



The English Connection

A Korea TESOL Publication

Winter 2020, Volume 24, Issue 4

The Classroom Edition

Tips

Teacher questioning
TBL presentations

Lessons

Storytelling
Collaborative book projects

Adapting Online

An international language center
Young learners

Plus

Member Spotlight: Bryan Hale
Book review
And regular columns...



KOTESOL
대한영어교육학회



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The English Connection

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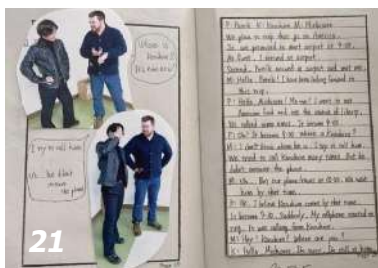
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To promote scholarship, disseminate information, and facilitate cross-cultural understanding among persons concerned with the teaching and learning of English in Korea.

Editorial

Do You Even Teach, Bro (and Sis)?

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

To be honest, I don't really consider myself a teacher.

But before you group me in with those who identify as *educators* and *life coaches*, let me explain.

First is my job title, that of *Associate Professor* (부교수). This middle position on the progression of the tenure track system places me between an assistant professor (조교수) and a full tenured professor (정교수). Now during the seven years or so being an assistant, I certainly wasn't assisting anyone, and my classes weren't of a type of me being lost and needing assistance any more so than when I was at the instructor/lecturer level (same courses, in fact!). It's even unclear whether I was to be the one assisting others at professing, or on the other hand, being at the entry level, requiring much more assistance than, say, one who associates. At the current associate level, one would believe they're well on the way to the top, yet the dictionary states *associate* as just being a colleague, with slightly subordinate membership. So being senior to assistant professors is of no mention, just that one is associating, whatever that means. Plus there's that slightly off-putting connotation of *associate* being attached to law firm lawyers – a feeling that particularly strikes me when I'm passing out business cards amongst a group of businessmen. Of course nowhere in this range of job titles is the nominalization capturing what I do (one who associates and professes?), nor is *teacher* even remotely conjured in the mind (perhaps being closest is *instructor/lecturer*, one who instructs/lectures), but those labels were fortunately discarded at the earliest possible opportunity. Ironically, the Korean word for *teacher* (선생님), is a catch-all term reserved firstly for distinguished elderly who have no other title one's aware of (and presumably any teaching, if done at all, was finished decades ago), and secondly for K-12 and *hagwon* superheroes who, arguably, are the real heavy lifters and rightly deserve all admirations that the designation *teacher* can bestow upon them.



The second reason I don't consider myself a teacher is that it's fairly out of style in English language teaching to actually teach anything. Explaining the grammatical building blocks of English through lectures and oral drilling (such as the Direct or Grammar-Translation methods) aren't looked at as classic methods but rather just plain ill-informed in today's language classrooms. The research is rich nowadays with non-teacher-fronted approaches to language learning, and if you haven't already recorded your lesson to get your teacher-talk time, you're probably lecturing way too much. Students are in the driver's seat with their learning, with the teacher in the back being overwhelmed with each new group of learner strategies, learner motivations, learner self-efficacy, levels, affective filters, cross-cultural sensitivities, and so on. If there's any teaching going on, it's teaching students how to learn, and feel good about it.

A third reason is this: Have you even seen what they're actually teaching kids nowadays? A national mock exam for high school first-year English assessment contains the following sentence, part of an article one must summarize the contents of with multiple choice answers: *Recent experimental evidence for the importance of reputation in facilitating cooperation has come from an analysis of the contributions to an "honesty box" for drinks in a university departmental coffee room.* Um, ok...that's great. But I'm pleased if four years on they can just tell me what they did last weekend with a degree of coherency. The pre-existing static knowledge that students bring with them when they enter university is, first, testament to where the real teachers are, and second, what little I have to offer in terms of teachable moments, or days, or semesters. Yes, I might be able to impart a few new idiomatic expressions to my English conversation participants, or explain some methods for increased cohesion or to better interact with PPTs in a public speaking course, but for the most part they've brought all that knowledge with them. They just need to engage with it; they need the chance, time, and space to use that knowledge and adapt it to their own personal situation and personas. And that's where I gladly come in. I really don't want to cut into my valuable class time and actually teach something new. Rather than *teacher*, I prefer *motivator*, *facilitator*, *coordinator*, *time manager*, *observer*, *corrector*, *praiser*, *helicopter parent*, and unfortunately, when the time comes, *assessor*.

Of course, I accept the title *teacher* as an umbrella term for the varied positions in our vast field. But rightfully being called one, I believe, depends on the course one is responsible for, and the way one goes about "teaching" the subject matter. Rather than suffer from what Thomas Farrell, in this edition's column, calls "the imposter syndrome" (page 30), in which feelings of teacher inadequacy can disrupt our positive outlooks and cause tensions between our teaching philosophies and practices, I have simply redefined some terms for myself, and thus released myself from the burden.

President's Message

Uncertainties Continue, but Much to Look Forward To

By Bryan Hale KOTESOL President

I'm incredibly honored and humbled to be able to share this message for *The English Connection* as KOTESOL president. During a difficult and unpredictable year, I have been so grateful for the community of practice offered by KOTESOL and look forward to doing my best to help our organization sustain the invaluable opportunities and support it offers to ELT professionals throughout Korea and beyond. Although we continue to face uncertainties stretching into 2021, it is spiriting to appreciate all that is going on in KOTESOL, and all of the ways – both innovative and time-cherished – that we are putting into practice our motto: Teachers Helping Teachers.



After online voting throughout October, the results of KOTESOL's 2020 elections were announced at our Annual Business Meeting on November 1. The results are as follows:

President:	Bryan Hale
First Vice-President:	Rhea Metituk
Second Vice-President:	Lucinda Estrada
Secretary:	Lisa Macintyre-Park
Treasurer:	Phillip Schrank
International Conference Comm. Co-chair:	Lindsay Herron
Nominations and Elections Comm. Chair:	Dr. David Shaffer

In addition, immediately following the ABM, the National Council held a short meeting to approve standing committee chairs for the new term. The following chairs were approved:

Publications Committee Chair:	Dr. David Shaffer
Membership Committee Chair:	Lindsay Herron
Publicity Committee Chair:	Wayne Finley
Research Committee Chair:	Dr. Mikyoung Lee
Financial Affairs Committee Chair:	Daniel Jones
Outreach Committee Chair:	James Rush II

I am so excited about working together with this wonderful team and also with KOTESOL's chapter presidents, who together will comprise our 2020–2021 National Council. Big, warm, heartfelt congratulations to all!

Although in many ways the outlook for the months ahead remains foggy and difficult to determine, our upcoming International Conference is a shining beacon on the professional development horizon. It will be held from February 19 to 28, via an innovative mix of online platforms including Zoom, Discord, Padlet, and more. Everything I hear about the plans underway sounds so exhilarating. I can't wait, and hope to see you there.

While the International Conference is our biggest annual event, our month-to-month activity is equally important, I believe! It is wonderful to see so much taking place throughout KOTESOL. I would especially like to thank our chapters for assiduously developing an ongoing program of online professional development opportunities available to all members. Thank you also to our Special Interest Groups, who have been finding various innovative ways to continue their activities. And, of course, our Publications Committee has continued its notable output unabated throughout this chaotic year. Because we often receive our publications through the mail or online, I worry that those who work so hard on them don't hear often enough how deeply their work is appreciated. Please know that it is!

Looking over the rich array of articles, ideas, interviews, and more on offer in this issue of *The English Connection* has been a lovely reminder of what was so captivating about KOTESOL back when I very first encountered it. Thinking deeply about classroom practice, about creativity and student projects, about culture and intercultural exchange. Practicing reflection, and responding to the challenges of teaching throughout a pandemic. Looking ahead to the International Conference. What a sumptuous winter feast – let's dig in!

Good Questions Matter

Narratives as Contexts for Questions in L2 Classrooms

By Esther Ahn

Can language learning also be about critical thinking and analytical reading? Is the quality of thought compatible with the language learning process? This article draws attention to literature – fictional narratives – as a great tool in teaching English in a way aligned with these critical thinking-based education theories. I believe that these aims enable students to understand the world and themselves so that they can become independent and compassionate citizens. Prior to being linguistically and culturally educative, and beneficial for personal growth, these aims fundamentally allow teachers and learners to raise reflective, relevant, and meaningful questions, inducing a more interactive and dynamic language learning environment.

The context for the core ideas in this article were prompted by a decade of experience in teaching literature-based language classes, specifically designed for elementary and middle school students in Korea with different levels of proficiency. The language institution where I have been working has twelve different levels of mixed-age classes and each level has a few tracks of programs with different learning objectives and approaches. Although these programs target students with different English levels, the ultimate aim is to cultivate students' imaginative, creative, and critical thinking.

In recent decades, there has been a surge of interest among scholars and professionals in the use of literature in language learning (Carter, 1997; Long, 1986; McRae, 1991; Simpson, 1996). Most view adopting a work of literature in an EFL classroom positively because effective use of literature naturally induces students' interest and engagement, and creates a lively and motivating environment. Literary texts provide "genuine language activities, not ones contrived around a fabricated text" (Long, 1986, p. 58) and authentic materials that engage learners "in authentic communication and in genuine experiences" (Stern, 1992, p. 302). Students are inspired by fiction, not only to learn the target language but also to bring more questions to class because it can generate many important and meaningful questions that they normally do not ask one another in an everyday conversational setting. Some of those questions compel us to imagine ourselves to be in another's shoes, and the teacher-student relationship becomes morphed into a more interesting and possibly open dynamic where individuals are free to have different ideas without feeling too hampered by constant anxiety for grammatical correctness. When this literature-based discussion is regularly and effectively practiced, the students can come out of the classroom not only with linguistic skills but also with better-formed opinions or ideas and an enlarged worldview. To sustain such an interest-inducing classroom with meaningful discussions, the teacher's ability to ask good questions becomes crucially instrumental. How, then, can we form good questions?

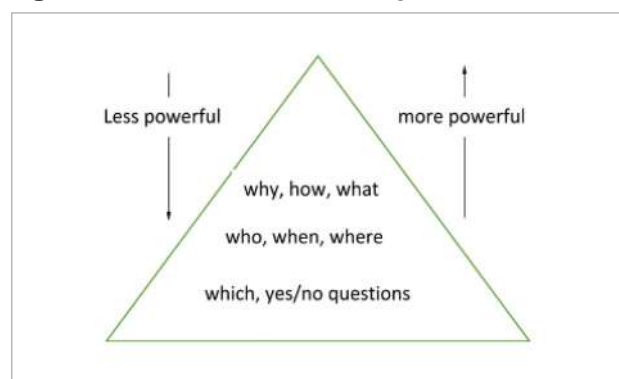
Good Questions

Education should be concerned with the development

of a student as a whole person, in all his/her cognitive, affective, and psychological domains. As one cannot separate feeling from thinking and doing, a good question should be presented in a way that connects with the students on both an intellectual and an affective level (Morgan & Saxton, 2006). Good questions address students' desire to learn; the unchanging truth is that they will not learn unless they want to learn. Good questions are not necessarily answerable right away. Rather, they might generate more and deeper questions. And generating further questions is particularly important for a language learner who is not sure whether he or she even has the desire to express himself or herself. This is because good questions make the learner want to respond voluntarily and, more often than not, personally. When this desire is stirred by good questions and meaningfully addressed, the learner realizes the necessity of learning the language prior to developing their ability to self-express.

