The English Connection

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KOTESOL IC 2016:
Reactions from Attendees

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KOREA TESOL
KOTESOL
대한영어교육학회

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The English Connection Editorial Team

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To promote scholarship, disseminate information, and facilitate cross-cultural understanding among persons concerned with the teaching and learning of English in Korea.

KOTESOL
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Editorial

By Gil Coombe Editor-in-Chief

Welcome! You currently have in your possession the final issue of TEC for 2016. It might be just me – or my age – but this year has simply flown by, and I now realize that it is time to take stock of what I have or have not accomplished in 2016 and look ahead to whatever challenges the future has in store.

In this issue, we have a number of fine articles written by members of our community that have done exactly that: taken stock of their situation and realized that they have learned things that may prove valuable to others in the EFL field. We start with Daniel Corks and his sound advice on assessment within a general skills English course, followed by Josephine Angus' informative overview of how psychology can inform teaching practice. We then have a submission all the way from Australia: one by Simon Cosgriff, who advocates for student-generated activities as a way to enliven the classroom.

Long-time contributor Christopher Miller then steps up to the plate with his story of self-reflection (something a lot of us will be doing as the year comes to its end) and action research while teaching high school writing. This leads into a discussion by Christopher Redmond on English as a lingua franca and the possible over-reliance on native English speakers in the Korean education system. We then have another article by an instructor based overseas: Romualdo Mabuan from the Philippines outlines how to incorporate Pecha Kucha into your public speaking curriculum.

Finally, the issue is rounded out by two regular columns. Our series of interviews with those KOTESOL members who have contributed so much to the organization continues with a sitdown with Kathleen Kelley, the Busan-Gyeongnam Chapter president and Publicity Director for the 2016 International Conference. We then end with a review of the highly respected MA in TESOL and MA in Applied Linguistics courses from the University of Birmingham by graduate Joanne McCuaig.

Oh, and one other thing: Kicking it all off on page 6 is a review of the KOTESOL International Conference from six people who were there, providing insights into how the conference helped them in their professional development and how the conference can continue to improve into the future. And that is the key message for us all – continual improvement into the future. It's something we all try to instill in our students, that concept of becoming a lifelong learner, and it's something we need to embrace ourselves. So think about what you are going to do in the new year. Put your name forward to teach a course you haven't taught before? Throw your hat into the ring to give a workshop for your local KOTESOL chapter? Or even drop us a line at tec@koreatesol.org to share your killer classroom activity and become a teacher of your peers?

Whatever it is you choose to do, make the most of it. Learn from it. Share it. And don't forget to have fun. To quote Kurt Vonnegut: "I urge you to please notice when you are happy, and exclaim or murmur or think at some point, 'If this isn't nice, I don't know what is.'"

President's Message

By Lindsay Herron KOTESOL President

Happy winter everyone, and happy 2017! I hope your semester is about to finish on a high note and you're ready to enjoy some well-deserved time off. It's a great time to relax, rejuvenate, and reflect – and perhaps get caught up on reading your KOTESOL publications.

This past year has been extremely successful for KOTESOL. The small but well-received KOTESOL National Conference brought world-class speakers to Wonju, Gangwon-do; and the 2016 International Conference, our flagship event, attracted more than 860 people and featured nearly 200 presentations. Many people at the International Conference expressed delight not only with the conference itself, but also with the return to Sookmyung Women's University – and I'm pleased to note that we'll be back at Sookmyung for next year's conference, as well, on October 21 and 22, 2017.

Our organization has also made many connections this year, both foreign and domestic. We renewed our partnership with JALT in Japan, signed a new memorandum of understanding with Cambodia TESOL, and sent representatives to conferences hosted by our PAC partners. We also established new partnerships with ALAK, KATE, and KAFLA here in Korea, expanding our efforts for cooperation with other ELT organizations in the country.

Many of our members have been extremely active this year at the national level, as well; following an outstanding leadership retreat last year, new committee members and volunteers undertook new projects with enthusiasm. This year saw new SIGs forming, such as the Social Justice SIG; other SIGs thriving, such as the Christian Teachers SIG, which coordinated an international conference this past June; and a few flagging SIGs becoming reinvigorated through online discussion boards, articles, conference workshops, and colloquia. Our members have more membership benefits than ever, from members' social and networking events to local, national, and international discounts and perks. In spring, we introduced a new group membership package that we are piloting this year, and new KOTESOL merchandise debuted at the International Conference.

This coming year, 2017, is our silver anniversary, and we hope to celebrate in style! Our members can look forward to more great events and some outstanding new opportunities. We hope to launch a Teacher of the Year award; Andy Curtis will be one of the plenary speakers at our International Conference; and we are currently investigating the possibility of bringing FAB, a neuro-ELT conference associated with JALT, to Korea in conjunction with the National Conference. The coming months should also see enhanced connections with our foreign and domestic partners; keep an eye out for additional information.

It's a great time to be a KOTESOL member! I hope you're as excited about the new year as I am. May 2017 bring you health, happiness, and inspiration!

KOTESOL International Conference 2016: Thoughts from the Floor

Another successful International Conference has come and gone as the new year slowly starts to creep closer. TEC asked around for some reactions to the latest IC, and we received a number of thoughtful responses from dedicated members of our community.

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1. What did you enjoy most about the International Conference this year?

As a first-time attendee, I enjoyed meeting professionals from various universities around Asia. It seemed like our stories were different, but at the same time, we were all there to improve and learn more about teaching English as a foreign language.

2. Were there any sessions that you particularly enjoyed?

One of my favorite sessions was "Second Language Teacher Education: Enhancing Teacher Training and Professional Development in CLT" by Bo-young Lee. Dr. Lee provided an opportunity to take an inside look into how English language is taught to Korean teachers and what aspects are lacking. She also shared her own personal experience learning English and the importance of having native speakers in the country.

My second favorite session was "Bring Hawaii to Your

Classroom: Innovative Speaking Tasks to Motivate Students" by Kristin Rock. Kristin had such great energy in the room that all of us were participating and actively listening to her instruction. Not only did I take away several activities that I can use in my class, but there was a chance for self-reflection.

3. What would you like to see for next year's International Conference?

For next year's conference, I would like to see evening mixing sessions for professionals teaching various age groups in various sectors. This would require a little more planning on the conference side, but it would provide a chance for more personal interaction. (The wine-and-cheese mixer was great, but there were so many people and limited space.) Additionally, I would like to have the opportunity to give feedback to the presenters either online or on paper after each session.

Wendy Morison
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1. What did you enjoy most about the International Conference this year?

I was very inspired and encouraged by Dr. Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa, who was the plenary speaker on Sunday. I consider myself to be someone who "fell into teaching." My process of grappling with what teaching and learning really are began on my first day of teaching, extended through formal study on adult education, and eleven years later, continues on. Dr. Tokuhama-Espinosa highlighted several simple yet key points for educators to remain focused on. In essence, the responsibility does lie with us as educators. Over the years, I have come to believe that teaching and learning are predominantly attitudinal practices, by which I mean it is our (educators') intentions and relationships with each one of our students that are most important – no matter the content or context within which we teach.

This is the second International Conference that I have

attended, last year's being the first. I thought that the pop-up coffee shop was a good addition this year. It was a nice central space for people to relax and chat.

2. Were there any other sessions that you particularly enjoyed?

In the field of adult education, it is believed essential that teaching and learning be immediately relevant and beneficial. The session I attended by Rose Golder-Novick on "Using Improvisation Activities for English Speaking Practice," offered me exactly this. I am implementing what I learnt from her in my English Communication classes this week. It just so happens that we are exploring the theme of "The Arts." I was both reminded, and in a sense, given permission to make learning fun – after all, isn't learning a serious endeavor? What I am really doing is making learning experiential by inviting students to be performers, rather than mere observers that recount the experiences of others' performances. They are discovering their creative abilities, using English language in an unconscious manner, and connecting with the fact that communication is both verbal and nonverbal.

3. What would you like to see for next year's International Conference?

On a personal level, because I live out in the countryside, I am very isolated in my teaching practice. Conferences offer me an opportunity to reconnect with fellow teachers whom I have met before and to establish new connections. I was only able to attend the Sunday session and was disappointed to discover that, unlike last year, no time slot had been allocated for lunch. I wanted to get the full benefit of the schedule and didn't want to skip sessions. Other than a few snatched minutes between sessions, there was no time to have meaningful conversations with anyone. In my experience, we learn as much from fellow attendees as we do from the official speakers.

