

Korea TESOL Journal

Volume 15, Number 1
2019



Korea Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

Korea TESOL Journal

Volume 15, Number 1



Korea Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

Korea TESOL Journal

Volume 15, Number 1
The Official Journal of
Korea Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
(Korea TESOL / KOTESOL)

Editor-in-Chief: Kara Mac Donald, *Defense Language Institute, USA*
Associate Editor: David E. Shaffer, *Gwangju International Center, Korea*
Reviews Editor: James Kimball, *Semyung University, Korea*

KOTESOL Publications Committee Chair: James Kimball

Board of Editors

Yuko Butler, *University of Pennsylvania, USA*
Richard Day, *University of Hawaii at Manoa, USA*
Michael Griffin, *The ELT Workshop*
Yang Soo Kim, *Middle Tennessee State University, USA*
Mikyong Lee, *University of Munich, Germany*
Douglas Paul Margolis, *University of Wisconsin-River Falls, USA*
Levi McNeil, *Sookmyung Women's University, Korea*
Scott Miles, *Dixie State University, USA*
Marilyn Plumlee, *The American University in Cairo, Egypt*
Eric Reynolds, *Woosong University, Korea*
Bradley Serl, *University of Birmingham, UK*
William Snyder, *Kanda University of International Studies, Japan*
Stephen van Vlack, *Sookmyung Women's University, Korea*
Kyungsook Yeum, *Sookmyung Women's University, Korea*

Production Editors (Volume 14, Issue 2)

Suzanne Bardasz, *University of California, Davis, USA*
Reginald Gentry, *University of Fukui, Japan*
Fred Zenker, *University of Hawaii at Manoa, USA*
Stewart Gray, *Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Korea*
Jose Franco, *University of Los Andes, Trujillo State, Venezuela*

Production Layout: Media Station, Seoul

Printing: Myeongjinsa, Seoul

© 2019 by Korea TESOL

ISSN: 1598-0464

About Korea TESOL

Korea TESOL (KOTESOL; Korea Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) is a professional organization of teachers of English whose main goal is to assist its members in their self-development and to contribute to the improvement of ELT in Korea. Korea TESOL also serves as a network for teachers to connect with others in the ELT community and as a source of information for ELT resource materials and events in Korea and abroad.

Korea TESOL is proud to be an Affiliate of TESOL (TESOL International Association), an international education association of almost 12,000 members with headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia, USA, as well as an Associate of IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language), an international education association of over 4,000 members with headquarters in Canterbury, Kent, UK.

Korea TESOL had its beginnings in October 1992, when the Association of English Teachers in Korea (AETK) and the Korea Association of Teachers of English (KATE) agreed to unite. Korea TESOL is a not-for-profit organization established to promote scholarship, disseminate information, and facilitate cross-cultural understanding among persons associated with the teaching and learning of English in Korea. In pursuing these goals, Korea TESOL seeks to cooperate with other groups having similar concerns.

Korea TESOL is an independent national affiliate of a growing international movement of teachers, closely associated with not only TESOL and IATEFL, but also with PAC (Pan-Asian Consortium of Language Teaching Societies), consisting of JALT (Japan Association for Language Teaching), ThaiTESOL (Thailand TESOL), ETA-ROC (English Teachers Association of the Republic of China/Taiwan), FEELTA (Far Eastern English Language Teachers' Association, Russia), and PALT (Philippine Association for Language Teaching, Inc.). Korea TESOL is also associated with MELTA (Malaysian English Language Teaching Association), TEFLIN (Indonesia), CamTESOL (Cambodia), and ACTA (Australian Council of TESOL Associations), and most recently with ELTAM/Mongolia TESOL, MAAL (Macau), HAAL (Hong Kong), and ELTAI (India). Korea TESOL also has partnership arrangements with numerous domestic ELT associations.

The membership of Korea TESOL includes elementary school, middle school, high school, and university-level English teachers as well as teachers-in-training, administrators, researchers, material writers, curriculum developers, and other interested individuals.

Korea TESOL has nine active chapters throughout the nation. Members of Korea TESOL are from all parts of Korea and many parts of the world, thus providing Korea TESOL members the benefits of a multicultural membership.

Korea TESOL holds an annual international conference, a national conference, workshops, and other professional development events, while its chapters hold monthly workshops, annual conferences, symposia, and networking events. Also organized within Korea TESOL are various SIGs (Special Interest Groups) – e.g., Reflective Practice, Social Justice, Christian Teachers, Research, Women and Gender Equality, People-of-Color Teachers – which hold their own meetings and events.

Visit <https://koreatesol.org/join-kotesol> for membership information.



Table of Contents

Research Papers

<i>Scott Miles & Buseon Song</i>	Happiness and the L2 Writer: The Effect of Positive Psychology Writing Tasks on Second Language Learners	3
<i>Luke Gertenbach</i>	Towards Strengthening Korean EFL Learners' Visions of Their Ideal Future L2 Selves	29
<i>F. Scott Walters</i>	A Sociocultural Inquiry into Assessment-Literacy Development of Veteran L2 Classroom Teachers via Standards Reverse Engineering	53
<i>Gregory Thompson</i>	Redesigning Forums to Incorporate Formative Assessment: An Initial Exploration	87
<i>Jared McKee</i>	Integrating a Close-Reading Method to Teach Reading to Young Learners in a Korean Elementary Class	113
<i>Tory S. Thorkelson</i>	The Journey from Specialist to Generalist: Creating a Skills-Based Program for Undergraduates at a Private University in Seoul	137
<i>Gerry McLellan</i>	Written Analysis: A Brief Account of How Three Classes Compared When Given Differing Methods of Instruction and Feedback	167
<i>Samantha Levinson</i>	Curriculum and Vocabulary Instruction Practices Using a Dual Literacy Approach for Korean English Learners	187

<i>Phan Thi Thanh Thao</i>	Why Have We Used Mobile Phones in Teaching English Writing Skills?	209
----------------------------	---	------------

Brief Report

<i>Sean Mahoney</i>	Primary School English Classes: Japan's Non-native English-Speaking Assistants	227
---------------------	---	------------

Book Review

<i>Robert J. Dickey</i>	Assessing Scott Thornbury's 30 Language Teaching Methods in a Post-methods Era (By Scott Thornbury)	237
-------------------------	---	------------

Korea TESOL National Council 2018-19

National Officers

President: Dr. David E. Shaffer, Gwangju International Center
First Vice-President: James Kimball, Semyung University
Second Vice-President: Mike Peacock, Woosong Culinary College
Treasurer: John Simmons, Hannam University
Secretary: Martin Todd, Independent ELT Professional
Immediate Past President: Lindsay Herron, Gwangju National University of Education

Committee Chairs

International Conference Committee Chair: Grace Wang, Yonsei University
International Conference Committee Co-chair: Michael Free, Kangwon National University
Nominations & Elections Committee Chair: Maria Lisak Chosun University
Publications Committee Chair: James Kimball, Semyung University
Membership Committee Chair: Lindsay Herron, Gwangju National University of Education
International Outreach Committee Chair: Allison Bill, Jeonju University
Technologies Committee Chair: John Phillips, Independent Computer and Network Specialist
Publicity Committee Chair: Wayne Finley, Woosong University
Research Committee: Mikyoung Lee, Chonnam National University / University of Munich

Chapter Presidents

Busan-Gyeongnam Chapter: Rhea Metituk, University of Ulsan
Daegu-Gyeongbuk Chapter: Kimberley Roberts, Gyeonghye Girls' Middle School
Daejeon-Chungcheong Chapter: Mike Peacock, Woosong Culinary College
Gangwon Chapter: Arturo Collado, Chuncheon Public School System
Gwangju-Jeongnam Chapter: Bryan Hale, Yeongam High School
Jeonju-North Jeolla Chapter: Allison Bill, Jeonju University
Seoul Chapter: James Tardif, Goyang
Suwon-Gyeonggi Chapter: Tyler Clark, Gyeongin Natl. University of Education, Gyeonggi Campus
Yongin-Gyeonggi Chapter: Stewart Gray, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Global Campus

Korea TESOL Journal

The *Korea TESOL Journal* is a peer-reviewed journal, welcoming previously unpublished practical and scholarly articles on topics of significance to individuals concerned with the teaching of English as a foreign language. The Journal focuses on articles that are relevant and applicable to the Korean EFL context. Two issues of the Journal are published annually.

As the Journal is committed to publishing manuscripts that contribute to the application of theory to practice in our profession, submissions reporting relevant research and addressing implications and applications of this research to teaching in the Korean setting are particularly welcomed.

The Journal is also committed to the fostering of scholarship among Korea TESOL members and throughout Korea. As such, classroom-based papers, i.e., articles arising from genuine issues of the English language teaching classroom, are welcomed. In its expanded scope, the Journal aims to support all scholars by welcoming research from early-career researchers to senior academics.

Areas of interest include, but are by no means limited to, the following:

- Classroom-Centered Research
- Teacher Training
- Teaching Methodologies
- Cross-cultural Studies
- Curriculum and Course Design
- Assessment
- Technology in Language Learning
- Language Learner Needs

For call-for-papers information and additional information on the *Korea TESOL Journal*, visit our website: <https://koreatesol.org/content/call-papers-korea-tesol-journal>



Research Papers

Happiness and the L2 Writer: The Effect of Positive Psychology Writing Tasks on Second Language Learners

Scott Miles

Dixie State University, St. George, Utah, USA

Buseon Song

Positive Learning English Education Research Center, Busan, Korea

A number of second language scholars have suggested incorporating positive psychology findings in the language classroom, but as of yet, there is no empirical evidence suggesting that positive psychology techniques will have any impact in the ESL/EFL classroom. This study compared two experimental groups composed of Korean students writing in English. Over a four-week period, one group did positive writings (gratitude and best possible self) while a comparison group wrote on neutral topics. A pre-post survey was used to measure the participants' self-reported levels of general well-being. There were no differences on the groups overall, with each group suffering a slight (but statistically insignificant) decline on well-being measures. However, an analysis of subgroups based on level of proficiency found that intermediate-high intermediate writers in the positive group made significant gains on well-being measures, while intermediate-high intermediate writers in the neutral writing group made no gains. The conclusion is that positive writing interventions on second language learners may only have a measurable impact on well-being if the learners are of intermediate or higher proficiency.

Keywords: positive psychology, PERMA, affect, well-being, writing

INTRODUCTION

Positive psychology is the study of how to improve happiness and overall sense of well-being. Whereas psychology had previously focused on people with mental issues such as depression and extreme anxiety, positive psychology seeks to increase levels of happiness and well-being

for everyone. Proponents of positive psychology offer specific intentional activities that can significantly boost our sense of well-being, both in the short-term and long-term, to assist “with facilitating good lives and enabling people to be at their best” (Linley, Joseph, Maltby, Harrington, & Wood, 2009, p. 35).

Though being happy in itself is its own reward, an individual’s level of happiness also correlates to a number of other benefits. Happy people choose to view the world and interpret events in a more positive way than unhappy people, despite being faced with identical circumstances (Lyubomirsky & Tucker, 1998). People who describe themselves as happy are less likely to be affected by criticism and negative comparisons with their peers. Happiness has also been related to physical health (see Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005, for a review).

For the educator, these benefits could have real effects on educational performance, and several scholars have suggested extending the practices of positive psychology to the educational context (Froh, Miller, & Snyder, 2007; Goleman, 1994; Noddings, 2003; Walters, 1997). Noddings (2003) argues that learning happens best when students have positive attitudes toward learning and motivation, and these qualities are difficult to develop if the student has a generally negative attitude about the world. Froh et al. (2007) claim that “it is imperative that school psychologists commit to understanding the well-springs, mechanisms, process, and outcomes of positive psychological constructions in children and youth” (p. 1). Goleman (1994) suggests “a new vision of what schools can do to educate the whole student, bringing together mind and heart in the classroom” (xiv).

Following suit, scholars and educators in ESL/EFL have begun to consider the introduction of positive psychology practices (Helgesen, 2006; MacIntyre, Gregersen, & Mercer, 2016; Pishghadam, 2011; Zabihi & Ketabi, 2013). Pishghadam and Zabihi (2012) argue that ESL/EFL educators should go beyond teaching language skills by preparing students for lifelong learning to help students improve their lives as a whole. Pishghadam (2011) notes that ELT lends itself well to the development of a positive sense of well-being, as ELT courses by nature can touch on a variety of subjects such as culture, society, and emotions, and thus easily afford the opportunity for students to reflect on their own lives and worldview. Zabihi and Ketabi (2013) claim that TESOL “can be a unique venue for adopting a pedagogy of happiness” (p. 35) and propose an ELT syllabus that focuses more on “life skills,” including

physical and mental well-being and “happiness intervention programs” to help enhance students’ quality of life.

Learning outcomes can easily be impacted by issues external to the classroom. Though it may be beyond our power as teachers to help students deal with problems outside school walls directly, we might be able to at least help students improve their inner reserves to better cope with external difficulties. If indeed there are some simple, relatively non-intrusive activities that can be done in the class that will result in healthier attitudes that in turn lead to better learning outcomes, then educators are remiss in neglecting these issues. As Helgesen (2006) observes, “It’s not an obligation. But it may be an opportunity” (p. 28).

Many studies in the psychology literature have shown that certain writing practices can lead to increased feelings of well-being and happiness. This study seeks to investigate the effects of applying these practices in the EFL classroom. As language programs typically spend a considerable amount of time developing writing skills, it is intriguing to find out if the kinds of writing that positive psychology encourages can lead to benefits beyond the development of writing skills in a second language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Positive Psychology

The positive psychology movement is a relatively new trend in psychology that has gained attention both in academia and in the popular media. While the role of traditional psychology focused primarily on individuals with depression, stress, and mental disorders with the purpose of bringing these individuals back to “normal” levels of well-being, positive psychology seeks to increase levels of well-being and happiness for everyone (Seligman, 2004; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). Positive psychology seeks to shift “attention away from pathology and pain, and direct it toward a clear-eyed, concentration on strength, vision, and dreams” (Kauffman, 2006, p. 220).

Positive psychology encompasses not only hedonic emotional aspects (e.g., pleasure and mood), but also eudaemonic aspects such as personal growth, strong relationships, and a sense of a meaningful life (Cohn &

Fredrickson, 2009). While definitions of happiness are elusive (Gilbert, 2006), leading positive psychology researchers Sheldon and Lyubomirsky (2004) provide a working definition of happiness as “long-term balance of positive and negative affect, or life satisfaction” (p. 7; see also Diener, 1984; Lyubomirsky, 2001).

Though genetics and circumstances (financial status, relationships with family, etc.) may make up the bulk of what determines an individual’s happiness (Tellegen et al., 1988), positive psychologists argue that there is still room for some degree of change through intentional activities (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005). Rather than a genetically determined set point from which no long-term change can be made, what may be at play is a set range that allows a degree of limited yet significant movement. Positive psychology, then, would seek to help individuals reach and maintain a level of happiness at the top of their set range (Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2004). Sheldon and Lyubomirsky (2004) introduced the “sustainable happiness model,” which proposes a framework to increase and maintain happiness through intentional activities.

A number of intentional activities that can have a lasting impact on happiness have been proposed and researched. These intentional activities include making an effort to commit acts of kindness (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005), expressing gratitude (Emmons & McCullough, 2003), visualizing best possible self (BPS) activities (King, 2001; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2004, 2006), and thinking about happy life experiences (Lyubomirsky, Sousa, & Dickerhoof, 2006). Though most, if not all, of the intervention activities could easily be incorporated into the ESL/EFL classroom, this research will focus on writing activities related to (a) gratitude and (b) best possible self (BPS).

Gratitude

Gratitude can be described as an emotional state (Froh, Miller, & Snyder, 2007). Emmons and McCullough (2003) describe the value of expressing gratitude as “a life oriented around gratefulness as the panacea for insatiable yearnings and life’s ills” (p. 377). It is easy for us to become accustomed to, and thus take for granted, good things in our life and exert more attention to negative circumstances. People who regularly express gratitude may be more aware and appreciative of the

good things in their life, and this can lead to an increased feeling of well-being and happiness. It may also lead to increased social bonds, which should also have a positive effect. Gratitude “promotes the savoring of positive events and situations and may counteract hedonic adaptation by allowing people to see the good in their life rather than taking it for granted” (Boehm & Lyubomirsky, 2009, p. 673). Scholars have linked feelings of gratitude to overall measures of well-being and happiness (Emmons, 2007; Emmons & Crumpler, 2000; Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Toepfer & Walker, 2009; Watkins, Woodward, Stone, & Kolts, 2003). Emmons and Sheldon (2002) note that those with a strong sense of gratitude are more likely to enjoy their work, feel energetic, and generally be more optimistic.

One way of increasing feelings of gratitude is to have individuals regularly express gratitude in writing. Emmons and McCullough (2003) reported three studies investigating this technique. In the first study, they had participants write regular entries in a journal each week for four weeks. One group listed five things they were grateful for, a second group listed five things that annoyed them, and the final group listed five events that took place in the previous week. Those in the “gratitude group” were happier, more optimistic about the future, healthier, and exercised more than comparison groups. The other studies confirmed that students in the gratitude writing group were superior to the control groups on measures of gratitude, positive affect, reduction in negative affect, their feelings about life, and how well they felt connected with others.

Toepfer and Walker (2009) conducted a study in which students wrote three letters of gratitude over an eight-week period (about once every 2–3 weeks). The letter writers had steady increases on measures of happiness, life satisfaction, and gratitude. Comparison students, who did not engage in any writing, also increased in happiness and life satisfaction, but to a lesser degree than the letter writers, and they experienced a slight decrease in gratitude measures. Lyubomirsky, Dickerhoof, Boehm, and Sheldon (2011) had participants write gratitude letters in which participants wrote about experiences in the recent past that caused them to be grateful for others. This resulted in significant improvements on measures of well-being.

Related to gratitude writings is the idea of affectionate writing. Floyd, Mikkelsen, Hesse, and Pauley (2007) had participants either write for 20 minutes about either someone who was special to them, or

something that happened to them that week. This was done three times over a five-week period. The affectionate writing group had an increase in happiness and a reduction in stress and even cholesterol levels.

Best Possible Self

In “best possible self” (BPS) activities, participants are encouraged to look to the future and envision the best possible outcomes. The concept of “possible selves” is the act of imagining our future self if we follow a particular course of action.

BPS writing is linked to motivation (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Niedenthal, Setterlund, & Wherry, 1992) and self-esteem (Markus & Ruvolo, 1989, Oyserman & Markus, 1990). Writing about the topic of possible selves can be tied to “self-regulation,” as to achieve an ideal future self naturally demands organizing a plan. Such writing can bring “awareness and clarity to one’s life goals, reorganizing priorities, deciding on values” (King, 2001, p. 800).

King (2001) had participants spend 20 minutes each day for four consecutive days doing BPS writing (how their lives would be if all their hopes and goals worked out as planned). A second group wrote about a traumatic period in their past. A third group wrote on both of the above topics, and a final group wrote about non-emotional topics. The BPS-only group saw a substantial decrease in health issues (as measured by visits to health clinics) and had the highest increase in psychological well-being. Second in benefits was the trauma-only group, and third was the mixed group (the control was last). Why mixing the two types of topics would lead to lower results is unclear, but a follow-up study (Burton & King, 2004) found similar results with the first group writing about good experiences in their lives.

A number of studies compared such positive writing with expressive writing (i.e., writing about negative events in the past). Some found positive writing to be superior for well-being (Lewandowski, 2009; Marlo & Wagner, 1999) while others found no difference (Baikie, Geerligs, & Wilhelm, 2012; Kloss & Lisman, 2002). Baikie, Geerligs, and Wilhelm (2012) assigned writing tasks to three groups: expressive writing (writing about traumatic events), positive writing, and a control. Participants wrote for 20 minutes on four occasions. The study found all three groups made progress in terms of mood and health (depression, anxiety, stress, and physical health), but only found statistical differences

between the groups when the expressive and positive writing groups were combined (in comparison with the control group, which wrote on mundane topics). These results held on a one-month and four-month follow up.

Though research on Best Possible Self writing produces more mixed results than the research on gratitude writings, the majority of the findings do suggest that there are benefits for Best Possible Self writing.

Positive Psychology in Language Teaching

Zabihi and Ketabi (2013) argue that language teaching may be an ideal vehicle for improving students' sense of well-being: "Language learners from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds are free to discuss many topics – scientific, cultural, social, political, and personal – in ESL/EFL classes with little or no socio-political restrictions; such freedom of expression can hardly be seen in any other class or school" (pp. 41–42). Language classes ideally try to cover many genres of language and thus are open to various topics. Though teachers may feel uncomfortable raising some potentially sensitive topics such as religion and politics, in regards to the content of positive psychology, ESL/EFL classes would generally be quite accommodating and relatively uncontroversial. In developing writing skills, students need to be writing about something, after all, so why not include non-threatening topics that can lead to increased motivation and sense of well-being in addition to language gains?

What has been completely untested is whether any of the techniques used for increasing happiness will work when done through a second language. When expressing oneself in a second language, a learner cannot solely focus on the content but must expend far more cognitive resources on vocabulary and syntax than what is required when conversing in the mother tongue. This struggle to come up with the language needed to express the content may make the entire endeavor a burden that diminishes, if not completely cancels out, any possible positive benefits of the activity. Thus, though intuitively positive psychology may have much to offer for second language pedagogy, empirical evidence is still lacking.

Another potential shortcoming of the current positive psychology movement is that much of the research is focused on Western cultures. Relatively far fewer studies in positive psychology have been conducted

in other cultures, and indeed the very concept and value of happiness and “subjective well-being” may vary dramatically per culture, with some valuing individual happiness quite high and others putting it below self-sacrifice, duty, and cooperation with the group (Ehrenrieck, 2009). Boehm and Lyubomirsky (2009) note that some cultures have more “collectivist” cultures that might not esteem individual happiness as highly as many Western cultures (see also Lyubomirsky, 2001; Suh, Diener, Oishi, & Triandis, 1998).

Though there may be some fundamental differences in how different cultures define and regard happiness, researchers have found that all cultures, even those that may be considered more collectivist, still value individual happiness (Diener & Oishi, 2000; Diener, Suh, Smith, & Shao, 1995; Triandis, Bontempo, Leung, & Hui, 1990). College students around the world rank happiness among the most important values in life (Diener, 2000).

Research Objectives

There are two questions this study addresses:

- RQ 1: Can regular writing exercises from positive psychology practices in a second language lead to increased student happiness in the Korean context?
- RQ 2: Does the amount of writing in a second language have an effect on happiness?

The first research question seeks to determine if the benefits of positive psychology as found in Western cultures extend to activities done in a second language in the Asian context. If so, a strong case can be made for the type of “happiness interventions” in the Asian EFL classroom, and perhaps in ESL/EFL classrooms in general.

The second research question will look at the amount of writing done by students to see if it has any effect on perceptions of well-being and happiness. This factor, to the best of our knowledge, has not been explored in previous research perhaps due to the fact that previous research has had participants write in their native language, and thus it may be assumed that participants will write as much as they need to. However, in this study the ability of students writing will vary, and difficulties in English writing ability may become a hindrance to some

participants' ability to fully express themselves.

METHOD

Study Participants

Study participants were 178 undergraduate freshman students majoring in oriental medicine at a university in South Korea. They were enrolled in Medical English (의료영어) courses, which are required for their major. As the general educational requirements for entering the oriental medicine program are high, the students tended to have higher levels of English ability in comparison to the average Korean freshman student, with general levels classified as low-intermediate to intermediate on ACTFL (1986) scales in terms of reading and writing. Each class was two hours and held twice a week.

Eight intact classes of 18–25 students were used in the study and were taught by two professors (4 classes each). Four classes were assigned to the positive writing group, while the other four were assigned to the neutral writing group. To account for potential differences between the two instructors, each professor taught two classes assigned to the positive writing group and two classes assigned to the neutral writing group.

The sole measure used in the study was a survey that assessed the students' general level of mental well-being. The survey was adapted from Hills and Argyle's (2002) Oxford Happiness Questionnaire but modified for length (see Appendix A). The survey was translated into Korean to ensure participant understanding.

The first survey (pre-survey) was given in the second week of the course prior to the experimental tasks. The results of the pre-survey were compared via an unpaired *t*-test to ensure that both groups had similar levels of well-being prior to the experiment. There was no significant difference in scores for the positive writing group ($M = 91.2$, $SD = 10.6$) or the neutral writing group ($M = 90.2$, $SD = 11.9$; $t(176) = .599$, $p = .55$). Participants scoring 115 or higher on the pre-survey were removed from the study due to ceiling effect concerns.

The study consisted of four writing assignments beginning on the second week (directly after the pre-survey was conducted). Students in

both groups did one writing per week for four weeks (see Appendix B for writing topics and instructions). The survey was given a second time (the post-survey) after the midterm period.

Writing Topics

Beginning in the second week, students in each group were assigned 15-minute writing exercises.

Positive Writing Group

Week 2: Gratitude

Week 3: Best of times

Week 4: Your perfect future (best possible self)

Week 5: Thank-you letter

Neutral Writing Group

Week 2: Current school schedule

Week 3: Weekly activities

Week 4: Plans for this weekend

Week 5 Current challenges

Both instructors were given the same procedure for each writing task. The instructor distributed handouts of the writing assignment at the beginning of the second hour (after the students returned from a 10-minute break). The students were reminded that they had 15 minutes to write and should write as much as they could in English. Students also could use their smart phone dictionaries. Instructors were free to give clarifications on the instructions and could answer any vocabulary or grammar questions that students asked during this time. Instructors were asked not to give any input on the content of the students' writing. After the 15-minute period, the instructor collected the papers, placed them in an envelope, and submitted them to the researchers.

The writings were checked by Author 1 to make sure the content matched the writing instructions and categorize each paper according to length. The amount of writing varied among students in all classes, with some students doing somewhat minimal writing (one short paragraph), while others writing 1–2 pages. Writings were categorized as short (70 words or less), average (between 71–199 words) or long (200 words or

more). Writings of less than 70 words were not counted as a completed writing. Students who completed fewer than three of the four assigned writings were removed from the study.

RESULTS

Statistical analyses were first run without considerations for length of writing. The results of the pre- and post-surveys are given in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Means and Standard Deviations on Pre- and Post-surveys

	Positive Writing Group ($n = 86$)		Neutral Writing Group ($n = 92$)	
	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	Mean Score	Std. Deviation
Pre-survey	91.24	10.63	90.23	11.91
Post-survey	90.92	12.26	89.85	12.11

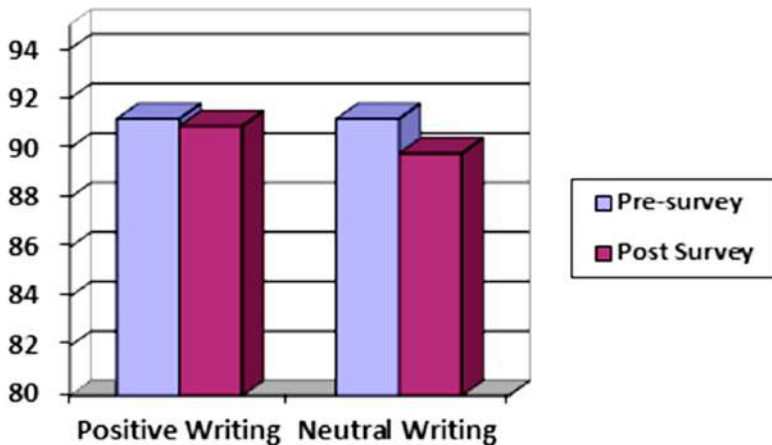


FIGURE 1. Pre- and Post-survey Results of Main Groups.

Both groups experienced a slight and nearly identical decline on overall scores. The positive writing group from 91.24 to 90.92 (-.32). The neutral writing group went from 90.2 to 89.9 (-.38).

An independent *t*-test was conducted on the post-survey scores of both groups. There were no significant differences on scores for the positive writing group ($M = 90.9$, $SD = 12.3$) and the neutral writing

group ($M = 89.8, SD = 12.1; t(176) = .586, p = .56$).

Statistics were also run on groups divided by the amount of writing done. Participants in the positive writing group who wrote at least three long (200 words or more) writings were classified as the Positive Fluent group, and their counter-parts in the neutral writing group were labeled as the Neutral Fluent group. An independent t -test was conducted on students who submitted at least three long (200 words or more) writings in each group. The results are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2. Means and Standard Deviations of Fluent Writing Sub-Groups

	Positive Writing Group ($n = 20$)		Neutral Writing Group ($n = 24$)	
	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	Mean Score	Std. Deviation
Pre-survey	89.00	6.91	91.58	12.06
Post-survey	93.42	8.64	90.42	12.71

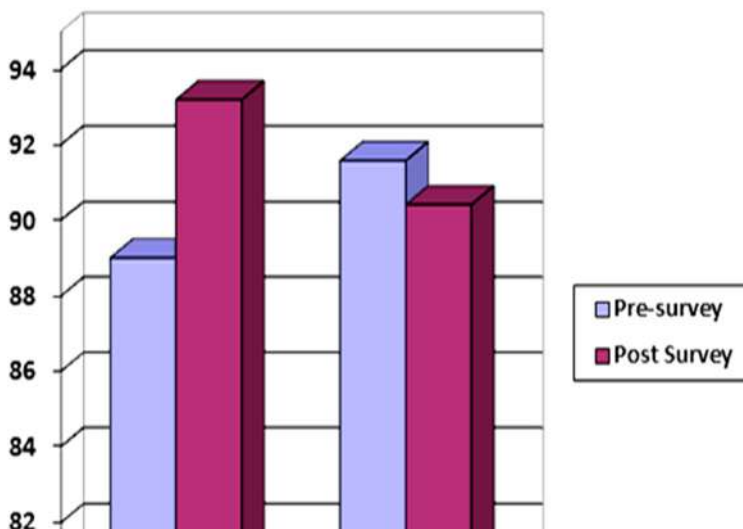


FIGURE 2. Comparison of Pre-Post Survey Results of Fluent Writers.

On the pre-surveys, the Positive Fluent writing group ($M = 89.0, SD = 6.9$) and the Neutral Fluent writing group ($M = 91.6, SD = 12.1; t(42) = -.848, p = .40$) were statistically equal.

The post-survey results show a widening in the differences between the two groups, with the writers in the Positive Fluent group going up

to a mean score of 93.2 (a 4.2 gain) and the writers in the Neutral Fluent group slightly declining to 90.4 (a decrease in gains of 1.2). To see if the changes in mean scores were statistically significant, an independent *t*-test was conducted on the post-survey scores of both groups. There was no significant difference on scores for the writers in the Positive Fluent writing group ($M = 93.2$, $SD = 8.6$) and writers in the Neutral Fluent writing group ($M = 90.4$, $SD = 12.7$; $t(42) = .831$, $p = .40$).

Though the comparison between groups showed no significant differences, a comparison of pre-survey and post-survey results *within* each group was conducted via a paired *t*-test.

The strong writers in the positive writing group did see a significant increase between the pre-surveys ($M = 89$, $SD = 6.9$) to the post-surveys ($M = 93.2$, $SD = 8.6$, $t(19) = -2.28$, $p = .034$). The eta-squared statistic (.22) indicates a large effect size.

The decline in scores experienced by the strong writers in the neutral writing group between the pre-surveys ($M = 91.58$, $SD = 12.1$) to the post-surveys ($M = 90.4$, $SD = 12.7$, $t(23) = .928$, $p = .36$) was not significant.

Thus, the Positive Fluent writers saw a significant increase in their well-being scores, while the neutral strong writers experienced a slight, but statistically insignificant, reduction.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The general results of the study did not find any advantage for either writing group. The overall survey results showed an actual reduction in well-being for both groups, though the decline was rather slight and not statistically significant. Overall, the writing treatments seem to have had no effect on either group.

It is curious that the general well-being scores for both groups suffered declines, however slight. The context of the participants in the study may shed some needed light. The participants were freshman students in very demanding majors, and as the semester continued it is likely that the optimism and positive outlook of the students, which may have been unrealistically high at the beginning of their first semester in a university, was severely challenged. Indeed, this difficult environment is one of the reasons why we were interested in these kinds of

interventions to help the students maintain a positive outlook despite being in a high-stress environment.

Only when the groups were examined according to the length of writing do differences between the groups begin to emerge. In the comparison of students who did lengthy writings, students in the positive writing group made substantial increases in happiness. The paired *t*-tests showed that their gains were statistically significant in comparison with their pre-test scores. The Neutral Fluent writers experienced a slight but statistically nonsignificant decline. We see two possible explanations to explain this data.

1. The benefits of positive writing can only emerge if a certain threshold in the amount of writing is passed. Writing for less than 2–3 paragraphs may indicate that the writer is not engaging in the topic enough to have any lasting impact on their mental state.
2. A certain level of writing proficiency is required before the benefits of positive writing can be realized. The reason that some students wrote more than others may be due to a relatively higher English proficiency. Weaker students may have been unable to fully engage in the topic due to limitations in their second language. Students who struggle with the language to express themselves may have viewed the exercise itself as a burden, and any potential positive benefits of positive writing might be countered by the negative effect of struggling to express themselves in a new language. Students of a certain level of proficiency would have more cognitive space to focus more on the content of the writing than the language itself.

The analysis of the participants who wrote at length does suggest that positive writing can have an impact on writers who pass a certain threshold either in the amount of writing produced or in their overall level of proficiency. The gains were modest, but significant: The Positive Fluent writers reported higher happiness levels in general at the end of the study. The authors suspect that had the study continued for the participants who wrote lengthy passages the gap may well have increased between the Positive Fluent and Neutral Fluent writing groups. Four writing tasks may simply be insufficient to see a large change.

There is little indication, however, that extending the study would have made any difference for the participants who wrote relatively

smaller writings. As discussed earlier, the level of English proficiency of these participants may have been too low for this type of exercise to have a positive psychological effect.

A tentative conclusion, then, is to recommend positive writing practices for students of at least the high-intermediate level. To realize substantial benefits, freewriting activities on positive topics should be given at least four times, as was done in this study, and likely more. Having high-intermediate to advanced-level students in nearly any kind of English language course do 10–15 minutes of free-writing on positive topics once per week is a realistic goal that may well result in students who are happier and more positive. This is not to say that positive writing topics would not be useful for lower-proficiency students. This study only looked at freewriting exercises. Writing classes often employ process writing techniques, which allot a great deal of time to planning, drafting, and revising topics. This additional time to reflect on the topic may well have a stronger effect on overall well-being than was found in this study.

THE AUTHORS

Scott Miles is an assistant professor and the EFL coordinator at Dixie State University in St. George, Utah, USA. He received his PhD in applied linguistics from Lancaster University. His research interests include extensive reading, memory and language learning, and vocabulary acquisition. Email: miles@dixie.edu

Buseon Song is the director of the Positive Learning English Education Research Center in Busan, Korea. She received her PhD in applied linguistics from Ball State University. She has taught at universities for 15 years. Her research interests include pragmatics, cognitive linguistics, teaching pedagogy, and second language acquisition. Email: plee2305@daum.net

REFERENCES

ACTFL. (1986). *The ACTFL proficiency guidelines*. New York, NY: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Retrieved from <http://www.sil.org/lingualinks/languagelearning/otherresources/actflproficiencyguidelines/contents.htm>

- Baikie, K. A., Geerligs, L., & Wilhelm, K. (2012). Expressive writing and positive writing for participants with mood disorders: An online randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 136*, 310–319. doi:10.1016/j.jad.2011.11.032
- Boehm, J. K., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2009). The promise of sustainable happiness. In S. J. Lopez (Ed.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (2nd ed.) (pp. 667–679). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195187243.013.0063
- Burton, C. M., & King, L. A. (2004). The health benefits of writing about intensely positive experiences. *Journal of Research in Personality, 38*, 150–163. doi:10.1016/S0092-6566(03)00058-8
- Cohn, M. A., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2009). Positive emotions. In S. J. Lopez (Ed.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (2nd ed.) (pp. 13–24). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195187243.013.0003
- Diener, E. (1984). Subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin, 95*, 542–575. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.95.3.542
- Diener, E. (2000). Subjective well-being: The science of happiness and a proposal for a national index. *American Psychologist, 55*, 34–43. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.34
- Diener, E., Emmons, A., Larsen, R., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 49*(1), 71–75. doi:10.1207/s15327752jpa4901_13
- Diener, E., & Oishi, S. (2000). Money and happiness: Income and subjective well-being across nations. In E. Diener & E. M. Suh (Eds.), *Culture and subjective well-being* (pp. 185–218). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Diener, E., Suh, E. M., Smith, H., & Shao, L. (1995). National differences in reported well-being: Why do they occur? *Social Indicators Research, 34*, 7–32. doi:10.1007/BF01078966
- Ehrenreich, B. (2009). *Smile or die*. London, UK: Granta Books.
- Emmons, R. A. (2007). *Thanks! How the new science of gratitude can make you happier*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin.
- Emmons, R. A., & Crumpler, C. A. (2000). Gratitude as human strength: Appraising the evidence. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 19*, 15–69. doi:10.1521/jscp.2000.19.1.56
- Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: An experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*, 377–389. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.84.2.377
- Emmons, R. A., & Sheldon, C. M. (2002). Gratitude and the science of positive psychology. In C. R. Synder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 459–471). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Floyd, K., Mikkelsen, A. C., Hesse, C., & Pauley, P. M. (2007). Affectionate writing reduces total cholesterol: Two randomized, controlled trials. *Human*

- Communication Research*, 33, 119–142. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2958.2007.00293.x
- Froh, J. J., Miller, D. N., & Snyder, S. F. (2007). Gratitude in children and adolescents: Development, assessment and school-based intervention. *School Psychology Forum: Research in Practice*, 2(1), 1–13.
- Gilbert, D. (2006). *Stumbling on happiness*. New York, NY: Knopf.
- Goleman, D. (1994). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can count more than IQ*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.
- Helgesen, M. (2006). ELT and the “science of happiness.” *The Language Teacher*, 30(7), 28–30.
- Hills, P., & Argyle, M. (2002). The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire: A compact scale for the measurement of psychological well-being. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 33, 1073–1082. doi:10.1016/S0191-8869(01)00213-6
- Kauffman, C. (2006). Positive psychology: The science at the heart of coaching. In D. Stober & A. M. Grant (Eds.), *Evidence based coaching handbook: Putting best practices to work for your clients* (pp. 219–254). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- King, L. A. (2001). The health benefits of writing about life goals. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27, 798–807. doi:10.1177/0146167201277003
- Kloss, J. D., & Lisman, S. A. (2002). An exposure-based examination of the effects of written emotional disclosure. *British Journal of Health Psychology*, 7(1), 31–46. doi:10.1348/135910702169349
- Lewandowski, G. W., Jr. (2009). Promoting positive emotions following relationship dissolution through writing. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 4(1), 21–31. doi:10.1080/17439760802068480
- Linley, P. A., Joseph, S., Maltby, J., Harrington, S., & Wood, A. M. (2009). Positive psychology applications. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (pp. 35–47). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Lyubomirsky, S. (2001). Why are some people happier than others? The role of cognitive and motivational processes in well-being. *American Psychologist*, 56, 239–249. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.56.3.239
- Lyubomirsky, S., Dickerhoof, R., Boehm, J. K., Sheldon, K. M. (2011). Becoming happier takes both a will and a proper way: An experimental longitudinal intervention to boost well-being. *Emotion*, 11(2), 391–402. doi:10.1037/a0022575
- Lyubomirsky, S., King, L. A., & Diener, E. (2005). The benefits of frequent positive affect: Does happiness lead to success? *Psychological Bulletin*, 131, 803–855. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.131.6.803
- Lyubomirsky, S., Sheldon, K. M., & Schkade, D. (2005). Pursuing happiness: The architecture of sustainable change. *Review of General Psychology*, 9, 111–131. doi:10.1037/1089-2680.9.2.111

- Lyubomirsky, S., Sousa, L., & Dickerhoof, R. (2006). The costs and benefits of writing, talking, and thinking about life's triumphs and defeats. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 90*, 692–708. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.90.4.692
- Lyubomirsky, S., & Tucker, K. L. (1998). Implications of individual differences in subjective happiness for perceiving, interpreting, and thinking about life events. *Motivation and Emotion, 22*(2), 155–186.
- MacIntyre, P. D., Gregersen, T., & Mercer, S. (Eds.). (2016). *Positive psychology in SLA*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Markus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible selves. *American Psychologist, 41*(9), 954–969. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.41.9.954
- Markus, H., & Ruvolo, A. (1989). Possible selves: Personalized representations of goals. In L. A. Pervin (Ed.), *Goal concepts in personality and social psychology* (pp. 211–241). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Marlo, H., & Wagner, M. K. (1999). Expression of negative and positive events through writing: Implications for psychotherapy and health. *Psychology and Health, 14*(2), 193–215. doi:10.1080/08870449908407323
- Myers, D. G., & Diener, E. (1995). Who is happy? *Psychological Science, 6*, 10–19. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9280.1995.tb00298.x
- Niedenthal, P. M., Setterlund, M. B., & Wherry, M. B. (1992). Possible self-complexity and affective reactions to goal-relevant evaluation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 63*(1), 5–16. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.63.1.5
- Noddings, N. (2003). *Happiness and education*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Oxford, R. L. (2016). Toward a psychology of well-being for language learners: The “EMPATHICS” vision. In P. D. MacIntyre, T. Gregersen, & S. Mercer (Eds.), *Positive psychology in SLA* (pp. 10–87). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Oyserman, D., & Markus, H. R. (1990). Possible selves and delinquency. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 59*(1), 112–125. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.59.1.112
- Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A classification and handbook*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press/Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Pishghadam, R. (2011). Introducing applied ELT as a new approach in second/foreign language studies. *Iranian EFL Journal, 7*, 8–14.
- Pishghadam, R., & Zabihi, R. (2012). Life syllabus: A new research agenda in English language teaching. *TESOL Arabia Perspectives, 19*, 23–27.
- Seligman, M. E.P. (2004). Can happiness be taught? *Daedalus, 33*, 80–87.
- Seligman, M. E. P., Steen, T., Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2005). Positive psychology progress: Empirical validation of interventions. *American Psychologist, 60*, 410–421. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.60.5.410

- Sheldon, K. M., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2004). Achieving sustainable new happiness: Prospects, practices, and prescriptions. In A. Linley & S. Joseph (Eds.), *Positive psychology in practice* (pp. 127–145). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Sheldon, K. M., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2006). How to increase and sustain positive emotion: The effects of expressing gratitude and visualizing best possible selves. *Journal of Positive Psychology, 1*, 73–82. doi:10.1080/17439760500510676
- Suh, E., Diener, E., Oishi, S., & Triandis, H. C. (1998). The shifting basis of life satisfaction judgments across cultures: Emotions versus norms. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74*, 482–493. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.74.2.482
- Tellegen, A., Lykken, D. T., Bouchard, T. J., Wilcox, K. J., Segal, N. L., & Rich, S. (1988). Personality similarity in twins reared apart and together. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 54*(6), 1031–1039. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.54.6.1031
- Toepfer, S., & Walker, K. (2009). Letters of gratitude: Improving well-being through expressive writing. *Journal of Writing Research, 1*(3), 181–198. doi:10.17239/jowr-2009.01.03.1
- Triandis, C., Bontempo, R., Leung, K., & Hui, C. H. (1990). A method for determining cultural, demographic, and personal constructs. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 21*, 302–318. doi:10.1177/0022022190213003
- Walters, J. D. (1997). *Education for life: Preparing children to meet the challenges*. Nevada City, CA: Crystal Clarity.
- Watkins, P. C., Woodward, K., Stone, T., & Kolts, R. L. (2003). Gratitude and happiness: Development of a measure of gratitude, and relationships with subjective well-being. *Social Behavior and Personality, 31*, 431–452. doi:10.2224/sbp.2003.31.5.431
- Zabihi, R., & Ketabi, S. (2013). Advocating a pedagogy of happiness in TESOL: Antecedents and potentialities. *Journal of Happiness and Well-Being, 1*(2), 35–47.

APPENDIX A

Well-Being Questionnaire

Adapted from Hills and Argyle's (2002) The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each by entering a number in the blank after each statement, according to the following scale. Don't spend too much time over individual questions. If you find some of the questions difficult, please give the answer that is true for you in general or most of the time.

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Slightly disagree
- 4 = Slightly agree
- 5 = Agree
- 6 = Strongly agree

1. I don't feel particularly pleased with the way I am. (R) _____
2. I feel that life is very rewarding. _____
3. I have very warm feelings towards almost everyone. _____
4. I am not particularly optimistic about the future. (R) _____
5. Life is good. _____
6. I do not think that the world is a good place. (R) _____
7. I laugh a lot. _____
8. I am well satisfied about everything in my life. _____
9. I have no confidence about the way I look. (R) _____
10. There is a gap between what I would like to do and what I have done. (R) _____
11. I am very happy. _____
12. I can see the good points in everything. _____
13. I always have a cheerful effect on others. _____
14. I get angry often. _____
15. I worry a lot. _____
16. I feel that I am not especially in control of my life. (R) _____
17. I feel able to take anything on. _____
18. I often experience joy and elation. _____

- 19. I don't find it easy to make decisions. (R) _____
- 20. I don't have a particular sense of meaning and purpose in my life. (R) _____
- 21. I don't have fun with other people. (R) _____
- 22. I don't have particularly happy memories of the past. (R) _____

행복 지수 설문조사

아래에 제시된 척도를 사용하여 각각의 문항에 대해 당신이 동의하는 정도를 나타내는 숫자를 괄호 안에 적어 넣으세요. 답을 할 때 너무 길게 생각하지 마세요. 그리고 만일 질문에 답하기 어려울 때는 당신에게 일반적으로 또는 평상시에 해당하는 답을 선택하세요.

- 1 = 매우 동의하지 않음
- 2 = 거의 동의하지 않음
- 3 = 약간 동의하지 않음
- 4 = 약간 동의함
- 5 = 거의 동의함
- 6 = 매우 동의함

- 1. 나는 나 자신이 그리 만족스럽지 않다. _____
- 2. 나는 인생에 반드시 보상이 있다고 생각한다. _____
- 3. 나는 거의 모든 사람에 대해 따뜻한 마음을 가지고 있다. _____
- 4. 나는 미래에 대해 그리 낙관적이지 못하다. _____
- 5. 인생은 좋은 것이다. _____
- 6. 나는 세상이 살기 좋다고 생각하지 않는다. _____
- 7. 나는 많이 웃는다. _____
- 8. 나는 내 인생의 모든 것들에 대해 매우 만족한다. _____
- 9. 나는 내 외모에 자신이 없다. _____
- 10. 내가 하고 싶은 것과 지금까지 내가 해 온 것에는 차이가 있다. _____
- 11. 나는 매우 행복하다. _____
- 12. 나는 모든 것에서 좋은 점을 발견한다. _____
- 13. 나는 항상 다른 사람들에게 유쾌한 기분을 갖게 한다. _____
- 14. 나는 자주 화를 낸다. _____
- 15. 나는 걱정을 많이 한다. _____
- 16. 나는 내 인생을 마음대로 할 수 없다고 생각한다. _____
- 17. 나는 어떠한 어려운 일도 해 낼 자신이 있다. _____

18. 나는 자주 기쁨과 즐거움을 경험한다. _____
19. 나는 어떠한 일에 결정을 내리는 것이 쉬운 일이라고 생각하지 않는다.

20. 나는 내 인생의 특별한 의미와 목적을 가지고 있지 않다. _____
21. 나는 다른 사람과 함께 있는 것이 즐겁지 않다. _____
22. 나는 과거에 특별히 행복했던 기억들이 없다. _____

APPENDIX B

Writing Instructions

Writing Week 1

For the next four weeks you will be participating in a research project for the TESOL Dept. professors (Author 1) and (Author 2). Every week you will have a writing assignment that will take 15–20 minutes. These assignments are expected to help your general English as well as provide some possible psychological benefits.

The content of your writing will only be viewed by (Author 1) and (Author 2). Your privacy is important to us, and we will not share the content with anyone else (even your current professor). If you have any questions about the project, please contact [Author 2] at [email address].

여러분은 오늘부터 4주 동안 테솔영어과 교수 (Author 1 & Author 2)의 영어교육 관련 연구에 참여할 것입니다. 여러분은 매주 제시되는 다른 주제에 대하여 15–20 분 동안 작문 활동을 할 것입니다. 이 작문 활동이 여러분의 영어 실력뿐 만 아니라 여러분의 정서적인 면에도 좋은 영향을 줄 것이라고 희망하고 있습니다.