Vogt, Brown, and Isaacs (2003) point out that an emphasis on finding quick fixes and an attachment to dualistic thinking in our culture hampers us from creative thinking. They lay out the architecture of formulating powerful questions by suggesting three dimensions: construction, scope, and assumptions. According to their research, most people rank the interrogatives from more powerful to less powerful in the following order: (a) why, how, what, (b) who, when, where, (c) which and yes/no questions. This shows that, by using "why," "how," and "what," we tend to make more robust and reflective questions, which provoke creative and exploratory thinking (as shown in Figure 1).

Figure 1. Architecture of Powerful Question Formation



Most questions that we pose have built-in assumptions due to the very nature of language. And powerful questions challenge the implied assumptions. For example, the question "How can we make more interactive classes?" assumes that interactive classes are more desirable compared to those that are not. A simple, exploratory question such as "Why are interactive classes better?" can clarify the basic assumption that the earlier question presupposes and bring everyone in the discussion to the common ground. Similarly, when discussing a work of fiction, rather than questions that focus on error and

blame (e.g., Which character made a lapse of judgment? Who is responsible for the negative consequence?), the teacher can gear the questions towards reflection, learning, and collaboration (e.g., What are we taking away from this example? What possibilities in life do we see now that we couldn't see before?). As such, the art of reframing questions can challenge existing assumptions and direct our attention to new possibilities.

Whereas some questions can "stifle learning by creating confusion, intimidating students, and limiting creative thinking" (Tofade, Elsner, & Haines, p. 1), when questions are put well, they "stimulate creativity; motivate fresh thinking; surface underlying assumptions; focus intention, attention, and energy; open the door to change; and lead us into the future" (Vogt et al., p. 11). Here, "open the door to change, and lead us into the future" can be interpreted as an effect of powerful questions, implicitly shaping the students' possible future actions. In framing better questions, teachers should ask themselves whether the question they are about to raise is relevant to the real lives of the students, conjecturing the function of the question, and gauging meanings and feelings that the question is likely to evoke. Inviting fresh thinking and feeling requires a fine art of striking the balance between familiarity and difference. In the process of making such effort, questions that require application seem particularly effective in drawing students' engagement in a language learning class. This is because they need to be able to transfer and generalize information in order to apply it to their own situations.

As one way to make class materials relevant to the students, the Socratic method of questioning employs thought-provoking questions that promote open discussion where one viewpoint is compared to another. It not only encourages original thought from the students but also leads students to locate their knowledge gaps about the subject matter, which can motivate them to clarify ideas and better understand. Tofade et al. (2013) sum up three categories of questions that teachers should be skillful at developing: exploratory, spontaneous, and focused. Exploratory questioning is employed to see how much students know about a given topic. Spontaneous questions guide the students to explore their beliefs and assumptions. Focused questions are about specific issues on which the teacher would like the students to reflect. These three types of questions stimulate students intellectually and lead them to evaluate their thoughts and perspectives.

Narratives as Contexts for Questions

It is a general consensus that the use of literature in EFL/ESL classrooms can be effective when judiciously applied by knowledgeable teachers who consciously use a variety of resources aligned with the fundamental objectives in their language classroom. Those who express their reservations on the matter usually emphasize the fact that each work of literature deals with a specific culture, a particular set of norms, a unique – sometimes fictional – setting that may not be universally transparent. However, such voices have become rarer in recent decades since, despite the potential difficulties due to historical, cultural,

and linguistic differences, there has been an increased demand, particularly from elementary and middle school students, who are somewhat advanced in their proficiency level, of language learning classes with a particular focus on reading and discussing literary texts. With a knowledgeable teacher capable of asking good questions as scaffolding for L2 learners, difficulties can be transformed into "newness" for students, to stir their curiosity and enhance their desire to learn.

Because a work of literature is a world of multi-layered meanings, it can be used as the context and the content from which many different kinds of questions can emerge. A narrative enables the students to be personally engaged in the act of reading and of sharing different interpretations with one another in the classroom. This is possible even in a language class because themes and topics that permeate stories are usually universal, despite the specific settings and characters that each story contains. While L2 learners are emotionally and intellectually absorbed in the reading, they usually identify themselves with certain characters in the work.

"Good questions make the learner want to respond voluntarily and, more often than not, personally."

Here, language teachers can maximize the effects of this emotional connection by asking questions to recall the students' related experiences. When reading becomes pleasurable for L2 learners because they are emotionally engaged and intellectually satisfied, they can additionally gain understanding of different cultures, which, in turn, might positively affect their desire to learn the target language. In this sense, literature can be a tool to strengthen L2 learners' motivation to study a foreign language.

The following are some examples of the questions that can be formed in the context of reading a work of literature, while at the same time, be relevant to the students and affect the way they see the world and others around themselves.

- From Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*: What is your opinion on Tralfamadorians' advice to Billy that he should only concentrate on the happy moments of his life and ignore the unhappy ones? Does this work for you as a way of life? What are the pros and cons in following this advice?
- From Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*: In what way are some of the features of the dystopian society depicted in the novel relevant to our current society? What are the contributing factors to a decline in reading?

- From Sung J. Woo's short story *Paris, at Night*: Asked why they want to be doctors, lawyers, diplomats, and YouTubers, many young students respond, "Because I want to make a lot of money. I can do anything with money." It's true that today almost everything is up for sale. This short story shows one such example. What is so unsettling about the idea of selling and buying one's memories? Why should we worry that we are moving toward a society in which everything is up for sale?
- From Ian McEwan's *Amsterdam*: From today's discussion, we see Clive choosing not to intervene in the argument the two strangers were having. There will be a certain consequence from his not doing anything at that moment. To what degree can we say other people's business is none of our business? In what sense is it true or not?

When questions are asked not simply to check certain facts about the plot or the characters in a literary work but also to elicit students' individually authentic responses and

"Language teachers can maximize the effects of this emotional connection by asking questions to recall the students' related experiences."

to encourage them to exercise their moral imagination, they can feel their opinions are being heard and valued. Admittedly, it may be difficult for L2 learners to capture subtle differences in shades of meaning and to fully appreciate the value of a text with all its connotations and cultural references. However, this challenge itself provides the opportunity for them to practice their inference skills in the process of finding meaning beneath the surface with a text that stirs their curiosity with a sense of newness to understand the foreign culture on which the target language is interdependent and thus constantly evolving. For students from different levels of proficiency, teachers should select works of fiction accordingly, with different focuses.

L2 learners are fundamentally narrators of their own stories. Philosophers Paul Ricoeur (1984) and Alasdair

MacIntyre (2007) suggest that the majority of human knowledge, including the identity of self, comes from narratives. A person's actions at any given moment have a narrative dimension. This implies that L2 learners' choosing to learn a language and the process of learning it is part of their life stories. From a lot of exposure to many different narratives in literature that reflect a shared reality, they may become more conscious of their own desires and choices in response to the external circumstances, thereby learning to shape their lives and their stories.

Questions are one of the most powerful teaching tools. When a teacher understands how to use them thoughtfully and effectively, it will significantly enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Instead of adhering to a willful separation of feeling from thinking, which is detrimental to nurturing whole human beings in education, when better questions are adequately posed, students and teachers may bring their experiences and feelings into the classroom. As such, both their cognitive and emotional capacities would become engaged, their dialogue more analogous to real-life situations, and their learning more practical. Learning from the examples of good questions in the classroom, students should be able to go on creating their own questions beyond the bounds of those initially posed.

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Enhancing EFL Learners' Speaking Competence Through Post-Task Public Performances

By Ciara Flores-Sim

On TBLT and Unique Challenges in the Asian EFL Context

In recent years, task-based language teaching (TBLT), broadly defined as an approach that uses communicative tasks as the primary basis for both designing a language learning syllabus and planning individual lessons (Willis, 1996; Ellis, 2009), has been touted as the "best hope if the educational goal is that of achieving real communicative ability in learners" (Ellis, 2014, p. 114). Direct support for a shift from the traditional grammar-translation method to TBLT derives from findings of extensive research in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) that demonstrate how engaging learners in meaningful task work activates the critical language learning processes (i.e., negotiation, modification, rephrasing, and experimentation) more effectively than grammar-focused teaching activities, thus ultimately providing better opportunities for the development of learners' communicative competence (Skehan, 1996; Willis & Willis, 2007).

The prominence of TBLT is evident in the fact that despite having its origins in mostly Western contexts of second language teaching, it has been advocated by education ministries of several Asian countries including China and Japan, as well as South Korea, as a means to reform their English curriculum (Nunan, 2004; Moodie & Nam, 2016). There is, however, an apparent gap between policy and classroom reality as research has identified an overall slow uptake of TBLT in actual EFL classrooms due largely to inadequate training in operationalizing TBLT among local English teachers, as well as negative perceptions of TBLT's effectiveness due to a supposed disparity between the goal of communicative activities in TBLT and students' expectations of classroom practice (e.g., Ellis, 2014). In Korea, while there is growing awareness and implementation of TBLT, many in-service teachers that I have met in training programs often point out that sociocultural factors hamper the effectiveness of TBLT in developing the learners' communicative ability. Pair and group communication tasks as structured in ESL classrooms, for example, are said to be ineffective in EFL classes since learners who share a common native language (L1) simply talk in their L1 during task performance and interactions in English are often treated with less importance, thus defeating TBLT's pedagogical goal of "stretching" the learners' interlanguages. As TBLT proponents argue, however, overcoming these challenges critically lies in the design characteristics of the tasks included in a course, the procedures for implementing them, and the kind of participatory structure employed (e.g., Kim, 2018).

Public Performance in TBLT

One method that has shown promise in boosting the effectiveness of TBLT in EFL contexts is the use of public performances (PP). PP is often treated as an optional activity in TBLT frameworks, with proponents

differing in their perspectives on where it fits within the standard "pre-task, during-task, post-task" model of task implementation (e.g., Willis, 1996; Ellis, 2006; Skehan, 1996). As shown in Table 1, the main difference in these perspectives is between treating PP as an essential part of the main task, as in oral presentations and public report (e.g., Willis, 1996), and on the other hand, considering it as an option for task repetition and/or an anticipated post-task activity. While TBLT proponents have used different terminology (i.e., post-task public repetition, learner report, and public report), all entail learners speaking publicly after completing an earlier main task. Hence, for discussion purposes, the term *public performance* (PP) is used to refer to an act of performing a speaking task (be it a report or task repetition) in front of the class after completing an earlier collaborative task in pairs or in small groups.

