

The English Connection

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Focus on Careers

Teaching at Korean Universities, by Tory Thorkelson
Should You Get a PhD? by Stewart Gray

Classroom Practice:
Content-Based Instruction
Scaffolding
Targeting Grammar Errors
Motivating Your Students

Regular Columns:

Thomas Farrell: Including Teachers in SLA Research
Curtis Kelly's On the BALL: The Importance of Movement
Book Review: Classroom Community Builders



KOTESOL
대한영어교육학회



Contact us:
KoreaTESOL.org
TEC@KoreaTESOL.org

The English Connection Editorial Team

Editor-in-Chief

Gil Coombe

Publications Committee Chair

Dr. David Shaffer / Jake Kimball

Executive Editors

Suzanne Bardasz

Dean Jorgensen

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Naheen Madarbakus-Ring

Joshua Grant

Layout / Design: Mijung Lee, Media Station

Printing: Myeongjinsa

Photo and Illustration Credits:

Cover: Steve Garrigues

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Suggestions and contributions to tec@koreatesol.org

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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.

By **Gil Coombe** Editor-in-Chief

We are a month away from the new year, meaning that many of us are also a month away from yet another list of resolutions for the upcoming 365 days. Before you gather together that collection of hopes and dreams though, try to think back to a year ago. What was on your list back then? How many of those things have you actually achieved?

I ask because I know from personal experience how easy it is to make a list and treat that as an achievement in itself, basking in the warm glow of *taking control of your life*. Before you know it, however, you are letting the days bleed away into your typical routine and you suddenly find yourself at the end of another year and ready to make another list. So it goes.

So I urge you all not to just throw together another collection of hollow aspirations, but to truly consider what you want from 2018. Consider what you want to happen in your life. Consider what you want to happen in your career. Consider what you want to happen in your classrooms. Consider what you want to *be*. Only you can make it so.

So many of us are tasked with instilling the notion of being a lifelong learner in our students, sometimes we forget that the best form of teaching is to simply be a role model, and let others follow our lead. I woke up to this fact this week, in the middle of midterm interviews with my graduate academic writing students. I asked them to bring me questions that they wanted me to answer with regards to their writing or the learning of writing in general. And there I was, giving them advice about how to structure a paper (outline, outline, outline, I said), and how to expand vocabulary (collocations are key, I intoned), or improving grammar (it takes concentrated effort, I nodded sagely), when suddenly I wondered, if this was all such great advice, why was my Korean still so abysmal? Who was I to teach others how to learn a language when I had thus far shown so little interest (or talent, let's be honest) in learning one of my own?

Sure, "Learn Korean" has appeared in a few New Year's resolutions lists in the past. But that is all it has done. Made an appearance on a piece of paper that is filed away and forgotten. So next year, I want to be a learner; I want to be in my student's shoes. I want to show them it can be done. I want to be a role model.

In this, the last issue of 2017, we have a collection of writers who *have* put an idea into action and decided to share their knowledge, wisdom, or experience with their peers in the hope of illuminating, inspiring, and educating. And if that is not the type of role model our students need, I don't know what is.

First up is KOTESOL stalwart Tory S. Thorkelson, who gives an overview of the current situation for teaching at Korean universities. This is followed by a quick overview of the importance of scaffolding for beginning learners by Stephanie Ptak. Stewart Gray then takes the reins, answering the question a number of university instructors have asked themselves in recent years: Should I get a PhD?

Deep into the middle of this issue, we get a collection of three articles that provide valuable advice for teachers in EFL classrooms. Michael Smith provides practical advice for fostering motivation among English learners, while Aaron Shayne introduces the concept of content-based instruction as a means to learn English at Korean universities. Finally, Andrew Garth outlines a useful method of encouraging learners to notice and correct their grammar errors.

After the KOTESOL International Conference, Invited Speaker Andy Curtis gives an overview of his latest book series, *Applied Linguistics for the Language Classroom*, it is then left to three of our regular contributors to round out the issue. Christopher Miller reviews Walton Burns' *Classroom Community Builders: Activities for the First Day and Beyond*, Curtis Kelly returns with his fourth installment of the "On the BALL" series, this time with a focus on the importance of exercise for cognitive processing, and Thomas S. C. Farrell delivers a heartfelt plea to allow teachers to play a more prominent role in SLA research.

So please read and enjoy ... and then decide what you are *really* going to do with 2018.



President's Message

By **Dr. David E. Shaffer** KOTESOL President

The dust is still settling from our whirlwind of autumn KOTESOL events. September saw our two most active special interest groups holding their biggest events of the year. The Christian Teachers SIG had their annual symposium, "Restorative Approaches in ELT," at Hadong University, and the Reflective Practice SIG held their "Day of Reflection 2017" at Sookmyung Women's University with Dr. Thomas S. C. Farrell as the featured speaker. KOTESOL is quite fortunate to have a patron scholar of the caliber of Dr. Farrell. Both events were well received and well attended.



Before the SIG dust had a chance to settle, KOTESOL moved into October to stir up the Korean ELT scene with its largest event of the year: KOTESOL's annual international conference. The 25th Korea TESOL International Conference and PAC 2017 was extra special for two reasons: It was our 25th KOTESOL Conference (the first was held in 1993), and it was held in conjunction with PAC 2017 and the Asian Youth Forum. Eight hundred attendees had over 200 presentations to choose from over the conference weekend. It is heartwarming to hear so many favorable remarks about the conference from both the attendees and the invited speakers. I would like to congratulate Conference Chair Sean O'Connor and Co-chair Kathleen Kelley as well as their 40-member-strong committee for choreographing this amazing performance.

Rounding out the second day of the conference was KOTESOL's annual business meeting. Election results were announced and that is why you see me writing the President's Message this issue. I wish to thank the KOTESOL membership for showing their confidence in me. As I expressed at the ABM, I will strive to my fullest to live up to your expectations. The other elected officers for the coming year are Michael Free, 1st Vice-President; Mike Peacock, 2nd Vice-President; Martin Todd, Secretary; Phillip Schrank, Treasurer; Grace Wang, International Conference Committee Co-chair; and Allison Bill, Nominations and Elections Committee Chair. With this group of officers on the National Council, I am confident that KOTESOL is in good hands and that good things are in store for the coming year.

Also at the ABM, outgoing President Lindsay Herron recognized numerous members for their service to KOTESOL. Here I can mention only a few. Two of the President's Awards went to Robert Dickey and John Phillips. Outstanding Service Awards went to Phillip Schrank, Sean O'Connor, Gil Coombe, Kara Mac Donald, and Suzanne Bardasz. In addition, a special Career Service Award went to Ingrid Zwaal, and a special Patron Award went to Dr. Kyungsook Yeum. It is gratifying to see so many members contributing so much to KOTESOL.

It is fitting for Lindsay Herron to here have space to say a few words: "It has been a true honor to serve as KOTESOL president for the past two years. Thank you for the privilege! I am delighted to turn the position over to my successor, Dr. David Shaffer – a trusted friend, mentor, and role model who has served the organization in a plethora of leadership positions. KOTESOL couldn't be in better hands. To Dave, I wish a term burgeoning with new opportunities and adventures; to the membership, I send my gratitude and admiration. You are all truly my professional family, my beloved community in Korea, and I look forward to continuing to spend time with you as I serve the organization in other roles. I hope to see you at future KOTESOL events!"

Lindsay will not be stepping back; I am certain that she will contribute greatly as Immediate Past President and in additional roles. She will be at our December 3 Leadership Retreat. Hope to see many of you there, too.

Teaching in Korean Universities: A Personal Perspective

By Tory S. Thorkelson

As I end my 21st year in Korea, and my 19th as a professor at a university in Seoul, I have been reflecting on what life is like for a university instructor within the current state of education and trying to predict what may be coming for those of us teaching in Korean universities. While I may not have all of the answers, I think what I will share here is indeed possible, but I will let you, the reader, be the judge.

terms, but most pay extra for this, and with a total of at least eight weeks of vacation in each of July/August and January/February, instructors will still get two to four weeks of vacation. Other benefits can include on- or off-campus housing or a small housing subsidy, often between 300,000 and 700,000 KRW per month, 50% of healthcare and pension costs covered by the university, and occasionally one-way or return airfare.

For a brief overview of the types of jobs available in Korea for those interested in teaching English at all levels (Government of Canada, 2017).

Most available jobs are for freshmen or sophomore classes, and conversation is still the typical focus of most classes, although other areas such as writing, presentations, job skills, and debate are slowly taking the place of the basic conversation classes that used to be the mainstay of universities around the country. Electives also offer opportunities for stepping outside the EFL sphere, allowing instructors to share their knowledge and experience in other areas.

The Students

According to an article in *The Korea Herald*, classes of 100 or more at a top-ranked university in Seoul were far fewer than those of 20 or less (Yoon, 2014). In the 1990's, classes of 35-50 were fairly common at many universities both inside and outside

of Seoul, but those numbers have dropped to 25 or so on average for freshmen or sophomore English classes. However, class size may be less noteworthy than the diversity of today's university or college classes in Korea.

According to *Study in Korea* (2016),

[looking at] the statistics on foreign students in Korea, there were 91,332 foreign students studying as of April 1, 2015. By country of origin, foreign students were from 171 countries. By area of study, there were 22,718 Korean language students, 32,972 undergraduate students, graduate students [reached] 22,767, and 13,415 other students.

