that is effective and educational. Some techniques are particularly helpful in creating a space for diversity in the classroom that is as comfortable and effective as possible.

INTRODUCTION

South Korea is projected to become multicultural by 2020, using criteria based on the most recent census data compared to the current European model, which defines multiculturalism as five percent or more of a nation’s population being of non-indigenous ethnic origin (Kim, 2009; OECD, 2016). While multiculturalism seems an inevitability for any developed nation due to the rise of globalism, casual conversation about the subject is often lacking in depth even in the most open and integrated of societies. In a historically closed social environment such as South Korea, talking about multiculturalism – or indeed any cultural topic – can be particularly unfamiliar territory. The intensely monocultural, collectivist history of Korea has lent itself to a way of discussing culture that can seem peculiar to those accustomed to living in more historically multicultural societies. The rapid rise of Korea from post-war recovery into economic world power status has spawned an equally rapid rise in outbound travel by Korean nationals and inbound travel by citizens of other nations (OECD, 2016). With this new interest in physical globalization, language education – particularly English language education – has developed rapidly as well. The result is a sometimes inadequate linguistic toolbox from which young Koreans draw the tools to express their culture and satisfy their curiosity about other cultures in English-language conversations.

THE COURSE

To provide adequate tools for expression, a short, extra-curricular course has been developed introducing terminology and contexts for discussing culture competently in English. While the course is marketed as an opportunity to learn vocabulary, practice conversational skills, and rapidly develop English confidence in a classroom setting – and is, in fact, all three of these things – the main goal of the course is to provide a framework for discussing culture in English in a way that is sensitive to both Korean and non-Korean cultures and speakers. This is accomplished by a variety of methods that work not only in the confines of a full course but also to bring sensitive cultural discussion alongside other topical classes when necessary.

The five primary techniques used are (a) creating a safe space for sensitive dialogue, (b) creating and guiding context for broad cultural topics, (c) making vocabulary relatable, (d) giving students ample speaking space, and (e) effectively using games, role-play, and speaking activities.

This workshop intentionally avoids providing a list of cultural topics to discuss or explicitly stating language learning techniques that should be used. That is because cultural discussion is not always the focus of a language class, but is often naturally integrated into less topic-specific more standard EFL classes. This can be at different levels with different ages and different demographic makeups in regards to gender, class, and ethnicity (even in Korea – remember, rapid multiculturization is occurring.) Instead, a set of general ideas that can be applied to either integrating cultural talk into the classroom or prepping for a full course on cultural conversations will be presented with very general examples of their potential application.

Students in EFL classrooms in Korea are often assumed to be shy about speaking English. This may or may not be true for individual students but often the greater issue is the need to maintain social harmony (Love, 2012). In situations where sensitive social issues may be discussed, it can be helpful to establish class time as a buffer zone, where the need to be socially harmonious, uncritical, and agreeable is temporarily suspended for students. With younger students, this is reasonably easy to achieve, although it does take time. Consistent repetition of the principles that establish the conversational tone and honesty of the class space, as well as the option to opt out at any time, will eventually allow students to speak more freely and explore difficult concepts more openly than in ordinary conversation classes. Adjusting the severity of subject matter as the class progresses further manipulates the sense of a safe space. By establishing the rules of a safe space when topics are simple and non-controversial, students may maintain that sense of safety when the topics become more sensitive later in the course and will open up about culture more naturally.

"Culture" encompasses a wide variety of information and a seemingly endless array of conversations. To avoid confusing students, already confronted with the potential uncomfortableness of suspending the norm of conversational harmony, it is essential to guide conversations about other cultures or about difficult cultural topics by grounding and centering them within Korean culture or university culture or some medium of discussion familiar to the students that can serve as a launch pad from which they can understand variations of the concept. Of course, this will require some research effort on the part of the instructor, but it is necessary for both student and educator understanding. Another simple technique is to require students to learn vocabulary within sentences and challenge them to make their own sentences using the new cultural terms and concepts. This can be accomplished as homework or as in-class group or pair work. By immediately contextualizing vocabulary within sentences and situations, it becomes relevant to the student and perhaps more likely to be remembered, as well.