Table 1. Public Performance in Three Approaches to Task-Based Teaching

	Skehan & Foster (1997)	Ellis (2005, 2006)	Willis (1996)
Pre-task	Pre-task planning	Strategic planning Task rehearsal	Activating tasks Input exposure
During-task	Task performance	Task performance	Task performance Planning Public report
Post-task	Public performance Transcription Task repetition	Options: Learner report Consciousness-raising Repeat task	Language analysis Language practice

(Adapted from Newton & Nguyen, 2019, p. 36; Ellis, 2006, p. 20)

Tips and Suggestions for Teachers

Depending on the goals and the proficiency level of the class, PP can be incorporated into a task-based lesson in various ways. One option, for example, is by asking each group to report their solution to a collaborative problem-solving task (e.g., creating the best day trip itinerary for a given budget) to the rest of the class so everyone can compare findings or begin a survey. Another option is through oral presentations that can be done on just about any topic, from proposing a business idea (e.g., a new invention) to teaching a new skill (e.g., how to cook a dish from another country). Using collaborative drama activities such as role plays (e.g., creating an etiquette guide for foreigners visiting Korea and acting it out) can also be a fun and effective way for students to practice skills like good body language, voice projection, and intonation.

As speaking in front of an audience can be a daunting task for many (even for native English speakers), effective use of PP in an EFL course requires proper mental and emotional scaffolding. The best way to start it off is by showing learners examples of how it is done right through



▲ Ciara Flores-Sim (center) with in-service teacher training course participants.

videos such as TED Talks and/or recordings of a previous class doing a similar task, and providing them with clear guidelines and rubrics for what they are expected to do. If students are not ready for individual presentations, have them work in small groups first so that all of the attention is not focused on a single learner, or allow them to give presentations to small groups first and then to the whole class. Effective classroom management is also critical to ensure that all learners (not just the few good/extroverted ones) are given equal opportunity to gain enactive mastery experiences in performing speaking tasks. This can be done by assigning group member roles in rotation (e.g., scribe, reporter, discussion leader). Finally, to ensure that the whole class is engaged during PP, the audience must be given a purpose to pay attention by assigning them tasks that can only be completed if they listen to the presenters.

Benefits of Public Performance in TBLT

The use of PP is still a relatively under-researched part of TBLT and teachers often have differing views on whether asking students to give in-class performances like role plays and oral presentations is actually worth the time and effort that they require. The empirical studies that have looked into its use in recent years, however, provide compelling reasons why it should be an integral part of any EFL course that aims to boost learners' oral competence (e.g., Newton & Nguyen, 2019; Flores-Sim, 2020).

1. Increases learners' speaking self-efficacy

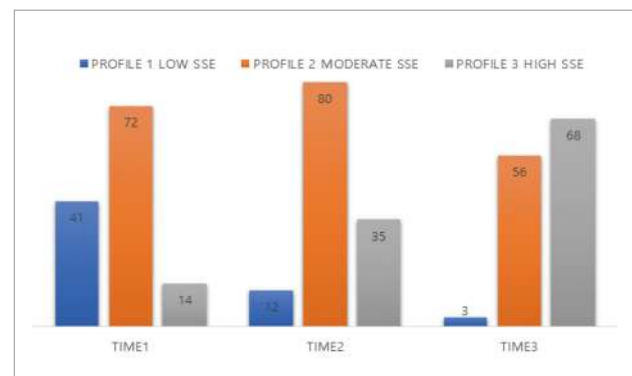
Self-efficacy (SE), a well-established construct in psychology that refers to an individual's beliefs in his or her own capability to perform a designated task or achieve goals, has been identified in numerous studies in education research as the strongest predictor of performance among motivational constructs (e.g., Bandura, 1986). SE is believed to have a stronger influence on the motivation to perform a course of action than actual skills, knowledge, or previous accomplishment. A growing number of studies in SLA in recent years have also demonstrated

the impact of SE in foreign language learning and its significant relationship to key factors including learners' proficiency and achievement, willingness to communicate, communication anxiety, use of language learning strategies, and persistence when faced with obstacles (e.g., Hsieh & Kang, 2010; Leeming, 2017; Mills & Belnap, 2018).

A recently concluded longitudinal mixed-methods study that I conducted at a national university in Korea (Flores-Sim, 2020) investigated the effects of implementing a context-sensitive task-based Practical English course using a series of public performances on the speaking self-efficacy (SSE) of 127 Korean university students. The

study tracked individual changes in the learners' SSE at the beginning, middle, and end of the 15-week semester using a combination of SSE questionnaires, class records, and learner interviews. Findings across qualitative and quantitative data sources indicated that the task-based course using PP had significant positive effects on the development of learners' SSE. Based on SSE profile classification (see Figure 1), there was a significant decrease in the percentage of students with low SSE by the end of the term ($n = 41$ or 32% at Time 1 vs. $n = 3$ or 2% at Time 3), and a notable increase in the number of students with high SSE ($n = 14$ or 11% at Time 1 vs. $n = 68$ or 54% at Time 3).

Figure 1. SSE Profiles Over Time



While literature on self-efficacy warns that it is most difficult to increase SE for people with low SE, as they are likely to avoid the specific situations in which they believe they will not perform well (e.g., Rubin et al., 1997 as cited in Tucker & McCarthy, 2001), an examination of growth trajectories based on learners' initial SSE profiles revealed that learners who had low initial SSE made the biggest gains in SSE, followed by those with moderate initial SSE. The few who started the course with high SSE, on the other hand, remained in the high range, with no significant overall change in SSE scores, which could be attributed to

ceiling effects that exist when efficacy is high and there is little room for any positive change (Gist & Mitchell, 1992).

2. Develops speaking competence and confidence

Both questionnaire and interview data from the study also suggested that speaking tasks with PP helped increase students' oral competence and reduced their fear of speaking. While all students have had at least six years of prior English education, most of them admitted to having almost no previous experience with speaking tasks and initially expressed apprehensions about having to perform them in class. As the course progressed, however, the majority of the learners believed that their speaking ability increased as they felt more confident and less anxious when speaking English. While they thought the speaking tasks that required PP were challenging, they cited them

fluency and accuracy, experienced lower communication apprehension, and had higher levels of self-perceived communicative competence than those who did not perform publicly (Matsuoka et al., 2014). As Brooks and Wilson (2014) explain, using tasks that require PP, such as oral presentations, do more than just give students an opportunity to practice language. Experiencing success in these tasks can lead to higher levels of motivation, self-esteem, and confidence for the students involved, as they are able to see the results of their hard work.

3. Changes the way learners orient to tasks

Using PP with TBLT creates language learning opportunities that extend beyond the actual performance itself. Collaborative process-driven tasks that require students to work together on a common goal can also



▲ University students delivering an oral presentation in class.

as the part of the course that was the most helpful in improving their speaking ability.

"I think my speaking ability improved so much. (How do you know?) because I couldn't speak English when I studied English before but after studying in this class, I can speak more. We didn't have speaking tasks in high school but now we have many. The speaking tasks in class, especially the presentations...when I presented in front of the class, I was so nervous but I was able speak proudly... and after the presentation I felt more confident. I feel less terrified of speaking." [Student 1 interview excerpt]

This relationship between PP and oral competence is supported by quasi-experimental studies in other EFL contexts that have also found that learners who did in-class presentations scored higher in terms of oral

increase class enjoyment, encourage group cohesion and provide an opportunity for learners to productively draw on their L1 to boost their L2 performance (Brooks & Wilson, 2014).

"I think preparing for the presentations with my group was the most helpful part of the course. At first, we spoke in Korean, and then we translated it to English together. Then we tried to speak in English more because after we discussed in group, we had to present it in English. If we didn't have to present it, we would just talk in Korean." [Student 2 interview excerpt]

As illustrated in this student interview excerpt, anticipated PP can also be a strong motivator for language learning as it changes the way learners orient to tasks, driving them to focus not only on the task objective but also on the

actual language and form-focused collaborative discourse during rehearsal to prepare for the upcoming PP (Newton & Nguyen, 2019).

Final Thoughts

As Tucker and McCarthy (2001) explain, “the paradox of self-efficacy and choice is that students with moderate and high self-efficacy will naturally participate and undertake more mastery experiences more frequently and, over time, strengthen their SE” (p. 241). Students with low SE, on the other hand, are likely to shy away from speaking opportunities, fail to develop their skills, and therefore reinforce their low SE. Because achieving oral communication competence can be a particularly challenging task for many Korean EFL learners, enhancing their speaking self-efficacy beliefs is critical to their language learning process and should be a priority in the language classroom.

The actual classroom-based research discussed here demonstrates that even learners with low levels of SE can benefit from an educational intervention that provides mastery experiences as catalysts for change. Using speaking tasks with PP as a required component of an EFL course provides an avenue for students who would normally opt out of participating in speaking tasks and avoid speaking situations to develop both their oral communication competence and confidence. Finally, while questions have been raised on the actual practicability and effectiveness of implementing TBLT in Korea due to the perceived uniqueness of the students’ learning culture, the findings of the empirical research discussed here show that Korean learners are not inherently resistant to TBLT by culture and are likely to respond to it favorably once given the opportunity to experience a well-designed and supported task-based program.

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Adopting Technology for Young Learners

An independent-learning-focused approach

By May Khoo and Eunice Tang

As educators around the world rush to move from traditional classrooms to e-learning to cope with unpredictable changes in formal education, there is a plethora of tools and activity ideas to be explored. The norm is holding live online classes through video-conferencing tools. While no longer new to universities, these tools and corresponding methods could be new and challenging to younger learners and their teachers, particularly those from kindergarten up to lower-secondary levels. This article suggests some ideas that have been tried and tested in ESL/EFL classrooms and can be adapted and applied to different cultural communities.

E-Learning in Action

If educational success means individuals having accountability for their personal development, can we not have students assume a larger role in their learning at this time? From flipped classrooms integrating peer support for younger learners to mobile learning, there are at least a few methods that teachers can experiment with with their learners in the language classrooms.

“If educational success means individuals having accountability for their personal development, can we not have students assume a larger role in their learning at this time?”

1. Flipped Classroom for Young Learners – A Structured, Peer-Supported Approach

As younger students usually have shorter attention spans as compared to their older peers, teachers may want to experiment with easing out supervision, while giving students more opportunities to be accountable for their own learning. The self-peer-teacher method can be adapted based on a thrice-a-week application or a 3-week cycle of once-weekly meetings. In the first session, teachers can assign self-study materials to students. The youngest learners shall be supervised by their guardians while going through the self-study materials. In the second session, teachers can implement a range of activities requiring peer support and collaboration. For example, students can meet in small groups via video conference or be paired up to discuss over a phone call the key ideas of the self-study topics. Students can also write collaboratively in the cloud. In the last session, teachers can hold an online meetings to confirm student learning and understanding of the topics covered in the cycle.

2. Flipped Classroom for Senior Grades – An Independent-Learning-Focused Approach

While younger learners could benefit from planned, peer-supported, and collaborative sessions in their learning, teachers shall consider guiding learners in their senior grades toward self-sufficiency. Compared to the method suggested above, this method involves only students performing the heavy lifting (e.g., reading notes, completing quizzes) during offline hours unsupervised; they will later meet with their teachers online either for a summative assessment and to receive feedback on their offline assignment performance. In this way, students are being implicitly guided on seeking the resources they need (e.g., from peers, external learning resources) to support their learning in meeting the offline assignment requirements.

