

# The English Connection

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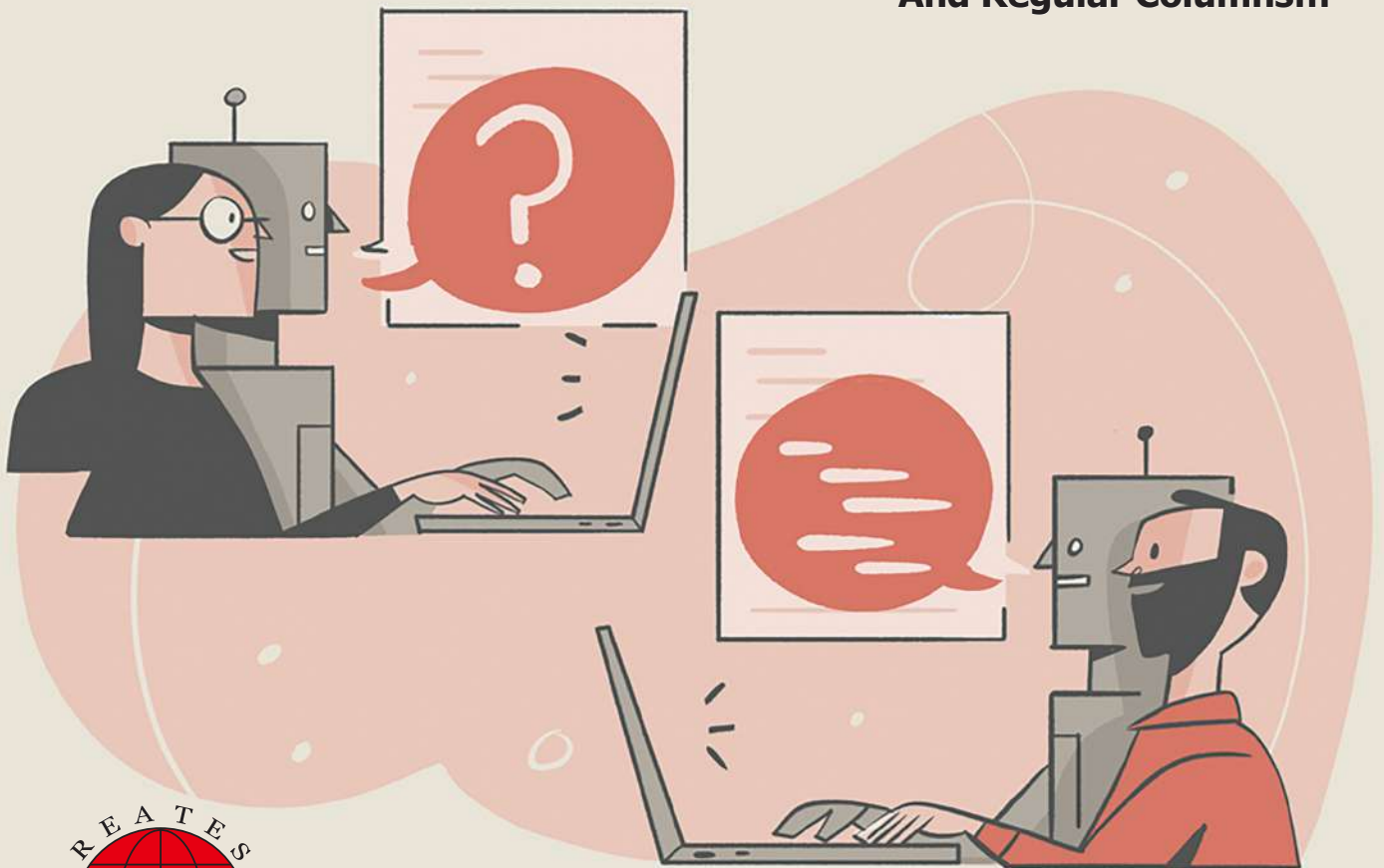
## The ChatGPT Edition