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1. What did you enjoy most about the International Conference this year?

The networking. I attended the Wonju KOTESOL Conference in May 2016, and academically, I learned so much more there, but this other bigger and international conference in the women's university

really opened my eyes about cultural barriers and about the curricula that teachers in Japan and Hawaii found most interesting and successful when teaching English. By the way, Mrs. Kristin Rock was awesome! Her workshop was enlightening and an instant gratification when used in both my class and my friend's class.

Thus, the networking and the laughs we had about the difficulties in teaching or the joys we received from this October conference were amazing. The people at this conference were what I personally enjoyed the most about this year's IC. Perhaps, next year, I'll be more focused on the content, especially how CLT is thought to work against Korean culture, but speaker Bo-Young Lee believes it does work in Korea.

2. Were there any sessions that you particularly enjoyed?

Hands down, Roger's Fusselman's talk about using TED Talks in your classroom. No matter what age, he surveyed his audience and a majority of us were college professors, but my gosh, did I learn the most and laugh the most in his very well-structured 45-minute class.

So, again, Roger's session was what I particularly enjoyed the most. He is the best presenter I've seen so far. Also, Amy Ahn's "Humor and Cross-Cultural Communication" was genius with her QR code for PPTs and, moreover, how nice and professional she is – it was stunning to watch!

3. What would you like to see for next year's International Conference?

Next year, hopefully, some more camera interviews. Kinga and I, both paying members of KOTESOL, tried to get a slot for media promotion but realized there wasn't an ideal time to be interviewed.

Moreover, I thought it was funny that Sunday had no slot for lunchtime. I understand, tickets are cheaper

on Sunday, but I believe an injustice is served when presenters have fewer people in their lecture. There should be an hour slot where no-one presents and participants may have time to dine and network with others. Honestly, for me, not a big deal, I understand time is scarce and airplane flights at night push for an earlier schedule. But many others believed differently. Next year, I hope to see even more participants – I will be promoting KOTESOL on my SNS as well.

Gideon Seaton
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1. What did you enjoy most about the International Conference this year?
Simply the chance to get to meet a few new people, put some faces to names, and also hang out with the Birmingham University faculty, as I am currently studying in their master's program. Sharing thoughts and ideas was important too, but as I am new to the world of KOTESOL, it was just good to meet a few people and start to build some relationships.

2. Were there any sessions that you particularly enjoyed?
Two sessions stood out for me. The first was by Campbell Larson about discourse markers. This was personally interesting as I may be writing my dissertation on a similar topic, and so it gave me a chance for further input and a contact in the field. I also enjoyed the input from Paul Goldberg on his extensive reading company, because it is always good to learn about available online resources.

3. What would you like to see for next year's International Conference?
Perhaps a slightly longer lunch break on Saturday. There was not enough time to have a good lunch and return for the sessions.

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1. What did you enjoy most about the International Conference this year?
I enjoyed that there were a range of different speakers to learn from. The sessions I chose were also quite interactive and practical in nature, so it was a great opportunity to try out some of the activities that were being presented and also to speak to other educators from other institutions about their own opinions and ideas that they use in their own teaching situations.

2. Were there any sessions that you particularly enjoyed?
I particularly enjoyed the speaking and listening sessions that I attended as they were very well presented and had many practical elements presented that I could take back to my own classroom.

3. What would you like to see for next year's International Conference?
I would like to see a more practical theme, where the skills can be divided. It would be great to have sessions where you can use the lesson ideas presented and adapt them easily to suit your own teaching situation. I was lucky enough to see three of these types of presentations this year and would welcome more at the next international conference.

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1. What did you enjoy most about the International Conference this year?
Although I have been a regular at TESOL International, this was my first KOTESOL International Conference. TESOL International is amazing, but an ordeal. While the three-plus days of conference offer many opportunities to learn and reflect, even the most eager and well-organized attendee cannot possibly properly absorb the amount of information available. While I know many people travel from afar to attend KOTESOL, I traveled a luxurious three subway stops. The presenters were top-notch and the amount of information, perfect. I returned to my classroom on Monday already implementing some of what I had learned.

2. Were there any sessions that you particularly enjoyed?
Many sessions deserve a mention here, but I'll just briefly summarize two. Cameron Romney presented on materials design, emphasizing how design can affect comprehension and learning outcomes. His website has many helpful materials on this topic, and I believe the slides from this presentation should be available soon. Alexander Nanni explained the project-based curriculum used at his university in Thailand. One of the main projects is a news video report on a current issue in an ASEAN country. The videos are posted on the class Facebook page, where all students can watch and leave comments. It is an interesting, creative way to introduce students to the skills needed for many academic writing and speaking genres.

Have opinions of your own you would like to share about the state of EFL in Korea? Interested in writing an article for an upcoming issue of TEC magazine? Drop us a line at tec@koreatesol.org

Quality-, Effort-, and Improvement-Based Grading for General Skills Language Classes

By Daniel Corks

Student assessment in university education is traditionally based on ability alone, with effort purposely not included. If you discuss student consultation about grades with one of your former professors, you'll often hear anecdotes in which students make complaints along the lines of "But I tried really hard!" only to be told that effort doesn't matter, only proven ability. This is true of language education and public education as a whole in South Korea, where the expression "He/she studies well" does not mean a student is diligent or focused but rather that they achieve high grades.

Say what you will about the successes or failures of post-secondary education in general, but this style of grading works for the typical course where the content is of a theoretical nature. It can also be effective for courses that aim to teach a practical skill, such as an instrumental music program. All students in a practical course such as this are strictly leveled and have a very similar starting ability, and there is a very clear expected level of ability that serves as the course's goal.

Problems with an Ability-Only Grading System

This type of grading system, which exclusively considers ability, is not an appropriate choice for the typical English course in South Korea and likely many other EFL contexts as well. A lack of strict leveling means that there is not a clear expected level of ability at the start of the course, and there is rarely a clearly stated goal in terms of ability for which students who are at that level are exempt. We are asked to improve each student's language ability as much as possible.

The large difference in starting abilities means that it is nearly impossible for the lower-level students to catch up to the higher-level students in the course of one school term, especially while doing an amount

> **"In my own teaching experience the difference in ability has been so great that the lower-level students have no chance to catch up to the mid-level students, and the mid-level students can't make up the difference with their higher-level peers either."**

of coursework that is reasonable, considering all the other classes they are enrolled in. In my own teaching experience, the difference in ability has been so great that the lower-level students have no chance to catch up to the mid-level students, and the mid-level students can't make up the difference with their higher-level peers either.

Despite these issues, ability-based assessments are often the default, no doubt because they are straightforward to produce and evaluate, our students are quite familiar with them, and often there is encouragement, if not pressure, from the school administration to use them. Further, it is easy to be trapped in the line of thinking that says that these assessments are objective, thus they are fair. While the objectivity of the assessment itself could be questioned – the choice of test content involves the instructor's subjective discretion, after all – the claim of fairness for ability-based assessment does not stand up to scrutiny. In this situation, the students who will receive the highest grades at the end of the term are those who were already the highest in ability at the start of the term. These students then have zero incentive to improve their ability over the term, and similarly, this situation is very demotivating for the lower-level students, who know that they cannot catch up to their peers in the four months between the start of the term and the end.

Anti-grade inflation policies, while well-intentioned, only serve to add insult to injury in these cases by virtually guaranteeing that the lower-level students will finish the course with at best a B or C, depending on the individual school's policy. All of their effort and improvement over the course of the term counts for little, and the higher-level students are rewarded for

ability they gained prior to the start of the course. Add to this research from the Korea Development Institute (Kim, 2012) showing that children's English ability is strongly correlated with their parents' income (referred to as the "English Divide") and this grading policy starts to look more like a form of class discrimination.

Finally, we as educators may wish to believe that our students are solely motivated by intrinsic factors and for the joy of learning itself, but we have to acknowledge the weight that grades carry for our students. Competition is fierce and grades impact many important areas of our students' lives from scholarships to job prospects.