3. The Socratic Method for Interactive Learning

By splitting up a class of students into smaller groups (even better, mix students who are usually in different classes into groups!), teachers can conduct small group tutorials online. While students in Group A do their readings and take notes in the first half of a session, those in Group B engage in a discussion with their teacher. Then, the students switch roles for the latter half of the session. Later, all students collaboratively put together their synthesized ideas on a topic in a document to be shared online. Essentially, classroom teaching becomes whole-form learning, regardless of the usual class segregation.

4. Mobile and Asynchronous Learning

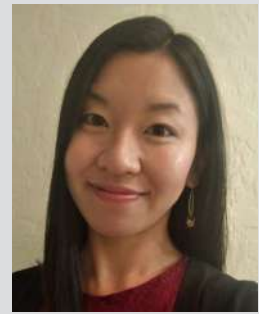
While it may not be as convenient for all students to access computers at the same time, it is relatively easier for most to reach a mobile phone. Teachers can share downloadable pre-recorded videos with students so that the students can have flexibility with their schedules. Teachers may also reproduce learning materials into smaller chunks (e.g., audiovisual materials of 1–3 minutes in length, short assignments that correspond to sub-topics) to experiment with microlearning according to student age and needs. Pre-recorded conversation prompts can also be shared with students so that they can practice and record their responses prior to a live language session. At the predetermined meeting time, students can “meet” for discussion or respond to quizzes through a texting or chatting application. Furthermore, meeting hours can be split up or rescheduled to times that better suit all, to enable students to have longer sleep hours and parents more time to be engaged with students’ learning.

Successful teaching with technology does not only rely on teacher motivation but also on the support that is available to teachers. This is because not all teachers received sufficient exposure to new technologies or are well trained to problem-solve technical issues as they arise. As such, the lack of technical support in the utilization of technologies for teaching is a barrier to e-learning. While such resources can be more easily made available at institutions of higher education where IT, computer science, and engineering students can fill in where staff members are lacking, primary and secondary schools may not have sufficient resources to do the same.

While online learning is not new in South Korea, online course offerings are being expanded to include previously unavailable subjects and learner groups. Additionally, new initiatives in STEM education are being developed to support science and computer science education. With some examples of teaching methods shared above in ESL/EFL classrooms, perhaps it is timely for teachers to group up to create a shared repository of materials and effective strategies that can be adapted to different circumstances. While some families are tech-savvy, others are not and may not have adequate resources or access to fully online learning experiences. As such, openness and adaptability are essential so that learner needs are well accommodated. Not to forget are matters of accessibility to learners with additional needs. A lesson that we can possibly learn from this time when formal education in the classroom is interrupted is the emergence of students as digital natives more adaptable and capable of dealing with change.

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Teaching English Through Korean Folktales

Learn About Language, Life, and Yourself Through Storytelling

By Seung Ah Kim

“Teacher, why do we have to learn English?”

I have been teaching English since 1994, and I have always been asked these questions: “Teacher, why do we have to learn English?” “Teacher, why do I have to learn English? I want to be a farmer. I don’t think I need it when I grow and sell my cabbages and radishes at the market.”

I usually respond, “What if you have foreign customers who speak English? If you can speak English, you will be able to make more money.” My students would nod their heads and agree. It was a conversation back in the 1990s (before Google Translator was invented).

As you may know, Koreans regard English as an essential part of success, which means making more money. If Koreans want to be successful, they should go study abroad, especially to English-speaking countries to take the TOEFL, TOEIC, IELTS, GRE or similar tests. English has been the most important subject, even more important than Korean.

Now my students say with a big smile, “We can use Google Translator or Papago!” I smile back and ask, “Yes, we are living in the era of AI. Do you know what AI cannot do?” Puzzled, they ask me, “What is it?” I look at their eyes and say, “AI cannot love.” They nod.

“Whenever I share Korean stories and culture with people around the world, I also share my love. Without English, it wouldn’t be possible.” Then I tell them what I have been doing around the world as a K-storyteller.

My Background in Storytelling

Back in 2007, I was in Toronto to get a TYC (Teaching Young Children) certificate. It was my second visit. My first time was in 2005 to get a TESL certificate. Even though I majored in English language and literature at a university in Korea and started to teach English in 1994, I always felt my English was not good enough. This is how most Korean people feel about their English skills. The more we study English, the less confident we become.

One day, while in Toronto, I came across the 29th Toronto Storytelling Festival on the internet. I registered for one of the storytelling performances. It was the last day of the festival. Luckily, I got a ticket. I had never imagined that it would be a life-changing moment! While I was listening to stories from the performance, I couldn’t stop shedding tears. I said to myself, “That’s it!” I realized that the true purpose of learning languages is to communicate heart to heart by sharing our experiences through stories. And I signed up for one of the courses run by The Storytelling School of Toronto. It was “First Step into the Art of Storytelling” by Lynda Howes,

my first storytelling teacher and mentor. Then I became a storyteller, and I have been telling Korean stories in English. Believe it or not, I have traveled to 18 countries on five continents to share Korean stories in English.

Teaching English Through K-Storytelling

Since I am known as a K-storyteller, I will explain telling Korean old tales handed down orally from generation to generation. I am sure that telling Korean folktales will motivate Korean students to learn English. I’d like to guide you in using Korean folktales in your class step by step and share some useful information and practical tips. Mostly, my tips will be for students in the intermediate to the advanced level.

Choose a Story

First, choose popular Korean folktales that your students already know. It will motivate and challenge your students to learn them in English. It will also be interesting for students to study the words and expressions from the story they have heard since they were little. (Table 1 contains eight famous Korean folktales that I recommend for students.)



▲ Seung Ah telling Korean folktales to a kindergarten in Kenya during the Sigana International Storytelling Festival 2016.

Table 1. Korean Folktales Suitable for English Storytelling

	Title	Main Characters
1	The Sun and the Moon 해와 달이 된 오누이	Widowed Mother, Son, Daughter, Tiger
2	The Tiger and the Dried Persimmon 곶감과 호랑이	Mother, Baby, Tiger, Thief
3	The Little Green Frog 청개구리	Mother Frog, Son Frog
4	The Fountain of Youth 젊어지는 샘물	Good Old Man and Wife, Greedy Old Man
5	The Fairy and the Woodcutter 선녀와 나무꾼	Woodcutter, Deer, Fairy
6	Heungbu and Nolbu 흥부 놀부	Two brothers - Heungbu, Nolbu
7	The Story of Simcheong 심청전	Simcheong, her father, Sim the Blind
8	The Hare’s Liver 토끼의 간	Dragon King, Hare, Turtle

Learn the Story

Learning a story is quite a creative and interactive process because the speaker and listener can exchange a lot of things, based on the act of storytelling. First, when we learn a story, we have to visualize the scenes from the story and describe them in English. There are so many activities that can be done to learn a story. Second, storytelling itself is the process of exploring ourselves in the story. The process of storytelling will keep students busy by being interactive. Third, student learning of a story is very entertaining and inspires two-way communication between the teacher and students.



▲ *Seung Ah performing the Korean myth, "Bari, the Abandoned Princess," at the 17th Folktales' Festival in Kea, Greece, August 2019.*

- Tip 1. Choose a scene from a Korean story and draw it. Compare the differences between the teacher's and students' drawings.
- Tip 2. The teacher can list the vocabulary words (objects and actions related to Korean culture, for example) from the story. Let students make a glossary using pictures and photos.
- Tip 3. Let students pick some sentences they can say in Korean and English. Have students make a video teaching Korean to non-Koreans by using the context. It will give them confidence.
- Tip 4. As homework, have students research the cultural background of the story. It will give them an opportunity to communicate with their parents or grandparents.
- Tip 5. Discuss the lesson within the story with students by comparing the differences between Korean (Asian) values and other cultures' values.
- Tip 6. Give questions for students to ask their parents and grandparents related to the story and have the students present the answers in English in class.

Tell a Story

Telling the story in English in front of an audience will help students improve their speaking skill. They can use different tools and formats to present the story through a variety of visual aids. They can transform the story into a video, PowerPoint presentation, book, pictures, musical,

play, dance, and so on to perform it. This allows students to express what they have learned in English in their favorite way. It will be a meaningful opportunity for them to find the best way to learn and use English.

Additionally, Korean stories can empower and heal Korean students. Learning Korean stories in English gives Korean students an opportunity to find their identity and moral values. It is such a healing process to restore students' confidence, self-esteem, and integrity. One of the biggest reasons why Korean mothers are crazy about English education is that they don't want their kids to face the

same embarrassing or shameful moments they have experienced. It is a pity that many Koreans lose their confidence when it comes to English.

When I teach Korean adults English, the most difficult thing is their mindset, especially their lack of confidence. Adult students feel ashamed when they cannot speak English fluently. They even think they are not capable. How can speaking a foreign language define a person's ability and capability? This way of thinking has given Koreans anxiety about learning English and speaking it well. And this anxiety has created the problems I mentioned above. Studying English through Korean stories can benefit Korean students and Korean society in the long run.

The world really needs healing. Humanity is disappearing, since the qualities of moral values, and ethics are missing in our education system. Parents are too busy to care about their kids' personalities and integrity. Institutes are mainly focused on making money through English education. I strongly believe that teaching students English through Korean folktales can have a strong impact and make Korean society better.

The Author

Seung Ah Kim is a K-storyteller and the CEO of Arirang Storytelling, founded in the memory of her grandmother, who told her stories as a baby. She has performed in 18 countries on five continents, sharing her grandmother's stories. In 2019, she received a Global Culture Award at the Arirang Korea Awards. Email: arirangstorytelling@gmail.com



Language Teaching Futures and the COVID-19 Pandemic Reflections from Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University (XJTLU) in China

By Christopher Harris and Ling Xia

For those of us who are professional language teachers, our world of work has been changed radically and permanently by the global pandemic. In particular, changes have occurred because of the unpredicted upsurge in online teaching. Whether those changes are ultimately for the better or to what extent they will continue to be problematic are still moot points. Yet there are compelling reasons for optimism and for pride in our profession.

We are living through a moment of history, a global health crisis, and multiple aspects of cultural life, including language teaching, can never be quite the same again. In this context, one of the questions we are grappling with in Suzhou, China, in the School of Languages and especially in the English Language Centre (ELC) is this: When we truly find ourselves in the days of the post-pandemic, which new educational practices will we retain in language teaching and learning, and which will we discard?

In other words, how exactly have EAP and transnational modern languages as disciplines been transformed by our experiences and what does this mean for students and staff? At XJTLU there are over 250 professional language lecturers in EAP, Chinese, Japanese, and Spanish. Our new Year 1 EAP curriculum, fully overhauled for 2020–21, has well over 4,000 students. The impacts of COVID-19-

delivery regardless of their current time zones, and for improving students' receptive skills. Staff who are on campus have been tasked with other duties: live streaming of in-class sessions (which are also subject to lecture capture); live delivery of smaller group teaching using Big Blue Button or Zoom, and development of students' productive skills.

As a result, XJTLU's international students experience a blend of live online sessions, recordings, and live streaming, depending on their time zone and chosen forms of engagement. Significantly, the option for students to listen and listen again with recorded sessions has proven to be attractive and enabling. In addition, recorded lectures from other schools, such as International Business and Advanced Technology, produce an ideal supply of EAP resources, especially in an English-medium instruction institution.