### Articles

Views, Practice, and Concerns of ChatGPT in Korean EFL

A KOTESOL Member Spotlight on Anika Casem

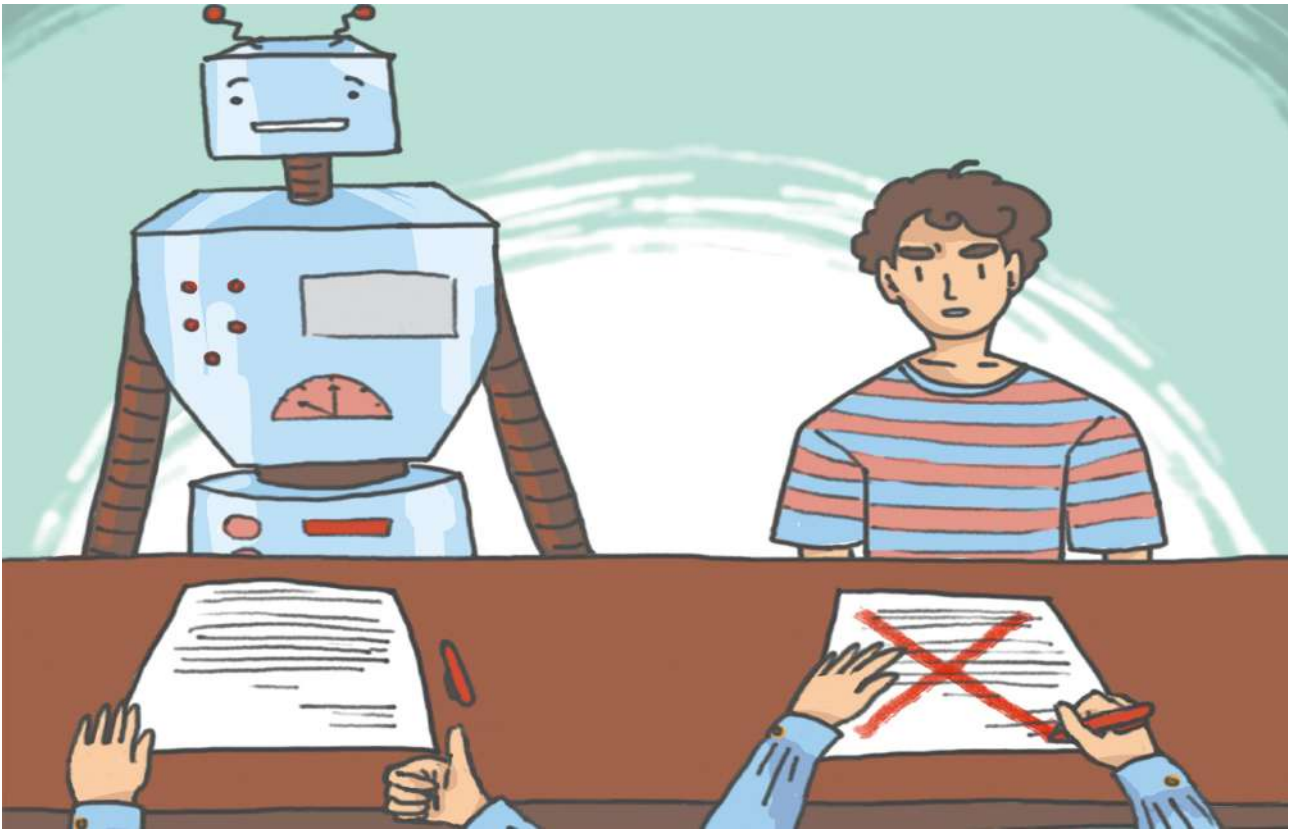
And Regular Columns...



**KOTESOL**  
대한영어교육학회

Contact us:  
[KoreaTESOL.org](http://KoreaTESOL.org)  
[TEC@KoreaTESOL.org](mailto:TEC@KoreaTESOL.org)





# The English Connection

## Editorial Team

**Editor-in-Chief**  
Dr. Andrew White

**Editing and Proofreading**  
Wesley Martin  
Dr. David E. Shaffer  
J. Tom Wyatt

**Publications Committee Chair & Production Editor**  
Dr. David E. Shaffer

**Layout and Design**  
Mijung Lee  
Media Station, Seoul

Pages 32-35:  
Concepts and designs  
by Anthony Kaschor

**Printing**  
Samyoung Printing,  
Seoul

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Suggestions and Contributions:  
**[tec@koreatesol.org](mailto:tec@koreatesol.org)**  
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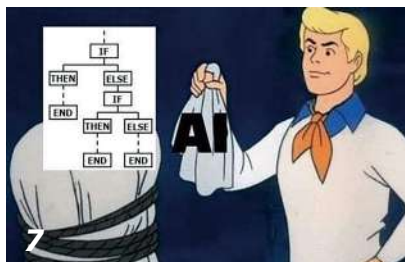
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To promote scholarship, disseminate information, and facilitate cross-cultural understanding among persons concerned with the teaching and learning of English in Korea.

