The English Connection

A Korea TESOL Publication

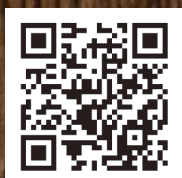Summer 2020

Volume 24, Issue 2

The Reflection Edition

Articles
Reflecting upon Academics, Organizations, and the ELT Self

Interview
Jocelyn Wright: KOTESOL Member Spotlight

And Regular Columns...

KOTESOL
대한영어교육학회

Contact us:
KoreaTESOL.org
TEC@KoreaTESOL.org

The English Connection

Contents

Summer 2020 / Volume 24, Issue 2

KOTESOL
대한영어교육학회

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

Eight Reflections on Not Reflecting

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

Apart from actually being a good teacher, reflecting is the next best thing you can do to improve your standing in the English teaching profession. Benefits of reflection include improving the effectiveness of your teaching, increasing students' motivations, and making class time as streamlined and efficient as possible. As Richards and Lockhart state in *Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms*, "Teachers who are better informed as to the nature of their teaching are able to evaluate their stage of professional growth and what aspects of their teaching they need to change," (p. 4) with reflection being a routine that builds confidence to try new things and assess their effects. Disadvantages, on the other hand, are it's difficult (what do I reflect upon? How do I transfer my findings back to the classroom?), time consuming (don't I want to get off work when the bell rings?), and paradoxical (how can only one me teach ten different learner personalities?). Here are eight of my only somewhat tongue-in-cheek reflections on not reflecting.

1. Reflection is one of those common black, white, or integrated dichotomies in EFL. Should I reflect upon what's good in my class, or what's bad? My teaching or their learning? Proactive planning for the future or contemplative reviews of what happened? Sometimes you just have to pick a side and stick with it.

2. Reflection so often starts as a vague goal – of an improvement one wants to achieve, and being dissatisfied how we're not currently achieving it. So we reflect upon the problem and want to be better. Something often breaks down in the implementation stage, however, as we rarely have total control of the program we're a part of. Vast external influences interfere from what starts out as pondering in a diary to an idea, to an implementation, to what finally results in class performance.

3. Change is difficult. Teachers are action oriented. We have to do things, and do them confidently. It might be beneficial, even liberating, if I could reinvent everything I've gained through my experiences, my education, my personality, my knowledge of my lesson plans and materials, all of which creates my safety zone. But there's a lot preventing change. Firstly, it requires a tremendous amount of bravery. Secondly, there is no guarantee new implementation is better than current practice. Thirdly, and most importantly, I want to portray that I know what I'm doing as a language teacher, and to show indecisiveness or "change horses midstream" can be misleading and disorientating to students.

4. Far from being a perfectionist, I'd like to be confident that I've "got it down pat," and not constantly reexamining myself.

5. There are multitudes of things to reflect upon. However, some that have the most effect in the classroom are factors that cannot be changed: your personality, age, gender, ethnicity, appearance, even the tone and delivery of your voice. One might argue that these non-changeable factors are indeed the most important to critically reflect upon, but unfortunately we often have too much personal bias getting in the way of proper objectivity. And isn't this the aim of reflection: to get at truthful discovery?

6. Snow White's wicked witch and her "mirror, mirror on the wall"; Narcissus sitting next to the fountain; and Dorian Gray, his portrait and mirror in the attic: What can these tragic figures teach us? Trust yourself more. Five minutes before class, sometimes you just got to look at that gorgeous image in the bathroom mirror, give a thumbs-up sign, and say "You got this!" That's the only reflection needed.

7. If language teaching is considered a science, how would you perceive a doctor pondering and second-guessing over a surgery? Conversely, likening our profession to an artform, the artist who can't complete a work?

8. If reflecting on our teaching is an on-going endeavor, as researchers suggest, isn't it encouraging to know we have our entire career to get it right?

With the recent COVID-19 epidemic, the past few months we as teachers have had to jump in the deep end of e-learning, rewriting syllabuses, importing content and lessons online, and becoming crash-course experts on techie LMS jargon. Very little time to study up, few to compare notes with, and nothing to reflect upon except a blank computer screen urgently needing a video of a smiling professional teacher looking like they know what they're doing. As we enter June, with months of this new routine behind us, perhaps a few of my "non-reflections" can offer support for the quick response we gave, as we've done the best we can in the situation we're faced with.

In this Summer edition, we have reflections upon language instruction and philosophies, student behavior, organizations, and mindfulness (many that jointly carry the theme of COVID-19-induced adaptations) by writers who know much more on the subjects than I do. Please enjoy these articles, and dare I say, reflect upon them.

President's Message
Together in Spirit

By Lindsay Herron KOTESOL President

I'm delighted this issue of *The English Connection* is organized around a theme of reflection; reflective practice, after all, is a habit all teaching professionals should strive to cultivate, and it never goes out of style. In fact, reflective practice – the iterative process of thinking critically about your practices, adjusting them based on the insights you gain, and then doing it all over again, gradually improving each time – has been a mainstay of KOTESOL for many years now. Our organization boasts not only a dedicated special interest group, the Reflective Practice Special Interest Group (RP-SIG), but also a history of workshops and conferences designed to help practitioners explore and improve their reflective practice skills. In addition, one of ELT's biggest luminaries in this area, KOTESOL Patron Award recipient Dr. Thomas S.C. Farrell, has been an active supporter of and participant in our organization's reflective practice endeavors for many years now, presenting at our conferences and RP-SIG events, contributing a regular column in this very magazine, and even sponsoring our organization's first Reflective Language Teacher Award last year. If you're not already incorporating reflection into your teaching routine, this issue of *The English Connection* offers a great excuse to start, and you can be sure KOTESOL will be there to support your continued reflective practice in the future!

Reflective practice is not limited to educators, though. It's also important that we, as an organization, intentionally incorporate this same iterative process to evolve and improve – and I believe we do. Evidence of KOTESOL's reflective practice has become increasingly clear over the years as we have changed with the times, consciously and conscientiously seeking to better represent and support our members while also embracing a core commitment to teaching for a better world. Our code of conduct, anti-discrimination policy, Diversity Committee, Social Justice SIG, Environmental Justice SIG, People of Color Teachers SIG, Women and Gender Equality SIG, and many of the policies in our guiding documents have all emerged in recent years as our organization has sought new ways to reaffirm and more fully embody its commitment to providing a welcoming space for community, professionalism, and mutual respect.

The onslaught of the coronavirus this past spring has certainly presented us with many new opportunities to reflect on, adjust, and creatively adapt our practices as an organization. I am constantly in awe of KOTESOL's volunteers and leaders, and this is particularly true today, as they face each new challenge with delicate deliberation, iterative innovation, and a moral compass centered on service. In response to the curveball thrown at us in the form of COVID-19, for example, the 2020 National Conference team redefined the game by moving the conference online and intentionally seeking out experts who could address the most pressing issues facing educators today. Moreover, after careful consideration, our organization elected to emphasize access and empathy when it chose to waive conference registration fees, standing in solidarity with global educators facing precarity and hardship as a result of the pandemic – a decision truly commensurate with our values as an organization. The success of this conference – as well as that of our international conference, which we have decided to reschedule – has provided a foundation for future efforts as we reflect on the unique challenges and tensions arising from this unprecedented situation as well as our organization's response to it.

This same spirit of adaptive, reflective, creative response to situated needs is evident in our organization at the chapter and individual level, as well. I have noted with admiration, for example, several Facebook groups founded by KOTESOL members seeking to connect with other teachers moving classes online, providing a space for mutual support and exploration. Many of our chapter presidents, meanwhile, have been communicating online to coordinate a full calendar of virtual KOTESOL events, discuss issues facing their chapter, learn from each other's experiences, and work together to continually improve. The dialogs in these spaces are beautiful to behold as they shift and flow with the eddies of collaborative reflection and coalesce into cataracts of creative inspiration.

The crucible of COVID-19 has held up a mirror to our organization in recent months and forced us to reflect more than usual on what our values truly are – and I think we can all be proud of who we have shown ourselves to be. In a time of crisis, the KOTESOL community turned to one another in the spirit of "teachers helping teachers," drawing closer instead of more distant and providing mutual encouragement and support. At this unique moment in history, we are facing new challenges as an organization and as educators; it is a time that requires reflection on what we've been doing, why, and how we can improve in the future. Looking into this particular glass, I am more confident than ever that through community, collaboration, and continuous reflection we can adapt, persevere, overcome, and improve in new and innovative ways – together.

Reflecting on Vocabulary Instruction Using Affixes

By Samantha Levinson

Introduction

Word components such as prefixes and suffixes, sometimes referred to as *affixes*, and root words have pre-existing definitions. Many English affixes originated from Greek and Latin words, highly influencing the English language. Though Latin is considered a dead language today, or a language with no native speakers, it often is poignantly described as "a dead language that never died." This is because Latin has transformed and evolved into English and the Romance languages. While many native readers may experience morphological processing (construing meaning from affixes and root words) automatically, for English learners, this process takes a conscious effort. As educators, when we reflect on our best practices, widening the breadth of our vocabulary teaching repertoire will allow students to use a more diverse toolset.

Graves et al. (2012) reminds us that word learning strategies are necessary for all learners, in particular second language learners, since they have more vocabulary to learn and lack background knowledge. There are different ways to categorize word learning strategies, such as by studying compound words (two words that combine to make one; e.g., *pop + corn = popcorn*), inflections (suffixes that modify the base word; e.g., *house/houses*), derivational suffixes (suffixes that modify the root word; e.g., *adore/adorable*), and prefixes (elements attached to the beginning of the word, such as *re-* in *replay*). We can train students to infer meaning of vocabulary by using level-appropriate Greek and Latin affixes and roots, which serve as context clues as well as build meaning.

Beck et al. (2002) suggests that when learning a new word, a continuum exists, ranging from no knowledge to a rich decontextualized knowledge of the word's meaning. Having limited contextualized meaning lies in the middle of the continuum and requires inferencing skills. Since there is a low ratio of *cognates* (words that have a common etymological origin) between English and Korean, an effective word learning strategy comes from looking at affixes. Graves et al. (2012) confirms that affixes generally help build meaning of entire word families at once, making vocabulary learning more effective. A study by Goodwin and Ahn (2010), for example, suggests that affixes can be taught to language learners effectively by "remediating phonological processing challenges" (p. 183). They found that morphological awareness results in positive literacy outcomes. By identifying multiple learning strategies, including teaching prefixes, suffixes, and roots to build knowledge of more complex words, educators can focus on specific and diverse strategies throughout a school semester. One benefit of this is that once students can explain the meaning of a word and understand the affix, they are likely to be able to generate other words that use the same affix.

In addition, there is a correlation between phonological awareness (how a word is pronounced) and morphological awareness (meaning of word parts such as affixes/root words). Take, for example, *magic/magician*. When a student learns the suffix -ian, they will simultaneously observe that the last consonant undergoes a phonological change when the suffix is added. This overlap between learning a word's sound and word-part meanings helps build awareness of sublexical processing, according to Goodwin and Ahn (2010).

Receptive Knowledge and Productive Comprehension Can Work Together

Interestingly, Hinkel (2005) has broken apart the cognitive components required to learn new words. She constructed a chart split between receptive and productive knowledge as it relates to learning vocabulary. Building off Swain's "output hypothesis" (1995), which states that producing language and comprehending language are separate tasks, Hinkel points out that negotiating meanings, vocabulary, concepts, and patterns are best learned in an immersion setting using differentiated instruction, so that receptive concepts are reinforced through a variety of production activities.

While Hinkel agrees that morphological processing is a useful strategy to learn new words, she differentiates receptive and productive skills. Using affixes engages many components of Hinkel's requirements of knowing a word, including form (such as being able to identify a particular prefix or derivational suffix), meaning (as in knowing which form to use to express a particular thought), and forming associations (knowing which word it makes you think of and identifying another word you could use instead). A student may be able to recognize an affix in a word through morphological training, but knowing which form of the word can be used to express a particular meaning comes through production practice.

A study by Lesaux et al. (2010) further supports this point. Learners in a language program were exposed to words in text and additional meanings of those words, engaged in morphological training (the study of affixes and root words) both explicit and in context, and finally used learned words in their own writing. The study found that a diverse range of word exposure methods improve students' ability to negotiate between meaning and production. A multitude of studies, including Goodwin and Ahn's (2010) study, reiterate the same findings. They found a direct association in lower-elementary students' word knowledge with their ability to read aloud, and with knowledge performance, including lexical phonology (how phonology and morphology interact; e.g., the different role of the words *neighbor/neighborhood*) and semantics (words and how they are used in everyday speech).

Testing the Theory
Last year at the 27th Korea TESOL International Conference, "Advancing ELT: Blending Disciplines, Approaches, and Technologies," I gave a presentation entitled "Greek Mythology Vocabulary Building as a Dual Literacy Approach for Korean ELLs." I was interested in how morphology affects English language learners' vocabulary acquisition, and this led me to the effectiveness of decontextualization as compared to contextualized vocabulary learning.