While it is early days still for us to make major choices about the nature of post-pandemic curricula and newly settled approaches to teaching, we have been keenly evaluating the panoply of specific innovative practices that have emerged. Significantly, module questionnaire results from the previous semester, during which all EAP courses were delivered online, suggest that students' satisfaction score with online teaching is quite similar with traditional teaching in general. What is clear is that language teaching has everywhere become distinctly blended: The modes of delivery globally are now a series of excitingly varied online–onsite configurations from which all of us can and must learn and advance.

Inevitably, opportunities for professional development in technology-enhanced language teaching and learning are both renewed and increased in number. Zoom, Big Blue Button, and Mattermost are just three of the many platforms already added to the repertoire of tools available to every specialist language lecturer.

While the chat and breakout room functions provided by such platforms are quite close to the traditional whole-class and group discussion activities, features like annotation tools and shared pad have undoubtedly enhanced students' learning experiences in language class activities. The rich variety of Moodle plugins provided in our virtual learning environment, such as Quiz, Podcast, and Level-up, also help to further engage students while they take EAP classes online.

induced change at this institution are therefore immediate and large scale This situation in many ways is the same for all professional language teachers, of course, and we stand together.

One engaging example of innovative practices is provided by the 2020–21 arrangements for XJTLU's Year 1 EAP teaching. Staff who are unable to return to China have been assigned responsibility for online synchronous



Careful consideration has also been given at XJTLU to issues of curriculum design and assessment in the current travel-restricted and cybercultural global landscapes. All examinations have been replaced by alternative forms of testing while we acquire the appropriate remote proctoring facilities. Students have recorded their spoken work and uploaded it following, where necessary, essential training and guidelines given by staff. At the same time, an increase in online delivery of guest sessions to students from leaders in business and science, and other experts not at XJTLU, is a main form of curricular enrichment.

One inevitable consequence of this period of change is that our profession(s) have been transformed so substantially that new types of training are now urgently needed for early-career language lecturers. In interview after interview at XJTLU, we ask the same question: What experience do you have with online teaching? We expect answers that demonstrate not only experience but a set of recently acquired skills and competencies. After all, motivating an online learner and encouraging spoken participation online are all difficult challenges in any institutional context. One novel solution for 2020–21 at XJTLU is to have international students present in on-campus sessions by using iPads. Each iPad displays the face of one student who can be seen by the tutor and by other students for small group work in the classroom.

This global transformation of language teaching is being propelled forward at XJTLU by the launch of our Learning Mall: an online–onsite learning ecosystem. From a School of Languages’ perspective, the Learning Mall Online dissolves several issues arising from time zone differences. It also enhances greatly the virtual delivery of language teaching from teachers worldwide to students worldwide. Furthermore, it better enables academic connections with business partners and other external experts. We are fortunate that there was a commitment to this networking initiative long before the pandemic emerged, as well as a long-standing dedication to on-campus excellence in language teaching and lifelong learning.

XJTLU’s Learning Mall will also soon gift us a physical Languages Hub at our new Taicang campus as a space dedicated to language learning for staff and students. It will be equipped with state-of-the-art VR facilities and other language learning facilities, including bring-your-own-device study stations, and is scheduled to open in 2022. In an institution that was committed to online education as mission critical before COVID-19 struck, factors that we control and others that we don’t have converged in fortuitous ways. And recently, the 2020 XJTLU Prize for Innovative Practice was awarded to two of our colleagues, Austin Pack and Alex

“XJTLU’s international students experience a blend of live online sessions, recordings, and live streaming, depending on their time zone and chosen forms of engagement.”

Barrett, who have established a VR language learning lab, developed a VR paragraph editor, and published some of their ideas and findings¹. For example, a VR program has been set up to help learners to improve cohesion and coherence in their paragraph writing. We currently have also funded projects that look into how VR technology could help students to improve their public speaking skills. Similarly, other staff have won two institutional research awards for VR-related projects. One of our main intents is to use the immersive applications currently in commercial use in professions



such as architecture – with, say, Symmetry or Truvision – to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the student learning experience in EAP while also supporting career development. For Year 1 taster lectures, designed to help students choose their degree program, immersive experiences simulating an exploration of the cosmos are ideal for introductions to physics.

Now, with the post-pandemic period still ahead of us all as a future, the main debates are arguably about the “blend,” the “mix”: How many hours of study are online? How many are live, and how many asynchronous? How many sessions take place in campus classrooms using other new technologies to ensure the highest possible standards of excellence? What can language teachers do to address the exacerbated “reticence” problems of Asian students required to participate in online classrooms? Each institution will face its own challenges and constraints. Many technologies have their place in enabling effective pedagogical responses to such challenges. Leaders must determine the most appropriate mode of delivery that is to become a “new normal.” At the same time, leaders in languages education must also consider the need for more technicians and instructional designers in order to maintain high levels of pedagogical professionalism.

For XJTLU staff, three key technologies for the future are artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and augmented reality. Artificial intelligence is already increasingly being used globally to leverage speech recognition for the time-saving assessment of students’ oral work, for start-of-year placement testing, and for self-study by students to improve pronunciation. Our aim at XJTLU is to replace commercial packages with software developed by in-house expert staff, hence the mention of technicians and instructional designers above as new hires. Virtual reality, using higher-end hardware such as Oculus Rift and HTC Vive, can be deployed to link the development of professional skills and EAP by asking students to engage, for instance, with urban planning challenges using English language just as professional planners might do. Augmented reality is being harnessed to gain the economies and benefits of scalability via mobile technologies with research into ways for vocabulary to be projected onto material objects in the student’s surroundings. In addition, language laboratory software from the Finnish company Sanako will be run across campus networks to multiply listening, interpreting, and subtitling opportunities for students to practice their language skills and for staff to catalyze new teaching-led research². For example, Modern Languages staff in Spanish, Japanese, and Chinese can use liaison and consecutive interpreting practice as vehicles for honing students’ advanced listening skills in the primary target language plus speaking skills in English at the same time. Simultaneous interpreting exercises raise the level of skills required even higher and open doorways to professional training and careers. One advantage here is financial. The cost of this type of software combined with high-end earphones is far below the cost of installing more traditional interpreting booths.

All of these developments feed the promotion of the profile acquired and earned by the global graduates that are emerging from language centers and schools in Korea, in China, and around the world. The specific contribution of language lecturers as professional teachers is inherent

in graduates’ multilingualism and agile intercultural mobility as they move between nations, and between different value systems and practices. Such linguistic and intercultural agility is a trademark of our disciplines, EAP and transnational modern languages alike.

Overall, it is worth re-emphasising that those of us who are language teaching professionals all belong to a global community of practice. That same community is constantly building transnational connections and friendships, as well as promoting intercultural cooperation and communication. Part of our responsibility is to help translate cultures, often in shifting contexts of political tensions that can veer towards polarization. Another responsibility is to share our best practices.

As we enter the third decade of the twenty-first century, head towards post-pandemic language teaching, and continue teaching about cultural differences, our professional contributions have arguably never been so important. Professional language teachers are situated right at the heart of societal change and are contributing significantly in the interests of the global public understanding of multilingualism and cultural diversity.

Footnotes

- 1 These publications include the following: (a) Pack, A., & Barrett, A. (in press). A review of virtual reality and English for academic purposes: Understanding where to start. *International Journal of Computer Assisted Language Learning and Teaching*; (b) Pack, A., Barrett, A., Hai-Ning, L., & Monteiro, D. (2020). University EAP students’ perceptions of using a prototype virtual-reality learning environment to learn writing structure. *International Journal of Computer Assisted Language Learning and Teaching*, 10(1), 27–46. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJCALLT.2020010103>
- 2 Sanako is Europe’s leading provider of language laboratory installations. They offer a system called Study 1200, which is software to run across a campus network. Every PC center on campus can then be used as a language laboratory for listening, subtitling, and interpreting activities. As language learning materials are cloud-based, students can also download a Sanako app and use their mobiles to access staff-generated materials remotely for extra practice. Many UK institutions use this system, including our partner in the UK, the University of Liverpool.

The Authors

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Collaborative Book Creation Projects

By Patrick Conaway

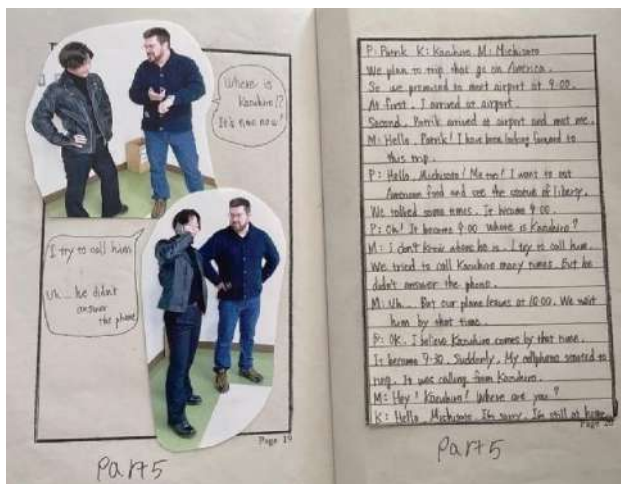
What is project work, and why use it in language classes?

Project work is used in a wide range of English teaching contexts. Hedge (1993) defines project work as “an extended task which usually integrates language skills work through a number of activities” (p. 276). She notes that some key features of project work are a focus on student group work, and sequences of activities that include student work outside the classroom and use a range of skills. Group projects have also been used in a Korean EFL university context. Kim (2015) suggests that although there can be some difficulties such as confusion regarding tasks and roles with lower-proficiency students, the benefits of student ownership of their learning and teamwork are clear. This article describes the procedures of one group project used by the author with university EFL students, following with an explanation of the rationale for various features of the project.

The Collaborative Book Creation Project

For this project, groups of four to six students worked together and independently to create short illustrated books of 800 to 1,200 words (200 words per member). The books that they created followed the format of one of two book series within their graded reader library: a fiction series where the reader’s choice determined the story outcome and a self-improvement series commonly called the “10 Ways” series by students. Over the course of six weekly lessons, students were responsible for forming their groups, setting the theme of their books, deciding individual writing tasks, proofreading, and producing illustrated final drafts. Groups were provided with a basic book template, but details of content, layout, and artwork were decided by students. Across five classes, nearly 50 books were created on a diverse range of topics. Figures 1 and 2 show the work of one group that chose to follow the self-improvement genre, but in a comical way.

At first glance, it may seem difficult for a group of students to create a book together because the various sections



▲ Figure 1. Student-Created Book Contents

need to be written in sequence. In fact, it is possible to make books in which students write various sections at the same time. Two popular series from the students’



▲ Figure 2. Student-Created Book Cover

graded reader library were chosen as models for book format: The Halico Pocket Readers contain a variety of books that show 10 ways to do various things such as achieve work–life balance or organize a trip. The Atama-ii series is a fiction series in which the reader is the main character of the story and the eight endings change depending on the reader’s choices. For both of these styles of books, it is simple for students to decide an overview of the book and set individual writing tasks. If they chose the Halico format, they wrote five ways to do something. For those who chose the Atama-ii style, students created one beginning with four endings. In addition to these main parts, students also added sections such as key words, introductions, and author profiles.