여러분이 작성하는 작문 내용은 연구 담당 교수 외에는 어느 누구도 볼 수 없으며, 여러분의 개인 정보 또한 공개되지 않을 것입니다. 만약, 본 연구에 대해 질문사항이 있으면, 수업 담당 교수에게 문의하기 바랍니다.

[Positive Writing Topic 1]

Gratitude

What are some things in your life that you are grateful for? For 15–20 minutes, write (in English) about everything in your life that you feel thankful for. You are free to write about anything you wish. You can talk about family members, friends, teachers, or other people who have helped you in your life (now or in the past). You can write about your environment, living conditions, your health, character, and so on.

As you write, do not worry too much about grammar and organization. The important thing is just to convey your thoughts. You may use your cell phone dictionary for vocabulary help. If you need additional paper,

ask your professor.

당신의 인생에서 감사한 모든 것들에 대하여 15-20분 동안 자유롭게 기술하세요. 예로써, 당신은 다음과 같은 것들에 감사할 수 있습니다. 가족, 친구, 선생님, 또는 현재나 과거에 도움을 받았던 사람들, 자연, 현재 살고 있는 환경 조건, 신체적 그리고 정신적 건강, 성격, 재능 등.

영어로 쓸 때, 형식이나 문법을 고려하지 말고, 하고 싶은 말을 자유롭게 기술하기 바랍니다. 전자 사전이나 휴대폰 사전을 사용해도 되며, 종이가 더 필요하면 담당 교수에게 말하기 바랍니다.

[Neutral Writing Topic 1]

Current Schedule

For 15-20 minutes, write about your current schedule this semester. Include information about what you do in the mornings, your class schedule, and what you do most evenings after school. Also write about what you usually do on the weekends. Please write in as much detail as you can. You can also include information on your eating habits. If you have time, you can also discuss how you might wish to change your daily routine this semester.

As you write, do not worry too much about grammar and organization. The important thing is just to convey your thoughts. You may use your cell phone dictionary for vocabulary help. If you need additional paper, ask your professor.

이번 학기 당신의 일상생활을 15-20분 동안 자세하게 기술하세요. 기상 이후부터 학교생활과 저녁시간에 하는 일, 그리고 주말에 하는 일들을 자유롭게 기술하시기 바랍니다. 또한, 식사 식단이나 식습관을 포함하여도 됩니다. 시간이 남는다면, 이번 학기에 개선하고 싶은 일상생활에 대하여 기술하여도 좋습니다.

영어로 쓸 때, 형식이나 문법을 고려하지 말고, 하고 싶은 말을 자유롭게 기술하기 바랍니다. 전자 사전이나 휴대폰 사전을 사용해도 되며, 종이가 더 필요하면 담당 교수에게 말하기 바랍니다.

Writing Week 2

[Positive Writing Topic 2]

Best of Times

Write about one (or two) of the best times in your life. Write in as much detail as you can about what happened and why it was such a good time for you. Discuss exactly how it made you feel. If you have time, you can write about something you hope will happen in the future which will could also be a very happy time in your life.

영어로 쓸 때, 형식이나 문법을 고려하지 말고, 하고 싶은 말을 자유롭게 기술하기 바랍니다. 전자 사전이나 휴대폰 사전을 사용해도 되며, 종이가 더 필요하면 담당 교수에게 말하기 바랍니다.

[Neutral Writing Topic 2]

Your Family's House

Write about your family's house in detail. Describe all the rooms in as much detail as you can remember, including furniture, appliances, etc. You can also write about the activities you do in each room. If you have time, write about your neighborhood as well.

당신이 가족과 함께 살고 있는 또는 살았던 집을 15-20분 동안 자세하게 묘사해 주세요. 방의 구조, 가구들, 전자 제품 등을 기술할 수 있습니다.

Writing Week 3

[Positive Writing Topic]

Best Possible Self

For 15-20 minutes, write about your perfect future or your best possible self in 10 or 20 years if all of your hopes and goals work out as planned.

10년 또는 20년 후 당신이 희망하고 목표로 하는 가장 완벽한 인생 또는 가장 좋은 당신의 미래 모습에 대하여 15-20분 동안 자유롭게 기술하세요.

[Neutral Writing Topic]

Watching TV

Describe the pros and cons of watching TV.

TV 시청의 좋은 점과 나쁜 점에 대하여 객관적으로 기술하세요.

Writing Week 4

[Positive Writing Topic]

Thank-You Letter

Choose someone in your life who has really helped you in some way. Write a letter to this person saying 1) exactly how he/she helped you, and 2) exactly how this help made your life better and how you are thankful for this help. Do the writing as if you are actually writing the letter to this person.

지금까지 살면서 당신에게 가장 큰 도움을 주었던 사람을 생각하고, 그 분에게 감사의 편지를 쓰시기 바랍니다. 편지를 쓸 때, 그 사람이 당신에게 어떤 도움을 주었는지, 그 도움으로 당신의 인생이 어떻게 나아졌는지에 대하여 자세하게 기술하세요. 그 사람이 이 글을 직접 읽는다고 생각하고 감사의 편지를 쓰시기 바랍니다.

[Neutral Writing Topic]

Weekend Schedule

Describe what you did from last Friday to Sunday in detail.

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

지난 금요일부터 일요일까지 했던 일들을 모두 기술하세요.

금요일

토요일

일요일

Towards Strengthening Korean EFL Learners’ Visions of Their Ideal Future L2 Selves

Luke Gertenbach

Busan University of Foreign Studies, Busan, Korea

Since its conception, Dörnyei’s (2005, 2009) L2 motivational self system (L2MSS) has been validated by scores of questionnaire-type research studies – all essentially concluding that there appears to be a significant correlation between learners’ visions of their ideal future L2 selves and their motivated learning behavior. Though much has been done to validate the L2MSS, very little has been done to employ it towards the development of learner motivation. This study’s two-fold objective was thus (a) to investigate whether L2MSS development could find application within the constraints of real-world EFL classroom limitations, specifically within beginner EFL contexts, and (b) to address the apparent lack of quantitative experimental research in this regard. Results demonstrated that a short-term development program aimed at beginner EFL Korean learners did indeed strengthen their visions of themselves as successful future English speakers. However, somewhat contradictorily, control groups’ post-test results also indicated that by merely spending focused time using the L2 in a communicative EFL environment and by participating in various L2 mastery experiences, learners’ ideal L2 selves were developed instinctively, giving rise to a new hypothesis that EFL learners’ ideal L2 selves can be developed and strengthened effectively through communicative task-based learning. Results gave rise to various critical considerations regarding the pedagogical relevance of the L2MSS and multiple future research recommendations.

Keywords: L2 motivational self system, ideal self development, ESL classroom motivation

INTRODUCTION

Over the past couple of decades a significant shift in focus has taken place within the field of L2 motivation. It has largely moved away from external integrative theories towards the internal domain, focusing on what is going on inside of language learners. This shift has been propelled by Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) conception of the L2 motivational self system (L2MSS), which in essence proposes that learners with positive visions of themselves using English in the future will exert a greater learning effort and that it is possible to strengthen the said visions.

The L2MSS and the idea of possible self development in the EFL classroom means that language teachers may have the ability to cultivate real, intrinsic motivation and autonomous learning behavior amongst their learners. An exciting prospect indeed were it not for one persistent problem within the field of L2 motivation research: the actual practical application of motivational theories within the four walls of the EFL classroom.

On the one hand, the ideal L2 self remains a somewhat intangible concept for busy teachers facing everyday classroom management, curriculum, and time limitations. Previous studies surrounding possible self development have been markedly longitudinal in nature and unfeasible within many real curricula. Also, most intervention programs surrounding learners' possible self development have either (a) been done in areas outside the EFL classroom, using participants' L1, or (b) been largely applied within advanced language learning contexts, which are situations where teachers and learners were able to comfortably discuss and explore possible self development in the L2.

In light of these pragmatic challenges, the monotonous nature of previous L2MSS research should not come as any real surprise. Over the past decade, most research done in this area has merely set out to validate the L2MSS through numerous questionnaire-type investigations, repeatedly establishing a significant correlation between the learners' visions of their ideal L2 selves and their self-reported learning effort. Very few studies have attempted to actually develop learners' ideal future L2 selves, and those studies that have were largely absent of any control research. Thus, hardly any experimental research has been done to show that ideal future selves can be quantifiably developed through

in-class intervention. This is significant because if the learners' visions of their future L2 selves remain a static notion, the theory as a whole presents no pragmatic purpose for the everyday language teacher.

Thus, this research study evolved due to this teacher-researcher's perception of not only (a) the inapplicability of the L2MSS within the constraints of real-world EFL classrooms but also (b) an apparent lack of L2MSS quantitative experimental research. Accordingly, can learners' ideal selves indeed be strengthened within the scope of real-life EFL classroom limitations? Can future selves genuinely be improved through short-term intervention, considering the time constraints real teachers face? Can intervention strategies be recast and made applicable within beginner EFL learning contexts? Will these strategies be effective in classroom contexts where the teacher and students have to rely on only the L2? What would the experimental/control groups' pre- and post-test results present?

Essentially, this inquiry aimed to determine whether ideal self intervention strategies could be adapted to quantifiably strengthen beginner Korean EFL learners' visions of their ideal L2 selves over a short period of time and within the constraints of an actual EFL learning environment. The hypothesis was that the improvement percentage of the experimental groups' ideal future L2 selves would indeed be markedly higher than those of the control groups', as indicated by the measured post-intervention and at the end of the academic semester.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The worldwide use of English as a lingua franca and the notion of globalization has meant that long-established views regarding L2 integrative motivation have become largely incompatible with the current status quo. Traditionally, learners' attitudes towards the L2 community were considered to have a great influence on learning behavior, as it was believed that having a genuine interest in the L2 community lead to so-called integrative motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). However, this value placed on pure integrative motivation has become largely conflicting with the idea of the world as a so-called global village – one where a language itself does not belong to one community and where English has become a basic educational component of most educational

curricula.

Consequently, the focus has shifted towards the dynamic nature of motivation within an international community, where issues of geography and physical integration have become less important. Researchers have identified a generalized international outlook or a so-called international posture amongst English language learners worldwide (Kong et al., 2018; Yashima, 2002). They have also shown that though learners may indeed show positive dispositions towards the speakers and cultures of their L2 communities, no motivation to truly integrate in the original sense remains (Irie, 2003).

Current-day language learners are able to “conceptualize internal representations of themselves as de facto members of a global community” (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012, p. 400). Learners are now regarded as able to transcend time and space, as learning seems to implicate a process of negotiating new identities as members of a global community conceived in their minds (Peng, 2015; Ryan, 2006). This recognition of the strength of learners’ imagination, as well as their ability to envision their future possible selves using the L2, very much forms the foundation of Dörnyei’s (2005, 2009) L2MSS.

The L2 Motivational Self System

Dörnyei’s (2005) initial hypothesis for the L2MSS was based on research outside second language acquisition (SLA), surrounding learners’ possible selves (Higgins, 1987; Markus & Nurius, 1986). Essentially, Dörnyei redefined traditional integrativeness, proposing that learners are no longer striving to draw closer to some external community but rather attempting to draw closer to notions of their own ideal future L2 selves.

Dörnyei (2009, 2015) argued that the L2MSS consists of three parts, namely (a) the *ideal L2 self*, meaning the self learners wish to become in the future; (b) the *ought-to L2 self*, or the qualities learners believe they ought to possess to meet others’ expectations and/or to avoid negative outcomes; and (c) the *L2 learning experience*, relating to various aspects of the learning environment. Amongst these three parts, the ideal L2 self has received the most attention and validation through past L2MSS research, establishing that the psychological desire to reduce the inconsistency between the learners’ current and future selves will “motivate them in a powerful way as they make their ways through the

L2 learning process” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2012, p. 400).

Since its conception, Dörnyei’s theory has been investigated and verified in various studies all around the world, the largest of which was conducted by Taguchi, Magid, and Papi (2009) with 5000 participants in three different countries, namely Japan, China, and Iran. It was clearly demonstrated that the ideal L2 self has a greater capacity than integrativeness to explain variances in the learners’ learning efforts. An assortment of other studies also established that the ideal L2 self and the L2 learning experience were indeed significant predictors of L2 motivated learning behavior, including in Hungary (Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002), Japan, China, Iran (Ryan, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009), Indonesia (Lamb, 2012), and most recently, in South Korea (Kong et al., 2018).

Overall possible self intervention has been proven to be successful in developing learner motivation, both inside and outside of the EFL classroom. It has been shown that, when learning is effectively tied to future purposes, motivation to set goals and invest the necessary effort becomes enhanced (Hock, Deshler, & Shumacher, 2006); that possible self intervention increases success in moving towards academic objectives and leads learners to take initiative (Oyserman, Bybee, & Terry, 2006); and that intervention contributes to the sustainability of positive emotion (King, 2001). Moreover, exploring one’s possible self is likely to greatly enhance self-regulation as “it allows an opportunity to learn about oneself, to illuminate and restructure one’s priorities, and to gain better insight into one’s motives and emotions” (Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006, p. 75). Research has also demonstrated a significant relationship between language learners’ willingness to communicate and their ideal L2 selves. In other words, by enhancing the students’ views of their ideal L2 selves, linguistic self-confidence will improve (Bursali & Oz, 2017; Peng, 2015).

Most importantly, the L2MSS promotes the development of learner autonomy – arguably one of the most important characteristics many teachers hope to develop within their learners. Research has demonstrated that strong and positive images of ideal future selves “creates a belief in one’s control over outcomes or being the cause of an effect, which can definitely be seen as a point of origin for the development of autonomy” (Benson, 2007, as cited in Ueki, 2013, p. 239). In the age of communicative language teaching (CLT), the L2MSS also clearly fits within learner-centered pedagogical approaches,

encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning as teachers aim to change expectations that “language can only be learned through the careful control of a specialist teacher” (Hedge, 2000, p. 84).

Pedagogical Limitations of the L2MSS and Past Research Shortcomings

As introduced earlier, within the field of SLA motivation research as a whole, there seems to be one persistent problem: the real-life application of motivational theories within the classroom. It does appear that much has been done to identify and validate various motivational theories, like the L2MSS, but very little has been done to develop actual techniques that can be applied to increase learner motivation. Although a better understanding of student motivation can clearly have numerous pedagogical advantages, researchers have questioned whether motivation research has reached “a level of sophistication that would allow scholars to translate research results into straightforward educational recommendations” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 120).

As discussed, Dörnyei’s L2MSS has been validated by scores of SLA questionnaire-type research studies within a variety of learning environments – all essentially concluding that there appears to be a significant correlation between the learners’ ideal L2 selves and motivated learning behavior. Indeed, all of these studies have contributed to the validation and theoretical development of the L2MSS, but not much has been done in regards to the actual implementation of developing real learner motivation and practical pedagogical recommendations. The real problem thus remains one of applicability – much has been done to verify the theory, but very little has been done to employ the concept in developing real learner motivation.

In regards to the actual application of the ideal L2 self concept, Dörnyei (2009) maintains six components of effective L2MSS intervention, namely (a) creation of the ideal L2 self, (b) strengthening the ideal L2 self, (c) substantiating the ideal L2 self, (d) keeping the vision alive, (e) plan development / goal setting, and (f) counterbalancing the vision / considering the fear of failure. These categories were obtained from research studies conducted in settings other than SLA through self enhancement programs that delivered various positive outcomes (Hock et al., 2006; Oyserman, Terry, & Bybee, 2002;

Oyserman et al., 2006; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006).

As discussed, the initial hypothesis behind the L2MSS was based on research done within the field of cognitive psychology (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Higgins 1987), and the components of successful intervention programs were originally obtained from various studies in contexts other than SLA (Hock et al., 2006; Oyserman et al., 2002, 2006; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006). In particular, to the researcher's knowledge, amongst the vast amount of L2MSS research, only two studies (Magid & Chan, 2012; Sampson, 2012) have actually attempted to develop and strengthen the learners' visions of their ideal future L2 selves. However, both of these studies were absent of any form of control research.

Furthermore, being that the components of successful possible self intervention programs were taken from research contexts outside of SLA and from programs where researchers and participants were able to jointly construct ideal possible selves in the L1, the practical applicability of the L2MSS within the EFL research context becomes somewhat questionable. Within the field of SLA research, the two studies introduced above were also done within more advanced ESL learning contexts where learners and researchers were able to discuss and write about their possible selves in the L2. These observations beg the question whether the L2MSS can find applications within true beginner EFL learning contexts, where oftentimes English-speaking teachers cannot lead an in-depth discussion in the learners' L1.

Consequently, there appears to be two pertinent issues that this research study intends to address: (a) whether the L2MSS can find practical applications within true beginner EFL contexts and (b) whether future positive future L2 self development can be verified quantitatively by examining what the results of experimental and control groups' pre- and post-tests would present.

METHOD

Participants and Research Context

A total of 91 South Korean university students participated in this study. They were all attending a mandatory Beginner Conversation

(Practical English) course whilst pursuing a variety of undergraduate degrees. Most of the participants were between 18 and 19 years old and were considered to be of true beginner EFL proficiency – being that they were able to conduct basic short conversations in English (e.g., greetings, basic question-answer patterns), but they were still largely building their English foundations (for example, students were still acquiring beginner vocabulary and tended to struggle with grammar such as the simple past tense).

Procedures and Materials

A Likert-scale type questionnaire was designed and employed to measure and correlate (a) students' views of themselves as successful future L2 speakers and (b) learning effort. In order to quantitatively investigate the effectiveness of a short-term, practical L2MSS-model aimed at beginner learners, an in-class experimental study was conducted with the experimental groups being exposed to a variety of possible self intervention treatments. The above-mentioned questionnaire and an adaption thereof served as a pre- and post-test to determine the strength of the experimental and control learners' ideal L2 selves prior to and after the development program.

All questionnaire components were selected from Dörnyei et al.'s (2006) Hungarian studies combined with items taken from similar L2MSS validation studies (Ryan, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009). Ultimately, 30 items were selected and translated into Korean in order to aid beginner learners' understanding. Once more, these questionnaires were employed to serve dual research purposes: (a) to pre-test the strength of the control and experimental learners' ideal L2 selves and (b) to post-test the strength of the learners' ideal L2 selves' after strategic intervention and without any intervention.

Through random selection, participants from six separate classes were appointed to serve as the three control groups ($n = 46$ students) and three experimental groups ($n = 45$ students). The control and experimental groups both followed the same basic curriculum, used the same textbook, and all participated in the same CLT-based activities throughout a 16-week semester with the added variable being differing ideal L2 self development strategies being applied in the experimental groups' classes and specific *ideal self*-related homework being assigned over a period of six weeks (six sessions). In order to measure the

learners' ideal L2 selves before and after the experimental study, the improvement percentage was calculated to determine the ratio of (positive) change between the learners' ideal L2 selves' pre- and post-test averages.

The various strategies employed within the six development sessions were all taken and adapted from previous intervention programs within both the field of SLA (Magid & Chan, 2012; Sampson, 2012) and various other successful self enhancement programs (Hock et al., 2006; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006; Oyserman et al., 2002; 2006), all ultimately forming part of a development outline based on Dörnyei's (2009) six components of effective L2MSS intervention, as discussed in the review section of this paper. There was an apparent need to simplify, adjust, and recast past development strategies in order to benefit and meet the context-specific needs of beginner EFL students. Presentations were kept straightforward, as they used ample imagery and simple descriptions, various drawing-type exercises were employed, peer-to-peer discussions about ideal L2 selves were often conducted in Korean (learners' L1), and video content and activity instructions were all translated and simplified.

As explained, the control and experimental groups both followed the same in-class curriculum throughout the entire semester, with the only added variable being the six intervention sessions described above being employed in the experimental groups' classes. In this regard, it must be acknowledged that it would have been very complicated to offer comparable or contrasting control treatments to the control groups' classes. Therefore, the control groups thus served as a measure of what the effect of completing one semester of communicative English language study on the learners' ideal L2 self development would be.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to determine whether an ideal L2 self development program could be adapted and applied to quantifiably strengthen beginner EFL learners' visions of their ideal selves over a short period of time and within the constraints of an actual EFL learning environment. The hypothesis was that the intervention program would indeed prove to do so, thus expectantly improving the overall self-

efficacy and motivating learning behavior. As explained in the methodology section of this paper, control and experimental groups both followed the same basic curriculum and participated in the same CLT-based in-class activities throughout the semester, with the added variable being differing ideal L2 self development strategies that focused on learners in the experimental groups.

Improvement Percentage Increase/Decrease: Pre-test vs. Post-test

Findings have shown that both the experimental groups and control groups presented a relative improvement increase in the strength of their ideal future L2 selves. The control groups comparatively demonstrated a 2.84% increase after receiving no control treatment (see Table 1), and the experimental groups had a 5.21% increase after participating in the intervention program (see Table 2). Overall, the post-test results showed an average increase of 4.03% amongst all the participants.

TABLE 1. Control Groups 1–3: Ideal L2 Selves Averages and Measured Increase

Future Self Pre-test Average	67.11
Future Self Post-test Average	69.95
Percentage Point Increase/Decrease	+2.84

TABLE 2. Experimental Groups 1–3: Ideal L2 Selves Averages and Measured Increase

Future Self Pre-test Average	67.84
Future Self Post-test Average	73.05
Percentage Point Increase/Decrease	+5.21

Individual Participant Increase/Decrease: Pre-test vs. Post-test

By focusing on the individual participants' increase/decrease, it appears as though the development study had a more significant impact on the experimental learners' L2 selves. In the experimental groups, a total of 33 learners' ideal L2 selves proved to be strengthened, 10 showed a decrease, and 2 remained unchanged (see Table 3). Overall, 73.33% of the experimental learners showed a stronger L2 self post-

development. On the other hand, in the control groups, 25 participants' ideal L2 selves were strengthened, 15 decreased, and 6 presented no change (see Table 4). Again, after receiving no control treatment or specific specific intervention, 54.34% of the control participants presented strengthened ideal future L2 visions at the end of the semester.

TABLE 3. Experimental Groups: Average Individual Participant Increase/Decrease

	Total Participants	Percentage
Total Participants Increase	33	73.33
Total Participants Decrease	10	22.22
Total Participants Unchanged	2	4.45
Total Participants	45	100.00

TABLE 4. Control Groups: Average Individual Participant Increase/Decrease

	Total Participants	Percentage
Total Participants Increase	25	54.34
Total Participants Decrease	15	32.60
Total Participants Unchanged	6	13.06
Total Participants	46	100.00

Results: Pre- and Post-test Concluding Questions

The pre- and post-tests' concluding questionnaire items also produced some mentionable results. To the first question, "Do you think that you will need to use English in the future?" 100% of the participants in both the control and experimental groups agreed. More notably, when asked to elaborate, beginner Korean learners showed a remarkable sense of international posture, with various learners particularly mentioning that we are living in the "global era" and that English is the "world's language." Students explained that "As a global citizen I will need English to communicate with people from all around the world" (st. 2705) and "I think English is the language of the world..." (st. 6578). Students also expressed a clear need for English in their future careers within Korea, with students mentioning that "Korea

is becoming a global country, and more and more English-speaking foreigners are coming here to live and work. I will need to use English in the future to communicate with them” (st. 0832), “You can’t have a good job if you can’t speak English” (st. 1342), and “I think all professions will evolve to become more and more English” (st. 7727). This seems very much in line with the main points made in the review section of this paper: a general international outlook that exists amongst modern language learners.

To the question “Do you believe that you can become a fluent English speaker?” 91% of the experimental learners said yes versus 78.26% of the control learners answering in the affirmative. One could argue that the development program perhaps also subjectively had a more positive influence on the experimental learners’ confidence in their future L2 success.

Furthermore, participants in the experimental group reported having an overwhelmingly positive experience during the six development sessions, with 97.77% enjoying the intervention program and finding the activities helpful. Students elaborated that “It is philosophical. It is improving my English and also influenced my view of my life” (st. 2705), “I found a new purpose and meaning for my English future” (st. 4831), “I enjoyed talking to my classmates about our English futures. We all feel the same. It was encouraging” (st. 0477), and “Actually, I don’t have confidence, but after listening to this class, I feel better. I have more confidence now” (st. 4198).

Results: Expected and Unexpected Outcomes

Generally, the main objective of this investigation was met, being that EFL learners’ visions of their ideal future L2 selves were quantifiably strengthened through a short-term experimental intervention program specifically adapted to meet beginner students’ needs. The hypothesis that the L2MSS development model could indeed develop positive ideal L2 selves within everyday classroom constraints was found to be accurate.

As discussed at length, one constant problem within the field of motivation research is the practical inapplicability of L2 motivation theories in general. Various previous research shortcomings were also identified, namely the total lack of control research within possible self development, that components of successful possible self intervention

programs were taken from research contexts outside SLA, and that most past programs were presented in the L1 or aimed at more proficient/advanced learners.

It is thus believed that the results of this study's development program are arguably pioneering in nature, considering that (a) as to the teacher-researcher's knowledge, this was the first attempt to quantitatively affirm the positive effects of ideal L2 self development strategies through experimental research, and also that (b) possible self development programs proved themselves to be adaptable and applicable enough to successfully strengthen beginner EFL learners' ideal L2 selves through in-class L2 short-term intervention.

On the other hand, despite the positive results the development program presented, this investigation also presented various unexpected outcomes – results that could perhaps call for a reconsideration of the pedagogical value of the L2MSS. The most surprising finding this study revealed was the comparative improvement percentage identified amongst the control groups' participants' views of their ideal L2 selves despite not being exposed to any development strategies or in-class intervention throughout the semester. As observed, the experimental group participants' ideal L2 selves were strengthened by an overall improvement percentage of 5.21%, as 73.33% (33/45) of the learners presented strengthened L2 selves versus the control groups demonstrating a proportionate improvement percentage of 2.84%, with 54.34% (25/45) of the participants' post-tests showing strengthened ideal L2 selves.

This finding was unanticipated indeed, since the control groups' post-test results were expected to largely present unchanged views of ideal L2 selves, as zero in-class or self-study time was assigned to specific development, and yet, more than half of the learners in the control groups presented strengthened L2 self visions at the end of the semester. How did it come to be that more than 50% of the learners' future L2 selves were strengthened without any specific, focused in-class development? And what are the implications of these findings? The following section will offer possible explanations and implications of these and other unexpected results.

Possible Explanations for Unforeseen Results

The most unforeseen finding that this study exposed was the comparative improvement percentage identified amongst the control

group participants' views of their ideal L2 selves, in spite of not being exposed to any development strategies or in-class intervention treatment at all. The control groups' post-test results were expected to largely present unchanged views of ideal L2 selves, but ultimately more than half of the participants presented stronger ideal future L2 visions.

Various explanations could be presented for this significant improvement; the two most probable causes being that control participants' ideal L2 selves were strengthened by (a) learners' having (successfully) completed one semester of focused English language study or (b) learners' being exposed to various in-class communicative and task-based learning activities throughout the academic term. It is conceivable that either of these reasons, or a combination thereof, could have contributed to the unexpected and comparative improvement noted amongst the control participants. Having spent regular focused time in the L2 environment and having participated in regular in-class communicative language-focused activities arguably strengthened the learners' ideal L2 selves automatically, in spite of zero explicit focused development. These explanations are very much in line with previous literature on self-efficacy, which has shown that task-specific competence beliefs can be strengthened by mastery experiences (Mills, 2014), accordingly implying that "through activating future self conceptions that involve mastery of the L2, such mastery experiences can also serve to increase the accessibility of learners' ideal L2 selves" (Hessel, 2015, p. 112).

The unexpected improvement percentage in the control groups' visions of their ideal L2 selves could also perhaps be explained by the general dynamic complexity of the L2MSS, and for that matter, motivation as a whole. The current era of motivation research has just begun to consider the L2 motivation process and its organic development in dynamic interaction with a multiplicity of internal, social, and contextual factors. The results demonstrated that, in spite of no explicit intervention, ideal L2 selves were strengthened, indicating that the concept of the ideal L2 self may be much more complex than the current research pool and investigated variables suggest. This also very much relates to the difficulty in language classrooms to reduce the variables of influence, making it problematic to exactly identify which factors influence learners' motivation, and in this case, the control learners' visions of their future L2 selves. At any rate, the findings suggest that possible self development is a much more layered concept influenced by

more than clearly defined development strategies.

On the other hand, the learners' ideal future L2 selves may also perhaps be a more static notion, already formed through exposure to previous EFL learning environments or through various experiences outside of the EFL classroom. It is plausible to assume that all learners might have pre-conceived visions of themselves using or not using English (successfully) in the future, perhaps largely influenced by previous learning experiences or even personal ideals for their future careers. Pre-tests support this supposition, showing that learners demonstrated a remarkably strong international outlook well before any intervention. As discussed, 100% of the participants in both the control and experimental groups agreed that they will need to use English in the future, and when asked to elaborate, the students' responses overwhelmingly corresponded with the belief that a general international outlook has largely replaced ideas of integrative motivation.

These findings are in line with those of previous motivation studies as described (Irie, 2003; Kong et al., 2018; Yashima, 2002) and demonstrate that participants truly do "conceptualize internal representations of themselves as de facto members of a global community" (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2012, p. 400). At any rate, pre-test results show that the learners' presented remarkable international awareness and awareness of themselves needing English in the future well before any intervention took place, questioning the need to "create ideal future L2 selves" in class, as these may already be formed and matured before the students walk into class on the first day.

Significance and Implications of Research Results

This experimental study did succeed in applying possible self intervention strategies in developing beginner EFL learners' ideal L2 selves – quantitatively affirming the positive effects of ideal L2 self intervention by employing both the pre- and post-tests and comparing both the experimental and control groups' results. Possible self development strategies proved themselves to be adaptable and applicable to strengthen beginner EFL learners' ideal L2 selves through in-class, short-term intervention using the L2. The significance of this finding being three-fold, as it implies that ideal L2 self development is indeed plausible (a) within everyday classroom and curriculum constraints, (b) over a realistically short period of time, and (c) within beginner L2

learning environments. In other words, this means that many real-life EFL teachers can, in fact, find the time to develop (even beginner) learners' possible selves, and can do so by using these adapted strategies and by mainly using the L2 in class. What's more, qualitative results from post-test answers demonstrated that beginner learners actually found the various intervention sessions quite enjoyable, generally describing the experience as rewarding and motivating, and reporting that their L2 self-confidence increased. This, in turn, might also support previous studies finding Korean learners in general to have shown significant visual learning style preferences (Reid, 1987) and to have remarkable imagery capacity (Kim & Kim, 2011).

However, on the other hand, and most conflictingly so, the control groups' comparative ideal L2 self improvement, despite not being exposed to intervention, begs to question the need for ideal self development programs as a whole, as it implies that learners' possible selves can naturally be developed by spending routine focused time in an L2 environment and through participating in regular in-class communicative language activities. Indeed, it seems plausible to infer that spending consistent time using the L2 in a controlled EFL environment could thus effortlessly activate and strengthen the learners' ideas of themselves using English in the future.

As demonstrated throughout this paper, the application of the L2MSS, though affirmed to be plausible, still presents various pragmatic challenges for teachers who are already facing multiple everyday curriculum and time constraints. Accordingly, why make time to specifically apply strategies to develop a motivational concept that presumably does so spontaneously through regular language exposure? Why spend valuable classroom time discussing ideal possible selves if they already exist or will be developed through mere CLT classroom practices? These results do indeed hold some serious implications, as it makes the overall need for explicit in-class ideal L2 self development programs somewhat obsolete and begs to question its pedagogical importance.

Then again, even in the light of these contradicting results, the L2MSS still proves to be a consistently validated predictor of L2 learning effort and is strongly rooted within current-day notions surrounding the dynamic complexity of L2 motivation and learner autonomy. Even though the post-test improvement percentages in the experimental groups' were not significantly higher than those of the

control groups', they were indeed strengthened. It is plausible that the learners may have left the intervention program with an entire new set of motivational tools, as the long-term effects of self development programs still remain uninvestigated.

Ultimately considering the general complexity of L2 motivation, and acknowledging the dynamic and wide range of factors that do indeed contribute to motivated learning behavior, perhaps these contradicting research results were to be expected – the real implication being that the ideal L2 self remains an important and substantiated predictor of motivated learning behavior, albeit one that appears to be much more layered and complex than initially anticipated with many unanswered research questions regarding its pedagogical value.

FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEW HYPOTHESES

A Call for More Experimental Research

Findings suggest that by participating in various in-class communicative activities and task-based L2 mastery experiences, learners' ideal L2 selves can be activated and developed spontaneously without any specific intervention. These results present a call for more experimental research to be done, ideally comparing both the experimental and control groups' ideal L2 self development with and without specific intervention. The relative effects of specific ideal L2 self intervention versus the impact of regular CLT practices on learners' visions of themselves as successful future English speakers need to be investigated more thoroughly since the results clearly indicate that ideal L2 selves can be strengthened effectively through communicative task-based learning and without the employment of specific interventions.

Language Teachers Need to Take the Lead

As demonstrated throughout this project, the L2MSS and motivational theories in general tend to lack practical applicability and rarely have academic recommendations aimed at real-life EFL teachers

seen the light. Findings suggest that it is indeed possible for teachers to develop learners' ideal L2 selves within everyday classroom and curriculum constraints over a short period of time within beginner L2 limitations. These findings seem to present a call for the everyday language teacher to take motivational theories like the L2MSS into the four walls of the classroom to grapple with and to adapt them to meet the needs of their particular learning contexts, ultimately drawing critically considered pedagogical conclusions and recommendations regarding the said theories' practical applicability. If teachers can provide much-needed pragmatic feedback, motivational theories could become much more robust and ultimately advantageous for the actual learner on the ground.

Shifting Research Focus: Increasing International Posture

Korean learners' responses to pre-test questionnaires signified an overwhelming sense of international posture amongst beginner EFL learners well before any ideal future L2 self intervention took place, suggesting that learners do already possess fairly strong visions of their future selves using English. Since the L2MSS has its roots largely set in notions of globalization and a modern-day international outlook amongst the learners, it does seem as though the two concepts are intrinsically linked. This correlation has, however, received little focused research attention as of yet, and it could be interesting to observe how general international posture as a concept influences ideal L2 selves or L2 motivation in general. Focused intervention to develop learners' overall international posture could present interesting and worthwhile findings.

The Correlation Between the Ideal L2 Self and Learner Autonomy

Previous research has demonstrated the ideal L2 self to have a significant correlation with learning effort, a variable that is also connected to learner autonomy and self-efficacy. These are important variables that have not received a lot of research attention; establishing strong correlations between the ideal L2 self and learner autonomy would greatly contribute to the overall pedagogical importance of the L2MSS.

Longitudinal, Follow-up Research

Research findings did suggest that learners' ideal L2 selves can indeed be strengthened, both through specific intervention and through communicative language exposure. However, these results have not been measured over the long term. There appears to be a need for follow-up research to examine and compare the difference between the long-term effects of development programs versus those of mere in-class CLT language exposure. Would focused intervention programs perhaps appear to have greater long-term effects on learners' ideal L2 selves and future learning efforts? Would focused possible self development perhaps hold more significant sub-conscious long-term effects on learning effort? More longitudinal research needs to be done.

Possible Limitations of the Current Investigation

Curriculum and classroom constraints proved to be one of the biggest limitations facing this research project. Learners' assessment deadlines and pre-determined curriculum demands meant that only six development sessions could be scheduled during the course of a 16-week semester. For this reason, each in-class intervention session was accompanied by a self-study or homework assignment, which was then discussed in the follow-up session. A more longitudinal intervention program could of course have been more constructive to the learners' future L2 self development, but time constraints is a reality many teachers face, and as much as possible was accomplished within these limitations. It could be argued that this study thus represents what reasonably could be achieved in real-life EFL classrooms. Nevertheless, a more longitudinal intervention program could perhaps have presented greater contrasts between the experimental and control results.

A further possible limitation is the lack of treatment administered to the control groups' classes. As mentioned, it would have been very difficult to offer comparable and yet different control treatments, and it is hoped that subsequent research could conceive practical measures in this regard. As for the current investigation, the control groups' pre- and post-tests will serve as a demonstration of what the effect of one semester in a communicative language focused EFL classroom will have on the beginner learners' views of themselves as successful future L2

speakers. This too presented itself to be an interesting research question, as marked improvements in their L2 selves suggests a critical reconsideration of the need for in-class development programs.

CONCLUSIONS

This investigation determined that it was indeed possible to develop and strengthen learners' ideal L2 selves within the realm of real-life EFL classroom limitations, that future L2 selves could genuinely be improved through short-term intervention, and that intervention strategies are able to be recast and made applicable within beginner EFL contexts and made relevant in classroom contexts where both the teacher and students mostly relied on the L2.

On the other hand, findings also contradictorily indicated that by merely spending focused time using the L2 in a controlled EFL environment and/or by participating in various in-class communicative activities and L2 mastery experiences, the control group learners' ideal L2 selves were activated and developed spontaneously without being exposed to any focused intervention at all. This gave rise to a new hypothesis, indicating that EFL learners' ideal L2 selves can be developed and strengthened effectively through communicative task-based learning, making the need for intentional ideal L2 self development questionable.

Generally, these findings raised various questions regarding the pedagogical importance of L2MSS development, and important future research considerations were made. It is believed that the control groups' results present an apparent call for more experimental research to be done within the field of SLA – exploring the relative effects of specific intervention versus the impact of regular CLT methods on the learners' visions of themselves as successful future English speakers.

It was also demonstrated that EFL teachers themselves should take the lead in regards to future L2MSS research, attempting to find creative ways to turn motivational theory into reality, which could then find in-class applications and be of practical benefit to language learners.

Furthermore, the results presented a need for future researchers to shift the L2MSS paradigm from ideal L2 self development to generally increasing the learners' international posture. This project demonstrated

how these two concepts seem to be intrinsically linked and that the beginner Korean EFL learners possessed remarkable international posture pre-intervention. It is assumed that focused development of international posture may indeed have significant effects on the ideal L2 self but also on general learner motivation. A call was also made for more longitudinal/follow-up research to be conducted. If the ideal L2 self can be proven to indeed strengthen learner autonomy over the long-term, its pedagogical significance could potentially be greatly increased.

In summary, this investigation presented a somewhat contradicting conclusion, being that even though the ideal L2 self can be strengthened through explicit in-class intervention, it does seem to also develop instinctively through regular communicative language exposure. Ultimately, large areas of the L2MSS theory's strategic development, dynamic complexity, and actual application remains to be relatively unpredictable and ambiguous – just as one might expect from motivational theories in general. This study attempted to contribute to this growing research area, and it is hoped that future research opportunities would present themselves to address the various research recommendations made by this project.

THE AUTHOR

Luke Gertenbach is an assistant professor in the Foreign Language Education Center at Busan University of Foreign Studies. Over the past nine years he has been teaching EFL in a variety of learning contexts in South Korea, and he completed his MA TESOL degree through the University of Birmingham (UK) in 2018. Email: lukegertenbach@gmail.com

REFERENCES

- Benson, P. (2007). Autonomy in language teaching and learning. *Language Teaching*, 40(1), 21–40.
- Bursali, N., & Oz, H. (2017). The relationship between ideal L2 self and willingness to communicate inside the classroom. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 6(4) 229–239.
- Csizér, K., & Kormos, J. (2009). Learning experiences, selves, and motivated learning behaviour: A comparative analysis of structural models for Hungarian secondary and university learners of English. In Z. Dörnyei &

- E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity, and the L2 self* (pp. 98–119). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2009). The L2 motivational self system. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity, and the L2 self* (pp. 9–42). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Dörnyei, Z., Csizer, K., & Nemeth, N. (2006). *Motivation, language attitudes, and globalisation: A Hungarian perspective*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2011) *Teaching and researching motivation*. Harlow, UK: Longman.
- Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1972). *Attitudes and motivation in second-language learning*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Hedge, T. (2000). *Teaching and learning in the language classroom*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Hessel, G. (2015). From vision to action: Inquiring into the conditions for the motivational capacity of ideal second language selves. *System*, 52, 103–114.
- Higgins, E. T. (1987). Self-discrepancy: A theory relating self and affect. *Psychological Review*, 94, 319–40.
- Hock, M. F., Deshler, D. D., & Schumaker, J. B. (2006). Enhancing student motivation through the pursuit of possible selves. In C. Dunkel & J. Kerpelman (Eds.), *Possible selves: Theory, research and applications* (pp. 205–221). New York, NY: Nova Science.
- Irie, K. (2003). What do we know about the language learning motivation of university students in Japan? Some patterns in survey studies. *JALT Journal*, 25, 86–100.
- King, L. A. (2001). The health benefits of writing about life goals. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27, 798–807.
- Kim, Y. K., & Kim, T. Y. (2011). The effect of Korean secondary school students' perceptual learning styles and ideal L2 self on motivated L2 behavior and English proficiency. *Korean Journal of English Language and Linguistics*, 11, 21–42.
- Kong, J. H., Han, J. E., Kim, S., Park, H., Kim, Y. S., & Park, H. (2018). L2 motivational self system, international posture, and competitiveness of Korean CTL and LCTL college learners: A structural equation modeling approach. *System*, 72, 178–189.
- Lamb, M. (2012). A self system perspective on young adolescents' motivation to learn English in urban and rural settings. *Language Learning*, 62(4), 997–1023.
- Markus, H. R., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible selves. *American Psychologist*, 41, 954–969.

- Magid, M., & Chan, L. (2012). Motivating English learners by helping them visualise their ideal L2 self: Lessons from two motivational programmes. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 6(2), 113–125.
- Oyserman, D., Bybee, D., & Terry, K. (2006). Possible selves and academic outcomes: How and when possible selves impel action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 91(1), 188–204.
- Oyserman, D., Terry, K., & Bybee, D. (2002). A possible selves intervention to enhance school involvement. *Journal of Adolescence*, 24, 313–326.
- Peng, J. E. (2015). L2 motivational self system, attitudes, and affect as predictors of L2 WTC: An imagined community perspective. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 24(2), 433–443.
- Ryan, S. (2006). Language learning motivation within the context of globalisation: An L2 self within an imagined global community. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 3(1), 23–45.
- Ryan, S. (2009). Self and identity in L2 motivation in Japan: The ideal L2 self and Japanese learners of English. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 120–143). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Reid, J. M. (1987). The learning style preferences of ESL students. *TESOL Quarterly*, 21(1), 87–111.
- Sampson, R. (2012). The language-learning self, self-enhancement activities, and self-perceptual change. *Language Teaching Research*, 16(3), 317–335.
- Sheldon, K. M., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2006). How to increase and sustain positive emotion: The effects of expressing gratitude and visualizing best possible selves. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 1(2), 73–82.
- Taguchi, T., Magid, M., & Papi, M. (2009). The L2 motivational self system among Japanese, Chinese, and Iranian learners of English: A comparative study. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity, and the L2 self* (pp. 66–97). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Ueki, M., & Takeuchi, O. (2013). Forming a clearer image of the ideal L2 self: The L2 motivational self system and learner autonomy in a Japanese EFL context. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 7(3), 238–252.
- Ushioda, E., & Dörnyei, Z. (2012). Motivation. In S. Gass & A. Mackey (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 396–409). London, UK: Routledge.
- Yashima, T. (2002). Willingness to communicate in a second language: The Japanese EFL context. *The Modern Language Journal*, 86(1), 54–66.

A Sociocultural Inquiry into Assessment-Literacy Development of Veteran L2 Classroom Teachers via Standards Reverse Engineering

F. Scott Walters

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, USA

As a follow-up to Walters (2010), which failed to answer certain questions regarding the assessment literacy (AL) characteristics of veteran ESL instructors, this qualitative, sociocultural-theoretic study investigated the efficacy of standards reverse engineering (SRE) as a mediation tool to cultivate AL. The research purposes were (a) to determine whether reverse-engineered item specifications and learning standards and/or performance indicators (PIs) can be determined at an appropriate level of quality, (b) to examine the extent to which SRE could help the teachers determine whether the selected test items aligned with state ESL standards/PIs, and (c) to discover what SRE could reveal about the epistemologies of veteran L2 instructors. The results suggest that SRE was useful in facilitating the teachers' critical thinking vis-à-vis L2 item-standard alignments and in uncovering relevant teacher internalizations of AL concepts, skills, and principles. Implications for the Korean EFL context and suggestions for further research are offered.

Keywords: assessment literacy, sociocultural theory, educational standards, teacher education

INTRODUCTION

Although there is as yet no firm agreement on a definition of assessment literacy (AL), one can find a number of useful descriptions in the mainstream educational and language testing (LT) literature. For example, Stiggins' (1991, 2014) original coinage conveys the idea that educators "must understand the basic principles of sound assessment practice" (2014, p. 67). In a review of LT teacher training courses, Brindley (2001) determined that a course in assessment should include topics such as the broader social context of assessment, the definition of

language proficiency, how to construct and evaluate language tests, and the relationship between assessment and curricula. In similar reviews, Bailey and Brown (1996) and Brown and Bailey (2008) found that common assessment topics may include the purposes for testing, norm-referenced and criterion-referenced measurements, washback, and also technical skills such as item writing, test revision, test analysis, and test scoring. The content of textbooks used in such LT courses can be roughly classified into those that focus on the theoretical side of L2 testing (Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 2010) and those that emphasize practical test-construction skills (Alderson, Clapham, & Wall, 1995; Bailey & Curtis, 2015; Davidson & Lynch, 2002; Fulcher & Davidson, 2007; Gottlieb & Nguyen, 2007; Hughes, 1989). Following Fulcher (2012), the above classifications can be summarized using Davies' (2008b) tripartite scheme: "skills plus knowledge plus principles" (p. 328) – that is, practical skills at test development, knowledge of linguistic description and measurement techniques, and social/historical principles undergirding assessment. Fulcher himself (2012) offers a complex, rich "working definition" of AL, which echoes and expands upon Davies' scheme and is excerpted here: "The ability to place [LT] knowledge, skills, processes, principles, and concepts within wider ... frameworks and ... to [be able to] evaluate the role and impact of [LT] on society, institutions, and individuals" (p. 126).

One may note that the aspects of AL in Fulcher's definition that relate to social relations are central to *sociocultural theory* (or SCT; Lantolf, 1994; Vygotsky, 1986). A sociocultural approach to L2 teacher education – and by extension, to assessment-literacy training (e.g., Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2016) – posits a constructivist theory of mind in which there is an interconnectedness between the cognitive and the social, where learning is a dynamic process by which the teacher-learner (re)constructs understandings in response to his or her own locally situated needs. Such understandings are accomplished via the use of *mediational tools* (or *psychological tools*; Johnson & Golombek, 2016) including cultural artifacts, activities, concepts, as well as social relations and interactions. Examples of such tools include language and literacy, lesson plans (both conceptual and hardcopy), reflection journals, and videotapes (Golombek, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2016), as well as information-gap activities, teachers' verbally paraphrasing L2 learners' oral contributions, and making L2 classroom norms and expectations explicit (Johnson & Dellagnelo, 2013).

The use of mediational tools to facilitate understanding traverses a gap termed by Vygotsky as the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD) and defined as “the distance between [a teacher’s] independently solved tasks and the level of the potential development of the [teacher], determined with the help of tasks ... under the guidance” of more skilled partners (Vygotsky, 1935, as cited in van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991).

Turning to LT, a sociocultural lens may also distinguish non-mediational from mediational approaches to testing. For example, Inbar-Lourie (2008, p. 387), following Shepard (2000), notes that in L2 education, “testing cultures” that foreground the use of externally mandated standardized tests evince an epistemological incompatibility with classroom-based “learning cultures” (or “assessment cultures”), which “foreground formative assessment practices” (Fulcher, 2012, p. 116) and which foster a socially mediated process that values “assessment for learning” (e.g., Leung, 2004). The ability of an L2 teacher or tester to distinguish between these two types of cultures resonates with the notion of *critical language testing* (Shohamy, 2001), in which a L2 teacher-and-tester in training “views tests as tools ... deeply embedded in cultural, educational, and political arenas,” and therefore “perceives testing as being caught up in an array of questions concerning education and social systems ... because it is impossible to separate language testing from the many contexts in which it operates” (p. 132). Similarly, in a sociocultural framework, the development of AL can be hypothesized as follows: L2 teachers, rather than operating as more or less passive consumers of tests (standardized or otherwise), consciously examine existing mediational resources, (re)create alternate ones to help themselves internalize understandings, and thereby raise their own critical awareness of LT issues. For example, one might contrast an “old school” view of educational standards-based reform (e.g., Glidden, 2008; Goertz & Duffy 2001; Hambleton, 2001; Menken, 2008), which asks, “To what extent do state learning standards affect teachers’ classroom testing practices?” with a “new school” approach via sociocultural theory: “How do L2 teachers *understand* (or *internalize*; Vygotsky, 1986) L2 learning standards in relation to their classroom teaching and testing?”