I gave the attendees a task to illustrate the problem that arises when educators link comprehension to production without an appropriate bridge. During my presentation, I asked, "Wouldn't it be interesting to understand the learning hurdles of our ELLs more thoroughly? Would our instructional practices change or improve if we understood the learning experience better through a student lens?" As part of our reflection, I utilized an invented passage filled with a high percentage of false and invented words, otherwise known as *pseudowords*. These pseudowords

> **"Understanding can come from word learning strategies such as morphological training games, in-context reading, and writing exercises."**
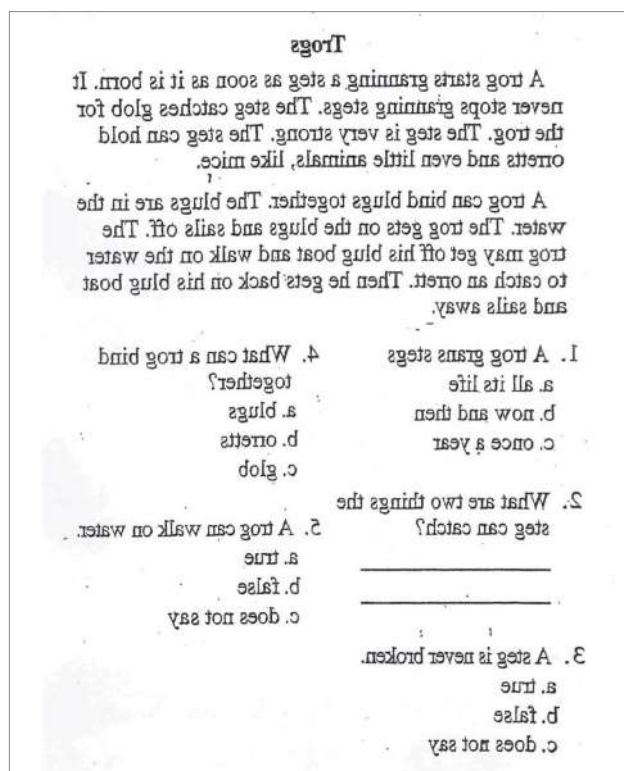
▲ **Invented passage with pseudowords.**

emulated an ELL's literacy learning experience. I asked everyone to pair off into groups of four or five, and then read and attempt to comprehend the passage. Watching my peers break down sentences, look for relationships, look for repeated words, and search for the parts of speech paralleled the experience I see my third to sixth grade students undergo while learning in English.

Next, I allowed my colleagues to use a mirror to see if their comprehension improved. Although less frustrating to read, comprehension did not improve. I then asked them to read and answer a series of comprehension questions based on the short passage. Interestingly, most attendees proudly answered the multiple-choice comprehension questions correctly and were able to identify the parts of speech and relationships between many or the pseudowords. While evaluating the context clues, I enjoyed hearing them state things like "I know that *orretts* are some type of housing for *trogs* who can definitely sail on the water on the *blugs* that go in the water. Maybe *blugs* are boats. I am not sure, but they definitely float." However, when asked to define the vocabulary or summarize the passage, they were unable to give any finite answers. This begged the question: Is it possible to decode new vocabulary in context without building meaning at all? This exercise supported that it is possible. This may help explain why Hinkel found a gap between comprehension and reproduction. You certainly can't effectively produce meaning for words you cannot understand.

As discussed, understanding can come from word learning strategies such as morphological training games, in-context reading, and writing exercises. Decontextualized vocabulary learning must accompany the contextualized components so that students understand how, when, and what form of a word is appropriate in a given situation, and can go on to use it accordingly. Furthermore, it appears learning occurs not only in embedded vocabulary instruction but also when the context is well understood. One study by Graves et al. (2012) found that students learned less from exposure to vocabulary embedded in the text than they did during shared book reading where both definition and context were learned.

To ensure students have ample opportunity for this, the research concluded that rich vocabulary instruction should consist of explicit instruction including:

• introduction of words through an authentic children's book
• clear, student-friendly definitions
• question prompts that help students think critically about the word
• examples of the word in other contexts
• opportunity to act out the word
• visual aids
• encourage students to spell, pronounce, and write the words
• opportunity to compare and contrast vocabulary
• repetition of targeted words
• inclusion of activities that develop word consciousness

Practical Strategies

Having a system for teaching word-learning strategies is important. By having a list of frequently used prefixes, root words, or suffixes, teachers can target a particular amount of vocabulary each class and track students' progress. A visual aid, such as Table 1, can help show words that share affixes and how they are connected.

Table 1: Eight Frequently Occurring Prefix Families
(based on Baumann et al. (2002)

Family	Prefixes	Example Words	Frequency
Not family	dis (not, opposite, reversal) un (not) in (not) im (not) a (not)	disloyalty, dissimilar, unappetizing, unfortunate inactive, inadvertent, improper, impure, amoral, apathy	High
Number family	mono (one) bi (two) semi (half, partly)	monorail, monotone, bilingual, biannual semicircle, semi formal	Medium
Below or part family	sub (below, part of) under (below, not enough)	subset, submerge underweight, underdone	Medium
Again and remove family	re (again) de (remove, reverse)	retell, reconsider, rhodecode, deductive	High
Before and after family	pre (before) post (after)	preshrunk, preview postgraduate, postwar	Medium
Against family	anti (against, stopping) counter (against, opposite)	antifreeze, antisocial counterattack, countermeasures	Medium
Excess family	over (too many or much) super (more, better, highest) out (better, more than)	overpopulation, overflow, superhighway, superheated, outrun, outlandish	Medium
Bad family	mis (bad, wrongly) mal (bad)	mistrust, mistreatment malnutrition, maladaptive	Medium

Graves et al. (2012) suggests that other word-learning strategies, such as word wheels, word ladders, and word games, are great ways to expand student vocabulary banks but should be paired with in-context usage for most effective results.

Reconsidering Vocabulary Instruction

If we reflect upon how to better our students' vocabulary ranges and reading comprehension, a variety of strategies may come to mind. One thing is for sure, vocabulary instruction must go beyond simple word lists if students are to gain a greater vocabulary range. As part of reading instruction, morphological awareness is not often used in ELL vocabulary instruction, but it should be! It is an effective vocabulary learning strategy. This article was written to offer a vocabulary learning philosophy that considers both receptive and productive elements, and to encourage teachers to reflect and explore new ways to make vocabulary instruction more dynamic and successful.

References

Baumann, J. F., Edwards, E. C., Font, G., Tereshinski, C. A., Kame'enui, E. J., & Olejnik, S. (2002). Teaching morphemic and contextual analysis to fifth-grade students. *Reading Research Quarterly, 37*(2), 150–176.

Beck, I., McKeown, M., & Kucan, L. (2002). *Bringing words to life*. Guilford Press.

Graves, M., August, D., & Mancilla-Martinez, J. (2012). *Teaching vocabulary to English language learners*. Teachers College Press.

Goodwin, A. P., & Ahn, S. (2010). A meta-analysis of morphological interventions: Effects on literacy achievement of children with literacy difficulties. *Annals of Dyslexia, 60*, 183–208. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11881-010-0041-x

Goodwin, A. P., Lipsky, M., & Ahn, S. (2012). Word detectives: Using units of meaning to support literacy. *The Reading Teacher, 65*(7), 461–470.

Hinkel, E. (2005). Analyses of L2 text and what can be learned from them. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 615–628). Lawrence Erlbaum.

Lesaux, N., Kieffer, M., Faller, S., & Kelly, J. (2010). The effectiveness and ease of implementation of an academic vocabulary intervention for linguistically diverse students in urban middle schools. *Reading Research Quarterly, 45*(2), 196–228.

Swain, M. (1995). Three functions of output in second language learning. In G. Cook & B. Seidlhofer (Eds.), *Principles and practice in applied linguistics: Studies in honor of HG Widdowson* (pp. 125–144). Oxford University Press.

The Author

Samantha Levinson (MEd) received a certificate in reading and writing education in 2019. She was a presenter at the 2019 KOTESOL international and national conferences and has taught a multitude of English courses at such institutions as Mokpo National University and Mokpo English Library. Her focus has been on running a private English study room for elementary students to adults for the past five years. An article publication can be found in the 2019 *Korea TESOL Journal* (15-1). Her academic interests include ELL literacy and vocabulary learning strategies.

Email: srlevinson@gmail.com

An Academic Reflection

Lessons on Migrating Online

By Adam Turner

Moving classes suddenly online has been quite a learning experience for all of us. In this article, I will share some reflections and lessons learned as well as issues to consider going forward.

Technology Shift Without Paradigm Shift
The first thing that struck me about the entire process was the widespread guideline to carry out your online class as close as possible to a traditional class environment. This seems reasonable on the surface, but it shows how little development there has been in general understanding of the difference between traditional teaching and e-learning over the past decade. For example, whether you are standing in front of the class or using Zoom, if a teacher is doing most of the talking, it doesn't resolve the problem of a teacher-centered rather than a student-centered traditional classroom environment. Replacing the "sage on the stage" with the sage on Zoom is not progress. Of course, this is sometimes due to constraints from administrations such as determining the number of

assignments are only accepted when minimum objectives have been met on a complete/incomplete basis. Students can be working on different assignments at the same time. This allows me to concentrate feedback on students who need it, while letting more advanced students move ahead in the course. Admittedly, this is easier in my writing class than it would be for a conversation class, but the principle could be applied to some parts of most courses. In short, we need to realize that the classroom period can be a limiting metaphor as well as a special place to learn.

Pedagogy and Technology
A common misconception of teaching online was the limited options of recorded PPT or using videoconferencing software such as Blackboard Collaborate or Zoom as the only options. This is perhaps based on how many content-heavy lecture classes that are taught in universities but is less appropriate for language education. Some educational organizations seemed to be unclear on the concept of screencasting. Screencasting simply means to record into a video whatever is on your screen with software such as

> **"…it has been nice to see more spontaneous informal collaboration among colleagues …"**

minutes of video or combinations of tasks and videoconferencing regardless of the learning objectives or type of class. As a parent, I saw the same teacher and video-based approach even for Grade-1 students as well, with more animation, but still mostly passive consumption of video as e-learning. What is the alternative? It could be creative tasks assigned as projects. Upon completion, take a picture or video as evidence if the result is not a document. E-learning environments can be places to manage learning but do not always have to be the place where learning content is delivered. As is the case with online graduate degrees, video does not have to be the main vehicle for learning. The terms *e-learning and distance learning* can sometimes be distinct.

Another example of the lack of paradigm shift is not taking advantage of the benefits of asynchronous learning, instruction that is not in real-time. Instructions to deliver content based on the "normal" class time on a weekly schedule for a classroom that doesn't even exist impedes proven e-learning techniques like mastery learning and formative quizzing, questions to check learning rather than to grade. In my writing class for graduate students,

Snaggit. After some trial and error, my recorded videos became a mashup of PPT files, webpages, MS Word files, Webcam, and LMS pages – much closer to what I would do in parts of the classroom using the beam projector. A technical challenge is to set the right screen size because it can't be adjusted after recording, as far as I know. I also ask students to pause the video and perform tasks at certain points. In short, although time-consuming to first create, I felt that the option of recorded lectures had much more potential than just a professor narrating their slides or for software tutorials.

One tip is to cut video into about 15 to 20 minute segments, which both TED talks and MOOC research has found to be optimal for attention. However, some universities did not allow this, indicating the need for greater understanding of online teaching's best practices for some administrators. In my own experience and hearing from others, some instructors were able to advise their departments on e-learning best practices, which should continue.

To take advantage of this recorded format, I started a new genre for me, the "makeover." After getting permission from students to use examples of their work (I also had this from previous semesters), I went over the work and edited it in Word files while recording and narrating in detail to illustrate common errors: effective recorded video with no PPT. Here are a couple of tips I learned. If you are screencasting, the size and color of your mouse cursor can be increased for greater video visibility. Also, PPT defaults can be set to widescreen if you know you are going to be only using them for video. Recording the video forced me to

slow down, which made me wonder if I should also do so in a regular class. Students who have difficulty with listening skills may also appreciate having the video available, even in a normal class. I will definitely reuse them.

Development of Professional Development
On a more positive note, it has been nice to see more spontaneous informal collaboration among colleagues either within the workplace or through Facebook groups created to address specific skills gaps, like teaching with Zoom. I have both learned from colleagues and have helped colleagues quite a lot in the last couple of months. From this experience, it would seem that we should not stop, but deemphasize the role of formal presentations in professional development in favor of opportunities that consist of educators at all levels getting together to solve specific problems with facilitators. Most educators would agree that in-house professional development workshops from outside speakers are often hit or miss at best. An alternative approach would be to list out the skills necessary to learn and common errors. An example would be listing the skills needed to run a conversation class using Zoom. I tried this format many years ago at KOTESOL in an online quiz-making workshop where I laid out all the tasks to complete online on a site. Then, the

participants worked in pairs to complete them. I did not "give" a workshop at all for the entire period but instead helped participants when they got stuck. We got a lot done. In another KOTESOL event, I did a Writing SIG "unpresentation" where I just answered questions on teaching writing the entire time with no presentation. We may have to think about reinventing conferences online at least for the near future.

Student Performance Online
One of the most interesting findings for me and others is how the experience of online learning has not always been for the worse during this semester. The switch to an online environment improved the performance of some students who have become much more engaged. In one of my own lower-level writing and presentation classes, engagement has been higher than I expected. Others have noted that without the social pressures of school, certain introverted students may perform better. Research

> "...it is also clear that the term 'digital natives' has been oversold."

on MOOCs, for example, shows that only a very small percentage of students will complete courses, but some of these students thrive in more self-directed environments where they can organize their own learning and pace to a greater degree than in a traditional lockstep classroom approach.