Book Creation Project Outline

A. Preparation

- Write introductory notes for students explaining the goals for the project, rubrics for grading, and a schedule of the subtasks for the project.
- Make an opinion questionnaire for students to complete regarding what type of book they would like to create and schedule availability.
- Make a storyboard handout to support students when they propose their book ideas.
- Print out storybook templates for students to paste their text and pictures into. Wordprocessing software has many options available for printing in a book format.

B. Procedure

Session 1: Getting started and making groups

1. Distribute the introductory notes for the project and give an overview of the project.
2. Students individually complete their questionnaires about what type of book they would like to make and the times they are available for group work.
3. Students interview each other using their questionnaires and take notes about students with similar interests and availability. Five to six rounds of five-minute interviews give students ample opportunities to talk with many classmates and work on their speaking fluency through repetition.

4. Students form their groups and choose one topic for their book project. At this time, students can use their L1 if necessary to speed up their group creation.
5. All students get a storyboard worksheet to complete as homework with a pictorial description of their vision for the group's book.

Session 2: Deciding book outlines

1. To practice describing their storyboards in English, students work in groups to make short scripts to describe an example storyboard of a book.
2. Students individually think about their storyboards and write a rough script to assist them in describing their ideas to their group.
3. Students go to their groups and each member presents their book project idea to the group in English while showing their storyboard.
4. Students create one final storyboard for all of their group. Although more advanced students may be able to do this in their L2, beginners may benefit from using their native language for this part.
5. Students decide which part of the final storyboard each member is responsible for writing. For homework, each member writes a rough draft of their section.

“The collaboration to achieve a challenging goal, such as creating a short book together, strengthens bonds between classmates who are just getting started in their university careers.”

Session 3: Content-focused peer review

1. Students go to their groups and read their section of the book to the group. While members are listening, they write questions and comments to share after all sections have been read.
2. Students ask questions and make comments on the book's written contents. For this section, it may be beneficial for students to use their native language to discuss ways to make their books more understandable, informative, or entertaining.
3. Students decide what type of non-written contents they want to add to their books, such as hand-drawn pictures, photos from the internet, maps, graphs, etc. For homework, students start preparing the media they want to add to their books.

Session 4: Proofreading

1. Explain several common language errors, such as tense, verb agreement, prepositions, and determiners.

2. Students go to their groups and search through their drafts for possible errors. It can be helpful to focus the groups on one type of language error at a time. During this time, the teacher can move among groups to answer specific student questions about language usage.
3. Pass out lined paper for students to transfer their corrected drafts to. By making the writing area of the paper the same size as for the final book template, it is simple for students to physically cut and paste their work into their books.

Session 5: Preparing for the exhibition

1. Students go to their groups and work on transferring their final drafts to the book template and finishing any illustrations.
2. Students submit their book templates to the teacher, who binds the individual books. I've found that stapling the pages and then covering the bound edge with book binding tape produces a good finished product.
3. Students are provided with a rubric that they will use to judge their peers' books in the following week. It is explained to them that scoring within plus or minus 20% of the teacher's score is a component of the project score. On a scale of 1 to 5, if the teacher assigned a score of 3, then student scores from 2 to 4 would be considered acceptable. This acts as a nudge to apply the rubric objectively rather than uncritically giving high scores to friends or low scores to themselves out of modesty.

Session 6: Book exhibition

1. The various books are distributed around the perimeter of the classroom and students go to their group's book.
2. Using the rubric, group members discuss and decide on a set of scores for their book.
3. Each group rotates to another station, where they read the book together, write positive comments on post-it notes, and discuss how to score the book using the rubric. Each round may require 10–15 minutes, so each group may only have a chance to view 4 or 5 books in addition to their own. During this time, the teacher can move between groups and relay positive reactions to the books. When students see their peers reading their books with interest, it helps them to realize that they have communicated effectively through their writing and brings closure to the activity.

Rationale for Collaborative Book Creation

In her study on teacher and student evaluations of project work, Beckett (2002) states that general benefits of projects may include increasing intrinsic motivation to learn, developing collaboration skills, and learning more deeply. From the perspective of language learning, she adds that project work is often seen as an opportunity for students to create comprehensible output. My view is that the collaboration to achieve a challenging goal, such as creating a short book together, strengthens bonds between classmates who are just getting started in their university careers.

The freedom of the book creation project lets the students set their creativity free and improves their attitude toward English in general. This is partially why my students create books for their projects rather than more academic reports. Many students' experiences in secondary school were limited to repetitive exercises or robotic essays

in which neither the students nor the teacher were particularly interested. When the students are focused upon moving, surprising, or entertaining their peers through their writing, they become more focused on how they use English. Students engage in languaging (Swain & Watanabe, 2013) as they actively discuss in their L1 how to best express their ideas in their L2. Also, since English was also used when planning and creating their books, students needed to use English to share and support their opinions, clarify unclear points, and negotiate towards an outcome. This practice can help them when they participate in meetings held in English for work after graduation.

Strategies for Improving Student Outcomes

Although group project work is common, so are complaints about group projects from students and teachers. Many students are concerned about group project grades: What exactly do they need to do to do well on the project? What will happen if one of the members does not do their fair share of the work? English teachers tend to worry about how much English is being used, and if the project is really using classroom time efficiently. While planning the book creation project, I tried to keep these three concerns in mind so that students could participate in a project that they understood and felt was fair, not diminishing their chances to use English.

Adjusting Project Difficulty Through Task Design

Creating a book can seem like a daunting feat. In addition to language challenges, students have to think about what steps are necessary to get to their final product. In his book outlining a rationale for task-based instruction, Skehan (1998) suggests that code (language) complexity, cognitive complexity, and communicative stress are three factors that can determine the difficulty of language learning tasks. For the project, language difficulty was managed by first reading books similar in format. In this way, students could familiarize themselves with both the book formats and useful vocabulary before starting the project. Meanwhile, breaking the project into weekly tasks eased the cognitive complexity of coordinating work. By having a pre-set schedule with concrete tasks to complete each week, the students could focus on their projects rather than spending energy on deciding amongst themselves what needed to be done next.

Fairness in Grading

Another common worry about group projects is that other students' lack of participation or poor performance can negatively affect their grades. Students who put a great deal of effort into a project may resent group members who do not contribute as much to the project. Also, students who have good proficiency in English may do work for less proficient peers to avoid mistakes in the final product. To deal with this, I placed greater weight upon individual completion of preparation tasks compared with that of the finished book. I believe placing priority on the preparation helped those who actively worked on the project to feel that their work was being recognized. It also may have helped students with lower language proficiency to contribute, as the accuracy and sophistication of the language used in the final product was not given as much weight as actively participating.

Maximizing L2 Use

To increase the use of English during weekly project

work sessions, I used portions of Willis' (1996) task sequence model. In this model, easy tasks based on receptive skills such as answering questionnaires are used to prepare students for their target task, while post-task reports to the class or teacher provide a form of accountability. In the book creation project, pre-tasks such as answering questionnaires about book genre interest helped to provide the students with language they could subsequently use while interviewing classmates to recruit members for their group. Support tasks such as the questionnaire reduced the difficulty of using English for the task by providing useful language for the task and by providing a chance to organize their thoughts. Meanwhile, individually written progress reports submitted at the end of each session provided students with a nudge to use more English. Even if students had resorted to using their L1 for decision-making during the task, writing the reports prevented them from falling into a pattern of using increasingly more L1 each session.

Conclusion

Group project work can provide students with ample opportunities to use their L2, and creating short books together is one viable option. With adequate support and accountability, students can use their L2 for the planning of their projects as well as the final execution. Although each student's contribution to their book may be short, creating the continuity of a book requires them to consider how their writing fits with other sections of the book. In classes using extensive reading, creating simple books together can also familiarize students with the graded readers in their library.

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The Author

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Member Spotlight: Bryan Hale

You may have seen him around. When he's not teaching at his school in Yeongam, you might run into him participating in a Reflective Practice SIG event, or leading a chapter meeting, or participating in and presenting at a KOTESOL conference. Bryan Hale has been a common sight around KOTESOL for years, and that common sight has just become more prominent as he is now the newly elected president of Korea TESOL. This issue, *The English Connection* shines its spotlight on KOTESOL's new leader and lifetime member, Bryan Hale, in this interview. — Ed.

TEC: Thank you, Bryan, for agreeing to do this interview for *The English Connection*. Would you begin by giving us a little background information about yourself – where you're from, what you did there, why you came to Korea, etc.?

Bryan: Thank you for having me. It's exciting to appear in TEC! Before coming to Korea, I had an office job in Sydney, Australia, which required me to listen to talkback radio all day long. We probably don't have time for me to explain what the job actually was, but suffice it to say that it was pretty isolating and unfulfilling. So, like a lot of foreign English teachers, I came to Korea in search of an exciting year abroad, and quickly discovered that I'm passionate about our profession.

TEC: You've been teaching in a rural high school as part of JLP (Jeollanamdo Language Program), the province's version of EPIK, for the past few years. What attracted you to and what keeps you in that position?

Bryan: After returning to Australia for a little while to work on my master's degree, I jumped at the opportunity to apply for JLP. I already had strong connections in Gwangju and wanted to come back to the area, and JLP has a history of valuing experience and expertise a bit more than some other employers of NETs. At my school, I enjoy smaller class sizes and stronger connections with students than I could in a lot of other positions.

TEC: Teaching in an all-boy's high school must have its challenges. What are the biggest challenges that you face compared to teaching, say, young learners or university students?

Bryan: I actually think a focus on English conversation in high school makes a lot of sense and presents some great opportunities. I enjoy teaching teenagers because they still have some of the playfulness and spontaneity of childhood, but they're also developing a strong sense of self and motivation. Many of my students already have particular career paths in mind and can see specific needs for English in their future. With high schools introducing more elective options – including subjects like "Career English" and "English-Speaking Culture" – and moving, slowly, towards more humanistic, holistic education practices, I think now is a great time to grow English conversation programs in high schools.

However, the biggest challenge remains the *suneung* [수능, university entrance exam], and the prevalence of suneung-style testing and Grammar-Translation Method

teaching. It's really frustrating to see learners put their successes in developing communicative competence in English aside in order to focus on rote prep. It's really frustrating to see students come out the other side of the suneung with less real, embodied knowledge than they had previously. It's distressing to see the amount of pain and trauma that suneung-style testing causes, especially given that it actually does damage to learners' education.

This is a professional challenge because suneung-prep-style education is a "deep attractor" – a really worn-in, stable system that is difficult to move away from. It seems like every new initiative designed to move towards more communicative teaching winds up with the Grammar-Translation Method springing right back into place and continuing unabated. Optimistically, maybe this is not only a challenge, but also an opportunity to have discussions about teaching with more of an explicit focus on pedagogy and purpose.

TEC: How has the advent of the coronavirus affected you and your teaching?

Bryan: When we moved to online teaching, I was worried about whether I'd be able to do interactive lessons. Many of our students didn't have access to Zoom or didn't feel comfortable using it. I ended up teaching my classes in a text-based chatroom in Band, which was an experience! But I was grateful to be able to run live, communicative activities in some form. I'm more grateful to be back in the real classroom, though!