An Alternative: Quality, Effort, and Improvement
Anyone can develop basic communication skills in a foreign language, but not within the span of a single university term. Considering this, we should see our classes as not an endpoint for our students but rather a starting point or midpoint of the long-term goal of developing practical language skills. Our duty to our students extends beyond the end of the term and includes helping them reach those long-term goals by giving them skills that will aid their future language development. Time and effort are among the most significant factors that contribute to long-term language development, and thus using an assessment system that encourages and rewards students for putting in time and effort benefits them in the long run.

My suggestion, then, is to use an assessment system that is able to address these concerns and give each student a fair chance. More specifically, it should be a system where a low-level student who produces quality work, displays good effort, and has marked improvement is able to achieve a grade similar to or perhaps even surpass a high-level student who produces substandard work, displays poor effort, and has negligible improvement, in a way that is fair, transparent, and reasonably objective.

As an example, we can assess quality of work by assigning projects such as presentations. Delivering a quality presentation and the preparation needed to do so – including doing careful research, rereading and revising materials, asking for help, and practicing in front of peers – all demand time and effort on the part of the students. This easily lets us distinguish between those students who were willing to make the necessary investments and those who were not.

Directly measuring time spent would be problematic, to say the least, but here we are indirectly rewarding time and effort spent in the service of producing quality work. Lest you think this approach is not academic, remember that directly rewarding quality in this manner is how much of the grading in graduate school courses is conducted, should our students choose to go down that route, and also how our students will be assessed in terms of job performance.

Specific Suggestions
Assessments that reward quality of work provide endless possibilities for creativity and flexibility for instructors. Any type of project given to the students likely already rewards quality by its nature or can have its grading structure modified to include a quality component. These include presentations, essays, research projects, assignments where students have to interview people on the street, and countless others. These all have the characteristic that they reward preparation over skill of execution. Most instructors are already familiar with and make use of project-type assessments.

Quality also includes most writing assignments completed outside of class time. Writing assessments very holistically reward planning, patience, and revising, and can be adapted to consider improvement to aid lower-level students. For instance, long writing assignments that involve multiple drafts could include a comparison of revisions to see improvement between

"**Assessments that reward quality of work provide endless possibilities for creativity and flexibility for instructors.**"

drafts. For effort in shorter writing tasks, students can be allowed to revise their writing based on feedback and resubmit it to be re-graded, giving students who need multiple attempts to reach the expected level of ability the opportunity to do so.

This is not to say that effort can't be assessed directly. Grading in-class participation can create unfairness as it's not always an equal opportunity for the students; however, out of class participation can be recommended without reservation. Having weekly short-form spoken/written response tasks that are graded for completion, in addition to being a useful way to preview a lesson, satisfies the goals of encouraging regular time investment and the development of routines for all students, primarily assessing effort, and giving lower-level students an opportunity to put in more time, if needed, to complete the task to the expected standard. These could take the form of participation in an online message board for the class, keeping a blog or posting public journal entries, or even a spoken response to a prompt that the students record and upload to the course's website.

Alternative assessment styles that consider effort could include having students complete lessons on an online learning platform, such as Duolingo, or having students choose one or two news articles to read on their own each week and then asking them to write a 3-5 sentence summary of the article. Creative teachers will be able to think of many other ways to adapt this idea.

For situations where a more traditional listening or reading test is being given, one way to help lower-level students is to provide the listening or reading material in advance for students who need to listen multiple times or read at a slower speed than what would be possible during the test itself. Questions then about the material would be ones that aren't readily predictable, such as questions relating to interpretation, evaluation, or application.

Measuring improvement directly in a fair way is challenging. The most obvious method would be to establish benchmarks at the start of the term and check progress against them at the end of the term, but this would not give each student comparable opportunities for improvement.

An alternative to this would be to shift the weighting of assignments or tests on an individual basis. For example, if a course had a midterm exam and a final exam each worth 20% of the final grade, the weighting could be adjusted to 10% for the midterm and 30% for the final on an individual basis if that would benefit the student. A student that performed better on the midterm would receive a 20%:20% weighting for the two exams as that gives them a higher grade, and a student that performed better on the final would receive a 10%:30% weighting as that gives them a higher grade. For students who made significant improvements, adjusting weighting reduces the penalty for starting off at a lower level. A variant of this would be to administer, say, four quizzes over the term but calculate scores using only the best three.

That is a sample of ways to incorporate quality, effort, and improvement into grading schemes. As expected, though, there is a need for some caution when implementing these types of assessments. Namely, we need to ensure that the quality or effort that we're grading is truly in service of improving language skills. A presentation grading system that includes points for attractive slide layout or a participation system that asks students to complete ten pages of grammar exercises each week is not likely to result in a marked improvement in language ability. The problems in these examples are obvious, but students can respond to a well-intentioned grading scheme in unexpected ways. Any new type of assessment must be carefully thought out and will likely need to go through multiple iterations before it produces the desired effect.

Summary

I've given a number of specific suggestions above as ways to move away from assessments that consider ability exclusively, and I'm sure readers will be able to come up with many more. In reality, ability will not cease to be a component of assessment, as any course content or assignments that we choose require a certain minimum level of ability in order to comprehend or complete. However, by using assessment systems that are designed to include considerations of quality, effort, and improvement, we can make our courses as inclusive as possible and encourage all our students to develop their skills as much as possible, regardless of their level at the outset of the course.

Reference

Kim, H. S. (2012). Equity and efficiency of Koreans' English education investments. *KDI Policy Forum, 245*. Retrieved from http://ssrn.com/abstract=2769699

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Enhancing the ELT Classroom Using Psychology's Learning Theories

By Josephine G. Angus

There is no question in my mind about the profession that I have chosen. I have fully embraced my teaching vocation even though English language teaching was never a field I imagined getting into. However, as destiny would have it, I find myself in a language classroom armed with years of university teaching experience, a TESOL certificate, and a large set of learning theories owing to my background in psychology.

As experience has taught me, an interactive classroom can benefit students' learning processes. To effectively engage with these processes, it is necessary to identify students' learning styles in order to provide responsive instruction. All learners have different ways of acquiring and creating knowledge, thus creating a need for variety in the classroom. This article aims to present, describe, and explain some of the learning theories proposed by the discipline of psychology, and to show how they can enhance the ELT classroom.

Contrary to what many people believe, psychology is not only for psychologists or therapists; it can be applied to many aspects of our lives, such as how we deal and interact with others, or how we react and cope with different situations in our lives. In other words, psychology is largely focused on people and the dynamics between people in different settings.

The field of psychology defines learning as a relative permanent change in, or acquisition of, knowledge or behavior (Plotnik & Kouyoumdjian, 2010). There are numerous learning theories that present different perspectives on how people learn and how learning styles are influenced by various factors. This article discusses five learning theories that have been helpful in providing variety in classrooms and in understanding learners in ELT.

B. F. Skinner's theory of *operant conditioning* is one of the most common learning theories. It postulates that the learner is a reactive adaptor of their environment. The primary focus of this theory is how the learner acquires an observable behavior with the influence of their environment (Huitt, 2012). This method of learning occurs through rewards and punishments depending on behavior, as provided by the environment.

With the question as to which is better, rewards are deemed to be more effective than punishment. Belsky (2008) further explains that continuous reinforcement results in the rapid learning of a behavior, while partial or intermittent reinforcement is more effective in maintaining behavior, and punishment only indicates what not to do within a particular environment. In addition, punishment does not necessarily result in an increase in correct responses and may, in fact, trigger emotional, or sometimes even aggressive, responses.

The theory of operant conditioning also introduces the concept of conditioned emotional response, an emotional reaction, such as fear of a specific stimulus that is acquired through constant exposure to the same situation (Plotnik & Kouyoumdjian, 2010). In an ELT classroom, it is quite common to notice students experiencing anxiety during class; for example, the English teacher is often feared, and having to sit in class where only English is spoken can be very difficult for some students.

How can this conditioned emotional response be undone? Positive emotional experiences can be introduced together with English learning. McLeod (2008) says that a continued attempt to gradually replace an anxiety or fear response with a relaxed response must be worked on continuously. As such, the ELT teacher must utilize more innovative and engaging methods of learning for students; the task is not just about teaching English, but making the experience itself more enjoyable and less stressful for learners.