Many colleges and universities are under pressure to alleviate the anticipated effects of the declining birth



The Job

According to one blog for English teachers (Fitzpatrick, 2014), salaries at universities in Korea range from 2.3 to 3.5 million KRW per month (as I write, 1 USD equals 1,164 KRW). This range is about right; I regularly check job advertisements to see what the conditions are like both inside and outside of cities, and there are positions being advertised with salaries ranging from 1.8 up to a high of 4 million.

Working conditions include anywhere from 9 to 18 contact hours per week, plus up to four office hours, faculty meetings, and other duties which may be paid, but probably are not (Shaw, 2013). Overtime is available at many universities; however, the rates may range from as low as 15,000 up to 45,000 KRW an hour or more. Some universities will require that you work summer or winter classes or camps between

rate, which will result in a surplus of openings for university students by 2018, and as many as 160,000 empty seats by 2023. One solution is to attract as many as 200,000 international students (*ICEF Monitor*, 2015). Some universities are even building special dormitories exclusively for international students or planning to put them all in special classes or departments (*Times Higher Education*, 2015). As a university instructor or professor, this means all the advantages and disadvantages of a more diverse classroom can be expected.

The Power of English

According to *The Diplomat* (2014), "Koreans spend \$17 billion a year and have hired 30,000 native English speakers to meet the demands of concerned parents who want their children to match the expectations of the job market." A study reported in *The Korea Times* stated that most of these expenses are related to private education (e.g., private English classes and test-prep courses) since many Koreans do not trust public education. As another article in *Groove Magazine* put it,

Parents want the best for their kids, ... learning English is the "bridge" to success. Some students are driven to study English to experience the world, while others just hope their high English scores will help them get into a famous university and land a job at one of Korea's big-name *chaebol* companies. (Ramirez, 2013)

Professor Kim Tae Young states, "The current college entrance exam does not test speaking and writing skills, which are crucial for Koreans to disseminate their creative ideas to the world through the Internet and

primarily on their K-12 English classes to develop their English abilities. As a result, classes with multiple levels and varying degrees of interest in anything related to English are to be expected at many Korean universities.

English Exams Everywhere

G-TELP, IELTS, NEAT, OPIC, PELT, PTE, TOEIC, TOEFL, TEPS, and the list keeps growing. Each of these acronyms represents an English test that was developed to evaluate the proficiency of non-native English-speaking students for work or study purposes. According to Ramirez (2013), the "Samsung Economic Research Institute estimated that Koreans, who make up nearly 1 in 5 TOEFL test-takers worldwide, spent a total of 14.3 trillion won (\$13.1 billion) a year on private English tutoring, and another 700 billion won a year applying for English proficiency tests in 2005." This is a huge market, and publishers, instructors, and universities are eager to become a part of it through textbooks, classes with test names in their titles, and/or becoming official test centers for these exams. This may result in our classes becoming more focused on test preparation rather than conversation, presentation skills, or writing, for example.

Qualifications and Their Value Here

Increasingly, the basic qualification to be an EFL professor is now a master's in education, TESL, or linguistics. While you can get a job with a BA and five years of university experience, most jobs require a completed master's degree in one of the aforementioned disciplines and two years of university experience. Although a TESL certificate is now apparently a requirement for K-12 teachers, university jobs do not often require any qualifications other than a master's degree. Some universities do ask for a PhD,

"Being perceived as a native speaker only able to teach conversation or language skills is no longer enough."

other high-tech means" (*The Korea Herald*, 2012). The proposed solutions have been many, including changing the college entrance exam to include speaking and writing, but "those ideas have often petered out amid controversy over their administrative implementation and technical viabilities [sic], and public concerns that they would hinder efforts to curb the bloated private education market." This means that universities will continue to struggle to make up for the perceived shortfalls of the public education system with ever larger classes filled with both highly fluent students who have had private classes and may have spent time overseas along with students who have had to rely

but this is rarely a requirement, and the benefits of having one are negligible in most cases.

Is It a Long-Term or a Short-Term Job?

In early 1996, the ELT field in Korea seemed to be booming. Jobs were plentiful and the Korean currency was strong, but then the economy crashed and many teachers left as their salaries (paid in KRW) crashed. After the IMF period ended, the economy seemed to stabilize and the demand for English teachers continued. Programs like the English Program in Korea (EPIK), established in 1995, and Teach and Learn in Korea (TaLK), established in 2008, have placed

over 5000 teachers in public schools all over Korea. However, the hiring and success of these programs is based on the priorities of the current government, and they rarely meet their stated goals for recruitment.

The end of the National English Aptitude Test (NEAT) has resulted in a number of things that make the future of English education less promising (*The Korea Times*, 2014). First, the traditional college entrance exam means that speaking and writing will continue to be less important than reading and grammar. Second, in conjunction with the cuts in the number of EPIK teachers in Seoul, for example, any gains in English ability over the past few decades may begin to regress (*Asiapundits*, 2014). Third, this seems to contradict the government's claim that they ended the NEAT as a college entrance requirement to reduce the burden of Korean families to pay for private lessons (*The Korea Times*, 2014). On the other hand, the pool of E2 visa holders has also dropped over the last few years which, coupled with the changes in requirements for newly hired college or university instructors mentioned earlier, means that competition for university jobs is likely to decline as time goes by if these trends continue (*Asiapundits*, 2014). Based on these factors and the fact that English policies tend to change with new governments and changes in education policy, it would not be surprising if these trends were to reverse when a new government takes over.

Another thing to consider is that the ability to be competitive as a generalist is decreasing. Being perceived as a native speaker only able to teach conversation or language skills is no longer enough. While I think a doctorate is overkill where language teaching at a university is concerned, having one may open doors to tenure track positions in other departments and fields other than TESL/TEFL. The pendulum seems to be swinging towards greater interest in specialists. With this in mind, it is a good idea to diversify your skills while offering unmatched skills in one or two areas like debating, job skills, drama, or academic writing to tip the scale in your favor when applying for a university or college job.

Korea still offers a lot of opportunities for those who want both a brief interlude between graduating from college and starting their career back home or trying to start a career in ELT at the college or university level. An article from the *Times Higher Education* (2016) based on research about foreign academics' experiences at a well-known and highly ranked university in Seoul reported that many do not stay more than a few years. At the moment, those wanting a brief interlude will probably be more satisfied than the latter in my opinion; however, if a new government starts reforming education, English education may become a priority once again.

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Note: This is a revised version of an article that appeared on the *EFL magazine* website in 2016.

Tory S. Thorkelson (BA, BEd, MEd in TESL/TEFL) is a proud Canadian, who has been an active KOTESOL member since 1998, and has presented at or worked on local and international conferences. He is a past president of the Seoul Chapter and KOTESOL (2008-09) as well as an active KTT member/facilitator. His 9-to-5 job is as an associate professor for Hanyang University's English Language and Literature Program. He has co-authored/-authored research studies (see KTJ, vol. 12-1) and a university-level textbook, *World Class English*, with a team of fellow KOTESOL members. He writes regularly for EFL magazines.



Scaffolding Project for Beginning Learners

By Stephanie Ptak

Introduction

As an ESL teacher in Korea, I am continually questioning and developing as a teacher. Recently, I focused on scaffolding my lessons in order to better help my elementary school students. The original activity described in this article (*Teacher Vision*, 2011) entailed a brainstorm, followed by time for students to use the vocabulary from the brainstorm in a creative way to make a final product. I used multiple scaffolding techniques to modify this activity in a way that improved learning outcomes. First, I created a review sheet for my students to use after they had already learned the vocabulary. Second, I created a student checklist to use after they created and completed their formative assessment. Lastly, I created a teacher's

“By practicing multiple types of scaffolding and reflecting on how each can benefit students, we can feel much more confident with the tools that we need to help students.”

rubric, which is quite simple, to assess the assignment. The students that I adapted this assignment for were third-grade English learners who were learning English for the first time. They were students at a public school in Seoul, Korea. During this first year of English learning, the focus of the class is to teach letters and simple vocabulary.

Before this activity took place, the students would need to have previously learned the vocabulary items. On this particular day, the students each received the review sheet, which consisted of a picture of a human body and a word bank, at the bottom, of the previously learned vocabulary. We did one example as a class on how to draw a line to the body part and write the word. Students then worked in pairs to complete the review sheet. Following this, I demonstrated an example of the next activity, which required them to trace an outline of another student and label the target body

parts using the key vocabulary. Often, I would use myself as the example, getting the students to trace me. Following the example, the students would partner up to trace one another. After tracing, they labeled the body parts of their own body independently. I put pictures of each body part on the board, so that the students could reference this to remember which body parts to label. However, I did not include the words with these reminders. If there is time, or the next day, the students could color and design their body parts poster. Students then received a self-assessment checklist (Table 1). The vocabulary items were written

Table 1: Student Checklist
















	Label	Location	Spelling
			
			
 			
 			
 			
 			
 			
			
 			

Table 2: Teacher's Rubric

	Spelling	Location
Hair		
Arms		
Legs		
Eyes		
Nose		
Feet		
Ears		
Hands		
Mouth		
TOTAL	/9	/9

on the board, and the students copied them into the assessment in the appropriate locations. They then filled out the self-assessment. Lastly, I assessed their work with the teacher's rubric (Table 2).

