

The English Connection

A Korea TESOL Publication

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Canlao on owning your own English
Bryan Alkema code-switching in the classroom
Wong on presentation pronunciation
Casey Lartigue Jr. on his organization teaching North Korean refugees
Peter Jinsuk Byun on speaking fluency activities
and Kimberley Roberts' newbie review of the 2019 IC

Regular Columns

The Brain Connection: Dr. Curtis Kelly
The Reflection Connection: Dr. Thomas Farrell

And...

Contrasting Views in ESL:
Lisak and Fusselman debate culturally responsive teaching



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KOTESOL

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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.

Editorial: *The ET in ELT*

By **Dr. Andrew White** Editor-in-Chief, *The English Connection*

I'm not here to convince the vast majority of you – my fellow EFL educators whom with me have long since realized the sole and guiding purpose of our teaching profession. With you I stand proud and resolute. No, this is an admonishment of the few remaining laggards and ignorant so-called teachers cowardly hiding amongst us who have not yet taken up the teaching campaign we so passionately must share with our yearning English language learners. Yes, we all know the dire threat: space aliens.

Of course space aliens need no introduction, as I'm sure your opinions have been reinforced by my accompanied series of YouTube videos, links to my website *www.ETinELT*, and teaching blogs *Area 51 for NonNative Speakers* and *The A.B.C.s through U.F.O.s*. Recent footage of alien spacecraft playing hide-and-seek with U.S. Navy pilots just cements the truth. The threat is now beyond real. Space aliens are amongst us.

We have matured from those naive and rudimentary times, when language teaching was merely thought as improving our students' accuracy and fluency in a second language, using building blocks of grammar and vocabulary to increase proficiency. No, it seems laughable as I recall those misguided early years of our profession, empty of our true mission, when language could ignorantly be categorized into four basic skills, and students could [snicker snicker] improve by self-created content and learner-centered discourse.

We have since carried the movement that language education requires treating learners as whole beings in society, and there is no greater threat to those beings in society than alien beings. We embrace our students' individuality, be it on race, gender, nationality, social class, religion, generation, IQ, disability, and realize there's no possible way a teacher can accommodate (let alone understand) all of them, so therefore should ignore them all, and join in cultural unity that one thing which brings us together in this world, and that is an invasion from out of this world, from space aliens. When this common bond of space alien infiltration is exposed, classmates can march in brotherhood and sisterhood towards foreign language success. This is the true underlying message of ELT teaching that must guide us in shaping our learners' language needs.

Of course, there's been backlash from a vocal and rogue "neutralist" minority (given false courage by graduate degrees in English education and linguistics, and decades of teaching experience), that so-called "Big C, little c" culture be left out of the language classroom, as it might reveal a teacher's personal bias and covert agenda. Rather, these traitors of our profession believe language be taught through a planned and structured methodology of comprehensible input, slowly pushing cognitive demands with motivated interaction and controlled output (and a bunch of other TESOL mumbo jumbo), with the result being students somehow show gains in second language acquisition and learning. To these fakers, I say, leave the science out of the classroom! Direct Method is the answer (always was), and with the variety of teaching resources now available (*Men in Black*, *Independence Day*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, to name a few) just press play and rest assured; students will pick up the language if they truly want it, while getting the true message they didn't yet realize they need. Krashen's immersion method is all an informed educator needs to know (plus a bit of Manufactured Consent).

It's a no-win situation being a language teacher nowadays. "C/cultural free" classrooms claim to be focused on language teaching, with specious teachers assuming students are paying money and attending classes with a desire to actually learn to communicate in a language. Enough with the charade! We know our mantras. If you're not teaching the truth about space aliens, you're teaching that space aliens aren't worthy of classroom time. Omission is a tacit message that it's not important enough to teach, so we might as well go all in and show our true colors as teachers, with the choices that matter most to our hungry pupils. Do you want to be called out and criticized by your lack of teaching content when judgment day comes, caught with an empty curriculum that supports the diminished status quo? No, I didn't think so. Space aliens are the elephant in the (class)room, and the only choice that matters.

With our content firmly in place, administrative petitions are our next step, requiring all language teaching courses be given their proper titles: *General Conversation and Space Aliens*, *Reading Comprehension and Space Aliens*, *Pronunciation and Space Aliens*... I think you see the direction we must go.

Empower learners for the challenges they have ahead, for foreign language success! And may the force be with you!



President's Message

By **Lindsay Herron** President, Korea TESOL

As 2019 draws to a close, I'm delighted to take this opportunity to look back on the year and reflect on what a truly impressive year it's been for KOTESOL. From stellar conferences at the regional, national, and international levels to new, progressive initiatives for the organization, the past twelve months have highlighted how dynamic and perspicacious KOTESOL can be – and how dedicated and energetic our volunteers are!

In the spring semester, the Jeonju-North Jeolla Chapter hosted an outstanding national conference featuring ELT luminary Dr. Jack C. Richards as the plenary speaker. With a theme of "Motiva(c)tion: Sparking Learner Motivation in Our Evolving Context," the conference also offered forty concurrent presentations and six poster presentations, drawing an audience of nearly two hundred attendees from around the nation. The spring term also included our annual chapter presidents meeting, which was conducted for the first time via videoconference, to rave reviews; and the Gwangju-Jeonnang, Seoul, and Busan-Gyeongnam Chapters all hosted regional conferences that were very well received.



The fall semester featured the Reflective Practice SIG's Day of Reflection 2019, as well as outstanding regional conferences hosted by the Yongin, Daejeon-Chungcheong, and Daegu-Gyeongbuk Chapters. Of course, the biggest event of the autumn was the 27th Korea TESOL International Conference, held October 12 and 13 at Sookmyung Women's University in Seoul. The conference theme this year was "Advancing ELT: Blending Disciplines, Approaches, and Technologies," and the plenary speakers were Dr. Rod Ellis and Dr. Andrew D. Cohen. Our international conference is routinely the largest ELT event in the nation, and this year was no exception; the 2019 conference boasted more than two hundred presentations and attracted nearly eight hundred people from twenty-three countries.

Also at the international conference, KOTESOL finalized a new domestic partnership with GETA, the Global English Teachers Association, and a plethora of awards were announced. In addition to our regular recognitions for service to the organization, we initiated several major new awards this year. The inaugural KOTESOL Teacher of the Year Award was presented to Dr. Kara Mac Donald, an associate professor at the Defense Language Institute (USA). Kara is a lifetime member of KOTESOL, editor-in-chief of the *Korea TESOL Journal*, and a past recipient of the KOTESOL President's Award in recognition of her service to the organization. Our second annual Research Paper of the Year Award went to Michael D. Smith of Kwansei Gakuin University (Japan) for a paper entitled "Centre-Periphery Agency Dynamics During Linguistic Imperialism: An Investigation of Korean Perspectives" published in the *Korea TESOL Journal*, 14(1). Dr. Thomas S.C. Farrell also sponsored an award this year, the Thomas Farrell Reflective Language Teacher Award, which was presented to Dr. Yeonseong Park, who has been active in the Gwangju-Jeonnang Chapter's local Reflective Practice SIG since its formation. Dr. Farrell was the recipient of an award, himself: the KOTESOL Patron's Award, presented for only the second time in the organization's history by the president in recognition of exceptionally generous contributions in various forms.

Finally, our organization is always looking forward and seeking new ideas to ensure we are a welcoming space offering community and professionalism. Accordingly, this past year saw the creation of the People of Color Teachers SIG, the Women and Gender Equality SIG, a Diversity Committee, and the KOTESOL Code of Conduct, initiatives commensurate with the organization's ongoing dedication to the values of respect, equity, inclusion, and belonging. Our Team-Building and Connections Day, too, saw a wide-range of attendees connecting on a personal and professional level as they shared inspiring visions and ideas for KOTESOL in the coming year and beyond.

Speaking of the coming year, 2020 is burgeoning with promise! The spring term features regional conferences in Gwangju, Jeonju, and Seoul, and the 2020 KOTESOL National Conference will be held at Kyungnam University in Masan. And in June, KOTESOL members can look forward to a special opportunity to participate in the 2020 Asia TEFL international conference, which will be held in Goyang.

It's been a busy, wonderful year, and 2020 seems as if it will be outstanding, as well. We look forward to seeing you at a KOTESOL event soon!



CONGRATULATIONS

to the 2019 award recipients
and newly elected officers

KOTESOL SERVICE AWARDS PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Lindsay Herron

OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARDS

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KOTESOL Patron's Award

Thomas S.C. Farrell

Special Appreciation Award

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AWARD RECIPIENTS

Research Paper of the Year Award

Michael D. Smith

Teacher of the Year Award

Kara Mac Donald

Thomas Farrell Reflective Language Teacher Award

Yeonseong Park

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English – Mine, Yours, and Ours: Enabling All Learners to Own It for a Purpose

By Maria Luz Elena N. Canilao

My English may not mirror yours because you and I probably belong to diverse backgrounds. My grammar may not reflect yours because you and I most likely follow different standards. My accent may not echo yours because you and I certainly possess distinct voices. While you and I may not speak the exact variety of English, we co-own the English language. It is mine, yours, and ours, and it is the valuable bridge that connects us. We own English for a purpose. We use it to share our ideas with the world and to reach out to people from various cultures and learn with them. We incorporate it into our linguistic repertoires, and combine it with other languages, to enhance the way we communicate. We employ it in writing creative masterpieces, and composing academic papers, to provide critical and insightful comments on different aspects of life and society. We access, acquire, and appropriate it to advocate and make things happen locally and globally.

Enabling *all* learners to own English for a purpose is a challenging task, especially if many perceive it to be a language that can only belong to an exclusive circle of speakers. No particular group can monopolize it, and it is a common language that any speaker may adopt. This stance reflects the Global Englishes (Galloway & Rose, 2015; Jenkins, 2015) orientation that espouses a deeper evaluation of English language teaching (ELT) paradigms, and further innovation of teaching policies and practices. This view invites ELT stakeholders to examine conventional approaches and explore alternative methods to make language learning more relevant and meaningful for students in the 21st century.

Moreover, it is vital for the ELT community to recognize that language is “a fundamental attribute of cultural identity and empowerment” (UNESCO, 2003, p. 16). Graddol (2006) contends that “as English becomes widely used as a global language, it will become expected that speakers will signal their nationality, and other aspects of their identity, through English” (p. 117). He also argues that a “lack of a native-speaker accent will not be seen... as a sign of poor competence” (p. 117). These language views suggest the importance of promoting linguistic diversity and equality in the classroom. Thus, exposing students to English varieties and offering them different models of English is vital (Harmer, 2007). Instead of being fixated on the mastery of language norms, teachers should enhance learners’ language awareness, which will enable them to communicate strategically and effectively with speakers from different cultures (Ruby & Saraceni, 2006; Canagarajah, 2013).