The second learning theory is the *information processing theory*. This theory views the learner as a processor of information using the three critical steps of attention, repetition, and elaboration (Huitt, 2012). It is often a challenge for a teacher to get the attention of students during class, much less hold it for an extended period of time. This theory, however, emphasizes the need for attention and repetition so learning can occur. When examples used in class are something learners can relate to, or when the questions asked are those that they have had previous experiences with, they are more likely to hold students' attention. And since learners' attention spans can be limited, lessons should be interspersed with exercises that keep the process going, while maintaining students' attention. The elaboration process can be measured later with the students' ability to apply the learning to other situations.

Another theory that focuses on the cognitive abilities of the learner is Gardner's *multiple intelligences.* This

theory maintains that students think and learn in a variety of ways and that many learning styles can be found within one classroom (Smith, 2008). There exists many intelligences, quite independent of each other, and each type of intelligence has its own strengths and constraints. Students think and learn in many different ways, and all intelligences are needed to productively function in society.

In the classroom, students bring with them different levels of all kinds of intelligences. With this in mind, it is imperative for teachers to implement a variety of classroom activities that can cater to these different intelligences. An enhanced ELT classroom provides all types of activities to ensure learning for all students – from the basic skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking to the more active pursuits of singing, drawing, playing ball, or exploring outdoors.

From another perspective, the *social cognitive theory* focuses on learning by observing others. Learners are believed to acquire new behaviors and knowledge by observing a model (Hurst, n.d.); behavior is goal-directed, and people eventually begin to regulate their own learning and behavior. According to Huitt (2012), learning occurs through social interaction, and self-efficacy is the most important factor for learning. Indirectly, and not primarily, reinforcement and punishment have some influence on learning and behavior (Hurst, n.d.). When learners perceive an ELT teacher as someone they want to emulate and when the teacher provides positive feedback to students, these can help build their confidence to use the language. Eventually, learners continue to use English, simply because they believe they have the ability to do so.

The final learning theory presented is the *humanistic theory.* This theory postulates that each person seeks to grow psychologically, and that they continuously enhance themselves in different ways. Personal growth and fulfillment in life are basic human motives for learning (McLeod, 2012). The learner is viewed as an autonomous agent with affect who values knowledge and cognitive processing skills (Huitt, 2012).

This theory encourages learners to talk about themselves and to express their feelings in relation to class content. In a class utilizing this learning theory, its goals are to highlight the uniqueness of each individual and to help learners attain self-acceptance and acceptance by others; its focus is on making the learner become more human through personal growth (Khatib, Sarem, & Hamidi, 2013).

There exists a multitude of theories aimed to aid and guide language teachers. The learning theories presented here have enabled me to provide positive learning experiences for the ELT learners I have worked with. Although there is no single theory that fully addresses the diverse and multiple needs of learners in the classroom, there is a need to use each of these theories in different situations to provide variety and to maintain students' interest in learning.

Enhancing the ELT classroom does not rest on special materials, equipment, or a specific teaching formula; rather, it requires an understanding of the social, emotional, and cognitive processes of language learners. An understanding of these processes can help us to better facilitate the practice of learning in our classrooms.

With this in mind, foreign language teachers must take on the task of humanizing language teaching (Khatib et al., 2013) as a way to ensure that learners are able to achieve the learning they desire. In the end, enhancing the ELT classroom is not achieved by adhering to a simple teaching formula, but instead by ensuring a balance between students' learning styles and a variety of teaching strategies that are able to address learners' needs.

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Student-Generated Tasks: Engaging the Learner in Reading and Listening Activities

By Simon Cosgriff

Decisions regarding syllabus content are often influenced by course-related assessments that often result in greater emphasis on the development of speaking and writing skills. There is often a reluctance by teachers to fully exploit listening and reading passages as the content is often not relevant to the context of the learner. Increased emphasis on the development of the productive skills, speaking and writing, is often at the detriment of learners who receive the necessary guidance in learning how to approach listening and reading material. One approach to overcoming this is an integrated skills approach whereby content from reading and listening passages serves as a basis for additional speaking or writing tasks.

What Is a Student-Generated Task?

Harmer (2007) states that student knowledge should be viewed as a valuable resource in the classroom. Student-generated tasks allow for the thoughts and experiences of students to be exploited in the classroom. By doing so, students provide the content and focus of the task, making them responsible for creating it and leading to more personal and engaging listening and reading tasks. With students working individually or in small groups, this opens up the possibility of having a range of different tasks for a single reading or listening passage.

> **"By exploring their own ideas, students are not constrained by what the teacher wants them to listen to or read for."**

Student-generated tasks involve students completing an activity prior to listening or reading a passage. The activity can be in the form of a discussion, role-play, description, or prediction on the passage's content. Content generated from this activity then becomes part of the listening or reading task. While students are the ones who provide the content of the task, it may be necessary for the teacher to provide some parameters for students to work within to ensure that what the students produce relates to the focus of the passage.

Student-generated tasks are consistent with a top-down approach to understanding language in that they exploit what students already know about a particular topic or situation (Richards, 2008). Their use in the classroom allows teachers to provide valuable opportunities for additional speaking or writing activities as well as providing a more personal element to the task. A common problem with textbooks is that topics are often not relevant to the learners' context. For example, if a group of Korean learners are required to listen to or read about something specific to another cultural context, and then answer a set of comprehension questions about the same reading, the interest level in the students is likely to be low. However, if the students are allowed to discuss the same content in the Korean context, then read or listen for similarities and differences between the two contexts, the students immediately become more engaged in the passage as they are relating an unfamiliar context to their own personal context.

Sample Listening Task

In one intermediate textbook, students are required to listen to four speakers describe their dream house and identify whose house is the *most hi-tech, most luxurious, most eco-friendly,* and *most romantic.* One of the problems with this task is that it is very limiting, and the students are not personally involved in the task. At the end of the activity, after listening to the passage a number of times, the students are given the opportunity to describe their own dream house. A more effective approach would be to have an initial activity whereby students describe their dream house to other members of the class. This could be done as a mini-presentation with the opportunity for the students to ask questions about each other's houses. The content created during this activity would allow for the following task: *Listen to four people describing their dream houses. Whose description of their dream house is closest to yours? Why?*

In the above task, the content generated in the original speaking activity is being used as part of the listening task. The students are no longer involved in a restrictive task in which there is only one answer, but are now relating what they hear to what they produced earlier. While listening to each description, students may notice similar aspects of their descriptions with more than one of the speakers, leading them to carefully consider which description is closest in meaning to theirs. As each student will have different reasons for their answers, this allows for more post-

listening discussion that would otherwise have been limited in the original task due to the specific answers that would have been required.

Sample Reading Task
In this task, students are presented with the following headline from a newspaper article: *Earthquake Strikes Central Japan.* Using this headline, students work together in groups to brainstorm questions that they would expect to be answered within the article. Examples of questions could be (a) When did it strike? (b) How many people were killed or injured? (c) Have there been any aftershocks since the original earthquake? (d) What impact did it have on people?

By doing this, students are becoming engaged in the article by deciding what information is of interest to them. This pre-reading activity will create multiple lists of comprehension questions related to the article that students can read for. After reading the article, students discuss the answers to their questions with their partner. If there are any questions that have not been answered in the article, students can be given the opportunity to find out the answers to these questions themselves by reading other related articles on the Internet. As an extension activity, students can write a summary of the article using the information from the questions that were brainstormed earlier. By limiting the summary to these questions, students are less likely to produce summaries that are too detailed.

What Are the Benefits?
Student-generated tasks have the advantage of being flexible, so they can be adjusted for use in different learning environments, which allows them to be of benefit to both the teacher and the student. For the teacher, student-generated tasks allow for the creation of activities that engage students, thereby raising interest levels. The integration of receptive and productive skills gives students more opportunities to develop a wider range of language skills. It also has a positive impact on lesson planning as teachers can use students to create their own tasks for reading

and listening passages, which makes it easier for the teacher to adopt Task-Teach-Task style lessons. Finally, the commonly used classroom task *"Compare your answers with a partner"* becomes a more meaningful activity as answers to tasks are likely to be more varied.

For the learner, having the opportunity to discuss their own context adds a personal element to a reading and listening passage that might otherwise have seemed irrelevant to their personal context. By exploring their own ideas, students are not constrained by what the teacher wants them to listen to or read for. This type of task also gives them the opportunity to speak and write more in the class. When students may be in a class of mixed abilities, there is, to some extent, the opportunity for students to control the difficulty of the task. For example, when students brainstorm their own comprehension questions, more advanced learners will create not only a greater number, but also more challenging questions than students at a lower level.

