The English Connection

A Korea TESOL Publication

Focus on Reflection:
Thomas Farrell: Online Reflective Practice
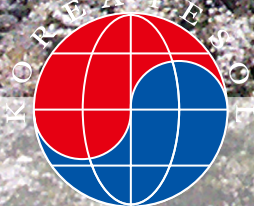Reflective Spaces — by Daniel Xerri
Micro-evaluating Your Classroom — by Christopher Judd
Reflecting on Investment and Capital — by Jocelyn Wright

Regular Columns:
Curtis Kelly's On the BALL: Embodied Simulation
KOTESOL People: *Julie Hye Seung Ha*

KOTESOL
대한영어교육학회

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The English Connection Editorial Team

Contents

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

Editorial

By Gil Coombe Editor-in-Chief

Welcome to the new year and, for many of you, a new semester. This means for many new classes, new challenges, and new inspirations. It can be a daunting time, but also an exciting one, and I wish you all the best for the semester. Don't forget that your fellow KOTESOL members make a great sounding board for any issues that may arise in the classroom, so keep an eye out for when the next workshops and conferences are scheduled and make the trek – you won't regret it. A list of important dates for this year can be found on page 12 if you want more information.

On a personal note, this will be my last issue as editor-in-chief of *TEC*. Life rolls on and new priorities emerge, so I've decided it's time to move on to new things. It has been a short stint – only seven issues – but I have learned a lot about the publication process and been privileged to have a number of excellent articles cross my (electronic) desk. I would like to thank the team of copy editors and proofreaders who have helped to shape *TEC* into what it is today and of course all the authors who have used some of their precious time to sit down and share their knowledge with the community. It's been a blast.

This spring issue showcases a variety of perspectives from within the EFL community, with a particular focus on reflection. First up is Daniel Xerri's look at reflective spaces for teachers; he recommends things like journal writing, professional discussions, and classroom research for teachers who want to develop their abilities further by looking back on what they have achieved so far. This is followed by a contribution from a quite active member of KOTESOL's Reflective Practice SIG, Jocelyn Wright, who takes a look at how students become invested in learning via their individual "capitals."

From Udayana University in Indonesia, M. Faruq Ubaidillah provides a description of some of the common beliefs Indonesian English teachers have about SLA and the extent to which these are actually true. Christopher Judd then continues the theme of reflection by outlining his experience with evaluating the effectiveness of his classroom activities using a six-step process. Following this, Neil Talbert provides a review of the book *The Intercultural Mind*, written by Joseph Shaules, a speaker at last year's KOTESOL National Conference. Finally, I manage to sneak in one of my own articles in my final issue; it is a summary of a presentation I gave at the 2015 International Conference about the usefulness (or lack thereof) of grading participation in university EFL courses.

Finally, we have our three regular *TEC* columns. The first is the KOTESOL interview, this time with Julie Hye Seung Ha, who is currently a member of the International Conference Committee, acting as the communications coordinator. Second, we have Curtis Kelly's On the Ball series; the fifth entry in this thought-provoking column takes a look at embodied simulation, which is where the mind reacts to a word (written or spoken) in the same way that it would if that individual was directly experiencing whatever that particular word represents. Wrapping everything up is Thomas S. C. Farrell's Reflective Practice column, which takes aim at the use of online tools for reflection.

And that's it. The last editorial. Even though I am leaving, *TEC* will continue in the capable hands of the next editor-in-chief, so I strongly recommend those of you looking for experience as a copy editor, proofreader, writer, photographer, illustrator – whatever you can think of – or those looking for the best way to give something back to KOTESOL to get in contact at kotesolteceditor@gmail.com for further information about where to start. *TEC* can't work without the energy and enthusiasm of a core group of individuals who are dedicated to community building and knowledge sharing. Become part of that group today.

President's Message

By Dr. David E. Shaffer KOTESOL President

The door is opening, albeit just a crack, unto spring. On the other side of the door is a season budding with opportunities for the KOTESOL English teacher to prime themselves for the new school year. Numerous KOTESOL events will be coming your way: monthly chapter meetings, annual chapter conferences, and the spring national conference!

With all the upcoming events preparing to blossom this spring, it may appear that KOTESOL was dormant during the winter months – but oh, not so. Much was going on behind the scenes to make our spring flower. On the first Saturday in December, the new National Council met in Seoul, setting a budget for our events and projects planned for 2018. On the following day, KOTESOL members from across the country gathered for our annual Leadership Retreat. "Retreat" is a misnomer as it conjures up visions of strolling into cabins in the countryside and cuddling up in a comfy armchair by the fireplace with a book or a pillow. Our Retreat was nothing like that. Braving the cold to converge on Seoul, dedicated members discussed KOTESOL's major activities (conferences, publications, chapters, SIGs, membership, publicity, website), made many valuable suggestions, and volunteered to work on various committees. If you would like to contribute your talents but missed out on the Retreat opportunity, contact your chapter president or a national committee chair. Their contact information is available in the recently updated KOTESOL Directory on our website. A thank-you goes out to Second Vice-President Mike Peacock for organizing the Retreat.

Over the past several months, many of our chapters have elected and selected new officers, who didn't wait for the spring thaw to spring into action. Planning is underway for at least three chapter conferences this spring: Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter, March 10; Seoul Chapter, March 31; and Busan-Gyeongnam April 21. Consider attending one or more of them. A thank-you goes out to the organizers of all these spring events.

By the time of publication of this issue, the chapter presidents will have held their annual February meeting. They will be sharing ideas, working on solutions to challenges, and discussing how they can better serve their members. In a bit of a change in format this year, chapter treasurers will also be at the meeting, gathering with the national treasurer to discuss a standardizing of chapter bookkeeping to dovetail with national records. A thank-you goes out to First Vice-President Michael Free and Treasurer Phillip Schrank for organizing this meeting.

Another event date to circle on your calendar is May 12, the 2018 KOTESOL National Conference. This year's theme is "Crossing Borders: Korean ELT in the Modern World." The plenary speaker will be the well-known Barbara Hoskins Sakamoto. (The deadline for proposal submissions in March 16.) Register online or on-site, but I do urge you to attend this premier spring event. A thank-you goes out to Stewart Gray and his team for putting together everything that goes into planning an event of this scope.

I have just mentioned some of the highlights of KOTESOL's spring activities. Much more will be going on at our chapters. If last year is any indication, we will be having more than two dozen chapter-level events during the spring months. I cannot emphasize too much how important our chapters are to our organization. It is the work of our chapters, our chapter officers and chapter members, that makes KOTESOL so vibrant. Our members are essential to our organization. They are our lifeblood. Therefore, I would like to make this "KOTESOL Challenge" to each of us: to bring one new member to KOTESOL this year. I hope we are all up to the challenge!

And let us not forget our perennial challenge – that of professional development. In addition to the individual plans that you may be making, it is my hope that you will take advantage of our chapter, SIG, and national activities coming up this spring for your professional development. I hope to see you at one of our events.

As a final, somewhat bittersweet note, I must say that we are sad that Gil Coombe will be leaving *The English Connection* as editor-in-chief to pursue other ELT goals. The skill and professionalism that he has brought to TEC cannot be overemphasized. It was a true joy to have worked with him.

Crossing Borders:
Korean ELT in the Modern World

*When:
May 12th (Sat.)
*Where:
Kangnam Uni.,
Yongin, Korea

Proposal submission deadline: **March 16**

Featuring:

Barbara Hoskins-Sakamoto
(Author: Let's Go)

Dr. Kyung-sook Yeum
(Sookmyung TESOL)

* Contact: **natconf2018@koreatesol.org**
* Proposals and registration: **koreatesol.org/nc2018**

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Reflective Spaces for English Language Teachers

By Daniel Xerri

Introduction

On a recent visit to a botanic garden in Perth, Australia, I spent some time at its Place of Reflection. The latter is a small garden opened in 2011 with the purpose of providing victims of trauma and visitors in general with a space in which they can find solace and engage in meditation. The garden consists of a number of sheltered recesses connected by wooden boardwalks and is screened off by rust-covered metal sheets with intricate designs incised into them. While seated on a solitary bench in each recess, visitors can admire the thick foliage around them and look out over Swan River at the foot of the hill on which the garden is situated. As someone who helps university students to enhance their reflective abilities through writing, I consider it admirable that a major city has designed a space for its citizens' reflection. The Place of Reflection made me think about the spaces that novice teachers can use in order to reflect on their students' learning, as well as on their own beliefs, practices, and well-being.