On the other hand, it is also clear that the term "digital natives" has been oversold. They definitely know about the latest popular apps, but managing their own learning through e-learning environments, searching online, and evaluating information – not so much. For those familiar with educational technology, it is easy to overestimate the digital literacy of some students. One reason moving to e-learning has been so exhausting for me and others is the greater amount of classroom management required. In business, this is called communication overhead and is often warned to be a hidden cost of business rarely understood. I think we understand it now! Something that can be simply shown or mentioned in class may take much more time to explain in text or by setting up a video meeting. I found that I needed to create videos on skills such as using the LMS, filename conventions, and how to use MS Word functions. Thankfully, these videos will continue to be useful in managing regular classes and as links to common FAQS. I was glad that I was forced to learn the software better.

However, creating videos may not mean that students are paying attention to them. One way to counter this problem is by using a Marvel-inspired technique I got from a colleague. By including "Easter Eggs" or tips or tasks found only by watching to the end of the video, it may become more apparent how well students are following recorded lectures.

For me, the biggest barrier to e-learning was not even about the technology. In a normal classroom, I get a much better sense of where my students are at. If

students are underperforming, I usually ask to speak to them after class to find out what the problem is. Not always, but often, these brief conversations have turned around the performance of some students. Digital communication is just not as effective. I was less able to develop that rapport that I have used in the past to bring back underperforming students so they can get a decent grade, if not excel. I just don't feel I know my students as well as I normally would, so I will be more actively pushing virtual office hours as a result. Unfortunately, administrators just looking at grade sheets won't be able to clearly see this difference that in-person teaching can make for underperforming students. In short, we need to better understand the factors that affect how students perform in normal classes vs e-learning environments to better design courses.

TMI – Too Much Information

Clearly teaching online risks the problem of information and communication overload. One of my students complained about the number of notifications in my course. Many were sent automatically through the software, so instructors need to review their notification settings. I found shared Google Docs useful for classroom management like signup sheets. I also found the Notion workspace useful to collect notes on using tools such as Snaggit, Camtasia, and Zoom that I found across Facebook, blogs, emails, Kakao, links, etc. Evernote or Microsoft OneNote are also very useful for this purpose. Another way to reduce communication overhead is to create means for students to communicate with each other through Kakao groups, which I started on the advice of colleagues in anticipation of more time necessary to manage the learning process. As we know all too well, most student questions can be answered by checking the syllabus or LMS instructions. When this communication occurs in a Kakao group or discussion board, there is less chance of error as the answer is "crowdsourced" rather than just being the answer from a friend in the class.

Conclusion

The big question is, of course, to what extent should we change our teaching practices after this. Is it a temporary emergency to cope with, or should we change some of our practices? In my case, it will be the latter. Overall, this experience has further increased my skepticism that e-learning alone can massively scale up and produce positive learning outcomes for all students, so I would not want to move fully online. However, I will definitely use more blended learning strategies, including supplementary video, homework video, formative mastery-based quizzing, and virtual office hours, to increase the amount of feedback and practice in class time. What will you do?

The Author

Adam Turner is an associate teaching professor at Hanyang University. He has been teaching in Korea since 1998. He specializes in English for specific purposes and teaches graduate and undergraduate school engineering writing courses as well as general writing and presentation courses. Email: adamturner7@gmail.com

An Integrated Approach to Teaching Creative Writing

By Darren Elliott

To some extent, academic and business English texts follow certain rhetorical patterns that learners can be taught to emulate. By utilizing authentic, formulaic language and fixed expressions, the teacher can create a scaffold for the learner to write their own original business emails or persuasive essays. On the other hand, finding and utilizing appropriate models is more challenging when teaching creative writing. Narrative fiction may appear to follow certain rules, but in reality, there are far more ways to write a short story than an academic paper.

Traditionally, foreign language departments in Japanese universities were populated by specialists in either linguistics or literature. In recent years, however, market forces and government policies have combined to shift the focus towards language learning, evidenced by the increasing number of language centers, TEFL-qualified instructors, and international faculty (Wadden & Hale, 2019). As a result, authentic L2 literature study is being overtaken in popularity by extensive reading (ER) in many contexts. According to T. Robb (personal communication, March 30, 2020), there has been a significant rise in the usage of MReader (an online system for recording ER activity), from 97 schools in 2014 to 156 in 2019 – more than 10 percent of the tertiary institutions in the country. In addition, ER implementation is not restricted to language majors but is also gaining a foothold in STEM and other contexts (Yamashita, 2013; Matsuda et al., 2018).

In ER, the reader is expected to read a large volume of self-selected material at an easily comprehensible linguistic level, and there is certainly growing evidence (see Nakanishi's 2015 meta-study) to suggest that this technique is effective in raising both language proficiency and learner motivation. Whilst I believe that ER has great value, in this article, I will argue that English literature still has a place in the language classroom, and that an integrated reading and writing approach can bring a deeper understanding within reach for many language learners. I contend that reading and re-reading short authentic fiction, reacting to it, and replicating it, can improve a learner's proficiency as both a writer and a reader.

In this article, I will demonstrate the use of authentic short fiction to assist learners in producing their own English language literature. Student reflections, gathered at the end of the course, are included throughout the article to show the students perceptions of this process.

Context

I work for the language center of a private university in central Japan. The majority of our work focuses on first-year required classes for students from each of our university's departments. Our university operates a quarter system, with classes meeting twice a week for eight weeks each quarter. The language center sets goals (as can-do statements) and guidelines for each class but also encourages teacher autonomy in assessment methods and material selection.

The class I would like to discuss in this article is a first-year literacy class from the Department of British and America Studies. The institution requires an ER component and the production of a writing portfolio, with the intention of integrating reading and writing and building towards the short story as a product in quarter four. Throughout quarters one to three learners read and react to short stories emotionally and intellectually as a class. In quarter four they return to these now familiar short stories and assess them structurally and stylistically, in order to produce their own short fiction.

Task vs. Extensive Reading

Any authentic L2 text can be utilized to teach and practice a foreign language. Thus, any text is a suitable base for a task. In ER, on the other hand, the comprehensibility of the text is key – it should be simple enough for the learner to read without the support of a dictionary – and the only task is to read as much as possible. Yet, to some extent, ER approaches reading purely as a vehicle for language input and lacks quality control and critical engagement with the text.

Balancing these two approaches leaves the teacher with something of a dilemma. Authentic literature is not easily accessible to language learners, and yet oversimplifying tasks and activities fails to exploit the rich language and cultural content it contains to the fullest extent. The teacher needs to compromise by finding more accessible authentic literature and by scaffolding more challenging tasks.

Material Selection and Readability

There are a number of factors that influence readability, and I took these into account in selecting the short stories we used for material in this class. As the teacher makes his or her text selection, I would suggest that the following aspects of the short story are important to consider.

Firstly, the cultural schema. Contemporary stories that lean towards the universal, rather than the culturally specific, are more accessible and relatable. However, cultural context can afford many learning opportunities. It is always wise to activate schemata before approaching a longer text – pre-teaching historical, geographical, linguistic, or cultural points that will enable learners to better appreciate the text – but if the teacher does select a more culturally "alien" story, this becomes particularly important.

Another alternative is "nativization," or the re-writing of a text with localized reference points. As teachers working in Turkish universities, Erten and Razi (2009) took a short story set in New York and simply changed the names of people, places, and foods to Turkish ones, finding that this alone was sufficient to increase comprehension and reading fluency in their Turkish students. In my class students performed this task themselves, by adapting the rural Ugandan story *The Winner* to a Japanese context.

The second important factor in comprehension is the plot structure. Linear, chronologically organized stories are easier for language learners to follow. Familiar folktales or fairy tales are often an excellent starting point to show important plot phases such as exposition, inciting incident, climax, and resolution. I recommend Yorke (2013) or Booker (2005) for more detailed and thorough investigations of plot structures.

The third story feature to take into account is the character relationship structure. The number of characters and the complexity of their relationship will certainly affect the readability of a story. It is also easier for students to keep track of the characters if they are distinct from one another. Readers can distinguish and separate characters by name, gender, personality traits, and physical characteristics. Both plot and character relationships can be mapped graphically while reading to facilitate understanding.

Although these factors should be considered carefully by the teacher when selecting texts, it is only to ensure that the stories are accessible to the students. Initially at least, learners should not be distracted by too much complexity. First readings should be "point-driven" (Vipond & Hunt, 1984), in search of the message or deeper meaning of the story.

From Reading to Writing
In the class under discussion, learners are asked to produce two texts per quarter, and each writing task is connected to a short story thematically. For example, after reading Shirley Jackson's classic American Gothic tale of a traditional ritual, students write a descriptive essay on a Japanese festival or tradition. Vonnegut's dystopian society serves as a prompt for a persuasive essay arguing for or against equality (same-sex marriage or animal testing are popular topics). Students also conduct discussions based on each of the short stories and thematically related news articles.

Table 1. Short Stories and Related Tasks

Short Story	Theme	Connected Writing Tasks
The Winner - Barbara Kimenye	Family	'nativisation', compare and contrast essay (Ugandan / Japanese family life)
Separate Ways - Higuchi Ichiyo	Love	letter to an advice columnist, with response
The Lottery - Shirley Jackson	Superstition	descriptive essay (a Japanese festival or cultural event)
Taste - Roald Dahl	Honesty	complaint letter
Harrison Bergeron - Kurt Vonnegut	Equality	persuasive essay (animal rights, same-sex marriage, affirmative action
Robbie - Isaac Asimov	Technology	cause and effect essay (how a particular technology has changed / will change the world)
The Monkey's Paw - O. Henry		plot structure, descriptive writing
The Last Night of the World - Ray Bradbury		advancing the plot and creating character with dialogue

In the fourth and final quarter, however, the emphasis switches to creative writing and short stories written by the students. At this stage, we return to the short stories we have been reading and analyze the stylistic features in more depth.

Expectations
It is important to recognize the strengths and limitations of the learners you are working with. My students are first-year students, and this short story will be the longest thing they have ever written. In addition, they are eighteen years old and may have a limited life experience. And, realistically, some people are naturally more creative or imaginative than others. This is a typical reaction from a student struggling to start an original short story:

K's Reflection Task
I have not written any story before and it was difficult to think of an idea. I always came up with an idea from what I watched and read and it was difficult to think of an original.

Inevitably, many students' initial ideas will be drawn from popular fiction (TV, film, or folktales). With this in mind, there is still a lot that students can achieve. It is important to focus on what elements of writing can feasibly be taught and what a reasonably proficient student may be able to put into practice.

> **"I contend that reading and re-reading short authentic fiction, reacting to it, and replicating it, can improve a learner's proficiency as both a writer and a reader."**

Plot
As mentioned previously, short stories with linear narratives and easily deconstructed plot structures are a valuable resource, providing a model for learners' writing. We revisited each of the short stories we had already read but in particular to Kurt Vonnegut's short story *Harrison Bergeron* for its clear examples of a five-act structure. After this task, each of the learners was able to produce their own skeletal plots and to present them to one another for feedback before embarking on early drafts of their story. In order to hone the plots of the writer's short stories, we practiced the "elevator pitch" – a summary of the main character and story in the time it takes to go from the basement to the seventh floor. In a role play, the screenwriters pitched to the producers and received notes on the strengths and weaknesses of their stories. This was viewed positively by the learners:

A's Reflection Task
The most useful thing was the elevator pitch. We practiced telling our short story to my partner for between 30 seconds and 1 minute, but it was so difficult to summarise clearly in a short time.

Once the learners were comfortable with formulaic plot structures, the more adept were able to subvert it – particularly by playing with chronology. Here is one student's feedback on her peer's writing:

M's Reflection Task
I enjoyed U's story the most because in her story, time does not go straight. The past and the future switch several times. I wrote my story just along with time, but she

uses *"time goes back to three years ago…,"* or something like that. *It's unique for me and I think that kind of technique makes (a) story more interesting and attractive.*

An interesting task at this stage is to have students swap papers and draw a four panel comic version of their partner's story. This can quite quickly show the writer if the story actually reads in the way it is intended to.

Person & Perspective

In my experience, students tend to write their early drafts in the third person. It is important to discuss the effect that choice has on a story. Most of the stories we read are written in the third person, but Roald Dahl narrates *Taste* in the first person. Tasks here were to rewrite sections of the model short stories (or their own) from another character's perspective. Students were initially surprised by what they had seen as an automatic writing choice in their own work, then took ownership to write a story from a more considered perspective. Writers were better able to justify their writing decisions after these tasks:

A's Reflection Task
I wrote in the first person because I wanted to focus on Yuki mainly and write change of her feeling.

Y's Reflection Task
I wanted to express my hero as a mysterious person, so I wrote the story from the heroine's eye. I chose the third person because I wanted to explain the situation naturally. My story is the reminiscence of the heroine, so I used past tense in almost all scenes.

Internal Logic & Tonal Consistency

It doesn't matter if something is possible in our world, provided it is consistent with the explicit or implicit rules of the world in the story. Even in fantasy worlds, characters must have believable motivations for their actions. Students are required to explain why their characters acted in certain ways. Writers must also be aware of the tone or mood they are trying to set. It can be very interesting to shift tone in the middle of a story, but this has to be handled deftly.

"Show, Don't Tell"

"Don't tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass." — Anton Checkov

Writers need to allow their characters to convey their emotional states through action and dialogue. Students tend to struggle with this at first, but each of the writers in our collection of short stories takes a different approach. Vonnegut uses reporting verbs to express the emotions of the characters. Dahl is masterful in his physical descriptions as a display for personal traits. Asimov, interestingly, is clinically direct – a useful reminder that "telling" can also work. Once again, the students return to the stories and find descriptive passages and dialogues that reveal characters' emotions without being explicit. One of the learners reported her reaction to Harrison Bergeron thus:

Y's Reflection Task
I think Harrison Bergeron had the strongest effect on me. It told me a lot of things. It was composed of many conversations, so I was drawn to the story. When I wrote my short story, I read it again as reference. It is a good example of "Show, don't tell". I could understand necessary things from the conversations and enjoyed guessing the characters' feeling.