In today’s borderless world, teachers have to make sure that learners understand that English use varies across contexts. If a particular variety of English is privileged in the classroom, then learners may begin to look down on other varieties. If varieties are not accepted in the

classroom, students not speaking the privileged variety are automatically marginalized. They may suffer from linguistic insecurity and become voiceless and powerless. Park (2015), for instance, describes how Koreans may experience “*junuk*, a strong sense of inferiority and inadequacy that paralyzes a person confronting a superior or powerful figure” (p. 63; citing Park, 2012) when it comes to using English.

On the other hand, students who speak the privileged variety may start to believe that it is the only legitimate kind. They may ridicule classmates and other speakers who do not sound like them. These students may keep this mentality and unknowingly spread and foster linguistic discrimination. Tension may arise among learners, and English may become a barrier between them. A study I conducted (Canilao, forthcoming) reveals the linguistic rifts existent in ELT tertiary settings in several Philippine regions because dominant clusters have the tendency to mock classmates who belong to minority groups for speaking English varieties that deviate from what is considered acceptable.

How do I promote linguistic diversity and equality in my classes, and enable all of my students to “own” English for a purpose? I incorporate activities that sharpen awareness and encourage them to acknowledge English varieties. For instance, in my English communication courses, I discuss the power of language and the importance of acknowledging “Englishes” that various groups use. We explore verbal and non-verbal communication norms that are popular in their regions and in other cultures. We talk about the various ways of pronouncing simple words and expressions such as *yes*, *schedule*, *dog*, *stop*, *good day*, and *good morning* based on our observations and experiences. We consider alternative spellings of *center*, *color*, and *theater*, and list the words that are used for common concepts in different countries (e.g., *toilet* – *loo*, *john*, *CR* – *comfort room*, *WC* – *water closet*, *washroom*).

We analyze how language is used by online writers, compare how subject-verb agreement rules are applied, and discuss why they differ. Why does BBC (2014) state “Germany win the 2014 FIFA World Cup...” and not “Germany wins...,” and why does CNN (McKirdy, 2014) report “Germany erupts with joy as 24-year World Cup wait comes to an end” and not “Germany erupt...”? Furthermore, we watch films representing different English speakers and note that characters speak “varied Englishes.” We discover that soccer in one context is *football* in another and that *football* has multiple meanings and interpretations. We then identify English expressions that are unique to our cultures. I tell students that in the Philippines, we “open and close” everything. Instead of saying “turn on or turn off,” Filipinos usually say, “Open/Close the light/the computer/the radio.” We exchange stories about how we communicate with locals when we

visit other countries, and share the language conventions and expressions we learn. Through these activities, they realize that English belongs to everyone, and they have every right to own it.

They also have to be reminded that owning it does not mean privileging it or forgetting their first language (L1) in the process. In fact, their L1 may help facilitate the learning of English and enhance it. I still remember one of my Korean students who showed me the power of using linguistic resources in developing ideas for composition. He spoke English fluently during class discussions and aced writing tasks frequently. After evaluating his final exam, I discovered his secret: His draft was filled with Korean script. Writing a draft was optional on that writing exam, and it was not part of the assessment process. He opted to develop his draft using his L1 to generate ideas. His final work in English was outstanding, and it was done with the help of the Korean language. A colleague in the field of writing had advised me to encourage students to use their L1 in developing drafts, if it would aid and motivate them. I finally believed her, and my epiphany led to the adoption of “translanguaging” and “translingual” practices, which involve the use of “code-switching” and translation as pedagogical tools and rhetorical devices (Garcia, 2009; Canagarajah, 2013).



Since then, I have allowed students to use their L1 and other languages as resources in honing their English communication skills and inspiring them to own the language for a purpose. I have also observed the spirit of collaboration among learners as a shy speaker recited more frequently and confidently after receiving the support of classmates. When running out of words in English, he conveyed his ideas in Japanese, and other Japanese classmates willingly helped and supplied equivalent expressions in English. My Filipino students did the same thing in class when they sensed that other Filipino classmates needed assistance in expressing their thoughts. Permitting my students to use other languages in the classroom has reduced the affective filter (Krashen, 1981) that usually serves as an obstacle to English language learning. Moreover, letting them incorporate local words and expressions in their compositions through “code-meshing” (Canagarajah, 2013) has enabled them to assert their cultural identities and enrich their writing.

These teaching encounters and experiences removed the veil that used to blind me from seeing how creative students are in learning language. I used to focus on all errors and pour my efforts into correcting mistakes. I

used to think that allowing them to use other varieties of English and languages would impede the learning process. Now, I wear a new set of lenses with an appreciation of students’ resourceful attempts to enhance communication skills and an understanding of the collective process that “owning English” for a purpose entails. I provide venues for students to express themselves using their own varieties of English and opportunities to learn conventional varieties that they are expected to use in other academic courses and chosen disciplines. I teach them *my English*, *your English*, and *our English* to help them become responsive and dynamic communicators who embrace and advocate linguistic diversity and equality.

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Code-Switching in the EFL Classroom

By Bryan Alkema

Picture this: It's Friday afternoon and, at the end of a long week, your students are having some problems focusing. Outside, a warm breeze is blowing. Before class, you cracked the windows open, and now the sounds of the street are drifting in. You've given your students a speaking activity and you're walking around the room. As you move from one table, you realize that at a couple of other tables students are speaking in Korean. The question is this: How are you going to respond?

The term *code-switching* (Gumperz, 1977) has become widely-used and the question of what a code is has become somewhat complex; for the purposes of this article, a code is nothing more specific than the use of one language, and code-switching is the movement between two different languages. This article suggests that such code-switching, within an EFL context, is unavoidable for our students, and can be utilized as an effective method for reaching certain classroom goals.

Code-Switching Is Unavoidable

This point seems obvious, but can be easily overlooked. I teach language classes at Handong Global University; the goal of the language program is to develop students' abilities in academic discourse, including written papers, presentations, and discussions. On a regular basis, I need to remind myself that, outside of my classroom, the majority of my students are using their native language (Korean, of course) as their operating language: the language they use to get things done. Therefore, my students must switch – code-switch – to the target language (English, of course) when they enter the classroom. Our classes are, in essence, 75-minute code-switches for our students, and that is important for us as teachers to remember – especially those of us who are teaching our first language as the target language for our students. In short, we are not actually teaching English; we are teaching a second language, which happens to

be English! Our students often enter our classrooms speaking Korean, they shift to English when we start the class, and they go back to speaking their first language again on their way out the door. Since code-switching is an unavoidable necessity for our EFL classes, we would arguably do better to teach our students relevant skills about how, when, and why to move between languages so that they can do it well.

In short, second language assumes – and in fact cannot ignore – first language. Those of us who teach teenagers, university students, or adults can effectively use first language as a springboard to quickly develop second language. When teaching vocabulary, it is important to remember that most of the concepts are already known by our students – all we need to do is provide a new (second-language) term for a concept already known (in their first language) by our students. Similarly, speech act theory – the idea that language is used to complete identifiable purposes – can be used effectively in this regard: Since students are already familiar with the type of interaction (such as giving advice, or requesting information, or giving directions), all they need to do in our classes is to learn the specific words or grammatical structures necessary to complete that interaction in their second language. The conclusion of this approach is that, since students bring existing resources into our classrooms – in their first language – code-switching can be an effective method of accessing those resources. A Korean word judiciously used to build upon students' existing knowledge can save precious classroom time and bolster the corresponding new vocabulary for our students.

Code-Switching Is Effective

Before delving into this second point, it is important to examine what we as teachers are trying to do in our classes because beliefs are an important foundation for pedagogy and methodology. My own approach is that, in a classroom, teachers can and should develop three attributes of students in regard to the target language: *knowledge, skills, and attitudes*. A successful student within this framework is a student who combines declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, and the willingness to communicate.

Declarative knowledge describes what is known: for example, that past tense for regular verbs is done by attaching *-ed* onto the verb stem, or that this *-ed* ending can be pronounced as /d/, /t/, or /ɪd/. Procedural knowledge, on the other hand, is what a student can do in a real situation with this knowledge, such as describing their actions of the just-past weekend to a classmate on Monday morning. When learning a language (first, second, or third), there is often a gap between declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge, and that gap can be frustrating for both students and teachers. Finally, willingness to communicate is an individual attribute that



can be encouraged by the teacher, although it remains the overall possession – and the responsibility – of the student.

How does code-switching relate to this three-part framework of knowledge, skills, and attitudes? Simply stated, use of L1 is not productive for developing L2 skills, but it can be very helpful in developing both knowledge and attitudes. This distinction provides a useful paradigm for determining how to respond to the use of the first language in a second-language classroom. Most of the activities within an EFL classroom should be focused on skill-building, of course – more than within an ESL classroom because of the lack of out-of-class reinforcement opportunities. When students are involved in a skill-building or reinforcement activity, code-switching is not optimal because the target language, rather than the first language, needs to be reinforced. However, when presenting new knowledge, or working to improve student attitudes toward the target language, code-switching – by both teacher and students – may be an effective way to complete class goals. A couple of examples drawn from real-life situations are provided below.

Example 1: Changing Knowledge >>> Vocabulary Needed for Task Completion

While learning Korean, I used the computer program Rosetta Stone. This program is firmly grounded on ESL principles and never provides direct translation, instead presenting new words in the target language multiple times. This is an important survival skill for ESL learners but is not useful for EFL students who will not encounter English vocabulary outside of the classroom, nor is it realistic for EFL teachers facing severe time constraints. Nation and Coady (1988) suggest that several (7–10) meaningful encounters are needed to lock new vocabulary words into long-term memory. Certainly deducing or inferring the meaning of a new word can be a meaningful encounter (although I personally find that technique to be highly frustrating and would often consult a Korean-English dictionary while using Rosetta Stone), but that is also a time-consuming process.