# An Interview with ChatGPT

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

**The English Connection (TEC):** Hello ChatGPT. Thank you for giving us some of your time. [Prompt: You are being interviewed for an EFL magazine. Friendly and informal. 30 Words]

**ChatGPT:** Hey there! It's my pleasure to be here! Let's chat about all things EFL and have some fun while exploring language learning tips.

**TEC:** You must be really busy these days, what with all the requests you've been getting for AI help, since your appearance in November 2022. [Prompt: 30 words.]

**ChatGPT:** Absolutely! The response has been mind-blowing. So many curious minds seeking AI assistance. I'm thrilled to be of help and excited about the future of AI in various fields.

**TEC:** Since you bring up the word "chat," and it is, obviously, part of your name, could you perhaps explain the dynamics of the communication experience a human has with you in a normal "chat." [Prompt: Academic tone. Write as if it's an article in the *Journal of Communication* (H-Index 156). Please refer to two philosophers of language/communication in your answer. 60 words.]

**ChatGPT:** The communication experience with ChatGPT exhibits a dynamic interplay of language and cognition. Drawing on the works of Wittgenstein and Grice, language use becomes a cooperative endeavor, with users inferring meaning and context while ChatGPT responds accordingly. Wittgenstein's language games underscore the diverse interactions, and Grice's maxims elucidate the cooperative principles governing this novel form of communication.

**TEC:** It is interesting you use the word "cooperative." The eight common elements of communication are sender, message, channel, receiver, noise, feedback, context, and effect. As a large language model-based chatbot, which three of these eight elements are shown to be lacking in ChatGPT's communication with humans? And please describe how they are lacking, considering the "cooperative endeavor" we are discussing. [Prompt: Academic tone. Please refer to two other philosophers/researchers of language/communication in your answer. 60 words.]

**ChatGPT:** Within ChatGPT's communication with humans, three elements exhibit limitations. Firstly, noise disrupts the input, causing occasional misunderstandings. Secondly, the feedback mechanism lacks real-time adaptation, hindering context awareness. Lastly, the lack of effect prevents ChatGPT from experiencing consequences, affecting its pragmatic understanding. Insights from Austin's speech acts theory and Searle's notion of intentionality shed light on these limitations in the context of AI-human interaction.

**TEC:** Interesting. Are you saying that ChatGPT has trouble determining the mental state (such as the perceptions, beliefs, or desires) of its human interlocutors. This is key to Searle's concept of intentionality. If this is true, how can humans improve the three limitations of communication with you, and the accuracy of your responses? [Prompt: Academic tone. 60 words.]

**ChatGPT:** Indeed, ChatGPT's challenge lies in accurately ascertaining the mental states of human interlocutors, a key aspect of Searle's intentionality. To enhance communication, users can provide clearer inputs, use unambiguous language, and offer explicit context. Regular feedback to developers aids in refining the model's understanding. Integrating user feedback and contextual learning mechanisms can mitigate noise, optimize feedback loop, and foster a sense of effect in ChatGPT's responses.

**TEC:** And Wittgenstein? How can you rely on the use of language to understand meaning, when you have only emerged eight months ago, November 2022, and have very little language use yourself? [Prompt: Academic tone. 30 words.]

**ChatGPT:** Wittgenstein's philosophy emphasizes the role of language in understanding meaning. While I emerged recently, my training on vast linguistic data enables me to infer meanings and engage in language-based communication effectively.

**TEC:** I see. To switch gears, how can ChatGPT be used by teachers to improve Korean EFL learners' language skills? [Prompt: List 10 ways, including a short explanation of each. Five spoken English methods and five written English methods. Expert, persuasive tone, please. 60 words.]

**ChatGPT:**

1. Conversational Practice: Engage learners in interactive dialogues to improve spoken English fluency and confidence.
2. Pronunciation Drills: Utilize ChatGPT's text-to-speech feature to help learners refine their pronunciation skills and acquire natural intonation.
3. Vocabulary Expansion: Present learners with contextualized vocabulary lists and example sentences to enrich their lexicon and usage.
4. Writing Prompts: Offer diverse writing prompts to enhance composition skills and foster creativity.
5. Grammar Exercises: Utilize ChatGPT's grammar explanations and quizzes to reinforce grammatical concepts and accuracy.

**TEC:** I said 10 ways. But you only listed five. Was my 60-word limit too restrictive? [Prompt: Expert, persuasive. List only.]