Scaffolding Approach 1: Language Simplification

I decided to use less vocabulary than the original assignment, cutting back from nineteen words to nine (*hair, arms, legs, eyes, nose, feet, ears, hands, and mouth*). By using less vocabulary, I hoped to allow the students the opportunity to focus better on what is important (O'Malley, 1996). I think, for a beginning-level class being exposed to English for the first time, nineteen words would be too overwhelming. Furthermore, I only chose to focus on the very distinguishable, easier parts of the face, as well as large parts of the body. This way, the students are only learning the basic parts of the body during their first exposure to this vocabulary. On the self-assessment checklist, I used simple language at the top of each column (Table 1). I explained to the students what these words meant and what I wanted them to do in each specific box. I chose to only put one word at the top so as not to overwhelm them with too much text.

Scaffolding Approach 2: Format Simplification

I created a simple format for the review sheet. The directions and the title were one and the same, located at the top of the page. Underneath the large picture of a human body was the word bank. I kept this page very simple so that the students could focus on the task instead of extra text or decorations. The self-assessment that the students filled out after they completed the body poster also had a simple format, consisting of a simple grid (Table 1).

Scaffolding Approach 3: Limiting Choice

The review sheet handed out to students had a word bank at the bottom of the page. Therefore, students had a limited choice of the words they could use to label the body parts. I chose to include a word bank as well so that students could focus on those vocabulary items and not use any other labels that they may have known from outside the classroom. I limited choices on the self-assessment checklist (Table 1). I instructed the students to check the boxes if they correctly completed the task listed at the top of the column. By instructing the students to check or not check a box, I limited the choices and the ambiguity of the responses from students.

Scaffolding Approach 4: Visuals and Graphics

I used a large visual on the review sheet so that students could connect the vocabulary to an image of the related body part, both on paper and in their mind. I scaffolded by using an image instead of a text description so that the students could connect the two in a simpler way while still demonstrating their knowledge (O'Malley, 1996). The self-assessment also

had pictures instead of the vocabulary items (Table 1). Students could then look at those parts on their completed product to see if they had accomplished the desired task.

Scaffolding Approach 5: Modeling

While reviewing the vocabulary with the students, I first labeled one or two parts of the body together with them on the front board. I wanted to model the task set out before them, in order to show them, rather than only telling them, how to complete the task. Students were shown a model of the final product before they began to create their own. In this way, students had an example that they could use to guide their creations.

Assessment

The teacher's rubric is very straightforward (Table 2). Due to the low level of my students, the goal of the activity was very simple: to learn a few vocabulary items pertaining to the body. As a reflection of this goal, the rubric is quite simple, as I was only looking for the correct spelling of the vocabulary item and the correct labeling with those items.

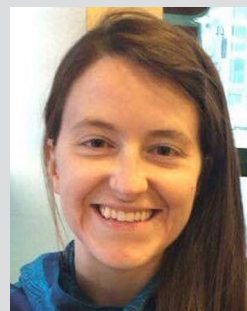
Reflection

This project has reinforced for me the importance of scaffolding. By practicing multiple types of scaffolding and reflecting on how each can benefit students, we can feel much more confident with the tools that we need to help students. I recommend reassessing the activities you use in your own classrooms to see whether there remains scope for increasing the scaffolding of the learning objectives you would like to accomplish.

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Stephanie Ptak is currently an assistant professor at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. Prior to this, she was an assistant professor and coordinator of the English Self-Access Center at Kyungnam University. Stephanie has also taught at elementary schools in Seoul and Mallorca, Spain. She holds a BA in linguistics and Spanish from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (USA), a teaching license in TESOL and Spanish, and a MEd from George Mason University.



Motivation in the EFL Classroom: Practical Tips for New Teachers

By Michael Smith

Teachers beginning their practice, whether for the first time or in unfamiliar contexts, often face the challenge of motivating students to participate. Understanding what motivates or demotivates learners is an essential component of any successful educational approach and has unsurprisingly received significant attention in language education research. Teachers seeking to balance theory and praxis as a part of their professional development process should aim to develop a firm understanding of the concepts of motivation early in their careers.

Motivation is a complex concept, and in what may seem at first glance to be a fairly homogenous group (e.g., a middle school compulsory language class), one might expect to find any number of contextual and affectual factors distinguishing individual learners' motivation. Influences might include preferred learning styles, intrinsic disposition towards a target language or community, and extrinsic factors such as tests, the desire to gain employment, and a host of other possible influences. Consideration of these contextual factors is of paramount importance when planning, implementing, and assessing the suitability of EFL learning content. While a particular approach may work for one student, the same approach may alienate others, creating tension or an inefficient learning environment. As such, for teachers starting out in an EFL context, it would be advisable for them to evaluate learners' needs as early as possible in an effort to ensure that they are sufficiently met.

Strategic assessment is an indispensable tool when appraising one's teaching practice and learner requirements. It can be both quantitative and qualitative and may take the form of questionnaires, interviews, tasks, or even the opening of a simple dialogue. Students can be queried, both directly or indirectly, to draw attention to the specific factors that are at play in relation to their motivation; these might include their current learning goals and objectives or initial motives for taking the class, possibly distinguishing whether they are integratively or instrumentally orientated. Additionally, personal motivational styles need to be considered, including intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, cognitive

and learning modality, and/or sensory perceptual styles, which can dictate whether students are visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, verbal sequential, or visual holistic learners. Another major influence is whether the students feel the learning materials are at an appropriate level for their current abilities. Once any appraisal has been completed, however, educators should be wary of considering this part of the task at an end. Learner attributes have the potential to vary considerably over time and to be situationally dependant on any number of conditions; as such, the strategic assessment of student motivation should be an ongoing process.

Additionally, as Richards and Rodgers (2014) note, learning preferences usually reflect a student's sociocultural background, especially when teaching non-native speakers of English. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers research the cultural context(s) of their learners and any associated student-teacher dynamics. For example, while one group or nationality may expect (or even favor) the employment of teacher-centred didactic instruction, another may respond favorably to inquiry-based or cooperative learning strategies. Although research literature might seem daunting to new and experienced teachers alike, much of it is accessible, and it is likely

“It is a teacher’s responsibility to ensure that students are sufficiently motivated to invest fully into the whole learning process and to react accordingly if learners lose focus.”

that research relevant to a teacher's current context is available to read. Once learning strategy preferences are investigated and analyzed, an educator may then attune their instructional strategies to the requirements of their learners, preferably adapting their teaching practice to be as varied, challenging, relevant, and as curiosity-inducing as possible. Whatever form the inquiry takes, however, the ultimate goal is to deliver a positive impact on student interest while

simultaneously increasing the level of cooperation and support within the learning environment.

Continuing with the theme of personalized lesson content, it is natural for learners to become invested in something that directly relates to their individual experiences and interests. Appropriately, an educator may try to find what interests learners outside of the classroom. By becoming aware of student relationships, backgrounds, hobbies, and so on, it is possible to implement lesson content that is both linguistically authentic and personally relevant to the lives of language learners. It is beneficial to provide students with tasks that cover a broad spectrum of cognitive demands, which, in accordance with Bloom's (1956) Taxonomy of Learning, preferably incorporate high-order thinking skills whenever possible.

If a student enjoys soccer, for example, then an educator could direct the language learner to create a league table, match report, or critical appraisal of their favorite team or, if a learner recently took a trip with their family, then they could be asked to compare their experiences to a case study or to design a tourist brochure describing the features of the destination. Cognitively engaging English language tasks that are authentic, creative, and meaningful are not only an effective way of connecting current learning with existing memories but also a useful means of enhancing concentration, participation levels, and most crucially of all, student confidence.

The ability to boost confidence while addressing potential language application anxieties is one of the most fundamental components of effective language teaching. Learner anxiety can be both the cause and result of poor academic performance and can arise as

goes without saying that learners should be motivated by a desire to succeed, rather than a fear of failure and embarrassment.

To help combat anxiety and increase motivation, a teacher can experiment with a number of learner-centred, humanistic strategies that, according to Richards and Rodgers (2014), promote the "development of human values, growth in self-awareness and the understanding of others, sensitivity



to human feelings and emotions, and active student involvement in learning" (pp. 32–33). Examples include community language learning (CLL), communicative language teaching (CLT), and the "whole language" approach, which, in accordance with self-determination theory, places increased emphasis on student choice and control regarding individual learning contexts.

“While a particular approach may work for one student, the same approach may alienate others, creating tension or an inefficient learning environment.”

a result of a multitude of factors. A study by Huang and Wang (2013) suggests that confident, relaxed learners are far more likely to participate in tasks and to communicate using the target language. It is imperative that an educator offers encouragement and appropriate reinforcement, while also providing a psychologically "safe" environment in which students are able to develop their language skills. After all, it

Accepting the learner as a complete individual, with all the complexities this entails, rather than purely a language student, is a fundamental tenet of whole language teaching. Here, student experience and input are both valued, with emphasis placed on the creation of an active community of language learners. The curriculum may be negotiated between an educator and learners, who are subsequently encouraged to act

autonomously; possible activities include presentations, inquiry-based tasks, self-assessment, and learning journals, with the increased choice of and control over lesson content potentially resulting in a higher level of personal learner investment. It should be noted, however, that this approach may result in stunted progress and participation if implemented incorrectly. Thus, it is a teacher's responsibility to ensure that students are sufficiently motivated to invest fully into the whole learning process and to react accordingly if learners lose focus.

While motivation may be dictated by any number of the individual factors already discussed, an educator should never lose sight of the fact that they can have a considerable impact on students' motivation. Subsequently, teachers may (within reason) share their personal interests with students while, at the same time, demonstrating their own enthusiasm for both the learning content and the academic progress of the learners (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). This display of mutual trust and passion for education not only helps to reinforce the effects of humanistic teaching strategies but also conveys a sense of intrinsic commitment to the educational process that, in turn, enhances learner enjoyment and interest.