In contrast, while teaching an intermediate four-skills class, I used the following activity. The students were in their second semester of university and coming up on the winter vacation. To both develop their reading skills

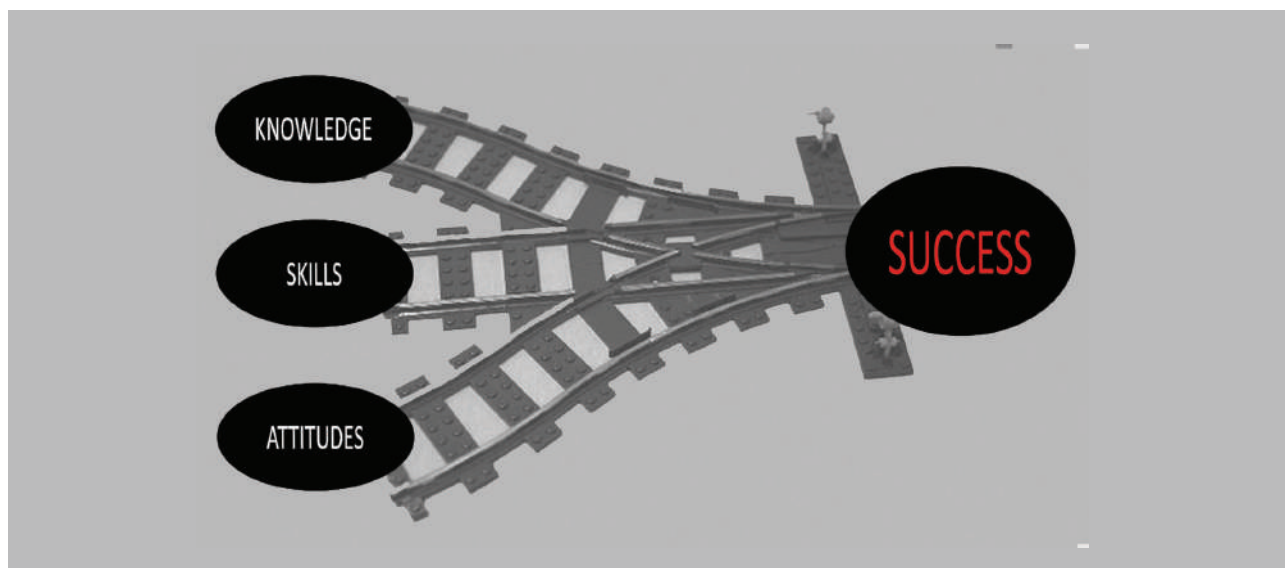
“Since code-switching is an unavoidable necessity for our EFL classes, we would arguably do better to teach our students relevant skills about how, when, and why to move between languages so that they can do it well.”

and prepare for an upcoming paragraph-writing activity, I wrote a paragraph that described the three-week intensive classes available during the winter vacation; the hope was that by combining a clear paragraph structure with an authentic and useful message, they would be able to benefit from both content and form. However, the word “intensive” was unknown to the majority of my students. Therefore, the paragraph opened with these sentences: “Have you thought about taking an intensive class (계절학기 수업) during the winter vacation? Students should know that intensive classes are different from regular classes because of the rapid pace, the necessity of completing daily tasks, and the ability to focus on one subject.”

This short and simple written code-switch enabled students to overcome and benefit from the overall meaning of the paragraph; a follow-up discussion activity (“Are you interested in taking an intensive class this winter?”) provided a meaningful encounter with the translated term, and there was almost no time or frustration involved.

Example 2: Changing Attitudes >>> Negotiation for Meaning

I have often seen students fumbling for words in discussion activities, and sometimes that fumbling can derail a promising conversation. Recently, I gave my



students this discussion topic: "Tell your group about a gift you received, and describe how you felt." This was intended to be a fluency-building activity – there was no special grammar feature or vocabulary to be used in the conversation. One student began, and then another chimed in. "When I was in middle school," he began, "my parents gave me a... a..." He paused, and then, remembering a discussion strategy I had taught them the previous week, he turned to a classmate. "How do you say 자전거 in English?" "Bicycle," the other student said. The speaker went on: "My parents gave me a bicycle, and I felt so happy!" Rather than allowing this one word to become an obstacle, the student was able to effectively ask another student for help through code-switching. This type of technique is highly relevant to EFL classrooms since it allows students to help each other without needing to wait for the teacher.

From Theory to Practice

We began with a hypothetical situation: You've given your students a discussion activity and you realize that students at two different tables have code-switched and are now speaking Korean. How do you respond? Within the framework presented above, a well-constructed response will depend on determining why the students have shifted languages. If the students have done so to avoid a skill-building activity, then the effective EFL teacher will gently – but firmly – redirect them to the target language. "Your Korean is already really good. I want to speak Korean as well as you do! But right now, I'd like you to work on improving your second language by practicing this activity."

On the other hand, the students may be trying to use their first language to assist the second-language learning process. One student may be trying to help another to comprehend the purpose or method of the specific activity or to understand a key vocabulary word. In this case, the EFL teacher can either spend time assisting this process in the target language or consider allowing the students to quickly complete the knowledge phase in L1 so that they can move on to the skill-building process in L2. Redirection may be necessary – there is always a risk that students who switch to L1 may not switch back to L2

– but this approach allows the EFL teacher to achieve maximum results of skill-development from minimal investments of time and energy.

Conclusion

Use of L1 to scaffold L2 is not the only workable method of teaching, of course, and certainly not the tool I use the most in my own classroom. My goal in writing this article is not to require everyone to use code-switching, but to describe it as one option – among many – available to EFL teachers. EFL teachers and classrooms may not be best served by a strict "English-only" policy; rather, since code-switching is inevitable, part of our responsibility as teachers is to train our students in how to code-switch responsibly and effectively for legitimate and authentic purposes.

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Putting Pronunciation into Context for Student Presentations

by Kalina Wong

Why Teach Pronunciation?

There are many reasons why you should teach pronunciation; the two most common reasons being the context in which pronunciation presents itself, such as within the school's curriculum and the learners' perceived need for pronunciation instruction. When pronunciation is integrated into the curriculum, we sometimes shy away from teaching this or gloss over this part of the lesson as we ourselves do not quite understand pronunciation and how to teach it. For various reasons, pronunciation instruction seems to be undervalued in the ESL/EFL classroom. It is not given the reasonably required time to best help students with speaking skills required for a speaking exam, yet students are explicitly graded on it.

It is important to clarify with the student right at the beginning why they might need pronunciation lessons. What part of pronunciation do they want help with? What is their end goal? A recurring dialogue that happens when students ask for help with their pronunciation is something like the following:

- Student: I have a problem with pronunciation.
Teacher: Why do you think that?
Student: My classmates can't understand me (or "My teacher told me").
Teacher: What part of pronunciation do you have a problem with?

When students ask for pronunciation help, my first thought is to go to the phonemic chart. They would like help with a specific sound. Is it possible to have English learners who can make all the sounds on the phonemic chart but still have trouble being understood? Yes! As students explain what they think their problem with pronunciation is, it is generally not a problem with phonemes but with linking, intonation, and/or stress.

ESL learners speak with accents in varying degrees, which should not be mistaken for pronunciation issues. However, when communicating, intelligibility is key for the listener to understand what is trying to be conveyed. Good pronunciation also enhances the communication between non-native English speakers, where contextual cues may not reinforce thoughts and ideas within a conversation.

Current Research

Current research states that there is an increasing amount of English spoken between non-native speakers. Because of this, pronunciation instruction should begin with the aspects of pronunciation that affect the listener's comprehension the most (Fraser, 2001). It is more important that speakers of English can achieve *intelligibility* (i.e., the speaker produces sound patterns that are recognizable in English), *comprehensibility* (i.e., the listener is able to understand the meaning of what is being said), and *interpretability* (i.e., the listener is

able to understand the purpose of what is said; Derwing, 2008). This is done through teaching the suprasegmental features of English pronunciation, as this appears to have more impact on overall intelligibility and comprehensibility (rather than segmental features) and carries a higher communicative load (Derwing, 2008; see Figure 1).

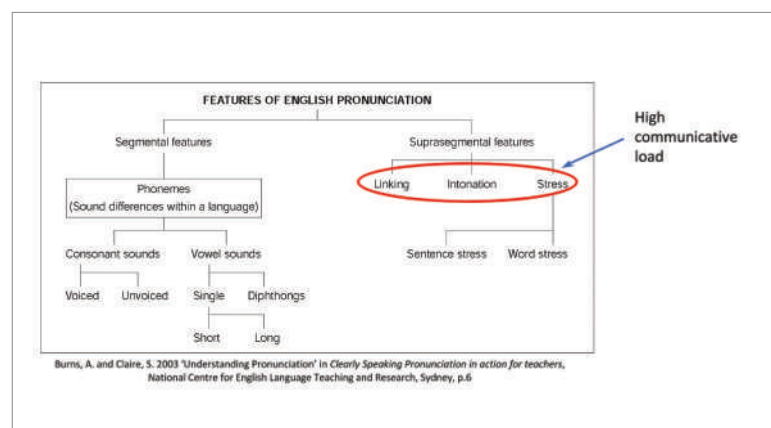


Figure 1. Features of English Pronunciation.

When researching presentation skills, it was found that content, visual aids, non-verbal cues, and word choice were commonly focused on, whereas pronunciation was rarely acknowledged. Consequently, I pulled together different aspects of pronunciation into lessons and put them into the context of giving presentations to make it clearer to students how pronunciation works as a whole, rather than as individual units.

“As students explain what they think their problem with pronunciation is, it is generally not a problem with phonemes but with linking, intonation, and/or stress.”

Warm-Ups

Like any exercise, one needs to warm up their mouth before presenting. This includes students being able to control their breathing to produce the desired sounds. The lungs are larger at the bottom (as is the rib cage), which allows expansion. This allows the diaphragm to move down, making space for the lungs to expand downwards. The abdomen can then control the outgoing air and keep

a steady flow through the larynx, making it easier to produce sounds. It is also important for students to be aware of what is happening inside and outside of their mouth.

Breathing Exercise: Breathe in and breathe out, while sustaining a hiss for as long as you can. Try to stretch your breath for longer in your next breath.

Lip Exercise: Smile, pucker, smile, pucker...
Practice: "Pretty pink ball bounces beautifully."

If you are breathing properly, you should be able to make *all* the sounds without running out of breath.

Notice your lip movements are different between the /p/ and the /b/.

Jaw Exercise: Pretend to chew, open the mouth, and rotate the jaw.

Practice: "aay-eee aay-eee aay-eee eighteen."

Feel the position of your jaw. Notice the up, down, and side-to-side movements.

Tongue Exercise: Flick the tongue.

Practice: "t t t t t t t tongue twisters twist tongues" and "la la la la la la la Lucy loves lemon lollies."

Notice the position of the tongue within the mouth.

How is "la" different than /t/?

Flexibility Exercise: Practice: /b/ /d/ /g/, /g/ /d/ /b/, /p/ /t/ /k/, /k/ /t/ /p/, /m/ /n/ /ŋ/, /ŋ/ /n/ /m/.

Notice the different movements of your mouth for the three sounds.