All educators have been educated, and often in a context very different from that of their students. Even though the intention may be to teach how to talk about culture, it is difficult not to also teach one's own social, cultural, and political beliefs. It is perhaps impossible to remove oneself entirely from a discussion of culture, especially if the educator is from a different country, culture, and/or context than the students. It is also unnecessary since these differences are one of many conditions that necessitate the type of learning discussed in this workshop. However, it is imperative to remain student-focused and allow students to do most of the discussion and answer questions. It is the educator's job to guide that discussion, not supersede it with preconceived notions of culture and an intention to implant ideas into the student's heads. The students likely already have their own ideas and will discuss them when given a toolbox of concepts, expressions, and vocabulary. It is imperative, however, that the educator do their best not to color student experience with projections of their own. This is a prime opportunity for educators to learn from the students after equipping them with the tools to teach. Every student, regardless of level, should be encouraged to speak to the best of their ability. Low-level students can be encouraged to share five words on the subject; intermediate students, five sentences; and higher-level students can draft questions to ask each other, and write or tell anecdotes of their own experiences regarding the subject at hand.

As a final technique, games, role-plays, and speaking activities (both in groups and pairs) can be used to develop a sense of empathy with other cultures, to more thoroughly explore unknown aspects of the student's own culture, and to gain a better understanding of how to use newly acquired vocabulary and expressions. Again, the goal here is to provide the student with an understanding of how to speak about and approach culture in English. To achieve that goal, practice is necessary but easily achieved using common EFL teaching activities.

CONCLUSION

All of these techniques are used with the assumption that students, regardless of their nationality or ethnicity, already embody their own lived culture and know about it intimately, even if they do not know how to describe it clearly in English, Korean, or any other language. The point of the course, and the techniques developed within, is not to inform students what culture is or how to think about diversity. These are not unfamiliar concepts in modern, global society, no matter how homogeneous or heterogeneous the location. However, they are unfamiliar topics of discussion, and these techniques, combined in a classroom space, are meant to bridge the gap between experiences, exposure, and the ability to speak about them competently, using appropriate vocabulary and communicative skills. As a university educator, it is more important to present ideas pertaining to culture and diversity for examination, discussion, and integration into a worldview than it is to attempt to impose viewpoints on said topics. Issues of culture and diversity are already working their way into the Korean educational consciousness. The ability to talk about them is a skill that students need in order to keep up.

The Author

Melissa Watkins is currently an adjunct EFL professor in South Korea. Prior to coming to Asia, she received an MA in cultural theology and a BA in theater, as well as the requisite TESOL certification. Her academic interest in the development of multicultural identity and personhood began when she worked in a deprived multicultural neighborhood in northern England as a youth and community worker. Her observations on engaging with different cultures and introducing multiculturalism to communities via personal presence have been published in the 2014 anthology *Trailblasian: Black Women Living in East Asia, Korea* magazine, and the popular blog "I'm Black and I Travel." Email: mel.watkins @gmail.com

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How to Use a Self-Regulated Learning Model in English Classes at Japanese Universities

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This paper aims to provide an instructional method based on a self-regulated learning (SRL) model to assist university students who have difficulty in learning English. The SRL model proposed by Zimmerman (1989) consists of the three cyclical phases in learning: forethought, performance, and self-reflection. Utilizing this model, the authors have developed “learning logs” to foster a positive attitude in students towards SRL. With the learning logs, students are able to verbalize their own learning challenges. In turn, teachers are able to observe how students are handling the SRL cycle. This paper will detail ways for applying these learning logs to different educational settings and recommend some practical tips to enhance the students’ attitudes towards SRL.