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Professional Reflection Through Self-Observation

By Christopher Miller

Background, Lesson Objectives, and Research Questions

In an attempt to gain a better appreciation of my practice and stimulate insight for future lesson planning, I engaged in a self-observation mini-research project. This project was largely lacking academic rigor. Rather, the focus was on discovering what practical benefit might result from audio-recording personal teaching practice. With these considerations in mind, I recorded two sessions of the same lesson (i.e., the same objectives, same materials) with different groups of students in the same week of March 2016.

The lesson entitled "Transitions" was the fifth lesson in a 10-lesson unit focused on the standard five-paragraph persuasive TOEIC/TOEFL essay, which all teachers instructing students in the conversational English class at the school where I work were required to teach. The objectives of the lesson were (a) students will be able to recognize four types of transition devices; (b) students will be able to produce a competent transition in a group setting; and (c) students will be able to produce a coherent body paragraph involving a complex transition.

The author devised four possible transition devices between body paragraphs.

1. Simple. Using phrases like *first, to begin with*, and *next.* Students were advised that transitions like these may lower their grade.
2. Extension: Combining themes from one body paragraph to transition to the next body paragraph. For example, "Exercise not only burns fat, it can also make you smarter."
3. Abstraction: Using more abstract language, perhaps to summarize ideas from previous paragraphs. For instance, "Exercise not only benefits you physically, it also has cognitive rewards."
4. Creative: The integration of rhetorical devices for transitions, such as chiasmus, rhetorical questions, and alliteration. A standard example is: "After all that hiking, wouldn't you be hungry? The area around Jirisan offers a wide variety of excellent restaurants."

The first 50-minute lesson initially had the following sequence:

1. Lecture on the four transition types (approximately 5 minutes)
2. Students engage in a matching activity in groups of either three or four. The activity is then debriefed in a whole class setting (approximately 5 minutes).
3. Students view a series of transitions and must label each item with the correct transition type. The activity is then debriefed in a whole class setting (approximately 3 minutes).
4. Students produce a transition in groups of three or four. Following this, students will share answers both with the teacher and in a whole class setting. Additionally, the teacher may suggest editing either during or after the composition process as warranted (approximately 15 minutes).
5. Students will compose a body paragraph that must have a transition (approximately 20 minutes – allowing a few extra minutes to prepare students for the writing task).

With these considerations in mind, I primarily considered the follow two items:

1. What are the opportunities to optimize considerations related to cognitive load for students?

2. How can I enhance the efficiency of my presentation (i.e., talk less while heightening clarity)?

Initial Recording

Question 1 (cognitive load): I found a series of limitations in the first lesson. There were few visual scaffolds present when I was discussing concepts that were potentially confusing to the students (for example, the difference between the abstraction and extension forms of transitions). Students asked questions about this and about the grading criteria for the assessed writing; for example, was it necessary to use all transition types? There was a lack of comprehension checking questions (CCQ). I tended to challenge students during the production phase of the lesson saying "[You should make] an amazing transition." Perhaps this put stress on the students and implied that they should exclusively use creative techniques for transitions – something not required. Also, I realized that the first activity of the class was lecturing (approximately five minutes). A warm-up activity can activate prior knowledge and schema, thus preparing students for subsequent instruction.

Question 2 (efficiency in teacher presentation): Using the grounded theory approach (Perry, Jr., 2011), after reading through the transcripts and engaging in reflective writing about the recorded sessions, I performed frequency counts for the following categories: (a) use of garbage words (i.e., unnecessary language), (b) calls for quiet, (c) slang, or use of language above students' level, (d) repetition of items, (e) reassurances to students (especially when the author sensed confusion by students), (f) dismissive or disparaging comments to students answers or productions, and (g) sarcasm. The results are presented in Table 1.

For the presence of items such as dismissive or disparaging remarks and language above the students' level merit scrutiny; for example, I referred to a student transition as "kind of weak," and I used slang twice: *super awesome* and *freak out.* Sarcasm could be divided further into (a) playful, which may heighten rapport in the classroom, and (b) sarcasm indicating disappointment in the quality of student production.

Modifications Implemented for the Subsequent Lesson

Upon reflection and analysis, changes were implemented for the next audio-recorded lesson. A simple warm-up activity was devised. Given time constraints, I chose a word search utilizing key words from the previous lesson that students were instructed to complete as quickly as possible in their groups. While acknowledging the limitations of this modification, this served to orient students to the lesson. Additional PowerPoint slides were produced to give students visual scaffolding to explain the difference between simple and complex (i.e., extension, abstraction, and creative) transitions, and a PowerPoint slide illustrating a series of worked examples for abstract forms of transitions, and worked examples involving fading (Sweller, Clark, & Nguyen, 2006) were produced to help strengthen mental models for the students prior to producing a transition. I also attempted to eliminate any dismissive or disparaging comments about student work, eliminate language above the students' level, as well as only use playful sarcasm. Immediately before the beginning of the 20-minute writing, I asked a series of CCQs about the appropriate sequence for composing a body paragraph to modestly strengthen the students' mental models prior to writing.

Second Recording

Comparing the frequency counts related to efficiency in teacher presentation, there were substantial differences observed (Table 1).

Table 1. Frequency Counts for Teacher Speech Patterns for Lessons 1 and 2

Pattern	Frequency Lesson 1	Frequency Lesson 2
Garbage words	17	4
Calls for quiet	3	3
Slang or language above student level	5	2
Repetition	16	18
Reassurances to students	1	3
Dismissive or disparaging comments	2	0
Sarcasm	4	4*

Note. *Sarcasm all "playful" in Lesson 2.*

Garbage words, language above students' level, damaging or dismissive comments, and less productive forms of sarcasm were greatly diminished. This may be a result of conscious attending due to recording – a self-induced Hawthorne effect (Perry, 2011). The word count length, including both teacher and student utterances, of the transcript was reduced from 2913 to 2348 in the second lesson.

Insight and Remaining Ambiguities

In many respects, this action research project gave me a degree of insight into the "hidden area" of the Johari Window (Figure 1; see also Wright & Bolitho, 2007). In the first lesson, during a whole-class follow-up for a

> "While no definitive answer is possible, the experience of the event accompanied by the lens provided through audio transcription and subsequent analysis allows the author to consider the possible source of the student utterance and gain a heightened sensitivity to the possible motives behind student behaviors."
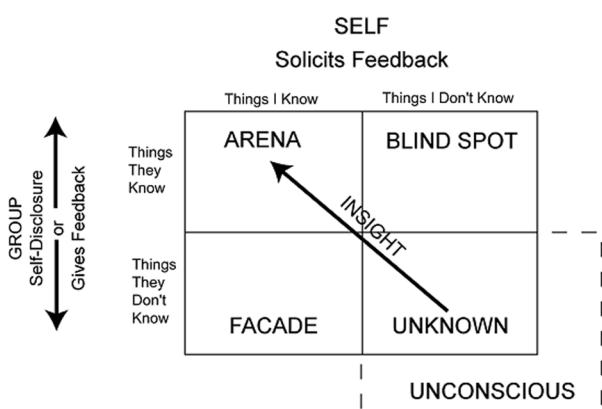
Figure 1: The Johari Window. Taken from "Small Group Instructor" (1998).

groupwork task, I dismissed a student response with the words "[student name] guessed wrong." That was meant as playful sarcasm, but disregards the student's sincere effort to participate in the class. During the analysis of the transcript, I noticed one student praised a random comment made by me, claiming that I was, in the student's words, "a genius." Later when assessing this student's written work, it was clear the learner exhibited a lower quality of writing compared to his/her peers. Were such kind words (or perhaps flattery?) a survival strategy on the part of the student, or merely an authentic response to a somewhat witty remark? While no definitive answer is possible, the experience of the event accompanied by the lens provided through audio transcription and subsequent analysis allows me to consider the possible source of the student utterance and gain a heightened sensitivity to the possible motives behind student behavior.

Recording and analyzing transcripts made me aware of student misunderstandings. When students were producing transitions, I noticed that some students often failed to establish a connection between the body paragraphs. Instead, students were producing a sentence resembling an introduction to the topic sentence. While this was recognized during the initial check of the students' written compositions during class, the process of transcribing and analyzing the transcript heightened awareness of this deficiency in understanding and fostered reflection on strategies to prevent such misunderstandings in the future.