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS STUDY

The present study is a further investigation from a sociocultural perspective of the relationships among L2 teachers' understandings of instructional practice, L2 assessment, and state standards, which were initially examined in an earlier study, Walters (2010). A brief summary of that first study (hereinafter, Study I) follows. The investigator, an educator of pre-service English as a second language (ESL) teachers engaged in bilingual, dual-language, and ESL internships in urban public schools, had noted that state ESL learning standards were prominently displayed in most classrooms. However, it remained unclear to what extent these standards had relevance in the minds of ESL teachers. Thus, Study I focused on the efficacy of a certain workshop technique (explained below) in uncovering and hopefully facilitating L2 teachers' critical awareness of state learning standards in relation to state-mandated, standardized language tests. While some study results were positive, there were some problematic outcomes that necessitated further inquiry, as will be explained further below.

Study I integrated four mediational tools of AL: (a) A *testing mandate*, according to Davidson and Lynch (2002), is a "combination of [social] forces which help to decide what will be tested and to shape the actual content of the test" (p. 77). Mandates can be motivated by testing companies, school teachers, school administrators, or legislators (Chalhoub-Deville & Deville, 2008). In another sense, *mandate* can be understood as a cultural artifact that articulates such social forces (e.g., state learning standards). (b) Understanding mandates can also be accomplished through *alignment* (Buckendahl, Plake, Impara, & Irwin, 2001; Rothman, Slattery, Vranek, & Resnick, 2002; Webb, 1997; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), which is defined as the process of determining the extent to which the content of a set of test items is congruent with a given learning standard. (c) A *test specification* (or *spec*) is a document that can be used by teachers as a guide to generate non-identical but parallel test tasks efficiently and to realize testing goals consistently over time (Alderson, Clapham, & Wall, 1995; Bachman & Palmer, 2010; Hughes, 1989; Norris, Brown, & Yoshioka, 1998; Popham, 1978). Using such guides is in contrast to the common practice of creating unreliable, ad hoc tests based solely on memory and intuition. The iterative, consensus-driven process of crafting specs can also help

teachers articulate and reflect on teaching and assessment goals, thus serving as vital mediational tools. (d) Finally, Study I focused on a fourth mediational tool, *reverse engineering* or “RE” (e.g., Davidson & Lynch, 2002; Elatia, 2003; Gopalan & Davidson, 2000), which involves the creation of a spec from an existing item. RE is performed in two general steps: (i) analyzing a representative set of items and (ii) inducing a specification from that set. It has been argued that inducing a spec where no spec existed will help teachers critically appraise existing test tasks before possible revision (Davidson & Lynch, 2002).

Briefly, three small workshop groups of ESL teachers (see Method section for details) were solicited for Study I: One group of pre-service ESL teachers, one group of new in-service ESL teachers who had been teaching for less than a year, and a group of experienced in-service teachers who had been teaching for an average of 12 years. The groups were each given a brief tutorial in specification RE, which they each performed on a standardized, reading-test item that had been released into the public domain. After performing RE on the item, each group was guided by the investigator to apply a new variation of RE, that is, standards reverse engineering (or “SRE”) – namely, reverse-engineering from the just-engineered spec, a new, hypothetical ESL learning standard, which was then compared to actual published ESL standards. The results from Study I suggested that this process of SRE could be a useful technique for raising teachers’ consciousness about the relationship between state learning standards and state-mandated, standardized language tests. As mentioned above, the study provided some evidence of the usefulness of SRE in cultivating AL.

However, questions remained. While the two less-experienced groups demonstrated facility with SRE, some of the results pertaining to the experienced-teacher group suggested that SRE might not be universally applicable: Reverse-engineered specs were of poor quality, and the experienced-teacher group failed to respond to post-workshop reflection questions designed to elicit self-reports about their mediational processes (see Results section of this paper for details). Also, the results indicated that the teachers’ negative attitudes toward state-mandated, standardized testing distracted them from properly evaluating item-standard relationships. It was further hypothesized that the group size ($n = 6$) may have been too large, thereby inhibiting group functioning. As it was not clear whether these results were due to sample bias, it was necessary to recruit another group of veteran L2 teachers in an attempt to more clearly

determine their epistemologies and the general usefulness of SRE with that professional demographic. It was also of interest to see how SRE might be applied, not to standardized test items, but to *classroom-based* test tasks created or used by a school's own teaching staff. Finally, it was considered desirable to examine the possible utility of SRE with greater sociocultural-theoretic rigor than was accomplished in Study I.

Research Questions

Given the uncertainties surrounding Study I, three research questions were formulated for this second study into SRE: The first concerned whether experienced in-service L2 teachers could produce reverse-engineered specifications and standards/performance indicators with the same level of sophistication (or simplicity) as those in Study I. The second question expanded on the aims of the earlier study, namely, to uncover the extent to which SRE could help teachers determine whether or not items from classroom-based tests (not commercial, standardized ones) were aligned with state ESL standards and/or performance indicators by adding to one set of items targeting reading ability (which had been grist for Study I's RE) a second classroom-based test task focused on written grammar. The third research question asked what SRE could reveal about the epistemologies of veteran L2 instructors as they engaged with one another while working with state standards and classroom-based test items, and as they reflected on their activity after the workshop.

Participants

In this second study, two workshop groups were established. They consisted of in-service L2 instructors (6 ESL and 2 Spanish) from a high school in New York City; this school was the same institution as in Study I, though six of the eight teacher-participants were new. Participant selection was not controlled by the investigator; teachers were volunteers who had responded to invitations conveyed on the investigator's behalf by the school's ESL program coordinator. A demographic questionnaire given to the teachers at the beginning of the session revealed a range of L2 teaching experience; the demographic data for these groups are summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Demographic Variables by Group

Group	Education	Teaching Experience	Gender/Age
Grammar (<i>n</i> = 4)	MA TESOL	9th–12th Grade: ESL (avg. 15.25 years)	2 male, 2 female (avg. age 53)
Reading (<i>n</i> = 4)	MAs in Spanish, Applied Linguistics, TESOL, Education	9th–12th Grade: 2 Spanish (avg. 10 years), 2 ESL (avg. 9 years)	2 male, 2 female (avg. age 46)

The participants were also asked about their experience with L2 assessment and their AL training, as well as their attitudes toward various forms of assessment. Five participants had had a college-level course in assessment within the previous five years, three had received some form of assessment instruction at in-service training sessions, and two reported no assessment instruction at all (though this is unlikely). Both groups reported a fairly broad range of types of assessments used in the classroom, from formal quizzes to the so-called “alternate” assessments such as portfolios. Table 2 summarizes the participants’ assessment-related educational and classroom experience.

TABLE 2. Participant Assessment-Related Experience

Group	Experience Details		
	Assessment Training	Last Training Occurred	Assessments Used
Grammar (<i>n</i> = 4)	2 college course	2 the previous year	Quizzes, unit tests, placement tests, <i>essays</i> , <i>writing</i> , <i>projects</i>
	3 in-service	1 three years before	
	1 none	1 N/A	
Reading (<i>n</i> = 4)	3 college course	1 the previous year	Quizzes, unit tests, <i>projects</i> , <i>informal</i> <i>assessment</i>
	1 none	2 no response	
		1 N/A	

Note. Italics indicate answers written by participants in blanks.

The claim reported in Walters (2010) by one teacher who volunteered in both studies that he had performed RE before Study I was revealed in the present study’s questionnaire to be erroneous; the teacher had earlier confused RE with the “backwards design” curriculum-development scheme of Wiggins and McTighe (2005).

The teacher’s attitude toward assessment was operationalized as answers to two multiple-choice items: “I usually find creating classroom tests...” and “I usually find state-mandated or standardized tests...” The participants were asked to select (circle) as many of the response-options as they felt were applicable to their situation. There was an additional

response option, a blank labeled *other*, into which participants could add additional comments or attitude-descriptors. Across all groups, the answers to the question regarding the creation of classroom tests were on the whole positive or neutral. Somewhat predictably, responses to the question regarding standardized tests were generally negative. Table 3 summarizes these findings.

TABLE 3. Participant Attitudes Toward Types of Assessment

Attitude Choices	Assessment-Type Frequency	
	Using State Tests	Using Classroom Tests
necessary	4	5
unnecessary	4	
a pleasure		3
beneficial		4
difficult	2	
unsatisfying	2	1
useful for teaching	1	3
<i>challenging</i>		1
<i>portfolios are much more useful</i>		1
<i>prefer holistic assessments</i>		1
<i>annoyance but necessary</i>	1	
<i>but it's nice to have alternatives</i>	1	
<i>colossal waste of time</i>	1	

Note. Choices in italics indicate answers written in a blank labeled *other*.

METHOD

SRE Groups and Workshop

As with the previous study, the basic format for data collection was a workshop model in which small groups of L2 teachers met for approximately two hours and analyzed L2 mediational tools – in this case, testing materials. Since the volunteer-participants were eight in number, they were divided into two groups, each $n = 4$; a group size of eight was assumed to be too large, given that the Study I group of

six had difficulties accomplishing some SRE tasks. The two groups also exhibited a rough balance of various demographic characteristics: Each had equal numbers of male and female participants (2/2) and an equal mix of teachers who had taught 12 years or more (three each) and those who had taught fewer than 10 years (one each). Each group also contained one member who had participated in Study I the previous year. An exception to this rough balancing was the fact that one group contained two Spanish-English bilingual teachers of Spanish, not ESL, whereas the other group was composed only of ESL teachers. Finally, the teachers in the two groups had teaching experience comparable to that of the experienced teachers in Study I, the earlier group having taught for an average of 12.5 years (range 2–18 years), the latter an average of 12.4 years (range 3–22 years). While the above demographic data are included for the sake of completeness, it should be noted that in this qualitative study they were not variables of interest per se.

As in Study I, the process consisted of four general phases. In Phase 1, each group received from the investigator a brief tutorial in test-item spec-writing in which basic concepts, rationale, and the specification format were presented. In Phase 2, the participants reviewed and analyzed test items and were then asked to reverse-engineer a spec describing the skill they deduced was being tested. The next two phases constituted the core of the workshop. In Phase 3 the participants were asked to examine their reverse-engineered (RE'd) spec with the classroom-based test items they had analyzed and then to reverse-engineer (RE) any ESL learning standard and/or performance indicator that they felt were implicit in those resources. Sometimes distinguishing between a “learning standard” and a “performance indicator” [or PI] is problematic, depending on the language used by a given state education agency. However, in general, a *learning standard* is a broadly worded statement that outlines the overall learning goals in a particular domain of knowledge or skill. Theoretically subsumed beneath a learning standard are more detailed *performance indicators*, each of which describes a specific task that can be used as evidence of progress toward achieving a learning goal or standard. Finally, in Phase 4, the participants compared their own reverse-engineered standards or PIs with those published by the New York State Education Department and noted similarities and differences between them. The reader should keep in mind that the workshop participants were not given access to handouts containing the ESL learning standards until Phase 3 was

completed. In addition, in the classroom where the workshop took place, no standards were posted.

In contrast with more complex specification models (such as those of Bachman and Palmer, 2010, and Norris et al., 1998), a simpler one proposed by Davidson and Lynch (2002) was used. It featured modular, co-articulating components that were found by the investigator to be clear and useful for student learning when conducting his own TESOL classes and teacher-training workshops in L2 assessment. The components of this spec model include the following: A *general description* (GD) section gives a short summary of the spec. A *prompt attributes* (PA) section describes the testing stimulus that the student encounters. Next, a *response attributes* (RA) section outlines what the test-taker is expected to do with the testing stimulus. A section of *sample items* (SI) provides hypothetical examples of the test tasks generated by the PA and RA sections. Finally, a *specification supplement* (SS) is a kind of appendix to the spec. It also contains additional information about how the teacher should craft the test task.

Classroom-Based Test Items Examined

Unlike the tasks examined by the teachers in Study I – namely, a single set of standardized items targeting facets of reading – for the present study, there were two such sets, each created by teachers in-house. One set targeted written grammar, while the other targeted reading. Adding another test task was intended to gather more information for the sociocultural focus of the study about how items with different linguistic targets might be used as mediational resources by participants. Moreover, by selecting classroom-based items as the grist for SRE, it was hoped that the distraction evinced by the Study I experienced-teacher group over commercially produced, standardized test items could be avoided (see above summary of prior study).

One set of test items had been created for a beginning-level ESL class and consisted of nine short video clips from an English TV comedy, *Mr. Bean*. Stills from this comedy were featured in the item prompts on the test sheet. The video reportedly had been tied to the school's elementary-level curriculum as a supplement to one of two ESL textbooks: *Side by Side* (Molinsky & Bliss, 2000) or *Exploring English* (Harris & Rowe, 1995). The test sheet included instructions directing students to watch each clip and then answer printed questions using

complete sentences. Students were also advised to use vocabulary that they had learned from their textbook. Printed below each video-still were three WH-questions in simple present and present progressive tense – for example, Question 1, below a shot of the character “Mr. Bean” unpacking a television crate: “Who is he? Where is he? What’s he doing?” (No video clips were examined by any workshop group.)

The other set of test items had also been created for a beginning-level ESL class and contained a short reading passage recounting an individual’s daily routine in short sentences, with frequent usage of simple present tense and time indices, followed by a set of multiple-choice questions about the passage content (see Appendix). These two item-sets were each assigned randomly to the two groups of veteran teachers. (N.B.: Accordingly, for convenience, the two groups hereinafter will be referred to as the “grammar-test group” and the “reading-test group.”)

Data Collection and Analysis

Various data-collection instruments were used. After first addressing demographic questionnaires (see Participants section), the teachers used an analysis worksheet for reverse-engineering specifications, standards, and PIs. Afterwards, they answered a short questionnaire with which they reflected on the SRE process. During the last two workshop phases, the investigator observed and took handwritten notes on the respective groups’ activities. The analyses of all these data were essentially qualitative. To answer the first research question (see above), comparisons were made on the L2 domain-definitions of the published state standards and performance indicators with the groups’ draft standards generated through SRE. Content analysis of reverse-engineered specs was performed as well. To answer the second research question, content analyses of the sample test items and both published and reverse-engineered specifications were made. In addition, relevant post-workshop questionnaire responses were analyzed. Finally, in an attempt to answer the third research question, analyses included the qualitative examination of spec content, published and RE’d learning standards, and relevant questionnaire responses.

RESULTS

This section will summarize the processes and artifacts of each veteran-teacher group as they reverse-engineered the specs and standards/PIs from their respective test items. Emphasized will be those SRE artifacts and processes that were problematic for the experienced in-service L2 instructors of Study I. Therefore, summary-comparisons of respective cross-study results will be offered where relevant.

Reverse-Engineered Specifications

In this phase of the Study II SRE process, the specs of both groups took 45–50 minutes to reverse-engineer. The grammar-test group's spec is given in Figure 1. To a large degree, the spec conforms to the Davidson and Lynch (2002) model, with modular sections such as a general description (GD), a prompt attributes section (PA), a response attributes (RA) section, and a specification supplement (SS; here erroneously labeled "SA"). However, the formal, descriptive language of the spec (what Davidson and Lynch call *speclish*) is somewhat fragmentary, often with abbreviations, as in the GD: "Responding to info Qs and Ability to use Vb ['verb'] to be in 3rd person"; or in the PA: "3 WH questions." However, more or less complete sentences can be found in the RA section: "Ss ['students'] will watch video." Such fragments seem normal for a group working on a specification draft. However, more significant than any fragmentary language is the extent to which the spec authentically captures the intended use, or uses, of a given test item and how it articulates tested skills in detailed, grammatical terms, such as "Ability to use BE verb and V + ing" and "Use of prepositions [of location]" (see Figure 1). Interestingly, the draft also included references to "Observing body language," indicating that the grammar-test group felt that identifying visual cues in the *Mr. Bean* video-captures was one skill component used to generate answers to test questions such as "What's he doing?"

Unlike the grammar-test group, which reverse-engineered a single draft specification, the four-person reading-test group produced four parallel, but not identical, specification drafts – essentially individual, hand-written notes of decisions made by the entire group (see Figure 2). The four drafts each mentioned two skills: one, variously labeled *text*

comprehension or *reading comprehension*, perhaps could be more precisely rendered, “finding details in a text,” given the nature of the items (see Appendix). The other deduced skill, “understanding expressions of time,” tested the understanding of equivalent phrases such as *7:15* and *a quarter after seven*. Interestingly, two reading-group members included grammar in their GD sections, for example, “[demonstrating] their text comprehension using present tense,” indicating that the L2 teachers noted the use of the simple present in the reading-text prompt to convey habitual or routine actions. A third teacher also made reference to verb tense in that teacher’s PA section. However, as there were no other tenses in the prompt or test items dealing specifically with tense or relative time, one perhaps cannot say that the items here were testing knowledge of that specific subskill of reading, and so, this spec-articulation could be understood as rooted in a “teacherly” preoccupation with grammar. One noticeable omission from the reading-test group’s specs was that of specification supplements (SS), either because the participants were told in the workshop’s mini-tutorial that the SS sections were optional or because the group found no use for an SS in their particular spec.

Reverse Engineering Wkshp
MR BEAN – John Smith’s (From Level 1 lesson)
Ss use of present tense
Ss use of present continuous
GD Responding to Info Qs
Observing body language
Ability to use Vb to be in 3rd person
Ability to use be verb & V + ing
Use of prepositions
PA Video clip of Mr. BEAN
3 WH questions
RA Ss will watch video. Ss will answer question
in complete sentence and use vocab. from Side by Side.
SA [SS] Appendix. Qs for true beginners based on
Chapter ___?___ in text “Side by Side” [or] “Exploring English.”

FIGURE 1. Grammar-Test Group Specification.

Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4
<p>GD. – Students will be able to demonstrate text comprehension using the present tense and different forms of expressing time.</p> <p>PA. – The students will see a test or short paragraph with daily routines using present tense followed by four multiple-choice questions.</p> <p>RA. – Students will read the paragraph and choose the best correct answer from the multiple choice question. [Strikethrough in original]</p>	<p>GD – Reading comprehension – Different forms of relating time.</p> <p>PA – The student will see the paragraph and questions #1-4. The student will see a short paragraph followed by multiple choice comprehension (and one short answer question) re: daily routines in the present.</p> <p>RA – Student will read paragraph. Student will read and answer MC questions.</p>	<p>GD. – This spec will help teachers create test questions that test students’ ability to comprehend a text in the present tense and different ways of expressing the time.</p> <p>PA. – The students will see a short paragraph about daily routines in the present tense followed by 4 multiple [choice] questions.</p> <p>RA. – The students will read the paragraph and will choose the correct answer.</p>	<p>G.D. – That test will check students’ comprehension of the text. Also, it will demonstrate whether a student understands a written form of time and corresponded [sic] number to the written language.</p> <p>P.A. – The student will see a short paragraph of daily routines using Present Tense, followed by multiple choice statements and questions.</p> <p>R.A. – The student will be able to read the text and questions, answer the questions.</p>

FIGURE 2. Reading-Test Group Specifications.

Comparing the specs of the present study with those of Study I reveals interesting differences. In the earlier study, the experienced group’s specs had been exceedingly fragmentary, even incomplete, for example, lacking an RA component (see Walters, 2010). However, in the present study, there was noticeably more sophistication in the experienced participants’ specs. For example, while the earlier specs had alternate GDs or undifferentiated “PA-RA hybrids” but no other subsection, in the present study, the grammar-group’s spec had two alternate titles, a GD, a PA (mention of a video clip and “3 WH questions”), an RA, and an SS. Moreover, the spec design of the reading-test group was also more detailed than that of the Study I group,

containing a more or less full spec-format with appropriate subheadings (GD, PA, RA, etc.). The speclish was realized in complete, even complex, sentences that described the targeted skills, the test-prompt attributes, and the expected student responses.

Reverse-Engineered Standards

This section will summarize the processes and compare the SRE artifacts with those published standards and PIs that the respective groups determined to correspond with their own versions. This part of the SRE process took approximately 30 minutes for each group. It is important to keep in mind that copies of the published standards and PIs were not given to the groups until after they had crafted their own versions.

Regarding the SRE process, the Study I experienced teachers (Walters, 2010) evinced trouble reflecting on the interrelationships among their reverse-engineered standard, the published standard, the sample item, and their RE'd specs. Since the items given to the Study I group consisted of multiple-choice items that did not focus on the reading passage's theme but rather on extraneous elements in the text, the items distracted the teachers from their RE task by provoking the teachers' traditional ire over standardized testing. Thus, the SRE process was partially thwarted: The teachers generated three different reverse-engineered standards and failed to achieve consensus on a single standard.

However, in the present study, the classroom-based items used were free of such extraneous elements, and the SRE process was productive for both groups. For example, in the grammar-test group, discussion initially focused on the nature of the short questions below the video stills, from which they re-affirmed that the point of the questions was to elicit evidence of the students' ability to correctly use simple present and present progressive tenses. Re-examining the item prompt in light of the reverse-engineered spec also brought out discussion as to the intended function of the video clips (as inferred from the video stills on the test sheets), which called their attention to the fact that the task required test-takers to match the actions in the video with appropriate English vocabulary items. While crafting their standard, some members first attempted to orally reconstruct New York State ESL Learning Standard 1 for Grades 9–12, namely, “Students will listen, speak, read,

and write in English for information and understanding” (Office of Bilingual Education, n.d.). However, no one in the group could fully recall or agree on the precise wording. At this point, one member rose to retrieve a copy of the NYS Standards from the nearby teachers’ office but was gently prevented from doing so by the investigator, who encouraged the group to proceed without the published standards and promised that they would later receive a copy for comparison purposes. The group resumed RE and, referring to their spec and to half-remembered versions of ESL Standard 1, eventually articulated a standard that combined features of that standard with specific characteristics of the analyzed test task (see second paragraph below).

The SRE process of the reading-test group was also more productive than that of the Study I group. They first examined the reading passage (see Appendix) and then discussed the passage content, paying particular attention to simple present tense and targeting synonymous expressions in the passage and multiple-choice items (e.g., *7:15* and *a quarter after seven*). Through discussing what the teacher/item-writer’s purpose may have been in selecting the reading passage, and by referencing the item and the group’s specs, the group generated a standard whose wording was an attempt at capturing the content and grammar on a more abstract level: “Students will be able to understand a written paragraph about daily routines and [in] everyday language.” Unlike the grammar-test group, the reading-test group spent no time attempting to reconstruct the published NYS ESL Standards.

Comparison of the reverse-engineered standards of the Study I experienced group and those of the present study’s groups reveals significant differences. As mentioned above, in Study I, the participants did not achieve consensus on their RE’d standards and/or PIs (Walters, 2010); in fact, three different standards were crafted. In contrast, both experienced-teacher groups in the present study achieved consensus on their respective standards. For example, the grammar-test group’s standard read “SWBAT” [‘students will be able to’] and “Obs [‘observe’] for Info and Understanding (in some ways it [the item] addresses all standards).” This is somewhat similar to the New York State ESL Learning Standard 1: “Students will listen, speak, read, and write in English for information and understanding” (Office of Bilingual Education, n.d.). On the other hand, the four reading-group members each created close variants of one standard: “Student(s) will be able to understand a short text about daily routines in everyday language,” the

variations being minor substitutions such as *written text* or *short paragraph* for *short text*. The reading-test group also identified their creation as being the closest in meaning to the New York State ESL Standard 1.

Reflections on the SRE Process

In the reflection phase, each group described the process it used to arrive at its respective standards deductions. As with Study I, of particular interest was the veteran teachers' ability to articulate technical details of the SRE process since such references might serve as indicators of teacher internalizations. Moreover, examining the reflection responses is crucial for the purposes of the present study since the Study I experienced group was not able to address all of the topics given in the reflection questionnaire.

To the first questionnaire item asking about the process used to arrive at a new standard, the grammar-test group wrote that their awareness was enhanced by analyzing the prompt, which "helped guide us to realize [what the students] needed to observe [and] understand actions (ongoing) and [to] respond [to] visual cues (based on questions)." To the same question, the reading-test group, again, provided four versions of a group decision, each of which showed differences in emphasis. For example, one participant reported, "As a group we analyzed the [reading] text and came to this conclusion [regarding the standards deduction]." Another participant gave a little more detail as to characteristics of the prompt: "[We arrived at the RE'd standard] by analyzing the content of the test and inferring the author's purpose in creating this text." A third participant, giving even more fine-grained detail as to the SRE process, wrote that the RE was accomplished by "analyzing the content (tenses, vocabulary) of the text and inferring the author's purpose in creating it." Overall, these responses indicated an ability to reflect on relationships among test item(s), spec, and reverse-engineered standards that was greater than that demonstrated by the experienced Study I group.

Regarding the second questionnaire item asking the participants to compare their reverse-engineered standards with published ones and to determine any discrepancies, the grammar-test group reported no issues but wrote, "We thought it [the RE'd standard] fit [only] one NYS standard, but on reflection came to realize it fit all ESL NYS standards"

(see Discussion section for more on this response). In contrast, the consensus of the reading-test group regarding the standards comparison was that their standard, “Students will be able to understand a written paragraph about daily routines and [in] everyday language,” was the most similar to a single standard, ESL Standard 1, as mentioned above (i.e., “Students will listen, speak, read, and write in English for information and understanding”). However, their RE’d standard describes a somewhat narrower range of language behavior than the state standard in that it delimits the language skill (writing as opposed to the canonical four skills), the topic of the language input (“daily routines”), and the register of the vocabulary used in the input (“everyday language”). This is somewhat different from the reverse-engineered standard that the grammar-test group produced, which was at a level of generality comparable to that of the published version. In addition, the reading-test group compared their standard to two PIs subsumed under Standard 1’s, namely 1 and 6. The first states that students will “[i]dentify and use reading ... strategies to make text comprehensible and meaningful,” and the other that students will “[m]ake and support inferences about information and ideas with reference to features in ... written text” (Office of Bilingual Education, n.d.). Both PIs reflect language skills required by a test-taker to successfully address the reading passage and the multiple-choice items (see Appendix). Interestingly, there was no mention of reading strategies or inferencing in the reading-test group’s specifications.

For the third questionnaire item – which the Study I group failed to answer – regarding whether the analyzed sample items actually reflected the published state standards or PIs, the grammar-test group wrote, “Yes...” (i.e., an affirmative statement followed by an ellipsis) but gave no details (but note the following paragraph). The four reading-test group members were unanimous in affirming item alignment with the published standards or PIs and gave similar answers of which the following is representative: “Yes, because students will have to apply/use reading strategies to make the text [i.e., the reading text] comprehensible and meaningful.”

For the fourth questionnaire item regarding whether or not the respective test items required revision to bring them more into alignment with the published standards – which, again, the Study I group failed to address – the reading-test group stated, without elaboration, that the existing item was “adequate,” implying that item revision was

unnecessary. In contrast, the grammar-test group provided two statements. The first was an apparent continuation of its answer to questionnaire item 3 (“Yes...”), namely, that the item “could be more specific [as to] whether [it is intended to test] listening/speaking.” This statement is somewhat unclear as the answer to the previous question, regarding whether the item reflected the standard, was answered in the affirmative. However, putting the answers to questions 3 and 4 together suggests a qualification and an implied disjunctive (e.g., “The item *in general* reflects the standard, *but...*”). If so, the statement can be understood to mean that the item needed more specific directions to let the teacher know whether the focus of the item was comprehension or production. The second statement from the grammar-test group to this question was “Even though we do not refer [to] NYS standards when creating lessons or making tests/exams, when we reverse engineer[ed] we realize[d] we intrinsically [sic; “implicitly”?] touch on many if not all NYS standards.”

Regarding the fifth question as to whether the published standards or PIs themselves needed revision, the grammar-test group replied that they “should be simplified.” By noting the comment to the fourth questionnaire item, which was addressed in the previous paragraph, one may interpret this comment to mean that the inclusion of all of the canonical four skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening in one standard was too complex and confusing, suggesting that an individual standard should focus on only one overall skill. One might thus infer that the grammar-test group felt that the greater specificity of PIs was more useful than the more all-inclusively worded standards. On the other hand, the reading-test group felt that the current wording of the published standards was “adequate” and required no revision. The response from each group, while brief, is in contrast with that of the Study I group, which failed to address this questionnaire item.

Finally, both groups gave written feedback on whether SRE helped them understand the given task and standards, and whether they felt this understanding would help them in their teaching and testing. The grammar-test group placed SRE in the context of a general principle or purpose for testing: “When creating curriculum [or] when collaborating with colleagues on tests, we would find this very helpful.” The reasons cited for this included the observation that the SRE process can be useful when considering the topics of content-based language teaching and goal-oriented learning along with testing. As one grammar-test group

member put it, “When you get in the car, you need to know where you are going and alternate routes to get to your destination” – the “destination” referring to educational or testing goals, and “alternate routes” indicating different strategies for teaching and testing. As for the reading-test group, they were likewise positive regarding SRE. Two participants replied that the process could help a teacher determine whether or not “a given test question accomplished the purpose of the learning standard.” They also stated that the process helped them determine which skills a given test item was testing and whether or not the skills were appropriate for a given proficiency level. Another group member replied that SRE would be “useful in reviewing one’s tests to see if they are in accord with the standards,” and a fourth stated that analyzing standards and performance indicators was helpful to evaluate a test with regard to the targeted skills, proficiency level, and students’ needs. Finally, the reading-test group as a whole related the process to a general pedagogical principle as the SRE was useful in that “over time this will help us improve the design of our tests.” Overall, the responses of both groups to this final question were comparable to those of the Study I experienced-teacher group.

DISCUSSION

As suggested above, when evaluating the results of the present study’s investigation into assessment literacy (AL), one may be served by considering the aspects of AL in conjunction with the features of sociocultural theory (or SCT; e.g., Johnson & Golombek, 2016). To review, SCT posits a connection between the cognitive and the social, and that through this link, learners (including teachers) construct understandings of phenomena via the use of mediational tools, e.g., cultural artifacts, activities, concepts, and social interactions. These tools in turn can be subsumed under Davies’ (2008b) “skills-plus-knowledge-plus-principles” classification of AL. In the present study, relevant AL *skills* included analysis of test tasks; deduction of GD, PA, RA, or SS spec-components from test-task features; deduction of draft standards or performance indicators (PIs) from sample items and specs; and critical analysis of resultant reverse-engineered specs and standards, including attempts at

item-standard alignment. The concrete specs and standards produced via the application of these skills may be classified as *artifacts* under SCT. As to relevant *knowledge* aspects of AL, the present study considered the teachers' recall of official state ESL standards and PIs as well as their understanding about the relationships among assessment, instruction, and learning standards/Pis. Finally, evidence for the teachers' use of certain AL *principles* emerged in the course of the workshop, namely reasons for testing or assessing, and reasons for engaging in RE/SRE.

Consideration of specific examples of mediational tools and processes in the data suggests conclusions for the research questions of this study, with possible relevance to the Korean EFL context (for which see the Further Implications section, below). For example, the first research question asked whether experienced L2 teachers could produce reverse-engineered specifications and standards or PIs with the same level of sophistication as those in the earlier study. In general, the experienced teachers in the present study outperformed the experienced-teacher group of Study I. That is, whereas the earlier group's specs had been fragmentary, even incomplete, in the present study, there was noticeably greater proficiency in the experienced teachers' specs. One example of this, as noted above, was a spec (see Figure 2) that possessed a GD explaining that the spec would "help teachers create test questions that test students' ability...." This explicit reference to teaching reflects an AL principle (purpose for testing) realized by this experienced group while both employing RE (an AL skill) and considering relations between assessment and instruction (relevant knowledge).

Similarly, the grammar-test group's multi-componential spec demonstrated a greater skill than did the relatively simplistic Study I spec-artifact. Granted, the grammar-test group's spec contained sentence fragments in the speclish (e.g., gerundive phrases in the GD and noun phrases in the PA). Yet even with these faults, the grammar-test group's spec was more complete. (While it is tempting to attribute this greater AL skill to the fact that each of the groups contained one member who had participated in Study I, and who therefore was able to guide the other group members to whom RE was new, this cannot be proven from the data.) As for the RE'd learning standards, while the Study I group failed to achieve consensus on these (Walters, 2010), both grammar-test and reading-test groups did achieve consensus and surpassed the Study I group in terms of the clarity and completeness of their RE artifacts.

As for the RE'd standards, both groups generated interesting and complex draft standards from their respective specs. However, detailed discussion of these will be offered in the paragraphs below dealing with the third research question.

The second research question, which expanded on the aims of the earlier study, concerned the extent to which SRE could help the teachers determine whether or not the items from classroom-based tests were aligned with the state standards or performance indicators. This part of the study, as noted above, included not only an item targeting reading ability (the grist used in Study I) but also a second, classroom-based task focused on written grammar. While the Study I experienced group failed to address this matter in the post-workshop questionnaire, in the present study, both groups responded that their respective sample items each reflected a particular NYS ESL State standard. Moreover, content analysis of the RE'd specs and standards provides corroborative evidence of the teachers' ability to align the items and standards. For example, the fact that the grammar-test group's RE'd spec (see Figure 1) served as a mediating bridge between the written grammar item and standard can be seen by noting how the item's purpose was captured by the GD section: "Responding to Info Qs." Further, while the grammar-test group's questionnaire response was a simple "Yes [they are aligned]" with no elaboration, their reverse-engineered standard, deduced from their item's RE'd spec, showed a significant overlap with the published standard, namely, a shared purpose for language use: "Students will [be able to perform a language task] for information and understanding."

Likewise, the positive response of the reading-test group regarding alignment was objectively supported by content overlap among their RE'd spec (see Figure 2), their standard, and the published standard and PIs. For example, the group's GD also characterized the item purpose ("Students will be able to demonstrate text comprehension...") in a way that reflected their RE'd standard ("Students will be able to understand a written paragraph..."), which in turn overlapped with ESL Standard 1, which articulated the goal of being able to engage in a language task "for information and understanding." In sum, the ability to reverse-engineer, from a given item, standards, or PIs that resemble a published standard, as well as the concomitant ability to determine a match between the item and that published standard, suggests that the social-interactive process of SRE artifact deduction was an effective mediational tool for this aspect of AL for these experienced-teacher

groups. Moreover, that this process was successfully applied to the reading and written grammar items can be taken as further evidence that SRE can be used as an AL-training mediation tool with a range of test-task foci and types.

The third research question concerned whether SRE could reveal internalized understandings of experienced L2 instructors. To investigate this question, it may be useful to consider further aspects of Vygotsky's sociocultural framework:

Vygotsky envisioned that learning involved a dialectic between *everyday concepts*, subconscious, empirical knowledge that may actually be incorrect or misinformed, and *academic concepts*, more systematic and generalized knowledge that is the purview of school learning. For Vygotsky, it is only through explicit and systematic instruction that learners will transcend their everyday experiences and reach a deeper understanding of and control over the object of study.... (Johnson & Golombek, 2016, p. 24; italics in original)

Although none of the teachers were true novices in L2 assessment, and their knowledge cannot be characterized as “everyday” in the strict Vygotskian sense, a path of AL development implied by the above quotation can be discerned from the data. First, none of the participants were exposed to test-item specifications or RE before this study, except for the two who had participated in Study I. Also, similarities between the RE'd and official learning standards for both groups suggest that pre-service or in-service training made an impression on at least some of the teachers with some long-term memory (knowledge) of the NYS ESL standards before the beginning of the AL workshop. From this novice state (or baseline condition), they were given “explicit and systematic instruction” (Johnson & Golombek, 2016, p. 24) – that is, a short tutorial in spec design, which necessarily included technical information (academic concepts), followed by guidance through RE and SRE, the investigator serving as monitor and resource. Finally, the teachers reflected on their experience on the post-workshop questionnaire, linking the RE-related academic concepts to new skills, new knowledge, prior knowledge, and pedagogical principles. In the words of one reading-test group member, “Analyzing standards and Perf indicators helps [us] look at the Test and the skills that have been tested for specific Level and students' needs.” Thus, the general trajectory of

learning implied by the categories of everyday (or “baseline”) concepts and academic concepts was manifest in the workshop and afterward.

While both groups showed evidence of traversing the learning path from a lower to a more advanced academic-concept level, there is also evidence that the ways in which each group viewed and engaged in the SRE-mediated task differed. For example, a salient feature of the reading-test group’s four-fold standard (e.g., “Students will be able to understand a written paragraph about daily routines and everyday language”) is that the focus is not only on one of the canonical four skills (writing) but also on a specific task *within* that skill. The reading-test group’s identification of their standard artifact with NYS ESL Standard 1, and PIs 1 and 6 (Office of Bilingual Education, n.d.) resonates with this level of specificity. Note also that the group’s four-fold spec artifacts were quite detailed in format and content. These data suggest that the group did not rely on memorized, broadly worded standards when performing SRE but more or less bypassed them, valuing the linguistic specificity of PIs and suggesting a preference for practical, useful details in pedagogical guidelines. (Whether this bypassing was due to the fact that two of the group members were teachers of Spanish for whom the ESL standards were not central, however, is speculative.)

In contrast, the grammar-test group’s standard artifact expressed a learning goal that seemed indicative of a struggle over what form their RE’d standard should take. On the one hand, their standard contained predominantly general, “standard-like” language – “SWBAT [‘students will be able to’] Obs [‘observe’] for Info and Understanding (In some ways it addresses all standards).” The parenthetical gloss was echoed by the group’s questionnaire response: “We thought it [the reverse-engineered standard] fit [only] one NYS standard, but on reflection came to realize it fit all ESL NYS standards.” In attempting to explicate this response, it should be mentioned that all five New York State ESL Standards state that ESL students “will listen, speak, read, and write in English” for four different purposes: “Information and understanding” (Standard 1), “literary response, enjoyment, and expression” (Standard 2), “critical thinking” (Standard 3), and “classroom and social interaction” (Standard 4). Furthermore, students will “demonstrate cross-cultural knowledge and understanding” (Standard 5; Office of Bilingual Education, n.d.). Given the different foci, the grammar-test group’s determination that their own RE’d standard was “in some ways” reflective of *all* the published NYS ESL standards seems a

puzzling conflation. However, one may turn to the group's other questionnaire responses for insight. As mentioned above, the grammar-test group responded to the fifth questionnaire item regarding whether or not the standard/PI should be revised with the statement, "If [there needs to be] any change, NYS standards should be simplified." In the Results section, *simplified* was interpreted to mean that the inclusion of the four canonical skills in one standard was too complex. However, *simplified* may also mean "reduced in number." Evidence for this interpretation comes from the group's response to the second questionnaire item regarding standard comparisons: "Even though we do not refer [to] NYS standards when creating lessons or making tests/exams, when we reverse engineer[ed] we realize[d] we intrinsically [sic; "implicitly"?] touch on many if not all NYS standards." Thus, the group seemed to have felt that at least some of the existing five ESL standards were unnecessary.

On the other hand, this apparent preference for generally worded, albeit possibly fewer, standards seems to be in tension with a simultaneous desire for specificity in artifact wording. Note that their standard's targeted skill, *observing*, was derived from the video stills on the item via the group's RE'd spec and lent a "PI-like" aspect to their standard. This integration of generic and specific levels of wording may thus represent mixed feelings – or, in Vygotskian terms, a dialectic dialogue – over the role of broadly worded ESL learning standards. Indeed, the first part of the group's response to the fourth questionnaire item suggests an attitude that standards are something best kept at arm's length: "Even though we do not refer [to] NYS standards when creating lessons or making tests/exams..."

Thus, each group's mediational activity with items, specs, and the reflective questionnaire elicited different approaches to the standards. One group was satisfied with them as they creatively bypassed the "generic mode" of standards articulation in their SRE. Another recommended radical (though undefined) modifications in the standards and struggled with generality and specificity in standards wording. Such creative trajectories reflect critical perspectives on standards, neither group parroting received official mandates (cf. Shohamy, 2001). It could be argued that the groups' bypassing or struggling with (or against) generically worded standards is arguably a positive development from the standpoint of AL. Indeed, such a development recalls the working definition of Fulcher (2012): "The ability to place knowledge, skills,

processes, principles, and concepts within wider ... [socially or institutionally mandated] frameworks” (p. 126).

FURTHER IMPLICATIONS

The results of the present study suggest possible application to the Korean EFL context. For example, with regard to the first research question, the EFL teachers’ facility with reverse-engineering specifications may serve as a partial antidote to the negative-washback effects of standardized testing on secondary EFL education (Choi, 2008). That is, fine-grained analysis of test items, as a component of AL strengthened by engaging in RE, would, in theory, enable Korean educators to more creatively assess their students and also consult with school administrators about the effectiveness of test tasks on a given standardized test. For example, the value of “alternatives to grammar-translation-method-based teaching and curriculum” (Choi, 2008, p. 55) could, as a result of RE, be knowledgeably argued for.

In addition, the results pertaining to the second and third research questions suggest similar AL-related possibilities: Mediation activities such as detailed content-analysis of test items, along with comparisons of RE’d standards with official standards, could contribute both to critical awareness of promulgated Korean EFL standards and, perhaps, to the development of the learning standards themselves. For example, the 2015 Korean national standards (literally, “achievement criteria” or *seongchwi gijun*) for high school English listening courses consist of five general statements that resemble PIs but, like the New York State standards, are somewhat broad (e.g., grade-10 listening standard 01-01: “You can get detailed information by listening to familiar words or conversations about general topics”; Ministry of Education, 2015, p. 39). Corresponding standards/criteria are provided for speaking, reading, and writing. Some of these standards are supplemented by “achievement criteria commentary” (*seongchwi gijun haeseol*), which can also be classified as PIs. One observation is that these standards do not clearly or consistently articulate facets of communicative language ability (cf., e.g., Bachman, 1990) or levels of English-language proficiency as such, even those labeled “English conversation,” for example, the grade-12 standard 02-02: “You can summarize and present the data about daily

life or familiar general topics” (Ministry of Education, 2015, p. 56). Given the relative imprecision of standard language and a lack of a clear communicative dimension, these standards could be difficult for even experienced EFL teachers to apply creatively in terms of L2 test development and use (Kane, 2006; Messick, 1989). Therefore, given the results of this study, it is suggested that as a tool for enhancing AL, SRE can be one means whereby Korean EFL teachers can, on the one hand, foster their own classroom test development (or use of externally mandated standardized tests), and on the other, provide vital input in concert with educational policy-makers and L2 test developers, leading to “rigorous validation research on the compatibility of standards among [EFL] tests” (Choi, 2008, p. 42).

CONCLUSIONS

The picture that emerges from this study is of groups of L2 teachers demonstrating technical and linguistic sophistication in their specs and standards, as well as evidence of critical and creative internalizations of external artifacts. These artifacts are examples of a delimited set of skills and knowledge (cf. Davies, 2008b) within assessment literacy. The results resonate with the following observation by sociocultural-theoretic L2 researchers Lantolf and Thorne (2006): “Human agency [or, in the present context, assessment literacy] appears once we integrate cultural artifacts [e.g., participant instructions and worksheets, test tasks, specs, standards, questionnaires] and concepts [e.g., RE, purposes for testing] into our mental and material activity” (p. 63). Furthermore, the two groups outperformed the Study I experienced-teacher group, which essentially disproves the hypothesis advanced in that earlier paper that veteran L2 teachers are not amenable to SRE. Another tentative hypothesis from the earlier study, namely, that group size possibly inhibited collaboration, may also be tentatively disproved given that both groups worked collaboratively and achieved consensus on draft spec-design and RE'd standard-characterizations. In addition, the implications of the SRE artifacts and teacher-internalizations for L2 classroom instruction, whether in South Korea or elsewhere, seem clear: A heightened awareness by L2 teachers of the nature of learning goals and of the relationships between those goals and language tests can

arguably lead to increased skills in the creation and use of their own classroom assessments.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

A few limitations of this study should be noted. For example, this workshop lasted only two hours, essentially for reasons of union regulations (follow-up queries were also not feasible), and this may have constrained the way in which the participants composed their reflections. Another is the fact that audio or video recordings of the group members' interactions were not permitted; hence, detailed information about how the groups engaged in mediation could not be collected.

The results of the study suggest avenues for future inquiries into SRE as well as offer suggestions for AL training for L2 instructors. Regarding the former, studies into washback (Bachman, 1990), involving participants who have already undergone SRE and a control group that has not done so, may be useful to determine the effect of SRE on the teachers' actual test-item writing and test use. Second, a washback-oriented study could also determine the extent to which the SRE method of raising AL among teachers positively impacts the students who take the tests that bilingual, dual-language, ESL, or FL teachers create and use (Shohamy, 2001). Third, studies into SRE workshops could be performed in non-Western EFL contexts, such as the Republic of Korea. Support for cross-cultural SRE studies can be found in Davies (2008a), who points out that "the very notion of 'standard' has to be viewed in its historical and social context – there is no universally agreed meaning of standards" (p. 485). Indeed, the unique nature of the revised EFL learning standards in Korea mentioned above (Ministry of Education, 2015), as well as the prescriptive nature of Korean K–12 educational culture (e.g., So & Kang, 2014), may well be grist for meaningful examination of the relationships in Korea among teachers, standards, and EFL assessment via SRE.

Regarding future AL teacher-training sessions in which SRE may be a component, the following suggestions are offered. First, groups should contain only four to five persons; this is in keeping with other studies into group workshops (e.g., Davidson & Lynch, 2002). Second, if state-mandated, standardized test tasks are used as grist for SRE, facilitators should take care to keep participants focused on the RE task. Third, facilitators should be aware that different groups will likely evolve

their own mediational trajectories toward modified academic concepts/ understandings, as was shown in this study. Allowing creativity a free hand may provide material for rich reflection after the workshop. Fourth, there should be enough time for post-workshop reflection, both individually and collectively, perhaps two and a half to three hours for the entire session, if institutionally feasible.