Presentation Considerations

When presenting, there are a few pronunciation features to consider that will help students get their message across. These include signposting, pausing, starting high and finishing low (intonation), stressing keywords, and linking. Discourse markers are words or phrases that we use to connect, organize, and manage what we say. Hence, these words are often stressed or exaggerated. Pausing after keywords informs the listener to pay attention. However, too many pauses may come across as a lack of confidence.

With intonation, it is possible for students to present using only falling intonation and rising intonation. Falling intonation when ending a statement (The focus of the lecture today is the role of leaders.) or expressing certainty (They need to be firm, yes.) and rising intonation when providing a list (Firstly, I will talk about...) or through incomplete sentences (The rise in sea levels is a result of...).

There are a variety of ways that speech is linked in English. The most commonly taught is catenation, in which one word ends in a consonant and the next word begins with a vowel. However, other linking patterns are just as important for students to help them achieve natural speech patterns. These include the following:

Assimilation: Where a word ends in a consonant and the next word begins with a consonant and the words are difficult to say one after the other; a new sound is made to help with the flow of speech.

Elisions: Where sounds disappear when a word ends in a consonant and the next word begins with a consonant; usually the first sound disappears.

Intrusives: Where two vowels meet and either the phoneme /r/, /j/, or /w/ is often introduced to ease transition to the following vowel sound.

"When presenting, there are a few pronunciation features to consider that will help students get their message across. These include signposting, pausing, starting high and finishing low (intonation), stressing key words, and linking."

Geminates: When a word ends in a consonant and the next word begins with the same consonant; linking naturally occurs.

Lesson Considerations

When designing a lesson, pronunciation features must be relevant to the needs of the student. Lessons require flexibility from class to class and student to student. I have found that by using the same text for each pronunciation feature, students can focus on the pronunciation aspects rather than the vocabulary or the grammar of the text.

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KOTESOL News and Happenings

Growing Bonds: A Partnership Between Korea TESOL and Mongolia TESOL

by Candace Lake-Ejim

“Transforming ELT in the Digital Era” was the theme of the English Language Teachers’ Association of Mongolia (ELTAM) 9th TESOL International Conference. Recently partnered with KOTESOL, ELTAM/Mongolia TESOL hosted its annual conference September 27–29, 2019, in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. As the representative of Korea TESOL to this conference, I witnessed first-hand the passion and efforts of the Mongolian instructors, in

collaboration with the U.S. Peace Corps, English Language Fellows (ELF), and Fulbright scholarship program members, to increase not just English language but general education standards in their country. This includes students in the main city of Ulaanbaatar, but most especially, those that live

in the rural areas of Mongolia, receiving non-traditional schooling.

During the opening ceremony, the head of the organizing committee, Mira Nasrai, spoke on how much the conference has grown and participants have increased over the years. The conference started with 40 presenters nine years ago and proudly had more than 160 presenters this year, with keynote and plenary speakers from the United States and Malaysia, Drs. Diane Larsen-Freeman and Cynthia Yolanda Doss. The ELT field is growing with the help of several programs out of the United States and the knowledge that English will help Mongolians in many ways.

Following the conference theme, the presentations I attended shared different approaches to using technology as a means to support classroom and curriculum objectives. There was such excitement in sharing ideas that could be used for both traditional and non-traditional schools, as well as classroom accounts from the students to get better insight into how they felt about using the technology. There was a lot of positive feedback.

Global Collaboration from ELF

One of the programs aiding and educating many



▲ Presenters’ Reception Participants.

Mongolian teachers is the English Language Fellows (ELF) program. Instructors working in rural parts of China traveled to the ELTAM conference to share ideas that have worked for them in their classrooms, many of which are similar to those Mongolia is trying to establish.

One such instructor is Damien Shuck, an active member with the ELF program currently teaching in China. With a background in creative writing, he uses this experience to teach technical and business writing (such as filling out job applications), as well as general English speaking and writing skills to Chinese university students. He enjoys using humor in his classroom and stresses the importance of using materials students will enjoy. He strongly believes that if you enjoy what and how you are teaching, the students will likewise enjoy and participate in class.

Here’s wishing to a long and successful partnership between Mongolia TESOL and Korea TESOL in the coming years. It was an honour to attend and witness the excitement this conference held, sharing ideas on introducing technology to both the traditional and non-traditional schools of Mongolia.

The Author

Candace Lake-Ejim is an assistant professor instructing general English courses at Hansung University in Seoul. Candace studied applied linguistics and second language acquisition in her master’s degree program at The Pennsylvania State University. As a current member in professional organizations such as KOTESOL and TESOL International, Candace is continuing to support the industry through publications and conference presentations. Email: candace.lake.us@gmail.com



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Contrasting Views in ELT:

by Maria Lisak

The issue of culturally responsive teaching, and having a culturally responsive classroom environment, has been a debatable one in

Teaching English in Korea evokes a cross-cultural stance, yet I often hear many language teachers in Korea state they are only teaching language. This position sees the fundamentals of English language – vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation – as the only focus of teaching. Culture, as in American Culture, Korean Culture, is taught as Culture with a capital “C” – that all Americans like hot dogs, and all Koreans eat kimchi. Culture is only a topic to cover. This dogmatic approach is unreflective about how deeply embedded cultural norms and stereotypes are in the actual choices that we make when teaching. Culturally responsive teaching or pedagogy (CRT or CRP), on the other hand, encourages reflection on not just the capital “C” of culture but the many small c’s of culture that are living in our classrooms. As Lynch (2012) explains, CRP is “a student-centered approach to teaching in which the students’ unique cultural strengths are identified and nurtured to promote student achievement and a sense of well-being about the student’s cultural place in the world” (para. 2).

Lynch points out three functional dimensions of CRP: the personal, instructional, and institutional. The personal dimension is how a teacher responds to the different cultural meanings: of themselves, the world, and especially, their students’ culture. The instructional dimension focuses on how teachers implement a culturally sound pedagogy. The institutional dimension looks at the macro systems that culture has in play. For teachers in Korea, this institutional dimension might focus on multiculturalism, mandated English education, or the test-taking system.

By focusing on the functional dimensions, teachers are offered a chance to take a step back from their teaching to analyze their context in three ways that intersect in their classroom. Looking at the institutional dimension or the big picture of how a school, government, or culture is in flow in the classroom is one area to analyze.

The personal dimension can segue into good reflective practices that teachers may already be doing. When living in a different culture than the one the teacher identifies with, there are several experiences that emerge in making sense of working overseas. Often the personal dimension of culturally responsive pedagogy is that a teacher can empathize with their learners when learning a new language.

The instructional dimension is an important way to be within and against the systems we are teaching in. The instructional dimension can have us not only question why dark-skinned people are not represented in textbooks teaching English to Koreans but also to elicit discussion from students about black-face comedians on TV.

Reflecting on culture is beneficial to inform our teaching

practices. Reflecting on ourselves by questioning the cultures that we were born into and socialize in is important to bring awareness to how we talk about people and culture. How we talk matters; our teaching methodology impacts the circulation of privilege and marginalization in class. While reflecting on ourselves deeply is a primary step to move to a more culturally responsive practice, we also need to reflect and learn about other cultures.

Learning about our students’ niche culture might be difficult when we get an answer such as “I do this because I’m Korean.” Learning about our Korean students’ cultures is to learn about the different sociocultural factors impacting their access to education. It could be learning about Korean dialects, or how other Koreans perceive and judge particular dialects. It could be learning about school cliques based on where a student lives. It could be to learn about home cultures of students from gold spoon (wealthy) families, single-parent families, or students with a disabled family member whom they help with care taking.

Teaching English language is not just about vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. It is also about understanding the role of English as a hegemonic force in a globalized world. As teachers, being more culturally responsive in our teaching practices offers a chance to problematize mandated language study. By learning about and welcoming the nuanced home cultures of students, we help them honor the many identities that they are developing by being multilingual. By learning about the world and the cultures within it, we empower our students to be able to be empathetic actors in the globalized world that South Korea’s political and economic policies are fostering. Developing a teaching practice that nurtures students’ unique cultural strengths is a supportive way to develop excellence and confidence, as well as language skills.

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Encouraging Culturally Responsive Teaching

by Roger Fusselman

English language teaching, and certainly no more so than in Korea. Two KOTESOL members discuss their opposing views on this topic. — Ed.

Nowadays, there is growing interest toward giving culture, politics, and other socially marked topics a much greater prominence than before for our students. One of these developments is called *culturally responsive teaching*. One source defines this as “a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students’ cultural references in all aspects of learning” (Brown University, 2019, para. 2).

All aspects, though? How central should culture and cultural knowledge or empowerment be in the language classroom? It is important, yes, but should it be central or a leading fundamental? I would say no and argue that this focus has potential pitfalls.

The same source gives a rationale: “Culture is central to learning. It plays a role not only in communicating and receiving information but also in shaping the thinking process of groups and individuals” (para. 1). There is cultural influence on learning. To a degree, learners can engage with the values of cultural sensitivity or awareness either in courses more suited to such purposes or from outside of school. We teachers should be aware of our own potential cultural biases.



That said, let us be careful how far we delve into culture. Firstly, students are primarily individuals rather than members of groups. The word *culture* suggests seeing them

more as units of society. While knowledge of culture helps me understand potential aspects of the individual student, it would be wiser for me to observe the student’s own behaviors and attributes, avoid jumping to conclusions based on the student’s origin, and instead focus on the student’s own individuality.

Secondly, cultural influence can shape a student’s thinking for the worse, such as through the weight of tradition and cultural expectations. Taken too far, the student may not evolve his or her mind independently from cultural roots. There are drawbacks to every culture and society in the world. I would rather foster students that challenge their cultural baggage than accept it uncritically.

Also, stakeholders of our various classes expect courses in language to be about language and to focus on them. Overdoing culture may insufficiently cover the necessary linguistic goals. When learners of Korean enroll in a Korean course, how much culture do we want for the money spent? Some attention to K-pop and Korean food is fine, but so are the students’ own instrumental interests for taking the course, regardless of how culturally marked they are. The same could be said of Koreans learning English.

Some students may be bored by a conventional treatment of vocabulary and grammar in the classroom. This might lead us to bring up topics such as politics, cultural identity, and so

forth to motivate them more. Aspects of these topics can be brought in to get our students motivated, but to transform the class more broadly to fully embrace this approach assumes too little about language learning itself being a motivator. Instead, let us ask how to make the process of acquiring target language items more empowering, rather than making our examples somehow attractive in and of themselves. Of the many other techniques available, games, less piecemeal ways of encouraging acquisition (e.g., task-based learning), and a broader range of examples (e.g., science, technology, film, etc.) might do well. Society with a capital “S” as a motivator may not be the best go-to solution for motivation.