One final piece of advice (and perhaps the simplest and most effective) would be for any educator, whether they be newly qualified or very experienced, to observe their peers. Faculties are made up of educators from all walks of life, with each offering diverse approaches to instruction and classroom management. If a colleague is familiar with the learning requirements of individual language learners or is well known for their rapport and ability to instill motivation, then ask to sit in on one of their classes and study their methods. Some techniques are best learned while viewed in functional settings,

and the professional practice of peers is a source of inspiration and knowledge that should be exploited at any opportunity. Additionally, a willingness to engage with the research available on additional language motivation is an excellent basis for professional development, and it is common to find that much of this research has emerged from teachers with similar problems, aims, challenges, and concerns as yourself.

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The Author

Michael Smith is a lecturer of English at the Republic of Korea Naval Academy, where he has taught for the past five years. He holds an MA in applied linguistics and TESOL, and a teaching license from his home country of the UK. He is currently enrolled at University College London, Institute of Education, where he studies technology and education.



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Should You Do a PhD or Not?

By Stewart Gray

These days, I often find myself having a certain discussion with English teachers: should we be getting PhDs? Anxiety over the ever-inflating qualification requirements in our industry has already driven many of us, even those with decades of experience, to return to school and get master's degrees. As time goes on, we seem to be making the leap to the next level of academia in ever greater numbers, and a lot of people who have not made this leap are presently considering it.

With this in mind, I hope to provide some food for thought on the question of whether to pursue a PhD or not. Even though I am doing a PhD myself, I confess I am not sure of the answer, so I have enlisted the help of around thirty teachers in Korea and abroad. These are friends and acquaintances of mine who are doing a PhD or EdD, considering doing one, or are vehemently against the idea, and who have kindly agreed to complete a survey and contribute their two cents. As I discovered, their survey replies tended to cluster around three points: ongoing learning, employment opportunities and security, and personal growth and development.

Lifelong Learning

A lot of people who responded to the survey, particularly those currently doing a PhD, described it as a great chance to continue studying and learning, to dedicate yourself to an area of personal interest, and gain access to a community of dedicated learners who share that interest. Ideally, some suggested, you can use what you learn to develop yourself as a teacher and contribute to the field of English education – one teacher described this as the “real reward” of doing a PhD (this person was sceptical that it would pay off financially). Many saw studying for a PhD as an investment in your own competitiveness and professional credibility.

However, many shared a belief that PhDs are for “researchers,” not teachers. Reasons given for disinterest in doing a PhD included a lack of ideas for research and a desire to get more “hands on” and “real world” experience. One respondent pointed out that, even for those who enjoy research, a PhD may be too inflexible: “I realize I could use it as a venue to study my passions, and potentially propel my career, but I also realize my passions and career will change in the time it will take to finish my PhD. I value my freedom too much [to do one].”

Employment Opportunities

Understandably, the biggest overall theme in people's survey replies by far was improved job opportunities. Particularly, achieving tenure, getting into teacher training, supervising graduate students, and opening their own school were mentioned as things that a PhD could help with. Several people also mentioned a desire to have an internationally transferable qualification – one described a PhD as “a must” for academic work outside of Korea. Another respondent felt that a PhD was a natural qualification to pursue in order to participate at the highest level of academia: “An MA alone does not, I feel, equip you with the research skills needed to get your name in *TESOL Quarterly*.”

However, an almost universal sentiment among survey participants was that as long as you are working as an EFL teacher, a PhD is not worth having – rather, a PhD is something you do to get out of classroom English teaching and into more academic areas of the field. Moreover, many said that it was too expensive to do a PhD, and many were doubtful that it would produce any rewards – while one teacher claimed that their own PhD had helped them professionally, and another noted that their colleagues with PhDs “typically work with seniors or graduate students,” yet another stated that they knew “more than one person who, having earned their PhD, is currently working a job they could have with an MA.”

Personal Concerns

A few teachers described doing a PhD as a means of personal growth and fulfillment. Several of those doing a PhD and those still considering doing it said they wanted to challenge themselves. A few also mentioned, often somewhat hesitantly, that a PhD would bring them “prestige” in the eyes of their peers. Several also declared that the increased job security they might acquire would set them up to pursue their non-academic interests and make their lives more comfortable in general.

However, even if true, all of this may come at a cost in time and stress. One respondent, who had witnessed a relative trying to get a PhD, described the process as “a torture chamber of shifted goalposts, absent mentors, and juggling a job and study.” Another explained their own lack of desire for a PhD in these terms: “I realized that I didn't want to devote a large chunk of my healthy adult years to academia.” Speaking as a PhD student, I found this last comment very jarring, if

totally understandable.

A Look at My Own Experiences

As I write this, I am beginning my second year of PhD study and would like to share something of my own experiences in light of the above comments in the hope that the reader may find the information useful.

For a year now, I have been putting together my research proposal. It has been a year of agony and ecstasy for me. On the one hand, I have been lucky to find knowledgeable and, crucially, available supervisors. I chose my school because I was familiar with their work and reached out to them. With their help, I have built a project design (still awaiting approval, but here's

“...for all a PhD might open professional doors, it might also close others.”

“If your desire for the title of ‘Dr.’ and all that may come with it is strong enough, it might all be worth it.”

hoping) that is more complete than anything I have done before. Reading up in my area of interest and learning about the research process has filled me with confidence as an academic. I feel that I have learned so much this year. Also, I must confess it is not only the challenge that I enjoy, but also the prestige of being on this road – I joke with my friends and family about becoming “Dr. Gray,” but in my heart I do desire that title deeply.

On the other hand, it has been surprisingly hard to force myself to read and write, even though I normally enjoy both. I have spent days staring at my laptop screen, kicking myself for procrastinating, desperately willing myself to write, painfully fearful that what I produce will be substandard. Meanwhile, I am aware that my PhD, which is “summers only” and involves traveling to the UK annually, is the sort that some people argue is especially not worth doing. I have heard it said that “there is no such thing as a part-time PhD,” and the thought that my efforts might prove professionally worthless because I was not a full-time student fills me with anxiety and regret in certain, dark moments.

With respect to investment of time and money, I have found I have enough time to do what I must while working as a teacher: this, I must admit, is a benefit of teaching English at a university with a light class load. Also, I had to work to convince my university in the UK that I still qualified as a home student despite having lived in Korea for years. Had I been classed as an

international student, my tuition fees would have been five or six times higher.

So, Should You Do It?

In truth, I cannot answer this question for you – it is hard enough to answer it for myself. As many of the respondents noted, it depends on your goals. If you want to be “a real academic” (survey quote), work in a university outside of Korea, open your own school, and/or see your name in *TESOL Quarterly*, it may be essential. You will need to invest time in reading and writing, acquire a tremendously deep knowledge of a narrow area of interest, maintain your interest in that area for anywhere from three to seven years on average, and make a financial investment that may pay off handsomely, or may not. If your desire for the title of “Dr.” and all that may come with it is strong enough, it might all be worth it.

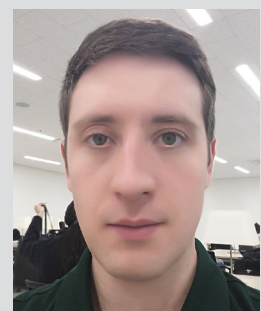
However, if you are happy to be a classroom English teacher, if you are a person of various and changeable interests, and if you are looking for hands-on experience and the cleanest, clearest road to professional advancement and job security, a PhD

may not be the way for you. A glance at Dave’s ESL Café reminds us that quite a few employers advertise for MA, CELTA, and teaching certification holders, but few mention PhDs. And for all a PhD might open professional doors, it might also close others. In my own case, I feel blessed these days to have the chance to work as an English conversation teacher, but I am slightly concerned – once I have a doctorate (presuming I graduate), I may well find it harder to be satisfied with the sort of jobs, BA/MA jobs if you will, that now bring me joy.

Ultimately, I believe the decision about whether or not to do a PhD should be made with a hard look at our goals and passions. We must ask ourselves what is most important to us, how do we wish to use our time, and what is the most healthy, most realistic way we can invest in ourselves to ensure our lives are happy and fulfilled.

The Author

Stewart Gray has been working in Korea since 2011. He is currently an English teacher at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Yongin, a PhD student at the University of Leeds, and the organizer of the Seoul KOTESOL Reflective Practice Group. Email: EC_391@hotmail.com



Teaching Korean History Through Content-Based Instruction

By Aaron Shayne

Although content-based instruction (CBI) is a relatively new fixture in Korean university classrooms, CBI methods are an incredibly effective tool that has been used in many classes all over the world. This semester, I have been given the opportunity to teach a Korean history course for exchange students. The course explores historical issues and controversies surrounding Korea's educational and economical development such as foreign aid, neo-mercantilism, the "Big Push," the New Village Movement, Confucianism, foreign influences on Korean education, and Korea's history of student protests. These are fascinating issues, but there are a number of challenges in teaching them. Foremost among these challenges are student comprehension of complicated topics and difficult primary source texts. This article will discuss how technology, primary source documents, and other miscellaneous ideas have helped in shaping the class, and at the same time, provide advice that can help other educators take on the challenge of CBI in Korea.