THE AUTHOR

F. Scott Walters is a lecturer in the Department of Linguistics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). He received his PhD from UIUC and has taught TESOL courses both there and at Queens College. His research interests include L2 assessment, L2 teacher training, and conversation analysis. Email: fwalters@illinois.edu

REFERENCES

- Alderson, J. C., Clapham, C., & Wall, D. (1995). *Language test construction and evaluation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Bachman, L. F. (1990). *Fundamental considerations in language testing*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Bachman, L. F., & Palmer, A. S. (2010). *Language assessment in practice*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Bailey, K. M., & Curtis, A. (2015). *Learning about language assessment: Dilemmas, decisions, and directions*. Boston, MA: Heinle Cengage Learning.
- Bailey, K. M., & Brown, J. D. (1996). Language testing courses: What are they? In A. Cumming & R. Berwick (Eds.), *Validation in language testing* (pp. 236–256). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Brindley, G. (2001). Outcomes-based assessment in practices: Some examples and emerging insights. *Language Testing*, 18(4), 393–407.
- Brown, J. D., & Bailey, K. M. (2008). Language testing courses: What are they in 2007? *Language Testing*, 25(3), 349–383.
- Buckendahl, C. W., Plake, B. S., Impara, J. C., & Irwin, P. M. (2000, April). *Alignment of standardized achievement tests to State content standards: A comparison of publishers' and teachers' perspectives*. Paper presented at the National Council on Measurement in Education, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA.
- Chalhoub-Deville, M., & Deville, C. (2008). Nationally mandated testing for

- accountability: English language learners in the US. In B. Spolsky & F. M. Hult (Eds.), *The handbook of educational linguistics* (pp. 510–522). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Choi, I. (2008). The impact of EFL testing on EFL education in Korea. *Language Testing*, 25(1), 39–62.
- Davies, A. (2008a). Accountability and standards. In B. Spolsky & F. M. Hult (Eds.), *The handbook of educational linguistics* (483–494). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Davies, A. (2008b). Textbook trends in teaching language testing. *Language Testing*, 23, 327–348.
- Davidson, F., & Lynch, B. K. (2002). *Testcraft: A teacher's guide to writing and using language test specifications*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Elatia, S. (2003). *History of the Baccalaureat: A study of the interaction between educational legislation, government policy, and language theory in the National Language Examination* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA.
- Fulcher, G. (2012) Assessment literacy for the language classroom. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 9(2), 113–132.
- Fulcher, G., & Davidson, F. (2007). *Language testing and assessment: An advanced resource book*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Glidden, H. (2008). Common ground: Clear, specific content holds teaching, texts, and tests together. *American Educator*, 32, 13–21.
- Goertz, M., & Duffy, M. (2001). Assessment and accountability systems in 50 states, 1999–2000. Philadelphia, PA: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania. Retrieved from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/16/df/13.pdf.
- Golombek, P. R. (2009). Dynamic assessment in teacher education: Using dialogic video protocols to intervene in teacher thinking and activity. In K. E. Johnson (Ed.), *Second language teacher education: A sociocultural perspective* (pp. 121–135). London, UK: Routledge.
- Gopalan, S., & Davidson, F. (2000, May). *The feasibility of historical reverse engineering to trace evolution of language test development*. Paper presented at the Midwest Association of Language Testers, Iowa City, Iowa, USA.
- Gottlieb, M., & Nguyen, D. (2007). *Assessment and accountability in language education programs: A guide for administrators and teachers*. Philadelphia, PA: Caslon.
- Hambleton, R. K. (2001). Setting performance standards on educational assessments and criteria for evaluating the process. In G. Cizek (Ed.), *Setting performance standards* (pp. 89–116). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Harris, T., & Rowe, A. (1995). *Exploring English*. New York, NY:

- Addison-Wesley.
- Hughes, A. (1989). *Testing for language teachers*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Inbar-Lourie, O. (2008). Constructing a language assessment knowledge base: A focus on language assessment courses. *Language Testing*, 25, 385–402.
- Johnson, K. E. (2009). *Second language teacher education: A sociocultural perspective*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Johnson, K. E., & Dellagnelo, A. K. (2013). How “sign meaning develops”: Strategic mediation in learning to teach. *Language Teaching Research*, 17(4), 409–432.
- Johnson, K. E., & Golombek, G. R. (2016). *Mindful L2 teacher education: A sociocultural perspective on cultivating teachers’ professional development*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Kane, M. (2006). Validation. In R. Brennan (Ed.), *Educational measurement* (4th ed.; pp. 17–64). Washington, DC: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Lantolf, J. P. (1994). Sociocultural theory and second language learning: Introduction to the special issue. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78(4), 418–420.
- Lantolf, J. P., & Thorne, S. (2006). *Sociocultural theory and the genesis of second language development*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Leung, C. (2004). Developing formative teacher assessment: Knowledge, practice, and change. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 1(1), 19–41.
- Menken, K. (2008). *English learners left behind: Standardized testing as language policy*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Messick, S. (1989). Validity. In R. Linn (Ed.), *Educational measurement*, (3rd ed.; pp. 13–103). London, UK: Collier Macmillan.
- Ministry of Education. (2015). *English education curriculum: Ministry of Education notification no. 2015-74, Vol 14*. Retrieved from <http://ceri.knue.ac.kr/index.php/engsub05/020407.html>.
- Molinsky, S. J., & Bliss, B. (2000). *Side by Side* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Pearson Education ESL.
- Office of Bilingual Education. (n.d.). *The teaching of language arts to limited English proficient/English language learners: Learning standards for English as a second language: Building the bridge* [Report No. ED485752]. Albany, NY: New York State Education Department. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED485752>
- Norris, J. M., Brown, J. D., & Yoshioka, J. (1998). *Designing second language performance assessments*. Manoa, HI: University of Hawai’i Press.
- Popham, W. J. (1978). *Criterion-referenced measurement*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Rothman, R., Slattery, J. B., Vranek, J. L., & Resnick, L. B. (2002). *Benchmarking and alignment of standards and testing* [CSE Technical Report No. 566]. Los Angeles, CA: Center for the Study of Evaluation.

- So, K., & Kang, J. (2014). Curriculum reform in Korea: Issues and challenges for twenty-first century learning. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 23(4), 795–803.
- Shepard, L. (2000). The role of assessment in a learning culture. *Educational Researcher*, 29(7), 4–14.
- Shohamy, E. (2001). *The power of tests: A critical perspective on the uses of language tests*. Harlow, UK: Longman.
- Stiggins, R. J. (1991). Assessment literacy. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 72(7), 534–539.
- Stiggins, R. J. (2014). Improve assessment literacy outside of schools too. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 96(2), 67–72.
- van der Veer, R., & Valsiner, J. (1991). *Understanding Vygotsky*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Vygotsky, L. (1986). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Walters, F. S. (2010). Cultivating assessment literacy: Standards evaluation through language-test specification reverse engineering. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 7, 317–342.
- Webb, N. L. (1997). *Criteria for alignment of expectations and assessments in mathematics and science education* (Research Monograph No. 6). Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, National Institute for Science Education.
- Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by design* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

APPENDIX

Reading-Test Group Items

Mary wakes up at 7 o'clock. She gets out of bed and takes a shower at 7:15. Then, Mary makes coffee and eats breakfast at 7:45. She arrives at school at 9 o'clock. At noon she eats her lunch and talks with her friends. At 3 o'clock, Mary leaves school and goes home. She begins her homework at 4 o'clock. At 6 o'clock, Mary eats dinner with her family. At 7:30, Mary plays a game with her brother. Her friend calls her on the telephone at 9 o'clock. She brushes her teeth at 10:30. At 11 o'clock, Mary goes to bed.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Mary wakes up at | 2. She takes a shower at |
| a. a quarter after seven | a. a quarter to seven |
| b. 7:00 am* | b. half past seven |
| c. 7:00 pm | c. a quarter past seven* |
| d. a quarter to seven | d. 7:50 |
| 3. Mary makes coffee at | 4. What time does Mary eat lunch? |
| a. a quarter to seven | a. 12:00 pm* |
| b. half past seven | b. midnight |
| c. a quarter past seven | c. 12:15 |
| d. a quarter to 8* | d. 12:30 |

*Asterisk indicates correct answer (asterisk not shown on test sheet).

Redesigning Forums to Incorporate Formative Assessment: An Initial Exploration

Gregory Thompson

Seoul National University of Science and Technology, Seoul, Korea

Forums are common online writing tools used to facilitate a variety of asynchronous educational activities. Despite this flexibility, forum design may not assist educators in setting up and facilitating reflective activities that could provide formative feedback on students' activity. While forums could be useful to facilitate reflective activities outside of class, application design choices complicate the affordances teachers have in including and running such activities. Over several cycles of development, application, and evaluation, a forum was developed that incorporates various formative assessment capabilities in order to study how design choices affect the inclusion and success of such online activities and to identify considerations for implementing those activities in other online learning tools.

Keywords: discussion forums, formative assessment, web development, design

INTRODUCTION

Forums are among the most common online tools used for educational purposes. The flexible nature of forums allows educators to use them to facilitate discussions, peer reviews, question and answer sessions, and other asynchronous activities within a course. Despite this flexibility, forum design may not assist educators in setting up and facilitating reflective activities that could provide formative feedback on students' activity within a forum assignment. Formative assessments are those activities that provide data about students' learning that students and teachers could use to improve the learning experience (Black & Wiliam, 2001). These activities could include self-assessments, peer

review, and setting and evaluating goals. However, Black and Wiliam (2001) note that formative assessment is difficult to implement well in courses due to the time it takes. In learning management systems, this difficulty is complicated by the application's design choices. Decisions about what to include, how to include them, and what not to include, whether intentional or not, impact affordances for practitioners. Lane (2009) notes that simply specifying default options may impact the way that educators use a service. Furthermore, integrating teacher feedback into a forum could affect the quality of the forum discussion. Research has shown that teacher presence in a forum can change the way students interact (Brooks, Greer, & Gutwin, 2014). However, many forum systems do not provide educators a way to privately comment on the forum with feedback without potentially disrupting the flow of discussion.

Goals

This research project aims to observe how design choices affect the facilitation of formative assessment activities in an online forum in order to identify a generalizable set of design considerations for implementing formative assessment activities in other online learning applications.

Research Questions

- RQ1. What design choices can promote inclusion of formative assessment in an online forum?
- RQ2. What design choices improve the students' sense of usefulness of formative assessment in an online forum?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Review of Forum Literature

Forums are among the most commonly used tools for facilitating asynchronous online discussion (Dawley, 2007; Gao, Zhang, & Franklin, 2013). They can support various types of online discussion, such as Q-and-A sessions, project collaboration, topical debates/discussions, and

other activities. While there are a variety of types of forums, the most common forum used for educational purposes is the threaded forum, in which users share their ideas through posts to which others may reply (Gao et al., 2013). Aside from the flexibility to facilitate various activities, forums have demonstrated promise in supporting learning. Students who participated more in online forum discussion achieved better writing results (Kol & Schcolnik, 2008; Zheng & Warschauer, 2015). Commander, Zhao, Gallagher, and You (2012) found that forums may help facilitate discussion between native and non-native speakers in order to increase cultural awareness and respect. Students themselves seem to value the use of forums because they like the flexibility of online discussion and thought they learn through the forum experience (Wu & Hiltz, 2004). Additionally, students may participate more in online discussion than in face-to-face discussion (Dashtestani & Stojkovic, 2015; Zheng & Warschauer, 2015).

Instructor facilitation plays an important role in the success of forum use. Facilitation refers to the instructor setting up and engaging in forum discussion with the students. The amount of instructor participation can affect the caliber of discussion that takes place in a forum. Too much instructor participation could cause students to post less frequently and focus on interactions with the instructor (Mazzolini & Maddison, 2003; Brooks et al., 2014; Loncar, Barret, & Liu, 2014; Zheng & Warschauer, 2015). Since online discussion forums generally revolve around students interacting with each other, such instructor over-participation could limit effectiveness. Conversely, when an instructor participates too little, students may feel less satisfied with the activity, feel the instructor is not helping, and think less critically (Loncar et al., 2014). The optimum amount of instructor participation in forum discussion varies depending upon the nature and purpose of the forum (Mazzolini & Maddison, 2003).

Numerous studies have suggested considerations for improved facilitation. Instructors need to ensure consistency in course design, communicate with students, and facilitate active discussion (Wu & Hiltz, 2004; Yang, 2008, as cited in Loncar et al., 2014). Additionally, instructors should attend to the message design of their instructions as well as contribute certain types of responses to facilitate critical thinking and participation (Loncar et al., 2014). DeNoyelles, Zydney, and Chen (2014) outlined instructional strategies based on the community of inquiry (CoI) framework. The study noted the importance not only of

facilitation techniques, like questioning, but also of adjusting assignment parameters, such as prompts and required interactions, to improve the social, cognitive, and teaching presences in assignments.

While the role of an instructor is certainly important, the design of the forum itself cannot be overlooked as a source for improving the educational utility. All technologies are designed systems. The designers and developers of a system make decisions about how the system should operate, what its users need, and the nature of activity taking place in their service. Edwards and Carmichael (2012) believe that the development process of educational software can influence the type of teaching and learning a tool affords. While complex, invisible aspects of software development may impact teacher and student affordances, even simple decisions made during software development can encourage a form of education. Lane (2009) notes that teachers may not be familiar enough with default options to change them, leading to technology driving aspects of curriculum. In the case of forums, discussion can be unfocused and lack insightful, critical points (Loncar et al., 2014). These problems may arise due to the design of the forums. As one example, Gao et al. (2013) state that most threaded forums organize posts and replies in chronological order, which complicates students' ability to make connections by making it difficult to show relationships between submissions and find the most relevant posts/replies. These two complications may reduce discussion and make reflection more difficult, limiting the effectiveness of the forum activity.

Attempts to redesign forum environments have proven effective in improving particular learning outcomes. Gao et al. (2013) point out several examples of literature focused on redesigning forums. Constrained forums encouraged labeling posts with predefined categories to promote students making diverse and specific contributions to discussions. This forum design resulted in better argumentation in terms of making hypotheses and supporting with evidence. However, students using this forum may have disagreed less and could not contribute useful ideas that fell outside of the labels. Another forum type reviewed in Gao et al. (2013), visual environments, uses graphical representations to show viewpoints and relations. Visualizations across the reviewed studies included shapes, tables, and maps. The visualized design could increase logical argumentation and problem-solving as well as comparison between personal and classmates' representations. Visualized environments may be less effective for more nuanced or extended

discussions due to the complexity of and crowding in the visualization. The final type reviewed in Gao et al. (2013) is the anchored discussion forum. This forum situates discussion on portions of text by allowing users to select an excerpt and comment. The design of anchored environments seemed to facilitate more focused, thoughtful discussion about texts. These attempts focus on redesigning forums to produce better discussion because social interaction facilitates the acquisition of knowledge. While healthy discussion is a critical component for success with forums, improvements to the tool's design can support other learning outcomes as well, such as facilitating formative assessment and reflection.

Review of Formative Assessment Literature

Formative assessment refers to any type of assessment that teachers and/or students can use to improve their learning (Black & Wiliam, 2001). Sadler (1998, as cited in Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006) notes that formative assessments are “specifically intended to generate feedback on performance to improve and accelerate learning” (p. 2). While teachers recognize that feedback is valuable for students, teachers overestimate the value of the feedback they give even though students may have trouble decoding the feedback (Havnes, Smith, Dysthe, & Ludvigsen, 2012). Good feedback embodies several components: (a) The feedback must tell what good performance is, (b) it must relate how current performance relates to optimal performance, and (c) it must suggest how to close the gap (Sadler, 1989, as cited in Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Aside from the teacher, however, formative assessment can come from other sources. Through self-reflection, the learner can generate formative assessment of their own performance on an activity. Additionally, peers can be a source of formative assessment. Finally, formative assessment can be built into the activity or technology directly.

Forums promote reflection and formative assessment. Vonderwell et al. (2007, as cited in Gikandi, Morrow, & Davis, 2011) note that “asynchronous discussions allowed students to rethink and assess their own understanding ... [which] facilitated reflective and self-assessment processes” (p. 2341). The asynchronous nature of forums allows students to consider their contributions, taking the time they need to refine their ideas for publication. Additionally, by reading peers' thoughts, students

are exposed to and must interact with various perspectives. Through careful construction of the forum activity, students may be prompted towards higher-level thinking, moving from exploration to integration to resolution (Zydney, deNoyelles, & Seo, 2012). As students integrate their ideas with others' ideas, they may consider their own performance of the task and how they articulated and formed their ideas. In this way, the discussion involved in forums can act as a form of formative assessment. By interacting with peers, students get a variety of feedback about their work, which, with further discussion and elaboration, will allow them to deepen their understanding. However, in their review of technologies, Golonka, Bowles, Frank, Richardson, and Freynik (2014) found that students gave feedback only when the assignment required it, so they believe that "instructors will need to design the task so feedback is considered an integral part of the interaction by the students" (p. 85).

Many activities can promote the generation of formative assessment data that current forum tools lack. Goal setting can be a source of formative assessment. Students can take stock of their current abilities, set goals for future progress, and work towards that progress. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) note that students may need help from the instructor to develop and set their own good goals. Self-reflection prompts, such as checklists and open-ended prompts, can also support students in reflecting on their work and work process. Leading questions and hints can help students reflect on their performance and self-correct (Gikandi et al., 2011). Rubrics and checklists may help students reflect on their performance by specifying the criteria on which students should assess themselves. Rubrics also support reflection after summative assessment by allowing students to identify areas of strength and weakness. Summative assessments can turn into formative assessments when students and/or teachers use them as opportunities to promote an understanding of performance. Visualizations that help students understand the discussion or their performance in the forum could also be a form of formative assessment embedded in the technology.

Incorporation of formative assessment into the learning environment is important for a variety of reasons. Formative assessment supports students in developing into self-regulated learners. Self-regulated learning refers to students' ability to develop strategies to regulate their learning, such as time management, reflection upon work, and other areas. Formative assessment activities that give students the opportunity to develop independent thinking skills about their performance help them

gain more independence. These students are more likely to receive higher grades and persist when encountering difficulty. Additionally, it supports students in developing self-efficacy – the belief that one has the ability to do certain tasks. Self-efficacy promotes self-regulated learning (Shea & Bidjerano, 2010). Students who exhibited higher levels of self-efficacy did better in courses and persisted when encountering difficult content.

METHOD

The author built a threaded forum environment that incorporated a variety of formative assessment activities. This forum used the MEAN stack consisting of MongoDB, Express, Angular 6, and Node.js. Angular Material and Bootstrap 4 supported the rapid development of frontend displays, including modal windows, alerts, and form elements. Building a new environment afforded full control over the design decisions, so development was not done in the existing learning management system the course used.

The forum integrated formative assessment activities into the forum, post, and reply creation processes. Teachers could set up formative assessment activities during the forum creation process by selecting textboxes that toggled the activation of the formative assessment activities. These activities appeared to students during the post/reply creation processes. These processes took place in a modal window, a window that appeared over the current page when “add post” or “add reply” was clicked. The modal window incorporated content creation and each formative assessment view into separate steps. Students could click between the various steps in order to refer to their content while engaging in the formative assessment activities. The post/reply processes only required a title and post/reply contents for submission; the formative assessment tasks did not require responses in order to be submitted. The five formative assessment tasks are described below.

1. **Checklist:** This task afforded a teacher the opportunity to create a list of criteria that students would check to indicate whether they believe they had met the criteria or not.
2. **Reflective Task:** This task afforded a teacher the opportunity to

- create reflective questions or tasks to which students respond.
3. **Feedback Request:** Unlike other tasks, this task was embedded in the post-creation step. Students could enter a message about what help or feedback they needed.
 4. **Exemplar:** Teachers could input a model of the post or reply assignment that students could refer to when completing the assignment.
 5. **Personal Goal Setting:** Teachers only had to enable goal setting without any additional setup. Once enabled, students would be asked, after entering their post content, to create goals to improve upon by their next assignment. When the teacher enabled the goal-setting activity in future assignments, students' most recent goals would be listed before the post creation step. After post creation, the goals would be presented to students in a checklist so that they could decide whether or not they believed they had met their goals. Students then would be prompted to set goals again for their next assignment.

The thread page, which displayed all student posts and replies in a thread, also incorporated these formative assessment activities. These formative assessment activities took place in a special section appended to the bottom of a student's post. Only the student and teacher could view that section. Other students were not able to view these responses in order to preserve the natural flow of forum discussion and to reduce the effect of teacher presence in the discussion. Checklist and reflection task responses were displayed under a *reflection work* heading, followed by a *teacher feedback* section allowing teachers to comment on the students' post and reflection work as well as on their feedback request. Also, this area displayed the student's feedback request.

This research study followed a design-based research approach (DBR). Wang and Hannafin (2007) have defined *DBR* as "a systematic but flexible methodology aimed to improve educational practices through iterative analysis, design, development, and implementation based on collaboration among researchers and practitioners in real-world settings" (p. 6). McKenney and Reeves (2012) have described *DBR* taking place across multiple simultaneous cycles of research: microcycles, which focused on one research phase (analysis and exploration, design and construction, or evaluation and reflection); mesocycles, which span multiple phases; and macrocycles, which encompass the whole project.

The analysis and exploration microcycles focused on a literature review and ideating solutions. The design and construction microcycles focused on building and beta-testing the forum and formative assessment activities. The evaluation and reflection microcycles focused on testing the service in use with actual classes. While microcycles seem distinct and sequential, they can overlap and be revisited as necessary. The initial site planning, research, and development took about six months. Then, the forum intervention was tested over a 15-week semester. Data from this first evaluation period informed the process of revising and further developing the site over two months. The second testing and evaluation period took place during another 15-week semester over a four-month period. According to Reeves and McKenney (2013), DBR has two goals: to develop “the iterative development of solutions ... to complex educational problems” and “the refinement of theoretical understanding ... that can guide other researchers and practitioners” (p. 10).

Participants

Participants included students from two university-level English language courses. A Reading and Writing course, which was a mandatory general education course, focused on introducing students to reading strategies and writing at the paragraph level. An Intermediate Writing course, an elective course, focused on developing students’ ability to write short multi-paragraph texts across a variety of genres. Two teachers were involved in the study. Teacher 1, who taught Intermediate Writing, participated for most of the first semester, but was unable to continue in the second semester. Teacher 2 was the author. Teacher 2 taught Reading and Writing and participated in both semesters of the study.

Semester 1 included four sections of Reading and Writing ($n = 48$) and 1 section of Intermediate Writing ($n = 17$). After attrition, the study included 59 participants between the two courses: Reading and Writing ($n = 42$) and Intermediate Writing ($n = 17$). Due to personal problems, Teacher 1 was unable to complete Semester 1, meaning the Intermediate Writing students were not included in the final data collection. Semester 2 included four sections of Reading and Writing ($n = 102$). After attrition, 73 students remained in the study.

Instruments

The e-learning success model introduced by Holsapple and Lee-Post (2006) was an updated version of the information success model by DeLone and McLean (2003; Holsapple & Lee-Post, 2006, p. 3). The e-learning success model includes six dimensions that characterize success of an e-learning intervention across three stages: design, delivery, and outcome. The design stage is measured by system quality, information quality, and service quality. *System quality* refers to the desirable characteristics of the learning environment. *Information quality* refers to how the information within the system was presented. *Service quality* relates to the characteristics of interaction between stakeholders using the system. Next, the delivery stage was measured by use and user satisfaction. *Use* relates to how stakeholders actually used the system. *User satisfaction* covers how users evaluated their experience using the system. Finally, the outcome stage was measured by the net benefits, the overall positive aspects of the students' learning experience in spite of perceived drawbacks. These six dimensions measured how the interdependent aspects of an intervention contribute to its successfulness (Holsapple & Lee-Post, 2006; Wang, Wang, & Shee, 2007). A survey containing 21 items using a five-point Likert scale and two open-ended items were created based on the e-learning success model and was given to students at the end of the semester.

Participating teachers wrote journals for each forum assignment throughout the semester. Each entry described the setup, implementation, and evaluation of the tasks for which teachers used the site. In the assignment setup portion, teachers wrote about their experiences creating assignments, including the context of the assignments within their course and the use of the site to set up their assignments. Assignment implementation information focused on how the assignments ran, including any successes and problems the teachers perceived. Finally, the assignment evaluation focused on patterns that teachers noticed in their students' work, the usefulness of the site features, and any site changes they thought necessary. Teachers could use their own journaling structure to write additional observations as well.

In Semester 1, teachers gave three assignments each. Five journal entries were collected for Semester 1. Teacher 1 was unable to complete the final journal entry of the semester, so only two journal entries were collected. In Semester 2, only Teacher 2 participated. Teacher 2 gave

two assignments and wrote two journal entries. Student and teacher use of the site was reviewed in order to find patterns and themes in the formative assessment activities, posts, and replies. All of the students enrolled in the Reading and Writing course taught by Teacher 2 took the final survey.

RESULTS

The responses for each category were averaged, leading to an item average out of 5 (e.g., 1–5). This average was converted to an item percentage out of 5. All item percentages for a given category combined formed a category average. The Appendix shows the category averages of the survey items in both Semester 1 and Semester 2. Across both semesters, the use category was the highest-rated category, and the system quality category was rated the lowest. Use had an average of 0.91 in Semester 1 and 0.88 in Semester 2. System quality had an average of 0.82 in Semester 1 and 0.74 in Semester 2. The remaining categories followed similar trends across semesters. These categories were all within 0.01 or 0.02 of each other, but generally they went from service quality, information quality, net benefits, and finally to user satisfaction.

The survey indicates that students largely valued the feedback given by both the instructor and their peers. The use category shows positive perceptions of the forum activity. Students indicated in Items 13 and 14 that they viewed feedback via comments from the instructor and their peers. Item 13 had an average of 0.91 in Semester 1 and 0.88 in Semester 2. Item 14 had an average of 0.92 in Semester 1 and 0.89 in Semester 2. From the information quality category, students' responses generally indicated that they found their peers' responses helpful (S1 = 0.86, S2 = 0.85). In responses to the open-ended questions, students positively mentioned peer and instructor feedback, such as the following statements (in their own words):

“I think forum is good way to interact with my peers and professors. To read comment of them, I could find way to fix my reports and it's very helpful.”

“It was helpful to be able to get feedback from the professor and my classmates.” [Translation]

“I can practice through forum myself, and share with peer and instructor, also feedbacks that I obtained are very good and directly. So, I can easily know what I should do.”

“My writing was told by my professors and classmates about the weak points of the writing. So they let me know what I lacked.”

A central part of the use category is whether students actually used the resources available in the forum. Based on the responses above, it seems that some students did read the posts and comments and use them to evaluate their own writing. Additionally, some students seemed to value the feedback given by their instructor and peers. Students generally met the assignment parameters when writing peer evaluations or commenting in the forum, not doing more than was required of them.

Furthermore, students generally responded positively regarding interactions within the forum. From the service quality category, Items 11 ($S1 = 0.88$, $S2 = 0.82$) and 12 ($S1 = 0.89$, $S2 = 0.86$) indicated that the instructor and peers provided adequate support. Responses to the open survey questions also supported this pattern. In general, students did not mention the embedded formative assessment features of the forum. Instead they described the assignment activities (i.e., posting and replying) and interacting with peers. Several students commented on the interactions with the professor.

“I was able to communicate with the professor, and the explanation of the task was very detailed, so it was very helpful.” [Translation]

“It helped me to learn from the fact that I could easily find the necessary information and materials, and my professor’s feedback was quick.” [Translation]

Interactions with peers through comments was frequently mentioned. However, students also interacted with their peers through reading other students’ writing and comparing that writing to their own. In this case, these students actively sought out other students’ work as models to improve their own.

“If I compared the articles written by others and the article I wrote, I could learn from the comments and what parts I should fix.”
 [Translation]

Changes to the order of posts may have had an effect on the forum interactions. In the Reading and Writing course, students had to complete three peer reviews by replying to peers’ posts. In Semester 1, the posts were in chronological order. As a result, the order of posts remained static, which resulted in students receiving a broad range of responses depending on the visibility of their post based on the time of their submission. In Semester 2, the forum displayed posts based on the number of comments. Posts with fewer comments showed higher on the page. This led to a decrease in variance for the number of replies to posts. Table 1 displays the average variance for replies by classes across Semesters 1 and 2. While the average for service quality went down between semesters, the averages remained high, indicating that students viewed this category positively.

TABLE 1. Variance in Replies Between Semesters

Semester 1		Semester 2	
Course	Average Variance	Course	Average Variance
Course 1	2.28	Course 1	0.48
Course 2	4.10	Course 2	1.11
Course 3	2.34	Course 3	0.25
Course 4	3.54	Course 4	1.03

System quality was marked the lowest category across both semesters. Data from both teachers and students noted problems with the system quality that affected their perception of the forum’s effectiveness. Item 1, regarding ease of use, received average ratings of 0.83 and 0.76 in Semesters 1 and 2, respectively. Responses to Item 2 (S1 = 0.81, S2 = 0.74) suggested that the students did not find the site user-friendly. Students commented that they lost their work when they clicked outside of the modal window that housed post and reply creation, which closed the window without saving their responses. This is one survey response:

“While I was typing my writing, I accidentally clicked the bottom of

the page and the writing was gone. I didn't know the reason for that time but after I did the click again, I found out that when you click the other part of the page instead of the writing page, the writing page shuts down."

More generally, however, students found the user interface to be dated and uncomfortable. Several responses mentioned that the user interface was uncomfortable for them to use because they found it difficult to read or search for parts.

While all the functionality worked, difficulty with navigation led to less satisfaction with the service. This is evident as the lowest average across both semesters and all items was Item 4, ease of navigation ($S1 = 0.73$, $S2 = 0.65$). Many students commented on difficulty browsing the site because they could not use a *back* button in the browser. Generally, users visited pages in the following order: login > profile > course > forum > thread > post. If they were doing peer review, they may have moved between the thread and post pages several times until they finished their assignment. However, students could not go back one page to a thread easily. In Semester 1, students had to click the *home* button, which took them back to the profile. After receiving negative responses regarding navigation experience in Semester 1, breadcrumb navigation was integrated into the top of the site under the main navigation bar. In Semester 2, students could use these breadcrumbs to navigate the path of viewed pages. However, students did not notice the breadcrumbs and requested more standard navigation features. One student responded in the survey as follows:

"It was difficult to adapt to the back function because it was different from other homepages." [Translation]

This problem was caused by students accessing the site from the LMS. Upon clicking a link from the LMS, a window with the forum would open that would not have the default browser navigational buttons (e.g., *back* and *forward*).

Teacher journals indicated that the messaging in the site did not provide enough assistance to users. Teacher 1 did not use any of the embedded formative assessment activities in the site for two of the three assignments because in-application explanations were lacking. Teacher 1 did not remember what features did or how they worked in the site.

Although training was provided before the semester and handouts with explanations were given, Teacher 1 worried about how to use the features well. Once in-application cues were given during Semester 1, Teacher 1 used the features.

The teachers differed in terms of how they used the site, which led to different interpretations of the site's effectiveness. Teacher 1 hoped to use the site for discussion. This teacher felt that students' discussion lacked depth and that they did not follow instructions given in class. Additionally, the teacher was disappointed that students had not more actively discussed. Teacher 2 used the forum as a space for writing process work, including drafting, peer evaluation, and revision. This teacher found that students discussed the work based on the model given to meet the assignment criteria. However, this teacher found it difficult to generate insights from the data because of the volume as well as the vagueness/broadness of responses. For example, one student wanted "to know if the sentence was used in accordance with the sentence," which the teacher did not understand. Still, Teacher 2 found that the data gave insights into the rationale for the students' posts that would otherwise have not been apparent. This allowed for more personalized instruction, including asking students about responses that were unclear. However, teachers may struggle to use student responses, as the volume of data from interactions in the forum grows. Teacher 2 found that checklists were a faster way to identify patterns and compare to posts than the reflection tasks or goals because checklists produced easily readable data and more closely matched existing grading criteria used during the actual class sessions. This shows that the site produced a considerable amount of data for teachers, but it did not assist in making the data actionable or presentable. Also, the addition of formative assessment activities to the forum does not necessarily improve discussion, but it may offer opportunities for various types of communication.

The design of the formative assessment process interface worked well, but the direction messaging needs careful consideration when integrating activities into a system. Students generally completed the activities, and they seemed to understand how to do so. However, some students left the formative assessment activities blank. Particularly, the feedback request was underutilized. Each formative assessment activity was given its own step and screen within the creation process. Even though they could submit their work without doing these activities, students generally did complete the goal-setting, checklist, and reflection

task activities across both semesters. The feedback request was located at the bottom of the post creation modal page, so students could have missed this. In terms of messaging, each activity in the forum had a set of general directions that told students what to do for each activity. For example, the directions for the goal setting activity were as follows: “Take a moment to set goals that you would like to improve upon by the next assignment.” Teacher 2 found the goals received in Semester 1 were quite general and, in some cases, irrelevant to the task. The goals received in Semester 1 were more general than Semester 2. While in both semesters, the directions were not tailored to the specific context of the activity, Teacher 2 incorporated more instruction around goals into the lessons in Semester 2. The instructor speculated that allowing teachers to set the directions for each formative activity or at least overwrite the default directions may have led to better results. In this case, it is important to note that the individual design and messaging of activities could have an effect on the perception of the formative assessment activities’ usefulness.

DISCUSSION

While other studies have looked at redesigning the entire forum, this study focused on integrating features into the existing threaded forum structure. By embedding activity setup and implementation into the forum, post, and reply creation processes, these types of activities could be incorporated into other forums or other online learning activities. The survey responses suggest that the forum with formative assessment activities was successful, but the data also indicated that improvements are necessary.

Design Choices That Promote Formative Assessment in an Online Forum

The results of the study show that some design choices can affect the inclusion of formative assessment in forums. Students valued the interaction with peers and the instructor. This forum was designed to have student–student and student–instructor channels of discussion. The student–student channel focused on posts and replies in the threaded

forum. The student–instructor channel focused on private, individual communication about a student’s work. Student–student channels and student–instructor channels allow for an instructor to adapt a forum activity not only in terms of discussion but also for types of reflection about that discussion. As a result, having dedicated channels of feedback could encourage teachers to use formative assessment in assignments. Across the semesters in the study, students discussed or offered peer review through comments. However, they rarely did more interaction than required for full points on the assignment. As such, the inclusion of multiple channels of communication alone does not seem to have an effect on providing more robust discussion. Additionally, the instructor–student communication was not as interactive as it could have been. Students submitted their work; instructors made comments on that work. Since the data shows that students reacted positively to interaction with their instructor, it may be better to make formative assessment between students and the instructor more interactive through a dialogue or a continuous chat.

The forum developed for this study did not make formative assessment responses mandatory when submitting work. While most students did complete the tasks as they were part of the graded assignment, developers may want to consider making these required for submission. Also, developers may want to consider which activities are selected or mandated by default. It can be easy for users to overlook functionality. Enabling formative assessment activities that do not require set-up may promote more use of formative assessment. Goal-setting or feedback-request activities could be useful to facilitate student reflection and communication with the instructor. However, any mandated setting, whether it be an activity or response, needs to have clear messaging to support the user in completing the task.

Use of forum data can support the effectiveness of formative assessment. The survey results show that student opinion did not change much as a result of changing the ordering of posts from chronological to number of comments. However, this change had a noticeable effect of reducing the variance of replies to posts. Making sure everyone has comments can ensure everyone benefits from feedback and that certain people are not given an advantage simply for doing the assignment earlier. Developers need to evaluate the possible data they could collect, or are already collecting, and find ways to use it for learning goals. Additionally, as students interact with formative assessment functions,

instructors will have to deal with a sizeable amount of supplementary data in terms of checklists, requests, goals, and responses. When considering the use of such data, developers can promote the use of formative assessment by presenting data in a way that helps instructors quickly identify and act on trends or areas they see. This study did not focus on data visualization or the presentation of data to faculty, but this would be a promising area to explore, specifically regarding formative assignment data.

Design Choices That Improve Students' Sense of Usefulness of Formative Assessment in an Online Forum

Despite the focus of the research project on formative assessment, the results show that the design of the website factored into students' opinions of the site's usefulness. While the forum functioned correctly, the design of the forum caused problems in several instances that led to lower ratings for system quality. The problematic navigation could have led to reduced site use (Tan & Kwok, 2005; Cebi, 2013). Additionally, the issue with modal windows closing contributed negatively to students' experience, as their work was lost and needed to be redone. As in other forum research, students in this study participated enough to fulfill assignment requirements and discussed only as much as necessary to complete the assignments (Gikandi et al., 2011; Gao et al., 2013). Poor user interface or design could have been a contributing factor for the minimal level of participation by creating frustration or unwillingness to interact with the site any more than required. For this project, removing modals or forcing modals to be closed by pressing an exit button would fix the modal window issue. Embedding the contents of the modal window into the respective page would solve this problem. Additionally, developing more navigation options and attending to the way accessing the site from the LMS works would reduce navigational issues. More generally, though, systems incorporating formative assessment need to consider not only how the actual formative assessment activities work but also the general design and usability of the site.

Messaging may have a significant effect on the success of the formative assessment activities. There needs to be several types of messaging. Teachers need in-application explanations for how to use the activities; otherwise, they may be hesitant to use them. During Semester

1, some explanations were incorporated into the assignment set-up via tooltips (brief notes that appeared on hovering) with the toggle checkboxes and in the actual set-up page for each activity. These adjustments did help increase the use of the features. However, the teacher journals made clear that attention needs to be given to providing context-embedded overviews and training on the tools through the application itself to support both teachers and students in using the site. Additionally, the messaging of the directions needs to be considered when integrating activities into a system. The prompt and directions a teacher uses have a significant impact on the success of activities in forums (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Each activity had a set of general directions that told students what to do. However, giving the instructor the opportunity to craft more specific directions for their activity and learning context would help students better or more successfully engage with formative assessment. This increased understanding and engagement could help improve students' perception of the system's usefulness. Allowing teachers to set the directions for each formative activity or at least overwrite the default directions may lead to better utilization as well as more clarity for students.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. First, there were five formative assessment strategies that could not each be tested in depth. Additionally, given the incomplete data from Semester 1, the tools were mainly tested in one course with a particular situation. Further, use of the site and refinements need to be made to identify whether the proposed changes outlined above would improve the results and whether any further changes need to be made. Incomplete data in Semester 1 led to fewer insights about how the service was used across teachers and subjects. More exploration across subjects and teachers is necessary.

Future research may want to explore different implementations of the same type of formative assessment. As an example, the site at the center of this study did not require formative assessment responses. However, in the case of a checklist, the site could mandate that students go back to fix their work if checklist items are left blank. Besides, these formative assessment activities could be integrated into other types of online tools, such as assignment submissions and wikis. Comparative studies of different implementations could yield insights into how best

to design the systems and how best for teachers to use them.

CONCLUSIONS

Integrating formative assessment activities into a standard threaded forum opens up possibilities for reflective activities in forums. These activities offer new means of fostering independent reflection within the forums while preserving the opportunity for students to learn through discussion and interaction. The use of a private space for interaction between teachers and students does not seem to break the flow of discussion between students, but it allows for teacher–student communication without disrupting student–student discussion. Additionally, the private space serves as an area to concentrate all the student data for instructor consideration when viewing and evaluating students’ posts. Message design and web design need attention because they have a critical role in how students and instructors use educational technology. While this project has focused on forums, it is worth noting that these designs could be applied to other types of online learning activities.

THE AUTHOR

Greg Thompson has taught in a variety of educational contexts in Korea for over ten years. He currently teaches conversation, reading, and writing courses at Seoul National University of Science and Technology. His research interests include instructional design, educational technology, and learning analytics. Email: thompsgj@gmail.com

REFERENCES

- Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (2001). *Inside the black box: Raising standards through classroom assessment*. Retrieved from <http://weaeducation.typepad.co.uk/files/blackbox-1.pdf>
- Brooks, C., Greer, J., & Gutwin, C. (2014). The data-assisted approach to building intelligent technology-enhanced learning environments. In J. A. Larusson & B. White (Eds.), *Learning analytics: From research to practice*

- (pp. 123–156). New York, NY: Springer. doi:10.1007/978-1-4614-3305-7_7
- Cebi, S. (2013). Determining importance degrees of website design parameters based on interactions and types of websites. *Decision Support Systems*, 54, 1030–1043.
- Commander, N. E., Zhao, Y., Gallagher, P. A., & You, Y. (2012). Promoting cross-cultural understanding of education through online discussions. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 46, 4632–4642.
- Dashtestani, R., & Stojkovic, N. (2015). The use of technology in English for specific purposes (ESP) instruction: A literature review. *The Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes*, 3(3), 435–456.
- Dawley, L. (2007). *The tools for successful online teaching*. Hershey, PA: IGI Global. doi:10.4018/978-1-59140-956-4
- DeLone, W. H., & McLean, E. R. (2003). The DeLone and McLean model of information systems success: A ten-year update. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 19(4), 9–30.
- deNoyelles, A., Zydney, J. M., & Chen, B. (2014). Strategies for creating a community of inquiry through online asynchronous discussions. *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 10(1), 153–165.
- Edwards, R., & Carmichael, P. (2012). Secret codes: The hidden curriculum of the semantic web. *Discourse*, 33(4), 575–590.
- Gao, F., Zhang, T., & Franklin, T. (2013). Designing asynchronous online discussion environments: Recent progress and possible future directions. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 44(3), 469–483.
- Gikandi, J. W., Morrow, D., & Davis, N. E. (2011). Online formative assessment in higher education: A review of the literature. *Computers and Education*, 57, 2333–2351.
- Golonka, E. M., Bowles, A. R., Frank, V. M., Richardson, D. L., & Freynik, S. (2014). Technologies for foreign language learning: A review of technology types and their effectiveness. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 27(1), 70–105.
- Havnes, A., Smith, K., Dysthe, O., & Ludvigsen, K. (2012). Formative assessment and feedback: Making learning visible. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 38, 21–27.
- Holsapple, C. W., & Lee-Post, A. (2006). Defining, assessing, and promoting e-learning success: An information systems perspective. *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education*, 4(1), 67–85.
- Kol, S., & Scholnik, M. (2008). Asynchronous forums in EAP: Assessment issues. *Language Learning and Technology*, 12(2), 49–70.
- Lane, L. (2009). Insidious pedagogy: How course management systems impact teaching. *First Monday*, 14(10). Retrieved from <https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2530/2303Lane>
- Loncar, M., Barrett, N. E., & Liu, G. (2014). Towards the refinement of forum and asynchronous online discussion in educational contexts worldwide:

- Trends and investigative approaches within a dominant research paradigm. *Computers and Education*, 73, 93–110.
- Mazzolini, M., & Maddison, S. (2003). Sage, guide, or ghost? The effect of instructor intervention on student participation in online discussion forums. *Computers and Education*, 40, 237–253.
- McKenney, S., & Reeves, T. (2012). *Conducting educational design research: What it is, how we do it, and why*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Nicol, D. J., & Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2006). Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: A model and seven principles of good feedback practice. *Studies in Higher Education*, 31(2), 199–218.
- Reeves, T., & McKenney, S. (2013). Computer-assisted language learning and design-based research: Increased complexity for sure, enhanced impact perhaps. In J. C. Rodriguez & C. Pardo-Ballester (Eds.), *Design-based research in CALL* (pp. 9–21). San Marcos, Texas: Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium (CALICO).
- Shea, P., & Bidjerano, T. (2010). Learning presence: Towards a theory of self-efficacy, self-regulation, and the development of a communities of inquiry in online and blended learning environments. *Computers and Education*, 55(4), 1721–1731.
- Tan, G. W., & Kwok, K. W. (2005). An empirical study of web browsing behavior: Towards an effective website design. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 5, 261–271.
- Vonderwell, S., Liang, X., & Alderman, K. (2007). Asynchronous discussions and assessment in online learning. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 39(3), 309–328.
- Wang, Y. S., Wang, H. Y., & Shee, D. Y. (2007). Measuring e-learning systems success in an organizational context: Scale development and validation. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 23(4), 1792–1808.
- Wang, F., & Hannafin, M. J. (2005). Design-based research and technology-enhanced learning environments. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 52(4), 5–23.
- Wu, D., & Hiltz, S. R. (2004). Predicting learning from asynchronous online discussions. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 8(2), 139–152.
- Zheng, B., & Warschauer, M. (2015). Participation, interaction, and academic achievement in an online discussion environment. *Computers and Education*, 84, 78–89.
- Zydney, J. M., deNoyelles, A., & Seo, K. K. J. (2012). Creating a community of inquiry in online environments: An exploratory study on the effect of a protocol on interactions within asynchronous discussions. *Computers and Education*, 58(1), 77–87.

APPENDIX

Survey Responses Across Semesters

Category	Item	Semester 1		Semester 2	
		Cronbach Alpha	Category Average	Cronbach Alpha	Category Average
System Quality	1 The forum was easy to use. 포럼은 사용하기 쉬웠다.	0.89	0.82	0.88	0.74
	2 The forum was user-friendly. 포럼은 사용자 친화적이었다.				
	3 The forum was fast. 포럼은 빨랐다.				
	4 The forum provided opportunities to ask questions and/or reflect on my assignments. 포럼은 질문을 하거나 과제를 반영할 수 있는 기회를 제공하였다.				
	5 The forum text was easy to read. 포럼의 텍스트는 읽기 쉬웠다.				
	6 The forum was easy to navigate. 포럼은 탐색하기 쉬웠다.				
Information Quality	7 The directions for additional steps to complete assignments when submitting my post were clear. 내 게시물을 제출할 때 과제를 완료하기 위한 추가적인 단계의 지시 사항이 명확했다.	0.89	0.87	0.85	0.82
	8 Steps of the assignment were presented in a logical order. 과제의 단계는 논리적 순서로 제시되었다.				

	<p>9 Peer feedback and/or responses in the forum were helpful for my learning. 포럼에서 동료의 피드백 및 / 또는 반응이 학습에 도움이 되었다.</p>				
Service Quality	<p>10 The forum provided an appropriate amount of guidance when necessary. 포럼은 필요할 때 적절한 양의 지침을 제공하였다.</p>	0.89	0.881	0.82	0.82
	<p>11 I received an appropriate amount of support from my peers and instructor in the forum. 포럼에서 동료와 강사로부터 적절한 지원을 받았다.</p>				
	<p>12 My professor provided satisfactory support for me to use the forum. 교수가 포럼을 사용할 수 있도록 만족스러운 지원을 제공하였다.</p>				
Use	<p>13 I looked at feedback from my instructor in the forum. 포럼에서 강사의 피드백을 살펴 보았다.</p>	0.93	0.91	0.78	0.84
	<p>14 I read comments to my posts and replies in the forum. 포럼에서 내 게시글의 논평과 댓글을 읽었다.</p>				
	<p>15 The discussions helped me understand the course content. 논의는 내가 강의 내용을 이해하는데 도움이 되었다.</p>				
User Satisfaction	<p>16 I am satisfied with the effectiveness of the forum. 포럼의 효율성에 만족한다.</p>	0.91	0.86	0.90	0.80
	<p>17 I am satisfied with the features available on the forum.</p>				

	<p>포럼에서 제공하는 기능에 만족한다.</p>				
	<p>18 I am satisfied with the progress made achieving course goals through the forum. 포럼을 통해 수업 목표를 달성하는 과정에 만족한다.</p>				
Net Benefits	<p>19 The forum helped me improve my writing ability. 포럼은 나의 작문 능력을 향상시키는데 도움이 되었다.</p>	0.91	0.87	0.89	0.80
	<p>20 The forum helped me consider areas of strength and weakness in my writing. 포럼은 나의 작문에서 강점과 약점의 분야를 고려하는 데 도움이 되었다.</p>				
	<p>21 The forum helped me take an active role in improving my abilities related to course content. 포럼은 내가 강의 내용과 관련된 내 능력을 향상시키는데 적극적인 역할을 하도록 도와주었다.</p>				

Integrating a Close-Reading Method to Teach Reading to Young Learners in a Korean Elementary Class

Jared McKee

Silla University, Busan, Korea

Close reading has been a topic that has long been explored to help with literacy instruction in elementary schools and with secondary students. It has been a tool that has prepared students for university study, where they must carefully analyze a text and communicate their understanding of it. However, the method has not been thoroughly discussed in Korean English language education. Although the grammar-translation method has remained in vogue for decades, the pedagogy of close reading in English with a native English-speaking teacher in Korea has not been adequately studied. To address this gap, a native English-speaking teacher at an alternative school in Paju conducted a study on close reading with thirteen elementary school students. Eight students were in middle-elementary and five were in upper-elementary. The students met the teacher for two hours per day during a three-week camp on literacy. The teacher researched how a close-reading method could help these students with their reading skill and applied proven methods to his instruction. To collect data on this process, a pre-test and post-test were administered using the same reading material to gauge the student's reading skill. In the end, it was concluded that close reading is an effective way to teach literacy skill to elementary students in Korea. Native English-speaking teachers in Korea will benefit from using a literacy-based method to teach English to Korean speakers by using a bilingual framework that develops both first and second language literacy.

Keywords: close reading, bilingual education, South Korea, elementary students, literacy, instructional methods, reading comprehension, assessment

INTRODUCTION

This action research project took place in Paju, South Korea, where the native English-speaking author and teacher spent two and a half years teaching English as a second language. First, he began his career in Korea teaching secondary school students with literature EFL classes and speaking and writing. Those classes were given to middle school- and high school-level students. The emphasis of the teaching was on the instruction of literacy, with the study of literature. The subject of literature is one that is often pursued in secondary schools in America, as that is the one English class that every high school student takes. Thus, it was an essential part of the high school curriculum at the alternative school, which had for its focus the preparation of students for university. Having developed his methods of teaching on literature with two years of professional development and training, the teacher was given the task of teaching elementary-level students using literary works that had been simplified to suit the elementary level of learning. While somewhat apprehensive about the thought of teaching young learners with his secondary school experience, he courageously took on the task. Although it was difficult at first, he became accustomed to teaching young learners, and the time spent with them over six months was an informative experience. The time of teaching elementary-aged children has been an essential part of his development as a teacher of English as well as a formulation of his research interests in bilingual education, literacy in young learners, and second language education.

After one semester of teaching middle- and upper-elementary, the teacher was given the task of preparing a winter camp for these levels of students. Having had a mixed focus on teaching secondary and elementary in the fall semester, he was prepared to have an exclusively elementary focus for the camp. It is important to give some geographic context for this study. The school, where the study took place, is in Paju Book City, which is a publishing district located just north of Seoul. The building of the school is within the Forest of Wisdom complex, which is essentially a library of donated books with over 100,000 books in its collection. The literary scenery made the place a welcome environment to study literacy and the education of young learners. Furthermore, the teacher created a literacy camp that would help boost the students' reading levels within a short three-week intensive period. Having focused

on careful reading instruction over the previous semester, the teacher wanted to increase the emphasis on using a close-reading technique in teaching, so he began to research the method of teaching elementary students with this method.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Close reading is a technique that has long been explored as a resource for teaching literacy skills. It is a method that has been taught in different educational contexts, including secondary to university student levels (Richards, 1929). However, as Fisher and Frey (2012) have indicated, the topic has not been thoroughly researched in the elementary-level context. Close reading is an educational method that is used to promote careful, analytic reading of a passage through multiple readings with attention to detail and full comprehension of a passage. Adler and Van Doren (1940/1972) showed that the practice of close reading is to “x-ray the book ... [for] the skeleton hidden between the covers” (p. 75). The reader is invited to explore the deep structure behind the work to see what is there. It is a dissecting of the text that enables the reader to see everything underneath the surface, and the individual interprets the text with a scientific examination.