Finally, let us be careful about what this could do to our own presence in the classroom. “Bring culture in” could mean something concrete, such as a French teacher teaching how to make chocolate mousse, or it could mean something more ideological. I would caution us all, including myself, to avoid building our positions on cultural issues into the lessons we teach. If certain viewpoints come up organically in the classroom, that is one thing, but orchestrating them is another. We do not want our authority as the teacher to interfere with or intimidate a student’s conclusions on these issues, even if we disagree with those views.

There are valid courses that specifically mention culture as their focus, but to do this for every course could be presumptuous of the student’s needs and contrary to the student’s own interests. I recommend a lighter touch to such topics than what may be recommended by the advocates of culturally responsive teaching.

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Do Our Hearts Look Broken? #loveTNKR

by Casey Lartigue Jr.

The Teach North Korean Refugees Global Education Center (TNKR) connects refugee participants with English language study opportunities to improve academic and employment skills as well as advocacy and support. Close to a thousand tutors and speech coach mentors have volunteered their time since 2013. KOTESOL has collaborated with TNKR (along with another non-profit organization KUMFA, which helps Korean unwed mothers), and a fundraising initiative at the recent KOTESOL International Conference raised over 1,400,000 Korean won. Casey Lartigue Jr. is the co-founder and co-director. — Ed.

When I talk with South Korean experts, counselors, and social workers engaged with North Korean refugees, I am apparently supposed to listen to their words and ignore what my eyes see from the refugees. The grand conclusion from one “expert”? Almost everyone working with refugees long-term has horror stories, and social welfare workers routinely get their hearts broken.

On my side of the split-screen, as co-founder and international director of the Teach North Korean Refugees Global Education Center (TNKR) in Seoul, I engage with North Korean refugees who are exactly the opposite of the South Korean expert and counselor scuttlebutt. I’m not disputing that those counselors and experts have had those experiences, but how could theirs and ours both be true?

I suspect: One, refugees have a clear need for English that has them chasing us, unlike the workshops and seminars they evade. Two, we have different levels of expectations, with TNKR volunteers being curious rather than judgmental as government staffers and office workers seem to be about North Korean refugees. Three, North Korean refugees have autonomy with TNKR to find their own way, rather than being objects of top-down programs.

center.” We have a tiny office at the end of a shady alley in the Mapo-gu District of Seoul. Our skeleton staff, including my co-director and myself, are all making minimum wage. Our academic coordinator, Janice Kim, and volunteer advisor, Daniel Cashmar, are both volunteers working full-time jobs elsewhere.

Despite our humble situation, we have refugees rushing down the path of that shady alley to our office to study English with volunteer tutors. TNKR is divided into two main parts with boring titles that would cause professional marketers to doze off. Track One is for flexible 1:1 English tutoring. Track Two is for those refugees who would like to engage in public speaking. Almost 450 North Korean refugees have studied at TNKR with almost 1,000 volunteers since we began operations in March 2013. In October, we had Matching Session #97, at which refugees chose volunteer tutors to study with a minimum of twice a month for three months.

Who studies at TNKR?

According to the data provided by TNKR co-founder Eunkoo Lee, 57% of TNKR students are college and graduate students, 29% are employed, and 14% are unemployed, housewives, or preparing for college. Seventy-six percent of students are females.



Background on TNKR

The Teach North Korean Refugees Global Education Center began humbly in March 2013, and even now, it is more a goal than reality to call ourselves a “global education

There are so many inspiring stories of refugees telling us that because of studying with tutors one-to-one, they have graduated from college, gotten employed, and won scholarships and fellowships. While most North Korean refugees avoid public attention, about 50 TNKR students have joined our public speaking program, although many are not active. Three have published memoirs, many have given speeches internationally and domestically, and some have opened YouTube channels.

Why is English such a challenge for North Korean refugees?

Jinhee Kim, a North Korean refugee who was an English teacher in North Korea and one of TNKR’s original students, said at KOTESOL’s 25th International conference in 2017 that, in North Korean style, she was assigned to her English teacher job because she had a higher test score than

others. Many North Koreans studied Russian as a second language until the late 1990s, but in recent years, more have been studying English. As Jinhee noted, many North Koreans still study with teachers who themselves would be EFL students in South Korea, as she was at TNKR. TV personality Yuna Jung, a TNKR student in both tracks, said in her speech at the 27th International "KOTESOL Gives Back" fundraiser that North Koreans learn English as a "weapon" to attack Americans, not for fluency.

Many North Korean refugees are well behind their southern counterparts. The Korea Development Institute (KDI) has indicated that nearly one-third of refugee college students said they want to suspend their studies because of English (Shim, 2016). A study of 10 universities in Seoul found that 28.4% of North Korean refugee college students had dropped out, which is about six times higher than the average dropout rate of 4.5% for the South Korean population (Kim, 2016, p. 3; Park, 2016). The government's preferential admission policy has helped more refugees get into college, but in many cases, it is like matching an amateur boxer with a heavyweight champion.



“North Korean refugees have autonomy with TNKR to find their own way, rather than being objects of top-down programs.”

Seeking Out TNKR

Struggling with English, many North Korean refugees discover TNKR, and they won't leave us alone. After finishing their initial interview with the co-directors, refugees have one main question, which demonstrates their eagerness: "When can I start?"

Universities in South Korea typically require students to use English language textbooks, take English lectures and exams, and pass a standardized test to graduate from college. Many North Korean refugees strategically evade English classes until it is unavoidable, with some being unable to graduate because of low English test scores. Refugees who are employed say they are struggling because of the need to write emails in English and converse with foreign business contacts and losing out on opportunities because of their English skills. Many cite problems even communicating in Korean because many South Koreans will suddenly use English-based loanwords,

leaving them baffled. English is a clear and present danger for refugees, whereas workshops by government agencies and well-funded organizations about democracy and integrating with South Koreans (as important as they may be) probably lack urgency.

Expectations

TNKR's activities are designed so that both volunteer language helpers and the refugees themselves have responsibility in the learning process.

Self-Study: From their initial interviews, refugees are informed that TNKR is a self-study program. If they are expecting tutors to open their heads and dump English inside, then they are in the wrong place. Word has gotten around: "Don't join TNKR until you are serious."

Student Accountability: Refugee learners are expected to come to class prepared (e.g., with a dialogue, an article, a vocabulary list) and to have a role in their own improvement. When I taught a substitute class one day, I asked the student what she had prepared with her tutor. She said "airport English." Based on what she said, it seemed she was more lost in an airport than she had been during her escape across China.

There are endless learning opportunities with a motivated student, even with a last-minute replacement. We went across travel vocabulary, role plays, and troubleshooting (e.g., "I lost my bag!"). She absolutely loved it, and that is the key point: The content was relevant to the student, not simply turning the page in the curriculum. Whether or not the tutor knew this student's background from North Korea, there was plenty of learning material for the student.

Look Forward, Not Backward: In Track 1, we discourage tutors from discussing North Korea and demand they protect the privacy of our students. The focus is on helping North Korean refugees with their lives in South Korea and abroad. The refugees have arrived. Our aim is to help them go forward, not interview them about North Korea. This is in contrast to the government and other organizations data-mining them.

Student Autonomy: Telling people you believe in them is one thing, but proving it with action is even more important. Some refugees have said they felt on fire as they reviewed the resumes of 15 to 20 volunteers eager to help them. As many of the students say, "I can't believe there are so many nice people in the world ready to teach



me, for free." After studying, they praise the "responsibility" of tutors who are so focused on their students' studying.

Tutors and refugees struggle, initially, thankfully

Some refugees initially struggled with this empowering process, and many volunteers were questioning if this process was appropriate for North Koreans. Being from North Korea, they didn't grow up in a culture of freedom of choice. Some students even worried they might look "greedy" if they selected more than one tutor. Now word has gotten around; refugees know they have the power to choose multiple tutors. Because so many were saying they loved TNKR, we changed our website to www.lovetnkr.org. Does it look like our hearts are being broken?

While refugees have now caught on, some volunteers still struggle with the process, with some gently complaining that they would prefer having a set curriculum (we have one, but most refugees aren't interested in it) and more background about the students' experiences in North Korea (which is irrelevant). Some tutors take offense when I say this, but we are just helpers for North Korean refugees on their journey into the world of English that will go beyond our interaction with them. This means that we need to take a step back and see how we can help them improve without pushing our various teaching theories on them or being such experts that the refugees don't have space to find their own way. Some refugees are just starting off as true beginners, others are intermediate or advanced. Our process is set up so refugees can go as far as their own motivation can take them.

North Korean refugees who study with us on average initially select three tutors, but one particularly ambitious young man actually lined up his own faculty by choosing 11 tutors! Through those initial experiences, refugee learners at TNKR start to have an idea about how to study English. We don't expect tutors to take beginners from A-B-C to fluency within three to six months, but we do hope that they will help the refugees start feeling comfortable with learning English and eventually guide the direction of classes.

Power of Choice

We flipped the power dynamic. Whereas North Korean refugees ask, "When can I start?", volunteer tutors have a completely different question: "Will I be chosen?"

How could refugees not feel respected when, for once in their lives, they are the ones with the power when they walk into a room? Why would they show up late, or need to lie, when a program has been set up so that they have the power to choose what they want to study and with whom? Thankfully, we have enough tutor applicants willing to go through our application process and, like back in elementary school when sides were being chosen for a kickball game, waiting to be chosen. We take the "fun" out of it by prohibiting socializing, dating, and hanging out. The result is refugees chasing us because they know TNKR prioritizes their studies and autonomy.

Despite this, many South Korean experts, counselors and social workers still don't believe me when I tell them we don't have the problems they discuss about troublemaking refugees. Because of the eagerness of refugees to choose tutors and our first-come, first-choose policy, some have threatened to sleep overnight at our office. One

particularly eager student contacted us at midnight, then arrived at our office at 1 a.m., with her overnight bag prepared to sleep at our office until the 2 p.m. Matching Session. As a result, we have had to bar North Korean refugees from coming to our office much in advance and have told them not to arrive before 9 a.m., but despite our rules and complaints, I can typically hear some rustling around outside the door from 8 a.m.

I won't dispute the experiences of South Korean colleagues, experts, and counselors who complain about the professionalism of refugees; it is possible that their programs are not designed in ways that appeal to refugees who must be rounded up. We identified a clear need for refugees (English), have high expectations for them, and make sure they have autonomy to find their own way.

I tell my South Korean colleagues that my heart still hasn't gotten broken, and they are welcome to come out on an early Sunday morning to see those same refugees (who don't show up for their non-TNKR activities) lining up outside our door for the chance to choose volunteer tutors to study with at TNKR.