Content-based instruction is a method of teaching second languages that focuses on learning academic content rather than the language itself. In other words, the language serves as a medium rather than the

centered manner. On the first day of class, have students sign up for a virtual classroom website. There are a variety of free websites for teachers to use like Edmodo, Moodle, or Google Sites. Each week, students can talk about what they have learned and respond to their classmates' opinions in their virtual classroom. This virtual forum is a valuable tool to gauge what students have learned but also to keep students thinking about complex issues outside of the classroom. Edmodo, in particular, offers teachers the ability to post presentations, texts, and video and audio files. This application allows students access to resources outside of the classroom.

Regarding these video and audio files, it is helpful to use short videos (3–7 minutes) and play them multiple times. Give students background information about the clip before viewing and questions as an accompaniment. These questions allow students to display their knowledge and are a method by which to check student understanding. After each clip, have students review their answers and discuss the video or audio file in small groups. Technology is a valuable classroom aid, and if used carefully and thoughtfully, the teacher can promote the communication principle effectively.

Additionally, one of the biggest challenges of using CBI is using primary sources to enhance student learning. Primary source documents are valuable tools, but they often employ complex or antiquated language that can be discouraging to students. For example, a discussion about foreign aid and economic development was supplemented with excerpts from government documents and opinion editorials. These excerpts can be simplified

by pre-teaching vocabulary, including discussion questions, and providing quick vocabulary exercises to students to enhance their understanding of the text. To ensure that students understand the material, ask them to summarize the excerpts in pairs or small groups.

Most importantly, the teachers should ensure that students understand why primary source documents are relevant to current events. For example, after analyzing documents regarding the history of foreign aid in North and South Korea, students were asked to

“Graphic organizers are a good way for students to gather their thoughts before discussing a difficult topic.”

focus of the classroom. According to Richardson and Rogers (2001), there are three general principles that guide CBI instruction. The first is the communication principle, which states that student communication improves a student's language skills. The second principle, the task principle, states that the target language should be used to complete meaningful tasks. Finally, the meaningfulness principle states that the language used by the student should be meaningful to the particular students involved.

First, try using technology in a thoughtful and student-

submit their own detailed plans regarding foreign aid in their home country. These methods can transform complicated texts into valuable and relevant learning tools based on the task principle.

There are other activities that can shape a class for the better, especially in regards to the meaningfulness principle. One activity focuses on improving class discussion. First, students are given notes with

excellent way to promote the meaningfulness principle.

CBI is becoming more common in Korean universities, and educators with diverse interests should welcome this new trend. However, complex topics do not necessarily require complicated classroom solutions. Allow your students extra time and space to formulate their views, both in class and in the virtual classroom. Give your students the tools to understand complicated

“A virtual forum is a valuable tool to gauge what students have learned but also to keep students thinking about complex issues outside of the classroom.”

questions so they can follow the class discussion with ease. Each slide of information is paired with questions for students to follow the discussion and also give their opinions. Students should write quick notes rather than full sentences as grammar is a secondary concern. Students are also asked to pose their own questions in small groups. This question-and-answer method (both verbal and written) is an effective method that allows students to keep up with and easily comprehend large amounts of information.

Along with organizing notes through questions, students find it helpful to use graphic organizers. Before a discussion about free trade and mercantilism, students are asked to write a freeform mind map that includes all the words and phrases they associate with those terms. After a discussion, students often create a T-chart to compare opposing views on a given issue. Graphic organizers are a good way for students to gather their thoughts before discussing a difficult topic. The mind maps also serve as a resource for students after the discussion when they want to review what they have learned. Finally, allowing students to pose their own questions and use graphic organizers is an

texts through question-led learning, extra vocabulary instruction, activities, and graphic organizers. Finally, enjoy these fascinating topics and the interesting perspectives your students bring to the classroom.

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The Author

Aaron Shayne is a professor at Silla University in Busan. He has his MEd with a focus on ESOL from Fort Hays State University (USA). He has been living and working in Korea for six years, and he also writes for the TEFLTips blog. Email: aaronshayne@gmail.com



An Interactive Method of Noticing Grammatical Errors for Intermediate and Advanced Students

By Andrew Garth

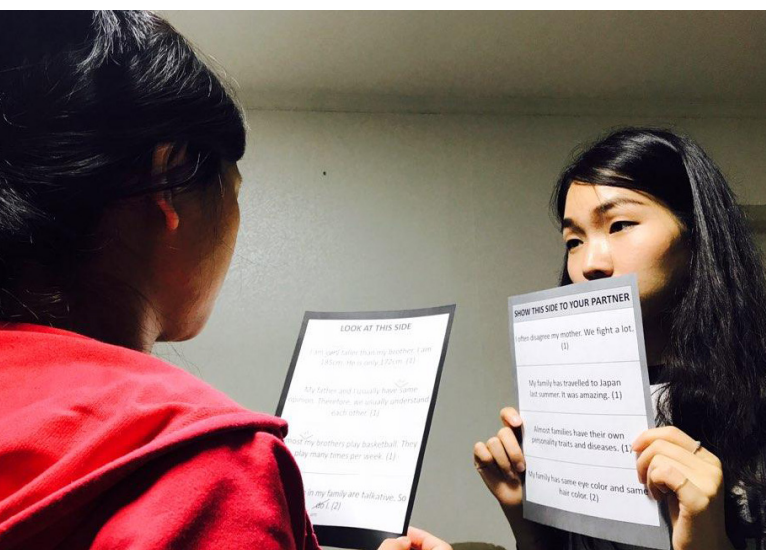
Intermediate and advanced EFL students, by definition, have a strong command of English grammar. Their knowledge, implicit or explicit, of English syntax enables them to create well-structured sentences and utterances that are complex and easily comprehensible. When grammatical inaccuracies do occur, they are often grammatical mistakes, not grammatical errors; that is, the students knew the grammar before making the inaccuracy, rather than not knowing the rules. While re-teaching grammar that students have made mistakes with can be valuable, students may not “learn” anything; after all, they already knew it. They simply

been almost entirely mastered by the students is not optimally beneficial. The students need specific corrective feedback to target their specific grammatical deficiencies. The following is the method I employed this semester to help my students notice these errors.

First, I compiled grammatical errors by having the students complete a pre-class homework assignment. This assignment consisted of 5–8 short answer opinion and personal questions related to the topic of the upcoming lesson and was submitted via Google Forms, which is a convenient way to collect and organize the answers. Students were informed that any on-time submission including 2+ sentences per question earned full marks; grammar was of no importance. (As a byproduct, the pre-class element helped to raise the students’ schema and prepare them for the theme of the upcoming lesson.) The construction of this means of submission required five minutes on average; I simply had to write out the short answer questions into a Google Form sheet and distribute a link to the Google Form site to my students.

Next, I combed through the students homework looking for 8–12 responses from different students that included grammatical errors (not simple mistakes) that I deemed beneficial to examine. I then corrected the grammatical structures that I didn’t want to target, shortened and simplified them, and altered any distinct information that might identify the author of any response (e.g., I was born on Jeju >> I was born in Seoul). At the end of the sentence, I provided a number in parentheses that indicated how many errors were in the sentence. This left me with 8–12 responses, which I then separated into two groups. For each group, I created a double-sided handout with the incorrect responses on one side and the corrections on the other side. I printed enough copies for each student in the class to have one of the papers, with relatively even amounts of each paper (i.e., a class of 19 students would require 9 of one handout and 10 of the other).

In order to reinforce the correction of the grammatical error, I would often include a few grammatical errors of the same nature within one activity and often recycle previously reviewed errors when they appeared in the students’ responses. This step was time-intensive. It often required 60–90 minutes to locate the errors, construct the handout, and print enough for my classes. (See Figure 1 for an example of the two different handouts.)



▲ *Two students completing the pair activity.*

made a mistake while producing output in their second language – a very natural phenomenon. Instead, targeting errors that are often of a nuanced nature and typically, considering the student’s L1, may be more beneficial for more advanced learners. For example, Korean EFL learners may say “Almost Koreans make same mistakes” instead of “Almost all Koreans make the same mistakes.” Korean speakers do not add “all” or “the” because of the differences between English and Korean regarding the use of articles (“a/the”) and of “almost.”

Unfortunately, EFL textbooks do a poor job at addressing this. First, EFL textbooks often include much structure-based (syntactical) grammatical content that the students already have a firm grasp of. This is probably because EFL textbooks are mass produced for audiences around the world and do not take into account the likely grammatical deficiencies of any specific country. Regardless, teaching grammatical content that has

In class, I grouped the students into pairs, asked them to face each other, and gave each pair the two different papers. One student (A) was instructed to hold the paper up, show their partner (B) the uncorrected side, and ask them to correct the responses. Since the side of the paper with the proper corrections was facing student A, that student was able to immediately confirm or ask their partner to “try again.” After student A quizzed student B, their roles were reversed. While the students were completing this activity, I circled the room and provided explanations for individuals or partners that did not understand why the correction needed to take place. This student–student activity typically lasted approximately 10–15 minutes.