A primary purpose of close reading is allowing the student to assimilate background knowledge and prior experiences of reading to interpret a text (Fisher & Frey, 2012). As Fisher and Frey (2012) state, the secondary focus of the close-reading technique is to cultivate new habits for the reader that he or she can use when studying any text. The practices that Paul and Elder (2003) have indicated as essential are identifying the purpose of the work, understanding why a text is being read, and considering the style and genre of the work. The more the students use these daily habits, the more improvement there will be in the literacy of the individual student. Elementary teachers often use these techniques in their work, but they do not usually employ them when studying a difficult work that involves a lot of analysis or thought on the part of the student (Fisher & Frey, 2012).

The practice of close reading should be limited to more difficult texts because the reading of easier works can be undertaken in a practice known as extensive reading. Because close reading is an intensive

practice requiring multiple readings, it is essential that the teacher is present with the students to guide the instruction of the reading. It is not something the student can do on his or her own. Newkirk (2011) has called this practice “slow reading,” implying that the student must deliberately slow down and carefully consider each part of the text. What a teacher should show the student is the value of slowing down and reading a text, because it is worth considering and thinking about it. And a teacher must give the student a text that is worth reading and allow the student to gain a comprehensive understanding of the text.

Reading comprehension is a skill that students need to have to succeed in their academics and their career (Dakin, 2013). Students use a variety of skills when they read a text carefully, including making inferences, conducting analyses, and creating evaluations and drawing conclusions. Dakin (2013) states that “to become literate, students must think critically about what they are reading” (p. 8). Critical thinking is a crucial aspect of getting students to read carefully. The way to truly comprehend a text comes from constructing meaning from reading a text. And to be able to construct meaning, the person must first come to the text with a range of individual experiences that impact his or her understanding of the text (Henderson & Buskist, 2011).

Ness (2011) completed a study that claimed that reading comprehension “involves recalling information from text, extracting themes, engaging in higher-order thinking skills, constructing a mental picture of text, and understanding text structure” (p. 11). Ness worked on research related to elementary students. She advocated for the use of informational texts in the elementary classroom. In her opinion, elementary students need to be prepared for “frequent and purposeful use of informational text ... [because] by the time they enter secondary schools, students are expected to adeptly maneuver through informational text” (p. 29). Moreover, 75 percent of the texts that are studied beyond sixth grade are informational. And most of the reading material for adults is in the nonfiction category.

How is informational text useful for elementary students? It provides many opportunities to help teachers and students by building background knowledge and promoting textual comprehension. As students become more comfortable with the material, they will be increasingly prepared to go on to secondary school and the workplace (Ness, 2011). Furthermore, many researchers have supported including informational text in elementary classrooms (Chall & Snow, 1988; Doiron, 1994;

Dreher, 1998; Smolkin & Donovan, 2002, as cited in Ness, 2011). Although there are many benefits to using informational texts in the elementary classroom, students often do not get to practice with them. Some objections have been that the material is too complicated for the students. Young children may not be able to handle the demands of the vocabulary, intricate sentence structure, and grammatical form (Ness, 2011). On the other hand, the use of narrative texts is more popular and prevalent in the elementary classroom because the textual content is more comfortable to navigate and more straightforward.

Reading comprehension theory has advised that students have a deep understanding of literal comprehension before they can advance to an inferential knowledge of a text (Lapp & Flood, 1983; Leu & Kinzer, 1999). According to Carnine, Silbert, Kame'enui, and Tarver (2004), literal comprehension is the easiest because the reader can obtain the information directly from the text. It doesn't require too much thought or reflection from the reader. In many cases, this form of questioning is common for reading programs to test comprehension.

To test the comprehension on a literal level, curriculum-based measures (CBMs) have been used to help teachers develop their methods of instruction for almost 40 years now (Alonzo, Basaraba, Tindal, & Carriveau, 2009; Alonzo, Robinson & Tindal, 2008; Deno & Mirkin, 1977; Tindal & Marston, 1991; Yovanoff, Duesbery, Alonzo, & Tindal, 2005). CBMs have been used to measure reading comprehension using cloze-type activities that include fill-in-the-blank exercises from a sentence or passage. CBMs have been useful tools for teachers, especially for those with students who are above third grade, where the emphasis on phonics and alphabetic principles no longer guides the instruction (Yovanoff et al., 2005). With these guiding structures, teachers can create assessments that allow them to effectively teach students to read carefully and re-read selected text purposefully and effortlessly to gain understanding (Blau, 2003).

Walsh (2017) writes about how students in university need to develop a close-reading technique. While teaching at a liberal arts college in Seoul, he recognized the need for more detail-oriented analysis in training students to read literature. He argues that students in Korea need to be trained to reflect on their methods of reading. Walsh led a seminar entitled "Literature and Pedagogy," which focused on the critical debates that have shaped the discipline of English teaching. While referring to globalization and post-colonialism, Walsh discusses how

students do not value the learning of the liberal arts but rather think more about the job market that is after university. From this study and reflection, it was concluded that close reading needed to be something that was worth exploring and investigating in a Korean context. Aside from this recent study in Korea, there have been no other studies conducted to explore the topic of reading in schools. There have been no other studies conducted to explore the topic of reading in schools in a Korean context.

In a Korean elementary context, the topic of close reading is worth a careful study because much of what is emphasized in the Korean education system is the grammar–translation and reading method. Many Koreans consider reading and writing skills to be essential, as opposed to speaking skills. As a result, most Koreans know how to read and write in English better than how to speak in English. Literacy is at a high rate in Korea; however, the acquisition of speaking and writing skills in English needs development. Because of the Korean emphasis on TOEFL passage-reading and the fact that the test-prep industry is continually growing and developing, it is appropriate to think about how a close-reading technique could be beneficial to a Korean student’s acquisition of English with a variety of skill sets, including speaking, writing, and listening. The practice of intensive reading could permit students to profoundly look at a piece of text, while not merely focusing on choosing the correct answer, as in taking a standardized test.

Preparing students for secondary level or even university requires a deep reflection on the best practices to prepare students while in elementary school. The habits and behaviors that are cultivated at this young age will inevitably impact how a student does later in his or her life. Therefore, close reading presents a unique opportunity to enable students to understand what they are studying and provide a student with the tools they need to succeed in a variety of educational contexts in their future. If these habits are neglected in elementary school, students will undoubtedly have a more difficult time later in their education.

In a project of independent research, this author, a native English-speaking teacher, sought to discover the answer to the question of how close reading can impact student growth and development with literacy. With an effort to raise the literacy level of the elementary students in the alternative school, a literacy winter program was created that emphasized the use of the close-reading technique, and the teacher administered a reading level test for middle- and upper-elementary

students. For this test, one research question was examined: How does a close-reading approach to teaching reading prepare students to critically analyze two texts (informative and story) across three skill sets (sequencing, comprehension, and vocabulary)? Consequently, the teacher designed a test based on the DePaul University close-reading passages that are used for analysis. A pre-test was given, followed by a post-test three weeks later, which included the same reading content.

METHOD

For this test, there were two passages for which the students would read and answer questions. The first passage was about the famous Chicago Fire (see Appendix A). It is an informational text and is written on a third-grade reading level. Nine questions include sequencing of events, simple vocabulary, and comprehension of the passage. For the preparation of the passage, the teacher annotated the text by also labeling each paragraph for ease of reference and highlighted keywords that the students were to be tested on through the comprehension questions. The second passage is written on a fifth-grade reading level and is entitled “More Trees” (see Appendix B). The content of the passage is fictional and tells a story. Instead of merely providing information, the passage fits into the genre of a literary work. There were only six questions on this section, and they included sequencing of events, simple vocabulary, and comprehension of the passage. The reason for this reduction in question number was that the test was designed to test a student’s readiness for upper-elementary. And also, the content of the second passage was more difficult than that of the first passage.

For this camp, there were two classes of students in middle- and upper-elementary. The ages of the students ranged from 7 to 12 years old (international age). And the grade level ranged from second to fifth grade. There were eight students from middle-elementary, and there were five students in upper-elementary. These students were taught by the teacher previously during the fall semester, so the teacher was able to see the progress more acutely within this short timeframe. In the fall semester, the teacher had taught reading classes for middle- and upper-elementary. For the most part, these students had studied English for an extended period. Middle-elementary students were generally at the

second-grade level and were preparing for third grade. The upper-elementary students were in the fourth grade and preparing for fifth grade. As a result, the selection of texts was within the range of a third-grade-level informational text with 345 words and a fifth-grade-level fictional work of 420 words. With this range, the assessment of the overall literacy level would be beneficial to the students.

On the first day of the camp, a pre-test was given to all students in the reading winter camp program. After taking the pre-test, the results were not shared with the students, and the answers to the questions were not revealed to them. The results of the pre-test are shown in Table 1 for middle-elementary students and in Table 2 for upper-elementary students.

TABLE 1. Pre-test Results for Middle-Elementary Students

Students	Total Score (%)	Story 1 (%)	Story 2 (%)	Grade Level	Age
Student 1	20	11	17	2	8
Student 2	13	22	0	4	10
Student 3	60	89	17	2	8
Student 4	47	67	17	3	9
Student 5	53	67	33	2	8
Student 6	33	22	50	2	8
Student 7	47	67	17	2	8
Student 8	42	52	25	2	8
Average Scores	42	52	25		
Target Scores	50	60	40		

TABLE 2. Pre-test Results for Upper-Elementary Students

Students	Total Score (%)	Story 1 (%)	Story 2 (%)	Grade Level	Age
Student 1	80	78	83	4	11
Student 2	93	89	100	4	11
Student 3	47	56	33	4	11
Student 4	60	78	33	5	12
Student 5	60	78	17	5	12
Average Scores	68	76	53		
Target Scores	80	80	60–65		

For the middle-elementary group, the following targets were set to be reached by the students within three weeks: 50% for overall score average, 60% for Story 1 score average, and 40% for Story 2 score average. For the upper-elementary group, the following targets were set by the teacher: 80% for total score, 80% for Story 1, and 60–65% for Story 2.

For three weeks, the students were using reading books that had a Korean and English version. The objective was to enable students to read using a bilingual method. Students from upper-elementary read three books (novels), a simplified version of *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling (2010), *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London (2007), and adapted stories from *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (2005) and did the extensive reading from Breaking News English (breakingnewsenglish.com) and ReadWorks (readworks.org), two online resources. Also, a close-reading workbook (Swanson, 2016) was used. Students practiced close reading different passages with careful and guided instruction from the teacher.

Middle-elementary students studied one book of short stories by O. Henry (Pitner, 2014) and did some extensive reading the first week. They also used a close-reading workbook (*Smiles from 2nd Grade*, 2011), which would help them to work on mastering the skill of close reading. Students also did extensive reading activities to improve their literacy rate from the reading book *Reading 2a* (Buckley, Hynicka, & Schoneweis, 1990).

Teaching Method

As part of a bilingual framework, the students were asked to memorize words from a word list with English and the Korean equivalent. These lists were distributed on the first day of the week, and students went through the text and highlighted the words. Students then completed the reading of the texts at home and during class time. The following is specific information about each level.

During the first week, students read one chapter from an *O. Henry* story. The teacher introduced Chapter 1 to the students with vocabulary memorized and with Korean equivalents for a word test, which took place on Friday. Students completed comprehension questions from the text. The teacher read aloud the first time to model the pronunciation, and then the students read aloud the following days. Reading aloud was

limited and not used all the time.

The techniques that the teacher used in the first week involved reading a sentence aloud and having students find the text on a page given. Students had to copy summarized sentences from the story into their notebooks. They also had to memorize the story and use summary indicators, such as “in the beginning,” “in the middle,” and “in the end.” For the specific close-reading class, the teacher taught the students how to annotate their text and highlight particular sections, including the beginning, middle, and end, as well as keywords. The teacher also conducted jig-saw readings of the text, cutting out parts of the text for students to piece together to sequence the events. Finally, students used a graphic organizer to assimilate the text.

The second week involved reading and memorizing the summarized text from the book. Students took a tennis ball and passed it across the room to take turns reading the passages. Students also did some memorization of text. The teacher summarized the second chapter of the stories in *O. Henry* and created a story wall that the students could use as they did a close reading of the text. The teacher created worksheets to guide students’ understanding of the summarized text that corresponded with the word wall. In the second week, students also continued their highlighting and annotating of the text that they did in Week 1

The third week included the study of the third story in the *O. Henry* reading book. The students studied the story. They heard the story read aloud with the CD. Then the students memorized sections of the story. The teacher also gave the students a dictation that involved reading sentences from the summarized text on a word wall and having students write them down. Additionally, students did gap-fill activities with the word wall and were able to walk over and check their answers on the word wall.

For the upper-elementary students, the teacher focused on integrating intensive and extensive reading into the program. Students read using extensive reading for three different literary texts. In addition, the students were completing more extensive reading with Breaking News English and ReadWorks resources that they were using for homework. The goal was to have the students read as much as possible and to increase their literacy level.

During the first week, the students studied Chapters 1 and 2 from *The Jungle Book*, and they learned how to summarize the text from

Chapters 1 and 2. They had to memorize the text that was written on the board. Students had to write summaries of Chapters 1 and 2 in their notebook, and then they had to say it out loud. Students read 2–3 chapters from *The Jungle Book*. They also did an extensive reading from *The Call of the Wild*. Students also did a ball game wherein students learned how to do the “beginning,” “middle,” and “end.” Sequencing was not as much emphasized. Students also watched the movie, *Mowgli* (Kloves, Cavendish, & Barron, 2018), and wrote a movie review about it using the teacher’s model. The movie review was a way to help students with their writing, which is a necessary skill for them to acquire and develop for when they are promoted to secondary school. For close reading, students had to analyze and color code a given text for keywords, expressions, and ideas. Students had to learn how to find the beginning, middle, and end of the given text.

In Week 2, students finished *The Jungle Book* and explored new topics. Students continued their extensive reading in *The Call of the Wild*, which they studied carefully with a Korean teacher. The teacher wanted to challenge the students, realizing the material was a bit easy for them, so he assimilated resources from a critical reading book with junior TOEFL-level questions (Walters, 2008). The two passages studied were on Woody Allen (pp. 50–54) and *Moby Dick* (pp. 86–91). Students had to learn how to carefully read and answer questions about the text. As part of a close-reading practice test, under timed conditions, students read and analyzed a text with a beginning, middle, and end, and practiced summarizing the text. Students completed extensive reading homework regularly during the week and wrote reading logs that summarized their reading with multiple parts of the story.

In Week 3, students studied another extensive reading book about Sherlock Holmes (Doyle, 2005). Students had daily reading assignments at home, and the comprehension questions were checked in class. Additionally, the teacher gave more readings from Breaking News English and ReadWorks, which were discussed in class, along with the new vocabulary words. Students did a preview read of the texts at home with preparation in reading, vocabulary, and answering multiple-choice questions, and then they came to class to talk about them. The teacher would explain vocabulary and the answers by referencing the text and specific sections highlighted. Finally, the teacher reviewed these words intensively through word puzzles, games of charades, and flash card games. Students were also tested on vocabulary in context.

RESULTS

After almost exactly three weeks, the students retook the same reading comprehension test with the following results:

TABLE 3. Post-test Results for Middle-Elementary Students

Students	Total Score (%)	Story 1 (%)	Story 2 (%)	Grade Level	Age
Student 1	60	78	33	2	8
Student 2	20	22	17	4	10
Student 3	87	100	67	2	8
Student 4	67	67	67	3	9
Student 5	67	78	50	2	8
Student 6	27	33	17	2	8
Student 7	67	78	50	2	8
Student 8	47	56	33	2	8
Average Scores	55	64	42		

The targets were all achieved for middle-elementary students (see Table 3). The overall average was 55%, the Story 1 average was 64%, and the Story 2 average was 42%.

TABLE 4. Post-test Results for Upper-Elementary Students

Students	Total Score (%)	Story 1 (%)	Story 2 (%)	Grade Level	Age
Student 1	87	78	100	4	11
Student 2	93	89	100	4	11
Student 3	53	44	67	4	11
Student 4	93	100	83	5	11
Student 5	67	67	67	5	12
Average Scores	79	76	83		

The targets were almost achieved for the upper-elementary students (see Table 4). The total score average was 79%. Story 1's average was about the same as the previous time at 76%. Story 2's average surpassed the expected outcome at 83%.

The results from middle-elementary showed a 31% increase for the

overall average from the pre-test to the post-test. The average score for the pre-test was 42%, and the post-test average was 55%. For the individual tests, the increase for Story 1 was from 25 to 64%. For Story 2, the increase was from 25 to 41%, or a 64% increase. For upper-elementary, the overall average from the pre-test was 68% and the post-test average was 79%, so the increase was 16%. For Story 1, the percentage increase was the same. The score did not change. For Story 2, the percentage increased from 53% to 83%, which is a 56% increase. Overall, there was an increase in virtually all students. Eleven out of 13 students improved in their overall performance (85%). There were two outliers in this experiment. Student 8 in middle-elementary decreased to 47% from 60%, and Student 6 in middle-elementary fell from 33% to 27%.

The overall success rate of this experiment shows the amount of work that was carried out to complete close-reading instruction in middle-elementary and upper-elementary classes. There was greater success in the middle-elementary group regarding improvement. The increase in the average score demonstrated that this method helped students in their overall literacy. The middle-elementary students were taught using a different method from the upper-elementary students. They had less homework and had more intensive reading sessions in class. More schoolwork was completed during class time, which was two hours a day for the week.

The upper-elementary students had more extensive homework and outside reading to do, especially in fiction reading. They also completed close reading in class, but a lot more instruction was given to promote speaking and writing fluency. With outside work, students read at home but may have been slower to complete their assignments. The students were able to increase their score by 56% in the fiction reading of "More Trees." Because this part of the test was in line with the students' grade level (fifth grade) and the genre that they were studying (novels), the students were able to see a significant increase in their performance on the fiction work test. The use of extensive reading was effective in getting the students to learn how to read more efficiently and with more care with this result. On the other hand, the reason that the first reading (third-grade level) passage did not see an increase was likely due to the higher emphasis on extensive reading in fictional works. However, the students used Breaking News English and other resources to study non-fiction works. The effectiveness of using these works or the method

of teaching may have needed development and improvement.

DISCUSSION

It can be concluded that the use of the close-reading technique is an effective teaching method for young learners in a Korean context. With a blend of teaching strategies, the teacher can effectively instruct students with a close-reading method that helps students to read better and more carefully. The 85% improvement rate on the post-test that was given at the end of the three-week camp demonstrates the effectiveness of this method. The reading test that was provided with 15 questions, two different passages with two different grade levels (middle- and upper-elementary), and questions with varying degrees of difficulty, was an accurate benchmark for students' ability in reading in English. The results of this study can prove that the teaching method was able to improve the score of students on the reading test across three different areas: vocabulary, reading comprehension, and sequence of events. The teacher demonstrated a teaching style that incorporated essential aspects that prepared students for the test. However, it is important to note the limitations of this study, as it only represents a small case with only 13 students in an elementary school setting. Additionally, there were no first-grade students included, which could have provided an expanded range of students from the beginning of their schooling to upper-elementary level. The focus was on only middle- and upper-elementary-level students.

From this action research study, the implications for elementary schools in Korea include a shift of focus for native-speaking English teachers from merely speaking and writing to reading instruction. With most foreign teachers focusing on speaking skills with elementary students, it is hard to find foreigners who are teaching reading skills, even while teaching conversational English. Using reading as a tool of instruction is vital to helping students to develop fluency in a foreign language. The method used was close reading, which is a technique that should be employed more by Korean English teachers and native English teachers.

Given that the method used in this experiment included elements of bilingual instruction and purely English methods, it is apparent that

providing a blend of techniques is useful in enabling students to understand what they are reading. The implementation of close reading is essential because the truth is that many students in Korea are not reading. They are on the Internet, they play games, and they do not engage in challenging activities for the mind. Training young minds to slow down and effectively read a piece of text is an essential task for the EFL teacher who is teaching reading to students. Whether that is a Korean or native English teacher, the principle is still the same. Students need to be instilled with an appreciation for learning and profoundly understanding the texts that they read. Without effective instruction, they cannot read the complex documents that are used in everyday life. Students need to learn how to read because their livelihood and future success in the world depend upon it.

To be a competent worker in society, one needs to know how to read, no matter what the topic is. Therefore, instilling an increased appreciation for close reading is essential to enable students to reach their potential in university study and beyond. It is also clear that the foundations for this method of instruction need to be laid at the elementary level. With many elementary students growing up with gaps in their English knowledge due to poor experiences with English language instruction, it becomes more crucial for teachers to fill in these voids that inevitably hinder progress and development. Native English-speaking teachers should become mindful of how to incorporate close reading and other intensive techniques to get students to think and grow from what they are learning. One must give the children something worth reading that will help the students grow. Elementary school is not merely a period in which a young child can play and spend time frivolously; it is also a time for developing and maturing. And this must be instilled in the children from a young age. Disciplined readings will enable children to be competent students once they reach secondary school and enter university. Therefore, it is crucial that teachers find ways to make reading a more engaging and beneficial exercise for young learners. Through their active engagement with reading, students can truly become the leaders of Korea, who are competent, intelligent, and innovative people of society.

How can native English-speaking teachers encourage reading to young Korean learners? One way is to encourage them to read both in Korean and English. Students need to be able to access the background knowledge that comes from reading in their first language. It is crucial

to give students the tools they can use to motivate them to learn in a second language. If students do not have this skill, they will falter and not be able to read. Developing literacy is important for students, because it is a skill they can use for the rest of their lives. By developing both first and second language literacy, students will be fluent in both English and Korean. Motivating students to get to this point is a challenge that teachers must address. Native English-speaking teachers need to be pushing their students to go farther than simply taking the TOEFL or TOEIC and reaching a score. The Korean English education industry is saturated with test preparation. What a native English-speaking teacher can do is create a platform for students to learn and develop their English skill in reading and writing, so they can be fluent in speaking, as well. This skill can be developed independently of a test-prep skill, so that students focus on learning, rather than simple but ineffective rote memorization of vocabulary. It also encourages students to become masters of their own learning, and they can become motivated to learn more and read more widely, which increases their fluency in language and literacy.

CONCLUSIONS

With a curriculum and a teaching context that is highly geared towards test preparation, it is important to explore additional approaches that can be utilized in the Korean classroom to build reading proficiency. Based on this study, it can be concluded that close reading is an effective way to teach literacy skills to elementary students in Korea. Native English-speaking teachers in Korea can benefit from using a literacy-based method to teach English to Korean speakers by using a bilingual framework that develops both first and second language literacy.

For further reading on the topic of close reading, it is helpful to look at Fisher and Frey (2012) and their study on the importance of close reading in the elementary classroom in their article on using the technique. In addition, Kucer's (2009) book *Dimensions of Literacy* can be a helpful resource on teaching literacy. To extend this study on close reading, it would be possible to include all levels of elementary from first grade to fifth grade and a larger number of students to test the

effectiveness of the method.

As students learn how to read and write, they gain access to the world of knowledge and education, which opens doors for them. Through first and second language literacy, students will discover the key to their future: lifelong learning. Educators and parents across the country can encourage students to not just obtain an esteemed core but receive a true education that will enhance their overall development and enhance their abilities for the rest of their lives. A variety of critical thinking and sociocultural awareness skills are needed, and one way to develop a range of such skills is through literacy, serving to provide a way forward for future success in English language education in Korea.

THE AUTHOR

Jared McKee is an assistant professor of English at Silla University in Busan, South Korea. He received his MA in French studies from Brown University in 2013 and a TEFL certificate in 2015. He has worked in English language teaching since 2010 and is passionate about promoting first and second language literacy. Email: jaredcmckee@outlook.com

REFERENCES

- Adler, M. J., & Van Doren, C. (1972). *How to read a book*. New York, NY: Touchstone. (Original work published 1940)
- Alonzo, J., Basaraba, D., Tindal, G., & Carriveau, R. S. (2009). They read, but how well do they understand? An empirical look at the nuances of measuring reading comprehension. *Assessment for Effective Intervention*, 35(1), 34–44.
- Alonzo, J., Robinson, Q. L., & Tindal, G. (2008). Using school-wide response to intervention to close the achievement gap in reading. *ERS Spectrum*, 29, 1–9.
- Beers, K., & Probst, R. E. (2013). *Notice and note: Strategies for close reading*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Blau, S. D. (2003). *The literature workshop: Teaching texts and their readers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Buckley, D., Hynicka, K., & Schoneweis, A. (1990). *Reading 2a* (3rd ed.). Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press.
- Carnine, D. W., Silbert, J., Kame'enui, E. J., & Tarver, S. G. (2004). *Direct instruction reading*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

- Dakin, C. (2013). *The effects of comprehension through close reading* (Unpublished master's thesis). St. John Fisher College, Pittsford, NY.
- Deno, S. L., & Mirkin, P. M. (1977). *Data-based program modification: A manual*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Leadership Training Institute/Special Education.
- Doyle, A. C. (2005). *The adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (Happy readers, Grade 5-04). Seoul, South Korea: Happy House Readers.
- Erhenworth, M. (2013) Unlocking the secrets of complex text. *Educational Leadership, 71*(3), 16–21.
- Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2012). Close reading in elementary schools. *The Reading Teacher, 66*(3), 179–188.
- Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2015). *Text-dependent questions, grades K–5: Pathways to close and critical reading*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Lapp, D. (2012). *Text complexity: Raising rigor in reading*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Henderson, S. C., & Buskist, C. (2011). Promoting the comprehension of teachers and students using young adult literature. *Theory into Practice, 50*(3), 231–238.
- Kipling, R. (2010). *The jungle book*. Seoul, South Korea: YBM Reading Library.
- Kloves, S., Cavendish, J., & Barron, D. (Producers), & Serkis, A. (Director). (2018). *Mowgli: Legend of the jungle* [Motion picture]. United States & United Kingdom: Warner Bros. Pictures & Imaginarium.
- Kucer, S. B. (2009). *Dimensions of literacy: A conceptual base for teaching reading and writing in school settings* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Lapp, D., & Flood, J. (1983). *Teaching reading to every child*. New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Leu, D. J., & Kinzer, C. K. (1999). *Effective literacy instruction (K–8)* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- London, J. (2007). *Call of the wild* (Penguin English Active Readers). London, UK: Pearson Education.
- Mezynski, K. (1983). Issues concerning the acquisition of knowledge: Effects of vocabulary training on reading comprehension. *Review of Educational Research, 53*(2), 253–279.
- Ness, M. (2011). Teachers' use and attitudes toward informational text in K–5 classrooms. *Reading Psychology, 32*(1), 28–53.
- Newkirk, T. (2011). *The art of slow reading: Six time-honored practices for engagement*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Paul, R., & Elder, L. (2003). Critical thinking... and the art of close reading (Part 1). *Journal of Developmental Education, 27*(2), 36–39.
- Pitner, S. (2014). *O. Henry short stories*. Seoul, South Korea: Darakwon.
- Qian, D. D. (1999). Assessing the roles of depth and breadth of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension. *Canadian Modern Language Review,*

- 56(2), 282–308.
- Richards, I. A. (1929). *Practical criticism*. London, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Smiles from 2nd grade. (2011). *Super sequencing fun* (Reading and writing activities). Fancy Dog Studio. Available from <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Super-Sequencing-Fun-Reading-and-Writing-Activities-480255>
- Smith, M. W., Appleman, D., & Wilhelm, J. D. (2014). *Uncommon core: Where the authors of the standards go wrong about instruction and how you can get it right*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Snow, C. E. (2002). *Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program in reading comprehension*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.
- Swanson, A. (2016). *Close reading* (Information and literature bundle). Available from <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Alyssha-Swanson-Teaching-And-Tapas>
- Tindal, G., & Marston, D. (1991). *Classroom-based assessment*. Columbus, OH: Charles Merrill.
- Wallis, J. (n.d.). Ensuring student success with complex text. Fisher and Frey's PD Resource Center for Close and Critical Reading. Retrieved from https://www.corwin.com/sites/default/files/612_gs_whitepaper.pdf
- Walsh, K. S. (2017). Close reading, teaching the conflicts: Reading reflectively in Korea. *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 48(2), 127–154.
- Walters, B. (2008). *Critical readers 2*. Seoul, South Korea: Darakwon.
- Yovanoff, P., Duesbery, L., Alonzo, J., & Tindal, G. (2005). Grade level invariance of a theoretical causal structure predicting reading comprehension with vocabulary and oral reading fluency. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 24(3), 4–12.

APPENDIX A

Text 1: Chicago Fire

Grade Level: 3rd Grade

(345 words)

The Chicago Fire CCSSR1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Chicago started out as a small town. Then many people moved to Chicago. They wanted to be part of the new city. They were brave. They came here to make a new life. They started with nothing. They worked hard. They made their homes good places to live.

But Chicago grew so fast people did not have time to build homes of brick. So, they made them of wood. The city had to put in streets quickly. The streets were made of wood. People had just put wooden planks down to make streets. They stuck them together with tar.

Some people said to watch out. They said that all the wood was dangerous. There could be a fire. But more people kept moving here. They needed homes in a hurry. So they kept building more wooden houses.

More than 100 years ago there was a big fire in Chicago. It was 1871. It had been hot all summer. The trees and bushes were dry because they needed rain. It had not rained enough to keep them growing green.

The fire kept burning. It lasted more than 30 hours. People tried to stop it. But all the wood kept the fire burning. Finally, it started to rain. That helped to put the fire out.

When people saw how much was burned, they were worried. How would they be able to stay here? But the people who had moved here had started with nothing. They had built the city. They could have moved. But they decided to stay. They would rebuild the city of Chicago.

The day after the fire, the newspaper had a headline that said “Cheer up! Chicago shall rise again.” People stayed and worked together. They

built new homes of brick.

People helped each other. They shared food. They shared homes. And they passed laws about building in Chicago. From then on, people would build with bricks so homes would not burn. By 1891, Chicago was a big city again. People who had stayed felt glad. They knew they had made the right choice.

Make a timeline. Show what happened. Write what you think. Why would people stay in Chicago after the fire? Use information from the passage and your own ideas.

Source: DePaul University (2005). Center for Urban Education at DePaul University. Retrieved from <https://teacher.depaul.edu/Documents/ChicagoFireNonfiction3rdgrade.pdf>

APPENDIX B

Text #2: More Trees

Grade Level: 5th Grade

(420 words)

CCSSR1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

When my teacher asked me to write a letter to the mayor asking for a change, I thought long and hard about what I wanted to say. I considered the changes I would like to see in our community. The first thing that came to mind was that I wanted a playground. We used to have a playground, but the community got too crowded, so they built homes where the playground used to be. I would also like to have a library. We had a library once, but it burned down. People said it required too much money to rebuild it. What would the best change be?

My teacher said I need to choose just one thing I want and write about that one thing. So, after I thought about everything, I decided on one particular change I wished to see. I chose trees, because I want more trees in our neighborhood. If we have more trees, the city will be much cooler in summer. Trees will also make the city much more beautiful, too. During wintertime, we can hang lights on the trees, which will make the city much brighter. This was a change everyone would enjoy.

I wrote my idea to the mayor, and I also told my family about it. My mother told the block club the idea, and they all liked it. The members of the block club called a city office and requested trees to plant on our block. Although it took several weeks to get an answer, eventually the answer came. Our neighborhood received ten trees!

One Saturday, the people in the block club planted our new trees. To plant them, we needed large holes, and it was difficult work. City workers used big machines to dig them. Then, we had to water the trees. People took very great care of the trees. The trees started out quite small, but over time they started to grow. Birds even came to nest in them, and now in the morning I can hear birds singing. I knew the trees would be pretty, but I didn't realize there would be more birds. What

a difference I had made. The trees really changed our community.

I'm glad I wrote the letter, and I'm especially glad I told my mother my idea. I hope the mayor puts trees all over the city. We already have got them on my block, and they make the block a better place. One thing I learned is that a change starts with you.

What is the lesson or theme that the writer wants you to understand from this story? That is an inference. Explain why you infer that.

Source: DePaul University (2005). Center for Urban Education. Retrieved from <https://teacher.depaul.edu/Documents/MoreTreesFiction5thGrade.pdf>

The Journey from Specialist to Generalist: Creating a Skills-Based Program for Undergraduates at a Private University in Seoul

Tory S. Thorkelson

Hanyang University, Seoul, Korea

This paper is intended as both a brief history and a reflection by the author on the creation of the four-skills-based undergraduate program for students in the Department of English Language and Literature at Hanyang University's Seoul campus. It shows the journey from a handful of unrelated courses taught primarily by faculty from the Practical English Education Committee's Freshmen English program into a top-ranked and successful program within a program offering a mixture of CBI, ESP, EAP, and SBELT courses to better train the department's students for life after graduation as graduate students or full time employees at domestic or international companies. Finally, it offers an analysis of what worked and what did not to help other programs/curriculum designers avoid some of the inevitable pitfalls involved in creating an all-new program of this kind.

Keywords: program development, curriculum, university, EFL, ESL, CBI, EAP, ESP, SBELT

INTRODUCTION

In 2006, eight to ten instructors from the Freshmen English Program (originally the Practical English Education Center, or PEEC) were interviewed individually by various members of the English Language and Literature (ELL) Department in order to fill four full-time faculty positions within the department (see Appendix A for the full list of program faculty from 2006 to the present) to teach a variety of skills-based courses, including writing, speaking, interview skills, and presentations (see Appendix A for a comprehensive list). Two of those hired had previously taught courses for the ELL Department in the past,

and the others were hired based on their reputations. As the foreword of the *Practical English Communication: Integrated Four Skills* (2005) textbook states,

Practical English Communication (or PEC) ... first has introduced the concept of “pseudo English for Special Purposes (ESP)”... according to the three big divisions of PEC I courses (i) humanities and social sciences, (ii) natural sciences and engineering, and (iii) fine arts, music, and physical education ... second, ... the textbook consists of seven common chapters and nine pseudo-ESP chapters; three chapters for each of the three specialization divisions ... and the “four skills of English” are more equally integrated ... and last, it contains sections for vocabulary, grammar, and learning strategies ... to give instructors more room for flexibility, so that they can take a more selective approach.... (p. iv)

This suggests the movement of the overall PEEC program towards more major- and department-specific courses within a four-skills framework and the foundation for our current program.

Over the next 13 years, all of those hired by the ELL Department’s program endeavored to improve the English ability of the program’s students while also working on their skills within the framework of the overall ELL Department. Through a combination of classes and theoretical ideas taken from content-based instruction (CBI), English for academic purposes (EAP), English for specific purposes (ESP), and skills-based English language teaching (SBELT), the instructors in this program-within-a-program have supplemented the original literature and linguistics courses with what are collectively referred to as “life skills.” On the ELL Department’s homepage, the second highlight states the following:

Special Curriculum Focused on Developing Practical English

The Department of English Language and Literature at Hanyang University emphasizes practical English by incorporating Speaking, Writing, and practical English grammar into the curriculum. In the Speaking and Writing class, students are divided into three different foreign professors [sic], each of whom is specifically trained in speaking and writing English that will be practically useful in employment and occupational settings. (Spring, 2019)

This paper will outline and describe the evolution of this program from its inception into a component of the top-rated English program in Korea (2015–16) and one that is consistently in the top three for humanities at our university (first place in 2019) and nationally (see Appendix B for 2018). According to the QS World Rankings, Hanyang University (HYU) ranks 25th in Asia, 7th in Korea, and 151st worldwide (2019), but this is up from 215th (2015) and 193rd (2016) to put the program’s achievements in perspective.

THE PROGRAM

Faculty

A good program necessitates good instructors and good instruction. Over the years, our program faculty has included a large number of those with master’s degrees (in TESL/TEFL, applied linguistics, and international studies) along with a variety of undergraduate degrees in history/psychology, political science/pre-law, film and theater studies, and elementary education, to list just a few. In essence, the program has benefitted from what Kahneman and Tversky (1993) refer to as “the outside view” as opposed to the more restrictive and common “inside view” that is the typical outcome of professionalization and specialization attained through higher education and lengthy experience within a given job, field, or career: “We take the inside view when we make judgements based narrowly on the details ... that are right in front of us.... The outside view is deeply counterintuitive, as it requires a decision-maker to ignore unique surface features ... on which they are an expert, and instead look outside.... It requires a mindset switch from narrow to broad” (as cited in Epstein, 2019, pp. 108–109). Our program would not be as solid and effective as it has been to date without a variety of viewpoints and backgrounds to enrich both the foundations of the program and the courses that have been offered over the past 13 years.

Theoretical Foundations

In an article for *The English Connection*, Thorkelson (2007) outlined

the background theoretical foundations and applications needed for course creation within the aforementioned PEEC program. The relevant sections are included below, as they formed the basis for creating the most effective and popular courses within the current program.

Definition of CBI

Richards and Rodgers (as cited in Krahnke, 1987) define CBI as “the teaching of content or information in the language being learned with little or no direct or explicit effort to teach the language itself separately from the content being taught” (p. 65).

Wesche (as cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2000), however, states that “in content-based language teaching, the claim in a sense is that students get “two for one” – both content knowledge and increased language proficiency” (p. 142).

Perhaps the best way to envision the benefits of CBI is as a continuum where the language taught is either incidental to or a key recognizable component of what is being taught. How you view the place of language learning in your CBI classroom will in turn dictate how much explicit language teaching you do inside the classroom. It will also help pinpoint where you fall on the CBI “continuum” (see Figure 1).

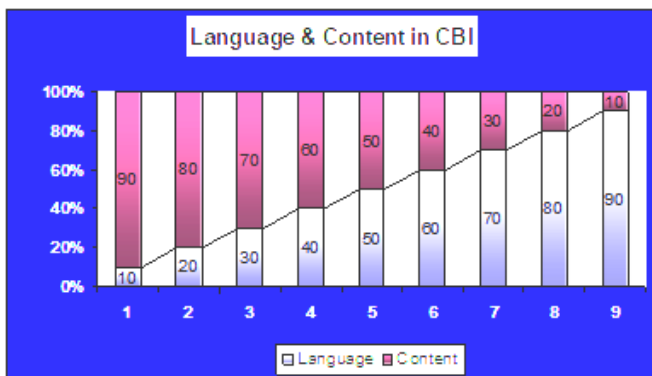


FIGURE 1. The CBI Continuum: Language–Content.

Two Principles

It is, of course, impossible to divorce the language from the content

(or vice versa), and there is no reason why you would want to do so. However, the issue is not whether to ignore language but rather whether to teach it consciously or allow it to develop naturally through the ebbs and flows of normal classroom interactions between students using the target language and between students and the teacher using, at least primarily, the target language to communicate. For this to work successfully, the two principles below, which formed the basis of a successful CBI program at HYU, have been key.

Principle One

People learn a second language more successfully when they use the language as a means of acquiring information rather than as an end in itself.

How many times have you heard your students complain that English is “boring” or “difficult”? When students are simply learning or reviewing something they find uninteresting (like grammar, perhaps), they turn off and tune out for the most part, and so any possible benefits of the carefully crafted lesson go out the window.

On the other hand, even the lowest ability (but motivated) students get both enjoyment and positive experiences out of an activity like a restaurant roleplay or a “matchmaking game” done as an information gap. The motivation is in the interaction with friends and peers as much as it is in the lesson or content. But, if the content is something students are already interested in, then half the formula for success is already there.

Principle Two

Content-based instruction better reflects the learner’s needs for learning a second language.

Obviously, this depends on who the learners are, but it is certainly true of the increasing numbers of international students as well as those students who have spent at least a few years overseas and don’t want to be stuck in basic conversation classes with all their major subject classmates and be bored to tears by the content. According to an article in the *University World News*,

The number of foreign students grew to a record high of almost 19% last year, according to a report from the National Institute for International Education under the education ministry. The number has rocketed to 142,205 this April from 123,850 the previous year,

and compares to 12,000 foreign students 15 years ago.... According to the report released in late September, 70,232 of the total are in degree programmes while the rest are in non-degree programmes, particularly Korean language courses at universities.... (Chung, 2018)

This does not mean that so-called “low-level” students can’t enjoy the benefits of a well-crafted CBI course. It simply means that they may need more explicit language teaching as a larger percentage of the course or that the “adjunct language instruction” format mentioned below will be the preferred approach for classes composed of large numbers of these kinds of students. While some departments and programs offer these types of courses, the ELL Department had only offered one prior to the beginning of our present program using the *team-teaching approach* (see below for details). The courses offered within the present program more closely fulfill the *skills-based approach* since the filling in of gaps in the students’ four-skills knowledge (e.g., listening, speaking, reading, and writing) is the goal, with the productive skills of speaking and writing being the primary focus for the most part (see Appendix B for lists of courses).

To put this in perspective, Thorkelson (2016) found the following breakdown for courses taught by Korea TESOL (KOTESOL) members in 2014:

TABLE 1. What Subjects Do Most of Us Teach in 2014?

Subject	Percent
English Conversation	80.8
English Education	23.3
Teacher Training Program	17.2
Listening	42.4
Reading	41.1
Writing	51.0
Presentation Skills	22.5
Interview/Job Skills	13.2
Business English	9.9
Debate	10.6
Drama	3.3
EAP/ESP	14.6

Note. KOTESOL survey from Thorkelson (2016).

While there has been a slow shift to other types of courses, the four-skills courses are still the majority in terms of what is taught. The ELL Department program has been ahead of the majority in this regard, apparently, since Advanced English Conversation was only part of our program for the first two years (and summer/winter classes until 2010). The other university-level CBI courses fall into a number of categories as explained below.

University-Level Courses

1. **Theme-based language instruction:** A language course where the syllabus is constructed around themes or topics like “pollution” or “women’s rights.” The language syllabus is secondary to the general theme of the course. Language analysis and practice are based upon and arise from the topical focus of the course (see the course Current Events: Listening and Discussion).
2. **Sheltered content instruction:** Content courses taught by an area specialist to a group of ESL/EFL students put together for this purpose. Thus, the instructor can tailor course content to meet the specific needs of the students – whether linguistic, cultural, or otherwise (see the courses The Story of English and Introduction to Acting).
3. **Adjunct language instruction:** Students are enrolled in two linked courses – a content course and a language course – with both courses sharing the same content and complementing each other in terms of mutually coordinated assignments. While the content course is taught in English, the language course may or may not be taught in the L1 depending on the level of the students.
4. **Team-teaching approach (a modification of the above):** Teachers must coordinate closely on what they teach, how they teach it, and the materials they use, but it can be doubly beneficial for the students in that they have access to the knowledge and experience of two teachers instead of just one. In this author’s case, the Korean professor’s focus was on acting for television and film, while this author focused on acting on stage (see the course Introduction to Acting).
5. **Skills-based approach:** Focuses on a specific skill area – usually academic. Often mimics an academic course in its make-up and

combines language skills with academic skills like reading, discussion, writing, and so on to better meet the needs of students in a particular subject area (see the courses Professional Presentation Skills and Interviews).

(Adapted from Richards and Rodgers, 2001, pp. 216–217.)

Now, in order to make the details of each type of course taught clear and to show how they differ from the usual “four-skills” or “conversation” courses, this author and his colleagues came up with the course description form (see Appendix C) based on a course proposal form originally created by John Morgan (program head teacher at the time) with input from this author and others working in the PEEC program at HYU’s Seoul Campus. Below, are detailed descriptions of each of the example courses mentioned above with a focus on courses that have been taught by this author within both the PEEC and ELL programs.

Example Courses

Introduction to Acting 1

There were 20–30 students in this class, usually a mix of theater and other majors – and the majority of them were motivated. The class goals were to introduce students to the fundamentals of acting and stagecraft while giving them as many opportunities to apply what they learned as both individuals and groups. An accompanying workbook was created by this author, mostly from my own experiences as an actor, but also using material from Spolin’s (2000) book on acting, for example. Specifically, the improvisation exercises from *Improvisation for the Theater* including the Mirror exercises (pp. 61–62) and the Gibberish exercises (pp. 114–118), for example (see article in TEC cited below for more details).

The course evaluation criteria consisted of attendance/participation (30%), journal (20%), monologue (20%), and a final scene/skit (30%). This was an uncurved class.

This author enjoyed this class and would teach it again. The only problems were (a) two hours a week is too limited for this class/subject and (b) the course was so popular that the author had to turn away 5–10 students every term. This class evolved a lot, but the author would really have liked to hold auditions to scare away students in search of an easy grade and to make for a smaller, more manageable group.

Professional Presentation Skills

There were 30–35 students in each of two sections – one DIS (Division of International Studies) and the other a mix of majors – and the majority of them were motivated. The class goals were to introduce the essential elements of a good presentation while giving ample opportunities for the students to apply what they learned. A workbook was created by the author, and an *Oxford Presentations* video, along with online material from YouTube, was used to highlight many aspects of the presentations being taught.

The course evaluation criteria consisted of attendance/participation (20%), written assignments (20%), and three graded presentations, each worth 20% (3 x 20% = 60%). This was initially a curved course that in later iterations became an uncurved class and was initially only taught in the spring terms.

The problems encountered include that it was a multi-level open elective that was uncurved. Most of the students were motivated but a few were not. Everyone wanted the grade of A, but many were not willing to work hard enough to deserve it. This author enjoyed this course and would teach it again. The only problems were (a) two hours a week was too short, (b) most departments wanted to teach more than one skillset in the limited time (presentations and writing, for example), and (c) 30-plus students are too many for this type of class. The number should be limited to 20–25.

The Story of English

There were 25-30 students in a mixed class – the majority of them were motivated. The class content and goals focused on introducing students to the language evolution and cultures of the English speaking world and not on linguistics as many students expected or assumed. An accompanying workbook was created by the teacher based around the core materials of the *Story of English* book and videos as well as the follow-up book and DVD set *Do you Speak American?*

The course evaluation criteria consisted of attendance/participation (20%), two papers (20%), two presentations (40%), and two open book tests (20%). This was an uncurved class and was only taught in the fall semester.

The problems encountered included that it was a multi-level open elective that was uncurved. Some students felt the class was not what they had expected: It was designed and proposed as a senior seminar,

but the students ranged from freshmen to seniors. This author enjoyed this course and would teach it again. The only problems were that (a) two hours a week was quite limiting and (b) the students objected that it was too academic/labor intensive, but most commented after the course that it was a positive experience. If taught again, the author would modify the workbook material slightly and add a bit more variety.

How Did It Happen?

When this author used to do workshops on this topic, there were a lot of comments like “My university would never go for this” or “My students could never handle this type of course.” In order to respond to these rather self-defeating attitudes, this section will explain briefly how these courses came about for the PEEC and ELL programs.

The Professional Presentations course for DIS and the Introduction to Acting course with Dr. Seong Je Kim were requested by the departments and designed with the departmental and students’ needs in mind.

However, the version of the Introduction to Acting course described above and the Story of English course were both original courses proposed when our department put out a request for CBI courses. In these cases, the request went out to all of our teachers through email. With little guidance as to what we needed to submit to get these approved, a detailed class syllabus with objectives, materials, resources, grade breakdown, etc. with an attached weekly plan was created by the author.