Multiple questions emerged during the process of reflecting on the recorded lessons. The questions were not all answered satisfactorily. Unresolved questions include: (a) Did I excessively challenge the students during the production phase of the lesson by prodding students to produce "amazing" transitions? (b) Should I have made greater use of CCQs? (c) Was there an over-reliance on Initiate-Response-Follow-up (Ellis, 2012) sequences? (d) Did I repeat myself excessively during class – or was it necessary to ensure students understood me?

Conclusion
I conducted a small action research project to probe the possibilities for enhancing the effectiveness of my teaching. The experience enriched subsequent lessons, streamlined aspects of my oral presentation, and made me more aware of personal blind spots. Self-observation, regardless of the scale or scope, can provide a wealth of insight and data for the motivated educator.

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Native-Speakerism in Korea: A Need for Change

By Christopher Redmond

Native-speakerism has become perhaps the dominant ideology related to English education in Korea. If you are an English teacher looking to work here, your efforts will prove challenging unless you are a native speaker of English. According to the best available evidence, however, being a native speaker of a language is no guarantee of pedagogical superiority. This article will examine native-speakerism in Korea and explain why this ideology is fundamentally flawed.

Why Is the Term "Native Speaker" So Contentious?

The definition of "native speaker" would appear at first glance to be uncontroversial – after all, a native speaker is a "speaker of a language as a first language or mother tongue" (Crystal, 2003, p. 465). However, this has given rise to the implication that native speakers are better at teaching their own language and should therefore be hired as instructors, even at the expense of well-qualified non-native speakers – hence the term "native-speakerism"; a view that has not received much support in applied linguistics research.

Native-Speakerism in the Hiring Process

In virtually all job advertisements for teaching positions in Korea, one can expect to encounter some variant of the phrase, "Native speaker required." EPIK and TaLK, the two organizations responsible for the recruitment of native English teachers (NETs) to public schools, both stipulate that only an E2 visa will enable non-Koreans to work as English teachers in Korea. However, only native speakers are eligible to receive an E2 visa. It is theoretically possible for non-native English teachers (NNETs) to work in public schools, but they must have a bachelor's degree in English and a recognized teaching license. No such requirements are imposed upon NETs. Furthermore, only native speakers are considered eligible for the EPIK, GEPIK, and TaLK programs.

Why NETs Do Not Necessarily Make the Best Teachers

Barbara Seidlhofer has written that "native speakers know the destination, but not the terrain that has to be crossed to get there" (Jenkins, 2015, p. 122). NNETs bring a different skillset to the table. For example, Medgyes (1992) lists six advantages that NNETs can have over NETs, one of which is their empathy towards students, borne out of their shared experiences as English learners. The same author states that both NETs and NNETs can make equally suitable teachers, with NETs possessing a distinct advantage in terms of language proficiency (1992, p. 347). Proficiency, however, is just one of many factors required to be an effective language teacher.

NNETs, according to Medgyes (1992), "are more able to anticipate language difficulties" (p. 347) than NETs, meaning that NNETs would be more likely to provide their students with comprehensible input. Having both encountered and surpassed similar difficulties themselves, the NNET would be in a stronger position than the NET to suggest solutions. Under-qualified NETs, by contrast, can find it difficult to adapt their level of input to low-level classes – something I have frequently witnessed when observing NET classes in Korean schools. Consequently, the native input valued by Korean hiring committees can often be ineffective, as students may leave their classes having understood little of the content. Qualified teachers, regardless of their country of birth, may be more likely to make classroom input comprehensible for their students, and this ought to prove more attractive to Korean employers than any perceived advantages attributed

> "I eagerly await the day when "Native speaker required" is replaced by "Competent teacher required.""

solely to nationality. Indeed, this bias extends beyond the hiring process: Textbooks often reveal that native speakers continue to be regarded as the sole gatekeepers of the English language.

Native-Speakerism in Korean ELT Materials

A study by Kim (2012) found that Korean-published EFL textbooks exhibit a "preference for Caucasian English teachers" (p. 37), despite the fact that in 2011, "multicultural society, and global etiquette were newly added to the contents of the English curriculum" (p. 31). When poring through the textbooks in my faculty office, the validity of this study quickly became clear

with the striking dominance of American Standard English in both the Korean-published and externally published textbooks. But are these English language teaching (ELT) materials a fair reflection of the English that Korean learners are likely to encounter in the 21st century? The answer, as we will see, is "no."

English as a Lingua Franca

In assessing the position of English in the world today, Baumgardner (2009) points out that its role "is that of the world's lingua franca in a myriad of diverse settings" (p. 664). "More often than not," the author goes on to write, "these diverse settings do not involve a native speaker of English" (p. 664). The university in which I work acts as a microcosm of these claims with international students from every continent currently enrolled. Predictably, the lingua franca amongst these students is English, and the number of non-Korean English as a lingua franca (ELF) speakers at the university greatly exceeds that of native English speakers. The preponderance of American English in ELT materials, then, is not a fair reflection of the changing linguistic landscape of Korea and, indeed, the rest of the world. Therefore, Korean learners should be better equipped for likely encounters with ELF speakers rather than being limited to a single form of English. An awareness and understanding of other forms of English is imperative, and until institutions begin incorporating ELF materials, there are some supplementary options for teachers to consider using in their classes.

> "Being a native speaker of a language is no guarantee of pedagogical superiority."

For instance, the website www.elllo.org contains a lot of authentic speech, in the form of videos, from ELF speakers from around the world. Much of its content takes the form of cultural monologues from its diverse group of speakers, enabling the teacher to use the videos as a means of introducing the students to other varieties of English. It also means that teachers in Korea do not have to confine themselves to the native-speakerist limits of their textbooks. In a class of eight students, for example, I used a video containing Singaporean English. After playing it three times, the students began to gain a better understanding of the Singaporean variety, while at the same time, expressing interest in the cultural features presented in the video.

Similarly, the website, Speak in Levels (http://www.speakinlevels.com), allows students the chance to Skype with ELF speakers from 110 different countries. They can choose from five different levels of proficiency and pre-arrange a Skype meeting with the person they

would like to speak to. One possible way of adapting this website for classroom use would be to ask students to interview an ELF speaker from the website and to report their findings to the class.

Although research is still being done regarding the role of English in the world, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that we can, and should, expose learners to other forms of English. In doing so, we can help them to gain an understanding and acceptance of the many varieties of English, and much of this is possible thanks to resources such as elllo.org and Speak in Levels.

Conclusions

ELT course books ought to better reflect the current role of English as a lingua franca and reject the native-speakerist trappings of current materials. While Korean learners are likely to encounter many native English speakers throughout their lives, the chances of encountering non-native speakers in ELF situations are considerably greater, and this should be recognized by administrators and materials writers alike.

It is time for English institutions in Korea to recognize that passports and first languages are not a guarantee of pedagogical excellence. Hiring processes are currently based on an ideology of English that is at best outdated and at worst bordering on serious discrimination. This is particularly true given that little evidence exists to support the belief that native speakers make the best teachers. Instead, competence should take precedence over nationality during hiring, and I eagerly await the day when "Native speaker required" is replaced by "Competent teacher required."

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Developing EFL Public Speaking Skills Through Pecha Kucha Presentations

By Romualdo A. Mabuan

I've been teaching English communication classes for over a decade now, and since I began, I've been on a quest to unravel the secrets to defying my students' nerve-wracking fears of public speaking. It's totally mind-boggling that despite engaging, encouraging, and informative lectures and discussions about how to deliver a speech effectively, I often get nervous students with pale faces and diminished auras on the day of the speech. Where will I find the elixir to solve this dilemma? How can I get my students on their toes, connecting with their audience, and talking enthusiastically?

Exploring Students' Communication Apprehension

Feeling tense, nervous, and anxious is normal, especially when facing an audience or speaking with people. James C. McCroskey was the first to pioneer the communication avoidance studies that aimed to unpack the factors behind communication apprehension (CA), which is "a broadly based anxiety related to oral communication." McCroskey's subsequent studies in the mid- to late-70s presented a more elaborate definition of CA: "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons."

Decades later, McCroskey's communication construct of CA continued to pervade the four corners of my ESL classroom, affecting my students' potential to become effective English communicators. Well, that was until I discovered the power of Pecha Kucha.