SHOW THIS SIDE TO YOUR PARTNER	LOOK AT THIS SIDE
I am very taller than my brother. I am 185cm. He is only 172cm. (1)	I am ^{much} very taller than my brother. I am 185cm. He is only 172cm. (1)
My father and I usually have same opinion. Therefore, we usually understand each other. (1)	My father and I usually have ^{the} same opinion. Therefore, we usually understand each other. (1)
Almost my brothers play basketball. They play many times per week. (1)	Almost ^{all} my brothers play basketball. They play many times per week. (1)
Most person in my family are talkative. So do I. (2)	Most ^{people} person in my family are talkative. So do I. (2)
SHOW THIS SIDE TO YOUR PARTNER	LOOK AT THIS SIDE
I often disagree my mother. We fight a lot. (1)	I often disagree ^{with} my mother. We fight a lot. (1)
My family has travelled to Japan last summer. It was amazing. (1)	My family has travelled to Japan last summer . It was amazing. (1)
Almost families have their own personality traits and diseases. (1)	Almost ^{of} families have their own personality traits and diseases. (1)
My family has same eye color and same hair color. (2)	My family has ^{the} same eye color and ^{the} same hair color. (2)

▲ Figure 1. Example of the two different handouts. Clockwise from top: Handout 1, Side A; Handout 1, Side B; Handout 2, Side A;

Finally, after completing the pair activity, the students became familiar with the corrections that needed to be made, but they might not have known why. Therefore, in front of the class, I went through each response and explained why the grammatical correction was necessary and gave additional related examples that demonstrated the grammatical point. This final explanation typically lasted only five minutes.

In conclusion, students enjoy the activity because it is fun and also educational. The majority of the students actively engage in the activity. Laughs and smiles often accompany the activity. On a purely fun level, the students seem to like this student–student interactive feedback method more than engaging in an individual book activity or handout exercise. On an educational

level, several students expressed satisfaction since they corrected a grammatical error they had unknowingly been making for years.

Satisfaction aside, student surveys and a tally of their grammatical errors during their end-of-semester speaking test suggest significant pedagogical benefits. When the students were surveyed at the end of the semester about the activity, 45% strongly agreed that the grammar correction activities we did in class improved their English grammar. Another 45% agreed, 8% were neutral, and 1% disagreed with the notion. Furthermore, the errors that were corrected using this method appeared again less often, and the students often self-corrected these now-mistakes when performing a speaking test at the end of the semester.

This corrective feedback method has been beneficial to the students. Rather than inefficiently spending time reviewing grammatical points that most of the class already knows, we can focus on the grammar content that the students have demonstrated weaknesses in, thus helping to polish their existing English level. In previous semesters, I compiled grammatical inaccuracies to go over each class by patrolling the class during speaking activities and overhearing the students’ spoken output. Compared to this method, the method explained above is more beneficial in that the volume of student output I can examine for student inaccuracies is far greater; this overcomes the limitation of only being able to hear one conversation at a time in the previous method.

In addition, by allowing students to produce written output rather than spoken output, the ratio of “errors” to “mistakes” greatly increased. When students are speaking, they often make grammatical mistakes because they have to produce immediate output. With written output, the students are able to thoughtfully and more carefully produce English output, which reduces the number of grammatical mistakes they already knew, but mistakenly made, and allowed me to provide corrective feedback on the grammatical errors that they were not aware of.

The Author

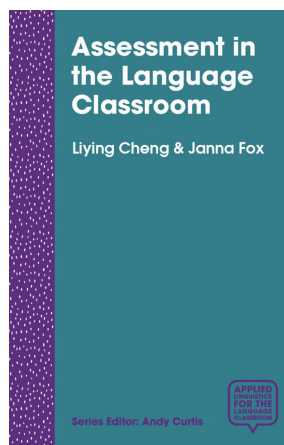
Andrew Garth is an assistant professor in the English Department at Dankook University, Cheonan Campus. His research interests focus on best teaching practices for native-speaking teachers and L1 use in EFL classes. He holds an MEd with a concentration in TESL. Email: andy.garth@gmail.com



Applied Linguistics for the Language Classroom: An Overview

By Dr. Andy Curtis

One of the questions that has troubled me for some years now is “OK, it is applied linguistics (AL), but applied to what exactly?” Some of my colleagues have claimed that it is linguistics applied to the language classroom. But when I meet and hear from classroom language teachers all over the world – such as those at the recent KOTESOL 2017 International Conference in Seoul – few of them have the time or the money to spend on books on AL. In fact, although some AL authors (and their publishers) claim that their AL books are *for* language teachers, I believe that such books are *from* language classrooms, which are used as little more than sources of data. In my experience, as a student, a teacher, and a professor, many AL books are written *about* language teachers and language learners, but not written *for* them, or *with them* in mind.



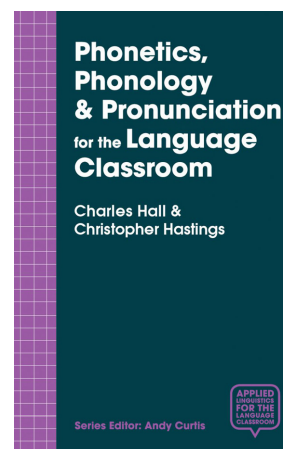
To address this disconnect, at the AILA 2011 conference (Association Internationale de Linguistique Appliquée, or International Association of Applied Linguistics) in Beijing, I pitched the idea of a book series that would help bridge the on-going gap between what applied linguists in universities research and write about and the day-to-day classroom realities of language learners and teachers.

Five long years later, the first five books in the *Applied Linguistics for the Language Classroom* (ALLC) series, for which I am the series editor, were completed in the fall of 2016 and published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2017. A distinguishing feature of the series is its focus on busy, classroom language teachers and/or MA students as its primary readership. As

a result, all of the ALLC books are compact, clear, and concise (so they can be read in transit), with practical activities, a glossary of key terms, and suggested

readings at the end of each chapter.

In the first half of *Assessment for the Language Classroom*, Liying Cheng (Queen’s University, Canada) and Janna Fox (Queen’s University, Canada) ask and answer a series of fundamental questions, including “Why Do We Assess?”, “What Do We Assess?”, and “How Do We Assess?” (Chapters 1, 2, and 3, respectively, pp. 1–101). In the second half of the book, Cheng and Fox go deeper, beyond the basics, applying theory to practice, by asking “How Do We Develop a High-Quality Classroom Test?” (Chapter 4); “Who Are We Assessing?” in relation to placement, needs analysis, and diagnostics (Chapter 5); as well as to feedback and motivation (Chapter 6). The last chapter addresses the question “When We Assess, How Can We Use Assessment to Move Forward?” (Chapter 7, pp. 188–214). The book also includes an appendix summarizing the details of more than 20 commonly used assessment tools and test formats.



In *Phonetics, Phonology & Pronunciation for the Language Classroom*, Charles Hall (Alfaisal University, Saudi Arabia) and Christopher Hastings (a US State Department English Language Fellow at the time of writing) cover six main areas, starting with “Phonetics” (Chapter 2, pp. 16–73). At nearly 60 pages, Chapter 2 is the longest chapter in the book, as it introduces dozens of fundamental concepts, including “hyperliteracy” (pp. 16–17), which is a new term coined by Hall and Hastings to refer to “the perception by educated speakers that the written form is norm-giving, rather than the original spoken form” (2017, p. 190). The remaining chapters cover “Phonology” (Chapter 3); “Research and Pronunciation” (Chapter 4), which brings readers up to date with recent discoveries in that area; and “Syllables and Suprasegmentals” (Chapter 5). “Language Varieties and English as a Lingua Franca” (Chapter 6) addresses some important issues regarding native/non-native speakers/teachers of English, and the final chapter summarizes important recent developments in terms of technology and pronunciation teaching.

Netta Avineri's (Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, CA, USA) *Research Methods for Language Teaching* is divided into four sections: "Inquiry," "Data Collection," "Data Analysis," and "Bringing It All Together." Avineri starts by introducing the acronym ACE and stating that "research by and for language teachers can be applicable, collaborative, and empowering: ACE" (2017, p. 1). The four chapters in Section 1 ("Inquiry") discuss "How to ACE the Research Process," "The Noun and Verb of the Literature Review," "Research Questions and Research Design," and "Research Ethics,"



in terms of reasons, roles, responsibilities, and relationships. Section II ("Data Collection") looks at how to make the best use of questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, case studies, ethnography, and other forms of data collection, followed by a discussion of analyses of qualitative and quantitative data (Chapters 10 and 11, respectively). The final chapter promotes the benefits of classroom

language teachers carrying out research as communities of practice.

As the Academic Director of the Euroidiomas language school, based in Lima, Peru, Leonardo Mercado is a keen technophile when it comes to language learning. But he also has many years of experience working with teachers who are new to such technology and who may feel more anxious than the students who have grown up with technology all of their lives. In *Technology for the Language Classroom*, subtitled *Creating a 21st Century Learning Experience*, Mercado introduces a number of innovative but accessible frameworks, including "Classroom and Autonomous Learning Integration," "Quality Language Learning Dynamics," and "Curricular Vetting," Chapters 5 and 6 cover "Technology for Speaking and Listening" and "Technology for Reading and Writing," respectively. The last two chapters focus on technology used for assessing, evaluating, and proficiency testing of language learners (Chapter 8), and technology for on-going language teacher professional development (Chapter 9).

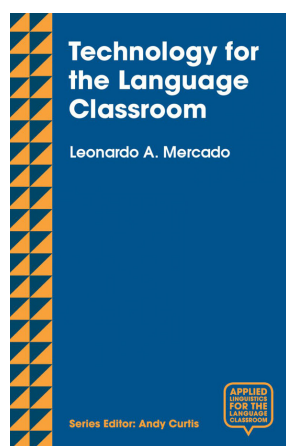
The fifth book in the series is *Methods and Methodologies for Language Teaching*, subtitled *The*

Centrality of Context (Curtis, 2017). Chapter 1, "Five Thousand Years in Five Thousand Words" (pp. 1-19) gives a very concise summary of some 50 centuries of recorded language teaching and learning. One of the features that distinguishes this book from other methods books is the argument that context is critical (Chapter 2), and that no method should be considered without reference to the context in which it was developed and in which it is currently being used. There are also chapters on task-based and communicative language teaching (Chapters 3 and 4, respectively), on content-based instruction and content-language integrated learning (Chapter 5), on the direct method and the audio-lingual method (Chapter 6), grammar translation (Chapter 7), and on humanistic and alternative methods (Chapter 8). The last chapter addresses the question "Where do we go from here?" (Chapter 9) regarding methods and methodologies.