The acting course was a bit more detailed as it was written to counter most of the problems with the co-taught course, but the Story of English course was fairly basic at first in order to assure approval. In the end, both courses were approved and became very successful within a short period of time. While most of this was probably luck and having a boss who was willing to take some chances, listening to what the students wanted and building on the initial success were also factors in helping to build a set of courses within the Practical English program that were then transferable to the new ELL Department’s curriculum framework. Of course, some colleagues might have claimed it was done just to get out of teaching three or four Freshman English classes a term, but they would only be partly correct.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CREATING YOUR OWN SUCCESSFUL CBI COURSE

1. Be clear about the pre-requisites and types of students the course is likely to work for. While these are often ignored by students and administrators alike, they will help you limit the scope of what you are teaching and meet the needs of the anticipated audience for the course through your lessons and class materials.
2. Set class size limits. Writing classes, as many of us know, need to be smaller because the workload for the students and teacher are at least 1.5 times as much as the average conversation class. The same is true of a presentation class, an acting class, and so on. While your preferences may be ignored by the university, if you don't set them from the start, you will most likely end up with 45 students in a class (and classroom) designed for 25–30. If you don't set the limits from day one, you will have no justification for complaining after the fact as far as the school/university is concerned.
3. Do your research/background reading before you propose the course. In an ideal world, you would only be teaching courses on subjects you already have a thorough grasp of. However, this is not an ideal world, and the resources available from publishers are still somewhat limited when it comes to CBI courses, or they have too many expensive components to use. If you are not able to get access to the resources you need to design and teach your hoped-for CBI course – and especially if students can't easily get the textbook you want to use – then it may be better to look at other options before you spend huge amounts of time and money preparing for a course like this.
4. Be clear about what you will teach and how you will evaluate the students. The CBI courses were all limited to two hours a week for 16 weeks – including midterms and finals weeks. This does not give a lot of time to go into any subject in great detail, so keep restrictions like this in mind in designing your course. Of course, you may be lucky and have more time to teach and delve into your topic and/or material.
5. Is the course curved or uncurved? It matters! Students expect

that an uncurved course will be easier than a curved one and that A+ grades are much easier to get without much effort on their part. Convincing them otherwise takes a lot of effort on the instructor's part and – in this author's experience – more detailed class rules and evaluation criteria as well.

6. Pick a subject you enjoy and know something about and that students want to learn about. If you enjoy it, it will be a pleasure to teach, and if it is something students want to learn, they will register and be motivated to do well, even before they enter the classroom. Since the program's instructors receive no extra funding or support for these classes, they had better be ones that we want to teach for their own sake. Otherwise, why bother?
7. Be prepared to do a lot of work at the beginning that will pay off later. It takes this author an average of 100 hours of background reading, wandering around bookstores, and browsing the Internet looking at related or similar materials to get a rough course organized and the beginnings of a workbook together. From there, it takes a lot of reworking, tinkering, and experimentation – in class and out – to get to something presentable. Finally, expect to change anywhere from 10–50% of your materials each time you teach a course. For the classes taught for two years or more, this means that the related workbooks can double or triple in size every year as the course instructor changes, adapts, or adds new material.
8. Don't expect to find a textbook to fulfill all your needs, but you may get lucky. The ELL Department has had an agreement with the university's publisher that the department needed to use a conversation book published by them rather than a commercially available book. On the other hand, most of the commercial textbooks are either unsuitable for the students' needs because of language/cultural content or too expensive (when adding up the cost of the textbook, workbook, instructor's book, audiotape, video/DVD, etc.). Thus, this author prefers workbooks and has created them for all the courses listed above (keeping student costs around 10,000 won in every case except the *Story of English* workbook, which is about 15,000 won). The choice is, of course, up to you.
9. Build on what the students know already and set clear goals for

yourself and them. After almost 23 years in Korea, and almost 21 years teaching at HYU, this author has a good grasp of what the students' needs and abilities are. With that experience in mind, this author has crafted all of the courses above with the students' needs (as expressed on class feedback forms many times in the past) and the instructor's needs in mind (alleviating boredom with conversation classes as well as stretching the author intellectually and professionally). This author has been fortunate to deal with a department and a program that encourages faculty members to do this, and apparent success with the students has surpassed initial hopes in almost every case. The fact that over half of these courses have waiting lists, and those originally offered only once a year have often been offered both terms to meet students' demands, has only encouraged the author to believe that the program planners and instructors have been doing something right. In the end, may your experiences with CBI be even more successful than this author's have been.

REFLECTING ON THE PROGRAM: SUCCESSES AND FAILURES

Jack Richards states (2017),

Curriculum in language teaching refers to the design and implementation of language courses as well the nature of teaching and language that occurs as curricula are implemented. All language teachers are involved in curriculum, although the nature of their engagement depends on their teaching context ... [the] choice of teaching approach or method cannot therefore be made unless a great deal is known about the context for the language program and the interactions between the various elements involved.... [This article like his] book offers two perspectives. The first ... [is] the traditional approach that considers an effective curriculum as one resulting from systematic procedures of needs analysis, planning goals and outcomes, syllabus design, course planning, selection of teaching methods and materials, and evaluation. This is ... the product-focused curriculum perspective. The second perspective ... considers

curriculum from the standpoint of classroom processes ... it complements the product-focused approach by describing how curriculum arises from the process of teaching and learning that teachers create in the classroom. (pp. 1-2)

For most programs, this is a balancing act between what the university or institution wants to achieve (i.e., institutional curriculum) and the teacher's interpretation and implementation of the curriculum (i.e., teacher's curriculum) and what happens to the curriculum within the classroom as the teacher and learner engage in the learning process (see Jack Richards, 2017). Having designed the program from the beginning and having taught many of the students from freshmen to junior/senior level has allowed for both types of curriculum to positively influence the curriculum at all levels. However, no program is perfect.

With regard to the current ELL program at HYU, this section highlights what has and has not worked in building the solid undergraduate program we have today in terms of all of the above curriculum types.

Level Testing

From day one, level testing was required for all classes in week 1. As there was a small group of 2-4 teachers, the instructors were able to crosscheck each other and make sure that students got into the right class/level. These tests were created in-house and this allowed for a variety of questions and topics for both the speaking and writing tests. While it was a bit of a headache to oversee this process, it paid off in classes that were not mixed levels for the most part. As a result, each instructor could focus on building language and other skills at the right level for students at the novice, intermediate, and advanced levels. Initially, three levels were offered for each class taught at the same times on the same days and grouped by student ability.

Good Colleagues

This author cannot say enough about colleagues. A like-minded officemate, for example, has helped build the program from the ground up. While our approaches are worlds apart, we are on the same page in terms of what we want our students to get out of our classes and the

program. We constantly share ideas and bounce test items, new approaches, or other issues off of each other. The classes and program would not be nearly as good without this process.

While this has not been such a big issue within the ELL program, K. S. Yeum and T. S. Thorkelson (2016) write,

The importance of cross-cultural understanding and leadership needs to be emphasized in the global age, where English is taught as a global/international language. Discussing intercultural leadership in the ELT profession is very ambitious and challenging due to the diverse variables to be covered such as: organizational culture and leadership, cross(inter)-cultural issues among stakeholders involved, and teacher leadership within classrooms in terms of socio-cultural aspects. However, to enhance teaching/learning quality in any ELT organization, looking into cross-cultural communication practices within the given context is not a matter of choice any longer; it has become a necessity. Many language programs are easily bicultural and multicultural even within EFL settings where students are relatively homogeneous groups. (p. 38)

As mentioned previously, with the increasing numbers of international students at universities in Korea, this is an issue that will become more and more crucial (Chung, 2018).

Training Students in Life Skills

This author is no longer a true ESL/EFL professional as he has been teaching more EAP/ESP/CBI-type classes and so-called “life skills” courses. These include writing classes (both academic and business writing), presentation skills, job skills, critical thinking, and discussion/debate skills among others. While the program does teach other subjects, the real takeaways for students are improved abilities in speaking, writing, and the above areas, which will serve them well wherever they end up (assuming they keep using English regularly after graduation in some way or other).

The Graduation Paper/Capstone

When this author and his colleagues first arrived at the university,

students were handing in papers on a wide variety of subjects and formats. There was no consistency or oversight. We created and taught a capstone course that walked them through writing the required 3000-word research papers from brainstorming to the finished paper. Although the graduation paper itself was gotten rid of a few years ago, we still consider this to be one of our greatest accomplishments, and at least one section of this course is taught each fall, mostly due to student demand for a more challenging writing class. The course now incorporates other styles of writing like newspaper articles or poetry and short stories to broaden the writing experiences of the students beyond the purely academic realm.

Rapport with Students

While the instructors do have a few former and current students who are friends in many senses of the word, this is more about being friendly and approachable than being a “friend” to our students. This does backfire on occasion; the author’s library is about 500 dollars poorer due to books, DVDs, and other materials lent to students who never bothered to return them. There still needs to be a bit of distance between professors and students for the job to get done, but students need to know that – if they need help – they can ask. On the other hand, if they do not ask, the instructor may assume they do not need help for the most part.

Constantly Creating and Teaching New Courses/Materials

Don’t misunderstand. This author had the dubious pleasure of self-publishing a course textbook on job skills, which was a mainstay of the program for ten years, and then saw the course cancelled in the fall of 2018 with no prior notice. However, this also means that every two years or so, the faculty gets to create an all-new course or two in a subject that the faculty may or may not know anything about. The most recent was a course on Current Events and Listening. On balance, it keeps the instructors fresh and creative as long as it is only one or two courses at any given time that needs to be created (see Appendix A for a list of courses taught in the ELL program since 2006).

The Feedback Loop

Up until a few years ago, the faculty got feedback from students officially once a year after final grades were handed in. This was mostly numerical in nature, with only a few comments that were helpful. More recently, we started to get midterm and final evaluations through the university website, but again, the results are not always helpful for improving our classes. This author uses an anonymous feedback form at midterm and final examination time for most classes, and these are generally helpful in making any necessary course changes.

Testing What We Teach, Teaching What We Test

While the content of the program's courses may seem straightforward on paper, their intent is not always as easy to grasp from the syllabus and course materials. Further, it makes little sense to simply use midterm and final exams based mostly on the textbook and nothing else in all cases. Some courses require journals and interviews while others may require presentations and research papers. The assessment tools should match the content of the course as well as the skills being taught, and the students should be made aware of this from day one.

Challenging Students in a Variety of Ways

Despite the fact that the program does not have pre-requisites for most of our courses, a freshmen course should be slightly easier than a sophomore course, and a junior-level course should be less difficult than a senior course. The level of content covered as well as the types of assignments required make the differences here clear. In addition, a variety of assignment types that match the levels and abilities of the students in any given course are essential to making this work.

Helping with Clubs or Other Activities

In the more than 30 combined years that the program faculty has been at HYU, we have helped with the English magazine, a number of drama clubs as well as English speech contests, run a class for students planning to go overseas for exchange semesters/years, and helped or

been in any number of English films done by students (one of which was shown at the Busan Film Festival and another that won top prize in the student film competition at HYU in 2016). One colleague offers four-hour-long debate clinics almost every week of the term to help students master these skills. Most of that work has been free, and most of it was a pleasure to do.

Being Available When Needed

Students seem to think that the program faculty, as instructors, should be available 24/7. The reality, of course, is that we need time for our own lives as well. Therefore, we ask students to make appointments; we post schedules on our office doors so they know when we are available. The students can email or text anytime, and the instructors will answer as soon as they are able to. Setting limits is important. Otherwise, we would be answering texts at 2 a.m. or continuously responding to emails on weekends and holidays to keep students happy.

Knowing One's Role(s)

Professor? Teacher? Counselor? Facilitator? Administrator? As English educators, we are asked to fill many roles inside and outside the classroom. As humans, we cannot excel at all of them, so we must learn to juggle all of them as effectively as we can. This author still believes that being strict, fair, and kind are an important combination for an instructor, but others will disagree. Keep your own abilities and expectations for yourself and your students in mind, and don't punish yourself when you fail to do it all as perfectly as you would like. My officemate and I have completely different classroom personas, and that is important as well since we appeal to different types of students and can address their needs more effectively as a result.

Becoming More of a Generalist Than a Specialist

This author came to Korea as a trained and certified ESL/EFL teacher as well as a secondary teacher with licenses in English and social studies. If you read this author's *EFL Magazine* biographical sketch and other articles, you will see that the courses taught are quite diverse, and

for the most part, they have been well received by the students. Suffice it to say that through these courses, the author has been able to expand students' knowledge and experience far beyond the typical four skills an EFL/ESL instructor in Korea often teaches. This has made for a more knowledgeable and effective educator in many ways, but it also means that the in-depth knowledge of the subjects and areas taught may have suffered somewhat as a result. According to Epstein (2019),

Kahneman marveled at the “complete lack of connection between the statistical information and the compelling experience of insight.” Around that same time, an influential book on expert judgement was published [by P. Meehl, 1954].... It was a wide ranging review of research that rocked psychology because it showed that experience simply did not create skill in a wide range of real-world scenarios, from college administrators assessing student potential to psychiatrists predicting patient performance to human resources professionals deciding who will succeed in job training. *In those domains, which involved human behavior and where patterns did not clearly repeat, repetition did not cause learning* [emphasis added]. (p. 20)

On balance, however, the author is quite happy with the results this evolution from specialist to generalist brings in terms of satisfaction with my teaching and keeping things fresher and more interesting for his students and our program's faculty. As Epstein (2019) argues quite convincingly, this personal evolution may be both necessary and inevitable in order to remain an effective educator in an ever changing environment like the ELL Department.

CONCLUSIONS

In the end, the author realizes that no two programs are exactly the same but hopes that the knowledge of how and why the ELL Department came about and a review of our successes and failures within our particular context will help other educators avoid some of our mistakes and create more successful and lasting curricula for their students.

As he continues to share his experiences and grow as a

CBI/EAP/ESP and SBELT expert, the author would like to end with one of his favorite quotes, from Helmuth von Moltke the Elder, which will then be modified for a teaching context:

“No plan survives contact with the enemy.” (Wiktionary, n.d.)

In a teaching context, no lesson plan or curriculum survives a class or the process of learning. It is the so-called emergent curriculum mentioned above that is most important in the evolution of a given class, syllabus, or curriculum, and so it should be. Better classes and, in this case, a better overall program have been the result with all of the pros (and a few cons) that they bring.

THE AUTHOR

Tory S. Thorkelson (BA, BEd, MEd in TESL/TEFL, PhD in language studies / curriculum development) is a proud Canadian who has been an active KOTESOL member since 1998 and has presented at many local and international conferences. He is a past president of the KOTESOL Seoul Chapter and an active KOTESOL Teacher Training member. His is as an associate professor for HYU’s English Language and Literature Program. He has co-authored research studies and textbooks, including a university-level textbook, *World Class English*, with a team of fellow KOTESOL members. Currently, he is a regular contributor to *EFL Magazine*. Email: thorkor@hotmail.com

REFERENCES

- Chung, A. (2018, October 11). Foreign student numbers grow a record 19% in a year. *University World News*. Retrieved from <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?st>
- Epstein, D. (2019). *Range: How generalists triumph in a specialized world*. London, UK: Pan Macmillan/Riverhead Books.
- Hanyang English Language and Literature Department Homepage. (2016). Retrieved from https://www.hanyang.ac.kr/web/eng/s303?p_p_id=introDept_WAR_introDeptportlet&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_col_id=column1&p_p_col_count=1&_introDept_WAR_introDeptportlet_action=view&_introDept_WAR_introDeptportlet_sTab=1
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2000). *Techniques and principles in language teaching* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Oxford University Press.

- Omaggio-Hadley, A. (2001). *Teaching language in context* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle/Thomson Learning.
- Pally, M. (2000). *Sustained content teaching in academic ESL/EFL*. Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Practical English Education Committee. (2005). *Practical English communication: Integrated four skills*. Seoul, Korea: Hanyang University Press.
- QS World University Rankings. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.topuniversities.com/universities/hanyang-university>.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C. (2017). *Curriculum development in language teaching* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Spolin, V. (2000). *Improvisation for the theater* (3rd ed.). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Thorkelson, T. (2005). Acting out: Improving your classes dramatically. *The English Connection*, 9(2), 1, 8–11.
- Thorkelson, T. (2007). Building a successful content-based course. *The English Connection*, 11(2), 1, 8–11, 25.
- Thorkelson, T. S. (2016). Language teaching organizations and professional job satisfaction. *Korea TESOL Journal*, 12(1), 67–106.
- Wiktionary. (n.d.). *Helmuth von Moltke the Elder*. Retrieved from https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Helmuth_von_Moltke_the_Elder
- Yeum, K. S., & Thorkelson, T. S. (2016). Cross-cultural understanding: ELT professionals' cultural sense-making process. *International Journal of TESOL and Learning*, 5(1/2), 17–38.

APPENDIX A

Program Faculty and Courses 2006–Present

Program Faculty: 2006–Present

James Clitheroe	(2006–Present) (Head Teacher, 2011–Present)
Mirrell Desjardins	(2006–2011) BA (Political Science), MA (TESOL)
Allison Hannify	(2006–2007)
Samantha Jenkins	(2007–2011)
Katie Mae Klemsen	(2011–2013) MA (International Studies)
Justine Park	(2013–2017) BA (Film & Theater), MA (TESOL)
Tory S. Thorkelson	(2006–Present) (Head Teacher, 2006–2011)

Classes Offered: 2006–Present (PEEC*/ELL Department)

Class Title	Term(s) Taught	Year(s) Taught
Introduction to Acting (S2)	Spring and Fall	2004*–2006, 2018–Present
Presentation Skills (S2)	Spring and Fall	2005*–Present
The Story of English (Global Englishes)	Fall	2005*–2006, (2017–Present)
English Speaking 1 (later Speaking 3): Interviews	Spring	2007–2010, 2011–2017
English Writing 2: Paragraphs	Spring	2007–2011
English Speaking 3: Discussion	Spring	2007–2012
English Writing 1: Sentences	Fall	2007–2011
English Writing 3: Essays	Fall	2007–2011
Writing 1: Sentences & Paragraphs	Fall	2011–2014
Writing 2: Critical Essay & Proposal	Spring	2011–2014
Writing 3: Business Correspondence & Project Essay	Spring	2011–2015
Speaking 2: Presentations & Debate	Fall	2011–2014
Project Essay Capstone Design 1 (New Writing 4)	Spring	2012–2015 (Graduate Paper cancelled in 2015)
Project Essay Capstone Design 2 (New Writing 4)	Fall	2014–Present (Same course as Design 1)
Speaking 1 (Discussion)	Spring	2015
Speaking 2 (Presentations)	Fall	2015

Speaking 3 (Interviews)	Fall	2015
Writing 1 (Sentences/Paragraphs)	Fall	2015
Writing 2 (Essays)	Spring	2015
Writing 3 (Business Correspondence)	Fall	2015
Writing 4 (Capstone 1)	Fall	2015–Present
Critical Thinking Reading & Discussion/Debate 1 & II	Spring/Fall	2016–Present
English Speaking Competence (2) (Presentations/Introduction to Acting)	Fall	2016–Present
English Speaking Competence 3 (Interviews)	Fall	2016–Present
Critical English Writing 2 (Paragraphs & Essays)	Spring	2017–Present
Critical English Writing 3 (Business Correspondence)	Spring	2017–Present

Classes for Other Programs

Class Title	Term(s) Taught	Year(s) Taught
Introduction to (Human) Communication	Fall	2010–2012
Global Business Communication	Spring	2012–Present
Current Events: Listening & Discussion	Fall	2018
Screen English	Summer/Winter Schools	2011–2012
Global Issues	Fall	2019

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE ELL COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Class Objectives for Spring

Speaking 1: Speech & Discussion (Original)

The objectives of this course are to get students talking about a number of relevant and current issues and to learn how to think critically for themselves. Students will write two sets of journals, do interviews during midterm and finals weeks, do an oral presentation on an issue of their

own choice to the class at least once during the term, and will participate in numerous group and class discussions perhaps culminating in a group debate.

Speech and Discussion (MUN version)

Model United Nations, also known as Model UN or MUN, is an activity in which students typically role-play delegates to the United Nations and simulate UN committees. Outstanding delegates in each committee are recognized and given an award certificate: the “Best Delegate” in each committee. Thousands of middle school, high school, and college students across the country and around the world participate in Model United Nations, which involves substantial researching, public speaking, debating, and writing skills, as well as critical thinking, teamwork, and leadership abilities.

Main Goals

- To encourage students to look at issues from a more global perspective through the framework of the UN and its members.
- To help students develop better researching, public speaking, debating, and writing skills.
- To help students develop better critical thinking, teamwork, and leadership abilities.

Writing 2: Critical Essay & Proposal

The objectives of this course will be to help students write a basic critical essay including topic, thesis, introductory paragraph, body, and concluding paragraphs. Also, we will look at how to write different types of essays including comparison, cause and effect, and argumentative essays as well as basic proposals (capstone). MLA style will also be covered briefly. Coursework will include writing a number of basic essays as well as two exams, brainstorming/discussion/feedback time, and a final portfolio.

Main Goals

- Learn about basic five-paragraph essay structure.
- Learn about supporting and researching an essay topic.
- To learn how to write a variety of essays in MLA style.

Writing 3: Business Correspondence

The course Business Correspondence aims to develop and refine general and technical writing skills, teach students how to write and respond appropriately to business letters emails and advertising copy and create internationally competitive Cover Letters and Résumés. Students will learn to consider format as well as to critically assess content, context, and tone. A presentation and portfolio of documents related to a company of your choice will be a major part of this course.

Main Goals

- To learn the proper format for business correspondence (e.g. Letters and Emails).
- To learn what to include in proper business correspondence.
- To learn about proper business communication in a variety of contexts including both formal and informal. (e.g. advertising).

Writing 4: Capstone

The Capstone course aims to provide students with the opportunity to learn how to write an academic paper. All areas of the final essay will be covered, including organizing information, judging reliability of sources, defending a topic and thesis with documented evidence, and publishing the paper in a prescribed (MLA) format. Emphasis will be placed on smooth, coherent, and intelligent writing.

Critical Thinking 1: Freshman

This course will help students to develop critical reading, and thinking skills through the use of TED talks and related tasks about global issues as presented and expanded upon in the textbook. Class components include a journal, interviews, weekly written reports and an Ed-TED style lesson on a topic of their choice that will be presented and taught to their classmates if chosen by their peers and professor.

Main Goals

- To critically assess global issues and innovations from a global perspective.
- To apply the lessons learned to students' own lives and world view.
- To develop the basic skills necessary to be successful at university and beyond.

Class Objectives for Spring or Fall

Writing 1: Sentences, Paragraphs, & Essays (2017/8)

The objectives of the first part of this course will be to help students critically write both proper sentences and a basic paragraph including topic, body and concluding sentences. Then, we will move on to helping students write a basic critical essay including topic, thesis, introductory paragraph, body and concluding paragraphs. Also, we will look at how to write different types of essays, including comparison, cause and effect, and argumentative essays. MLA style will also be covered briefly. Coursework will include writing a number of basic paragraphs/ essays as well as two exams, brainstorming/discussion/feedback time and a final portfolio.

Main Goals

- Learn about basic paragraphs and the five-paragraph essay structure.
- Learn about supporting and researching an essay topic.
- To learn how to write a variety of essays in MLA style.

Speaking 2: Professional Presentations

The objectives for this course are to learn how: to deliver a presentation with acceptable posture, eye contact, and voice inflection. Proper structure for a presentation with an introduction, body and conclusion will be taught with appropriate transitions and how to make and use a variety of visuals including graphs, diagrams, flow charts and bullet charts. Students will have to make at least four graded presentations in class and write outlines and self-evaluations for all presentations given. The final presentation will be a group presentation leading to an in class debate/discussion of a controversial issue.

Main Goals

- To teach students how to give a solid presentation with an introduction, body and conclusion.
- To help students learn how to use visual aids properly.
- To teach students how to handle questions and stage fright as well as other issues related to giving a good presentation.

Speaking 3: Interviews

The objectives of this course include (a) familiarizing students with the social interaction aspects of interviews, (b) giving them the opportunity to practice a variety of interview types and styles, and (c) helping students prepare for interview situations like applying for internships, graduate schools, or jobs. Course components include two mock interviews, two tests, and writing a basic English résumé and cover letter.

Main Goals

- Familiarizing students with researching and preparing professional CVs and cover letters.
- Giving them the opportunity to practice a variety of interview types and styles.
- Helping students prepare for interview situations like applying for internships, graduate schools or jobs.

Critical Thinking 2: Freshmen

The objectives of this course are to get students talking about a number of relevant and current issues and to learn how to think critically for themselves. Beginning with topics chosen by the class and using the book “What I Wish I Knew when I was 20,” students will write a journal, do an oral pair or group presentation on an issue of their choice to the class at least once during the term and will participate in numerous group and class discussions perhaps culminating in a group debate.

Main Goals

- To read, think about present current events and broader social issues critically.
- To read and discuss “What I Wish I Knew When I was 20” book.
- To prepare, practice and conduct group debates about topics chosen by the class.

The Story of English: Global Englishes

The Story of English is the extraordinary tale of the origins and development of the English language. Two thousand years ago English was confined to a handful of savage tribes on the shores of northwest Europe; today, in one form or another, it is spoken by a billion people

around the world. More widely scattered, written, and spoken than any other language in history, English has become a global phenomenon. Exploring its amazing success, this course will look at the evolution of English from its earliest beginnings up until today.

Main Goals

- To explore the depth and width of English's history and evolution.
- To help students become experts in at least two aspects of English's history.
- To use videos, discussions, two presentations and two short research papers to accomplish the above goals.

Acting Class

This course will introduce students to the performance art of acting. It will cover improvisation, object exercises, character building through pair/group work as well as monologues, scenes and ten-minute plays. Students will be active and there is will be little time to sit so wear loose, comfortable clothes and be prepared to actively participate.

Main Goals

- To develop the skills to act in front of a crowd.
- To develop confidence in basic acting theory and practice (improvisation and the Stanislavski method).
- To perform monologues, duologue/scenes, and ten-minute plays.

Current Events: Listening and Discussion


The purpose of this course is to initially help students raise their awareness of trustworthy and fake news sources through a media bias analysis project. Through regular lessons about current events/social issues students will improve their knowledge and listening skills. Further, they will discuss and exchange ideas about the lessons they study and create their own lessons at the end of the term. Class assignments will include the media bias analysis project, an original lesson on current events, and two presentations.

Main Goals

- To raise students awareness of how to spot/analyze real and fake news.
- To listen to, become familiar with and discuss current issues.
- To create an original lesson on current events to be presented on and/or done with groups of their classmates.

APPENDIX C

Course Proposal Form (PEEC version)

Type your information in the cells below – all cells will expand to fit content			
Course Title:			Students: max ___ min ___
Instructor:	Alternate instructor:		
Stream:	_____	Major:	_____ or mixed
Pre-requisites:	Yes _____ No _____ if yes please specify _____		
Hours/week:	2 3 4	Student Year	freshmen/sophomore/junior/senior/mixed
Student level:	Advanced, intermediate, beginner, mixed – TOEIC min ___ max ___		
Curved:	Y N	Preferred semester	spring summer fall winter
Course Objectives Include description, why and rational in detail	 <p>사람의슬기 한양 1939 HANYANG UNIVERSITY</p>		
Materials i.e., textbook audio, video, etc.			
Evaluation Criteria for grades, include % weight			
Classroom requirements multimedia, size, computer, etc.			
Proposed 16-week schedule (topics, notdetails)	1)	9)	
	2)	10)	
	3)	11)	
	4)	12)	
	5)	13)	
	6)	14)	
	7)	15)	
	8)	16)	

Written Analysis: A Brief Account of How Three Classes Compared When Given Differing Methods of Instruction and Feedback

Gerry McLellan

Aichi University of Education, Nagoya, Japan

Recent developments in EIKEN and TEAP testing in Japan now try to ensure that students are able to write to a suitable standard and express their thoughts concisely whilst making use of correct academic conventions. However, as many teachers are aware, a large percentage of university students in Japan are incapable of writing even the most fundamental sentences despite having studied the language for six years. The author assumes the case in Korea may be similar as both countries share a similar grammar. Although factors such as cultural differences and educational expectations and instruction also contribute, these are not examined critically in this paper. Hunt (2017) discusses at length the extent to which English acquisition is promoted in Korea, and this may have more positive outcomes on student's written work, especially on those studying at institutions in which English is the medium of instruction. However, in Japan large numbers of students wishing to attend universities in the UK and other overseas countries find it difficult to convey meaning accurately in English. They face similar problems with content and structure. This paper will examine how three classes, one of 35 students and two of 34 students, at one university were assessed on their writing ability and demonstrate that, even with the most rudimentary instruction and feedback, they were able to increase their writing performance significantly. This paper was completed before the onset of a more detailed active research project, and it is hoped that initial findings substantiate further research into this field. Although conducted in Japan, ramifications are pertinent to L2 writing skills in Korea. In the following paragraphs the methodology and reasoning behind the project will be discussed in detail.

Keywords: action research, written analysis, timed writing, quantitative findings, qualitative findings

INTRODUCTION

As I teach English at a number of institutes from junior high schools to universities and have extensive experience of dealing with students' written work, enabling students to improve upon their writing skills has been a constant source of frustration. In addition, I grade written work for EIKEN pre-first examinees and TEAP examinees, as well as deliver seminars on skills in EAP. I began to notice that a large number of students made similar repetitive mistakes in their written work. At the time of writing, I am working with a colleague to develop assessment software for the EFL market, and I wanted to test the appropriateness of this software on a number of students, and receive their feedback and suggestions before investing in the software.

The rationale behind the software is to allow students to analyze and assess their own work as well as that of their peers in real time, provide and receive detailed feedback, and generally raise awareness of writing techniques. Additionally, by providing continual assessment in real time, students can gain maximum benefit from their studies and become aware of and address their own shortcomings. Incidentally, it took me a number of months to analyze and provide feedback for the students in these classes, a time-consuming exercise that allows only the instructor to provide feedback – a highly impractical use of teacher time in the day-to-day classroom. Assessment software would allow for teacher and student feedback, provide scores, and give advice on improvement soon after the work has been completed. Although this article will focus on written work, the software program would also allow for feedback on other skills and could be adapted to highlight various kinds of activities such as presentations, one-on-one exchanges, and group discussions as well as academic writing and other forms of writing, either in-house or at home.

Before investing in the production of the software, two main objectives had to be met:

1. Trial how students would perceive this kind of detailed feedback.
2. Discover whether or not it was beneficial.

Results show that students were highly motivated by having their work thoroughly analyzed and were able to improve upon their writing

as a direct result. Indeed, many students informed me that they had never had such thorough critique of their work and some felt embarrassed or ashamed by the number of mistakes they had made. It seems that during their time at junior high or high school, the best they could hope to receive by way of feedback was a mark at the top of their paper. Disturbingly, a number of students had never had an opportunity, or claimed that they hadn't, to express their ideas in writing during their school years. Many tests at Japanese high schools are concerned only with marking archaic grammar and short sentence structures. Little is done to help students become creative writers or to use academic conventions correctly. Reinking, Hart, and Von der Osten (2001) discuss the qualities of good writing and explain reasons for writing. Many students, it seems, lack this awareness and see writing as a burden rather than a means of expression. I believe this to be a major flaw in the Japanese system, and it is a problem to which my assessment software should directly address. I chose an action research project as, according to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011, p. 344), it "is a powerful tool for change and improvement at the local level." As educators, we have ample opportunity on a daily basis to try to make changes for the better for our students, and for ourselves, and it is incumbent that we seize these opportunities. Figure 1 shows the steps involved in an action research framework.



FIGURE 1. A Framework for Action Research. (Adapted from Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011)

Figure 1 shows how action research is a cyclical process involving much reflection between each cycle. Indeed, it is a never-ending process as time, students, and circumstances constantly change. Educators can therefore never realize completion but should, however, strive to ensure that classes are the best they can be to suit the needs of students present at any given time.

Although this research was conducted in Japan, there is obvious relevance to Korean students of English: firstly, because of the shared grammar and, secondly, because now in Japan many classes contain a mix of Asian students from countries such as Thailand, Taiwan, China, and Korea. Tyson (2000) notes feedback from a survey conducted in 1998 that students are happy to be informed of faults in their written work and that they find it useful. However, he also explains that in Korea, as in Japan, students often have a paper returned with only the grade written at the top. There is seldom mention of the errors made and of how to improve upon written work.

Participants

In total 104 first-year university students comprising three English conversation classes from the same university took part in this study. The first class (C1) consisted of 35 students, 26 males and 9 females; the second (C2) of 34 students, 24 males and 11 females; and the third (C3) of 34 students, 11 males and 23 females. All classes were first-year students, and all students were aware of the fact that their written work was being analyzed for research purposes. They all signed agreement forms.

Procedure

Written work from three classes, two of 36 and one of 37 students, at one university in Aichi was examined in detail. The action research project was both quantitative and qualitative, and students were asked to submit a questionnaire upon completion of the written tasks. All three classes were held on a Friday afternoon, periods three to five, times being from 1:00–2:30, 2:45–4:15, and 4:30–6:00 p.m. Factors such as students being tired in the class immediately after lunch or in the final class of the day were not considered. Prior to the research, students were

informed of the rationale for doing it, and upon completion, they were asked to sign a consent form if they did not object to their work being used. Not one person objected.

From the outset, students were not informed that the writing exercise would last for three weeks. Initially, they were under the impression that it was a one-time writing exercise. Similarly, in Week 2, they were under the assumption that they would write no more than two essays. This approach was chosen so that students would not save the best for last.

Students were asked to choose a topic from a list of eight and write about it for twenty minutes. The topics they chose from were as follows:

1. My Family
2. My High School
3. My Favorite Restaurant
4. My Best Holiday
5. My Best Friend
6. My Favorite Sport
7. My Best Memory
8. My School Club

As students chose their favorite topic in Week 1, it can be assumed that the content of the first essay might be the most detailed. This tactic was deliberately used to help assess the content and structure level after their third-choice essay. As the final essay was the students' third choice, it was assumed that under normal circumstances the content would not be as detailed or interesting. At the onset, students had no idea that they would be asked to complete three essays under time pressure. Table 1 shows a breakdown of the topics chosen each week by each of the three classes.

TABLE 1. Breakdown of Weekly Topics

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Week 1	1-12; 2-13; 3-1; 4-0 5-1; 6-1; 7-2; 8-4	1-8; 2-19; 3-1; 4-3 5-0; 6-0; 7-3; 8-0	1-8; 2-17; 3-2; 4-3 5-2; 6-2; 7-0; 8-1
Week 2	1-7; 2-7; 3-8; 4-2 5-1; 6-2; 7-0; 8-8	1-9; 2-5; 3-11; 4-2 5-1; 6-1; 7-2; 8-2	1-10; 2-5; 3-4; 4-2 5-3; 6-2; 7-5; 8-3
Week 3	1-2; 2-4; 3-12; 4-2 5-2; 6-6; 7-4; 8-2	1-4; 2-6; 3-7; 4-2 5-2; 6-3; 7-3; 8-7	1-6; 2-1; 3-10; 4-3 5-4; 6-1; 7-5; 8-4

Note. Topic number is followed by the number of students choosing that topic.

One class received considerable instruction between the three writing sessions, one received minimal feedback and instruction, and one (the control group) received no feedback or instruction. The intention was to investigate whether there would be a significant difference in the number of errors between the control group (Class 1) and the group that received the extensive feedback and instruction (Class 3), and if there was, could this be attributed to the fact that the students in that particular group received and acted upon the advice of the teacher. Table 2 highlights the main differences between the classes.

TABLE 2. Class Differences

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Week 1	Students choose essays from the list of 8 choices. They are then given 20 minutes to complete the writing task. No formal instruction or feedback is given.	Same as C1.	As C1, but 10-minute advice given on how to structure an essay after students handed in the first papers.
Week 2	Students choose essays from the list of 8 choices. They are then given 20 minutes to complete the writing task. No formal instruction or feedback is given.	As C1, but 3-minute feedback given and advice on how to structure essays. Correction code given to students to help them with this and the following week's writing.	Gave correction codes to students prior to writing. Also, informed them on how to structure and essay. Total time was 10 minutes.
Week 3	Students choose essays from the list of 8 choices. They are then given 20 minutes to complete the writing task. Gave students correction code sheet and some detailed advice after they submitted their final essays.	As C1, but 3-minute feedback given on how to structure essays before beginning third essay, and correction code given to students to help them with the following week's writing.	Spent 10 minutes explaining structure to students and handed out example paper on how to write a short essay. Students were able to refer to this during the final writing exercise.

The essay writing tips and sample essay can be found in the

Appendix. I used this to explain to some of the students the essay structure and help them visualize it. Although a simple and quick approach, it seemed to cement the idea of having some sort of structure. The essay, in addition to helping students with their written work, also helps establish teacher immediacy with the students and encourages them to be more open when writing about themselves. The students that received the longer explanation and feedback showed the most improvement overall. By providing them with basic instruction and a sample template, they were able to use this to inform their own written ability.

Holec (1981) discusses autonomy as allowing students to take charge of their own learning. However, in order for students to become autonomous in their written work, they first need to learn what constitutes a good piece of writing and, indeed, a substandard piece of work. To this end, students submitted three pieces of writing over a period of three weeks. Feedback was provided to the students, which varied from extremely detailed to general in order to discover whether the type of feedback helped or hindered the students' subsequent written work. Details of the type of feedback each class received, the improvements made, and the varying responses from each class is discussed in the following paragraphs.

The following two research questions were asked:

- RQ 1. Would students benefit from detailed, informative feedback, and if so, would it be in a positive fashion?
- RQ 2. Would there be a noticeable difference between students that received this feedback and those that did not over a short three-week period?

FINDINGS

Quantitative Findings

Table 3 shows the totals taken from each class in Week 1. Class 1 represents the first class from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m., and classes 2 and 3 show the subsequent classes.

TABLE 3. Total and Average Word Count, Number of Class Errors, Correct Introductions, and Conclusions

Week 1	Class 1 (1:00-2:30)	Class 2 (2:45-4:15)	Class 3 (4:30-6:00)
Word Count	3862/110	4138/122	3694/109
Total Errors	673	836	739
Introductions	16	3	3
Conclusions	8	13	13

As can be seen, few students in any of the classes were able to successfully structure their writings properly, showed scant awareness of the time, and made considerable numbers of mistakes, which will be dealt with later in the paper. Few were able to write introductions or conclusions; the word counts were low and the number of errors high.

Table 4 shows how the students improved in their writing ability in Week 3. As can be seen, all classes showed signs of improvement; however, the stark differences made between the control group (Class1) and Class 3 seem to indicate that students benefit enormously from positive feedback and informed input on their written work.

TABLE 4. Results from the Third Week of Writing Tasks

Week 3	Class 1 (1:00-2:30)	Class 2 (2:45-4:15)	Class 3 (4:30-6:00)
Word Count	3937/116	4851/143	4782/141
Total Errors	845	771	615
Introductions	11	14	28
Conclusions	24	25	24

If we focus on the total word count, the average per student increase in the three classes are as follows:

- C1: From 110 words to 116 (6-word average increase per student).
- C2: From 122 words to 143 (21-word average increase per student).
- C3: From 109 words to 141 (32-word average increase per student).

Class 3, although having the weakest initial performance with regards to word count, made the most significant gains. Of course, the quality of writing is more important than the quantity of words on a

page, so we have to take into consideration other improvements made.

The number of errors declined by 124 for C3. This compared with a reduction of 65 for C2 and an increase of 172 errors for C1. Significant enough, perhaps, to warrant further research into the validity of providing feedback coupled with instruction. Table 5 shows the other areas in which all participants' work was graded.

In the second part of the paper, student responses to the detailed feedback they received will be analyzed. Initially, many were shocked by their poor writing skills, as they had prior to this class been under the belief that their written work was at a satisfactory level. This fact leaves the author in no doubt that a great deal of work is needed in L2 classrooms in Japan in order to rectify this problem. Namely, the hiring of better qualified teachers (both native and Japanese) and a definite need to provide students with the means to help themselves.

One of my children attends a private school in the Aichi area, and there is a focus on grammar and correct word stress rather than on creative writing or critical thinking. I understand that it is difficult for L2 teachers to correct essays, so it is imperative that more is done in this area to allow students to interact more fully with essay writing and become more confident in their own writing ability.

TABLE 5. Results of Total Numbers of Errors Made During the Three Classes

Error Type	Class 1			Class 2			Class 3		
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Word Count	3862	3553	3973	4138	4580	4851	3694	4816	4782
Use of 'I' to start a sentence	122/427 29%	129/422 31%	139/454 31%	111/428 26%	139/510 27%	159/492 32%	120/398 30%	150/515 29%	166/533 31%
Adjective Number	133	181	205	164	232	263	129	199	261
Vague Word	2	0	2	1	0	3	1	0	5
Tense	101	90	80	93	62	107	95	57	58
Spelling Error	30	45	57	61	71	74	37	40	59
Article Error	92	78	99	89	104	108	100	94	91
Word Class	43	67	104	66	79	56	60	73	55

Word Order	8	5	10	7	7	4	5	6	6
Wrong Word	103	96	77	80	75	65	87	92	68
Sentence / Structure	17	10	6	23	7	11	34	7	7
Plurals	42	64	54	58	101	88	55	74	61
Need to add a word	74	87	74	124	101	89	110	103	83
No word needed	103	80	77	143	89	97	100	101	72
Correction/ Link	17	38	37	41	89	36	32	43	21
Sign Posting	Y/16	Y/9	Y/11	Y/8	Y/17	Y/22	Y/8	Y/18	Y/25
Introduction	Y/16	Y/9	Y/11	Y/3	Y/13	Y/14	Y/3	Y/18	Y/28
Conclusion	Y/8	Y/12	Y/24	Y/13	Y/22	Y/25	Y/13	Y/19	Y/24
Able to finish	Y/12	Y/12	Y/27	Y/20	Y/21	Y/26	Y/20	Y/25	Y/25
Preposition Error	18	5	18	12	13	20	19	14	20
Meaningless Sentence	25	29	19	39	14	16	7	21	10
Total Errors	673	694	845	836	757	771	739	721	615

Note. The use of “I” is expressed as the number of times “I” was used to begin a sentence out of the total number of sentences. The percentages are shown below.

It was hoped that the students would use more adjectives and make less use of the pronoun “I” at the beginning of each sentence. They were attempting to write in a creative style and not an itinerary one. As the word count increased over the three timed-writing exercises, it was expected that the number of errors would similarly increase but at a relatively lower rate. A number of students were able to improve their overall word count and decrease the amount of errors made. Additionally, they were also able to address issues with structure and show awareness of more proper writing conventions. The findings, although rather ad-hoc, tend to suggest that students are capable of addressing issues in their writing when awareness is raised. As mentioned at the onset, collecting data and analyzing it is a tedious, time-consuming project. Assessment software would be able to do in seconds what it takes a person weeks to do. It therefore allows both

educator and student the freedom to focus on other tasks and work together to ensure lessons are more enjoyable and worthwhile. This is true whether or not the students are in Japan, Korea, or China.

Qualitative Findings

This section will focus on the rationale behind the questionnaire administered to the students and briefly analyze their responses.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections (Parts 1, 2, and 3) and contained eighteen questions in total. The aim of Part 1 was to try to find out more about the students, such as reasons for studying, and most and least challenging English skill. It consisted of four questions, excluding the first two questions, which asked for name and student number. The four questions were as follows:

3. Have you ever studied English abroad? (If yes, please specify where and for how long.)
4. Why are you learning English?
5. What is the most challenging skill for you – listening, reading, writing, or speaking? Please state why.
6. What is the most comfortable/enjoyable skill for you – listening, reading, writing, or speaking? Please say why.

Part 2 aimed to discover, by use of attitudinal statements and a Likert scale (see Table 6), how much students had learned or thought they had over the course of the three weeks, and to ascertain whether their beliefs corresponded with the quantitative findings. It also sought to discover what steps the students had taken to actively improve upon their written work and to try to determine whether they were becoming more aware of their shortcomings and able to know how to improve upon them.

Table 7 illustrates some examples of responses students could choose from when answering Part 2.

TABLE 6. Likert-Style Attitudinal Statements in Part 2 of the Questionnaire

Attitudinal Statement	1. Yes, very.	2. Yes, somewhat.	3. Yes, a little	4. Not really.	5. Not at all.
7. I am now better at writing					
8. I know how to plan an essay.					
9. I know how to structure an essay.					
10. My writing improved.					
11. I am now more confident about writing.					

TABLE 7. Examples of Responses Students Could Give

I check the spelling	I read more about the topic
I correct the spelling using spell-checker on Word	I talk to other people to get ideas about the topic
I look up a dictionary	I add new ideas
I look up a grammar book	I try to use more complex grammatical structures
I ask a classmate or friend when I have doubts	I try to use easy grammatical structures

Part 2 also asked the following three questions to discover what actions students took after receiving feedback:

12. After receiving my first corrected draft, I...
13. After receiving my second corrected draft, I...
14. After receiving my third corrected draft, I...

Part 3 attempted to discover student perceptions when doing a written exercise. The questions were as follows:

15. How do you feel when you receive your drafts with a lot of corrections? Please explain why.
16. What is the most challenging part for you when writing an essay? Please explain why.
17. What do you like the most when writing an essay? Please explain why.

18. What is the most enjoyable part of writing? Please explain why.
19. How do you think you could improve your writing skills?
20. Please add any other ideas to improve your writing in class.

This paper will primarily focus on student answers to Questions 3 through 6. This is mainly due to word number restraints and the fact that responses to other answers will be more fully explored in a subsequent paper.

Table 8 is a tabulation of student responses to Questions 3–6 of the questionnaire for the students in each of the three groups (Class 1–3). Each response is followed by the number of students giving that response.

TABLE 8. Student Responses to Questions 3–6

Question	Class (1)	Class (2)	Class (3)
3	Yes – 2	Yes – 3	Yes – 2
	No – 31	No – 31	No – 32
4	Improve English – 10	Improve English – 5	Improve English – 6
	Job / Study – 7	Job / Study – 7	Job / Study – 10
	Enjoy – 2	Enjoy – 2	Enjoy – 2
	Important – 8	Important – 10	Important – 7
	Travel /	Travel /	Travel /
	Communication – 6	Communication – 8	Communication – 6
5	Other – 1	Other – 1	Other – 1
	Speaking – 19	Speaking – 9	Speaking – 19
	Writing – 2	Writing – 7	Writing – 5
	Reading – 1	Reading – 6	Reading – 0
6	Listening – 10	Listening – 13	Listening – 13
	Speaking – 7	Speaking – 5	Speaking – 4
	Writing – 3	Writing – 7	Writing – 2
	Reading – 16	Reading – 17	Reading – 24
	Listening – 8	Listening – 5	Listening – 4

DISCUSSION

Jang (2014, p. 39) discusses the need for teachers to know about how “students develop language proficiency,” and he mentions the difficulties teachers face in determining the differences between the ways

in which students learn. Although his focus is on differentiating between students with specific language difficulties, including learning difficulties in their own language, it cannot be denied that teachers in the L2 classroom also face similar struggles to determine the different kinds of mistakes that each student in the class makes and how to help students with their individual language issues. Indeed, Brown (2007, p. 125) talks about how left and right brain dominance can play a key role in determining the ways in which they learn. We know that any given class comprises a set number of individual students, all with different learning needs, purposes, and motivations. It is imperative that teachers are able to treat students as individuals and by being able to better assess their individual abilities this becomes more of a reality. With reference to replies to Questions 3–5 from Table 8, it can be noted that similar numbers of students in all three classes responded to Q3 and Q4. It is interesting to note that writing was considered by many as one of the stronger skills. Perhaps the written feedback and correction they had previously received had been incorrect or overly positive. More work would have to be done in this area to ascertain exact reasons.

As an aside, Rugen (2018) talks at length about teacher immediacy. When teachers are able to read and respond to errors made by students on an individual basis, the psychological distance between the two are considerably reduced. Students feel that their efforts are being rewarded, or at the very least, seriously scrutinized. In my sample essay (see Appendix), I have discussed my family so that students can learn a little about how I spend my free time. Since they are writing about themselves and their lives, I think it is only fair that teachers also open up. Once again, this improves immediacy between teacher and student, which leads to a more informal class environment and one to which I believe study is more suited.

Ellis (2002) argues that “frequency of input” is pivotal in language comprehension. Although he is referring to reading in a second language, it can also be argued that the same principles apply to writing in a second language. My convictions seem to be justified by the improvements shown over a short period of time. Repetition and practice are key to learning anything, whether it be a musical instrument, a sport, or a language.

Coulthard (2002) mentions how structure is important when trying to convey meaning in written text. When students were able to explore their own work thoroughly, edit it for errors, and received detailed feedback

on their shortcomings, they were able to improve significantly and become more aware and, therefore, more autonomous in their written work.

Kim and Kim (2006) and Tyson (2004) discuss how process writing should be more widely utilized in the Korean classroom. The three authors note the problems faced when teaching writing classes in Korea, as there is often a heavy emphasis on grammatical form and end product. Long (2017) mentions how a task-based approach is useful, and there is certainly an argument for adopting such an approach. However, students need to become more aware of errors made at the micro-level in order to gain the confidence to focus on more important writing issues such as content, structure, and cohesion. As Hunt (2017) points out, in Korea English is viewed as being essential to a child's overall education. They need to be able to know the basic structures before learning to become more creative with their written work.