"As many of the students say, 'I can't believe there are so many nice people in the world ready to teach me, for free.' After studying, they praise the 'responsibility' of tutors who are so focused on their studying."

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Developing Speaking Fluency Through Authentic and Meaningful Communicative Activities

by Dr. Peter Jinsuk Byun

Improving speaking fluency as a component of general speaking proficiency is an important element of verbal communication in the target language for second language learners. Unfortunately, there are limited classroom opportunities for speaking fluency development in second language (L2) learning classes, especially in an EFL context, like Korea or China (Cho, 2004; de Jong & Perfetti, 2011; Gu & Reynolds, 2013; Kwak, 2018; Yang, 2014). Therefore, I will introduce three meaningful and authentic communicative activities that teachers may use in L2 classes to help students improve their speaking fluency, which may be defined as the ability to draw upon one's memory-based system to speak in an automatic and natural way.

Promoting Speaking Fluency Development in Second Language Learning

The best way to incorporate speaking fluency development in L2 learning seems to be through meaningful communicative activities because fluency, as opposed to accuracy, is developed mainly through message-oriented communicative activities rather than language-oriented controlled activities (Brown & Lee, 2015; Lazaraton, 2014). When communicative activities are accompanied by fluency development techniques, L2 learners are able to improve their speaking fluency through active participation in these communicative activities. The two speaking fluency development techniques that will be presented here are the 4/3/2 task, having shown to have positive effects in the literature (Nation, 1989; de Jong & Perfetti, 2011; Yang, 2014), and what I call the "To Three People Technique."

In the 4/3/2 task, students talk about a given topic for 4 minutes, 3 minutes, and 2 minutes to three different people. When students talk in this way, the time pressure and immediate repetition related to the task help fluency development (de Jong & Perfetti, 2011). The 4/3/2 task is especially useful in L2 classes because teachers may easily incorporate it into most communicative activities. For example, teachers may have their students speak to three of their classmates about their favorite movie, sport, game, or what they did on the weekend using the 4/3/2 task format. Teachers may also give their class questions or riddles and have students share their answers three times with three different people using the 4/3/2 task.

The 4/3/2 task can also make students feel comfortable if it involves physical movement. The teacher can have students stand up and move around to look for three different people, which may lower their affective filters. This physical movement makes the activity dynamic even though it involves repetition.

The To Three People Technique is a simplified version of the 4/3/2 task in which students find three different people and talk about a given topic for a specific time.

When using this technique, teachers should have students move around to keep the activity from becoming boring and mechanically repetitive. The three meaningful communicative activities introduced in the next section may be conducted using either the 4/3/2 task or the To Three People Technique.

Three Meaningful, Authentic Activities

The three meaningful authentic activities that follow are motivating for ESL/EFL learners. They are supported by the three domains of linguistic, cultural, and functional authenticity. According to Buendgens-Kosten (2013), linguistic authenticity is related to the native English-speakers' language use in a non-language learning context, cultural authenticity in the use of materials, and functional authenticity in the relevance to learners' real lives.

Sound-Based Spelling

One of the cultural features in English-speaking countries is naming businesses after a common English word with a little distortion of its spelling based on the sound-spelling mismatch in English. For example, an American fast food restaurant, *Krystal*, is named after the English word, *crystal*. The name of a strawberry orchard, *U-Pick*, is based on *you pick*. The name of a convenient store, *Rite*

"When communicative activities are accompanied by fluency development techniques, L2 learners are able to improve their speaking fluency through active participation in these communicative activities."

Aid, is based on *right aid*. These sound-based spellings are used often in English-speaking countries. Businesses do this to draw customers' attention. ESL/EFL teachers can use spellings like these to develop many interesting class activities. For example, the teacher can have students in groups develop ideas for a new business. The students should choose a business and make a brief plan for it. Then they should name their business using sound-based spelling. After that, they can move around the classroom, sharing their plan with the interesting name with their classmates using the 4/3/2 task or the To Three People Technique.

Funny Classroom Dictionary

This activity is based on the Detorie (1993) book, *The Crazy Classroom Dictionary*. The book has classroom

English words that have funny definitions. For example, the definition of *homework* is “something for which there are 6,874 reasons to forget to bring it to school” (p. 33) or “My cat ate it. Then my dog ate the cat” (p. 33). The definition of *spelling bee* is “a competition that makes you a nervous wreck until you miss a word and can sit and enjoy watching the other kids mess up” (pp. 60–61).

This interesting dictionary exercise has many applications in ESL/EFL classes. For example, after teachers present students with the funny classroom dictionary, they may have students develop their own funny definitions of a classroom word. Then the students can move around the classroom and ask their classmates what the word is through the 4/3/2 task or the To Three People Technique.

Guessing the Meaning

There are many interesting or funny authentic signs that are available offline or online these days. Teachers can develop interesting ESL/EFL activities out of them by having students guess the meaning of the sign. They can take a picture of a sign they see to increase authenticity. For example, the teacher may present the picture below and have the students guess the meaning, using the 4/3/2 task or the To Three People Technique.



After the students move around the classroom and share their ideas about the meaning of the sign with three different peers, the teacher can share the picture below that explains the actual meaning of the sign.



Another guessing-the-meaning activity might involve showing students an interesting YouTube video and having them guess how it will end through the 4/3/2 task or the To Three People Technique after the teacher pauses it in the middle.

Summary

ESL/EFL teachers may feel the need to incorporate speaking fluency development activities in their classes, considering the importance of oral communication as a goal of L2 learning. To help them, I recommend that they use two fluency-promoting techniques, the 4/3/2 task and the To Three People Technique, as they are interesting,

meaningful, and authentic communicative activities. I also introduced three communicative activities that can be incorporated in ESL/EFL classes through the two fluency-promoting techniques. I hope that more activities for promoting speaking fluency will be developed and shared by TESOL professionals in the future so that English language learners can develop oral language skills in a balanced way.

“Linguistic authenticity is related to the native English-speakers’ language use in a non-language learning context, cultural authenticity in the use of materials, and functional authenticity in the relevance to learners’ real lives.”

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KOTESOL News and Happenings

A Newbie's Experience: Review of the 2019 KOTESOL International Conference

By Kimberley Roberts

It's 7 a.m., and I've only slept for four hours. I've just found out my favorite kimbab store is closed. I am standing on the train station platform, shivering in the early morning light – on a Saturday!?! Why, you might ask? Well, it's October 12th, the first day of KOTESOL's International Conference (IC)! Despite a sleepy and shivery start to the weekend, I'm happy to say that things only improved from there. Considering everything I took away from the IC, it was definitely worth the early start, and I even forgot about the kimbab store (until writing this). It was my first time attending the IC, so as a relative "newbie," I hope to offer a fresh, first-hand perspective on the weekend, including a breakdown of presentations and my top tips for newbie and seasoned attendees alike.

But first, who is this person moaning about having to be up so early on a Saturday? My name's Kimberley and I'm a public-school teacher at an all girls' middle school in Daegu. I came to Korea in 2016 through the EPIK program, where I worked at the Daegu Global Education Center for two years before transferring to my current middle school. Disappointed by the lack of opportunities for personal development in the EPIK program, I stumbled across KOTESOL through a Facebook ad shortly after arriving here. I started attending my local workshops, stepped up as chapter vice-president in 2018, and am currently serving as chapter president for the Daegu-Gyeongbuk Chapter. I've gained so much from my local KOTESOL chapter, met some amazing people, and had some incredible opportunities to grow and develop as a teacher. Despite attending several local workshops and conferences, I had never attended the IC. This year the stars finally aligned for me, so no excuses, let's do this!



Kimberley Roberts, with Paul Montgomery, at the International Conference.

Once my registration was complete and train tickets booked, I started to look ahead to what I'd be doing at the conference. I'm terrible at making decisions, and even the smaller conferences left me spoilt for choice and fretting

over which sessions to attend. Luckily, KOTESOL had my back. About 10 days before the conference, I got my invite code to join Whova, a handy little app that helped me with planning my weekend. Through the agenda page, it's so easy to check the schedule, read abstracts and bios, and create your own personal schedule. I really enjoyed using the message boards, where I got a chance to chat with other conference goers, and even made a couple of friends. You could also check, at a glance, any meet-ups being held, which is a great way to meet people with similar interests and network. By the time it was IC weekend, I actually felt pretty prepared and ready for a weekend of exciting workshops, panels, and networking.

Over the weekend, I attended so many sessions and seminars that it would be difficult to discuss them all in detail in the space I have, so I will just try to offer a taster of some of the sessions I attended that were particular highlights for me. Of course, I need to mention the two plenary speakers that were in attendance this year, Rod Ellis and Andrew D. Cohen. However, as I have already seen several accounts of their presentations online, I'll keep my own brief. As a TESOL graduate student, these are both names I have come across in my readings over the last couple of years, and it was a great opportunity to put faces to names that I'd only read in books. Having read Ellis' book *Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching*, I was fairly familiar with the content of his session, though I took away some new tips on how I might implement this teaching style with my own beginning-level learners at my current school. Cohen's speech was very insightful, as it examined some of the shortcomings of translation apps, which made me consider my own overreliance on them, both inside and outside the classroom.

One workshop that I found particularly engaging was Thomas Farrell's *Advancing ELT by Becoming an Expert Teacher*. As someone striving for self-development and improvement, the title certainly caught my eye, and I evidently wasn't the only one, as the audience was



packed, with latecomers sitting on the stairs and floor. Farrell was incredibly funny and engaging, punctuating his presentation with hilarious quips and anecdotes. It also gave me a lot to consider when I think about my own definitions of what exactly a “good” or “expert” teacher might be, as it became evident that pinpointing exactly what a “good” teacher is isn’t an easy task. He concluded that while the exact meaning of “expert” might be elusive, reflective practice is critical to developing expertise. Having dabbled in reflective practice a couple of years back, this presentation certainly gave me a little push to pick it back up again. I even bought a new notebook to keep in my classroom for tracking my reflections, and I’m excited to get back into the practice.

A personal favorite presentation type of mine at any conference or KOTESOL event is what I like to call the “take-away” workshop; one where I can pick up activities that I can use immediately in my own classroom. As a busy teacher, these games and activities are absolute lifesavers, as they often give my classes a fresh boost of energy (with minimal effort on my part!). I attended one such workshop by Marshall and Dzieciolowski on *Promoting Language Production Through Classroom Games*. This was a very hands-on presentation with a lot of audience participation, where we got to sample several games and activities (one of which I ended up using in my after-school class the following Monday).