INTRODUCTION

Developing autonomous study skills is essential for successful academic achievement in higher education. However, a common criticism is that Japanese students are somewhat lacking in this regard (Kajita, 2016). To foster students’ autonomous learning, the desire to regulate their own learning is necessary. Regarding self-regulated learning, Zimmerman (1989) and others proposed the self-regulated learning model, which consists of three cyclical phases: forethought, performance, and self-reflection. In the model, at the beginning of learning, the student sets a learning goal, then selects a learning strategy, and finally confirms achievement through self-efficacy. While students are engaged in learning activities, they monitor their own learning and performance. When the activities are complete, students look back on their learning and perform reflection in the form of self-feedback, self-evaluation, and/or self-reactions. Students then attribute either success or failure of their learning outcome(s) to an appropriate factor. Successful self-regulated learners are able to advance to each phase by themselves (see Figure 1).

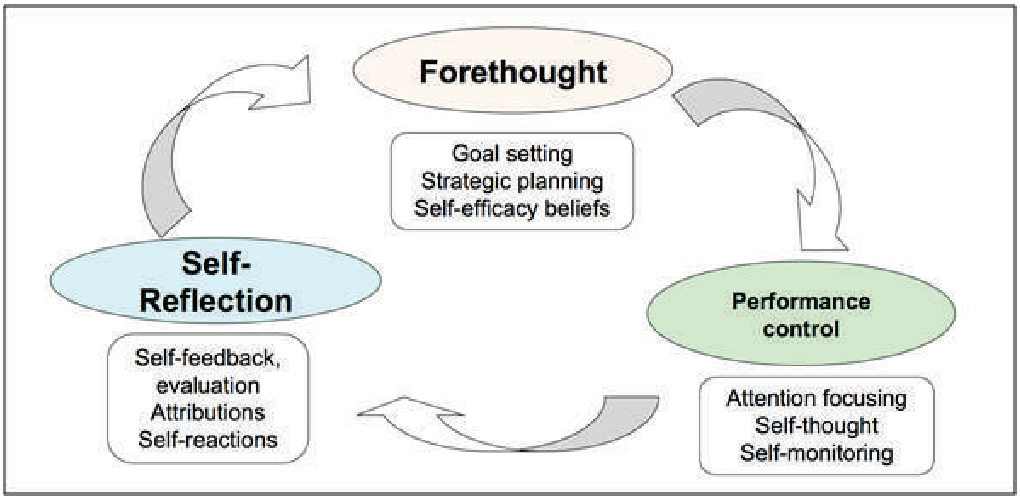

FIGURE 1. The Self-Regulated Learning Cycle. (From Schunk & Zimmerman, 1998)

In real-world educational settings, students in remedial training often experience difficulty in adopting the SRL cycle by themselves and, as a result, need more personalized assistance from teachers. The authors, therefore, developed a form of reflecting their own learning (learning logs) based on the SRL notion and introduced it to the classroom to help students experience the three-phased learning cycle. This form was designed to allow students to verbalize their own learning challenges while teachers, in turn, were better able to observe how the students handled the SRL cycle.

PRACTICE

Practical Principles

There are two principles for the use of the authors' SRL log from the standpoints of students and teachers. Firstly, it is important to nurture students' awareness of SRL by developing their abilities to create an appropriate learning environment, set learning targets, and connect current learning opportunities with their future careers – simply put, building awareness of the underlying principles of SRL itself. Thus, teachers should pay close attention to the learning process, not the outcome alone, while keeping in mind the risks of spoon-feeding as well as the significance of providing step-by-step instructions for autonomous learning.

Secondly, data from the SRL logs should be easy and safe to manage. To expeditiously utilize this data for individual and classroom feedback requires an appropriate management system. Furthermore, easy and secure handling should be considered from the perspective of the students. Students should be given easy access to their own written logs. Thus, efficient management of logs should be exercised for their effective use by students themselves, in addition to communication between students and teachers via verbal or electronic means.

Practical Approaches

Our learning logs can be applied to classrooms in three different ways. First, the log can be handled in traditional paper form. In classrooms, students can write down their actual feelings in the paper-based logs or on spot logs, rather than simply copying and pasting the same comment(s) on computer. In this way, teachers can give immediate feedback/direction while circulating around the classroom.