Value of Reflection

Reflection has long been deemed vital for English language teachers given that it promotes their professional growth. In particular, there seems to be consensus that teachers who engage in reflection can gain new insights into their practices (Farrell, 2016a). In fact, reflection can help to develop eupraxia, i.e., good practice (Smagorinsky, Shelton, & Moore, 2015). In the case of novice teachers, when they are taught how to figure out their experiences through reflection, they are able to deal with the challenges they face in the classroom (Shoffner et al., 2010). In fact, it is suggested that reflection can help novice teachers to address such concerns as adjustment to the profession, acceptance of students, and management of emotion (Shoffner, 2011).

Spaces for Reflection

There are various spaces that novice English teachers can exploit in order to engage in reflection. These spaces can take the shape of tools, activities, or physical and digital places. While different reflective spaces seem to share similar benefits, knowing how to capitalize on the special characteristics of each one is significant for novice teachers.

One of the main avenues for reflection is that of journal writing, which helps teachers to develop self-awareness and leads to constructive behavioral changes both inside and outside the classroom (Farrell, 2013). Journal writing has been found to help teachers cope with uncertainty, instability, and value conflict, as well as to make changes to their practices and beliefs (Chi, 2010). Despite the fact that the production of texts such as dialogue and response journals provides teachers with opportunities to engage in reflective thinking (Lee, 2007), there are also some considerations that need to be borne in mind. For example, in his analysis of three Korean EFL teachers' use of a journal as a means of reflecting on their work, Farrell (2016b) indicates that

> while writing a teaching journal may facilitate the reflective process for the majority of language teachers, for some other teachers (granted, a minority), writing a reflective journal may lead to increased levels of anxiety that may be associated with reflecting in general and with the act of writing itself. (p. 91)

Hence, it is important that novice teachers are provided with the right kind of support when it comes to choosing a topic to focus on, sharing their writing with an

▲ *The Place of Reflection, Kings Park, Perth*

audience, and engaging in systematic reflections when writing a journal (Farrell, 2016b). Supporting teachers with reflective writing is essential, whether it is for producing journals or other text types. For instance, portfolios have been shown to help teachers to engage

in in-depth self-reflection as part of their professional development process; however, they can only do so effectively if they are provided with training on reflective writing (Xerri & Campbell, 2015).

Other reflective spaces that novice teachers may use are centred around dialogue. For example, engaging in collaborative group discussions with one's peers has been shown to affect teachers' ability to understand and resist plateauing, as well as to maintain their commitment and enthusiasm for teaching (Farrell, 2014). Olsher and Kantor (2012) discuss the value of questions as a mentoring resource in enabling a novice teacher to engage in critical reflection, while Gabriel (2016) analyzes post-observation debrief conversations between novice teachers and mentors to show how these can help to shape reflection. In some cases, dialogue complements the use of a tool like an e-portfolio. Liu (2017) reports that e-portfolios have strong potential to support a dialogic approach to reflection, especially in reinforcing critical dialogue between teacher educators and pre-service teachers, this being an important means of developing the latter's critical reflection, transformative learning, and teaching practice.

Some other spaces for reflection available to novice teachers consist of research and digital technology. Classroom research is considered an effective way of enabling teachers to develop their reflective thinking (Medwell & Wray, 2014) and can help them to critically interrogate their beliefs and practices (Xerri, 2017). As a contributor to English teachers' continuing professional development (Xerri, 2014), social networking sites like Twitter are reported as being a useful tool for facilitating practitioners' on-going reflection (Benko et al., 2016). Despite being around for some time, video has become easier to produce thanks to digital devices. This has meant that teachers can maximize its use for reflection. Video is recognized as having the capacity to empower teachers to adapt and grow via critical inquiry (Ortlieb, McVee, & Shanahan, 2015).

Conclusion
Notwithstanding the different kinds of reflective spaces that are available to novice teachers, it does not mean that they will use them productively, if at all. Research indicates that once pre-service teachers start working, the tendency is to quickly fall into a rut partly because they do not seem to find the time for reflection. In fact, Shoffner et al. (2010) claim that "reflective practice is often pushed aside when teachers enter the classroom, a casualty of too little time and too many demands" (p. 70). One of the factors behind this phenomenon could be that novice teachers might not have received adequate training on how to sustain reflective practice in the course of their profession. In addition, they might have only been trained to utilize one space for reflection, and they might be unaware of how other spaces could be used for the same purpose. Hence, it seems fundamental that novice teachers be provided with adequate and continuing support and guidance in order for them to develop the necessary skills to engage in critical

reflection and to harness the potential of the different spaces in which they can do so.

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Daniel Xerri is a lecturer in TESOL at the University of Malta, the joint coordinator of the IATEFL Research SIG, and the chairperson of the ELT Council in Malta. Further information about his talks and publications can be found at www.danielxerri.com. Email: daniel.xerri@um.edu.mt

By Jocelyn Wright

Almost every month, the Gwangju-Jeonnam Reflective Practice Special Interest Group (RP-SIG) meets to discuss topics related to our teaching. As one of the founding coordinators, I often facilitate these meetings. Recently, I have been interested in the construct of investment, coined by language and literacy scholar Bonny Norton in her 1995 article "Social Identity, Investment, and Language Learning." Norton offers investment as an alternative to the concept of motivation to explain what it is that causes learners to actively participate in learning a second language. She argues that students invest in learning with the expectations that they will "acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources" and thus raise the value of their individual capital.

Norton's work was inspired, in part, by the well-known sociologist and cultural theorist, Pierre Bourdieu. As a result, I had to revisit some of his writings in relation to the workshop that I was preparing. I was particularly interested in the four main capitals he developed in various works (e.g., *Language and Symbolic Power,* 1991): economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capitals. The first, **economic capital,** refers to material wealth (e.g., money and assets). **Social capital** reflects relations (e.g., group membership, connections, and norms), while **cultural capital** might be viewed as more educational (e.g., knowledge and skills). Finally, **symbolic capital** is associated with recognition (e.g., prestige and honor). All of these are considered resources that afford or otherwise inhibit action.

Of course, these are not the only forms of capital Bourdieu identified. Those familiar with his earlier work may also have heard of a form of cultural capital that is particularly relevant to our field, namely, **linguistic capital.** In his famous 1977 article, "The Economics of Linguistic Exchanges," he defined this as greater than linguistic competence (in the Chomskyan sense), as the ability not only to know and use language accurately but also in socially acceptable (valued) ways.

Norton emphasizes that a learner's drive to study English is connected to the returns expected on their investment. Drawing on the contribution of political scientist Benedict Anderson (i.e., *Imagined Communities,* 1983), Norton highlights the power of the imaginary, and it can be argued that the resources we have, those we lack, and those we aspire to (i.e., **imagined capitals,** according to work by educational researcher Jocey Quinn); all have an impact on motivation and, importantly, investment in learning.

It is interesting to reflect on all of these forms of capital and their relation to ourselves as teachers, our students, our interactions, and of course, our teaching and learning contexts more generally. Stimulating that reflection was initially my purpose.

In the midst of insightful exchanges and discussions at the SIG meeting, however, the conversation turned to **health and well-being**. It is possible to have sufficient financial resources, social networks, knowledge and skills, and even be recognized, yet suffer or be disadvantaged physically, cognitively, or emotionally.

With regard to investment and learning, it seems that health and well-being would also be consequential, and further digging revealed other noteworthy forms of capital have also been topics of research. For example, explicitly expanding on Bourdieu's embodied capital, Chris Shilling explores **physical capital** in corporeal sociology and shows how physical attributes and abilities produce inequalities. Its "disembodied" counterpart, **mental capital,** defined as "the totality of an individual's cognitive and emotional resources, including their cognitive capability, flexibility and efficiency of learning, emotional intelligence…, and resilience in the face of stress" by the 2008 Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project, "captures a key dimension of those elements that serve to establish how well an individual is able to contribute effectively to society and also to experience a high personal quality of life."