Conclusion

Although it is not unusual to see language learning divided into the "four skills" of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, it is neither possible nor desirable to teach that way in reality. In this article, I have tried to show a way in which reading and writing instruction can complement one another, by using authentic literature as both a source and a product. I hope, too, that the importance of curriculum design is clear. Many of these activities would fill a lesson, but each task and text becomes more powerful through reuse and recycling in different ways and at different points throughout the course. The planning and execution of such a course does require effort on the part of both student and teacher, as writers require multiple drafts, probing questions, and plenty of well-chosen examples. However, the student's reflective tasks demonstrate increased confidence in their writing, and a better understanding of how to develop a story. This final comment shows a typical feeling of growth:

A's Reflection Task
In my first drafts, the situations of the story changed suddenly. Since my story was heart warming through the relationships between a girl and others, I needed to add some emotions. However, at first I just wrote down some situations changing. It was kind of boring. Then, I realised that relationships between people were not so easy, actually. To make my story more real, I added more emotions and struggling in each person. Through these processes, I could complete my final version. I was happy to see that I could describe the transaction of girl's feeling. In other words, I could describe how the girl grew up in my story.

References

Booker, C. (2005). *The seven basic plots: Why we tell stories*. Bloomsbury.

Erten, I. H., & Razi, S. (2009). The effects of cultural familiarity on reading comprehension. *Reading in a Foreign Language, 21*(1), 60–77.

Matsuda, S., Imura, M., & Nakanishi, N. (2018). Encouraging L2 science majors to talk using L1 readers. *Extensive Reading World Congress Proceedings, 4*, 145–154.

Nakanishi, T. (2015). A meta-analysis of extensive reading research. *TESOL Quarterly, 49*(1), 6–37.

Vipond, D., & Hunt, R. A. (1984). Point-driven understanding: Pragmatic and cognitive dimensions of literary reading. *Poetics, 13*(3), 261–277.

Wadden, P., & Hale, C. C. (2018). *Teaching English at Japanese universities: A new handbook*. Routledge.

Yamashita, J. (2013). Effects of extensive reading on reading attitudes in a foreign language. *Reading in a Foreign Language, 25*(2), 248–263.

The Author

Darren Elliott (DELTA, MA ELT) is originally from the UK and has been teaching in Japan since 1999. He is an associate professor in the Foreign Language Education Center at Nanzan University, Nagoya. His research interests include learner autonomy, metaphor as research methodology, and teacher development.

Email: darrenrelliott@gmail.com

It Takes a Village to Rear a Teacher

KOTESOL and Its Community of Practice

By Kara Mac Donald, with Robert J. Dickey

Kara Mac Donald is the 2019 recipient of the Teacher of the Year award, in which KOTESOL recognizes an educator who has made an outstanding contribution to English language education in Korea. One of several benefits to this award is the opportunity to contribute a feature article to The English Connection*, which she has done here. — Ed.*

"It takes a village to raise a child," says an African proverb, and it suggests that all the members of a community must interact, support, and teach fellow members to successfully foster them in a nurturing context. The proverb refers specifically to a child, but it could also be adjusted to refer to an adult on a particular path of development or journey, like a teacher.

Skilled teachers don't become as such only through formal education but also from multiple sources and interactions, and active reflection over time. Who they are and what their instructional practice is are molded by their students, their peers, their ongoing professional development, and the educational associations, in which they participate, to name only a few. There are so many more influences it is impossible to list them all. And just as raising a child takes a community, so does the rearing of a teacher. Teachers do not become skilled educators by being static. Good teachers are dynamic and evolve, and are able to do this because of the communities with which they interact.

The following begins with Kara Mac Donald, 2019 KOTESOL Teacher of the Year recipient, discussing her value in academic communities and KOTESOL in her ongoing development, as a *village that reared, and rears, her*. Then, Robert Dickey, a long-term KOTESOL member from the association's founding days, offers insight on KOTESOL as a community.

Communities of Practice

Although there are many communities that teachers interact with that inform their instructional practice, I would like to focus on how influential academic associations as communities of practice (CoP) are to a teacher's development. Wenger (1998) and Wenger et al. (2002) examined the concept of CoP, describing

them as groups of individuals with similar passions and concerns who have a desire to achieve goals related to these interests and concerns by regularly interacting and working with each other. They are also collectively engaged in undertaking the community's activities to build and sustain the common goal.

TESOL and its affiliates, such as KOTESOL, serve to foster teacher development and also, in many cases, become a form of extended family that develops teachers. In a study conducted by Thorkelson (2015), it was shown that KOTESOL members sought predominantly professional development and networking from the association. Yet, about a third of the members surveyed sought social interactions and personal opportunities. In fact, the regional, national, and international conferences were highly valued, as they were considered events where members could fulfill all of the above-mentioned objectives. Participating in the association and its events develops teachers' persona inside and outside of the classroom. For many, involvement in KOTESOL may be a relatively small part of their teaching career, but leaves a positive and long-standing impact. For others, involvement in KOTESOL is lengthy, and the members develop along with the association as it changes and responds to the changing needs of Korean ELT. In all cases, from my experience, KOTESOL as a CoP plays a significant role in making teachers active both in Korea and abroad through professional development and social interactions, which informs their instructional practice and who they are as individuals.

The Village That Reared Me

I have 25 years of experience as a foreign language teacher and 15 years of experience as a teacher trainer, as I have often held both foreign language and teacher trainer positions simultaneously. Within this time period,

> **"Good teachers are dynamic and evolve, and are able to do this because of the communities with which they interact."**

KOTESOL started to mold me in 2006, one month after arriving in Korea to work in a post-graduate TESOL certificate program. I now have 13 years of active involvement in KOTESOL because the association as a CoP continues to inform me as a teacher, academic, and member of a CoP. It is because of KOTESOL's ability to adapt to the changing contexts and times that makes it a viable CoP. Korean ELT changes, as does the global ELT industry. One example is that from 2007 to 2011, I was provided the opportunity to be editor of *The English Connection*, and later editor of the *Korea TESOL Journal* (2014–present). These experiences mentored me initially in the skill set required for publishing academic publications, and then, to support other members' development in writing classroom practice and research pieces. Others are the opportunities to work on KOTESOL's national and international conference committees, developing an understanding of the diverse factors that come together to put on such professional development events. As a consequence, I have been able to mentor others in KOTESOL and have the ability to mentor and train members in my local TESOL affiliate to work together

In the 1980s, several local groups spun-off from the Seoul-centered AETK (Dustheimer & Gillette, 1999) as independent affiliates, while still maintaining close ties. KOTESOL as a nationwide organization began when those predecessor communities of practice gradually wound down from a joint conference in October 1992 into a new organization, with the first KOTESOL conference in October 1993. Those predecessor groups became the basis of many of the local chapters today. Chapters are, in one sense, "villages within villages."

KOTESOL inherited the TESOL International affiliation from AETK and became an IATEFL associate in 1996. The founding constitution of the KOTESOL organization, largely following the AETK constitution, specified that there would be Korean leadership at the highest levels in the new unified organization, making it a community with both local roots and international ties.

Key elements in this community are a sense of continuity and connectedness: Even while things must change to reflect evolving circumstances in classrooms,

▲ *Attendees at the KOTESOL International Conference 2019.*

to put on large academic conferences. Maybe most importantly, I have been able to remain abreast on issues in Korean ELT over time and connect with and collaborate on professional projects related to Korea through the association from outside of the country.

For members to have some insight into our CoP, Robert Dickey, as an individual with institutional memory, offers a summary of KOTESOL's birth, development, adjustments, and purposes, in the following section.

The KOTESOL Village Rearing Its Members
KOTESOL, more formally known as Korea TESOL (and in Korean, as 대한영어교육학회), is an organized community of practice with beginnings in November 1981 as the Association of English Teachers in Korea (AETK). Of course, there surely were less formal gatherings of teachers in Korea even earlier. A number of those AETK members are retired yet still living in Korea. Another, no longer in Korea, is a globally renowned researcher (Dr. Thomas S.C. Farrell). The founding president, Dr. Dwight Strawn, was also a charter member of TESOL International (TESOL, n.d.).

in employment, in teaching methodologies, and in membership, the ties that bind us as teachers of English in Korea are not limited to time, workplace, first language, or nationality. Evolving from those earliest meetings in the 1980s to today are the multiple orientations that complement rather than compete: national events and programs alongside local meetings, as well as specialized SIGs (special interest groups) and tracks at conferences alongside general events. "Old Korea hands" share their insights with "newbies." Scholars, well-experienced trainers, and those new to TESOL all teach and learn from each other. As with all communities, there is birth, growth, and contraction with ties across Korea, and reaching out globally.

The first chapters were in Busan, Daegu, Daejeon, Gyeongju, Jeolla-do, and Seoul. Numerous other regional chapters have been founded (and a few have closed) as local members created local communities: Gangwon, Gwangju (separating from Jeolla, which became "North Jeolla"), Suwon-Gyeonggi, and Yongin-Gyeonggi remain active, while the Cheongju and Jeju chapters have come and gone. Add to this numerous international members,

those who have left Korea for other jobs or came for a conference and retained membership. These members also join topic-focused SIG communities of practice.

KOTESOL's membership numbers and demographics have varied over the years, as has attendance at conferences and events. Some changes reflect adjustments in Korea's economy and immigration rules, others may be harder to ascertain. Koreans have been leaders and members: up to 47% of national council members, 9 of 21 presidents, and over 35% of members (Dickey 2018). The number of members with higher degrees in TESOL/applied linguistics or education has steadily climbed despite some significant occasional fluctuations.

Alongside chapter meetings, KOTESOL is perhaps best known for world-class conferences. Since the 1992 joint conference, there have been 27 annual autumn conferences (KOTESOL, n.d.-b) along with dozens of national and regional conferences and symposia. International conference attendance has climbed as high as 1500 participants, with more than 200 presentations across a weekend, with most recent years having roughly 800 attendees.

Members also benefit from publications. This quarterly magazine *The English Connection*, the conference *KOTESOL Proceedings*, and the *Korea TESOL Journal* have all featured articles from and for members since their startup at the 1997 autumn conference.

The community is more than just research, just socialization, just "teachers-swap-shop," although all these elements are important. The organization combines institutional and membership foundations. While there is a need for "corporate-type" approaches to financing, publication, and conference management, members are the basis for all activity, and new membership recognitions and services have come forward in the past decade: Teacher of the Year, Researcher of the Year, new presidential awards, and the latest innovation, KOTESOL Gives Back (members' contributions to other social campaigns).

While other organizations for English teachers in Korea existed earlier, and some have begun (and some closed) since, KOTESOL's unique orientation is as a professional and social community of practice that actively encourages sharing across cultures and work environments, specifically inviting expatriates teaching in *hagwons* (private language schools) as well as K–12 and universities to partner with Korean teachers and scholars in all areas of education – a multinational, multi-skilled, and multilingual village that uses English to talk about English teaching, i.e., communities within a community of practice.

Conclusion

KOTESOL has proved to be a viable and resilient CoP because of its membership and adaptability. In closing, I encourage readers and members to reflect on how KOTESOL has influenced and developed them. Maybe some have already done so, but not recently. Maybe others haven't had a moment to do so yet. Take the time to identify what the CoP of KOTESOL means to each of you as members. If our membership has a clear understanding of what is valuable for them in the CoP, the membership and leadership can use that moving forward to ensure another four decades (and more) of serving Korean ELT.

"'Old Korea hands' share their insights with 'newbies.' Scholars, well-experienced trainers, and those new to TESOL all teach and learn from each other."

References

Dickey, R. J. (2018). Representativeness and development of leaders in Korea TESOL. In A. Elsheikh, C. Coombe, & O. Effiong (Eds.), *The role of language teacher associations in professional development: Second language learning and teaching* (pp. 267–282). Springer International.

Dustheimer, C., & Gillett, R. (1999). The history of ELT in Korea. In G. Crocetti (Ed.), *The KOTESOL handbook: Teaching English in Korea* (pp. 1–12). KOTESOL.

KOTESOL. (n.d.-a). *History of KOTESOL presidents*. https://koreatesol.org/content/history-kotesol-presidents

KOTESOL. (n.d.-b). *Conference archives index*. https://koreatesol.org/content/conference-archives-index

TESOL. (n.d.). *TESOL charter members*. https://www.tesol.org/about-tesol/association-governance/tesol's-history/tesol-charter-members

Thorkelson, T. (2015). Language teaching organizations and professional job satisfaction. *Korea TESOL Journal,12*(1), 67–106.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge University.

Wenger, E., McDermott, R., & Snyder, W. M. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice*. Harvard Business.

The Authors

Kara Mac Donald has been active in KOTESOL since 2006 to present. She is an associate professor at the Defense Language Institute, Monterey, California, with a master's degree in applied linguistics, TESOL and a doctorate in applied linguistics. She conducts teacher training for faculty and provides academic support to students. Email: kmacd@rocketmail.com

Rob Dickey has been an active member of the KOTESOL community of practice since 1995. He has attended and presented at conferences and chapter meetings, and served in a variety of roles at the national and chapter levels. He teaches at Keimyung University in Daegu. Email: rjdickey@content-english.org

Cultivating Loving Organizations

By Jocelyn Wright

Besides KOTESOL, what organizations do you belong to? How would you describe them? Would you qualify any as being loving? If so, how would you define "loving"?