Another method is to incorporate the log into the school's existing language management system. Used in other courses, the existing LMS is probably more familiar to students, and similarly so is the learning log. Generally, the LMS allows teachers to customize documents and offers good handling of data.

The third and most recommended method is to use Google Forms. With the Google Forms system, teachers can organize their logs based on different attribute elements such as courses, grades, and other survey items. In addition to automatically graphed results, written data are stored in spreadsheets and made available online for teachers to find sources for feedback. Using the script editor, teachers program Google Forms to automatically email the contents of written logs to the writer/student and teacher simultaneously, so that they can both optimize their sort settings to maximize viewing ability.

The authors designed the learning log form in paper-based, LMS, and Google Forms formats, and started implementing them in classroom practice in 2014. From 2014 to 2016, at the end of each class meeting, students were asked to write in the log in Japanese (see example logs in Figure 2). A log included the following parameters:

1. Self-evaluation of one's own homework given in the previous class meeting
2. What they learned in the classroom
3. What they found to be their problems in the classroom
4. How these problems were resolved
5. Homework assignment each student selected to solve the problems

In the class meeting that followed, students were asked to, first, self-evaluate the degree of achievement on their previously self-imposed homework in percentage terms, and then explain why they chose the rating they did. At the conclusion of the class, students were again asked to write in the learning log. Filling in the log completes one learning cycle. Students routinely wrote in the logs until the end of the 14/15-week course. Teachers observed their learning process by reading the logs each week and offered guidance as necessary. The log was used at three private universities in the Kanto region, one private university in the Kyushu district, and one public university in the Chugoku region. Logs written by more than 500 students were collected over a period of three years. The authors analyzed the data both qualitatively and quantitatively. The following section describes the results derived mainly through qualitative analysis.

FIGURE 2. Google Forms Version of the Learning Log.

OUTCOMES

At the initial stage of the study, students' learning logs revealed the following results. Student comments on their learning varied greatly from student to student, depending on their English proficiency level. Students at a relatively higher proficiency level wrote more than those at a lower proficiency level, as one might expect. Differences in descriptive quality depending on the proficiency level were also observed: The weaker students often just enumerated the contents covered in the classroom and rarely distinguished their learning problems from classroom activities. This indicates that they did not successfully go through the "performance control" and "self-reflection" stages. What can be surmised is that the learning log did not function as a self-regulating tool that enabled students to find tasks by themselves. Consequently, students were not able to effectively realize any meaningful improvement through the use of the log, either. It was necessary to let students separate "what they have done in the class" from "what they understood or were able to do in the class by themselves." The comments they made on their learning were of learners at the stage of acquiring declarative knowledge, as Zimmerman (1989) describes. As for the self-selected homework assignments, without checks by teachers and other students, many students failed to complete these, and that lead to a breakdown in the learning chain.

Based on these results, the authors revised the learning log form in 2015. In the new version, students were asked to write three areas of learning focus as prompted by the teacher and one more thing they thought they learned in the class, and comment on them. Because of the revision, students were expected to realize what they actually learned and how they felt about it. Examples of the collected comments are shown in Figure 3. Overall, students wrote more comments on their learning than in the previous version of the learning log. Through analysis based on SCAT (steps for coding and theorization; Otani, 2011), the authors found the following characteristics in the learners' comments:

1. In some comments, students merely listed the name of the grammar items such as "future tense" and "sentence order" covered by the teacher, or activities such as "impromptu speech" and "conversation" done in the classroom. In this case, many students omitted verbs when describing exactly what they did in the class.
2. Some students did not describe what they studied. Their comments were "I found mistakes in my essay," "I could wrote sentences a little longer," and so on.
3. Comments in which students did not describe how they could improve their learning weaknesses were also frequently evident. They wrote things such as "It is difficult to listen to the speech," "I must improve my pronunciation," "I need to sophisticate my essay." Some students wrote how they felt in the class, but in a very superficial and unsatisfactory way. For instance, students wrote "I enjoyed the class," "I found that I made many mistakes and will have to pay more attention," and so on.