TEC: Would you explain when and how you got involved in KOTESOL?



Bryan: I first attended the KOTESOL International Conference in 2012 and was excited to discover such a panoply of ELT people, ideas, and resources. It was like a lifeline, given that I felt a real lack of focus on professional development in my position at the time. I started attending chapter meetings, and later on, in Gwangju, got more and more involved at the chapter level as well as with the Reflective Practice Special Interest Group.

TEC: A major aim of KOTESOL is to promote the professional development of its members. Has KOTESOL done much for you in this area?

Bryan: As I mentioned, I discovered KOTESOL at a time when I was feeling professionally frustrated. I sensed a lack of attention to real learning and student-centered education in the position I was in, but at the same time, I was discovering how passionate I was about teaching. Getting involved in KOTESOL – first by attending workshops, and then later sometimes presenting in them, and helping to organize things behind the scenes – has helped me to take control of my professional growth and feel more confident in focusing on the things I think are important.

TEC: You are currently winding up a term as president of the Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter. Would you tell us what the main activities and/or projects of the chapter have been during your presidency, and also how the spread of COVID-19 has affected the activities of the chapter?

Bryan: Gwangju-Jeonnam is a vibrant, engaged chapter, and in “the before time,” we were continuing the chapter’s great tradition of holding workshops every single month. This year it has been wonderful to see our local Reflective Practice group continue to hold monthly meetings and also to see various chapters holding online events open to all. But it has also been tricky to plan online events this year. I think many teachers are overwhelmed by the amount of online everything that they’ve been having to do, and it seems the dynamics we all face in our various teaching contexts keep shifting dramatically. Actually, I’m looking forward to reflecting on and growing from all the events of this year, with the support of our PD community in Gwangju-Jeonnam. I think that reflection and growth might take a little while to unfurl, and it might still be part of how we’re supporting each other when we can return to in-person events.

TEC: As KOTESOL’s new president, what will your priorities be? What would you like to see KOTESOL doing in the coming months and years?

Bryan: Supporting our members as we come out of the pandemic will obviously be a priority in my term. KOTESOL has been doing some really innovative online stuff, and I want to make sure we are championing

the people in our organization making that happen. And as we return to in-person events, we will have valuable opportunities to revisit and reflect on the professional development landscape in Korea. ELT professionals in Korea are more diverse than ever before. More non-Koreans are coming to Korea with more expertise, staying in Korea longer, and forging all kinds of unique ELT careers. The expertise of Korean English teachers, too, is changing, and Korean English teachers have a lot of options when it comes to professional development. But I hope we can appeal to everybody in Korean ELT by providing networking opportunities and exchanges of ideas in ways that are relevant to particular contexts, needs, and collaborative endeavors. KOTESOL members really have a lot to offer – not only to each other but to all the learning communities we are a part of, and to our whole profession.

TEC: Looking into your crystal ball, what do you see Bryan Hale doing in the not-so-distant future, and beyond?

Bryan: I think, like a lot of people, I’m finding my crystal ball a bit fogged up by COVID-19 right now! I love being in the classroom, and I want to continue that. I also recently completed a Master of Applied Linguistics (TESOL), and developing further as an action researcher could be worthwhile. Maybe I’ll have some more concrete answers to this question a year from now!

TEC: Thank you, Bryan. We wish you the best in your position as KOTESOL president and in your teaching in the year to come.

(Interviewed by David Shaffer)



▲ Bryan participating in a workshop at Day of Reflection 2019.

Re-envisioning the International Conference

By Michael Free, Chair, 28th Annual Korea TESOL International Conference

"This is not what I signed up for," he says, muttering to himself.

I'm sure I've not been the only one muttering since COVID-19 arrived. Our social and work lives have been turned upside-down and inside-out. With respect to KOTESOL, my chapter (Gangwon) had to rethink a few things, while my work as chair of the Teacher of the Year Committee didn't change at all. My role as chair of the International Conference (IC), though, ended up being completely transformed once we decided to go entirely online.

When I decided to run for the position, I had a good deal of experience with conferences: I'd planned and presented quite a bit at the local and national levels, including being chair of one national conference and program chair of another. More important than my individual qualifications was the fact that there were both a team and a process in place. The team was built around a number of people who had been filling key roles for years (and in at least one case, decades), providing a stable core to the many helpful and necessary volunteers who came and went from year to year. The process was also well established: Dates would change, and there would be a new theme, but at the deeper level, matters such as the vetting process and venue set up were well understood. No longer. Once we committed to an online conference, both team and process went, at least for me, from known quantities to question marks and "maybes" with a lot of empty spaces.

I honestly wasn't sure I could do it. But just as I figured out how to move my teaching online (still a work in progress, to be sure), I read, searched out experienced colleagues (some regulars, others new), talked to regular conference attendees, and most of all, watched what other organizations were doing online (from ExcitELT to JALT). There's still a lot to do, and we have some spots to fill, but we've got some momentum now, and this conference is shaping up to not only be a rapid-response effort, but an absolute cracker of an event!

One thing that is for certain is our theme: Re-envisioning ELT Altogether, All Together. "Envisioning" is the only word that remains, and it's in a different context due to the addition of the *re-* prefix. As I've remarked elsewhere, and many of you are doubtlessly aware, there seems to be a desire to rethink ELT on a fundamental level: in terms of



the place of English(es) in the world, of who "qualifies" to be a member of this profession, and even the question of whether ELT is a profession. Even teaching itself is being reconsidered at its core: How do we make classes more hospitable places for students, mitigate if not eliminate inequities, and leverage the enormous potential that our students as unique individuals bring to our classrooms. The final three words of the theme express our belief

that if we are to truly "re-envision ELT," we will need to listen to each other and work together.

Overview

Theme: *Re-envisioning ELT Altogether, All Together*

Dates: February 19–28, 2021

Platforms: Zoom, Discord, and Padlet (plus some others)

Highlights

- A keynote address to prompt, provoke, and inspire!
- Multiple streams of synchronous and asynchronous interaction
- More panels, including the Chair's Panel: "Native" and "Non-native" Professionals in ELT
- A revamped Graduate Student Showcase
- More poster presentations
- More international participation
- More student participation



**RE-ENVISIONING ELT
ALTOGETHER, ALL TOGETHER
FEBRUARY 19-28, 2021
ZOOM / DISCORD / PADLET / +**

<https://koreatesol.org/ic2021>

The theme is different. The team is different. What isn't different is that KOTESOL will once again provide participants with a professional development event that will be among the best in ELT!

"This is what I signed up for," he says, still muttering, now with a resolute nod.

Book Review

Young Learner EFL: A Little Guide to Teaching Tots and Tikes

By Ricky Law (Amazon Kindle, 2020)

Reviewed by John Burrill

Ricky Law began his teaching career as an EFL teacher in his twenties when he moved to Japan and started teaching at a large English school chain. Since his first position, he has worked for a variety of educational organizations including nursery schools, kindergartens, and private children's English conversation schools. Although he admits he struggled when he first entered the classroom, he has refined his practice and now believes that teaching young learners is "the best job in the world" (p. 69).

In *Young Learner EFL: A Little Guide to Teaching Tots and Tikes*, Law wants the reader to gain an appreciation for teaching young learners in a foreign country. He emphasizes that it can be a rewarding experience, but it also comes with a list of challenges for a new teacher. Many of the teaching points Law addresses in *Young Learner EFL* can be applied to any ESL classroom around the globe. This book is, however, aimed at afterschool programs and language classes outside of the traditional school setting. Ultimately, Law has produced a book for readers who are new to the idea of teaching internationally and who want to gain a better understanding of how to begin a career as an international EFL teacher working with children.

In this book, Law allows the reader to move through the book in multiple ways, reading the chapters that they find most important. He covers class management strategies by examining classroom logistics, rules, and expected behaviors. He describes student behavioral types and discusses the do's and don'ts of remedying undesirable behaviors. Law continues with topics on classroom flow, transitions, energy management, lesson planning, activities, and games to play with young EFL learners. In all, the book covers many aspects of teaching EFL in a foreign country through a topical approach that gives the reader a rather detailed account of what to expect as a new foreign language teacher.

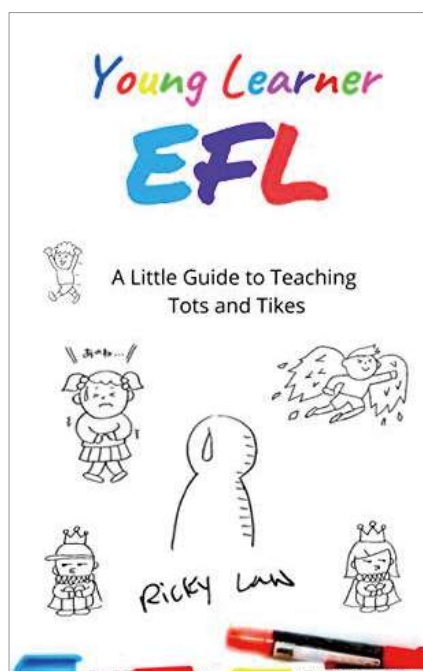
Law supports his findings through his work experiences in English language schools throughout Japan. Although his conclusions are based on personal experience, a great deal of the information provided in his book actually holds true with my own experiences teaching abroad. For the most part, I think his classroom suggestions are very useful and practical. One example, however, that Law describes as "astonishing" is a technique that I do not believe is a good practice to use with young learners. On page 33 in the section on "Classroom Requests and Manners," Law explains the use of a red tape. In the example, he describes his experience in a colleague's classroom where a strip of red tape was placed across the floor of the doorway. According to Law, this tape was used as a management tool that students had to ask to cross before entering or exiting the classroom. Although this may encourage students to practice manners and relevant vocabulary when asking to enter and leave the room, I believe that it does not create a welcoming environment or help to build a sense of community. Although this particular activity does not match

my teaching style, one strong point of this book is the sheer variety of activities that the author presents. Readers will find many activities that they will be able to adapt to their own classrooms.

Law has structured the book from some of the most challenging aspects of working with young learners, namely, classroom management, to the more technical side of lesson planning, including specific classroom activities. He presents his findings in a somewhat humorous way with comical sketches that many teachers would find amusing. The topic of Law's book that I enjoyed reading the most was the section that describes "Student Types and How to Deal with Them." This information, along with the sketches, gives

an excellent representation of the variety of student behaviors that a new teacher is likely to encounter when working with young learners.

I believe that *Young Learner EFL: A Little Guide to Teaching Tots and Tikes* would be an excellent choice for any new teacher considering moving abroad and experiencing the world of English



language instruction. It is an especially good book for those who might end up teaching young children. Covering the most important topics and issues that an EFL teacher will face in the classroom, *Young Learner EFL* includes personal anecdotes to help new teachers move seamlessly into their new role. More importantly, this book provides a glimpse into the possibilities of working internationally and promotes the joy that working with young learners can bring to anyone wishing to embark on a similar journey.

The Author

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The Brain Connection



Nondependent Learners: Adults Coming Back to School

By Dr. Curtis Kelly

Did you ever walk into one of your college English classes on the first day, look over your students, and find one who was much older? It makes for an awkward class, doesn't it? Your usual style is direct, strict, and demanding, as all traditional pedagogy is. You might come down hard on a 19-year-old who did not do her homework, but that doesn't seem right for your 50-year-old. You feel a dissonance, and rightly so.