Breaking Students' Communication Apprehension through Pecha Kucha

When I attended a conference on ICT in education in Kobe, Japan, in April 2014, I attended a presentation about Pecha Kucha. It caught my attention and motivated me to bring it into my classroom.

Pecha Kucha (www.pechakucha.org/faq) is a Japanese term for chit-chat, or informal and friendly talk. It is a presentation that uses PowerPoint slides in a 20 x 20 format, which corresponds to 20 pictures or images shown for 20 seconds each. The images transition automatically and the presenter talks along with the slides, carefully matching his words with the images, but also focusing on the audience.

Building and Boosting Students' Confidence with Pecha Kucha

A Pecha Kucha presentation does not demand many things. It only requires a PowerPoint program, a strong and meaningful topic, and an eager and enthusiastic speaker. In making a Pecha Kucha presentation, the PowerPoint feature that is usually needed is the Insert function, which allows the students to insert pictures, text boxes, movie clips, and even sound bites, depending on their desired design or style. Pecha Kucha is supposed to use images and minimal text in the slides, but I give my students the freedom to tweak the original format and be creative in their presentations by adding short video clips, moving images, and even sound, which should not last longer than the allotted 20 seconds per slide. I wanted them to "own" their presentations.

The second most important requirement is a strong and meaningful topic. I always declare an open topic for our Pecha Kucha presentations, which is both hard and easy. On the one hand, it is sometimes hard, because some students prefer to work on a controlled topic to lessen the burden on thinking and looking for a

A student in Romualdo's class delivering his Pecha Kucha presentation.

good topic. On the other hand, it is easy, because they can talk about anything. I find it very useful to assist

my students in choosing their topic through the Self-Inventory Method. With this method, I tell my students to refrain from searching for topics on the Internet or asking their peers for a good topic; rather, I ask my students to "look within" and focus on what they already have, asking themselves simple questions such as these:

• What am I very passionate about?
• What can I talk about spontaneously, enthusiastically, passionately, untiringly?
• What makes me smile, motivated, and inspired?
• What personal story or experience do I want to share proudly with the world?

The answer to any of these questions will give them an idea on what to talk about in their Pecha Kucha. With these, I always remind my students that their heart is their best compass, and that if they have to deliver an unforgettable, meaningful, and impactful speech, it should be about something that they love and hold dear, because such topics will bring out the best in them.

After the students have decided on their topic and have formed the story, or flow, they should organize it according to the basic principles of the presentation:

1. It should start with a "bang!" through its introduction.
2. It should unfold with compelling and relevant details in the body.
3. It should end again with another "bang!"

The story or presentation unfolds with the help of relevant photos (or texts, video clips, sound bites) that are carefully and coherently structured, organized, and presented to cover the topic.

The final and the most important requirement in a successful Pecha Kucha presentation is the presenter who will willingly share what he has with his fellow learners. Because he loves his topic so much, he will forget his fears of speaking in front of his classmates and just focus on his story. He knows his topic at its very core and is excited to share it with his peers. The speaker owns his topic and delivers it with pride and confidence.

For two years now, Pecha Kucha has become a significant component of my English communication classes. Its format is very flexible in that it can be applied to any subject and with any topic among learners of various levels across varying contexts. Aside from using it to allow students to share their interests, it can also be used to summarize the salient points that the students have learned in a book chapter or unit. Furthermore, it can be modified into a peer presentation where students have to work with a partner and present together alternately. This format

> "The Pecha Kucha format is very flexible in that it can be applied to any subject and with any topic among learners of various levels across varying contexts."

works well in big classes where time constraints do not allow for individual presentations.

In April 2016, during my summer class with my Korean exchange students from Gyeongju University (www.gju.ac.kr), we broke the bars of communication apprehension and boosted their confidence in public speaking through Pecha Kucha presentations. The class was composed of 13 students who were in high school. It was a small but mixed class, and giving a controlled topic would not have been an ideal decision. With Pecha Kucha, they were given the freedom to talk about the topic of their choice, and it was successful. Despite having different English proficiency levels, each of them managed to deliver their presentation naturally and successfully. When we discussed the outcomes after their presentations, they were surprised they had been able to do so well, even though they had been anxious about the task beforehand. They liked Pecha Kucha and described their presentation experience as being memorable, exciting, fascinating, fantastic, amazing, and interesting.

The Author

Romualdo A. Mabuan teaches English communication subjects at the Lyceum of the Philippines University (LPU) and is a doctoral student in applied linguistics at De La Salle University at Manila. He also teaches oral communication classes with Korean international exchange students at the LPU's International Affairs Office. Email: romualdo.mabuan@lpu.edu.ph

KOTESOL People: Kathleen Kelley

Kathleen Kelley is Busan–Gyeongnam Chapter president and Publicity director for the 2016 International Conference. She answered some questions for The English Connection *on her role in KOTESOL and her work with the IC. Since the interview, Kathleen has been elected as co-chair for IC 2017 and appointed as National Publicity Committee chair. — Interview by Julian Warmington*

TEC: What did you do in your previous life before coming to Korea?
Kathleen Kelley: Before coming to Korea, I was working as a commission salesperson at a retail furniture chain outside of Philadelphia. It was okay at first, but by the end, I hated it, and that's why I moved to Korea.

TEC: When did you come to Korea and what was your first impression of it?
When I moved to Korea in 2011, it felt a bit like I had entered the twilight zone. So many things were familiar, but just a little off. For example, the 7-Elevens in Korea look the same outside, but they don't sell Slurpees and hot dogs, or my favorite 7-Eleven snack, the taquito. Doritos and Cheetos come in unexpected flavors here.

TEC: When you first came to Korea, how long did you expect to stay, how long have you been here now, and how long do you hope to stay going forward?
When I first came to Korea, my husband and I only planned to stay for two years. Now it has been five and a half years, and we are not sure when we will return. Maybe in two years, but with all the recent tragedies in the news, the thought of returning to the US isn't that appealing.

TEC: What do you enjoy about life in Korea?
There are many things I like about my life in Korea: I like my job. I don't contemplate calling in sick every morning like I did when I worked at the furniture store. I also like having ample free time to explore other interests and hobbies. This is aided by the low-stress life I can enjoy as an expat. Of course, I love the vacation time and the ease of travel. I also like that Korea has excellent public transportation and an affordable health care system.

TEC: What do you enjoy most about teaching?
I really enjoy interacting with students. I like watching their skills develop, and seeing them become more confident in their English ability. Especially the younger kids, they learn so fast, but even with university students, when I hear them use an idiom or expression I taught them, I feel a sense of accomplishment.

TEC: What different levels/ages have you taught in your time here, and what changes have you had to make to your approach to teaching to adapt between the different needs of student groups?
I taught at a public middle school, then at public elementary schools, and now I am halfway through my first year at Andong National University.

When I moved from middle school to elementary school, I had to learn to simplify everything, especially with the younger students. At the elementary school level, there was also a lot more focus on using songs and games to reinforce the sentence structure and

> **"Becoming involved with KOTESOL has allowed me to gain experience in non-teaching fields, like publicity and marketing."**

vocabulary being taught.

Now at the university level, I have to give my students more freedom and responsibility. Because I teach English conversation class, I think my job is to make sure the students understand the topics and to facilitate conversation between students.

TEC: How, and why, did you first become involved in KOTESOL?
I first became involved in KOTESOL about three or four years ago. I was an EPIK teacher at a middle school, and EPIK was cutting the middle school program. That's when I decided it was time to be proactive and start networking, so I became a member and started attending workshops in Busan.

TEC: What have been the biggest benefits to you since becoming involved with KOTESOL?
I benefit from KOTESOL in two ways. Firstly, the things I study and pick up at workshops and conferences motivate me to try new things in the classroom, and it keeps me from falling into a teaching rut. Secondly, becoming involved with KOTESOL as a chapter officer and at the national level has allowed me to gain experience in non-teaching fields, like publicity and marketing.

TEC: What contributions have you made to KOTESOL that you are the happiest about?
This year, I did the poster design for the International Conference, and I am very excited about that. I am also happy to be working on publicity for the IC. The other thing I am really pleased with is the Busan Chapter's email newsletter that I implemented just over a year ago.

TEC: Do you have any favorite practical tips or lesson techniques you picked up at a KOTESOL session and used in class?
I have learned tons of things from KOTESOL events. I saw an excellent presentation on the "flipped classroom" last winter, which really inspired me. Now I do a hybrid version of the flipped classroom. If I need my students to read or write something or to study vocabulary, it is given as homework, so class time is focused on speaking. I think that it has allowed my students and me to make the most of class time.