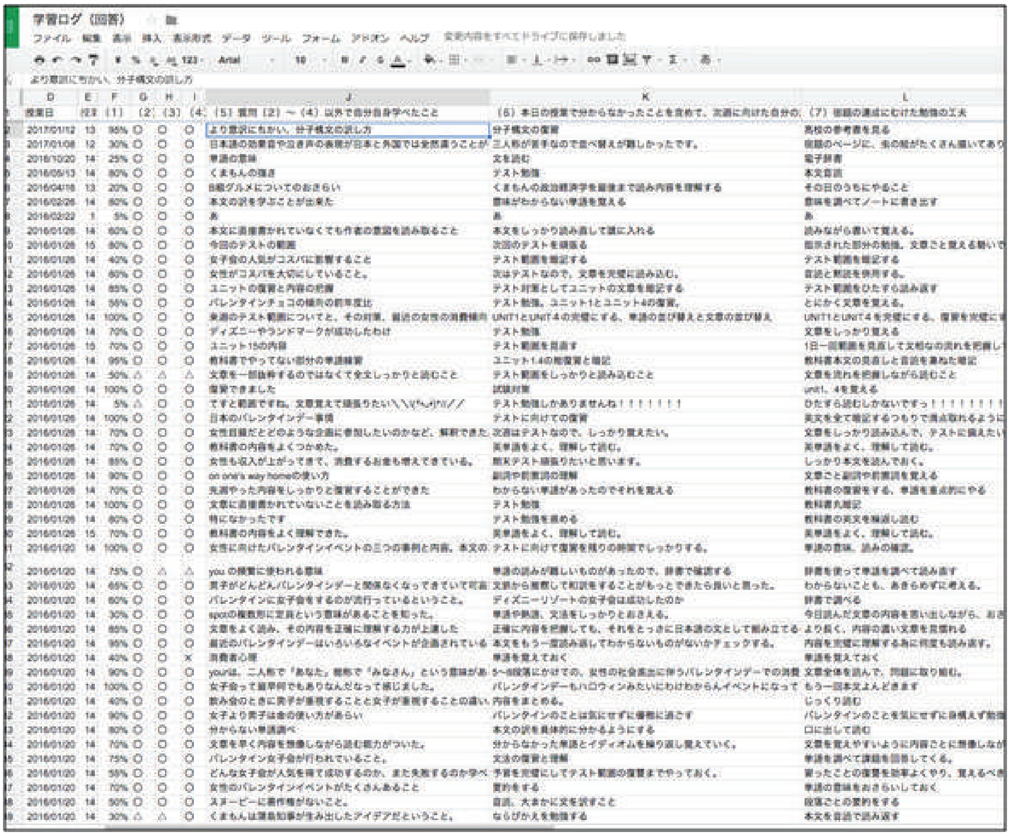

FIGURE 3. Sample of Students' Comments on Their Learning (Learning Log).

TIPS FOR IMPROVING STUDENTS' SRL SKILLS

What can a teacher do to improve students' SRL skills through learning logs? The first step is to help students write more detailed reflective comments on their learning. In case (1) above, students' comments lacked what they actually did in the class and thus couldn't function as a tool to look back on their learning. In such cases, teachers can encourage students to write "what" they did/learned and "how" they felt about it by asking questions such as "What did you do when we did future tense? Can you express your activities using future tense?" and "What did you do to make an impromptu speech? Was making a speech difficult for you?" or "What questions did you ask your partner? Did you do it well?"

Cases (2) and (3) illustrate some limitations in fostering the students' SRL skills. Comments simply describing the classroom activities do not work as a bridge to the forethought in the next learning stage. Even though the students wrote how they felt in the class, such comments still need to be elaborated upon by adding a degree of detail such as describing what aspect(s)/point(s) they felt were most difficult. In both cases, teachers should encourage students to refine their self-feedback and evaluation. Students also need to clarify the cause of the success or failure of their learning in order to complete the SRL cycle. In classroom practice, teachers can ask questions such as "How much of the speech did you understand?" "Why do you think the speech was difficult to understand?" "What do you think you can do to improve your pronunciation? Do you know any good ways to do this?"