By making them aware of the simple errors they make, students can gain that confidence. As mentioned, it is extremely difficult and time consuming for educators to correct and give feedback to every student in every class. Additionally, although many native teachers are employed as ELTs in Korea, many may not be aware of basic grammar structures and they certainly do not know how to explain grammar concepts to students or give proper corrective feedback. In short, although they speak English, they are not teachers of it.

By using assessment software, instructors can grade and provide detailed feedback on all written assignments and students can also provide feedback on each other's work. This allows a level of classroom interaction never before experienced. Armed with the knowledge of any shortcomings, they can then address them immediately and refer to each draft of their essay or other written work to see real time improvement.

At the outset of this paper, I mentioned my rationale for implementing the action research project. The time taken to correlate the data was lengthy, but students were appreciative of the detailed mark-up and feedback. Students deserve to be more informed as to the errors they are making in order to improve upon them. However, educators cannot devote enough time to providing such extensive feedback. By using assessment software and providing real-time feedback and comments, students will become aware of their mistakes and act accordingly. Whether in Japan, China, or Korea, all students should benefit from real-time constructive feedback.

CONCLUSIONS

Although the findings of this research have not been analyzed in full, initial results seem to suggest that students benefit from feedback, even if this takes the form of only a few moments at the beginning or end of the class to reflect upon the previous class and reinforce any major grammatical howlers! Often teachers are busy and do not have enough time to address each student's individual needs, but a quick list can be drawn up of main class mistakes, and these can easily be addressed. As stated at the onset of this paper, the author is in the process of developing assessment software that, it is hoped, will enable students to become more autonomous in their studies by raising awareness of their own shortcomings as well as those of their peers and help them to develop their own unique writing ability.

Classroom teachers are never be able to help each student fully on an individual basis, but if students are empowered to help themselves by becoming more aware of the challenges they face, as well as their own shortcomings and what they need to do to overcome them, they will be emboldened and confident in the knowledge that there is something that can do to take control over their own destiny.

I intend to continue this research over the next two to three years and to write more extensively on the findings. Additionally, I hope to add to my data bank and to work with others doing a similar line of research. Early results are encouraging, but much still has to be done.

THE AUTHOR

Gerry McLellan is a lecturer of English at Aichi University of Education, Aichi University, and Kinjo Gakkuin University in Nagoya, Japan. He is an associate fellow in TEAP with BALEAP and is currently working on his fellowship. He is also advisor to the JALT publication, *The Language Teacher*, and a published EFL author. Email: jsagerry@gmail.com

REFERENCES

- Brown, D. H. (2007). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. San Francisco, CA: Pearson Longman.

- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education* (7th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Coulthard, M. (2002). On analysing and evaluating written text. In M. Coulthard (Ed.), *Advances in written text analysis* (pp. 15–25). London, UK: Routledge.
- Ellis, N. (2002). Frequency effects in language processing: A review with implications for theories of implicit and explicit language acquisition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 24, 297–339.
- Grabe, W. (2009). *Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice*. New York, NY: Cambridge.
- Jang, E. E. (2014). *Focus on assessment*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Holec, H. (1981). *Autonomy and foreign language learning*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Hunt, J. G. (2017). The transformation of instruction: A critical analysis of trends in English education in 21st century Korea. *Korea TESOL Journal*, 13(2), 3–9.
- Kim, Y., & Kim, J. (2006). Teaching Korean university writing class: Balancing process and the genre approach. *Asian EFL Journal*, 7(2), 1–15. Retrieved from asian-efl-journal.com/June_05_yk-jk.pdf
- Long, M. (2017). A task-based model for the development of second language writing skills for Korean university freshman. *Korea TESOL Journal*, 13(2), 91–108.
- Reinking, J. A., Hart, A. W., & Von der Osten, R. (2001). *Strategies for successful writing* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Rugen, B. (2018). Developing teaching immediacy in language teacher education. *The Language Teacher*, 42(2), 13–17.
- Tyson, R. E. (1998, October). *Teaching Korean university students to peer-and-self-edit*. Paper presented at the 1998 Korea TESOL National Conference, Seoul, Korea.
- Tyson, R. E. (2000). Increasing the effectiveness of composition instruction in Korean university English classes. *English Language Education*, 21, 205–214.

APPENDIX

1. Essay Writing Tips

➤ **Title**

The title should be short and catchy. Try to make your own original title. It is the first thing that the reader sees, so make sure it is interesting.

➤ **Introduction and a conclusion**

The introduction is like an upside-down triangle. You start with a wide topic and narrow the focus of your essay. Tell the reader what you are going to write about.

The conclusion is the opposite. You say something about the future or make some other suggestion.



Introduction



Conclusion

➤ **Main Body**

Split this into your essay paragraphs and write something about each point in the body.

➤ **Remember to**

- Use articles a/an/the before nouns.
- Do not repeat words. Use he/she/they/it etc.
- Use the correct tense of verbs.
- Do not begin sentences with “But,” “And,” “So,” etc.
- Use your time well.
- Use adjectives if it is a descriptive essay.
- Read your essay before you hand it in to check for mistakes.

2. Example Essay

Title: My Family

(Original Title: Love Family: Love Life)

Families are very important. I hope that everyone is lucky enough to have a loving family. I have two brothers and a large number of nephews and nieces. We live in different countries, so we can't see each other as often as we would like. However, in Japan, I am lucky enough to have a lovely wife and two adorable children. I will write about them. First, I'll mention my family members and discuss their personalities and likes. Then I'll write about what we do together. Lastly, I'll mention our plans for the summer.

Firstly, my wife, Mayumi, has her own English school for young children. She works three days a week, and she also cooks dinner most evenings. She is tall and has long, black hair. She speaks English well. She likes going to rock concerts. She gets angry easily. Shaun, my son, is ten years old. He is also tall and many people think he is a junior high student. He likes swimming and playing rugby. I usually play soccer and rugby with him three mornings a week in the park near our house. We get up early and practice together. However, he recently started to study at a cram school, so is sometimes too tired in the morning. Cara, my daughter, is six years old. She likes gymnastics and practices once a week. Both of my kids also play the piano and are members of other clubs. I have to pay a lot of money!! Both Shaun and Cara are outgoing and friendly, so they make friends easily.

Secondly, I'll write about our favourite family activities. In winter we often go skiing with friends. Shaun can already ski black runs, so he often goes off with some friends. I enjoy the fresh mountain air and the feeling of tiredness after skiing all day. I think it is very healthy. After skiing, we go to a hot spring and relax. Then we come back to Nagoya and go to a family restaurant. Although the food isn't so good, the kids enjoy it, and I can have a couple of glasses of wine. I always sleep well after skiing... and wine! In other seasons, we play sports such as tennis, and we often go camping. I like to sit in the countryside and gaze at the stars. I never cease to be impressed by them!

Thirdly, I'll write about our plans for this summer vacation. Every summer, I have to work at the University of Glasgow in Scotland, so I take my family with me. We spend five weeks in Scotland. It is cooler than in Nagoya, but it often rains. My kids go to summer camp and play sports, and my wife has many friends to visit while there. When I'm not working, we go to soccer games and visit family. I also love the pubs and restaurants in Scotland. The food is fresh and the beer is tasty. My family also go to the Edinburgh Arts Festival. It is

always crowded as more than two million tourists visit it every year. It is the third largest event in the world, so you have to get a ticket early. However, there are more than 23,000 performances over a three-week period, so you can always find something to watch. After Scotland, we go to an all-inclusive family hotel in Spain. I can relax and the kids can run wild!

As you can see, we are a busy family, but we enjoy life to the full. I hope that you can find time to spend with your family and that you enjoy your life as much as we do.

(593 words)

Curriculum and Vocabulary Instruction Practices Using a Dual Literacy Approach for Korean English Learners

Samantha Levinson

Mokpo English Library, Mokpo, Korea

This paper explores one teacher's curriculum development of two units that offer a new perspective to ELL vocabulary acquisition by building vocabulary using morphological training, and then access and build on background knowledge through practical applications that lead to higher comprehension. This investigation (a) explores the role that curriculum plays on literacy development focused on the development activities that supports the vocabulary development of elementary Korean English language learners using Greek root words and affixes beyond vocabulary word lists, (b) uses grapheme, phoneme, and morpheme awareness, integrated in a way that helps students understand how words are built and takes the form of a unit plan adapted from Understanding by Design Backward (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006), and (c) activates student knowledge in the application phase through personalized communication practice.

Keywords: Greek affixes, morphological awareness, vocabulary development, language proficiency

INTRODUCTION

This project sought to find a way to introduce vocabulary education beyond word lists to fifth- and sixth-grade ELLs residing in Korea. Although decoding literacy skills are undoubtedly a critical component in academic literacy learning, when used improperly, students do not retain new knowledge, and they won't activate background knowledge and stimulate high-level thinking skills. Uribe and Nathenson-Mejia (2008) state that vocabulary is essential for ELLs to develop comprehension through concept development and word usage.

Vocabulary should not be seen as words lists, rather as the form, use, and semantics within a text. Uribe and Nathenson-Mejia elaborate that vocabulary development goes beyond word definitions to require interaction and application of contextualized and decontextualized language. This includes syntax, semantics, and phonics. The relationship between these systems and actual communication, or building on background knowledge, is a key element of the units that comprise this project. With this in mind, the guiding question in developing the curriculum is as follows: How will the use of vocabulary activities to support literacy development affect the vocabulary acquisition aspect of the literacy of elementary Korean English language learners?

ELL vocabulary curriculum for Korean ELL learners in Korea is often built to help students decode new words in a decontextualized fashion. This project sought to build a curriculum that uses the strength and usefulness of a decoding component with meaning-making while simultaneously encouraging student interaction. Instruction centralizes vocabulary-building curriculum that encourages students to learn how Greek-origin roots, prefixes, and suffixes operate within the ever-evolving English language. Affixes and root words can be used to decode and build meaning of new vocabulary autonomously with the support of the teacher. Then, a follow-up unit pushes students to use critical-thinking skills to relate learned vocabulary from Greek mythology readers' theater to personal experience. Uribe and Nathenson-Mejia (2008) confirm vocabulary development is the key to progressing academically for intermediate ELLs.

The curriculum takes the form of a unit plan adapted from *Understanding by Design* in Tomlinson and McTighe (2006), and the unit is driven by core essential questions and the content is always central to the theme. All learning plans in the curriculum are directly derived from essential questions. Educators who seek to find a new perspective to ELL vocabulary acquisition are encouraged to implement and adapt the units that are geared to access and build on background knowledge leading to higher comprehension.

Below, the major learnings that informed this curriculum project are discussed in the literature review. The methods, including the limitations experience when researching; results; discussion; and conclusion are also included.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, leading research in L2 English acquisition is used to pinpoint the key elements and strategies that contribute to vocabulary learning and literacy skills. All research directly pertains to the curriculum developed, which was designed to ensure that grapheme, phoneme, and morpheme awareness are integrated in a way that helps students understand how words are built. Firstly, the components of successful vocabulary acquisition are measured by basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP; Cummins, 1982). The BICS-CALP scale illustrates key components to reading comprehension, discusses linguistics confusion and affixations acquisition, and makes an argument for vocabulary instruction using meaning emphasis versus code emphasis literacy (Murray, Munger, & Hiebert, 2014). The success of morphological awareness training on Korean ELLs literacy-building by analyzing a study of ELLs from linguistically different backgrounds is noted and indicates an opportunity to improve understanding of the best literacy practices for Korean ELL students. Lastly, the study explores the role of connectionism and tandem theory for L2 English learners, critical literacy theory, and classroom application using think-alouds and vocabulary-learning strategies (Tracey & Morrow, 2012). The guiding question is this: How will the use of vocabulary activities to support literacy development affect the vocabulary acquisition of elementary Korean English language learners?

BICS-CALP Continuum, Reading Comprehension, and Its Components

Cummins (1982) developed an iceberg representation to illustrate the BICS-CALP framework. The BICS-CALP framework measures students' knowledge and usage of academic vocabulary using an image of an iceberg and acquisition framework to monitor and divide learning into surface (basic interpersonal communication skills, BICS) and below-the-surface (cognitive academic language proficiency, CALP) skills. Cummins (1982) created a four quadrant continuum to show how students move from BICS toward CALP (see Table 1).

TABLE 1. BICS to CALP: Cummins’ (1982) Framework Language Proficiency Development

Cognitively Undemanding	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survival “chunks” • Simple grammar forms • High-frequency vocabulary: family, clothes, food, money, face-to-face interactions • “Here and now” language: 1,000–2,500 words. Learners must personalize, internalize, and automatize these building blocks. They need to hear them hundreds and hundreds of times. <p style="text-align: center;">Content Embedded 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial reading skills • Writing for personal needs: notes, lists, recipes, group-constructed text (LEA) • Common vocabulary: sports, hobbies, celebrations • Begin to integrate grammar and vocabulary: mini-themes • “My lived experience”: 2,500–5,000 words <p style="text-align: center;">Content Reduced 2</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Context Embedded 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitioning to curriculum-related content • Manipulatives • Visual representations • Shift from learning-to-read, to reading-to-learn (GE 5 to GE 7): reading strategies • Thematic units: disasters, heroes, Blue Jeans • ELL learners has 3,000 high-frequency words, some academic words (AWL) and some common vocabulary (possibly 8,000 words) • “There and then” language and thought: can access with scaffolded support (images) 	<p style="text-align: center;">Context Reduced 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The educated imagination”: ideas I can access only through language itself • Abstract thought: metaphor, symbolism, idiom, imagery • Extensive use of reading and writing in academic genres (essays, debates) • GE 7–9* • 12,000 words + (compared with L1 speakers with at least 40,000 words and heading towards 100,000 by the end of grade 12)
Cognitively Demanding	

On the horizontal axis, language development ranges from context embedded on the left to context reduced on the right. The vertical plane moves from academically and cognitively undemanding on the top to demanding on the bottom. BICS-CALP offers an important framework for assessing second language development. It seeks to help students

progress through the quadrants until they acquire the ability to use academic language in a cognitively demanding fashion. The BICS-CALP continuum was created as a way to monitor students' English language comprehension (Roessingh, 2006). Roessingh (2006) elaborated upon Cummins (1982) iceberg continuum by making recommendations based on the designated benchmark descriptors that can be referenced for assessment purposes within each quadrant. Table 1 is a visual representation of the BICS-CALP continuum.

According to Cummins (1982), the surface language of second language learners develops within two years of direct immersion. However, DelliCarpini (2008) makes an important note that CALP can take up to twelve years to master. Cummin's (1982) BICS-CALP continuum breaks second language development into four quadrants that constitute students' progress as their communication usage becomes more autonomous and cognitively demanding. Quadrant 1 and 2 are considered cognitively undemanding. Within Quadrant 1 of the CALP continuum, students may learn simple vocabulary and have a word bank of 1,000–2,500 words to draw from (Cummins, 1982). Students understand simple grammar forms. The words are needed to hear “here and now” language hundreds of times to build, internalize, and personalize meaning (Roessingh, 2006). Once students have moved into Quadrant 2, they may be able to make lists, talk about common vocabulary, and begin to integrate vocabulary into themes. Their living-experience vocabulary will consist of 2,500–5,000 additional words. The transition to Quadrants 3 and 4 is more difficult. In Quadrants 3 and 4, students transition into cognitively demanding work reduces embedded context. Embedded context uses cues and signals that help reveal meaning. In quadrant 3, these hints are reduced, and by Quadrant 4, they are reduced again.

According to Roessingh (2006), an ELL student in Quadrant 3 should have use of 3,000 high-frequency words and a working academic vocabulary up to 8,000 words. The curriculum transitions into a content-based curriculum at this point. By Quadrant 4, students need to have a good grasp on a variety of writing styles with the use of abstract thought. They should acquire 12,000 new words with the goal to accumulate a total of 100,000 words by grade 12. Native speakers are expected to acquire 40,000 new words within the same time period (Roessingh, 2006). Therefore, lessons should focus both on language support as well as content acquisition. With the use of the BICS-CALP continuum to monitor language acquisition, students will have an

opportunity to progress to the latter quadrants with help from a strong curriculum. The purpose of this study is to develop a curriculum that will allow students to cross into Quadrants 3 and 4 by learning, activating, and using new vocabulary simultaneously.

Vocabulary Considerations and Effects on ELL Reading Comprehension

As Roessingh (2006) pointed out, vocabulary is essential for academic growth for intermediate to advanced English speakers. Second language learners' depth of vocabulary affects their reading comprehension. Special consideration should be made to help ELL students succeed in building their vocabulary to improve literacy and reading comprehension. Below, strategies for expanding vocabulary will be discussed.

Quian (1999) defines ELL vocabulary acquisition into two categories: breadth and depth. Quian states that breadth of vocabulary knowledge refers to vocabulary size, whereas the depth of one's vocabulary knowledge refers to how well the learner actually knows the word. Quian created a framework for assessing ELL vocabulary depth of vocabulary as it pertains to reading comprehension. These key elements include pronunciation, morphological properties, syntactic properties, and word meaning as it pertains to its own application, its register (how it is read, style, regional variations), and its frequency. Quian (1999) cites significant evidence that vocabulary size, or breadth of vocabulary knowledge, affects ELL reading comprehension. However, how ELL reading comprehension is affected by depth of one's vocabulary knowledge is harder to measure. Challenging Korean ELL depth of vocabulary knowledge with the help of an innovative curriculum becomes a key objective of this project.

To better address Korean ELLs needs, we must first look at their specific learning needs. While best practices of vocabulary acquisition often are effective with non-native speakers, there are some special considerations specific to the ELL demographic. Graves (2006) summarizes them as such: (a) Teaching students to read in their first language promotes higher literacy achievement in English. (b) ELLs require instructional accommodations such as vocabulary development support and more time. (c) ELLs also require additional factors such as

motivation, classroom consistency, the use of graphic organizers, and the provision of redundant information in verbal and nonverbal forms. (d) Pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading activities will help support vocabulary acquisition and overall comprehension of the text ELLs have read. (e) Teachers should help students organize and consolidate text knowledge with reviews and summaries, and provide ample opportunities to interact with teachers and peers. Graves (2006) suggests that pairing non-native speakers with native speakers has strong comprehension benefits. Speaking rate and vocabulary complexity should be taken into consideration.

When teaching specific words to ELLs, Graves (2006) goes on to advise that more words will have to be taught, of which many will be basic words. Oral vocabulary, as well as written, will need improvement. These new words may represent new concepts that need to be explained. In order to have success, the teacher should identify potentially difficult vocabulary prior to reading, and the ELLs will benefit from multiple exposure in multiple contexts to the new words. Tactile tasks, rhymes, poems, games, pictures, demonstrations, and videos are helpful in promoting ELL vocabulary acquisition. I have discussed considerations necessary for improving second language learners' depth of vocabulary and how it affects their reading comprehension. Next, I will discuss how linguistic confusion affects ELL vocabulary acquisition.

Effects of Morphological Awareness

According to Marinova-Todd, Siegel, and Mazabel (2013) morphology is defined as the study of words, how they are formed, and their relationship to other words of a language. It analyzes the structure of words and parts of words, such as root words, prefixes, and suffixes. When students understand how words can be broken apart to construct meaning, they are able to construct meaning of new words. According to a study conducted by Marinova-Todd et al. (2013), the Korean language is considered an agglutinative language, or morphologically transparent. In linguistic terms, Korean complex words are formed by stringing together morphemes without changing their parts in spelling or phonetics. It has a high rate of affixes per word, which categorizes it as morphologically rich language.

Within their study, Marinova-Todd et al. (2013) tested eight language groups, including Chinese, Filipino, Germanic, Korean, Persian,

Romance, and Slavic. The study compared student performance on metalinguistic, reading, and spelling abilities to determine whether associations between morphological awareness and reading and spelling in a second language are influenced by the morphological structure of the first language. The results showed that indeed there was a positive correlation. This confirms that morphological awareness is important for reading and spelling growth. The criteria of the test included syntactic awareness, morphology awareness of real-word reading fluency, pseudo-word reading fluency, Stanford reading comprehension, real-word spelling, pseudo-word spelling, and real-word identification and pseudo-word identification. Korean students scored at the bottom of six of the eight categories, only performing higher than Persian students marginally in two groups. The overall, low morphological awareness of Korean and Persian students was hypothesized to be due to a lack of exposure of fusional languages (opaque languages in which “one affix may represent more than one meaning, and often through a derivational process, the stems could undergo phonological and/or orthographic change” (Marinova-Todd et al., 2013, p. 97). English and Slavic languages are heavily influenced by derivational processes (breaking apart the root from the prefix and suffix, and deriving a change in meaning from similar words (e.g., *teach/teacher*); as such, they are categorized as fusion languages. Other factors attributing to Korean low scores are the symbolic alphabet and shallow orthography. Korean, which has a shallow orthography, does not require morphological training when learning spelling, as mentioned above. Words are simply phonetic. In contrast, in English there are a variety of morphemes that can create a sound. For example, “fish,” “nation,” and “magician” make the same sound, the “sh” sound, yet are spelled very differently. The results of the Marinova-Todd et al. (2013) study suggests that variety of strategies are necessary when acquiring literacy and morphological awareness training is an essential component to literacy training.

Marinova-Todd et al. (2013) and Cho, McBride-Chang, and Park (2008) state Korean words most commonly consist of two or more morphemes (units of language), and as a result, words can be broken down to construct meaning of new words. While English is written in a linear progression, Korean morphemes are built in vertical stackable cells. Often Korean morphemes are unchanged when building compound words allowing readers to learn new words easily. Consider the word “kindergarten”: In Korean, a compound word is used to combine 어린이

(*child*) + 집 (*house*) to form 어린이집 (*child-house*). Another example, 위험물 is a compound of 위험 (*danger*) + 물 (*stuff*) = dangerous-material.

Because Korean phonemes often remain unchanged, a reader who is unfamiliar with a new word can easily extract meaning if they have an understanding of the simple components. Culpeper (2015) warns that although compound words do exist in English, a great number of words come from varying origins, which makes this meaning-making method far from foolproof.

Studying Latin and Greek prefixes and suffixes is a helpful meaning-making tool and is the central focus within this curriculum set. In addition, morphological construction exercises can help draw a parallel between Korean and English. Cho et al. (2008) suggest creating a word construct task, such as Cunningham and Hall's (2008) "Making Words," which requires students to use morphemes they are familiar with to make new compound words. The use of analogies and deduction allow students to learn new words based on previous learning. This component will enrich the ELL curriculum and helps students understand the underlying components of vocabulary-building. Marinova-Todd et al. (2013) and Cho et al. (2008) cited that morphological awareness is central to a Korean students' ability to learn English vocabulary beyond memorization. When students understand how words can be broken apart to construct meaning, they are able to construct the meanings of new words. As mentioned above, Korean is considered as an agglutinative language lacking inflections or isolated elements within words. As a result, most grammatical and inflection changes are indicated within the suffix or postposition. This is important to understand when teaching Korean ELLs because many students will likely struggle with vocabulary acquisition. In addition, morphological emphasis is needed because Korean has a shallow orthography, which does not require learning a variety of morpheme combinations that make the same sound as English does. Being able to break English words down to their root, prefix, and suffix allows students to construct meaning of new vocabulary item autonomously. This process of deriving a change in meaning from a similar word is referred to as *derivational process* (e.g., *teach/teacher*; Marinova-Todd et al., 2013).

Next, vocabulary acquisition in Korea is often based on decoding according to principles of phonics. This research supports the importance of using meaning-making strategies in combination with morphological training (Marinova-Todd et al., 2013; Cho et al., 2008). Meaning-making

emphasis, also referred to as a “top-down, bottom-up approach” (Hinkel, 2005), encourages social learning incorporated in vocabulary education. The sharing of personal perspective is found to reinforce learned vocabulary through usage. If students have limited time to engage in conversation and build comprehension, their understanding is not engaged. In addition, it isolated students from the language that they are learning.

In addition, Leopold (2012) confirms that Korean ELLs respond particularly well to task-based tactile and visual learning strategies, so this curriculum takes that into account and focuses on learning activities central to these two learning styles. This preference is distinctly Korean. Cultural patterns such as these makes the case for taking a culturally sensitive and inclusive approach. It is centrally important to Korean learners’ English education that students recognize that English is a living, breathing, useful, and usable language and that it is presented in a way in which students can fully engage.

Task-Based Learning

Vocabulary acquisition methods have been divided into two categories. Hinkel (2005) has divided vocabulary learning into receptive and productive categories. Receptive, or passive, is knowledge needed for listening and reading. Productive, on the other hand, is knowledge needed to use the word for speaking and writing. This specific project will focus on the interplay between receptive and productive vocabulary acquisition. Hinkel created a table for understanding how vocabulary is acquired. She has broken acquisition into form, meaning, and usage. She defines the form of a word as a combination of learning a word’s spelling, sounds, and word parts. Meaning is constructed by linking the form of the word with its meaning and being able to identify similar or connected words. Usage refers to the ability to understand a word’s grammatical rules, sentence patterns, its formality, and how and when it is appropriate to use the word. (See Table 2 for specific vocabulary acquisition methods.)

TABLE 2. What Is Involved in Knowing a Word

Spoken Form	R What does the word sound like? P How is the word pronounced?
Written Form	R What does the word look like? P How is the word written and spelled?
Word Parts	R What parts are recognizable in this word? P What word parts are needed to express the meaning?
Form and Meaning	R What meaning does this word form signal? P What word form can be used to express this meaning?
Concept and Referents	R What is included in the concept? P What items can the concept refer to?
Associations	R What other words does this make us think of? P What other words could we use instead of this one?
Grammatical Functions and Use	R In what patterns does the word occur? P In what patterns must we use this word?
Collocations	R What words or types of words occur with this one? P What words or types of words must we use with this one?
Constraints on Use	R Where, when, and how often would we expect to meet this word?
(Register, Frequency, etc.)	P Where, when, and how often can we use this word?

Note. In column 3, R = receptive knowledge. P = productive knowledge. (Adapted from Hinkel, 2005)

Another factor to consider in ELL vocabulary learning is learning style. The role learning style plays on ELL instruction determines students' engagement and ability to learn new material. Leopold (2012) states that the potential for a mismatch between the teacher's and the learner's style may be high and makes a connection to cultural minority groups. A mismatch in teaching has been linked to poor academic performance and a negative attitude towards education. Leopold notes that while many ELL learners prefer kinesthetic tasks, Korean ELLs in general prefer tactile and visual modes, which is distinctly Korean. Although further explanation is not given, this cultural pattern makes the case for taking a culturally sensitive and inclusive approach. Tactile and visual tasks are central to this curriculum development project as a result of this finding.

According to Herraiz-Martinez (2018), task-based language teaching (TBLT) classroom activities are characterized by single tasks or the

repetition of tasks to develop the knowledge of language, which is then internalized. Herraiz-Martinez states that TBLT is well-known for its communicative nature. He writes that tasks result in real outcomes, and as a result, a negotiation of meaning takes place. It is within these interactions that learning is enhanced.

Benefits of Phonological Awareness and Meaning Emphasis vs. Code Emphasis and Benefits of Phonological Awareness

Kang (2010) notes that Korean has a shallow orthography. This means that Korean reading is more reliant on decoding. Literacy instruction usually involves working with letter and name combinations rather than sound combinations or manipulatives. Korean has a phonetic writing system. Letter combinations almost always make the same sound, making fundamental literacy skills easy to acquire. Murray et al. (2014) note that the English language has a high frequency of irregular words, which account for up to 50% of all words. Since sound patterns may appear in a variety of different spellings, it is important that these irregular words appear in high frequency and are arranged to show patterns and be practiced often. As explained above, phonological awareness (PA) is often a foundational literacy-building component in English. In contrast, Cho et al. (2008) found that Korean irregular words are recognized and learned using morphological awareness, the ability to breakdown a word into parts and derive meaning. In addition, words are built by lexical compounding of root words. Cho et al. (2008) state this contrast in language acquisition may be due to the fundamental differences of the two languages characteristics. Factors such as the prevalence of compound words as well as shallow orthography contribute to why PA is lacking in Korean literacy studies, but PA should be understood when teaching Korean ELL students. Kang (2010) reiterates this point while adding that Korean L1 learners' lack of need for PA training while learning Korean.

In contrast, PA training is a common component in early literacy programs in English-speaking countries, yet in Korea it is rarely incorporated in the texts or curriculum that students encounter. This results in Korean ELLs needing to learn PA for the first time when studying English. They are essentially learning two separate skills at the same time: a language and a new way (PA) to study that language. The

study of irregular sound patterns, and syllable and phoneme awareness should be included in lessons for Korean ELLs. There is a variety of ways to go about teaching these complicated and irregular patterns. Kang believes that “it is useful to visualize the written forms in performing PA tasks (p. 427). Vaknin-Nusbaum, Sarid, Raven, and Nevo (2016) state that after initial awareness of grapheme-to-phoneme awareness, students will begin to read words and, as they become more comfortable and confident, move onto morphemes. They define a morpheme as a meaning component within a word. By visualizing the morphemes that a letter or series of letters will make, student language acquisition is better obtained.

When meaning is made within the word form, these words are referred to as *concrete* words (as opposed to *abstract* words). Vaknin-Nusbaum et al. also emphasizes that an “interaction between their Korean and English letter name knowledge contributes significantly to their English PA” (p. 427). After all, bilingual language development requires a certain synergy, or interlanguaging, to draw meaning from similarities and differences between learned languages. In Korean syllabification of English loanwords, additional syllables are often added, which creates confusion when learning English graphemes. For example, the word *strike* has one syllable, while the loanword in Korean (스트라이크; pronounced seu-teu-ra-ee-keu) has five syllables. This is caused by a phonological difference between the languages.

Rescorla, Lee, Oh, and Kim (2013) state that the Korean language has a weaker noun bias than English. Discourse factors as well as linguistic factors play a part in why this occurs. Korean sentence structure typically follows subject-object-verb word order, whereas English generally is subject-verb-object. This results in the Korean sentence-final verb becoming more prominent. Additionally in Korean, sentences that have already introduced previous ideas, subjects, and objects will more readily omit them. It is for these two reasons that many researchers believe that a weak bias exists. The implications affect how Korean ELL process and acquire new vocabulary. This leads one to believe that Korean students acquire new vocabulary, especially nouns, in a different way than native English learners. This makes a case for scaffolding and working to build meaning-making alongside vocabulary expansion. In the next section, the methods in which this curriculum set was developed will be discussed.

METHOD

The goal of this project is to activate already acquired vocabulary and build on past knowledge in a meaningful way that will facilitate a link between speaking skills acquired and written literacy skills pertaining to Greek affixes and root words. Recognizing the benefits of dynamic instruction when teaching ELLs, the curriculum will rely on the use of multiple elements including interlanguage pragmatics to activate oral language alongside instruction that honors “socially, culturally, and linguistically diverse backgrounds” (Domínguez & Gutiérrez, 2015, p. 136), phonological awareness, and morphological awareness. It will be implemented with a dual emphasis on both meaning and decoding literacy techniques through task-based learning activities.

A variety of strategies are necessary when acquiring literacy and morphological awareness. Morphological emphasis is needed because Korean has a shallow orthography, which does not require learning a variety of morpheme combinations that make the same sound as English does. Being able to break English words down to their root, prefix, and suffix allows students to construct meaning of new vocabulary autonomously. This process of meaning-making is referred to as a derivational process (breaking apart the root, from prefix and/or suffix, and deriving a change in meaning from a similar word (e.g., *teach/teacher*; Marinova-Todd et al., 2013).

There are two schools of thought as to how to build foundational literacy skills: meaning-making and decodable emphasis literacy. Meaning-making literacy programs may focus on word repetition, high-frequency words, and multiple-syllable words (often concrete words which elicit a mental picture (e.g., *pancake*; Murray et al., 2014). These characteristics align it with a meaning-oriented literacy philosophy. Such programs emphasize “meaning, semantic cues, natural language patterns, predictable syntactic patterns, and word repetition” (Murray et al., 2014, p. 493). Programs focusing on decodable reading passages, on the other hand, may emphasize phonetic regularity, highly decodable words, and a high lesson-to-text match (LTTM) ratio (Murray et al., 2014). There should be a high frequency of sight-words with high phonetic regularity used to build student’s working word base.

There is no good reason why these two programs cannot be used in tandem to create a dynamic program that is focused on both highly

decodable words that help build early literacy and frequent practice, with a gentle release of power until students can acquire new vocabulary based on repetition, multiple-syllable words, and concrete words with the use of task-based activities. The problem with traditional ELL vocabulary study is that it separates learning categories into four distinct and unrelated fields. Compartmentalizing instruction into the four separate learning categories of reading, writing, speaking, and listening often has a low overlap in lesson-to-text match (LTTM) and doesn't offer the opportunity to practice what students have learned since the material is rarely consistent.

The proposed curriculum will be comprised of two units containing ten 50-minute lessons each. Lessons 1 through 4 focus on vocabulary-building with the use of morphological and phonological training activities using Greek affixes and root words. The second unit focuses on activating and expanding student speaking and writing skills using learned vocabulary in task-based learning practices. The theme of interlanguage pragmatics training that includes points of view from "socially, culturally, and linguistically diverse backgrounds" (Domínguez & Gutiérrez, 2015, p. 136) runs throughout the project. It will be comprised of two units containing four 50-minute lessons each. A lesson can be taught three times per week over the course of approximately three to four weeks (e.g., Monday, Wednesday, Friday). A pre-test a week prior to curriculum implementation and a post-testing week may accompany the two curriculum units as formative assessment. Altogether, the project will require a six-week period. The first unit employs a dual emphasis on meaning and decoding literacy techniques through task-based learning activities based on Greek affixes and root words. The second unit, or application phase, focuses on meaning-making and application through question-asking focused on comprehension, structure, interlanguage pragmatics, and critical literacy components using Greek mythology. The chart below illustrates an ideal implementation timeline. The curriculum design will take shape within a five-phase process. In the first phase, the pre-test is created and piloted by being administered to a panel of volunteer test-takers. Then, in the second phase, we identify the goals and concepts of the unit based on the Understanding by Design unit plan. In the third phase, teaching materials are gathered and created. In the fourth phase, scaffolding is created. The fifth phase is designated for cumulative evaluation and critical reflection.

The curriculum intends to expand students' English literacy two-fold.

First, students will engage in morphological and phonological training activities. The second unit focuses on activating and expanding comprehension by employing spoken and written expression with personalization through the use of hot-seat games, word-play games, reader’s theater presentations, literature circles, and creative writing. This dual approach will be referred to as “top-down and bottom-up processes” (Hinkel, 2005).

TABLE 3. Learning Objectives: Units 1 & 2, Lessons 1–8

Unit 1: Lessons 1–4	Unit 2: Lessons 5–8
<p>Time Frame: 50 minutes per class.</p> <p>Audience: Small groups of 7–8 Korean ELLs.</p> <p>Unit Objective: Understand an overview of the role of prefixes, suffixes, and root words; reflect and build on vocabulary knowledge.</p> <p>Vocabulary Objectives: Reflect on what root words, prefixes, and suffixes are; their function; and roots already learned. Then learn new words.</p> <p>Vocabulary Learning Strategies: Use semantic word mapping, think-share brainstorming, group discussion, word games such as word ladders and word maps, and worksheet completion.</p> <p>Reading Objectives: Close reading, worksheet completion, interview reflection, exit ticket reflections.</p>	<p>Time Frame: 50 minutes per class.</p> <p>Audience: Small groups of 7–8 Korean ELLs.</p> <p>Unit Objective: Understand the role of root words on vocabulary knowledge. Activate understanding of the role of prefixes, suffixes, and root words; reflect on vocabulary knowledge based on reader’s theater.</p> <p>Vocabulary Objectives: Continue to build vocabulary using word games such as word ladders.</p> <p>Vocabulary Learning Strategies: Use literature circles to activate understanding of learned vocabulary and concepts.</p> <p>Reading Objectives: Read and understand figurative language and use it as it relates to personal life.</p>

RESULTS OF BAE AND JOSHI

Bae and Joshi (2018) conducted multiple group comparison on the

role of morphological awareness for Korean ESLs as well as EFLs in the upper level of elementary school (5th and 6th grade). ESL students were defined as students residing in Texas, USA, who used their L2 predominantly for socialization and throughout their education. However, the EFL students who agreed to participate were from a single middle-class neighborhood in Seoul where Korean was their predominant language of communication. The Bae and Joshi report focused on the results of the EFL students residing in Korea. The study consisted of 130 fifth-graders and 127 sixth-graders who received at least two years of English instruction in public school. Their public English instruction time consisted of at least 120 minutes per week. The study used pre-tests and post-tests consisting of two forms: derivational production tasks (e.g., My uncle is a _____ [farmer]. He has a huge _____ [farm].) and compound production tasks (Cho, McBride-Chang, & Park, 2008). The production tasks required the students to listen to a definition of a compound word and make a new compound word based on a question (e.g., “Early morning when the sun comes up is called a sunrise.” The student then sees a picture of a moon rising and is asked what it is called). All test questions were asked orally.

The study aimed to find the direct contributions of morphological awareness (MA), the indirect contributions of MA, and cross-linguistic contributions of MA to reading comprehension mediated by vocabulary. Cross-linguistic transfer refers to students’ ability to take existing knowledge about their L1 and identify, analyze, and transfer their knowledge to their L2. Nagy (2007) developed the metalinguistic hypothesis to suggest the role of L1 in knowledge transfer and in enhancing L2 language manipulation and overall outcomes.

The empirical evidence showed that there was a stronger positive correlation in both the direct and indirect effects of MA in English reading comprehension for EFLs residing in Korea than for ESLs residing in the U.S. Though both groups primarily utilized their knowledge of processing morphological structure to extract meaning, the ESLs used MA and vocabulary separately, whereas the EFL group relied on vocabulary knowledge that was activated by morphological processing skills. These findings build on consistent research within the field, which proves that upper-elementary Korean ELL students who use MA training acquire enhanced literacy development.

DISCUSSION

Teaching students to be strategic instead of using strategies is part of what experts call authentic strategy instruction (Almasi & Hart, 2015, p. 226). Strategy is defined as “cognitive and metacognitive processes that are deliberately and consciously employed as a means of attaining a goal” (Almasi & Hart, 2015, p. 227). Almasi and Hart warn that teachers often focus on teaching a strategy and forget to allow students time to complete a task to inforce understanding of their new-found strategy. Other teachers, conversely, focus on a task and forget the essential elements of the lesson. Strategic processing is defined by Almasi & Hart (2015) as focus on both strategy and tasks that allows students to “become strategic thinkers” (p. 223). Readers should engage with strategies “until the strategies become part of the reader” (p. 231). Almasi and Hart go on to use the metaphor of a toolbox for the strategies that the reader uses but specifies that the reader “no longer reaches for a tool from a toolbox that is outside of him or her; the reader actually is the tool” (p. 231).

A strong curriculum has the ability to use task-based learning as a means to allow “the reader to transform into the tool” (p. 231). The metaphor will be taken a step further in the implementation of a “comprehension tool box” task activity central to the capstone curriculum plan. This process may be implemented in literature circles, small think-share pairs, or in a whole-group discussion.

Though morphological training units are often regarded as difficult to master in elementary education, there is evidence of its usefulness in building Korean ELL English literacy skills (Bae & Joshi, 2018). This article serves as a reminder that vocabulary education needs to be balanced between decontextualized morphological training and contextualized meaning-making in ESL education. Since affixes and root words do not require a great deal of contextual practice, they offer as a natural scaffolding to allow Korean ELL students to recognize common words that have Greek root words and affixes and learn new words using common affixes. Leontjev (2016) cites Bauer and Nation’s (1993) classification chart of affixes to measure their difficulty levels based on frequency, difficulty, and use restrictions. Levels range from Level 1, which is different forms of the same word, to Level 7, which is classical roots and affixes. Progressing through the levels helps build on existing knowledge in a manageable learning environment.

In the Korean education context, the curriculum serves to offer a way to bridge the gap between conceptual and practical vocabulary learning. In the Korean education system, “teaching to the test” is a reality that has caused significant gaps in students’ usable knowledge. Mundy (2014) notes that TOEIC testing isn’t beneficial for English proficiency; in contrast, it is proven that expressive language development is essential for Korean elementary students to acquire academic vocabulary that will allow them to attain academic literacy within their secondary education careers.

For young Korean students who seek to go on and succeed in reading, writing, speaking, and listening using academic vocabulary in their secondary education, a strong foundation needs to be set in elementary school to avoid grade-level regression. Curry (2004) warns that academic vocabulary is a hidden barrier that often blocks ELLs from achieving academic success in English. In order to afford Korean ELLs the opportunity to achieve academic vocabulary knowledge in Quadrants 3 and 4 of Cummins’ (1982) BICS-to-CALP framework, students need meaningful early exposure that creates cognitive and conceptual understanding. This vocabulary set should be introduced early and practiced often for best results. This vocabulary method targets school administrators, curriculum developers, action researchers, and educators who seek to create a balance between application and meaning-making methods within ELL vocabulary education. Whether policymakers chose to use the recommended curriculum or adapt it to their particular needs, it acts as a stepping stone to a more holistic vocabulary education philosophy.

CONCLUSIONS

This project has confirmed that ELLs’ vocabulary-building knowledge does not follow a clear set of rules. Rather, decoding skills develop alongside meaning-making, and it is meaning-making that often cements a word’s meaning. The mere looking at a new word and seeing the Korean translation devalues the importance of semantics and syntax within ELL vocabulary education.

With the use of highly interesting and interactive activities, Korean elementary students’ language use is challenged while facilitating

high-level critical-thinking discussions. The articulation of their thoughts helps reinforce learned vocabulary, all while using proper language structure.

Secondly, Korean and English have vastly different morphological structure which strongly suggests that morphological training is imperative for Korean ELL education. Because Korean phonemes often remain unchanged, a reader who is unfamiliar with a new word can easily extract meaning if they have an understanding of the simple components (Marinova-Todd et al., 2013, Cho et al., 2008). The English equivalent is Greek and Latin root words and affixes. This became a central theme in this project. This became the focus of Unit 1.

In addition, this study found ELLs thrive when social interactions are central to the learning environment. All the class activities strive to be group-oriented and task-based, yet offer adequate language support and scaffolding to help support the individual's learning. Thus, meaning-making in the form of reader's theater, literature circles, and narrative writing became the central focus of Unit 2.

The problem with traditional vocabulary study is that it separates learning categories into four distinct and unrelated fields. Compartmentalizing instruction into the four separate learning categories of reading, writing, speaking, and listening often has a low overlap in lesson-to-text match (LTTM) and doesn't offer the opportunity to practice what students have learned since the material is rarely consistent.

In conclusion, this paper offers a new perspective on ELL vocabulary education using morphological exercises paired with task-based conversation to answer the guiding question: How will the use of vocabulary activities to support literacy development affect the vocabulary acquisition of elementary Korean English language learners?

Vocabulary instruction for ELLs residing in Korea should be reevaluated to make considerations for activating knowledge. Using affixes within students' receptive and productive language instruction is an effective way to do so. This vocabulary-building curriculum encourages students to learn how Greek-origin roots, prefixes, and suffixes operate within the English language in order to enhance their L2 literacy development and then allows them to use their newly learned language in engaging discussions and tasks. This curriculum sought to offer a new perspective on ELL classroom instruction and can be adapted to fit the needs of educators in the future. Educators are encouraged to use this curriculum as an MA language-support

educational tool to improve L2 proficiency.

THE AUTHOR

Samantha Levinson received her MEd from Hamline University in 2019 with a certificate in reading and writing. She has taught a multitude of English courses at such institutions as Mokpo National University and Mokpo English Library. She has been running a private English study room for elementary students to adults for the past five years. Her academic interests include ELL literacy and vocabulary learning strategies. Email: srlevinson@gmail.com

REFERENCES

- Almasi, J., Domínguez, K., Gutiérrez, D., Hart, H. (2015). *Best practices in literacy instruction* (5th ed.) [Kindle version]. New York, NY: Guilford.
- Bae, H., & Joshi, S. (2018). A multiple-group comparison on the role of morphological awareness in reading: Within- and cross-linguistic evidence from Korean ESL and EFL learners. *Reading and Writing, 31*(8), 1821–1841.
- Cho, J., R., McBride-Chang, C., & Park, S. G. (2008). Phonological awareness and morphological awareness: Differential associations to regular and irregular word recognition in early Korean Hangeul readers. *Reading and Writing, 21*(3), 255–274. doi:10.1007/s11145-007-9072-z
- Culpeper, J. (2015). *History of English* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Cummins, J. (1982). *Language and literacy: Let's get back to the real basics!* Toronto, Canada: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.
- Cunningham, P. M., & Hall, D. P. (2008). *Making words first grade: 100 hands-on lessons for phonemic awareness, phonics, and spelling*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Curry, M. J. (2004). UCLA Community College Review: Academic literacy for English language learners. *Community College Review, 32*(2), 51–68. doi:10.1177/009155210403200204
- DelliCarpini, M. (2008). Success with ELLs: Working with English language learners – Looking back, moving forward. *English Journal, 98*(1), 98–101.
- Domínguez, M., & Gutiérrez, K. D. (2015). Best practices for teaching dual-language learners: Leveraging everyday literacies. In L. M. Morrow & L. B. Gambrell (Eds.), *Best practices in literacy instruction* (5th ed.) [Kindle version]. New York, NY: Guilford.
- Graves, M. F. (2006). *The vocabulary book: Learning and instruction*. New York, NY: Teachers College, Columbia University.

- Herraiiz-Martínez, A. (2018). Technology and task-based language teaching (TBLT): Exploring pragmatics. *International Journal of Education and Development Using Information and Communication Technology*, 14(2), 38–61.
- Hinkel, E. (2005). Analyses of L2 text and what can be learned from them. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 615–628). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Kang, J. (2012). Do bilingual children possess better phonological awareness? Investigation of Korean monolingual and Korean-English bilingual children. *Reading and Writing*, 25(2), 411–431.
- Leontjev, D. (2016). L2 English derivational knowledge: Which affixes are learners more likely to recognise? *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 6(2), 225–248.
- Leopold, L. (2012). Prewriting tasks for auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learners. *TESL Canada Journal*, 29(2), 96–102.
- Marinova-Todd, S. C., Siegel, L. S., & Mazabel, S. (2013). The association between morphological awareness and literacy in English language learners from different language backgrounds. *Topics in Language Disorders*, 33(1), 93–107. doi:10.1097/TLD.0b013e318280f5d5
- Mundy, S. (2014, June 16). *South Korea's millionaire tutors*. Retrieved from the CNBC website: <https://www.cnbc.com/2014/06/16/south-koreas-millionaire-tutors.html>
- Murray, M. S., Munger, K. A., & Hiebert, E. H. (2014). An analysis of two reading intervention programs. *Elementary School Journal*, 114(4), 479–500.
- Nagy, W. (2007). Metalinguistic awareness and the vocabulary-comprehension connection. In R. K. Wagner, A. E. Muse, & K. R. Tannenbaum (Eds.), *Vocabulary acquisition: Implications for reading comprehension* (pp. 52–77). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Roessingh, H. (2006). BICS-CALP: An introduction for some, a review for others. *TESL Canada Journal*, 23(2), 91–96.
- Rescorla, L., Lee, Y. M. C., Oh, K. J., & Kim, Y. A. (2013). Lexical development in Korean: Vocabulary size, lexical composition, and late talking. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 56(2), 735–747.
- Tomlinson, C., & McTighe, J. (2006). *Integrating differentiated instruction and understanding by design: Connecting content and kids* [Kindle version]. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development.
- Tracey, D. H., & Morrow, L. M. (2012). *Lenses on reading: An introduction to theories and models*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Uribe, M., & Nathenson-Mejia, S. (2008). *Literacy essential for English language learners: Successful transitions*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Vaknin-Nusbaum, V., Sarid, M., Raveh, M., & Nevo, E. (2016). The contribution of morphological awareness to reading comprehension in early stages of reading. *Reading and Writing*, 29(9), 1915–1934. doi:10.1007/s11145-016-9658-4

Why Have We Used Mobile Phones in Teaching English Writing Skills?

Phan Thi Thanh Thao

University of Foreign Languages, Hue University, Vietnam

Mobile devices play a crucial role in supporting language teaching and learning at universities. As a popular and fast means of communication, mobile phones can potentially enhance the quality of teaching and learning English in many EFL contexts, like Vietnam. This study focuses on the application of mobile pedagogy to help teach English writing for academic purposes (EAP). A pre-course questionnaire was offered to 80 English major students to determine their attitudes toward writing skills and their learning difficulties. Then the students were required to use text messages for the circular writing of different common topics and to keep a blogs, portfolios, or diaries with mobile phones to share their reflections. The teacher's comments and feedback also supported them in improving their English writing skills. The implications of using mobile pedagogy in teaching EAP, particularly writing skills, are suggested in this study in order to create practical language lessons at other institutions.