Viewing Bourdieu's initial repertoire in this expanded light pushes us to consider the construct of investment in a more holistic and humane way. Without a doubt, all of the forms of capital interact to influence a learner's imagined capital, and this plays a role in determining the investment made in learning, which in turn, impacts other types of capital *ad infinitum.*

Jocelyn Wright has worked at Mokpo National University for more than nine years. Her educational background is in linguistics and education. In addition to being a local facilitator of the Reflective Practice SIG, she is the national coordinator of the Social Justice (Critical Educators in Korea) SIG.

Unveiling Indonesian EFL Teachers' Beliefs about English Language Teaching

By M. Faruq Ubaidillah

Recently, I was invited to participate in an English language teacher discussion forum in Sidoarjo, East Java, Indonesia. During the break time, one teacher asked me whether I used British English (BrE) or American English (AmE) in my English classes. I was actually shocked that in today's so-called globalized world of English language teaching, such a question is still lingering in the mind of an English teacher in

> **"Recent studies have revealed that both teachers and learners in EFL countries still perceive native speakers to be the 'owner' of the English language."**

Indonesia. It seems to me that research carried out on English as a lingua franca (Fang, 2017; Jenkins, 2009), English as an international language (McKay, 2003; Sharifian, 2009), and English as a global language (Crystal, 2003) has not been a focus of discussion in the EFL teacher profession. Based on this point, the present article sets out three common beliefs held by Indonesian EFL teachers.

I would like to begin by explaining the issue of English learning goals that characterize most Indonesian EFL settings. A study carried out by Zacharias (2003) reported that a widespread tenet held by many Indonesian EFL teachers is to direct their students towards at least three passive goals of learning: globalization, employment, and prestige. Why so? Globalization is often identified as the major reason why many learners learn English in their own country or travel overseas to do so. Due to the world's economic development, there is a benefit to thinking globally, and this means having the ability to communicate effectively in both spoken and written English. The second reason for learning English is employment. A plethora of companies require job applicants to have a good command of the English language. This is commonly indicated by the mastery of TOEFL skills. When a job seeker has reached a minimum TOEFL score of 550 or so, he or she has a greater chance of securing a position within a company. The last goal many Indonesian teachers offer as a reason to study English is that it can act as a symbol of prestige in Indonesian society. In most EFL countries, it is

undeniable that people who can speak fluent English (and have a close-to-native-speaker accent) are regarded as having a high social status in society. Also, being adept in English can affect the regard in which an individual is held when they use English in non-English-speaking communities. In general, the more fluent an individual is in English, the more positively they are regarded by their community.

The native speaker fallacy is the second-most cited issue prevalent within the Indonesian EFL teacher profession. Recent studies (Floris, 2013; Ubaidillah, 2017) have revealed that both teachers and learners in EFL countries still perceive native speakers to be the "owner" of the English language. Thus, native speakers are generally considered to be the best model for language learning. In today's globalized world, many local Indonesian English teachers, for example, are now upgrading their teaching qualifications to higher degrees of study, be it master's or doctoral degrees. This should be seen

as an important trend in the teaching profession. Policymakers should now prioritize qualifications in terms of recruiting new staff and when setting salaries in the workplace, regardless of their non-native status. According to Crystal (2003), since the majority of English speakers are now from expanding-circle

countries, there is no need to glorify native speakers as models for learning.

The third point, the use of the students' mother tongue in English classes, is also intriguing to discuss. Honestly speaking, Indonesian EFL teachers still tend to believe in the traditional concept of second language acquisition (SLA): that the more students are exposed to the target language (English), the more fluent they will become. However, the mother tongue should not be seen as a hindrance to learning a foreign language. In fact, SLA is influenced by native-like competence concepts that EFL learners should adopt. For instance, errors and mistakes made by Indonesian EFL learners in SLA are sometimes said to be "deviant" or a problem. Meanwhile, in English as a lingua franca, those same errors and mistakes can be seen as examples of the learners' creativity and uniqueness. So, why do we not encourage EFL learners to produce errors and mistakes since attempting to exactly produce target language like a native speaker is only a dream? Using the students' mother tongue will not ruin their attempt to learn the target language.

This article has attempted to reveal three common perceptions held by English teachers in their English language teaching practice in Indonesia. The goals of learning English, native speakerism, and the use

"Why do we not encourage EFL learners to produce errors and mistakes since attempting to exactly produce target language like a native speaker is only a dream?"

of students' mother tongue are oft-cited issues in the teaching profession in this part of the world. As a world language, the use of English should always be contextualized, based on the local norms of individual countries. If this is achieved, then learners would be able to express their self-identity with confidence.

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Important Domestic Dates for Your Calendar

KOTESOL Daegu Chapter Workshop	March 3, 2018 Ecology Oriental Wellness Experience Center, Daegu
KOTESOL Jeonju Chapter Workshop	March 10, 2018; Location TBA
KOTESOL Gwangju-Jeonnam Annual Chapter Conference	March 10, 2018 Gwangju National University of Education
KOTESOL Daejeon Chapter Workshop	March 24, 2018; Location TBA
The 14th Annual Seoul KOTESOL Conference	March 31, 2018 Sookmyung Women's University, Seoul
DisCog & SSK 2018 Spring Conference	April 14, 2018 HUFS, Seoul Campus
KOTESOL Busan-Gyeongnam Annual Chapter Conference	April 21, 2018 University of Ulsan, Ulsan
KOTESOL 2018 National Conference	May 12, 2018 Kangnam University, Yongin
The 3rd International Conference on English Literature, Language, Education, and Culture	May 25-26, 2018 Mokwon University, Daejeon
LSK 2018: The Linguistic Society of Korea Conference	June 28-29, 2018 Kyung Hee University, Seoul
The 2018 KATE International Conference	July 6-7, 2018 Sookmyung Women's University, Seoul
The KAFLE Conference	September 28-29, 2018 Soongsil University, Seoul
The 2018 ALAK International Conference	October 13, 2018 Sogang University, Seoul
KOTESOL 2018 International Conference	October 13-14, 2018 Sookmyung Women's University, Seoul
Jeonju-North Jeolla Annual Chapter Conference	November 10, 2018 Location TBA
Daejeon-Chungcheong Annual Symposium and Thanksgiving Dinner	November 24, 2018 Woosong University, Daejeon

For links and additional information, https://koreatesol.org/calendar

The Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter
of KOTESOL cordially invites you to

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Adventures in ELT

Korea TESOL
Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter
Regional Conference
March 10, 2018

Gwangju National University of Education
Gwangju, Korea
https://tinyurl.com/GJConf2018

Micro-evaluating Your Classroom

By Christopher Judd

That feeling of satisfaction after providing an engaging and productive lesson is at the heart of why we teach. However, not every lesson ends with that feeling. This is because a multitude of factors influence how well the lessons are received, including how students interpret and approach tasks in unexpected ways (Murphy, 2003). It is therefore desirable to gain an objective view of factors that affect task engagement to maximize our chances of success. The process of micro-evaluation (Ellis, 2015) provides us with the means to access a more objective understanding of why our lessons succeed or fail, which can only improve our success rate.

Micro-evaluation is a framework for evaluating lesson tasks or projects using research-style methods, without the aim of publishing. While research may sound like a lot of work, data collection with tools such as Google Forms, Socrative, and Typeform reduce the workload significantly. Ellis' (2015) six-step approach to micro-evaluation (outlined in Table 1) guided a recent evaluation of a group project at my university. The group project involved groups of three or four students creating role-play dialogues in class and then recording videos around the university campus to present to the class.

Table 1: Six-Step Approach to Micro-evaluation
(adapted from Ellis, 2015)

Step 1	Describe the task, its materials, and procedures.
Step 2	Formulate evaluation aims and research questions.
Step 3	Decide how to collect data.
Step 4	Make an evaluation plan, including when to collect data.
Step 5	Analyze the data using appropriate methods.
Step 6	Prepare a report of the findings.