Some students need more suggestions than others to enrich the descriptions in their learning logs. For those who are "at a loss" in writing their logs, more detailed guidance is recommended. Showing a checklist to clarify the degree of understanding of a certain grammar point, for example, is one way. Explaining typical problems EFL students have in comprehending authentic English and letting the students identify the source of their own difficulty is another way. The teachers can suggest essentials for reading comprehension: additional background readings, appropriate grammar and syntax, and higher-level vocabulary, etc. Students are then left to determine by themselves which of these hinder their reading comprehension and to adjust their self-learning accordingly to compensate.

Factors to Be Considered in SRL Instruction

In concluding this paper, the authors will discuss some factors that should be considered when engaging in SRL instruction. Firstly, teachers should consider cultural issues. Self-regulation can be understood as a process of how the learner interacts with the learning environment. Therefore, it is not appropriate that the teacher assumes a universal process of acquiring self-regulatory skills without considering the learner's intrinsic/extrinsic cultural and environmental features vis-à-vis the classroom.

As for remedial English education at the university level, this should not be confined to simply reviewing structures and concepts that were covered at the junior and senior high level, but should also include nurturing SRL skills, which are, arguably, life-long intellectual skills for living. To respond to such a need, teachers are supposed not only to provide detailed directions for solving their learning problems in close support but also to lead students to foster autonomy in the mid- and long-term to help them fulfill their life goals.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP26370744 (Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C)).

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Conference Overview

Presentations of
The 2016 KOTESOL International Conference

Shaping the Future: With 21st Century Skills

October 15-16, 2016, Seoul, Korea

The 2016 Korea TESOL International Conference Committee gratefully recognizes the following individuals for presenting research papers, conducting workshop sessions, and leading discussions at the 2016 Korea TESOL International Conference.

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Thomas S.C. Farrell	Professional Development of 21st Century Language Teachers Through Reflective Practice
Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa	You Can't Get Apples from a Pear Tree: What Teachers Need to Know and Be Able to Do in the 21st Century

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Todd Beuckens	PUSH Your Lessons Beyond the Classroom
Boyoung Lee (이보영)	Second Language Teacher Education: Enhancing Teacher Training and Professional Development in CLT
William Littlewood	Back to Basics for the 21st Century: Language Learning as Memorization
Kara Mac Donald	Communicative Instructional Approaches: A Framework for 21st Century Skills
Robert S. Murphy	7 Brain-Friendly Ways to Foster Deeper Understanding and Autonomy in Your Classroom
Willy A. Renandya	Enhancing L2 Learning Using Simple Technology
Burcu Tezcan-Unal	The Demands of the 2020 Job Market, Transferable Skills, and ELT
Linda Yates	Teaching Language and Culture for the 21st Century

INVITED SECOND SESSIONS

Todd Beuckens	Build Your Own LMS – For Free
Thomas S.C. Farrell	Standing Up for Your Principles: The Power of Reflective Practice

William Littlewood	Time Past, Time Present, Time Future
Kara Mac Donald	Making *Gwaoe* and *Hagwon* Lessons More Collaborative
Robert S. Murphy	Designing a Better Brain-Friendly Syllabus: 5 Major Points to Remember!
Willy A. Renandya	Is *Dadok* (다독/ER) the Missing Link in L2 Learning?
Burcu Tezcan-Unal	Timeless Interplay Between Learners, Teachers, and Learning
Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa	Creating a Personalized Professional Development Program to Enhance 21st Century Skills

INVITED SPEAKERS

Tim Clauson	Becoming a Class(room)Dojo: Classroom Management Software + Young Learners
William Coward	Developing Teachers for the Long Haul
Whitney Mirts	The Role of the U.S. Department of State in Enhancing English Language Teaching and Learning in the East Asia Pacific Region
Whitney Mirts	Using Games in the Classroom
Chuck Sandy (& Josette LeBlanc)	Answering the Call to Vocation: An (ELT) Idea Igniter
Chuck Sandy (& Timothy Hampson)	Teaching Life Through Stories
Richard Waddell	Developing Teachers for the Long Haul