Keywords: mobile phones, writing skills, texting messages

INTRODUCTION

The world's educational environment has changed considerably due to many factors of which technology is considered the most influential one. In fact, technology is rapidly changing education, compelling instructors to be familiar with various mobile learning devices and formulate strategies to incorporate technology into the curriculum to meet the changing needs of their students (Jackson, Snider, Masek, & Baham, 2014). Mobile devices have become a more popular tool that has supported and impacted both teachers and learners in their teaching and learning process in many universities in the world generally and in

Vietnam particularly. Actually, Zhang (2015) and Hamm, Drysdale, and Moore (2014) indicate that mobile technology has been recognized as one of the most important innovations that has influenced teaching and learning.

As a major element of mobile pedagogy, mobile learning is known as “learning that is facilitated and enhanced by the use of digital mobile devices that can be carried out and used anywhere and anytime” (O’Connell & Smith, 2007, p. 29–32). In our current times, mobile pedagogy has become more and more prevalent because it has changed the ways of teaching and designing or creating lectures that are different from the traditional ones.

The number of mobile users is steadily increasing – in 2016, 100% of K-12 students used mobile handheld devices for education, but in 2012, the ESCAR Study Undergraduate Students and Information Technology confirmed that 62% of students own a smartphone (Hamm, Drysdale, & Moore, 2014). A Pew Research Center study also found that one in three teens sends more than 100 text messages a day with at least 70% of 17-year-olds texting daily (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010). That is to say, the young people’s tendency to use mobile phones in their daily activities is increasing around the world, which affects their studies and work dramatically. To face this issue, some educators, specifically teachers, have taken advantage of the mobile devices’ potential to improve the quality of language teaching.

Concerning the learning of the four English language skills, the writing skill is one of the most difficult ones. According to Shalbag (2017), many students panic with writing tasks, especially when such tasks require pen and paper because of the linguistic complexity of these tasks. Moreover, some students frequently complain that as soon as they pick up their pencils, their minds go blank. Also, some of them are afraid of the mistakes that they might make in spelling, grammar, mechanics, or vocabulary when they start writing their tasks. Therefore, they prefer using their mobile phones, which can help them automatically correct those errors mentioned above in the English writing classes.

Due to the previously addressed issues relating to the benefits of mobile pedagogy, the increasing number of mobile phone users, and the learning of writing, as it is the most challenging language skill, our study focused on mobile phone applications to teach English writing skills, which requires a lot of time for learners to practice.

Our research aimed to answer the following questions:

- RQ1. What are student's attitudes toward English writing skills and their learning difficulties?
- RQ2. How can students improve their writing skills with the use of mobile phones?
- RQ3. What are some ways for learners using mobile phones to develop English writing skills?

MOBILE PEDAGOGY APPLICATION INTO TEACHING WRITING SKILLS

Benefits and Challenges of Mobile Pedagogy in Teaching and Learning a Language

Liu, Navarrete, Maradiegue, and Wivagg (2014) indicate that the literature on mobile pedagogy has identified such affordances as (a) flexibility and accessibility, (b) interactivity, and (c) motivation and engagement. When students can use mobile devices to study at home and outside the class, teachers are also able to incorporate these devices into activities by bringing the real world into the classroom. In addition, students can take advantage of mobile devices' technological advances to get information and materials such as electronic books, newspapers, and video recordings, as well as interact and collaborate with other students. In fact, multimedia devices have brought learners a high autonomous capacity over their own learning process, particularly in language learning.

According to Sana (2017), English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers can benefit from this technology in a number of ways, especially since the use of mobile phones can extend far beyond the classroom, where it is more convenient for the student. In fact, with one smartphone, a student can easily access the Internet to search for any kind of learning resource anywhere and anytime. In the study conducted by Abbasi and Hashemi (2013), the use of mobile phones had a great impact on the EFL learners' vocabulary retention. Taking into consideration the use of mobile phones in language learning, Ally, McGreal, Schafer, Tin, and Cheung (2007) and Darmi and Albion (2014) have indicated that using mobile phones increased students' abilities to

enhance their English language learning.

Nevertheless, each issue always has two sides: positive and negative. Mobile pedagogy is not an exception. One common challenge for teachers is how to manage the classroom with mobile devices. For an effective lesson, teachers have to ensure that all the devices are charged and updated to run properly. Teachers take the role of both device managers and educators, which can potentially overwhelm them. Moreover, student–teacher interactions also require some adaptations on the part of the teacher. In addition, the teacher must also learn how to handle the independent nature of a mobile device. On the other hand, a high-quality mobile phone is sometimes too expensive for a student, and limited mobile storage space may prevent them from storing large multimedia contents suitable for their learning (Mtega, Bernard, Msungu, & Sanare, 2012). Thus, there should be some solutions to deal with these obstacles to using mobile phones for language learning.

Using Mobile Phones’ Text Messaging Feature in Teaching English Writing Skills

This study concentrated on using mobile phones in teaching English writing skills, presenting several techniques of the text messaging function. Among the 20 practical ways to use mobile phones to support second language learning recommended by Reinders (2010), there are several ways that phones can improve writing skills. Students can use the “Notes” feature to practice writing skills with tasks given by teachers. Reinders (2010) also added that students can use the text messaging feature for circular writing, where they are able to create a story together by contributing one text message at a time.

Each student writes a sentence or two and then sends this to the next student, who adds another message, and so on until the story is complete. This mobile phone function is really effective for students who want to improve their writing skills with different topics such as news reports, instructions, brochures, warnings, short stories, etc. by using social networks like blogs and Facebook (Melor, Lau, & Hadi, 2013; Mancas, 2014).

Furthermore, using mobile phones to keep a blog is considered a more advanced form of writing task. Students can use text messaging and camera features to add messages and post pictures to their personal

blogs. Figure 1 shows five main steps in writing blogs to improve students' writing skills. Teachers can read blogs and write comments or provide feedback on their reflections on writing skill progress.

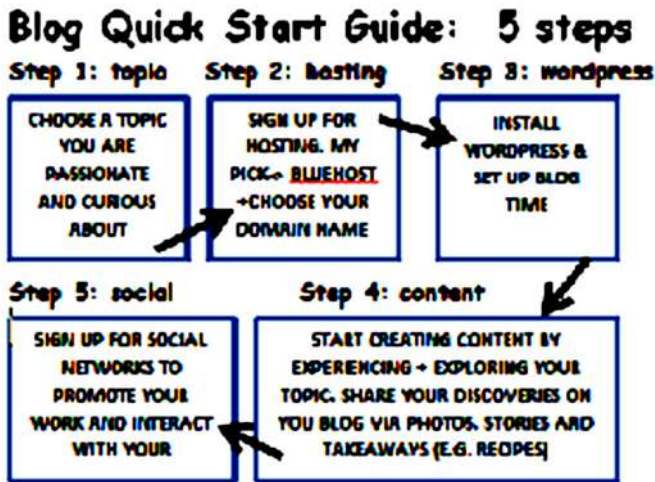


FIGURE 1. Five steps of creating blogs to improve English writing skills.

Furthermore, via mobile phones, students are able to access some useful websites to improve their grammatical knowledge (e.g., Grammarly, Grammar Girl, Grammar Book, Grammar Monster), vocabulary (Thesaurus), and writing styles (The Purdue Online Writing Lab, Writer's Digest University, Hemingway App, Pro Writing Aid). In brief, using the mobile phone's text messaging feature in teaching and learning a language has motivated us to conduct our research on its application to teaching English for academic purposes (EAP) at our university, Hue University of Foreign Languages (HUFL).

Previous Studies on Using Mobile Phones in Teaching and Learning English Writing Skills

In the era of advanced technology, there have been many studies on the application of mobile pedagogy in teaching and learning English language, especially for the writing skills. Ecem and Ebru (2018) determined the effects of using Twitter with micro-blogging on the EFL students' academic writing in Turkey. Learners in this technology's

world are regarded as “digital natives” (Prensky, 2001). Meanwhile, teachers, the so-called “digital immigrants,” use Twitter hashtags to ask their students to write English sentences about daily topics and then give immediate feedback to those sentences. Through this method, students can increase improvements in their English writing skills.

By studying the teaching and learning of English in a Korean higher education context, Shin (2014) discovered that the pedagogical gap between English as a foreign language (EFL) students and native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) has had some significant impacts on EFL education. This means that EFL learning and teaching has been greatly considered by many educators and scholars in Korea. Concerning the application of modern technology devices into the EFL education in Korea, Steyn (2014) states that the advances in technology has had a tremendous impact on the EFL landscape in Korea, which is proud of having the highest per capita high-speed Internet access of all the countries in Asia. Thus, Korean students now have access to social and international news and other social networking sites at almost any time with modern electronic devices like laptops, iPads, and mobile phones to improve their English writing skills. In fact, O'Donnell (2018) believes that despite some difficulties in English learning, particularly writing skills due to the Korean socio-cultural and educational environment and the significant differences between English and Korean letters and writing, there have been some innovative uses of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) that are specifically related to the EFL/ESL context. Through the use of the vast resources offered, CALL can increase motivation and enhance student achievement by impacting the students' attitudes and helping them feel more independent (Lee, 2000). Besides, with the online learning approach, there are a variety of advantages applicable to any blended or online program that provides learners with numerous opportunities to apply mobile phones in improving their English writing skills. Huang and Liu (2000) suggest that computer-assisted language learning most likely reduces the learner's anxiety and enhances their communicative skills in English.

A study conducted by Thornton and Houser (2004) on providing vocabulary instruction through short message service (SMS) indicates that students using SMS learn more than twice the number of vocabulary words as the students who receive materials through email, and that SMS helps students improve their scores by nearly twice as much as the scores of students who received their lessons on paper. When their

amount of vocabulary is increased, the students find it easier to enhance their writing ability in English. Concerning using SMS in learning English vocabulary and idiomatic expressions, two researchers, Kennedy and Levy (2008), carried out a program similar to the one by Thornton and Houser (2004) and got similar results in Australia when they sent vocabulary and idioms, definitions, and example sentences via SMS in a scheduled pattern. They then obtained the feedback in the form of quizzes and follow-up questions. That is to say, using SMS significantly improved the learner's English writing skills.

To explore Vietnamese learners' experience and attitudes towards mobile phone use in learning English writing skills, Dang (2013) determined that most students are highly interested in using mobile phones in writing blogs, diaries, or portfolios in English, which may help them complete their writing tasks, as well as practice their writing on various topics in daily life. Since this technology has been taken into consideration by many researchers and educators due to its potential contributions to language learning in general and English writing skills in particular, more and more students often use mobile phones in order to develop their writing techniques in English.

In brief, with a variety of studies in the world in general and in Asian countries in particular, such as Vietnam, Korea, and Japan, on the use of mobile phones in learning writing skills, we can conclude that this electronic device application is on the rise in teaching and learning English writing techniques in non-native English-speaking countries due to its previously mentioned benefits.

METHOD

This study was conducted for one semester as part of an English writing course for students majoring in English language at HUFL. With the participation of 80 second-year students over 15 weeks, our research was implemented in two phases. In the first phase, we designed a "pre-use mobile pedagogy questionnaire" to discover the students' attitudes towards English writing skills and their learning difficulties. In the second phase, we implemented a teaching experiment with the method of using text messaging on mobile phones to improve English writing skills. Every week, students were offered some writing tasks on

different topics shown in the textbook *NorthStar Reading and Writing 3* (Barton & Sardinas, 2015). Students could use mobile phones to write emails, instant messages (IM), texts, blogs, and diaries, and share their writing with their partners or teachers. We then created an “after-use mobile pedagogy questionnaire” to reveal the students’ reflections on their writing progress.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The 80 responses shown in two tables are categorized under five headings: Those who strongly agreed (A), those who agreed (B), those who expressed no attitude (neither agreed nor disagreed; C), those who disagreed (D), and those who strongly disagreed (E). The number of responses for each item under each of these five categories was calculated.

The study’s results were mainly concerned about the students’ attitudes towards English writing skills and their learning obstacles. Most of the students didn’t like to write for the following reasons: First, their vocabulary was limited. In particular, they were not good at using English collocations, idioms, or expressions. Second, some students found writing styles in English completely different from their mother tongue (Vietnamese), so they often made mistakes in writing English paragraphs and essays. Third, the majority of students agreed that the writing topics should be more interesting and inspiring, and finally, most of the students wanted to improve their writing skills because of its importance in improving their communication skills. Most of the students agreed that they often used mobile phones inside and outside of class, but few of them used mobile phones for improving their writing skills (see Table 1).

TABLE 1. Students' Attitudes Toward English Writing Skills and Their Learning Difficulties

No.	Responses	A	B	C	D	E
1	Among the four English language skills, I like writing the most.	2	5	3	56	14
2	I have problems with writing in English because my vocabulary is limited.	37	23	4	10	6
3	I often make grammatical mistakes when I write in English.	35	24	0	7	14
4	I am not good at English collocations, idioms, and expressions.	42	21	5	7	5
5	I seldom pay attention to writing styles when writing in English.	31	24	2	10	13
6	I prefer to learn English writing skills with interesting and inspiring topics.	24	32	4	8	12
8	I find writing skills very important for language learners.	35	20	5	11	9
9	I agree that mobile pedagogy (laptops, tablets, mobile phones...) can help us learn a language better (English).	32	25	4	7	5
10	I often use mobile phone in class and out of class (at home, at work, at cafés, restaurants, etc.).	40	25	0	9	6
11	I never use mobile phones for learning English writing skills.	43	21	2	11	13

After conducting the experiment with students by using mobile phones in our writing class, we determined that they had made significant progress through reading their writing reflections. Table 2 indicates that most of the students were interested in using the text messaging features because they achieved some useful knowledge on writing skills from websites. In particular, they were able to broaden their vocabulary and grammar knowledge when keeping blogs, diaries, or portfolios. Since they could share their ideas and opinions with their friends and teachers, they felt it was easier to deal with different topics in different writing styles (e.g., narratives, instructions, and reports). These topics were familiar to their daily life, which considerably inspired and motivated their learning of English writing skills. Due to the effectiveness and benefits of using mobile phones, they also expressed a desire in developing other language skills such as reading, listening, and speaking with mobile phones in the future. However, some students

occasionally spent too much time on the Internet, which affected their quality of learning.

TABLE 2. Students' Reflections After Using Mobile Phones in Learning English Writing Skills

No.	Responses	A	B	C	D	E
1	I am interested in learning how to write in English with text message features on mobile phones.	35	24	4	10	7
2	I have obtained some useful information on learning English writing skills with Internet sources and websites via mobile phones.	24	35	3	12	6
3	I can review and improve my vocabulary and grammatical structures after using mobile phones in English writing class during some weeks.	27	30	2	13	8
4	I found out that my writing skills became better due to my texting practice on mobile phones (creating more blogs, diaries, and portfolios).	32	28	3	7	10
5	I can share my opinions and ideas of different writing topics with my friends and teacher.	31	24	2	13	10
6	I often receive comments and feedback on my writing from our teacher.	34	28	4	7	7
7	I am satisfied with the mobile pedagogy application in English writing class.	42	20	3	6	9
8	I think I will use mobile phones to improve other language skills such as listening, reading, and speaking.	41	25	4	4	6
9	I sometimes spend too much time surfing the Internet on mobile phones.	37	23	4	10	6
10	I am occasionally too dependent on my mobile phone. I find it hard to write in English without it.	24	35	5	9	7

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

There is no doubt that there is a great impact from using mobile phones in teaching English to Vietnamese students since mobile phones have become the most indispensable and successful means of communication. In particular, the application of the text messaging feature of mobile phones into teaching English writing skills in our experiment has been effective in improving the quality of students'

language learning. However, we still face open questions concerning texting: What are the influences of using mobile phones on students' learning? Are students too dependent on mobile phones in their study? Furthermore, in spite of some limitations on the number of participants and questionnaires, a further study will be conducted with a larger number of students in the teaching of other language skills such as listening, reading, and speaking. Hence, this will increase the validity of results with respect to mobile pedagogy application to teaching a foreign language.

Like Vietnamese, millions of Korean people spend much time, effort, and money learning English, but why can't most of them speak and write in English as well as expected? The deep-rooted and firmly embedded problems result from teaching and learning methods. Therefore, this study aims to offer some suggestions to enhance English learning and teaching methods, such as improving English communicative skills, particularly writing skills for not only Vietnamese but also other Asian learners.

Based on the results obtained in this study, we suggest some implications on using mobile pedagogy in teaching and learning English for Asian students in general and, in particular, Vietnamese students, teachers, and institutions in the Asian region such as Korea.

For Students

First, due to the great impact of mobile phone use on their English learning, Asian students should take advantage of the various potentials of this advanced electronic device to enhance their language self-study capacity. They are able to learn English anywhere and anytime, provided that they bring a mobile phone with them. To improve their vocabulary and grammatical structures in English, which is one of the most difficult things they have to deal with in learning English writing skills, they can create a list of words on various topics relevant to their daily activities, such as sports, music, food, and clothes, and then use them as much as possible. In addition, they can use the function of message texting to make up stories, create blogs, and keep a diary with their English writings regarding their concerns, questions, and outcomes from their study. In other words, students are always encouraged to use mobile phones outside the classroom to write in English as much as possible so that their writing skills will be significantly developed.

However, students need to avoid being too dependent on mobile phones in their study. Due to the available resources on the Internet, which can be accessed anytime and anywhere, students tend to plagiarize in completing their English writing tasks at school with a mobile phone. Hence, students should become more active in their critical thinking and avoid plagiarism in learning English writing skills.

For Teachers

To adapt to the advanced technology teaching environment, teachers need to improve their qualifications by training themselves to be skillful in using electronic device applications in their teaching. This means that teachers should be able to professionally use these devices, including mobile phones, iPads, and laptops. Teachers should work hard to design attractive lessons using mobile phones in teaching different English language skills, especially writing with text messaging features, as we have shown in this study. Furthermore, teachers in Asian countries such as Vietnam, Korea, and Japan ought to understand well the impact of cultural and social factors on learning English in non-native English-speaking nations so that they are able to create appropriate teaching methods.

In addition, teachers should encourage students to use mobile phones in their language self-study, which can help them improve all English skills effectively. However, teachers ought to set up measures that discourage students from plagiarizing in their writing tasks, for example, by giving lowest scores or punishments to those who break learning rules during classes.

For Institutions

Due to the benefits of using mobile phones in learning and teaching English, schools or institutions should equip the teaching facilities with a high quality Internet network. As a result, both teachers and learners can easily access the Internet to obtain the useful resources of teaching and learning English. Since some students in need cannot afford to buy smartphones, schools should support them with some funds so that all the students can use this electronic device in learning English. Moreover, institutions should organize some training workshops for teachers to help

them update their knowledge of applying advanced technology devices.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are some limitations in this study since the use of mobile phones can be applied in teaching and learning all English language skills, not only writing skills. As a result, it is necessary to have further studies on using mobile phones to improve other language skills such as speaking, listening, and reading. Furthermore, the number of participants in this study was rather limited (80 students). Thus, we should have more participants in future studies.

THE AUTHOR

Phan Thi Thanh Thao, PhD, is a lecturer in the English Department at Hue University of Foreign Languages, Vietnam, where she teaches English language skills and translation courses. She holds a doctorate in the science of language. Her professional interests include TESOL, CALL, translation studies, CAT, and blended learning. Email: phanthao0105@gmail.com

REFERENCES

- Abbasi, M., & Hashemi, M. (2013). The impact/s of using mobile phone on English language vocabulary retention. *International Research Journal of Applied and Basic Sciences*, 4(3), 541–547.
- Ally, M., McGreal, R., Schafer, S., Tin, T., & Cheung, B. (2007, October). Use of mobile learning technology to train ESL adults. In *Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference on Mobile Learning*, Melbourne, Australia. Retrieved from <https://auspace.athabasca.ca/handle/2149/2582>
- Barton, L., & Sardinias, C. D. (2015). *NorthStar Reading and Writing 3* (4th ed.). London, UK: Pearson Education.
- Bosch, T. E. (2009). Using online social networking for teaching and learning: Facebook use at the University of Cape Town. *Communicato*, 35(2), 185–200.
- Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (2nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Christian, Y. S. (2014). *Native English-speaking teachers' perspectives on Korean*

- university students' learning of English as a foreign language (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia.
- Ecem, E., & Ebru, S. K. (2018). Effects of Twitter on EFL students' academic success in writing. *International Journal of Languages' Education and Teaching*, 6(3), 89–102.
- Dang, H. T. (2013). Towards the use of mobile phones for learning English as a foreign language: Hesitation or welcome? *Language in India*, 13(10), 474–485.
- Hamm, S. E., Drysdale, J., & Moore, D. (2014). Toward a mobile learning pedagogy. In D. McConatha, C. Penny, J. Schuggar, & D. L. Bolton (Eds.), *Mobile pedagogy and perspectives on teaching and learning* (1–19). Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference.
- Huang, S. J., & Liu, H. F. (2000). Communicative language teaching in a multimedia language lab. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 6(2). Retrieved from <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Lee-CALLbarriers.html>
- Jackson, S. A., Snider, S., Masek, N., & Baham, J. (2014). Mobile learning applications and differentiated instruction. In D. McConatha, C. Penny, J. Schuggar, & D. L. Bolton (Eds.), *Mobile pedagogy and perspectives on teaching and learning* (pp. 108–121). Hershey, PA: IHI Global.
- Kennedy, C., & Levy, M. (2008). L'italiano al telefonino: Using SMS to support beginners' language learning. *The ReCALL Journal*, 20(3), 315–330.
- Lee, K. (2000). English teachers' barriers to the use of computer-assisted language learning. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 6(12). Retrieved from <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Lee-CALLbarriers.html>
- Lenhart, A., Purcell, K., Smith, A., & Zickuhr, K. (2010). *Social media and mobile internet use among teens and young adults*. Retrieved from <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Social-Media-and-Young-Adults.aspx>
- Liu, M., Navarrete, C., Maradiegue, E., & Wivagg, J. (2014). Mobile learning and English language learners: A case study of using iPod touch as a teaching and learning tool. *Journal of Interactive Learning Research*, 25(3), 373–403.
- Mancaş, E. A. (2014). *Facebook for the language class: Authentic communication and autonomous learning*. Retrieved from <https://conference.pixel-online.net/ICT4LL/files/ict4ll/ed0007/FP/1152-ICL711-FP-ICT4LL7.pdf>
- Melor, M. Y., Lau K. T. J., & Hadi, S. (2013). Using blogs to promote writing skill in ESL classroom. In *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Education and Educational Technologies* (EET '13; pp. 109–113). Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/f700/53398cd90c2e79a23304361e55cdb07b0714.pdf>
- Mtega, P. W., Bernard, R., Msungu, C. A., & Sanare, R. (2012). Using mobile phones for teaching and learning purposes in higher learning institutions: The case of Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania. In *Proceedings*

- and Report of the 5th Ubuntu Net Alliance Annual Conference (pp. 118–129). Retrieved from <https://repository.ubuntu.net/bitstream/handle/10.20374/130/mtegap.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- O’Connell, M., & Smith, J. (2007). *A guide to working with m-learning standards: A manual for teachers’ trainers and developers*. Sydney, Australia: Australian Flexible Learning Network.
- O’Donnell, T. (2018). Learning English as a foreign language in Korea: Does CALL have a place? *The Asian EFL Journal*, 10(1), 1–27.
- Penny, C., Schuggar, J., & Bolton, D. L. (2014). *Mobile pedagogy and perspectives on teaching and learning*. Available from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/291761968_Mobile_Pedagogy_and_Perspectives_on_Teaching_and_Learning
- Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants. *On the Horizon*, 9(5), 1–6.
- Reinders, H. (2010). Twenty ideas for using mobile phone in the language classroom *English Teaching Forum*, 3, 20–25.
- Sana, A. (2017). Using mobile phones in learning English: The case of Jordan. *Journal of Education*, 6(4), 120–128.
- Shalbag, A. R. (2017). Close analysis: An activity for using mobile phones in teaching ungraded writing tasks for university students. Paper presented at the *International Conference, the Future of Education, 4th Edition*. Retrieved from <https://conference.pixel-online.net/FOE/files/foe/ed0004/FP/0466-SOE453-FP-FOE4.pdf>
- Steyn, D. (2014). Second language motivation in a Korean context. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/11438758/Second_Language_Motivation_in_a_Korean_context
- Thornton, P., & Houser, C. (2004). Using mobile phones in education. In *Proceedings of the 2nd IEEE International Workshop on Wireless and Mobile Technologies in Education (WMTE’04)*. Retrieved from <https://www.cin.ufpe.br/~mllearning/intranet/m-learning/Using%20mobile%20phones%20in%20education.pdf>
- Wang, S. (2013). Reading and grammar learning through mobile phones. *Language Learning and Technology*, 17(13), 117–134.
- Zhang, Y. (2015). Student feedback in mobile teaching and learning. In Y. Zhang (Ed.), *Handbook of mobile teaching and learning* (pp. 769–786). Berlin, Germany: Heidelberg Springer.

Brief Report

Primary School English Classes: Japan’s Non-native English-Speaking Assistants

Sean Mahoney

Fukushima University, Fukushima City, Japan

BACKGROUND TO EARLY ENGLISH EDUCATION IN JAPANESE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Following rather belatedly in the footsteps of South Korea and many other neighbors in Asia, Japan began in 2011 to make “Foreign Language Activities” classes mandatory for primary school children in grades 5 (age 10) and up, and optional for grades 3 and 4. Classes are not evaluated, are based on activities, and are held for 35 class hours per year (once per week). Significantly, these classes are also, in principle, to be led by homeroom teachers (HRTs), who generally teach all of the 10 other subjects as well.

Beginning in April 2020, however, Japanese children in grades 5 and 6 will for the first time have evaluated English classes, twice per week or 70 times per year, and children in grades 3 and 4 will have mandatory English classes for 35 hours per year. Table 1 outlines the current and future policies in Japan on the right with South Korean policies on the left.

TABLE 1. English in Korean and Japanese Primary Schools

South Korea	Japan
1997 - Grades 3 & 4 (evaluated) 1x/wk. - Grades 5 & 6 (evaluated) 2x/wk.	2002 - Optional from Grade 3 (a few times per year)
2012 - Grades 3 & 4 (evaluated) 2x/wk. - Grades 5 & 6 (evaluated) 3x/wk.	2011 - Grades 3 & 4 (optional) - Grades 5 & 6 (not evaluated) 1x/wk.
	2020 - Grades 3 & 4 (not evaluated) 1x/wk. - Grades 5 & 6 (evaluated) 2x/wk.

According to data from Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT), since only 5.9% of Japan's homeroom teachers (HRTs) hold any form of English teaching license (MEXT, 2018a, p. 2), most schools have been actively recruiting both in-school and outside help. On-the-job-training does exist, but HRTs already work over 11 hours per day on average (Kyodo, 2018), and such support varies greatly from city to city. Still, just over 60,000 of Japan's 350,000 HRTs (17%) took some form of training outside their schools, generally through local boards of education, in the calendar year 2017, with most teachers having had at least a few in-service training sessions (MEXT, 2017, p. 3). As to the length, depth, and quality of those sessions, however, little is known. In the same report, MEXT notes that almost 568,000 teachers attended in-school, in-service classes, assumedly with many taking such classes more than one time in that year.

ASSISTANT TEACHER VARIETIES

The demand for help remains strong, despite the entrance of thousands of new HRTs every year. The problem with fresh teachers has been that, until English becomes a full *kyouka* (core), evaluated class in 2020, university students majoring in primary education have not been required to take any courses in English language teaching. For this reason, most HRTs require assistants, the majority of whom have until recently been helping at junior and senior high schools, and have traditionally come from what Kachru (1985) calls the "Inner Circle" English-speaking countries: the U.K., U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Ireland (which Kachru includes in later publications).

According to MEXT data, just over 13,000 assistants are involved in primary school English teaching, a number that has almost doubled since 2013 (MEXT, 2018b, p. 3). The main group, collectively called assistant language teachers (ALTs) helped with about 62% of all primary-level English classes in 2017 (p. 8). Yet recently another group of helpers, Japanese and foreign non-native English-speakers, account for a further 11% of class hours taught (MEXT, 2017, p. 7). This group appears to be growing as Japan prepares to increase the number of required English classes at all of its approximately 20,000 primary schools by 2020. Yet beyond one quantitative study of Japanese (only) assistants by Suga and

Yoshida (2015), and a pilot study of assistants from nine countries (Mahoney, 2017), these instructors' voices have not been represented in research to date.

Figure 1 is a breakdown of approximate class hours currently taught in teams and by solo HRTs, based on MEXT (2017, p. 7).



FIGURE 1. Assisted vs. Solo HRT Teaching. The percentages are of English class hours taught by homeroom teachers (HRT) alone, with native English-speaking assistant language teachers (NES ALT), and with non-native English-speaking assistant language teachers (NNES ALT).

FOCUS OF RESEARCH

This paper reports the findings of qualitative data gathered so far via interviews in a MEXT-sponsored study. The author has concluded over 16 hours of interviews so far with 12 assistants from four countries who have acquired English as a second or foreign language. Firstly, since some interviewees from Brazil, the Philippines, Peru, and Japan have all been hired as “ALTs,” it appears that the term “ALT” no longer necessarily means a native English-speaker. Nor does the term have to mean foreigner anymore, since more and more Japanese assistants are being called “ALTs” in their contracts. The bulk of the paper from this point will focus on unique perspectives from three representatives of this new type of ALT.

Sakiko (in her 50s) holds an English teaching license for junior high, where she works as a temporary teacher, but she has been asked to visit

four primary schools in her town at the end of each month to help HRTs teach grades 5 and 6. She says that as a result of the major curriculum changes for 2020, when teachers will have to teach more English classes (and likely more often on their own), she's seen two types of HRTs emerge. The first type reacts to this new responsibility in an ideal way. For example, one teacher who was comfortable enough to involve herself in learning together with the children used her skills as a music major in particular to get the children moving. Her pronunciation was not great, but she realized that and left the teaching of pronunciation up to the assistant.

However, the second type of teacher Sakiko has noticed tries suddenly to do too much all by themselves, even when they have an assistant in the class. For example, she described one HRT with poor pronunciation of even simple phrases like "good morning" who had made each student repeat the greeting individually when they hadn't said it loud enough. Faced with this predicament, Sakiko wrote the teacher a memo in Japanese after class was over, noting (to the interviewer) that she never challenges HRTs in front of students. She mentioned that her advice, written in extremely polite Japanese, was (and generally is) respected due to her own professional status and her discreet approach.

Sakiko also explained why some teachers may try to take full responsibility for teaching the whole class: Although they may not know how to teach English, they have a very strong, even overriding sense of responsibility. They do not intend to be mean but are teaching only from this spirit of responsibility (*gimu-kan*, in Japanese). This is something a typical ALT, not fluent in Japanese or very familiar with the culture, may not fully understand. A lack of such culturally informed sensibilities, however, could lead to frustration with team-teaching, which could be compounded by an inability to communicate dissatisfaction in a way that would not cause the HRT to lose face.

Next, a Filipino ALT, here referred to as Jasmine (in her late 20s), revealed a very different team-teaching dynamic and a refreshing perspective on teaching English as a lingua franca. Jasmine teaches most often with *three* others in the classroom: the HRT, a Japanese assistant, and a "coordinator" from her board of education. Very much aware that Japan has just begun teaching English at the primary level, she makes a point of praising her HRTs no matter what, "as long as they're trying." When other team-teachers asked why she praised homeroom teachers despite their Japanese accents, she reminded them that she cannot change

their accents in one day, that it's hard to force people to do so (especially in front of children), and that even she herself has a Filipino accent.

While Jasmine admits that she sometimes adjusts her own pronunciation to what her board of education wants (i.e., a Midwestern American accent), she feels they sometimes take things too far. For example, they don't want children to say 21 and 22 as "twenty-one" or "twenty-two" (as Jasmine does) but as "twenny-one" and "twenny-two." Nor do they let children say "tomato" the way it's pronounced outside North America (and in Japanese, as an imported word from the U.K.); they insist she make HRTs and children say "to-MAY-to" only. Although her Japanese assistant shares her concern, agrees that either pronunciation is used globally, and generally supports her, Jasmine said she wishes she had more backup when making such points to administrators.

A third assistant, Mayumi, is a Japanese woman in her 30s who runs her own private English school (like a Korean *hagwon*) in the evenings and teaches at four primary schools during the day. She has a junior high English teaching license and holds advanced certification from "J-Shine," a citizen-run NPO that supports and links its members with English-training services in the private sector. She and an American ALT alternate their workweeks at the schools and need to keep each other informed of what activities, songs, chants, etc. have been used and of which units of *Hi, Friends!*, the current MEXT-recommended text, have been covered. They have created a shared file for each other, an innovative and useful resource, but have noticed a few drawbacks: (a) Since the file is in English only, the HRTs often cannot follow it; (b) school rules prevent them from putting it on Google Docs or Dropbox; and therefore, (c) they need to be at the school to check it.

Since Mayumi has been assisting in primary schools for over nine years, she helps mediate communications between monolingual HRTs and ALTs. She has also fielded complaints about both groups. For example, some ALTs choose not to follow *Hi, Friends!* at all in their classes, leaving homeroom teachers concerned about how to connect their solo and team-taught lessons. She has also had to help ensure continuity in English curricula from year to year amidst staff changes: Homeroom teachers in Japan (as in Korea) are placed in different grades each year and are even shuffled to different schools every five to eight years. She and other Japanese assistants interviewed emphasized that this

practice makes progress in English classes difficult, and continuity almost impossible.

CONCLUSIONS

Interviewing new types of assistant teachers has revealed a variety of contributions they've been making to English education at the primary level. Interviews described in this paper have demonstrated the following:

1. Japanese citizens are able to describe aspects of Japan's school cultures that are hidden or unknown to foreign assistants and that sometimes work against improving English education (i.e., why some teachers take on too much responsibility, the detrimental effect of the annual teacher shuffle, and how to provide advice in a culturally appropriate way).
2. Bilingual assistants may also serve to mediate between monolinguals who disagree or have concerns.
3. Non-Japanese, non-native English-speaking assistants are able to show children, and teachers, and boards of education that it is all right not to be a native of a particular brand of English.
4. Participation in classes and *attempts* to communicate are most important, especially at this elementary level.

Lastly, primary school English education should not rely on volunteerism or the goodwill of assistants or HRTs. With the doubling of English classes in 2020, homeroom teachers who are to teach alone will need at least twice the current level of support from their schools, boards of education, and the Ministry. The assistants interviewed also shared a desire for more pre- and in-service training as well as ongoing support.

THE AUTHOR

Sean Mahoney is an associate professor of English at Fukushima University in Fukushima City, Japan. He received his Master of Arts (English) from the

University of Victoria in 1995 and has published books and articles in English and Japanese on foreign language education issues, including error gravity, mutual intelligibility, and team-teaching. Email: mahoney@ads.fukushima-u.ac.jp

REFERENCES

- Kachru, B. (1985). Standards, codification, and sociolinguistic realism: The English language in the outer circle. In R. Quirk & H. G. Widdowson (Eds.), *English in the world: Teaching and learning the language and literatures* (pp. 11–30). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Kyodo News. (2018, October 30). Teachers and medical staff among professions most at risk of overwork in Japan, government white paper finds. *Japan Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.japantimes.co.jp>
- Mahoney, S. (2017). New assistant types for English activities in Japan's primary schools. In D. Shaffer (Ed.), *KOTESOL Proceedings 2017* (pp. 97–108). Seoul, South Korea: Korea TESOL.
- MEXT. (2017). *Heisei 29 nendo koritsu shogakko ni okeru eigo kyoiku jittai jokyō chosa no kekka ni tuite* [Results of survey on the implementation of English education at public primary schools for the 2017 academic year]. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/detail/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2018/04/06/1403469_09.pdf
- MEXT. (2018a). *Heisei 30 nendo koritsu shogakko ni okeru eigo kyoiku jittai jokyō chosa gaiyō* [Summary of results of a survey on the implementation of English education at public primary schools for the 2018 academic year]. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/kokusai/gaikokugo/1415042.htm
- MEXT. (2018b). *Heisei 30 nendo koritsu shogakko ni okeru eigo kyoiku jittai jokyō chosa gaiyō* [Results of a survey on the implementation of English education at public primary schools for the 2018 academic year]. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/kokusai/gaikokugo/1415042.htm
- Suga, K., & Yoshida, K. (2015). Issues in teaching English in elementary school and future implication. *ASTE (Association of Sophian Teachers of English) Newsletter*, 63, 55–67. Retrieved from <http://www.bun-eido.co.jp/aste/aste63.pdf>

Book Review

Assessing *Scott Thornbury's 30 Language Teaching Methods* in a Post-methods Era

Scott Thornbury's 30 Language Teaching Methods

Scott Thornbury

Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Pages: 130 + x. (ISBN-978-1-108-40846-2, Paperback)

Reviewed by Robert J. Dickey

INTRODUCTION

Another teaching methods book? Do we really need another in this “post-methods era” (Brown, 2002; Kumaravadivelu, 1994; Prabhu, 1990; Richards & Rodgers, 2014)? Another report on out-of-fashion “designer” methods, many of which were not in use for very long since they were strongly linked to particular claims and practices that soon fell out of favor (Richards & Rodgers, p. 383)?

On the other hand, a teaching approach based on a more contemporary “principled eclecticism” requires a firm understanding of both the teaching elements of various methods, and awareness of the presumptions and theoretical underpinnings of those methods. Hence, a book such as *Scott Thornbury's 30 Language Teaching Methods* is worthy of examination alongside a few other books purporting to review the field of language teaching methods. Particularly since Thornbury goes far beyond the typical list of eight to sixteen methods.

Here we will contrast three classic reviews of language teaching methods: Diane Larsen-Freeman and Marti Anderson's *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*, Jack C. Richards and Theodore Rodgers' *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, and Earl W. Stevick's less well-known *Teaching language: A Way and Ways*. We may also note that there are numerous “how-to” books and general guides or reviews of language teaching that include “methods” in the

title or summary. Most of these, such as Richards and Renandya (2002), are oriented towards teaching the “skills” or elements of language as well as general classroom technique, and are not discussed here.

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The 30 methods are presented in 30 short (four-page) chapters, plus a brief introduction (“Why I wrote this book”), one-page introductions for each of the six major parts within the book, and an index. All in less than 140 printed pages. The six parts are organized not chronologically, but instead are clustered by commonalities: Natural Methods, Linguistic Methods, Communicative Methods, Visionaries, Self-Study Methods, and Beyond Methods. Each chapter is divided into four sections: Background (history and theoretical basis; How does it work? (description); Does it work? (evidence for success); and What’s in it for us? (how it might be useful to classroom teachers). These 30 methods run from immersion to the classic methods identified by Richards and Rodgers (2014) to less-known designs based on Dogme, Pimsleur, Duolingo, and finally, Principled Eclecticism. Each chapter includes from two to six references (which are not combined at the end of the book). Thornbury points out that many of these designs are not traditionally labeled as “methods” but rather “approaches” or even a “way” (p. ix). He also notes that some have been included in the book because they have become “lost methods” despite their intrinsic merits (p. ix), such as translation and rote learning.

One important contribution by Thornbury is the inclusion of self-study designs. Here we find inclusion of learning techniques such as memorization, reading aloud, authentic readings, scripts, and gamification among the six designers spanning nearly 200 years. Self-study has been ignored in most surveys of methodology, perhaps because they focus on *teaching* methods rather than *learning* methods?

In the Dogme chapter, Thornbury reveals the origins of that approach (now better known as “Teaching Unplugged”) by referring to his own drafting of vows in the *LATEFL Issues* (newsletter) to counter the approaches based upon riches of ELT’s manufactured items, following along the lines of the cinematic Dogme manifesto. Similarly, the chapter on Crazy English and the Rassias method discusses two

designs never likely to be included in more scholarly driven reviews of teaching, despite the fact that many teachers may have heard of these through popular media. Thornbury shows us their underlying philosophies and the possible demerits of these systems. One might summarize these by saying they are less concerned with language and language teaching, and more concerned with learners' inhibitions. Generating confidence through oral drills and "larger than life teachers" (p. 99) would seem quite a contrast from a communicative language teaching design – which seems pretty important to consider.

For a complete listing of the 30 methods, visit the Cambridge University Press website (https://assets.cambridge.org/97811084/08462/toc/9781108408462_toc.pdf) for a preview of the table of contents.

EVALUATION

There is a lot to like in this thin book. It is exceptionally readable. Since each section of each chapter is approximately one page, Thornbury sticks to the key elements. It's not child's play: The theory gets a brief mention, as well as key background, but the analysis is there while being reader-friendly. I like that Thornbury introduces background elements that Richards and Rodgers (2014), a much more theoretically based book, misses, such as noting that Caleb Gattegno (Silent Way) was not principally interested in language, but math (p. 93). Thornbury writes inclusively, such that novices new to teaching can understand, yet established scholars in the field can also benefit.

Some things are missing, though, or could be done differently. Diane Larsen-Freeman and Marti Anderson (2011) offers two wonderful tools for better understanding. The first I call the "fly on the wall perspective," as they walk the reader through a typical class in each method. The second is a chart that matches what we have "seen" in the class with the principles underlying each event in that class. But of course, only a dozen methods are presented in the over 250-page book. (There was also a hard-to-find video produced around the time of the first edition that illustrated the methods.)

Thornbury's succinctness has its drawbacks. Richards and Rodgers (2014) provide more extensive scholarly background for each of the 16 methods presented in their over 400-page third edition. Each method

includes a more analytic and academic discussion of how the class would progress. There is also a very useful appendix that compares the key features of each of the 16 methods and a more encompassing index.

Earl Stevick (1998) takes these “background” discussions to the extreme, while examining only three methods: Counseling-Learning, Silent Way, and Suggestopedia. Roughly half his book considers what might be called “fundamental building blocks” for deeper understanding of those three methods under review (Dickey, 2002). It would be fair, though, to assess those three as more cognitively laden, what he calls “clutter on the worktable” (p. 23), perhaps justifying the extensive preliminaries.

The final section of Thornbury’s book is entitled “Beyond Methods.” It contains only one chapter, “Principled Eclecticism.” While Richards and Rodgers’ (2014) final chapter reviews briefly the broader issues of method versus approach, and the underlying issues for these considerations, they don’t really discuss how a teacher could mix the various designs in a classroom. Thornbury takes that next step, pointing out that teachers make choices, based on factors such as school policy, ideology, and the learners (pp. 123–124). And yet, the reality is that many teachers are in jobs where they have little flexibility in terms of the syllabus or coursebook – where learners are in classrooms because of policy or parental demand, not because of desire, where external motivation counts for more than internal. In situations such as these, sometimes teachers have to look for the little ways they can address both learner needs and teacher self-satisfaction. Teachers’ qualifications, rights to insert a political, religious, or social agenda within the classroom, assessment and grading issues, ability and authorization to address individual learner needs versus the class as a whole, and even class versus class considerations (versus lock-step teaching and grading) set up challenges in professional ethics (see Dickey, 2018) that a well-reasoned and elucidated eclectic approach may address, at least to fill in the cracks within an officially designated teaching system.

Regretfully, this small book does not help a reader consolidate the various elements of the 30 methods, such as Richards and Rodgers (2014), nor does it challenge the readers with comprehension questions at the start or end of each chapter or section. Still, this is not a *Dummies* series book. The thoughtful reader could use the differences between approaches, particularly with the lesser-known designs, as a framework to organize their own methodological toolbox in a “principled

eclecticism” approach to language teaching.

Inevitably, the market will be an important judge of any book. This is a powerful little overview, and its conciseness will be highly valued by teachers looking for quick summaries of various methods and approaches they may be less familiar with. While *Scott Thornbury’s 30 Language Teaching Methods* may never become highly cited in the scholarly literature, as Richards and Rodgers (2014, and earlier editions) has been, it might well become a bestseller, identified in many TESOL certificate programs as recommended or even required reading.

THE REVIEWER

Robert J. Dickey has been teaching English in Korea for 25 years and continues to read ELT materials as he continues his professional development in the field. He has reviewed more than 30 ELT books in journals, newsletters, and online magazines. Rob is a past-president of Korea TESOL, and teaches at Keimyung University in Daegu. Email: rjdickey@hotmail.com

REFERENCES

- Brown, H. D. (2002). English language teaching in the “post-method” era. In J. C. Richards & W. A. Renandya (Eds.), *Methodology in language teaching*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Dickey, R. J. (2002). *Working with teaching methods: What’s at stake?* [Book review]. *TESL-EJ*, 4(4). Retrieved from <http://www.tesl-ej.org/wordpress/issues/volume4/ej16/ej16r17/>
- Dickey, R. J. (2018). Ethical guidelines for teachers. In J. I. Liontas (Ed.), *The TESOL encyclopedia of English language teaching* (vol. 7, pp. 4242–4247). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9781118784235.eelt0117>
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (1994). The postmethod condition: (E)merging strategies for second/foreign language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28(1), 27–48.
- Larsen-Freeman, D., & Anderson, M. (2011). *Techniques and principles in language teaching* (3rd ed.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Prabhu, N. S. (1990). There is no best method – why? *TESOL Quarterly*, 24(2), 161–176.
- Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (2002). *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (3rd ed.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Stevick, E. W. (1980). *Teaching language: A way and ways*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Korea TESOL Journal General Information for Contributors

As an academic journal in the field of English language teaching (ELT), the *Korea TESOL Journal* welcomes the submission of manuscripts that meet the general criteria of significance and scientific excellence. Submissions should be of practical import, dealing with aspects of the Korean ELT context or directly applicable to it. As a journal that is dedicated to the nurturing of research among ELT practitioners, the Journal also welcomes quality submissions from the early-career researcher.

The *Korea TESOL Journal* invites submissions in three categories:

1. Full-Length Articles. Contributors are strongly encouraged to submit manuscripts of 5,000 to 8,000 words in length, including references, tables, etc.

2. Brief Reports. The Journal also invites short reports (approximately 2,500 words). These manuscripts may present preliminary findings, focus on some aspect of a larger study, or summarize research done in the pursuit of advanced studies.

3. Reviews. The Journal invites succinct, evaluative reviews of scholarly or professional books, or instructional-support resources (such as computer software, video or audio material, and tests). Reviews should provide a descriptive and evaluative summary and a brief discussion of the significance of the work in the context of current theory and practice. Submissions should generally be no longer than 1,500 words.

Manuscripts are accepted for peer review with the understanding that the same work has not been submitted elsewhere (i.e., not pending review or currently under review) and has not been previously published, online or in print.

Manuscripts should follow APA style guidelines (*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th ed.), especially for in-text citations, references, tables, and figures. Submissions should be made with tables, figures, and other graphics included in the manuscript text (and upon request, as separate files). All figures should be created in black and white, and graphs must display distinctive shades or patterning for readability. Manuscripts should be submitted as MS Word (DOC or DOCx) files.

The *Korea TESOL Journal* accepts submissions for two issues annually.

Inquiries/manuscripts to: journal@koreatesol.org

For more information on submissions to the *Korea TESOL Journal*, including paper submission deadlines, evaluation criteria, and formatting requirements, visit:

<https://koreatesol.org/content/call-papers-korea-tesol-journal>



LOOKING FOR FLEXIBLE STUDY OPTIONS?

The University of Birmingham's Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics offers flexible personal development opportunities for professionals wishing to develop their skills and expertise. Our distance learning Masters programmes are delivered part-time over 30 months, to fit around your existing commitments.

APPLIED LINGUISTICS MA

This programme is for professionals wishing to further their personal development, and those who are interested in learning more about possible applications of language research. You will study topics including corpus linguistics, sociolinguistics, lexis, functional grammar, spoken and written discourse, and multi-modal communication.

TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (TESOL) MA

This programme is for practising teachers of English as a second or foreign language who wish to develop their knowledge of classroom methodology and materials design. You will study topics such as language teaching methodology, second language acquisition, syllabus and materials, pedagogic grammar, lexis, and teaching young learners.

KEY FACTS

- Start in February, April, July, October or December
- Study entirely online
- All modules assessed by written assignment
- Pay per module

Find out more and apply:
www.birmingham.ac.uk/elal-dl

Korea TESOL Journal

Volume 15, Number 1

2019