The first two steps provide the research-style foundation for evaluating the task. Three broad categories of interest for micro-evaluation questions are set out in Ellis (2015): motivation for the task, performance behaviors while on task, and language development or acquisition. In the recent micro-evaluation I conducted, the evaluation questions focused on motivation for the task, which I deemed relevant since my students were not English majors and were of a lower proficiency level.

The third and fourth steps concern selecting appropriate methods and drawing up a plan for data collection. While numerous methods of data collection can be adopted, the key is choosing a method that matches the focus of the evaluation. Investigating the perspectives of multiple stakeholders also provides a more rounded picture of how tasks are working for all

> "It was the open-ended feedback in the students' first language that provided further unobservable insights, such as how much they enjoyed making new friends during the task."

involved, with students and teachers being the easiest to access. Research questions that are focused on student motivation lend themselves to more student-based methods, such as conducting questionnaires or interviews with the students, whereas questions focused on matters of performance require more response-based methods such as keeping a teacher's diary or having a colleague observe your lesson.

In my motivation-focused micro-evaluation of the group video-making project, some valuable insights for the project's future implementation were revealed. Multiple perspectives were gained from students' open-ended feedback about the task, collected anonymously using Socrative.com, and my own response-based reflective notes of student performance during lessons. Analysis of each data source revealed how motivated to complete the task the students were and what aspects of the task contributed to their feelings of motivation. Some of the student-based findings indicated that students really enjoyed the social aspects of the task, which involved working in groups of three or four, with group members from different subject majors.

Elements of the task that need changing include the need to clarify the project objectives by reducing the openness of the task and, from the performance-based data, the need to provide more class time

for the project. The most useful part of this micro-evaluation was the different perspectives the two data sources revealed about the same events, particularly unobservable aspects of the task that occurred outside the classroom. While the reflective notes taken during

> **"The process of micro-evaluation provides us with the means to access a more objective understanding of why our lessons succeed or fail."**

the lessons revealed outward signs of motivation, such as how intently students were working and the degree of challenge the task posed, it was the open-ended feedback in the students' first language that provided further unobservable insights, such as how much they enjoyed making new friends during the task and the fun they had while recording around campus.

For curious teachers, I highly recommend employing micro-evaluation methods to analyze your lesson activities to improve your chances of providing engaging lessons. By evaluating lesson activity in a

systematic, research-orientated way, we can reap the benefits of deeper insights into the inner workings of our lessons. As a form of reflective practice, the process of micro-evaluation and its products can only serve to prompt improvements in how we design our lessons to achieve greater consistency.

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Book Review: *The Intercultural Mind*

By Neil Talbert

At the FAB11 NeuroELT series of talks at the KOTESOL 2017 National Conference, findings from the neuroscience of learning as they apply to language education were highlighted for the consideration of the Korea TESOL community. In his book, *The Intercultural Mind*, one of those speakers, Joseph Shaules, writes about intercultural learning and experience from a psychological perspective, emphasizing the importance of intuition in this process. In addition to the adaptive challenges of living in a foreign country, such as the tendency to resist differences, he also delves into some of the hard questions about what *cultural difference* actually means. Shaules supplements this synthesis of ideas about culture and psychology with interviews of international sojourners. As well as making the book easier and more enjoyable to read, these excerpts from real experiences give substance to the abstract ideas the book describes.

After Chapters One and Two, which prime the reader with basic information on psychological concepts necessary to understand the rest of the book, such as cognitive bias, the culture-cognition connection, and the importance of intuition, we get into one of the main purposes of the text, which is to examine the role of intuition in cultural learning's "two-mind process" (that is, its conscious and unconscious aspects). Chapter Three analyzes in depth the complex interplay between

expectations of what is "normal" and the new normal in another setting can promote cultural learning at a deep level or, sometimes, resistance. This theme was echoed at KOTESOL, where one of the main points was that emotion drives learning. Yet, as well as an emotionally provocative experience, metacognitive awareness of this process is also conducive to learning. After an overview of the unconscious cognitive processes involved in intercultural contact in Chapter Four, Chapter Five focuses specifically on the practical takeaways that can be derived from what the research says about culture and psychology, a discussion covered in greater depth in Shaules' earlier book, *Deep Culture.*

As the book goes on, it moves deeper into theoretical territory. Particularly interesting is the question of the extent to which cultural differences matter. On the one hand, the book is based on the premise that cultural differences do matter, as we see from the many excerpts of his interviews with students who have spent time abroad. There is, on the other hand, also a need to not overstate the degree to which culture determines thinking and behavior. Chapter Nine opens with this objection to the emphasis on cultural differences by citing a talk given by cultural psychologist David Matsumoto, who argues that statistically measured cultural differences regarding individualism and collectivism don't allow us to predict an individual's

▲ **Author Joseph Shaules**

"**Teachers, administrators, and others working to help people adjust to living in a foreign country could also benefit from a greater metacognitive awareness of the hidden processes of acculturation.**"

conscious and unconscious cognitive processes at the moment of a firsthand encounter with stark cultural differences, which the writer calls the "Oz moment." This moment of dissonance between one's intuitive

behavior.

In response, Shaules makes an insightful observation: While culture does not explain an individual's behavior

(e.g, "He did that because of his culture"), cultural knowledge is said to be "the degree to which we are capable of successfully interpreting behavior in accordance with community standards" (p. 160). This concept of perspective parallels the idea of the

JOSEPH SHAULES

the intercultural mind

Connecting Culture, Cognition
and
Global Living

"A fascinating and important book about understanding cross-culturalism. Lively, well-written, incisive, and fun to read."
—Robert Whiting, Pulitzer Prize nominee and bestselling author of *Tokyo Underworld*

generalized other, which is the notion that we carry in our minds the attitudes of those in our communities. Along these lines, cultural empathy – an ability to perceive a situation in the way a person in another community would – is described in Chapter Eight.

In Chapter Ten, the writer weighs in on another ongoing debate, this time about the connection between language and culture. Defending the necessity of linguistic skill for deep cultural understanding, he brings into the discussion the idea of "embodied simulation." This term refers to how a word encodes not only an abstract concept, but also sensory information, based on our experience with that word. When people share experiences and a discourse, the words they use acquire connotations that a direct translation cannot capture. Learning about a culture secondhand, then, is different from being immersed in the linguaculture of a community.

Overall, this book is a good introduction to psychology, language, and culture, yet our understanding of these

complex issues is still growing. Also, at some points as previously mentioned, the discussion seems to approach concepts described in social psychology so, although it could be considered beyond the scope of this book, drawing on the fields of social psychology
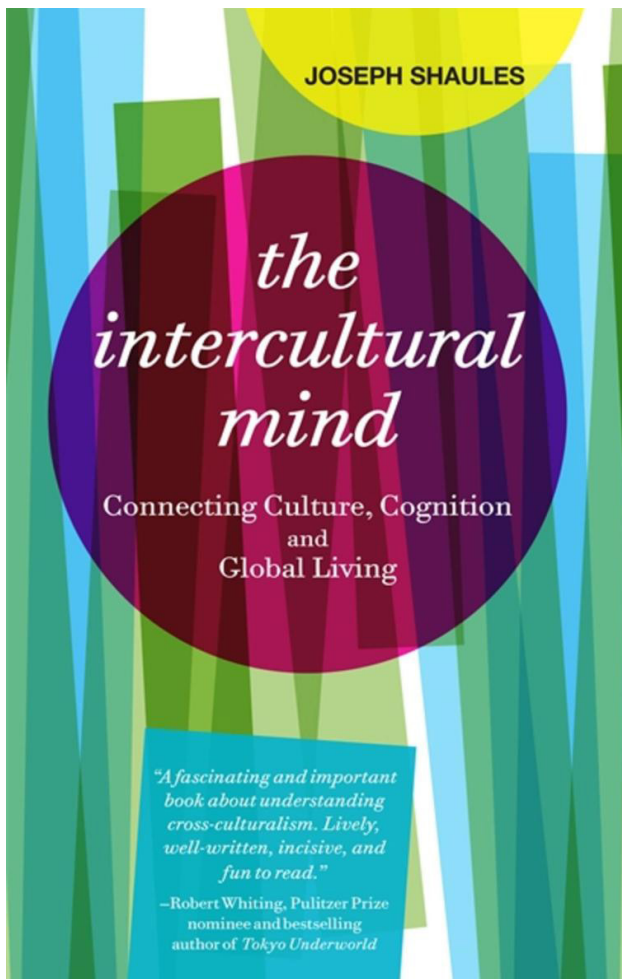
"In his book, Joseph Shaules, writes about intercultural learning and experience from a psychological perspective, emphasizing the importance of intuition in this process."

and sociology could help draw a more complete picture of interculturality and the mind. Yet I would recommend this book to someone with an academic curiosity about culture. In addition, teachers, administrators, and others working to help people adjust to living in a foreign country could also benefit from a greater metacognitive awareness of the hidden processes of acculturation.