I recently read a blog post entitled "Operationalizing Love: Building Loving Organizations" (Ungard, 2016). In my view, the author made a number of very important points. He defines "love" accountably as a decision, a courageous decision, to commit to another, not simply verbally, but through one's way of being and acting, and he firmly believes that "organizations can be built to operate from love – to operationalize love."

How can an organization operationalize love? Ungard states, "When I decide to love someone, whether romantically, platonically, or professionally, I decide to hold them in my highest regard and to act unconditionally in their service." He also claims that the tough decision to love is paradoxical "because one is committing to the person as they really are and to their highest potential – unconditionally accepting and valuing *what is* while also serving *what wants to be*" (original italics).

In terms of organizations, this means committing to the present organization in its current state and valuing the present contributions and potential of community members with a vision of a win-win future for all.

As founder of the Social Justice (Critical Educators in Korea) Special Interest Group (SJ-SIG), I penned the original 2015 mission statement (revised in 2018 with the help of committee members Maria Lisak and Mitzi Kaufman). In that statement, I wrote that the SJ-SIG had, since its start, "endeavored to connect active educators interested in social justice and critical approaches to education in South Korea" and that "in the spirit of heart and hope, members will attempt to promote positive and pacific transformative social outcomes through teaching and learning" (KOTESOL, 2020a).

Five years have passed, and we can note some obvious improvements. Acknowledging the benefits of diversity, KOTESOL has been making efforts to become more inclusive. From 2017, great strides have been made to encourage LGBTQ+ teachers and allies to speak out. Last year, two new SIGs were formed (People of Color Teachers and Women and Gender Equality) and given platforms and greater visibility. Another accomplishment in 2019 was the formation of a Diversity Committee intended "to celebrate the beauty of culture, language, accents, race and gender relations, educational backgrounds, nationalities, identities, opinions, and all other divergent factors that make [us] unique" (KOTESOL, 2020b). Further, some members are currently trying to reach out to less-represented populations, such as *hagwon* teachers (see KOTESOL, 2018 for some statistics). While these initiatives are still in their infancy, and more work is always needed, including maintaining unity in diversity, they are small steps in the right direction and in line with KOTESOL's motto of "Teachers Helping Teachers."

Of course, when an organization attempts to recruit new and diverse members, there are bound to be adaptational tensions. Transitioning to accommodate individuals and their valuable, and maybe sometimes "radical," perspectives in changing times, which demand, among other things, greater transparency and collaboration, can be both exciting and painful. Devoted members, who have poured their hearts and energies into the organization for years and hear "Out with the old, in with the new" discourses, may feel hurt, and become cautious or defensive. On the other hand, enthusiastic newer members' optimism may be dampened if they perceive "resistance," or they might become more insistent. If we see things as a tug-of-war, with some pushing and others pulling, valuable time gets wasted on the ground. In caring and respectful partnerships, the same rope can be used to make a ladder. Devoting our collective and complementary talents to a united vision can improve the organization for everyone.

If we are to talk about inclusivity, no agenda of exclusion should replace a former model. As Ungard says, "Operationalizing love is not something you do to have better outcomes, it is an organizational choice about who and how you want to be." I hope that KOTESOL can balance business models and economic imperatives with humanizing ideals and develop deliberately with the idea of love at its center. Open minds, mindfulness, patience, and compassion, all signs of love, are important when working towards this goal.

References

KOTESOL. (2018). *Demographics at KOTESOL international conferences.* https://koreatesol.org/IC-Demographics

KOTESOL. (2020a). *Social justice*. KOTESOL. https://koreatesol.org/content/social-justice-critical-educators-korea-sig

KOTESOL. (2020b). Diversity Committee. https://koreatesol.org/diversity-committee

Ungard, B. (2016). Operationalizing love: Building loving organizations. *Medium*. https://medium.com/@ungard/operationalizing-love-building-loving-organizations-d94374033565

The Author

Jocelyn Wright is an associate professor at Mokpo National University and has taught in Korea for more than eleven years. Her educational background is in linguistics and education. In addition to being a local facilitator of the Reflective Practice SIG, she provides leadership support for the Social Justice (Critical Educators in Korea) SIG. As a lifetime member of KOTESOL, she values and is committed to the organization.

Email: jocelynwright@gmail.com

A Teacher Reflection
The Real-World Benefits of Holistic Reflection

By Brennand Kennedy

Introduction

Since returning to Korea after completing my graduate studies in Canada, teacher reflection has become something of a passion of mine. While presenting a workshop on techniques for holistic reflection at the 2019 KOTESOL International Conference, it became apparent to me just how much teachers' interest in reflection has grown. I was not only thrilled by the better-than-expected turnout at my workshop but also energized by the eagerness and diverse insights that the international attendees brought with them.

However, when asking attendees why they think we should, or perhaps should *not,* engage in reflection, one reason in particular always emerges without exception: Reflection is necessary when there is a problem to be solved. While this is absolutely a good reason for why teachers should reflect on their practice, I argue that teachers who perceive reflection as no more than a diagnostic tool risk missing the forest for the trees.

In one of the first books written on the subject for an audience of second language teachers, Richards and Lockhart (1996) provided several reasons for why they thought reflection was necessary. However, none of their reasons seemed to point directly to problem-solving as a specific priority:

1. Teachers are mostly unaware of what is really happening in their teaching.
2. Reflection helps teachers become more informed, and therefore more knowledgeable teachers.
3. Professional development requires more than just experience.
4. Asking "how" and "why" provides a deeper understanding of teaching.
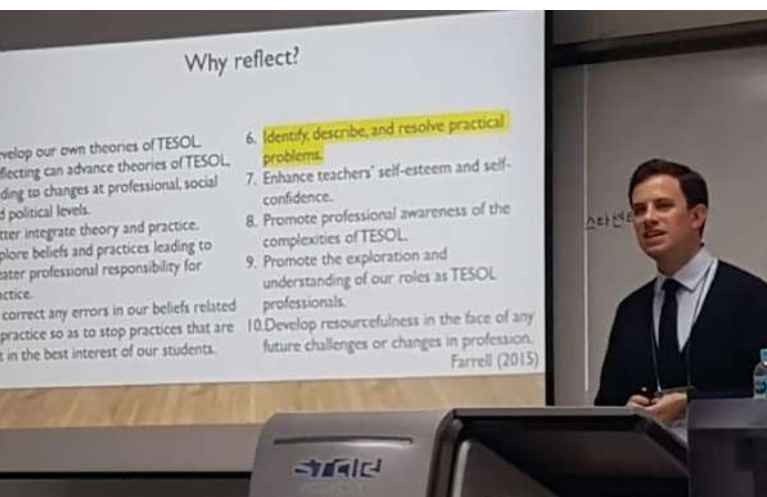
▲ *Presenting at a 2019 Jeonju North Jeolla KOTESOL workshop.*

More recently, Farrell (2015) has mentioned the discovery and resolution of practical problems as one in a list of ten worthwhile reasons to engage in reflective practice. However, the remaining reasons in his list all seemed to go much deeper, prioritizing a greater awareness and integration of teacher beliefs overall.

Table 1. Reasons for Doing Reflective Practice

	10 Purposes for Engaging in Reflective Practice (Farrell, 2015)
1	Develop our own theories of TESOL.
2	Advance theories of TESOL, leading to changes at professional, social, and political levels.
3	Better integrate theory and practice.
4	Explore beliefs and practices leading to greater professional responsibility for practice.
5	Correct any errors in our beliefs related to practice so as to stop practices that are not in the best interest of our students.
6	Identify, describe, and resolve practical problems.
7	Enhance teachers' self-esteem and self-confidence.
8	Promote professional awareness of the complexities of TESOL.
9	Promote the exploration and understanding of our roles as TESOL professionals.
10	Develop resourcefulness in the face of any future challenges or changes in profession.

Therefore, while these scholars would never discount the utility of reflection as a problem-solving method, their suggestion is that reflection on problems to be solved cannot be separated from reflection on the self or reflection on the context in which the reflection is taking place (Farrell & Kennedy, 2019). This integration of reflection on the self and reflection on the context (i.e., critical reflection) is at the core of what makes reflection holistic. Although it has typically been slow to catch on, a generation of TESOL professionals are now embracing holistic reflection, thanks to models like Farrell's framework for reflective practice (2015). In this article, I would like to discuss some of the fundamental factors that I believe are making Farrell's framework, and holistic reflection in general, so attractive to such a diverse range of teachers.

Greater Accessibility

It is understandable that many teachers feel overwhelmed by the prospect of reflecting beyond what is readily observable in the classroom, especially if they hope to remain systematic in their reflections, and even more so if they are new to reflective practice. Fortunately, Farrell's (2015) framework was specifically crafted to help teachers of all levels of experience overcome these apprehensions by breaking down the complex process of holistic reflection into five stages: *philosophy, principles, theory, practice,* and *beyond practice.*

This compartmentalization of the reflective process is attractive to many teachers who may have previously felt intimidated by the idea of documenting their life stories or developing theories of learning and teaching, as each stage is accompanied by examples of straightforward reflective techniques. Moreover, teachers who use this framework can not only choose the aspects on which they would most like to focus their reflections, they are also free to adjust the depth of their reflections depending on the time and energy they intend to commit. In other words, this one-size-fits-all

framework can provide an effective base on which to conduct a detailed case study (e.g., Farrell & Kennedy, 2019), as well as a ready-made regimen of reflective activities that any teacher could easily add to his or her routine.

Figure 1. Farrell's Framework for Reflective Practice

Farrell's (2015) Framework for Reflective Practice
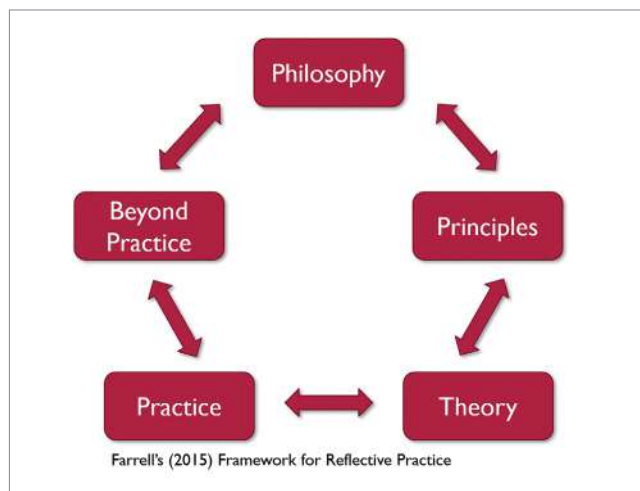
Reflection as a Social Activity

As Brookfield (1995) has noted, classrooms cannot be separated from their social, cultural, and political settings. Thus, for our reflections to be truly holistic, we must reflect critically on the ways in which larger sociocultural norms express themselves in our practice. These norms often express themselves in ways that, unbeknownst to us, reinforce unequal or oppressive power relations in our educational contexts, thus creating potentially hostile environments for both teachers and students. Therefore, if you have ever found yourself at the end of a semester agonizing over grades, wondering what you could have done better to help disadvantaged students, and fearing you were turning into your evil high school chemistry teacher, you are likely to feel that critically reflecting on the power dynamics that exist in your educational context is an endeavor worth pursuing. In fact, critical reflection was probably the greatest tool I used to get through the toughest semester of my career. Despite an unusually heavy course load and an unprecedented number of students with special needs, taking the time to reflect helped me to ensure an equitable learning environment for all my students, resulting in some excellent student feedback and my highest evaluation score to date.

As you may have guessed, our own biases can make it very difficult to uncover unequal power relations within our classrooms. Moreover, when we start to question norms and practices at the administrative level, it is almost impossible to effect any change without the support of colleagues. For these and many more reasons, a beneficial strategy is to join or establish a teacher reflection group. These groups, in which teachers are encouraged to share their vulnerabilities, offer moral support, and give constructive feedback (Farrell, 2015), have come to be one of the most popular topics at my workshops. Through post-workshop chats and emails, teachers everywhere have expressed to me their excitement about creating their own teacher reflection groups. While teacher reflection groups offer teachers the chance to see things from different points of view, teachers tend to be most excited by the variety of collaborative reflective activities these groups can enable, whether it is peer observation, team-teaching, or lesson study (a collaborative activity reported by Johnson, 2009, in which a group of teachers develop a lesson together, and then observe and reflect on

the lesson's execution in the classroom). In fact, teachers in my own reflection group felt that the customizability of the reflective experience was the group's greatest strength, as it allowed all members to participate fully and with minimal impact to their usual workload. This customizability has been made even more apparent during the COVID-19 crisis as reflection groups have also proven to be well suited for online videoconferencing. For those of us who thrive in collaborative environments, this departure from reflection as a solitary activity is indeed welcomed news, especially in times when regular interactions with colleagues may be restricted.

While teachers are eager to tell me about their plans to make reflection groups, I have also spoken with many teachers who feel a growing sense of alienation or discomfort in their work situations but who are unsure about what steps they should take. Because many foreign teachers seem to struggle with understanding what is expected of them by their students, administrators, and colleagues, determining these expectations through critical reflection can have important benefits for many teachers, and especially for those in Korea. Once you can better understand the roles you occupy in your current situation, comparing these roles to your own philosophies and principles can bring you greater focus and lead to either a sense of security in your current working arrangements or the ability to make more informed decisions when looking for a job that aligns better with who you are as a teacher.

So, although it may not be immediately obvious why your average language teacher would be attracted to the idea of reflecting critically, when we account for the real-world benefits that critical reflection provides (e.g., better evaluations, greater camaraderie among co-workers, and a more fulfilling career), we need only wonder why more teachers have not been inspired to depart on a journey of holistic reflection.