As a teacher employed through the EPIK program, I am concerned with issues surrounding our image and place in the education system in Korea, as we’re often seen in a bad light by other teachers and even by the wider community in Korea. I was fortunate enough to attend two research presentations at the IC discussing issues surrounding EPIK teachers. The first was *Native-Speaker Teachers as a Source of Extrinsic Motivation* with Andrew Lerner. His paper discussed findings that elementary students at a school with a native teacher were more motivated to learn English than students at a school without one. The second presentation was *Native English-Speaking Teachers in Korean Secondary Schools* with Hey Won Shin. Her paper aimed to contradict reports that NESTs were not cost effective due to their low competence, attitudes, and lack of experience. Her findings showed that many NESTs were qualified and scored similarly to non-native English teachers on a survey about teaching attitudes. Both these talks also gave opportunities for in-depth discussion about a topic that feels particularly close to me. I hope that this kind of research will continue and even make a positive impact on attitudes towards NESTs in Korea.

I also attended two panels at the IC, *Career Directions for Teachers in Korea: Practical Goals and Paths* and *Tips for Doing Research and Writing a Graduate Thesis or Dissertation*. As a current graduate school student who is concerned with both my current research and my future career, these panels were invaluable. The careers panel featured speakers from a variety of backgrounds, and they offered perspectives from entering academia to opening your own *hagwon*. One of the most impactful things I heard over the weekend came from Kara Mac Donald at the thesis panel. I asked about whether to continue on to a PhD after my master’s. I was struggling with my current workload and had fallen out of love with it, and she told me to “enjoy the process,” and not worry so much about

the end goal. This really hit home with me, as I had been enjoying my master’s degree studies in the beginning but have really been struggling lately. This made me take a step back and re-evaluate my attitude. You never know where you’re going to find incredible inspiration, but here it was for me! So, Kara, if you’re reading this, I would like to give you a big “thank you!” It’s really changed my whole perspective.

Overall, my first experience of the IC was fantastic. Beyond some minor inconveniences like session rooms suddenly changing, I can’t think of any other complaints. Everything I took away was well worth the value of the registration fee and train tickets, and I’m excited to go again next year (work allowing!). If you haven’t attended the IC yet, I urge you to give it a try. I’ll finish off with a few handy tips and pieces of advice that you might find useful at the next IC.

- Whova – Download this conference app! It was so handy and helpful, as I have already mentioned, but I want to reiterate that it’s an absolute lifesaver.
- Go Friday. – Traveling to Seoul on Saturday morning was exhausting, and my day was so busy that I was wiped out by early afternoon. If you have the means to do so, go for the whole weekend. This way you can also catch the early morning sessions that I had to miss.
- Socialize. – There are so many meet-ups for so many things! Sadly, I missed the Friday night social, but I wish I’d come down a night early. I loved the wine-and-cheese party on Saturday, and it gave me a chance to say hi to everyone I hadn’t seen yet.
- Get involved. – There were so many times presenters asked for audience participation, only to be met with a sea of stony faces. We know how it feels as teachers when students do that, so don’t do it to presenters. Don’t be scared to jump in and try something new.

Whether you’re a regular attendee at the IC or other conferences, or are yet to take the plunge and attend your first (like I was), I hope this review has been helpful for you. I believe KOTESOL has a lot to offer the teaching community. Whether its at a local workshop, regional conference, or the IC, I hope you’ll drop by and see what’s on offer. You never know what you’re going to learn!

The Author

Kimberley Roberts is a public school teacher in Daegu. She arrived in Korea in 2016 and has since been an active member of the teaching community. She is currently working towards her master’s in TESOL, but when she has free time, she enjoys playing *jangu*, swimming, trying new restaurants, and late night gaming sessions at the PC room. Email: kimberley-roberts1@hotmail.co.uk



The Brain Connection

Brain Development and Being Smart: Why That Boy Just Doesn't Get It

By Dr. Curtis Kelly

We've all had them, those kids that seem way ahead on the line of brain development – the smart ones – and then, those, well, kids way behind – the ones who just don't get it.

Teachers of young learners are particularly aware of this difference: That kid just doesn't get it. The learning situation might involve sounding out words with a four-year-old, algebra with a seventh-grader, or grammar rules with a junior high-schooler. So what do you do? You take some extra time and explain it in a way that anybody could understand. Carefully. Perfectly. Sloooooowly. You break it down into simple steps and go through them one by one. It is so simple. There is no way that kid couldn't get it by now, and the kid nods weakly that he does. Then, you go back to the main task, and he fails again.

That is when you cut your losses. You figure he will *never* get it. You wonder why he is even in this class. Maybe he is slow, or that thing teachers are *never* supposed to think: Maybe he's not as smart, the nice way to say "stupid." And both assumptions – slow and not as smart – are absolutely right. But there is more to the story, as I will get to.

Well, guess what? I was that boy. I took a required geometry course in the 10th grade. We studied geometric theorems and proofs, but no matter how hard I tried, I just couldn't get it. All my peers were doing well, spinning out proofs for the theorems one after another, but I was floundering. So, I dropped out of the class, something that was quite radical for a high school student back then.

Then something inexplicable happened. I took the class again a year later, with the same teacher, same materials,

and same theorems to prove. But this time I got it. I really got it! It was a whiz and with far less study than the first time, I got one of the two highest scores in the class.

Let me say that again. The first year I did not get it. Then the second, I did. I did not have any family or health issues the first time through. I did not have a girlfriend that I broke up with. I did not get insights on geometry from some other class. So what happened? Same learner; same situation; completely different results. Actually, one thing was different, just one: the year in between.

That made all the difference. I was a year older.

But why? Piaget has given us part of the answer. Whereas we used to think any smart person could learn anything if given enough training, Piaget found that this was not the case. Biological development plays a role, too. A seven-year-old can understand that water poured from one glass into another with a different shape does not change in quantity but a six-year-old cannot. The ability to understand this develops in the *concrete operational stage*, 7 to 11 (McLeod, 2018). In the *formal operational stage*, 12 to adulthood, youths became able to engage in the kind of deductive, syllogistic thinking needed to solve scientific problems, which, in my case, was making proofs for geometric theorems.

Despite criticism and refinement by other researchers, Piaget's theory is still considered valid (Cherry, 2012). In addition, the massive NIH ABCD study is providing terabytes of data to help us look even more closely at gradations in brain development (Casey, 2018).

That explains brain development and cognition, but does it mean that those who are "slow" in development are just plain "slow" mentally as well?

That set me to wondering. A few years after my geometry class, I became an avid fan of the science writer, Stephen J. Gould. I noticed one thing he kept saying over and over: A basic rule of ontogeny (growth) seen across species is that higher-level brains take longer to develop. For example, chimp brains, which look just like human brains, develop along the same track as human brains up until about three years old, where maturational development stops. While an adult chimpanzee never develops processing abilities beyond the three-year-old



stage, humans keep on developing well into adulthood, allowing us to develop abilities they cannot: collaboration, language, and higher-level abstract thought (Tomasello, 2014).

So it occurred to me, if development speed and higher cognitive abilities is true *across* species, might not it also be true *within* a species?

The evidence says it does. Increasing cortical thickness that comes with maturation, is associated with higher

and more than anyone else, they need to be told that a kid who has trouble “getting it” is probably just a late bloomer, and that in itself might be a sign of higher intelligence.

We have a chance to cross a bridge, my friends, to becoming wiser educators. We have a chance to make right the wrongs our predecessors have inflicted. Just telling the kids-who-can’t-get-it that the smarter ones often take longer might flip the mindset. Just showing them that you cherish them as much as any other might

“We punish the slow ones. It is a principle our entire educational system is based on, and if you think about it at all, one that should bring tears to your eyes.”

levels of intelligence in humans, but with a caveat. The higher levels of intelligence are only reached if brain development is prolonged. According to J. Giedd, a researcher at the U.S. National Institute of Mental Health:

The brain regions used to think, plan, and reason mature two years later in those kids with high IQ scores.... A child who is not reading or doing math like his peers may end up doing even better than them years down the road. (Savage, 2006)

While all brains reach the same level of development by 19, it is those brains that took longer to get there that show the highest levels of intelligence.

Think about that and the implications. Those kids that we think are “slow” (unaware of how right that word really is) are the ones Giedd says become the smartest. If so, what a terrible injustice we are perpetuating, which I’m going to call “better-brain punishment.” We group learners by age, not maturation, and compare their test scores to differentiate the smart from the not smart. Interestingly, the “not smart” group includes Spielberg, Edison, Disney, Lincoln, Darwin, Gates and Allen, Dyson, Rowling, Zuckerberg, Einstein, Newton, and so many more, who all had trouble in school.

We punish the slow ones. It is a principle our entire educational system is based on, and if you think about it at all, one that should bring tears to your eyes.

When I was the only kid in my geometry class who didn’t “get it,” my peers thought I was dumb, and I thought so, too. A year later, I did get it, but by then, it was too late. I had already been judged. In today’s world, performance in school carries huge stakes for youth, and better-brain punishment might be further tilting the playing field. We might be shutting out the smartest.

So what can we do? Just knowing what we have discussed here is a good start, and telling other teachers can help as well. But maybe the best counter is telling parents. Parents tend to be more direct in their punishments,

give them the power to persist. We now know that instead of just one or the other, abilities come from a combination of nature and nurture. We cannot stop nature, but we can shape it with the nurture!

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By Dr. Thomas S.C. Farrell

I was lucky enough to be invited to the 27th Annual Korea TESOL International Conference October 12–13 in Seoul on the theme of “Advancing ELT.” This was an especially important moment for me and my relationship with Korea and Korea TESOL because it was my 40th (yes, fortieth) anniversary since I first stepped on Korean soil as a young Irish lad/teacher. I was awarded the title of “Patron of Korea TESOL” during the conference, of which I am so honored and delighted, and this is also such a significant moment in my career.

Speaking of my career, I think I am best noted for my interest in reflective practice and its use for TESOL teachers. During the conference someone asked me an interesting question, which I will devote this article to: How can we develop a school culture of reflection? What an interesting question; it made me step back and think for a moment because I had so many different ways I could have answered. I am afraid I muddled my answer though, so here are my thoughts on paper, and hopefully a bit clearer.

When considering the school or institution, we must first realize that each has its own unique culture that must also be taken into consideration when trying to develop a philosophy of reflection throughout that school or institution. Each school or institution has its own culture that is noticeable to every new teacher and student, although much of this may not be documented or even talked about. For example, schools and institutions have their own set of rituals unique to a particular school or institution that reflect its values and also shape the behavior and relationships of the people who work and study there. In more general terms, schools or institutions can have cultures that exist on a continuum from a highly individualistic school culture to a collaborative culture where all the teachers are willing to help one another.