The Author

Neil Talbert earned his MA in applied linguistics and ESL at Georgia State University and teaches practical English at the Catholic University of Daegu. If you'd like to start a discussion with him on the topics of language, culture, and social psychology, you can contact him at njtalbert@gmail.com.

The Case Against Grading Participation in University EFL Courses

By Gil Coombe

Participation in university classrooms, whether it be in the form of student-to-student or student-to-teacher interaction, has been shown to be vitally important for numerous reasons. For example, it has been known to improve motivation, overall learning, group interaction, critical thinking, and communication skills (Rocca, 2010). Participation is deemed particularly important for second language classrooms, given the benefits derived from increased interaction and language output during class time, something that has been supported by a large volume of research (e.g., Swain, 1985; Nunan, 1991; Long, 1996). This is especially true in EFL classrooms, where the students have fewer opportunities to practice English in their everyday lives.

However, not all students participate equally. Research indicates that 20% of the students in a general university classroom tend to account for 80% of the participation (Frymier & Housier, 2015) and that only about 1 in 3 students are regular participants (Howard & Henney, 1998). This means that, in order to ensure that all students interact and thus gain access to the benefits of participation, the instructor needs to specifically encourage the practice. Though there are many ways to achieve this, one method that is particularly common is grading participation (i.e., making it one of the assessed tasks in the course). It has been estimated that more than 90% of instructors at university may use participation as a component of the overall class grade (Bean & Peterson, 1998).

The same holds true in Korean university EFL classes; in a self-selecting survey of the Facebook group Foreign Professors and University English Teachers, 94.1% of all respondents graded participation in some form. For 68.7% of these survey-takers, the grading of participation was actually required of them by their university, though in total 70.6% of respondents believed in the practice of grading participation. In general, participation accounted for between 5% and 20% of the final grade (not including attendance, which is sometimes conflated with participation). In the survey, the respondents were asked to describe the criteria they used to grade participation. Table 1 presents a summary of their answers.

Given that grading participation is so prevalent in Korean universities and that the majority of native English-speaking instructors agree with its use in EFL classes, it is important to determine whether there is in fact a significantly positive relationship between the grading of participation and language acquisition; otherwise, the entire foundation of the practice could be called into question. On that score, past research is mixed. A recent study (Crosthwaite, Bailey, & Meeker, 2015) found that the presence of a participation grade had little effect on either participation levels or academic

Table 1: Criteria Used by Korean University EFL Instructors to Grade Participation (based on a survey of a Facebook university instructors group)

Positive Criteria	Negative Criteria
• Coming to class on time	• No textbook
• Having all materials	• Phone use
• Paying attention	• Sleeping
• Doing daily classwork	• Text messages
• Using English	• Speaking in Korean
• Attentiveness during other students' speeches	• Absences
• Asking questions	• Not ready to work when class starts
• Answering questions	• Being rude
• Being polite	• Lateness
• Contributing to class discussions	
• Doing homework	
• Actively engaged in listening and reading	
• Volunteering to speak	
• Group work	
• Attitude	
• Cooperation with other students	
• Office visits	
• Preparation for class	

performance in Korean university students, but Sariefe and Klose (2008) and Dewi (2013) have shown that the presence of a participation grade can be a direct motivating factor in EFL/ESL students. On top of this, Kim (2004) argued that it is up to the teacher to emphasize and promote oral communication in Korean students because there is no direct relationship between motivation and willingness to communicate (i.e., even though they want to learn, students may not appreciate the need to interact and participate).

Therefore, based on current research, the question of whether to grade participation or not in an EFL context remains open. However, lets assume that conventional wisdom holds true, and participation grading in EFL classrooms does improve both participation and subsequent achievement. Does that mean that participation grades should be adopted by all? It is the aim of this article to make the argument that the answer to this is "no." In fact, I will argue that perhaps grading participation should not be done at all in a university classroom. My position rests on the idea that, even if grading participation does improve interaction and language acquisition, there are several side-effects that can cancel out or even completely overwhelm the benefits. What follows are ten reasons why grading participation may not be the best choice for a university EFL class in Korea. It should be noted that I am not against encouraging participation in itself – not at all. I believe it is vital to a functioning EFL classroom. I just believe that directly tying participation to the final grade is not the best means of facilitating it.

1. Grading participation may be redundant.
One important question that must be answered is this: Is there a need to spend time grading participation when participation may ultimately be reflected in the final grades anyway? In other words, if students with high participation do better in other assessments, what is the point of tracking participation in the first place?

To test whether this was in fact the case, I recalculated the grades in my mandatory freshman EFL course over three years after removing the participation score (so that the final grade did not reflect participation grading at all), and then calculating the average participation grade for each grading bracket. (I scored participation holistically out of 10 based on, among other things, participation in group discussions, class discussions, pair work, in-class tasks, and communication with me.) The results are shown in second column of Table 2. As can be seen, the students who participated more according to my holistic measurement of participation tended to receive higher grades anyway. So if I had not recorded participation at all, the students who participated more would still have received higher grades on average.

This could be because higher participation reflects more effective learning. However, it is not the only explanation. It could be that the type of student who is motivated to participate because a grade is tied to it is also likely to be motivated to do well in the assessments because a grade is tied to them. This has in fact been shown in previous research as well. Highly grade-orientated students tend to participate more in the presence of participation grades.

To see whether the mere presence of a participation score affected participation levels, for three semesters, I graded half of my classes on participation, and the other half I did not, but I recorded a score for them anyway based on their participation in the same way as the assessed classes. As can be seen in the third column of Table 2, there was no difference – participation was just as high and participation still varied by final grade. It turned out, I did not need to spend all that time recording student behavior.

Table 2: Average Participation Score for Students in a Freshman EFL University Class over Three Semesters by Final Grade Received

Grade Received	Average Participation Score (/10)	
	Classes with a participation grade	Classes without a participation grade
A+	9.45	9.31
A	8.91	8.87
B+	8.53	8.53
B	7.98	7.89
C+	7.64	7.78
C	7.00	7.71
D+	6.17	7.00
D	6.00	6.00
F	6.07	4.50

2. Grading participation does not particularly help students with lower English levels in mixed-level classes.
Some instructors see a participation grade as a way to help lower-level students compete in mixed-level classes, because it gives them something that they can achieve without having to worry about the standard of their English. However, higher-level students will always tend to participate more because they find it easier to do so – and this is the key difference between participation in regular university contexts and the EFL context; it is confounded by language ability and L2 anxiety. In EFL classes, it is generally true that higher-level students are more comfortable with expressing themselves. In addition, those that have studied overseas are more comfortable with the expectations of a non-native instructor. Therefore, grading participation merely serves to reinforce the divide between high- and low-level students rather than bridge it.

Some instructors express concern that higher-level students may coast through their class and cause disruption because they think it is too easy or not worth their time. This seems to be a matter of course design, not participation grading.