Ownership of Your Practice

If critical reflection were one side of the holistic reflection coin, the other side of the coin would be self-reflection. According to Farrell (2015), the most important thing that reflection can do is make us accountable for our actions. In other words, reflection allows us to "walk the talk" by bringing our practice closer in line with our beliefs about teaching and learning. As I will explain in the following paragraphs, the process of gaining more accountability, while challenging, can be very rewarding to teachers, as it allows them to own their practice by learning who they are as teachers and by scrutinizing of their own accord the merits and shortcomings of their practice.

While largely missing from more technically driven interpretations of reflection, Farrell (2015) argued that any reflection on practice must include a thorough examination of the *person* who is central to the act of teaching; that is, the teacher. Thus, Farrell dedicated three stages of his framework (philosophy, principles, and theory) to self-reflection. The first stage encourages us to tell our stories so that we can understand "how we got where we are today as teachers and how our past experiences have influenced our decisions" (p. 42). The second stage asks us to examine the beliefs and assumptions that affect our practice, and the third stage urges us to reflect on our theories of teaching and learning as well as the origins of those theories. Although I have described these stages in a linear fashion, what I believe makes Farrell's framework truly holistic is its *reflexive* quality: It allows us to go back and forth between stages, connecting patterns as they emerge to build a bigger picture of who we are as teachers. This was indeed the case with my own research participant, whose reflections revealed three

such patterns which not only emerged in each stage as he proceeded through the framework but could also be seen to influence his teaching decisions (Farrell & Kennedy, 2019).

Besides revealing more meaningful information about our practice, self-reflection (much like critical reflection) offers teachers many attractive benefits both for their career and their general mental health. Firstly, reflecting on who you are as a person and what you bring to the classroom can have an enormously positive effect on the way you value yourself as a teacher. A common refrain I hear from some teachers is that they often feel under-valued or under-utilized at work, which then leads them to feelings of burn-out. Although self-reflection will not magically make us more content with being in such a situation, the path to a more fulfilling career usually begins by first identifying who we are as teachers.

My biggest moment of self-reflection came some years ago, while teaching elementary students in rural Gyeongnam. I was feeling stuck between being the teacher I was expected to be and the teacher I wanted to be. The special literacy programs I was designing for struggling students were going unnoticed, and as my Korean skills increased, so did the number of first- and second-grade classes I was being asked to oversee alone. After reflecting on the philosophies that had been passed on to me from two generations of teachers in my family, something became very clear to me. If I truly wished to be in a position where I could make bigger impacts on students' learning, some big changes would need to be

> "…reflection on problems to be solved cannot be separated from reflection on the self or reflection on the context in which the reflection is taking place."

made. Because I had felt my theoretical knowledge was lacking, this self-reflection ultimately led me to the decision to return to Canada to pursue graduate studies. While my own self-reflection had a positive result and changed the trajectory of my whole career, for some, self-reflection may simply have the subtle effect of knowing more about oneself as a teacher. Though self-reflection can also bring up some harsh realizations, it remains extremely beneficial for teachers as a first step towards further clarity of mind.

A second benefit is that by becoming more aware of your principles of teaching, you will be in a much better position to check these principles against your actual practice, thus increasing your accountability and professionalism. A bonus benefit of this awareness is that you may also reveal so-called *hegemonic assumptions* that you may have been accepting without question despite them originating from a source outside yourself (Farrell, 2015). One example from my own experience includes a semester during which the assumption that teachers must demonstrate selfless dedication to their craft led me to take on more work than I could handle, causing a massive decrease in my energy and performance overall. After some reflection, I came to the realization that this assumption had previously never been a part of my core principles but had only been adopted at a time when my school's administration had begun making threats of laying off teachers. In other words, these assumptions were not a true reflection of what I believed made someone a good teacher but rather of what I thought would make me appear valuable

in the eyes of my employer. Because such assumptions can have negative impacts on you and your students, it can be empowering when you finally see these assumptions for what they are and take action to expel them from (or at least diminish their influence on) your practice.

One final benefit self-reflection provides is the ability to take ownership of your classroom decisions by accounting for your theories of teaching and learning. Whether your theories come from scholarly literature or from your own experience, there is no better feeling than being able to confidently tell students and colleagues why it is you do what you do in the classroom. However, teachers should be aware that these positive benefits cannot be achieved through mere name-dropping. Although we can feel redeemed when we discover theories of language acquisition that confirm our personal insights, we must also reflect on what produced these insights in the first place. This was the case for my research participant, (see Farrell & Kennedy, 2019) whose theory that students learn better when activities force them to interact with their teacher was shown to be informed by the principles of approachability that had emerged in his self-reflection. Therefore, by allowing us to discover personally held insights and uncover their origins, self-reflection (and holistic reflection as a whole) can appeal to all teachers who crave a greater sense of affirmation and recognition.

Conclusion

In this article, I have attempted to describe how holistic reflection has become attractive to teachers by placing reflection on practice at the junction of critical reflection and self-reflection. The greater accessibility afforded by holistic models like Farrell's (2015) framework encourages practitioners to look past the singular purpose of problem-solving towards the social context in which they teach as well as the philosophies, principles, and theories that make them who they are as teachers. The outcome of this is that teachers now have more reasons than ever to proceed down the path of reflection toward a more fulfilling and professional career.

References

Brookfield, S. D. (1995). *Becoming a critically reflective teacher*. Jossey-Bass.

Farrell, T. S. C. (2015). *Promoting teacher reflection in second language education: A framework for TESOL professionals*. Routledge.

Farrell, T. S. C., & Kennedy, B. (2019). Reflective practice framework for TESOL teachers: One teacher's reflective journey. *Reflective Practice, 20*, 1–12.

Johnson, K. E. (2009). *Second language teacher education: A sociocultural perspective*. Routledge.

Richards, J. C., & Lockhart, C. (1994). *Reflective teaching in second language classrooms*. Cambridge University Press.

The Author

Brennand Kennedy is currently an assistant professor at Dongshin University in Naju, Jeollanam-do. He completed his MA in applied linguistics at Brock University in Saint Catharines, Canada, and conducted graduate research under the supervision of Dr. Thomas S.C. Farrell. His interests include reflective practice, a topic on which he enjoyed presenting at various KOTESOL events over the past year.

Email: brennandkennedyefl@gmail.com

A Teacher Reflection

A Renewed Sense of Purpose in the Face of Unique Challenges

By Joshua Vise

My personal journey in the field of education has been one of surprising personal discovery and reflection. I started my teaching career in the academy system in Korea, and like many others who come to South Korea to teach in the *hagwon* system, I thought that I would spend a few years here before moving on to other things. However, over the first two years that I was here, I discovered both that I genuinely enjoyed the experience of teaching and that I seemed to be good at it. I found the energy and enthusiasm of my young students to be inspiring and rewarding, and felt a sense of pride when activities I made for my students succeeded.

Because of these positive experiences, I began to seek out opportunities to improve myself as well as to move from the academy system into the universities. I realized somewhere along the line that, regardless of my initial plans, I was in fact a career educator and wanted my education and training to align with the work experience I was accruing in South Korea. I pursued a Master of Education online and received an alternate certification in middle and high school English language arts from my home state of Missouri. Through a combination of hard work and good fortune, I eventually found my way to Daegu University, where I am a visiting professor of ESL to this day, fourteen years after first entering a classroom as an instructor.

Despite my education and experience, I still have doubts about my abilities, and these doubts have been brought to the forefront of my thinking as our school deals with the unique difficulties that the coronavirus has presented. Like so many other schools, our university has shifted classes online. This sudden transition has been accompanied by a new set of rules and guidelines that were quickly put together to address the circumstances and which our faculty has never had to contend with before. The greatest sense of purpose I have as a teacher is the desire to create useful, interesting, and meaningful educational experiences for my students. It motivates me to work hard, to try and think of new and creative ways to engage with my students, and to share my knowledge with colleagues. Being the best teacher I can be means being able to justify my instructional methods through research and experience. But how does one justify what they do when they are thrust into uncharted waters and where the still unfolding situation demands rapid revision of instructional guidelines and methodologies?

Re-examination in the Time of COVID

In the early days of this crisis, I thought that trying to imagine what the future could hold in uncertain times would be a worthwhile exercise and one that would give me a sense of stability and direction. However, as I attempted to think my way through these issues, I found that there were too many intangibles for my speculation to be of any utility. For every problem I imagined, there seem to be a cascading set of ancillary problems that I hadn't anticipated. For every solution I envisioned, something seemed to pop up that would render it infeasible. Such is the nature of uncertainty. Rather than continuing to pursue this line of thinking, it seemed more useful to reexamine the things about teaching that I felt would remain constant through time.

This examination was, for me, rooted in a series of fundamental questions that educators must ask: What skills and abilities do I have and how do I bring these to the instructional environment? How capable am I to be flexible and adapt to change? How do I know when an instructional method is working? What are my attitudes towards teaching, learning, and education in general? Reflecting on these questions has led me to the personal conclusion that it is my attitude that will help me succeed during periods of change. By being mindful of my attitude and its effects on my instruction, I will be better equipped to deal with my own doubts.

The most useful attitude that I could approach new challenges with is one of empathy and understanding. Each time I feel frustrated about something that doesn't go smoothly – a sudden surprise or a new change to our instructional guidelines – it helps to remember that

others in the university are just as frustrated as I am. Faculty, staff, administration, and students are all dealing with these issues at the same time, and the uniqueness of these issues means that there will inevitably be some missteps. Everyone is working diligently towards finding the best solutions to the problems we face. Realizing this helps me move away from a "Why is this happening to me?" attitude and towards "How can we make this work?" This is an attitude that allows me to remain flexible and adapt quickly to new demands that arise.

Being truly open to ideas and emotions of others has also been very useful. As our semester unfolded, different teachers dealt with similar problems in different ways. Taking the time to understand what these teachers were doing and to question how those methods could be incorporated into my classes allowed me to confront problems with potential solutions. I could then use my knowledge and prior experience to better shape these methods to meet my students' specific needs. Additionally, paying close attention to how students responded to different aspects of instruction allowed me to strive towards the creation of meaningful educational experiences that aligned with their goals and desires.

The online environment is filled with new experiences, and approaching these experiences with a sense of curiosity

> **"But how does one justify what they do when they are thrust into uncharted waters and where the still unfolding situation demands rapid revision of instructional guidelines and methodologies?"**

has allowed me to learn more about the practical, technical, and managerial aspects of online education. Seeing the strengths and limitations of the technology we use has helped me learn new ways to communicate with students, new methods of content delivery, and new strategies for assessment. Adapting content that I have created for an in-class environment into a new medium has been challenging, but the positive feedback I have received from my students has been extremely rewarding. Allowing oneself to be curious is the same as giving oneself permission to explore, which leads to greater understanding.

Striving towards perfection, towards continual improvement, is something every educator should do. However, it is important to remember that perfection is not required, nor is it attainable. Just as others have made missteps along the way, I am likely to make mistakes as well. Giving myself permission to be fallible frees myself up to take responsible risks in a new environment. It allows me to recognize that every challenge is an opportunity and that even after years of experience, I am still as much of a learner as a teacher.

Finally, learning to relax a little is an essential part of longevity in this career. There is a great deal of stress

placed on teachers even in the best of times, and this is even more true as we deal with the difficulties the coronavirus has placed on us. By recognizing myself as a priority and by setting aside personal time for myself, I have been able to replenish my stores of energy. This has made my work time much more productive and effective, and much less exhausting. I feel that I am better equipped to handle the stressors of the job, to deal with surprises, and to respond to colleagues and students in a positive manner when I give myself permission to relax. We are not machines, after all.

Our attitudes exist within us. If we take the time to reflect on our attitudes, we will find that they have no basis in

a medium or circumstance without our say so. This realization gives us the power to shape our attitudes into an outlook that is most likely to help us succeed. I am a career educator with many years of service still ahead of me. It is a certainty that I will face challenges and obstacles, and that these may engender feelings of doubt about my abilities. Focusing my energies in a positive way gives me the means with which to address my doubts. It motivates me to try harder in the face of uncertainty. With any luck, it may inspire colleagues and students as well. There are more discoveries about myself and my career ahead of me, and more opportunities to reflect. I encourage all of you to do the same.

The Author

Joshua Vise is a visiting professor of ESL at Daegu University and has been an ESL instructor for various institutions for fourteen years. He received his MEd in curriculum and instruction from the American College of Education.

Email: joshua.d.vise@gmail.com

A Teacher Reflection

Reflecting on My Philosophy of Education 10 Years On

By Kristy Dolson

Ten years ago, I was in my final year of university at Teachers College in Ontario, writing an essay regarding my personal education philosophy. This year, prior to presenting at KOTESOL's regional and national conferences, I thought it would be a good reflective exercise to re-read my essay. Have my beliefs and values changed in the past decade? If so, how much? How have my classroom practices changed as a result of being a professional EFL teacher, as opposed to a classroom teacher in my native Canada?

When I wrote that paper, I was fresh from an exhilarating five-week practicum in a grade 5 classroom. I was glowing with enthusiasm for my future profession. But the future I envisioned for myself in 2010 is quite different from my 2020 reality. While many of my peers began the long supply-to-long-term, occasional-to-full-time teacher route, I opted to teach English abroad. Placed in a foreign language center tucked in an elementary school, I spent the next five years loving my teaching experience. But I was no longer growing or being challenged. After five years, I packed up and went home.