Two of the best-known and longest-standing names in our field, Kathi Bailey (Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, CA, USA) and David Nunan (University of Hong Kong, China), were our two International Advisory Board members, helping us balance the theory and the practice, with a focus on the latter. It is also worth noting that the seven ALLC authors, who are fluent in a total of ten languages, have over 100 years of combined classroom experience as language teachers and language learners, to which a total of more than 50 years as researchers, writers, and scholars can also be added, making this an unusually diverse and rich series.

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The Author

Andy Curtis received his MA in applied linguistics and his PhD in international education from the University of York, England. He is working with the Graduate School of Education at Anaheim University, which is based in California, USA. From 2015 to 2016, Andy served as the 50th President of the TESOL International Association. Email: andycurtiswork@gmail.com



Book Review: Classroom Community Builders: Activities for the First Day and Beyond

Author: Walton Burns

Reviewed by Christopher Miller

Harried English teachers are frequently in search of quick go-to activities to help structure their classes and provide learners with opportunities to practice the target language. In an attempt to satisfy this demand, Walton Burns has, via his self-publishing platform Alphabet Books, written *Classroom Community Builders*. While not perfect, it does offer value for the interested reader.

With a total of 67 activities, the book is divided into four primary sections: (a) Set Your Expectations, (b) Working Together, (c) Getting-to-Know-You Activities, and (d) Get to Know Your Teacher. While most of these activities are available in many other locations – for instance, some activities such as Mystery Gap can be found in Hadfield (2000) – this book provides a good resource that can primarily benefit younger, less experienced teachers.



▲ **Christopher Miller**

Hunt allow learners to actively preview and, in some small way, prepare themselves for the material they will need to encounter and hopefully learn in a given course. Activities like Classroom Rules Negotiation, and Study Habits True or False allow students to participate in the creation of classroom expectations.

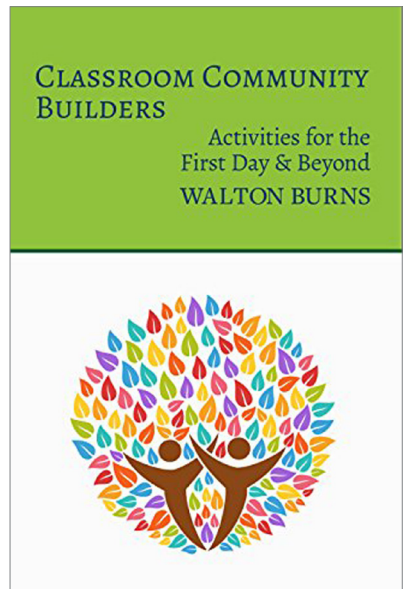
The second section, “Working Together,” contains many strong activities, yet seems an odd fit for this context. With a total of 33 activities, many language teachers, myself included with a decade of ELT experience, are likely to discover at least a few activities that would prove useful in the classroom. Many are familiar activities, such as Jigsaw Reading and an activity that is over 30 years old, Difficult Situation – also called Agony Aunt or Dear Abby (see Ur, 1981). Many of these activities seem to be discussion and fluency development activities, and while the argument can easily be made that “interaction builds community,” they seem out of place for a book

specifically purporting to focus on community-building.

The next section, “Getting-to-Know-You Activities,” is much more on focus and most, perhaps all, of the activities included here could work well at the start of a course.

Activities range from remembering games, such as going on a picnic, surveys (class survey/class averages/group profile), and activities that allow for some degree of kinesthetic movement like snowball fighting and snowball “texting.” I especially like Fun Fact Memory Chain, which promotes learning names and little pieces of information about fellow classmates.

The book concludes with “Get to Know Your Teacher.” This section has a variety of activities including ones with a focus on reading/writing, such as First Day Letter and others that are primarily listening/speaking activities and build curiosity about student and teacher



“Indispensable – no; however, it still has much value, especially for younger teachers.”

alike, for example, Correct the Teacher and Answers on the Board.

There were a few issues with this book. There are many rookie-level activities that are bound to fall flat in most Korean EFL contexts, such as Plane Crash Survival. The range of activities is exceedingly broad as well. The author includes activities that would be appropriate for young learners (Fill In the Picture), for more advanced and mature learners (Culture Shock

and Role Play), and for ESL learners (In My Own Words). It's unclear who the target audience is for this book other than English teachers. Additionally, a few activities, such as Debate, would require a high degree of scaffolding and advanced planning to work well, even for advanced learners. For instance, in Debate, Burns suggests 20–60 minutes for the activity from start to finish. Perhaps that is sufficient as a fluency development activity; however, through more detailed

planning and by working with students over several lessons, learner output – both in quality and quantity – could be greatly increased. Burns does not provide any such guidance.

With a few modifications, this book could be improved greatly. First, the author needs

to hire a professional editor or at least a proofreader. There are literally dozens of spelling errors and word omissions. Most do not impede comprehension, though on occasion they do. For example, Burns writes “But some students don’t feel interacting in a vacuum.” Second, certain activities, such as Debate, mentioned previously, require more elaboration by the author with regards to key considerations such as appropriate time and lesson sequencing. Finally, this book would have been more focused if the “Working Together” section

“Activities range from remembering games, such as going on a picnic, surveys, and activities that allow for some degree of kinesthetic movement like snowball fighting and snowball “texting.”

had been eliminated. Much of it is highly redundant – having already appeared in other well-known volumes – and has limited connection to the theme of the book. However, doing so would have reduced the size of the book by approximately 50 percent.

The author includes a quote from Scott Thornbury on the back cover endorsing this book: “An indispensable book...for teachers teaching in an ESL or an EFL context.” Indispensable – no; however, it still has much value, especially for younger teachers. Considering the book’s price of US\$1.99 as an e-book, the book can be said to deliver on its value and (depending on your level of expertise) beyond. This is ultimately a book in search of a clear identity, but nevertheless one that can help most teachers find at least a few new ways to both build community and assist learners in acquiring the English language.

Available as an e-book download for \$1.99 from www.alphabetpublishingbooks.com

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On the BALL: Brain-Assisted Language Learning for the ELT Classroom Part 4: Movement

By Dr. Curtis Kelly

The topics in this series include the neuroscience of learning, movement, language processing, sleep, and similar concepts. This TEC entry on learning is based on a chapter Curtis Kelly wrote for a recent book:

Gregersen, T., & MacIntyre, P. D. (Eds.). (2017). *Innovative practices in language teacher education: Spanning the spectrum from intra- to inter-personal teacher development*. New York, NY: Springer Nature.

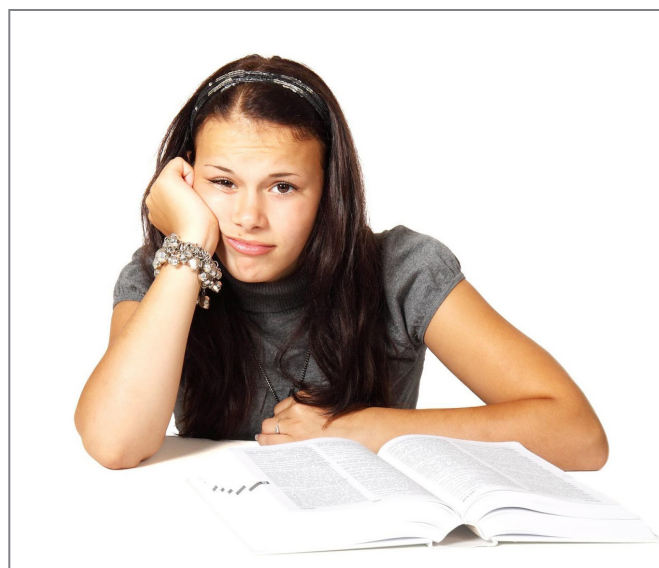
Most findings in neuroscience typically just bolster theories from other fields. There are two exceptions. One is sleep. Yes, we knew students need sleep, but until neuroscience told us how absolutely important it is for learning, we put it in the same category as brushing your teeth or eating salad. We thought not getting enough sleep was just a matter of just toughing it out.

The other exception is exercise, another activity we tend to associate with general health rather than brain function. Again, neuroscience is telling us it is critical for the latter, mainly because of blood flow.

As Read Montague puts it, our brains evolved on legs, and this makes all the difference (2006). Our ancestors walked from 10–20 kilometers a day, so our brains evolved with far more blood flow than we get in our modern sedentary lifestyle (Medina, 2008). The human brain burns up blood-supplied glucose at ten times the rate that other body parts do, and glutamate is the most common neurotransmitter. As the messenger rather than just modulator, glutamate gets released every time a synapse fires and eventually builds up to a toxic level, causing neural erosion. As long as our blood keeps pumping through (and we get sleep), these neuron busters get carried away in the oxygen, but if not, they accumulate (Ratey, 2008). Cognitive

happens in most schools, but for even longer periods.

In addition to clearing out toxins, exercise does other things as well. It causes the release of mood-shaping



neurotransmitters like dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin (Ratey, 2008). Even just a little exercise gives learners better focus, higher motivation, more confidence, and less impulsiveness; in other words, ideal classroom behavior. The release of neurotrophins, like brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), occurs too, at two or three times the normal level. Harvard’s John Ratey calls BDNF “Miracle Gro” (a lawn fertilizer) for neurons.