3. Grading participation is unfair to more introverted students.
The natural inclination for introverted students to simply communicate less can be compounded by low perceived communicative competence and communication anxiety, two factors that are primary obstacles to willingness to communicate (e.g., Baker & MacIntyre, 2000). The result of this is that introverted students are more likely to receive lower participation scores. For example, Crosthwaite,

Bailey, and Meeker (2015) found that students who self-identified as preferring an individual learning style (as compared to a project learning style or a group learning style) had lower participation whether or not participation was graded. Therefore, in classes where it is graded, they are ultimately being "punished" on their final grade for being introverted.

4. Grading participation is often used as the rationale for participation in itself

This argument can be summed up in this quote from an Indonesian student in Dewi (2013):

As far as I know, there was no participation point in IC class…. If there were participation point, I would involve in discussion. I felt that without extra points, there was no difference between active and passive students. In my point of view, participation without participation grade was useless. (p. 23)

If our students walk out of our classrooms with this attitude, something has gone dramatically wrong. Participation has to be valued in and of itself, not be tied specifically to a grade. This is particularly important in the EFL context, where students need to find intrinsic motivation to speak if they are going to be lifelong users of the language.

5. Grading participation lacks clear criteria and quantification.

There are numerous issues surrounding the actual grading process for participation. For example, students are rarely given clear rubrics for participation; often they are just a few sentences of description in the syllabus. In addition to this, the criteria can seem arbitrary or biased (e.g., the use of Korean in class). Why does the sound of Korean in the classroom cause such a spike in stress in so many native English-speaking teachers? If the students are using Korean to facilitate their English or task goals (e.g., by sharing translations or quickly relaying instructions for someone who did not understand), should they be punished for it? Again, these are thorny questions that arise when participation is explicitly graded.

It is also difficult to quantify the relative values of specific forms of participation, especially between teachers and students. Peer and self-assessment participation scores are known to be higher than instructor participation scores, even in classes where the criteria is clearly spelled out (Gopinath, 1999), so there may be variations in the perception of what constitutes "good" participation.

6. Grading participation lacks validity.

It's simply not possible to accurately measure all of the participation events for all students in a class for all activities at all times. This is illustrated by the following quote from a very different context (Franks & Miller, cited in Hughes & Franks, 2008): "Studies have shown international level soccer coaches could only recollect 30 percent of the key factors that determined successful soccer performance and were less than 45 percent correct in the post-game assessment of what occurred during a game" (p. 36).

Indeed "experienced coaches were more likely to report a difference in performance when none existed, and were very confident in their decisions, even when incorrect"

(Maslovat & Franks, 2008, p. 3). It is not difficult to extend this to the EFL classroom and experienced teachers in their attempt to track 20–30 students over the course of an hour or so. It is also impossible to always accurately interpret student behavior. For example, a student who is very quiet: is it because they do not care, or are they just listening and processing?

Another issue is that a sufficiently valid participation rubric runs the risk of reducing the effectiveness of the teacher. In an EFL environment, a teacher needs to be there to guide and provide feedback on language use. Keeping track of participation naturally takes time away from facilitating classroom activities in the classroom. Therefore, the more detailed the participation rubric is, the more time will need to be dedicated to applying it, which may not be conducive to actual learning.

7. Grading participation discourages teachers from pursuing other factors that influence student motivation

For some instructors, the participation grade is wielded like a bludgeon to force students to engage with the material. In doing so, it allows instructors to avoid self-critiquing their classroom materials and teaching material. However, Kang (2005) suggested that willingness to communicate is primarily influenced by excitement, responsibility, and security, which in turn are affected by their interlocutors (i.e., classmates and teacher), topics, and conversational context. Indeed, Kim and Kim (2013) interviewed Korean students in a university EFL course run by a native English instructor, and the following were reasons some of them gave for not engaging in the class, despite the existence of a participation grade: overly easy classwork, dull textbook, poor proficiency of classmates, lack of feedback from teacher, overexposure of certain activities, boring or embarrassing topics of discussion, and no intention to pursue English outside of the course. It is easy to forget about these things if all motivation can get driven towards the phrase "Do it or you will lose participation points," which means suboptimal activities or unmotivating material can get forced through despite negative student reaction.

This is particularly true in the case of classroom management, where instructors are likely to try to curb unproductive behaviors (e.g., using smartphones while the teacher is speaking, not being prepared, speaking while the teacher is speaking) by simply docking participation points. This does not get to the root of classroom issues that may be causing disruption and, depending on how participation is scored and reported, it may not provide timely information for the student to modify their behavior.

8. Grading participation constantly places students under scrutiny.

By grading participation on a daily basis, the instructor is implicitly saying that it is not okay to make mistakes (i.e., uttering Korean), or to have a bad day, or that every response that a student makes (or does not) has a bearing on their final grade. Therefore, if they are in a group discussion and their teacher happens to look at them at a moment when they are not speaking, it may be that, instead of remaining engaged in the actual task, their thoughts may shift to their grade and increase their anxiety. On that topic, one of the most common sources of

speaking anxiety in an EFL context is the fear of speaking ability being judged poorly by peers and the teacher (Liu & Cheng, 2014); should we be adding formal assessment to this to compound the problem? It has also been found that constantly grading the participation of students with communication anxiety may lead to lower participation and possibly lower levels of learning as they worry about what to say rather than engaging in the task on a deeper level (Frymier & Houser, 2015). Indeed, it is difficult to be both supportive and evaluative at the same time (Gilson, 1994).

9. Grading participation can be used as a fudge factor in final grading.

To me, this is the most indefensible use of participation grades – using them divorced of any objective rubric in order to decide final grades, especially when a grading curve needs to be followed. In a study of general university courses, Cross, Frary, and Weber (1993) found that 19% of instructors recorded participation and used it for overall grading, 10% recorded participation but only used it to adjust some of the grades at the end of the course, and even worse, 22% did not record participation at all but still used it to adjust some grades at the end. This means that instructors will arbitrarily raise or lower the participation score in order to raise or lower the final grade of individual students to fit a curve or to break ties. This to me goes against the very basic general principles of assessment.

10. Grading participation does not help to generate autonomy.

Finally, one of the justifications teachers make regarding the grading of participation is that it is a reflection of the "real world," in which you are accountable for your actions and need to follow the rules of your workplace. However, Gilson (1994) argued that grading participation by its very nature filters every classroom interaction through the instructor's agenda. All individual learning decisions within the classroom are judged against the teacher's idea of what good learning should be. In other words, it is just another way of preventing students from thinking for themselves as they are micromanaged to fit an artificial system, thus harming one of the most important attributes of a successful learner: being autonomous. Also, at your work, do the administrators constantly watch you and adjust your salary according to how much perceived effort you put into your job on a day-to-day basis? How many jobs ever do that? Workers are judged on their results. Students should be too.

Conclusion

Encouraging participation in the EFL classroom is vital to both the classroom environment and to individual learning outcomes. However, there are many ways to achieve this without resorting to grading participation levels. Instructors are encouraged to look at what they teach from a fresh angle and determine whether there is something else they could be doing to give their students the best chance of meeting course objectives in the short term and becoming confident English language learners in the long term.

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The Author

Gil Coombe is currently the soon-to-be ex-editor-in-chief of this very publication that you are holding in your hands; as a last show of ego, he has decided to inflict one last article on you while he can. He also teaches at Korea University and has a particular interest in academic writing, especially for research. He can be contacted/berated at gmcoombe@gmail.com.

KOTESOL People: Julie Hye Seung Ha

The English Connection recently caught up with International Conference Committee member Julie Hye Seung Ha for a brief chat about her background and future plans. — Interview by Julian Warmington.

TEC: Where did you grow up?
Julie: I was born and raised in Seoul, Korea until high school. My family immigrated to Canada when I was a high school student. My life in Canada was very happy and exciting because I could achieve any goals for which I planned. But I always thought that I wanted to go back to Korea to teach English to Koreans because I had had a hard time learning English at first, and so I could understand what a Korean student might feel when they studied English. I wanted to teach and help students from my own experience. That's why I planned to come back to Korea and become an English teacher in 2003.

TEC: What did you do in your previous life before getting involved with KOTESOL?
Julie: When I was a university student, I studied fine arts and accounting. After I graduated from university in Canada, I wanted to go to a graduate school in fine arts. I wanted to study painting, but life did not turn out the way I wanted, so then I worked in a Korean company as an accounting manager, and later as a sales manager. Then, I became a Catholic church office manager.