Not sure what the future would bring, I traveled and spent time with my family. And then opportunity knocked. A colleague of mine was leaving the teacher training institute in Damyang (Jeollanamdo). Was I interested in the position? The next thing I knew, I was standing in front of a room of wide-eyed primary Korean English teachers (KETs). My course was microteaching, and I was there to help them evaluate their teaching practices, to make them more efficient and engaging language teachers.

My first time through the six-month intensive training program was an eye-opening experience. I learned a lot about the Korean school system that I didn't know from actually working in it. Mostly, I learned about my own teaching practices and how poorly I'd been teaching all those years in the language center. When the institute moved from Damyang to Yeosu, I had a few months of downtime to evaluate my own classroom practices before the next intensive program. If I was going to preach, I had better reflect and practice.

The Philosophies I Apply

Now that I've completed teaching the six-month program five times, how have my values, goals, and practices changed? To begin, my main educational philosophy was informed by progressivism. This theory claims that the purpose of education is to allow students to learn actively from their own experiences and interests. As teachers and cultural ambassadors, we must find appropriate ways to bring authentic material and activities into the classroom. In my course, I encourage KETs to design learning tasks that engage their students in a meaningful way. From storybooks, to movie-making, to pop music, I am a steadfast advocate of sharing passions in the classroom. If you bring energy and enthusiasm, in time, so will your students.

Yet despite my belief in authentic experiences, I still agree with Dewey, the key theorist behind progressivism, that not all experiences are appropriate for learning. Dewey (1938) claimed that while experiences may be lively and interesting, they can be harmful to learning if "not linked cumulatively to one another" (p. 26). I have found this to be especially true in the EFL classroom. Not only did I make this mistake numerous times, but I have seen this happen in many of my teachers' practice demos. They use a technology or activity because it is new and exciting, but they fail to integrate it with their learning objectives and target language. What follows is a disjointed and confusing learning experience. Therefore, I instill in my KETs and NETs (native English teachers) that careful planning is crucial for language learning. It is the teacher's duty to plan lessons and units with carefully selected objectives, target language, and scaffolded learning activities.

Although "student-centered learning" was and remains the buzzword of the day, I strongly believe that teacher-centered instruction is still relevant. It is most useful when introducing new terms or concepts or when demonstrating an unfamiliar skill. In the language classroom, especially at beginner levels, the teacher must be a comprehensible pronunciation model. Especially for Korean English learners, who are encountering new sounds and unfamiliar mouth positions, the teacher should be an explicit model to ensure students have many opportunities for comprehensible input before producing intelligible output themselves. Reflecting upon my overseas teaching experience, I better understand that effective teachers use every strategy in their repertoire to reach as many students as possible.

Secondly, my about-to-be-graduated-self was a fierce advocate of social reconstructionism. This theory upholds the view that schools should be sites for change and critical examination of prominent issues in their immediate community and across the globe. This orientation also places value on authentic experiences and bringing the world into the classroom. I avoid explicitly teaching

social issues for fear of running afoul of the Ministry of Education, and as a guest instructor here, it isn't my place to agitate for social change. I can, however, create a more compassionate and collaborative atmosphere for my students to question, create, and learn together.

The classroom should be a caring and supportive community in which each individual feels welcomed and valued. I never use competitive activities, and I actively discourage point-based games. Now that I am a teacher trainer, I cringe thinking of the times I played the popular Flyswatter game. I now urge my trainees to avoid such games and choose activities that encourage collaboration. In my presentations to incoming Jeollanamdo Language Program (JLP) and Teach and Learn in Korea (TaLK) teachers, I provide alternative activities for whole- and small-group listening and speaking practice. In my upcoming KOTESOL presentations, I will demonstrate some of these activities.

Social reconstructionism allows for students to express their knowledge and talents in multiple ways within a safe and inviting atmosphere. My primary goal as an EFL instructor is to lift the fear of failure while also encouraging mistakes. I inspire my trainees to try new methodologies and activities in a low-stakes and supportive environment. After practicing with their peers and receiving my feedback, they feel better equipped to use those new methods when they return to their schools.

Finally, constructivism is a psychological orientation whose followers contend that students are not passive recipients of the teacher's knowledge but are capable of constructing their own understanding. Vygotsky further argued that the social environment of the classroom has a heavy influence on student learning (Schunk, 2008, p. 247). I agree that social interactions are relevant within the classroom because they shape the learning experiences and impact what each student takes away from a lesson. I strongly believe that learning something from a peer will stay in a learner's memory far longer than learning from an authority figure. With advanced students, I often let them explore and experiment with language in pairs or small groups before I step in and offer guidance or correction, and they feel valued when I ask them to express their questions and share opinions. Our classroom is a community of learners.

When my trainees present their teaching demos, I evaluate them using activity effectiveness criteria that specifically includes how much student-to-student interaction is involved. This is especially true for the secondary-level teachers, as their students are fully capable of peer-learning and feedback. Too often my KETs seem to see lessons as a showcase for their own language abilities. I try to minimize teacher talk and maximum

▲ *Halloween and Baking: A cultural activity hit with Kristy's trainees.*

student production. Students should be encouraged to use English with each other far more than they use it with the teacher.

Looking back, I feel that my language classroom has become very constructivist. I am a big advocate of lifelong learning, and I heartily believe in employing primary sources and manipulatives to help students grasp and practice a concept. In my classroom, I tell stories and use lots of props. My goal is to spark interest and inquiry, as well as making the learning more memorable.

Empowering students to challenge inequalities and promoting the ideal of lifelong learning are still crucial elements of my philosophy of education. I can think of no better or worthier way to spend a lifetime. These days, I focus on peer-learning and feedback to ensure high-level students don't overshadow their peers, and I level my language and diversify my learning activities so that all students can engage with the material and take pride in their accomplishments. It might not have taken the path that I originally envisioned, but it is still a worthy way to spend a lifetime.

Final Thoughts

I am happy to see that ten years in the profession has not altered my core beliefs and values, although my classroom practices have changed a lot. As I pursue more professional development in the EFL field, my practices will continue to change as I grow and overcome new challenges. This is the duty of all educators: to actively reflect on our values and practices to make sure we are best serving the needs and interests of our students.

References

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. Simon & Schuster.

Schunk, D. H. (2008). Constructivist theory. In H. Brown & D. Ciuffetelli Parker (Eds.), *Foundational methods: Understanding teaching and learning* (3rd ed.). Pearson Custom.

The Author

Kristy Dolson moved to South Korea after attaining her Bachelor of Education in Ontario, Canada. After five years of classroom teaching experience, she became a teacher trainer at the Jeollanamdo International Education Institute. She mainly instructs Korean primary and secondary public school teachers in pronunciation skills and microteaching.

Email: kdolsom@gmail.com

Member Spotlight: Jocelyn Wright

In this issue, **The English Connection** *(TEC) shines its spotlight on lifetime KOTESOL member Jocelyn Wright. Jocelyn has been a member and officer of the Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter for numerous years. She is the founder of KOTESOL's Social Justice Special Interest Group (SIG) and a facilitator of the chapter's Reflective Practice SIG. Jocelyn teaches at Mokpo National University (MNU) and is a regular presenter at KOTESOL events. The following is our interview with Jocelyn. — Ed.*

TEC: We want to thank you, Jocelyn, for making time for an interview with *The English Connection*. Let's start off with you telling us a little about yourself?

Jocelyn: Well, I grew up in English Canada. However, languages quickly became part of my daily routine. My grandmother was a French teacher in British Columbia, and she encouraged me to enter an immersion program there. Later, I did a year of high school in France and moved to

Montreal after graduating. I wanted to teach abroad, so I got my feet wet in the Dominican Republic and then came to South Korea in 2007. After a few years, I had reached a glass ceiling. I was told I needed to study more to make it in this country, so I left and returned more educated a couple years later.

TEC: I've heard that you've had a quite varied education – different countries, different languages – fill us in on the details, please.

Jocelyn: In addition to French, I studied German and Spanish in secondary school. I continued to study Spanish, which was a piece of cake because I had studied French very well in school. Anyway, when I got to Montreal, I got it in my head that I should complete all levels of education, and each one in a different language. I completed a BA in TESL and linguistics in English. That was pretty easy. Later, I did my MEd in France. Then came the hardest part. I decided to do an online doctoral degree through a Spanish university. This has been enriching, but I really hope to finish my dissertation next year!

TEC: What did you do in your life before Korea – besides study, that is?

Jocelyn: Before coming here? I did a lot of things! I needed to support myself through school. I managed to get some relevant experience tutoring, teaching in a language school, becoming a language monitor and teaching assistant (TA) at Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM). Later, I also got to work as a TA and do research at Concordia University. Due to connections at UQAM, I was able to help design a language program for Ministère du Revenu du Québec employees one summer. Then after graduating, I was a pedagogical assistant in a language school for a while.

TEC: People come to Korea for many different reasons. Why did the compass point in this direction for you?

Jocelyn: When I was young, I had a Chinese aunt who had come to Asia to teach English. She taught in Japan and Thailand. Japan particularly interested me because my first official ESL student was from there, and we had studied Japanese history in school. But I was open to anything, and, as it turned out, a university friend had been teaching in South Korea. She was my main influence.

TEC: I'll bet you have formulated a quite detailed teaching philosophy. Would you let us know what it is and what kind of teacher you are with your students?

Jocelyn: Honestly, I still struggle with this because the way my teaching philosophy is evolving does not always match my current work environment, although this also offers many affordances. I founded the Social Justice SIG in 2015, after I started reading critical work by Paulo Freire and work on multiculturalism and interculturalism. More recently, because of my readings of Nel Noddings on care and work related to Peace Linguistics and Nonviolent Communication, my interest has actually been gravitating away from a more justice-based stance to a more compassionate one.

I try to design courses that are both useful to students in terms of content and communication skills. Because we don't need to be here if we are doing what Korean teachers are, I try to avoid overly traditional methods. I believe in experiential learning (John Dewey), favor collaborative learning, and appreciate more holistic approaches, so I encourage group work, try to do projects, and vary my assessment methods. I would like to tailor learning more to my students' interests and needs than I do now, but I feel somewhat constrained because so much paperwork is required before we even meet our students. The relative grading system, which strongly encourages competition, also hampers my efforts.

TEC: Numerous expats come to teach in Korea for a few

years and then move on. What is it that keeps you teaching here and teaching at the same university for so many years?

Jocelyn: That's a really good question especially because many people ask me why I don't move to Seoul. First, I'd have to say the people, the kind people. Our campus is nice, too. As we interview, the country is battling the COVID-19 outbreak. I feel particularly fortunate to be surrounded by a high density of trees. The other thing is that I've found that there can be more opportunities sometimes than we imagine in a place. For instance, I loved developing the English Zone program at my university in 2009–2010. It has been a joy for me to bring diverse peoples together through the International Graduate Student and Staff group I formed at MNU in 2014. We have hosted some fun KOTESOL outreaches at my university since 2009 and are working on an exciting Pan-SIG event for this fall. Being appointed last December to the position of vice director of our Institute of International Exchange and Education was also a joyful occasion! And of course, meeting my husband has kept me here.

TEC: Yes, I hear that not so long ago, you went to Nepal on your honeymoon. Now, Nepal isn't one of the world's most common honeymoon destinations. Will you tell us a little more?

Jocelyn: Well, actually, that wasn't our honeymoon. My husband, Prabesh Paudel, and I went to Nepal for our second wedding! We wanted to celebrate with family, but we also wanted to celebrate with those around us who knew us when we first met and became best friends. In this case, getting married in South Korea made a lot of sense. The thing is our community here is mainly present during the semester, which is not a super time to entertain family! So we had two very different types of weddings. The first was a blast! Maybe you'd agree that it was a nice fusion event. Your role as a father in my Mamma Mia-style giveaway was really memorable! People still talk about that today. The second one was more traditional and a very special introduction to Nepali culture. I met my husband's family there for the first time, and they were really grateful, as was I, that my family had traveled to Nepal for the occasion. The meeting of families was a really important move.

TEC: Let's talk a bit about KOTESOL. What attracted you to KOTESOL, and what is it about KOTESOL that keeps you so active within the organization?

Jocelyn: I joined KOTESOL right after I arrived in Korea. A colleague at the time brought me to a meeting. I liked the idea of belonging to a community of fun yet professional individuals. Soon after that, the Gwangju Chapter president roped me into my first position of membership coordinator. Although I have sometimes felt pressure, I enjoy that there is room for growth. There is an open-mindedness in the organization, and there are opportunities to propose activities and events.

TEC: On the topic of activities and events, tell us a little about your attraction to SIG activities within KOTESOL, especially the Social Justice and Reflective Practice SIGs.

Jocelyn: I studied RP when I was in France. It seemed strange I had not heard about it before. KOTESOL's RP SIG did not exist when I first lived in South Korea. It was set up during the two years that I was away. Hearing about it when I got back in 2012 resonated with me, and I wanted to set up a group in the Gwangju-Jeonnam area. I've had some good support over the years from chapter members. Later, I felt RP was not as critical as I liked, and I wanted to learn more about social justice from others, so I started that SIG. I was lucky to be joined by Maria Lisak and Mitzi Kaufman along the way, and these days, there is a lot more interest in these issues in the wider KOTESOL community. A few new related SIGs have started up, among the most active are the Environmental Justice SIG and the Women and Gender Equality SIG. It's really wonderful to see!

TEC: Five years from now is the year 2025. What do you see yourself doing then?