TEC: In what directions do you think KOTESOL should move in the future?
In the future, I think KOTESOL will need to be more active online, especially on social media. KOTESOL's social media accounts are now under-utilized, but they could be a good way to spread awareness and engage with English teachers throughout Korea.

University of Birmingham: MA TESOL and MA Applied Linguistics

By Joanne McCuaig

I graduated from the University of Birmingham's MA Applied Linguistics (AL) program four years ago. Like other teachers in Korea, I'd been teaching for many years and had some certificates that helped me to organize my classroom skills, but I was looking for more. I wanted recognized credentials and a better

understanding of the components that make up our profession. I wanted to know things like why textbooks were organized a particular way and how I could better create materials to meet the needs of my students. The Birmingham program allowed me to learn not only the content of the courses, but also how to conduct research, both inside and outside of my classroom, and how to write at the graduate level.

Why I Chose a Distance Program
There were four main reasons why I chose to complete a distance program versus going on campus: (a) I wanted to work while I studied. (b) I wanted to be able to use my skills immediately, which also helped to offset the cost of completing the program. (c) A distance program allowed me to pace my studies; being a part-time student allowed me more time to reflect on what I'd learnt. (d) It wasn't feasible for me to move overseas to complete a program, as I had personal and professional commitments tying me to South Korea.

The Application Process
I mention the application process, because I was impressed that there are four different starting times for the program: February, April, July, and October. This showed me that there was already flexibility with the program and an element of control that I, as a student,

would have in my studies. I had vacation plans already set and was pleased I didn't have to either delay my trip or pack a bunch of books to bring with me.

What Do You Study?
Birmingham has both TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) and AL degrees, and there is overlap between the two programs. Classes such as Methodology, Research Methods, Second Language Acquisition, Pedagogical Grammar, and Discourse Analysis are similar to other MA programs that are popular in South Korea. To achieve the MA, you take six modules and write a research dissertation.

Optional courses that Birmingham offers, such as Testing and Phonology, appealed to others on the program while I myself enjoyed the Corpus Linguistics and Functional Grammar modules. Again, this flexibility allowed me to focus my studies on areas that were of interest to my current teaching context.

> "One of the biggest draws of the program was the personal tutor that Birmingham allocates to each student."

Program Length
It takes 30 months, or about 2.5 years, to complete the program, assuming that you take no breaks between your studies. To accelerate the program, you have the option to study on campus in England. I personally know two students in Korea who took that route, which allowed them to finish in 22 months. As a distance

student, you also have the option to simultaneously work on the sixth module with the dissertation, thereby finishing the degree in 20 months. Personally, I preferred the slower pace, which allowed me more time to reflect on what I'd learnt and to apply it while I was still in the classroom. I could also spread out the cost over the duration of the program, which is about 9,000 GBP in total or KRW 13 million, plus books (at the time of writing).

There are additional textbooks to read, many of which are offered online via Birmingham's extensive e-library or sold in Korea. When I completed the program, you needed to purchase most of the books, but thankfully, now more of the books are available online.

One of the biggest draws of the program was the personal tutor that Birmingham allocates to each student. It had been many years since I had written an

Time Commitment
From speaking with other students, in general, it takes about 10-15 hours of studying a week; the variation depends on how well you know the subject matter. The program requires a 4,000-word assignment at the end of each module, so I needed to increase my time commitment accordingly. Being a distance learner requires you to set your own schedule for studying, which can be difficult at times when you are also working. I found that by setting a predetermined time, usually in the mornings before work and a few hours on the weekend, I was able to keep on top of the readings, but every student has their own preference. Both my studies and employment benefited from me being in control of my time.

Materials and Course Conduct
The modules, by way of PDFs, are offered online on a system called Canvas. There are discussion boards and chat forums, along with some video content, but the majority of the program requires you to read the content. There is no requirement to participate in the chat or discussion boards, which appealed to me, because I wanted to focus on learning the content and chatting about it with coworkers or at the Summer Seminar held annually in Seoul. At the Summer Seminar, two professors from the Birmingham campus come to Seoul for a week of special sessions that are free for currently enrolled students to attend. I didn't attend my first year and regretted it as being able to speak with others in the program really motivated me.

academic paper and having a tutor to review and make suggestions on my papers was invaluable.

Value
As previously mentioned, I learnt the content of my MA, along with research and writing skills. I was amazed that even years after completing the program and facing a teaching dilemma, I would recall something that I had learnt from my MA that would assist me in solving the issue. The ability to research and write at the graduate level has also proved beneficial outside of the classroom. While it can be challenging to study via distance, I personally found that the organization and support that Birmingham provided, along with being a high-quality program, made it quite worthwhile.

The Author

Joanne McCuaig is a 2012 graduate of the University of Birmingham, MA in Applied Linguistics (with distinction). She is a tutor for the program as well as the in-country representative for Korea. Email: J.McCuaig@bham.ac.uk
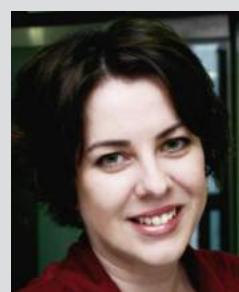
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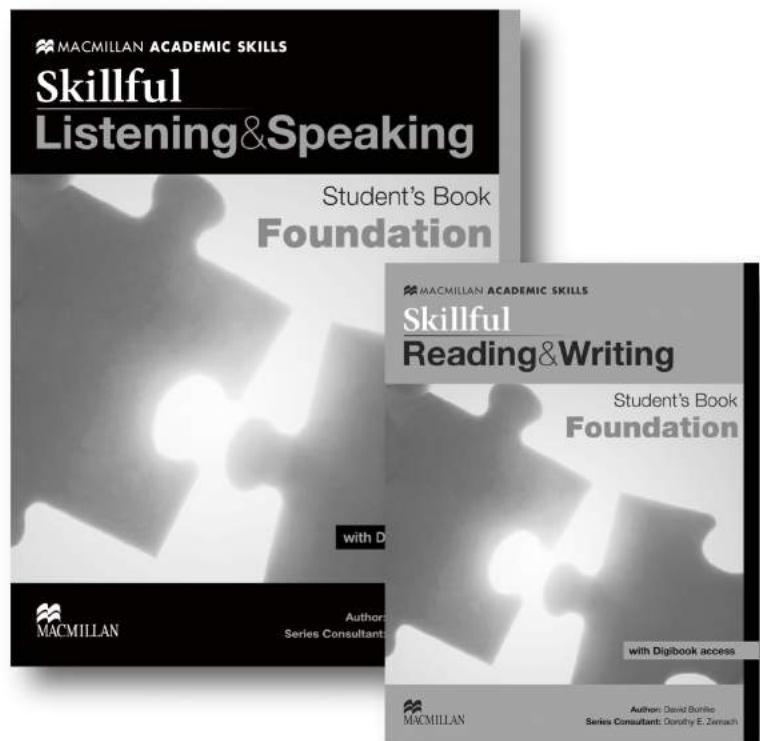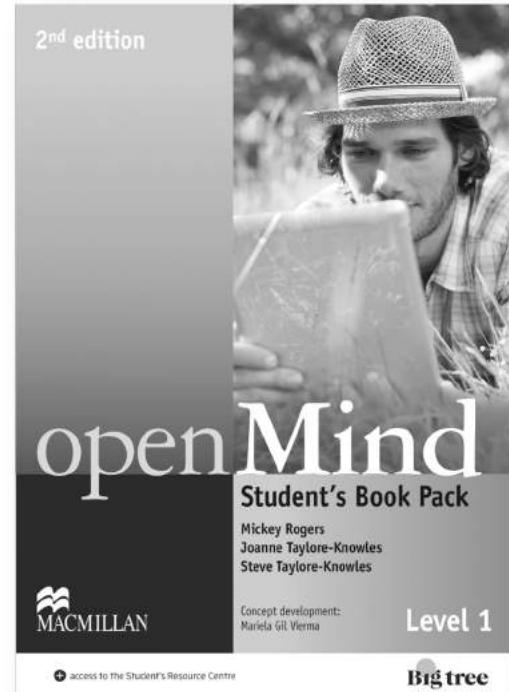
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