TEC: What do you enjoy about life in Korea, and what do you do now?
Julie: I enjoy teaching, traveling, and meeting people. When I was young and lived in Korea before my family immigrated to Canada, I did not have much time or

> **"I hope more people join KOTESOL and build good networks to create a better English education environment for EFL students and teachers."**

opportunities to travel around Korea. However, after I came back to Korea, I have been to many places, which I've enjoyed a lot. I especially fell in love with Jeju Island. As for my professional life, I used to teach from young children to teenagers at an English kindergarten and English institute. I also taught adults in a university continuing education program. Right now, I work at a university in Seoul where I teach general English to undergraduate students.

TEC: How and why did you first become involved in KOTESOL?
Julie: After coming back to Korea, I studied in a TESOL certificate program and for an MA in TESOL. After my studies, I heard about KOTESOL and participated initially as an attendee. At first, I did not know I could participate within the International Conference Committee. However, one of my friends introduced me to the ICC, and so I joined and became a member because I like organizing things and meeting new people.

TEC: What have been the biggest benefits to you since becoming involved with

KOTESOL?

Julie: It has been a good experience for me to be involved with KOTESOL because I met many good friends and participated in a variety of areas. I've been able to take advantage of new opportunities

such as learning about guest services, practicing communicating with many people, and organizing many conferences.

TEC: What contributions have you made to KOTESOL that you are the happiest about?

Julie: I've been happy to participate in KOTESOL as an ICC member: the communications coordinator and guest services manager.

TEC: What has been the most difficult thing for you as the ICC communications coordinator, and what has been the most rewarding?

Julie: As the ICC communications coordinator, I needed to communicate with many people and be in many places. These demands were pros and cons because I could learn new information and experience new cultures from those people I met. However, the most difficult thing for me was that I could not satisfy everyone's needs at once. To deal with this challenge, I always tried to plan ahead, make a checklist, and be ready for every job I needed to do.

TEC: In what directions do you think KOTESOL should move in the future?

Julie: I hope more people join KOTESOL and build good networks to create a better English education environment for EFL students and teachers.

TEC: If you were KOTESOL president, what three things would you want to change about the organization first?

Julie: I do not think we need to change things because our team is in good hands. Our team members interact very well and help each other to develop a better environment for everyone.

TEC: What session are you most looking forward to attending, or which speaker are you most looking forward to hearing at this year's IC?

Julie: I do not think I can attend any session during the conference because I need to be in the IC office to communicate with and help others. Even though I might not be able to attend any of the presentations, I hope that every attendee at the conference enjoys our big event and improves their knowledge and shares their ideas for teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL).

Editor's note: If there is a KOTESOL member that you would like to see highlighted in this feature, feel free to contact TEC at tec@koreatesol.org with your nomination.

> **"But I always thought that I wanted to go back to Korea to teach English to Koreans because I had had a hard time learning English at first, and so I could understand what a Korean student might feel when they studied English."**

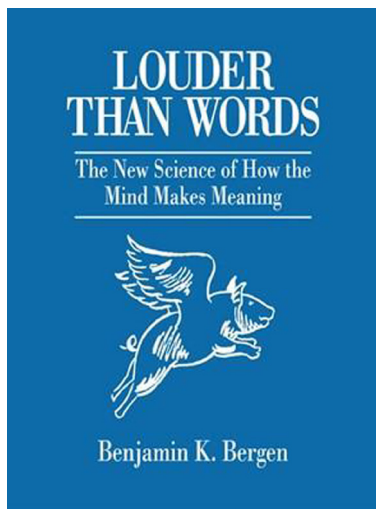## By Dr. Curtis Kelly

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.

In 2012, a book came out that I believe is bound to have a huge impact on TESL training. Ben Bergen's *Louder Than Words: The New Science of How the Mind Makes Meaning* is not the only book on embodied cognition, but it is the most relevant and accessible for us. In it, Bergen answers a question we have been asking for over a century: How does the brain process language? He has finally solved the mystery of how we make meaning. According to Bergen, who also summarizes the extensive research behind the theory, we process meaning through what he calls *embodied simulation*. "Embodied" does not refer to things happening in your body per se, but rather in the cortices that interact with your body: the visual, auditory, somatosensory, olfactory, and the motor cortices.

In short, when you hear or read a word, especially of an object or an action, the same neurons fire in your sensory cortices that would fire if you actually experienced that scenario. For example, within milliseconds of someone saying "a tiger jumped on the antelope," your brain is already subconsciously conjuring a visual image of a tiger in some African setting running and pouncing with outstretched claws. Your auditory cortex conjures the related sounds. At the same time, in order to understand "tiger jumping," your motor areas for pouncing and stretching fire up (unless, of course, you are from Detroit or Osaka, in which case you might be conjuring an enraged baseball player). In a similar fashion, the words "coffee" or "cinnamon" cause the olfactory cortex to light up (Gonzalez et al., 2006).

For language referring to actions, such as "he opened the door," networks in the motor cortex for the same muscle actions fire as well. They fire at a lower amplitude than when actually opening a door, so that your hands do not start flaying around. In other words, on hearing language, the same neural networks to process visual, auditory, speech, olfactory, and motor actions connected to whatever actions the word represents, fire again, as if we were actually doing or sensing that action. If this sounds similar to how mirror neurons work, you are right. We now know that what we identified as special mirror neurons in the nineties were really just regular neurons making meaning through simulation.

If interpreting words is a process of sensory simulation, then you might ask how we interpret words like "justice," "organized," or "peaceful" that do not seem to have sensory components. Actually, all the evidence indicates that they do. Lakoff and Johnson (2008) and Bergen (2012) explain that we make meaning for these concepts through metaphors. If you hear "Timberlake's velvety voice," your visual networks for trees and water will fire initially, and then for Justin. "Voice" will make that part of your motor area active and for metaphor, "velvety" will activate the somatosensory network for the feel of velvet. The latter has been demonstrated in fMRI research (Paul, 2012).

> "Language, a tool that gave us a huge evolutionary advantage in allowing us to shape affordances in others, is so complex that it is spread across the entire brain."

We can also simulate things that we have no real memory of, such as a "flying pig" (Bergen 2012), by amalgamating memories of flying and pigs (or for some people, English pubs). In fact, though we do not have the evidence to say for sure yet, it seems likely that all language processing might start with embodied simulation. I suspect that this might be the case, but after repeated simulation, the words or other conditions might become automaticized, maybe in the association cortex, and simulation plays a less important role. In fact, this automaticization of episodic memory might be the source of all semantic memory, not just that of language (Gluck et al., 2008).

The way our brain processes language, which has been called our "latest, greatest cognitive achievement" (Campbell, 2015b, p. 21), is an example of neural reuse, the finding that the brain, in order to learn complex things, cobbles existing parts together in a coalition. Language is a coalition too. To engage in language, the brain uses numerous sensory, motor, relational, cognitive, and emotional areas, all originally developed for other tasks. Language, a tool that gave us a huge evolutionary advantage in allowing us to shape affordances in others, is so complex that it is spread across the entire brain. That is why it does not make sense to say language is "located" in the Broca or Wernicke areas, or even in the left hemisphere, as once thought. In fact, talking about "where" things happen, as if there was a one-to-one correspondence between function and location in the brain is no longer appropriate. This is not to say that the Broca area does not have an important role in language – it is critical – but it is not just a language center. It is telling that the Broca area is also activated for other
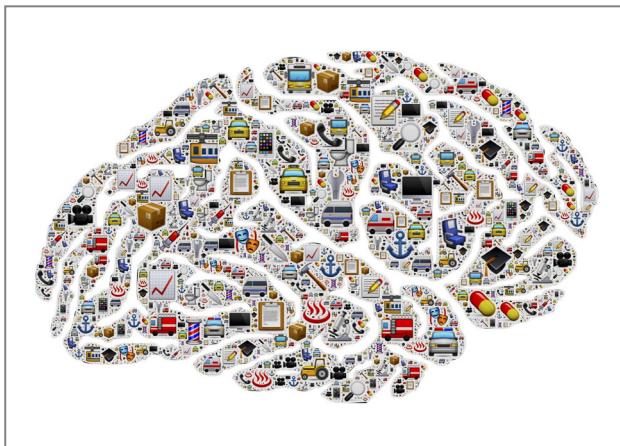
processing that has nothing to do with language, a fact we seemed to have glossed over in the past. Brain parts with certain processing abilities seem to be recruited for multiple, unrelated functions, rather than specific ones.