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

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Simon W. Albright	Implementing a “Sound” Vocabulary Course Where Theory and Practicality Converge
Dewi Atikah	The Effectiveness of Teacher and Peer Feedback in Teaching Hortatory Exposion Writing
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Siti Nurul Azkiyah	Developing Individually Tailored English Teacher Training in Indonesia
Carrie K. Bach	Learners’ Self-Repair, Post-production Monitoring, and Listening Behavior in Mobile Audio-Messaging

Daniel Bailey	Forum-Enhanced Activities for English Communication Skills Anyone Can Do
Daniel Bailey	LMS Friendly Face-Off: Which Learning Management System Is for You?
Casey Barnes	Engaging Student Self-Reflection: Increasing Learner Responsibility and Developing Learner Autonomy
Jessica Barraza	LINK-it!
Jessica Barraza	Use ENGLISH-OPOLY for Supreme, Long-Term Classroom Management: for Elementary and MS
Barney Battista	English Language Teaching at Vocational Colleges: Action Research on Activities That Work
Rachid Bezzazi	The L2 Instructor's Role in Developing Learners' Reading Skills: Monitored Extensive Reading
Euan Bonner	The Case of the Intimidated Student: Using Custom-Designed Games to Scaffold Narratives
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Ian Brown	VoiceThread and Moxtra: Digital Presentations for the 21st Century
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Kai-Jye Chia	Integrating Concept Mapping and Prediction Skills in the ESP Classroom
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Daniel Craig	NoRedInk for Offloading Grammar Diagnostics, Instruction, and Practice
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James Michael Wood	Enhancing Engagement with Google Docs on a 13-Week Full-Time EAP Course.
Jocelyn Wright	What Should We Call “Them”
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Xiaofang Yan	Becoming Academic Sojourners: Chinese MATESOL Students in South Korea
Andrew Yim	Evaluating the Usefulness of Introductory Writing Classes for College ESL Students
Kuniko Yoshida	How to Use a Self-Regulated Learning Model in English Classes at Japanese Universities
Victor Zhe Zhang	Focusing on Process: Individual L2 Students' Engagement with Teacher Feedback
Luke Zimmermann	Practise English Pronunciation with Luke

PROMOTIONAL SESSIONS

Jarrod Belcher, TESOL Asia	The Importance of Continuing Professional Development for Language Educators
Allison Bill, Anaheim University	Professional Advancement Through Online Doctoral, Master's, and Certification Programs in TESOL
Ian Bosiak, E-future	Activities for Engaging Students by Extending and Expanding Reading Comprehension Lessons
Ian Bosiak, E-future	Engaging Students and Promoting Literacy with Graded Readers
Anthony Hanf, Anaheim University	Professional Advancement Through Online Doctoral, Master's, and Certification Programs in TESOL
Julie Hulme, E-future	21st Century Skills in the EFL Classroom
Steve Iams, SIT Graduate Institute	An Inquiry Approach for Language Teacher Development
Petra Schoofs, University of Birmingham	The University of Birmingham: The ELAL MA in TESOL and MA in Applied Linguistics
Hoon Seo, Turnitin Korea	Integrating Digital Feedback Tools to Support Excellence in English Writing
Aaron Siegel, E-future	The Magic of Comics in the EFL Classroom
Jake Whiddon, Macmillan Education	Language for Life: Developing and Integrating Life Skills in Language Teaching
Jake Whiddon, Macmillan Education	Optimizing Learning Through Differentiation: A Higher Skill Set for Mixed-Ability Groups
Jake Whiddon, Macmillan Education	Skilling Up for Academic Success: Essential Skills and Competencies for the 21st Century
Linda Yates, Macquarie University	Postgraduate Study and Research Pathways for Applied Linguistics, TESOL, and Translating and Interpreting Professionals

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