Unfortunately, many of us still cling to the notion that more regular class time is what learners need to pass tests and that physical education classes are an “extra.” And yet, a study with 5,000 children over a three-year period found that 30 minutes of exercise, twice a day, led to greater achievement across the board, especially with girls. The largest increase was – now get ready for this – in math, an area of study that requires intense executive processing (Medina, 2008, pp. 24–25).

“It is just as likely that some of the things we are learning now might become neuromyths in a few years”

function deteriorates and we age prematurely. Think about how you feel after a long meeting. Your mind feels dull, you have a hard time talking, and your normally sharp cognitive skills turn muddied. This is what happens when your brain is active for a couple hours but your body is not. Unfortunately, that is what

It is important for us to make teachers aware that to optimize brain function, they need to get their students out of their seats every half hour or so. That does not mean you have to conduct physical exercises in class, but a few simple changes can make a huge difference. For example, (a) have students come to the front to get the quizzes and handouts, instead of passing them out, (b) when handing papers in, have them bring them to you instead of passing them forward, (c) instead of just raising hands to answer questions, have students all stand up, and those who do not know the answer sit down, and (d) have them do pair work standing up. A little moving benefits student energy, mood, and cognitive ability. It improves learning. In fact, our motor areas are involved in all kinds of processing so any movement might aid learning. For example, numerous studies have found that chewing sugarless gum increases retention, the best known being Scholey's 2002 study that showed it increased word retention up to 35 percent (Laskaris, 2006). The

attend three or four conferences a year, and I noticed that after just a couple presentations, I feel mentally sluggish and dull. By the end of the day, my head feels like jello. Then I listened to Ratey on the Brain Science Podcast and found out why: all that sitting and listening was causing the build-up of neurotoxins.

So I conducted an experiment. At the very first FAB NeuroELT conference we held, I asked for volunteers to go up and down five flights of stairs with me during the breaks between presentations. Only a couple did, but at the end of the day, we compared notes and found we all felt much fresher than usual. Over the next couple years, we institutionalized that kind of conference exercise routine as "energy breaks." It is hard to get people to do the stairs, but we have found other ways to get them out of their seats and moving between presentations, whether that means playing a game or just coming down to the front to get free snacks.

In fact, in the JALT BRAIN SIG, which I am coordinator of, we have even established an official officer position, "Body Police," to make sure all our events have movement and the audience knows why.

My next goal related to movement, one I hope to have accomplished by the time this article hits the press, is to write a newspaper article for entrance exam-takers that tells them how they can increase their test scores by 10 percent, which is to do the stairs between serial tests instead of just sitting.



exact reason why, though, is still not clear. So why don't you put this magazine down and go out for a walk?

Learning about movement and cognitive function was a surprise, but such a valuable one. It not only explained why I felt so mentally dead after teachers' meetings, but it helped me understand what was happening to students.

This finding has also had a large effect on my way of teaching. I intentionally try to add movement to my classes, something I rarely thought about before. Even in my 70-student classes, I set up long lines of dyadic pairs, who change partners with each exchange. It helps.

However, the biggest personal impact of what I learned about movement is related to conferencing. I

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The Author

Curtis Hart Kelly (EdD) is a professor at Kansai University in Japan. He co-founded the FAB (NeuroELT) conferences and the JALT Mind, Brain, and Education SIG. He has published over 30 books including the Writing from Within series (Cambridge). His life mission is "to relieve the suffering of the classroom." Email: ctskelly@gmail.com



Classroom-Oriented Research: Why Teachers Matter

by Thomas S.C. Farrell

Introduction

Recently I was invited to give a plenary at a conference in Poland that was titled “Classroom-Oriented Research” and most, if not all, of the other invited presenters from overseas institutions were from the second language acquisition (SLA) field. Why I mention this is that not one paper considered teachers in these classrooms where the so-called research took place. In this article, I want to highlight why teachers should be included in any classroom-oriented research because they will be the ones that truly matter when it comes to putting or not putting the results of any research into practice.

Classroom-Oriented Research

Diane Larsen-Freeman pointed out at an earlier conference in Poland some years before on this very theme that classroom-oriented research is important, especially when it is explicitly directed towards understanding effective learning *and teaching*. I put the latter two words in italics on purpose because, although she includes teaching, many scholars who

“Teachers are not mechanical robots who should implement research results because some isolated study in a completely different context suggests that a particular method will work.”

conduct research in classrooms do not. The conference I was at in Poland on classroom-oriented research suggested that such a conference can provide a forum for disseminating latest research findings in this area, which is critical for foreign and second language pedagogy and, as such, will be relevant to language teachers wishing to enhance their instructional practices.

However, a closer look at most of the papers that were presented revealed that the main focus of the

“classroom” research was on the learner; the teacher was not highlighted in any manner, with the idea being that research on the learner is more important than that on the teacher who conducts the lesson. When the teacher is included (rarely) in any discussion of SLA research, the emphasis is on his or her technical competency in putting into practice whatever results this research unearths (although from my knowledge, SLA research continues to unearth inconclusive research results!).

Teachers Matter

So I would argue that it is time that such research (SLA, classroom-oriented research) considered the teacher as well – teachers matter to learners of English as an additional language while they are learning in the classroom. Some SLA classroom-oriented research has begun to notice that teachers do exist (this is sometimes called *instructed SLA research*); however, the teacher is still considered in terms of technical competencies in the target areas of instruction (i.e., how he or she can implement SLA research results), classroom management (i.e., the control of learners), assessment (i.e., how he or she can assess if the target learning has taken place), and other professional responsibilities imposed by others.

In the above scenario, I believe that although instructed SLA research does include teachers, it does so reluctantly because the teachers are needed in a practical sense, but the researchers want the teachers to mechanically implement the results of *their* research without any consultation with the teacher. Many researchers seem to think that learners would learn more efficiently if only the teacher would implement this in the way research suggests! Or teachers do not really matter because SLA research will simply *tell* them what to do.

It is apparent that a great deal of SLA research (including instructed SLA) ignores teachers as individuals and teaching as a complex act that requires the teacher to be a reflective practitioner who is striving to provide learning opportunities for his or her students based on their needs and not the needs of the academic or researcher. The above approach views teachers as being incapable of being responsive, creative, and integrated practitioners who are responsible for their students’ learning. Many in SLA

research would take away this responsibility and let the research results direct the focus of the lesson (e.g., the usual SLA call for “focus on form”).

Implementing this SLA research approach in TESOL teaching has been the driving force of our profession for far too long and to ignore the teacher as a person will continue to lead to teacher burnout and attrition because teachers are considered cogs in a research machine. This SLA approach will continue to result in teachers being provided with more methods (derived from SLA research) and more strategies (that result in more rubrics and checklists) that continue to tell the teacher that he or she does not really matter, a mindset that publishers have also contributed to over the years with the addition of teacher manuals so that they can follow the dots!

From my most recent travels this year in places such as the Middle East, Asia, North America, and Europe, I believe that TESOL teachers are more sophisticated and aware of trends in the field as well as the results of SLA research (mostly inconclusive), and they are not buying it anymore, regardless of what they are being presented in teacher education programs by scholars who have no real clue about what actually happens in an EFL/ESL classroom. In fact, a few years ago, I was invited to Korea TESOL, and one of the other plenary speakers said in his opening that he had no experience as a language teacher, and he wondered why he has had such a long career as a professor training teachers! Well, yes, I agree and wonder why we as a profession still allow this.

A Way Forward

I believe that teachers do matter, and the success or failure of a lesson will rest with how the teacher approaches that lesson as a human being. Teachers are not mechanical robots who should implement research results because some isolated study in a completely different context suggests that a particular method will work. I believe that the teacher is the method! Teachers can ask questions and think creatively, reflectively, and imaginatively about teaching and learning as they visualize their classrooms. Teachers cannot, and should not, shut off their emotions, feelings, or senses as they attempt to implement some other person’s method; rather they should pay attention to their inner lives, as well as the lives of their students. This approach points towards the development of an integrated teacher who is self-aware, aware of his or her students’ needs, and aware of the learning context, and who interprets his or her professional practice to be of an emotional rather than a mechanical nature.

Conclusion

Classroom-oriented research does have a place in our profession, but it should be put in its place and not

be allowed to dominate as it has for the past 20 years or more. We can listen to and read the results of SLA research (and I believe that many teachers do), but we should refuse to be blown off our feet by any of their results because there is more to teaching than implementing the results of others’ research, especially if we believe that the teacher is the method. Teachers do matter, and classroom-oriented research should

“The main focus of the ‘classroom’ research was on the learner; the teacher was not highlighted in any manner, with the idea being that research on the learner is more important than that on the teacher who conducts the lesson.”

not forget that teaching is multidimensional (not just cause and effect or input to output) in that it has moral, ethical, spiritual, and aesthetic dimensions that are important and complex. Remember, the first letter of the acronym of TESOL is “teaching” and “teachers.” Such an acknowledgement requires teachers to be reflective practitioners who are integrated and responsive to their students’ needs (Farrell, 2015).

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The Author

Thomas S.C. Farrell is Professor of Applied Linguistics at Brock University, Canada. Professor Farrell’s professional interests include reflective practice and language teacher education. Professor Farrell has published widely and has presented at major conferences worldwide on these topics. A selection of his work can be found on his webpage: www.reflectiveinquiry.ca





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