So what does this have to do with effective language teaching? We are not sure yet, but there are some implications. It is probably why multi-sensory input and rich narrative formats, as opposed to memorizing lists, are so effective in vocabulary learning. It might also explain how reading automatization occurs; it is the strengthening of sensory networks activated by language. It probably explains the reasons for L1–L2 errors, since L2 language representations get integrated into the same sensory networks that L1 representations are part of. It certainly explains the subvocalization (involuntary movements in the larynx and articulation muscles) that occurs during silent reading and listening, and also why subvocalization plays a role in short-term memory. It supports experiential learning. And finally, it fully validates the constructivist theories of learning and language, if they still really need validating. This is not to say Bergen's book does not have critics, but most of the criticism I have read is calling for broadening, rather than rejecting, the theory.

For me, Bergen's book was a godsend. I was always bothered by the hypothesis that the brain stores words

in separate, specific areas like a dictionary or computer does. This hypothesis does not fit the view of the brain as a network, in which everything is connected to everything else. And where would the brain store all those words? Bergen, along with Greenfield, Clark, and the neural reuse scientists, solves this problem. The neural network that fires for "a tiger running" reuses the sensory networks for cats in general, for colors in general, for running in general, and hungry in general. In fact, in reading that very phrase, you probably conjured a mental image of a tiger running that goes far beyond just the literal definitions of those words, one that was more sensory. You probably conjured a tiger running really fast, legs in the air, going a certain direction, doing so in a certain physical environment, having a certain look on its face.

Contrary to the dictionary model, language is sensory, and the networks overlap. The same neurons are used to make many meanings, but the particular configuration for any one meaning is also unique. Think of how the brain generates meaning as being like the way we write words. We use the same 26 letters for millions of words, but each has a unique configuration. We use the same networks for millions of memories, and meanings, but each has a unique configuration.

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Online Reflective Practice for TESOL Teachers

by Thomas S.C. Farrell

Introduction

With the constant advances in technology, TESOL teachers are increasingly participating in online reflective communities for their professional development, especially in Korea. These online communities are said to provide teachers with supportive and collaborative reflective discussions in which they can share teaching techniques, explore new ways of teaching, and pursue their individual interests related to their own professional development. This article explores the issue of how language teachers can communicate online as a means of facilitating their reflections on practice.
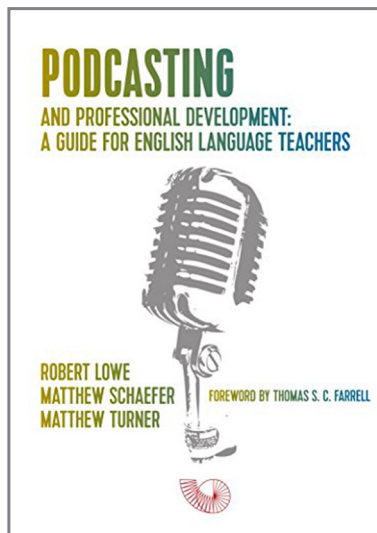
Online Reflection

Advances in technology have allowed teachers to become members of online communities that really signify the advent of second-generation uses (or Web 2.0) of the Internet rather than the "old" first-generation users (or Web 1.0 – such as this author). Whereas Web 1.0 was mostly one-way communication, Web 2.0 encourages more engaging two-way communication and has allowed any teacher with a computer to set up communication modes such as blogs, social networking sites, and wikis without much knowledge of technology. These types of communication offer more opportunities for teachers to connect with each other regardless of where they live in the world and, in such a manner, can offer support, mentorship, and the chance to engage in endless professional dialogue. There are now many online format methods (too many to cover in this article) that language teachers have at their disposal when looking to facilitate their reflections on practice such as blogs, social media (Twitter), and podcasts. In fact, research on language teachers' use of online formats to facilitate their engagement in reflective practice has revealed the following about such online formats (Farrell, 2018a):

• It combats teacher isolation.

• Teachers can discuss identity, beliefs, theory, practice and beyond practice.
• Teachers can get new ideas for practice.
• Teachers can share emotions as it allows for the socio-emotional dimension of a learning community.
• Users can experience a sense of camaraderie.
• It promotes collaborative learning.

Blogs

Blogs are probably the easiest to set up by language teachers who have little expertise in the technological skills needed for more complicated formats and are a way for teachers to express and share their thoughts, emotions, opinions, and reflections online with other professionals. Blogs can be easily updated when the teacher wants to add further thoughts, opinions, and reflections. Some teachers can read other, more established blogs to help them in their reflections, such as in Korea, with Michael Griffin's wonderful blog, *ELT Rants, Reviews, and Reflections.* Michael states in his blog that he is "hoping to share and develop my thoughts about ELT and teacher development" and after reading some of his entries, I think he has more than accomplished this. Language teacher educators are also now using blogs in teacher education courses more often to help student teachers to reflect on theory and practice, and report that the results of blogging are largely positive as blogs provide powerful organizational forums for online expression and most pre-service teachers are willing to continue blogging when they

> "Twitter has brought many language teachers from all over the globe together and can be a positive means of pursuing professional development for teachers, but I believe it is not without its problems."

begin their teaching careers. Although blogs have begun to wane somewhat in ELT since the early 2000s, they are nevertheless still used by teachers and teacher educators as a means of self-discovery and reflection, and are still an important means of pursuing and continuing professional development.

Twitter

Social media has taken the world by storm, as well as the ELT world, with many language teachers in different countries having their own Twitter accounts. Twitter is fast becoming very popular as a form of communication and interaction for language teachers in many different contexts. Teachers also use Twitter when seeking advice about a particular way to teach one of the skills, to undertake research, or to find out if others had similar experiences with a particular method of teaching. Twitter has brought many language teachers from all over the globe together and can be a positive means of pursuing professional development for teachers, but I believe it is not without its problems as I outlined in my previous TEC article "[The Problem] with Reflective Practice Is That It Often Ends Up in the Teacher's Head, not Shared": Reflecting on TESOL Twitter Bites" (Farrell, 2017).

Podcasts

In their recent book, *Podcasting and Professional Development: A Guide for English Language Teachers,* Rob Lowe, Matthew Schaefer, and Matthew Turner (2017) have written extensively about the use of podcasts as an important means for language teachers to engage in personal reflections and, if they want, to share these reflections with a worldwide audience. I was honored to be asked to write the forward to this book, and I learned a lot from reading it. They suggest that teachers can individually, or in collaboration with what they call co-podcasters, record their thoughts online as a means of promoting self-reflection and professional development. Most importantly, they suggested that teachers can use podcasting for the purposes of professional development, some of which are improving teaching ability, improving teacher talk, and developing reflective learners. They have created their own podcast called *TEFLology*, and I was honored to have been interviewed by the authors when I was in Tokyo recently. This interview is available at https://teflology-podcast.com/2015/08/19/tefl-interviews-13-thomas-farrell-on-reflective-practice-in-tesol/

Conclusion

This article has outlined and discussed the use of online tools to facilitate and promote reflective practice for language teachers, such as blogs, chats, Twitter from social media, and podcasts, to name but a few (from Farrell, 2018b). Many of these can be used in conjunction with other modes of reflection such as online journals, online communities of practice with teacher group discussions to share, discuss, evaluate, reflect, and promote the professional development of language

> "[Web 2.0] types of communication offers more opportunities for teachers to connect with each other regardless of where they live in the world and can offer them support, mentorship, and the chance to engage in endless professional dialogue."

teachers. Such an online community of teachers can extend reflective practice beyond the normal face-to-face interactions and trigger reflection within a wider community of practice that has a global reach.

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