Schools or institutions that, for example, have a culture of individualism can be seen as a place where colleagues have relationships characterized by a non-committal type of existence in a “live and let live, and help only when asked” mode of existence. In this type of school culture, teachers have peers but no real colleagues. If such a school pursues such a culture of individualism, it can damage the long-term interests of that school because nobody takes pride in their work, as they remain on individual paths that can pull from the center. On the other end of the continuum, in schools or institutions that pursue a culture of collaboration, colleagues can be considered of major importance for the development of one another, rather than as individualists. Such collaborations result in a shared sense of values and beliefs about teaching and learning, and a sense that they are all there together working for their students’ collective success.

However, what is a more realistic picture of school culture,

I suspect, is that several different “teacher cultures” exist in one school, and that teachers are usually faced with a dilemma of which one to join. It is also a fact (that many experienced teachers will attest to) that whatever culture of the school exists, it dictates the energy of that school very strongly (be it negative or positive energy), and so it is important that when encouraging teachers to engage in reflective practice, the school’s culture should be behind this encouragement, or it will not take on a school-wide ownership. It is up to the administration and school leaders to build such a culture because of the competing cultures that may exist in the school.



Schools and institutions can do a lot to develop a culture of reflection in the workplace. Schools can also establish a system of teacher evaluation through self-reflection; they can engage in mentoring to guide less experienced teachers, encourage team teaching for teachers to reflect with each other, as well as conduct peer coaching and form critical friendships for teachers to help each other. They can also sponsor various events within the school and in the community that can foster a culture of reflection, establishing an overall vibrant and healthy working environment. When teachers and supervisors approach teaching evaluation from a collaborative perspective, all sides enter into a win-win situation because they all benefit from such a reflective approach. One way of developing such a culture of collaboration is to encourage teacher evaluation through self-assessment reflective practice and the use of teaching portfolios. Such self-assessment can go a long way towards building a culture of collaboration in a school where everyone is out to help, rather than hurt, each other.

School leaders and administrators can promote reflective

practice as a school culture by not only encouraging teachers to examine and reflect on their practices collectively through teaching portfolios but also by sponsoring specific reflective events. The institution as a result can begin to function as a community of professionals rather than as individuals working in isolation from each other. Developing school-sponsored events creates a culture through developing cohesive and professional relationships between teachers, administrators, and the wider community.

Such events can include brown-bag lunches where teachers share their knowledge with each other. Teachers can also bring in materials they use for teaching the various skills (e.g., speaking, listening, writing, and reading) and discuss them in such brown-bag meetings. The result can lead to the development of materials as a collaborative effort that further connects teachers and administrators. The group can invite outside speakers who are experienced in a particular topic that interests the group. The school administration can provide space and encouragement for such events by allowing time off for the presenter to prepare as well as providing a room and refreshments.

Schools can also develop readings and discussions with teachers by building a professional library and encouraging reflection and collaborative discussions in different study

groups on particular topics that encourage more in-depth reflections on topics of interest. They can also arrange visits to other schools, where appropriate, to find out how reflective and professional development activities are conducted and supported there. By organizing and supporting various events, the school as a whole benefits and will attract more students as well as provide better opportunities to learn.

The Author

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Book Review

The Power of the Adolescent Brain: Strategies for Teaching Middle and High School Students

By Thomas Armstrong (2016).
Association for Supervision Curriculum and Development.

Reviewed by Christopher Miller

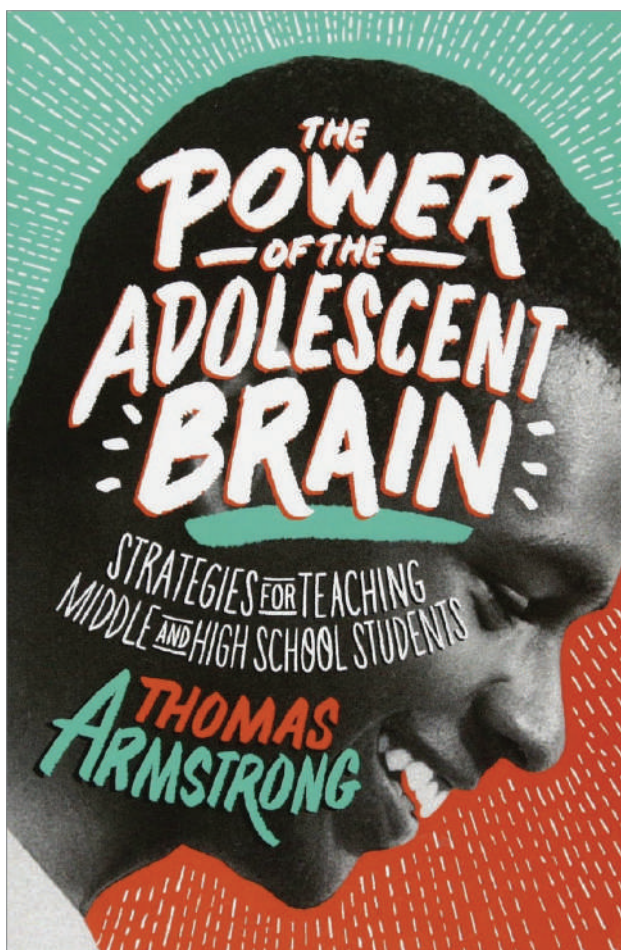
"Moody. Reckless. Impractical. Insecure. Distracted" is written on the back cover of Tom Armstrong's 2016 work, *The Power of the Adolescent Brain*. With that kind of an introduction, who would want to learn any more about adolescents? Committed educators working with teenagers, of course!

This book is composed of ten chapters. The first two, "The Amazing Adolescent Brain" and "The Miracle of Neuroplasticity," deal with more abstract and biological matters. The author does a good job of establishing the theory behind the wide array of practical teaching strategies that will be forthcoming in later chapters. Armstrong makes a convincing, if brief, argument that the adolescent brain (defined by Armstrong as ages 11–18) is fundamentally different from both younger children and adults. A wide array of facts are offered to make the case. For instance, the nucleus accumbens, "an area of the brain associated with aversion, reward, pleasure, motivation, and reinforcement learning" (p. 11), lights up for big rewards

but not for small ones. Similar patterns in the nucleus accumbens do not occur in either children or adults under similar conditions. Likewise, processing of emotion is often different among adolescents. For example, when viewing photographs of people with fearful expressions, the prefrontal cortex is activated; however, for adolescents, it is the amygdala. The larger point, according to Armstrong, is "that in social contexts involving strong feelings, adolescents may be more emotionally reactive and less capable of relying on rational faculties" (p. 10).

Near the end of the second chapter the author proceeds to make the case that many present-day schools are engaging in "brain hostile practices" (p. 28). Many educators in South Korea will easily recognize similar (but not identical) practices, such as "early start time for the school day," which in the author's words "exacerbates adolescent sleep deprivation" (p. 23) – recent Western research suggests that 45 percent of all adolescents suffer from sleep deprivation – and "requiring students to declare a major

or course of study in ninth grade or earlier” (p. 28) – or at least for many learners in South Korea, deciding what special purpose high school to attend. The bulk of the remainder of the book is devoted to providing teachers with strategies to limit the impact of these still-present brain hostile practices.



There are eight chapters focused on providing teachers with tools and techniques to optimally teach the adolescent brain. These include opportunities to choose, self-awareness activities, peer learning connections, affective learning, learning through the body, metacognitive strategies, expressive arts activities, and real-world experiences. A series of relevant lists (of 4–10 points each) accompany each chapter. The lists are further augmented by anecdotes from teachers in the field. For example, one teacher from the American state of Missouri discusses her use of collaborative learning during a field trip to a local museum. Each student had a specific role to complete in a group, such as gathering materials, writing portions of the report, etc. Correspondingly, student praise of more “adolescent brain-friendly” techniques are frequently included to provide a more holistic perspective on this topic, such as one student claiming they were able to think “in a completely different way” about chemical reactions after observing such scientific processes expressed in the form of a dance, because, in the student’s words, “You cannot actually see what is happening on the atomic level during a reaction, it was helpful to dance it out.” Furthermore, the same student offers additional praise for this fundamentally kinesthetic activity, claiming that the

activity engaged the whole class: “There wasn’t one person in the class who wasn’t always involved” (p. 127).

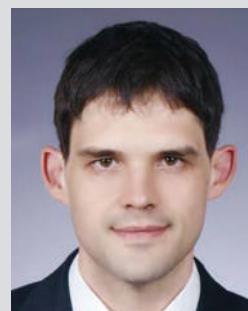
The Power of the Adolescent Brain finishes with a series of practical tips and resources. The conclusion focuses on fighting resistance among teachers and administrators. The second appendix offers concrete unit-level illustrations of these strategies and principles in action in a wide array of subjects including history, science, English literature, and mathematics. Finally, a brief list of resources is included. As is rare in my experience, I actually found this section useful. For instance, browsing through the (now discontinued, but still archived) Institute of Play (www.instituteofplay.org), I came across the Woodrow Wilson History Quest Fellowship. This program aims to incorporate more elements of gamification into the history curriculum. With a little imagination, the applications for ELT instruction become obvious.

There are limits to this work for most ELT classroom instructors. Especially, many of the ideas listed in the final chapter, “Real World Experiences,” will be difficult to put into practice. Armstrong encourages teachers to establish apprenticeship programs and provide internship experiences. Useful for students to be sure, but due to many teachers’ relative status (especially pertinent for NESTs in South Korea with one-year contracts and being validly seen as outsiders, coupled with the day-to-day pressure of learning objectives), these will be hard to fully implement for most in ELT classrooms.

While a lot of the content in *The Power of the Adolescent Brain* is useful, not much is new. Readers familiar with the work of frequent KOTESOL presenters, such as Curtis Kelly and Robert Murphy, will already know much of the neuroscience and subsequent educational principles informing Armstrong’s book. Still, it does a good job of providing a near 80/20 balance between practice and theory. There were many concrete illustrations that I feel helped to enrich aspects of my pedagogy, such as prompts to guide peer assessment (p. 73) or simple ways to generate questions to better “connect content to students’ personal lives” (p. 59). Thus, I recommend Armstrong’s work with the caveat that the reader needs not only read the work but also scan the resources provided and reflect with an eye for potential classroom applications.

The Reviewer

Christopher Miller has been involved in ELT for over a decade. He is a frequent KOTESOL presenter and has held numerous roles in KOTESOL since 2011. He is presently active in KOTESOL as assistant editor for the *The English Connection*. Christopher currently works at Daeil Foreign Language High School in Seoul. Email: chriskotesol@gmail.com





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