In fact, a lot of college teachers in the U.S. felt the same dissonance in the 1980s, when a large number of adults started entering their classes. Here is how it happened:

From looking at the U.S. demographic curve (similar to Korea's in 2010), experts predicted a 40% decline in college enrollments in the 1980s (Kerr, 1979, p. 2). They based this judgment on the decrease in births after the baby boom and the fact that young people were less interested in school. As it turned out, they were completely wrong. From 1972 to 1994, university enrollments went up an astounding 36%. Two-year colleges, which were initially expected to suffer the most, did even better. Their enrollments almost doubled, going from 2.8 million in 1972 to 5.5 million in 1994 (Jones, 1996). How could those experts have been so wrong? They did not factor in the huge number of adults that would flock back to school because of job insecurity. By 1986, over 30% of the students in higher education were 25 or older (Parnell, 1990), and by 1996, adults comprised 43.5% of all part-time and full-time students in American colleges (NCES, 1997).

No one was ready for this boom, and most college teachers taught these incoming adults the same way that they taught regular students: in the traditional, directive fashion. It didn't work, and dropout rates reached up to 50% (Knowles, 1990). So, this problem stimulated a new area of research, adult education, and one of the leaders in the field, Malcolm Knowles, identified how adults have a different psychological profile:

1. Adults are non-dependent learners.

First of all, the most important difference in adult

learners is their higher level of maturity. They prefer to be self-directed, non-dependent learners (Knowles, 1990). They might come into your classroom thinking they should act like younger learners, giving the teacher total control, but that is a misplaced assumption. Unless the subject area is completely unknown to them, adult learners tend to feel uneasy by being directed. As a result, they do not always respond well to our traditional methods: the lecture-test format, Q-A instead of discussion, fixed report topics, and so on.

The Takeaway

The key here, then, is letting adult learners make their own decisions whenever possible. Forgo the teacher-centered approach and opt for personalization, flexibility, and empowering them to shape their own study, and even their own criteria for assessment. Think of yourself as a coach, or co-learner, rather than a teacher. In fact, rather than "student and teacher," the preferred terminology in adult education is "learner and facilitator."

2. Adults are already out in the world.

Adults have a reason for preferring control. Whereas education for younger learners is oriented towards preparing them to live in the adult world, adult learners are already in it. They have careers, families, and real-world problems to solve. They hope that going back to school will help them solve those problems, so they tend to be life-centered and problem-centered. Newlyweds want to learn about interpersonal communication and child-raising; company employees want to learn about marketing and international tax laws; retirees want to learn about money management and healthcare.

The Takeaway

Since adults prefer learning that helps solve the problems thrown at them by life, they are goal-centered in their orientation towards learning. They want to see how their studies apply to their lives, so whenever possible, learning should be oriented towards real-life situations. For example, adults are much more likely to sign up for a course called "Writing Better Business Letters" than "Composition 1."

Our own conference-going is a good example of how adults use education to solve real problems. If I am struggling with my composition class, I will attend presentations on writing instruction and skip those on grammar, reading, or speaking instruction, even though I know far less about those other subjects.

So, how do we help adults connect the class subject matter to their own lives? One answer, and something we rarely do, is to include time for discussion. "Discuss what you should do if you can't understand what an English speaker is saying." "How would you ask someone from Canada to join you for lunch?" The discussion will almost certainly veer off into "war stories," as they bring in their own experiences (and sometimes you have to intervene), but this is how they amalgamate their new skills into their real-world situations. Educators like Knowles (1990) think that discussion should be the core of the class plan.

In classes where discussion is hard to do, reflection can get the same results: "Write down three situations in your life where you might use this language."

3. Adult learner motivation is intrinsic.

Since adult learners are actively trying to find ways to improve their lives, they are motivated by personal payoff. It follows then, that extrinsic, top-down motivators, like testing, scoring, and scolding, might not always be received well. Adult learners appreciate being treated like adults.

Related to the above, I once had an epiphany in an adult education course I was taking. I had to fly to Phoenix, Arizona, to take this one particular class. I had planned to arrive a day early to finish a paper, but to my horror, I was bumped off my scheduled flight and had to spend the night in the airport. I rushed to the class as soon as I arrived, but without my paper. When I started to explain to the teacher why I had not done it yet, she stopped me and said, "You are an adult. You have reasons for not doing your paper, and I don't need to hear them. Instead, just tell me when you are going to get it done."

What a valuable experience that was! She not only made me realize that I was acting like an immature, dependent learner, she also taught me the important principle of fostering horizontal rather than vertical relationships with adult learners. I sometimes repeat her very words to my own 3rd- and 4th-year college students.

A Finish with a Turn

After Malcolm Knowles wrote about how adults learn, a strange thing happened: Teachers of traditional students, even those teaching children, started telling him that those same techniques worked in their teaching environments as well (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998). It seems that all students prefer

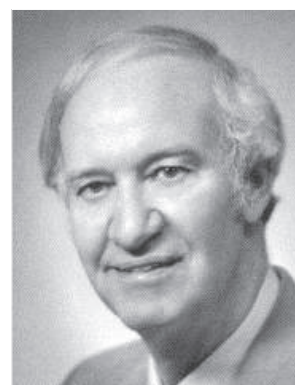
study that is life-centered, offers opportunities for discussion, and uses a problem-based learning approach. Younger learners might be weaker at self-direction, with less real-world experience to connect their learning to, but the same principles still apply.

So now, no matter who I teach, I try to use personalization and a learner-centered coaching approach. It is not always easy, but when it works, it opens doors to tremendous rewards. Malcolm Knowles found them too. He wrote about how he changed after becoming an adult educator:

"My self-concept had changed from teacher to facilitator of learning. I saw my role shifting from content transmitter to process manager and – only secondarily – content resource.

"In the second place, I experienced myself as adopting a different system of psychic rewards. I had replaced getting my rewards from controlling students with getting my rewards from releasing students. And I found the latter rewards much more satisfying.

"Finally, I found myself performing a different set of functions that required a different set of skills. Instead of performing the function of content planner and transmitter, which required primarily presentation skills, I was performing the function of process designer and manager, which required relationship building, needs assessment, involvement of students in planning, linking students to learning resources, and encouraging student initiative.



▲ Malcolm Knowles

"I have never been tempted since then to revert to the role of teacher." (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998, p. 253)

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The Reflection Connection

Overcoming “The Imposter Syndrome” Through Reflective Practice

By Dr. Thomas S.C. Farrell



I almost always feel like I'm "playing teacher." I'm in the middle of my 6th year, and I legit feel like a phony so much of the time. My colleagues look like they have it all together. I'm so glad to see I'm not alone in this!! (8th Grade teacher, Language Arts, U.S.)

Introduction

Teachers, regardless of how many years they have been teaching, can suffer from a kind of professional identity crisis that involves the teacher feeling like an imposter. As the quote above suggests, many teachers reveal that they are “playing the role” of teacher, but do not really feel that they are real teachers. This is called the “imposter phenomenon” in general psychology, or the “imposter syndrome” in teaching. For teachers, such imposter type feelings never really go away, and I suspect a lot more TESOL teachers also “suffer” in silence and possibly without being aware of why they have such a debilitating feeling of being inadequate as a teacher. However, I believe that teachers who continuously engage in reflective practice can not only better understand these largely undeserved feelings but can also brush off any such feelings throughout their career because they know they are making informed decisions throughout their practice.

The Imposter Syndrome

“Impostorism” and impostor fears generally describe the psychological state of people who think of themselves as intellectual frauds, and as a result, have a fear of being exposed as such. The

“imposter phenomenon” in psychology, or feelings of intellectual phoniness, generally “strikes” successful people as being unable to handle and internalize their success. Indeed, we may be surprised to learn that famous and influential people we are familiar with as public icons have experienced feelings of inadequacy, even though they are famous and fully established, such as Academy Award winner Kate Winslet, who has noted that when she wakes up each morning before going off to a shoot, she said she thinks, “I can’t do this. I’m a fraud.” Alan Dye, who was vice president of Apple, has noted that he was scared “that at some point I [was] going to get found out.” (Shorten, 2013).

People (some say up to 70% of the public have experienced some episode of the imposter feelings) who experience the imposter phenomenon generally worry that they may be exposed as a fraud at any time, and as a result, feel distressed that the achievements they may have acquired are largely undeserved (Gravois, 2007). I should point out that an “imposter” is not a perfectionist because psychologists tell us that perfectionists usually do not tell anyone about their mistakes because they fear that telling them will cast them as being imperfect. On the other hand, although they also fear to appear imperfect, imposters are nonetheless more open in voicing their self-perception of feelings of inadequacy to others. The problem is, however, that the imposter syndrome disrupts the psychological well-being of individuals who suffer from it because they always feel they need to be special or the very best. As a result, they experience fearful feelings of failure because they will deny their own competence. If they experience any success, they will probably

deny it and/or feel guilty about it and discount any praise they may receive.

The good news is that the imposter phenomenon is not a pathological disease. Although it can be damaging and self-destructive, it can also be overcome with a better understanding of its nature. Perhaps we all suffer from feelings of being inadequate at different times in our lives, but when these become more frequent, we can feel that we are going to get found out in some way at some time. In other words, we will always be looking over our shoulders. When we experience such feelings as teachers, and we similarly always feel that we are looking over our shoulders, then tensions between our philosophy, principles, theories, and teaching practices will erupt. Our students, if they do not pick up on these, will suffer from not having the most optimal opportunities to learn. Because teachers of all experience levels are sometimes vulnerable, and as a result may be prone to the imposter syndrome, engaging in reflective practice becomes all too important for TESOL teachers of all levels of experience throughout their careers.

TESOL teachers can collaboratively use the framework for reflecting on practice (Farrell, 2015), which encourages them to examine their philosophy, principles, theory, and practice, and critically reflect beyond practice. Such collaborations can be facilitated in TESOL teacher education programs and the early years of teaching in different contexts (see Farrell, 2021) through mentoring. In addition, the use of critical friends groups, team teaching, and peer coaching, along with providing them with such reflective tools as writing, dialogue, engaging in action research, and making use of whatever technology can help them develop a reflective stance during their teaching career (Farrell, 2018, 2019).

Conclusion

The imposter syndrome can be very disruptive if not fully understood for what it is. Thus, a greater awareness of the imposter syndrome through self-reflection with other teachers (perhaps in

the KOTESOL RP-SIGs) using the framework for reflecting on practice can help TESOL teachers better minimize its impact, thus preparing them better for how to deal with any perceived feelings of inadequacy or failure throughout their teaching careers. We do not have to let the imposter syndrome control our thoughts or actions as long as we understand what it is and where it comes from, and constantly engage in reflecting on our practice. As one experienced ESL teacher in Canada wrote in an email to me in response to a workshop I gave on reflective practice:

There were moments in my teaching until now where I've done something because that's the way I've always done it...but without really questioning what was going on! Before, I always felt like there was something missing, and I felt like I was faking it. But I know that I won't be faking it anymore. I'll be reflecting on more things.



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