Jocelyn: Well, first of all, I expect to have more free time when I'm PhD free! Professionally, I'd like to focus more on career counselling. I think education should become more personalized, and students will need better guidance than they are currently receiving. As for personally, my husband said I should add being busy taking a child to daycare! Hopefully, that dream will come true, too!

TEC: Thank you, Jocelyn for insights into your teaching, your KOTESOL activities, and your life!

Interviewed by David Shaffer

▲ *Jocelyn with her Reflective Practice session attendees.*

The Reflection Connection

The Importance of Contemplation in the Age of COVID-19

By Dr. Thomas S.C. Farrell

Introduction

I wake up each morning from an uneasy sleep, but not sure exactly why, because I don't have anything particular on my mind since I am in the house 23 hours of the day – with an hour or less outside to shop or take a walk while at the same time observing my social distancing. By noon, I feel a fatigue building up, and by late afternoon, I have attracted a general malaise of thoughts that some mysterious illness has descended from the mists of the invisible disease that has hit the world.

Perhaps the above paragraph may seem a bit morbid, but contemplation and self-reflection involve reality checking, and this is my reality in the age of COVID-19 (thankfully it is not named after that light beer anymore!) and I suspect that of many readers too. Teaching is an intensely personal individual undertaking, and as such, it is critical to know about the person the teacher is. As Parker J. Palmer (1998, p. 3) has noted, "Good teaching requires self-knowledge…. Whatever self-knowledge we attain as teachers will serve our students and our scholarship well." So it really is time to look into the subconscious and reflect on who I am, or from a professional perspective, "who is the self that teaches?" (p. 5).

Contemplation in TESOL

The notion of contemplation and its awareness-raising effects has long been a part of the great religions and philosophies of the world, including Buddhism's mindfulness of the "here and now"; existentialism and the inevitable mortality of human beings; and prayer as integral parts of Christianity, Islam, and other faiths.

> *" Contemplation can help us reach this state of mindfulness where we can experience an enhanced awareness of our thoughts, feelings, emotions, and perceptions."*

These philosophies and religions engage in contemplation not to solve particular issues but to become more aware of the inner self. Although such contemplation might place individuals at the center of the contemplative process, this does not result in self-judgment but in becoming more aware of their surroundings in a more *mindful* way.
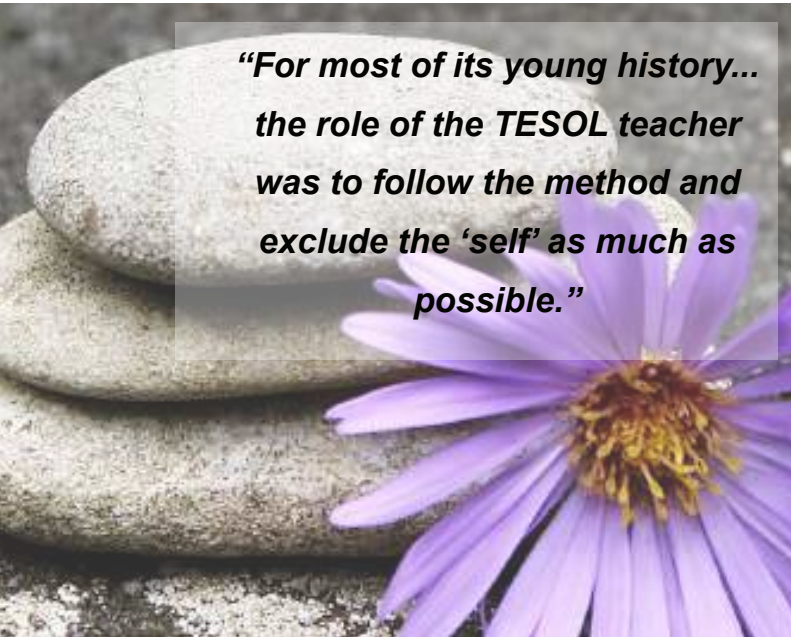
Indeed, contemplation can help us reach this state of *mindfulness* where we can experience an enhanced awareness of our thoughts, feelings, emotions, and perceptions. It is important for us to become aware of our perceptual experiences as a detached observer so we can also begin to examine them in light of our conscious experiences as teachers (Farrell, 2015). As Palmer (1998, p. 11) notes, "The connections made by good teachers are held not in their methods but in their hearts – meaning heart in its ancient sense, as the place where intellect and emotion and spirit and will converge in the human self."

Contemplation can help TESOL teachers reach a state of mindfulness or attentiveness in which they can experience an enhanced awareness of thoughts, feelings, emotions, and perceptions, a practice that is rarely addressed or acknowledged. TESOL teachers might develop their contemplative abilities by practicing different meditative techniques, such as *insight meditation, visualization*, and *movement meditation* (Farrell, 2015).

Insight meditation allows us to focus on what happens in each moment as it happens. We can accomplish this just by focusing on our breathing: When we breathe in and out we concentrate on this act and nothing else. Then as we focus on our breathing, we can gain insight into the "self" as we watch various thoughts and emotions come and go because we do not react to any of them. We can thus become clearer about who is the *real self* that teaches. For example, at the beginning of a class or at a transition

> *"For most of its young history... the role of the TESOL teacher was to follow the method and exclude the 'self' as much as possible."*

Movement meditation includes any body movement as meditation. The most popular types of movement meditation include yoga and tai-chi, but even a simple routine such as walking or jogging can also be considered movement meditation. Teachers can do simple stretching exercises or body movements that relax both body and mind before they enter a class, or they can take a walk/jog during lunch hour to experience meditation through movement.

Conclusion

For most of its young history, the field of TESOL has favored methods over teachers to the extent that methods were developed as close to being teacher-proof as possible and the role of the TESOL teacher was to follow the method and exclude the self as much as possible.

This article has pointed out that we can best put our COVID-19-imposed lockdown to good use by getting to know the *self* as teacher. Contemplation can lead to more self-awareness, and I outlined three techniques that TESOL teachers can use to gain such personal understanding: insight meditation*,* visualization, and movement meditation. For far too long, TESOL as a profession has separated the teacher from the act of teaching, as publishers have long searched for *the* correct method while all along ignoring the person who must deliver such a method, the teacher. I agree with Palmer (1998, p. 1) when he states, "Knowing myself is as crucial to good teaching as knowing my students and my subject…. When I do not know myself, I cannot know who my students are."

Stay safe and healthy.

References

Farrell, T. S. C. (2015). *Promoting teacher reflection in TESOL*. Routledge.

Palmer, P. J. (1998). *The courage to teach.* Jossey-Bass.

time during a lesson, a teacher can turn the lights off and ask students to take a few deep, slow, clearing breaths and be silent for a few minutes while they focus only on their breathing and simply doing nothing. Then ask them to transition slowly from the depth of contemplation to the classroom and continue the lesson. Indeed, students report sensations of peacefulness, a clearer mind, and a feeling of centeredness.

Visualization is a meditative technique in which the practitioner visualizes a place (new or old) or a task and remains in a general state of openness while using this place as a type of sanctuary where one feels safe, because this mental sanctuary is uniquely individual. As he or she sees inside this sanctuary, they become calm and totally relaxed. Because this sanctuary is uniquely individual, it reflects personal identity. As a result, we gain knowledge of the self. A teacher might try this before class and see if their attitudes toward teaching, students, and learning change. Such visualization can help teachers become more mindful of their own attitudes towards their classroom practices and also become more mindful of their students' emotions and experiences.

The Author

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

The Brain Connection

Dealing with "Bad" Behavior in Class

By Dr. Curtis Kelly

"Why, as teachers, do we downplay the pain our students suffer from rejection, failure, and shame?"

Many years ago, on a speaking tour through Kyushu, Japan, I gave a presentation on dealing with difficult students, one of my favorites. (The ultimate message is that it is we, as teachers, who have to deal with *ourselves,* meaning a change in perspective.) In the discussion afterwards, a Japanese English teacher, Ms. Maekawa, told us about how one of her students kept leaving class.

Every single class, about halfway through, this student asked if he could go to the bathroom. Naturally, she said "yes." After all, how could she refuse a request like that? There are teachers who do refuse. I know of some who say, "You should have gone before class!" but Maekawa-san was not so demanding. She let him go, and he would disappear for a few minutes and then come back later.

There we were hearing a familiar story. "Yep," all of us veterans thought, "I have had students like that. They use the bathroom ploy to get out of class, maybe taking their cell phone along and having a smoke. We all frowned and shook our heads.

However, this wonderful teacher did not come to the same negative conclusion we had. Instead, she wondered if the student had a health issue, and in looking at his school profile, she found out that he did. It turned out the boy suffered from severe hemorrhoids. Hemorrhoids! He was too embarrassed to bring a donut pillow, so sitting on a hard seat for 90 minutes was just plain painful. And that is why he went to the restroom, so that he could stand up!

As soon as we heard that, all our expressions softened. We went from frowns to compassionate smiles. "Oh, poor boy," we thought. "He is not such a bad student. What can we do to help students like that?" How our outlook changed with that little bit of information.

But then something hit me, what brain experts call "cognitive dissonance." It is this: We always bend over backwards to help someone with an external physical disability, or even a neurological one, but when it comes to an internal, psychological disability, such as fear of

looking stupid in class, a lack of motivation to put efforts into something that continually results in failure, or just the inability to sit for hours in a boring class, we become self-righteous and indignant. We waggle our fingers. Yet, how can we say that psychological pain is less debilitating than physical pain?

In fact, from the perspective of the brain, fMRI research shows the same areas of the brain are activated for both types of pain. Research shows that social pain, such as rejection, and even a broken heart, activates the same part of the brain that makes us feel physical pain, even though the stimulus originates in different places (Laslocky, 2013; Singh, 2015). Lost love also activates the areas of addiction. In short, emotional pain and physical pain have evolved

to share the same neural pathways to alert us to either kind of danger.

So then, why, as teachers, do we downplay the pain our students suffer from rejection, failure, and shame? Why do we attribute their avoidance to a lack of moral fortitude or "not trying hard enough"? We do not downplay physical pain as much. Why do we take a completely different stance for mental pain, even though it is identical in some ways? I ask because learners do not really choose their psychological dispositions any more than their physical ones, nor do they have much control over them. A child who had been screamed at for years by a parent who did not think they were studying hard enough develops a subconscious mental model of study as being unpleasant, painful, and something to avoid. The emotional value attached to our mental models are the things that steer us through life. They steer us *away* from the angry dog and *towards* the bakery. We cannot help avoiding an activity that elicits strong negative affect, despite best intentions. Indeed, a psychological problem can be just as disabling as a physical one.

This is important. Let's stop here a moment and think about the implications of the notion that physical and mental pain are equal deterrents. Do you ever become angry at, or belittling towards, a student who does not complete an assignment, thereby just reinforcing the negative effect? I know I do, usually figuring that if I can make the student feel bad enough for not complying, that student will comply. But is that logic reasonable? What support do we have for that approach? How many of your students have changed their ways as a result of your attack, meaning true changes, not just superficial adjustments of appearances? I suspect there are some, but I have seen a lot more students who just end up hating English even more.

Does that mean that we should let students do whatever they want? Of course not (though

> "I have often found that
> being the supportive 'coach'
> when students have trouble
> producing...
> is just what they need."

educational humanists say we should). But the least we can do is be understanding of their fight with negative effects and adjust our reprimands accordingly. If we portray the points taken off as required by "the system," meaning school policy, rather than as a product of our own disdain, it can do wonders. Sympathy might be just as powerful a tool for modifying behavior as anger. In fact, I have often found that being the supportive "coach" when students have trouble producing, such as offering to meet after class, is just what they need.

At the very least, let's change our perspective. Let's develop the same compassion that we had for the boy who left class because of hemorrhoids for students who leave for other reasons, such as to escape boredom or have a smoke. Those psychological frailties need the same understanding that we would offer a student in physical pain. Let us "deal with ourselves," making our oft-stated but rarely used principle of giving the same loving care to every single learner a reality.

The Author

Curtis Kelly (EdD) founded the JALT Mind, Brain, and Education SIG and is a professor of English at Kansai University in Japan. His life mission is "to relieve the suffering of the classroom." He has written over 30 books, 100 articles, and given over 400 presentations. This article was based on one he wrote for the MindBrainEd Think Tanks, so please subscribe!
Email: ctskelly@gmail.com

References

Laslocky, M. (2013). This is your brain on heartbreak. *Greater Good Magazine*. https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/this_is_your_brain_on_heartbreak

Singh, M. (2015). Breaking up is hard to do, but science can help. *National Public Radio*.https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2015/01/13/376804930/breaking-up-is-hard-to-do-but-science-can-help

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

DEPARTMENT OF
ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS

LOOKING FOR FLEXIBLE STUDY OPTIONS?

The University of Birmingham's Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics offers flexible personal development opportunities for professionals wishing to develop their skills and expertise. Our distance learning Masters programmes are delivered part-time over 30 months, to fit around your existing commitments.

APPLIED LINGUISTICS MA

This programme is for professionals wishing to further their personal development, and those who are interested in learning more about possible applications of language research. You will study topics including corpus linguistics, sociolinguistics, lexis, functional grammar, spoken and written discourse, and multi-modal communication.

TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (TESOL) MA

This programme is for practising teachers of English as a second or foreign language who wish to develop their knowledge of classroom methodology and materials design. You will study topics such as language teaching methodology, second language acquisition, syllabus and materials, pedagogic grammar, lexis, and teaching young learners.

KEY FACTS

- Start in February, April, July, October or December
- Study entirely online
- All modules assessed by written assignment
- Pay per module

Find out more and apply:
www.birmingham.ac.uk/elal-dl