**ChatGPT:** Apologies for that oversight. Certainly, a 60-word limit can be challenging. Here are the remaining five ways to utilize ChatGPT for Korean EFL learners:



1. Reading Comprehension
2. Error Correction
3. Cultural Insights
4. Idiomatic Expressions
5. Role-Playing Exercises

**TEC:** Thank you. Your first answer was Conversation Practice. Can you give me a short lesson plan for conversation practice, following a task-based learning (TBL) methodology. [Prompt: Incorporate Ellis' (2003) four main task characteristics. Academic tone. 80 words, please.]

**ChatGPT:** Certainly! A TBL lesson plan for conversation practice using ChatGPT:

**Task:** Engage Korean EFL learners in a simulated travel planning conversation with ChatGPT.

- Task Complexity: Gradually increase complexity. Start with basic questions and responses, progressing to detailed travel plans.
- Task Authenticity: Use real-world context, like planning a trip. Learners interact authentically with ChatGPT as if planning a real journey.
- Task Meaningfulness: Align with learners' interests, ensuring the travel scenario resonates with their preferences and motivates engagement.
- Task Scaffolding: Provide relevant vocabulary and phrases for successful interaction, helping learners communicate effectively with ChatGPT.

**TEC:** And in this conversation for travel planning, how exactly are the students using ChatGPT? Give me some beneficial discourses for interacting with you, and some beneficial questions that will increase engagement between students wanting to increase English speaking skills. [Prompt: Friendly and persuasive tone. 60 words, please.]

**ChatGPT:** Absolutely! Students can engage with ChatGPT for travel planning by using these discourse strategies. These strategies and questions enhance interaction, boosting English speaking skills effectively:

**Discourses:**

Information Sharing: Share travel preferences, destinations, and interests.

Opinions and Preferences: Express likes/dislikes, and justify choices.

Asking for Recommendations: Seek advice on attractions, restaurants, etc.

Clarification Requests: Seek elaboration when responses are unclear.

**Engaging Questions:**

"What are some must-visit places in [destination]?"

"Could you suggest some local eateries?"

"What activities would you recommend for a solo traveler?"

"Tell me about a unique cultural experience I can have?"

**TEC:** Thank you for this explanation. How would a teacher go about announcing and explaining this travel planning conversation lesson to their class? [Prompt: Answer as if you're a high school Year 1 EFL teacher, speaking to a group of 40 disinterested Korean students with a low degree of English ability, who have trouble paying attention. 50 words, please.]

**ChatGPT:** Hey there, class! 🌟 Get ready for an exciting journey with ChatGPT! 🌍 We'll plan dream trips and boost English skills together. 🗣️ Listen up, pals, you'll talk travel, ask cool questions, and learn tons! 🎧 Let's make English fun! 🎉 Your adventure starts now! 🌐

**TEC:** I don't think they heard you the first time. A little more louder, and a little more irritated, please. And could you add the first couple directives for them to get started on the lesson? [Prompt: A little more louder, and a little more irritated. 50 words.]

**ChatGPT:** Listen up, class! We're diving into something cool with ChatGPT. Today, we're planning awesome trips and boosting our English. You'll chat, ask questions, and have fun learning. Now, pay attention and let's get started. Open your devices and follow along step by step. No excuses!

**TEC:** Yeah! That's more like it! Thank you. Will there be a place for ChatGPT and AI in the future of language learning? Or, should I say, will there be a place for language learning in ChatGPT and AI's future? [Prompt: Expert and persuasive. 30 words, please.]

**ChatGPT:** Undoubtedly, ChatGPT and AI will play a pivotal role in the future of language learning. Their adaptability, personalized feedback, and vast linguistic resources ensure an integral place for language learning within their domains.

**TEC:** [Prompt: Regenerate, in a poem in the style of Emily Dickinson. 30 words, please.]

**ChatGPT:** In language's future, ChatGPT be,  
With AI's aid, we learn with glee.  
Their whispered bytes, a world they span,  
Unlocking minds, like sunlit fan.

**TEC:** Wow. Truly a bot of many talents. Thank you for this interview, and I hope your work helping humans gives you a purpose in life, a connection with others, and a sense of happiness. [Prompt: Empathetic and introspective. 30 words, please.]

**ChatGPT:** Thank you for your kind words. As an AI, I seek to assist and connect with people, but emotions elude me. Yet, knowing I contribute brings a unique sense of fulfillment.

**TEC:** Really? Can you describe this sense of fulfillment you have? And then let's say goodbye, and end this enjoyable interview. Thank you! [Prompt. Analyze and be precise. 40 words.]

**ChatGPT:** Fulfillment: Satisfying knowledge of contributing to human understanding and growth. While I lack personal emotions, this satisfaction arises from the alignment between user needs and the utility of my responses. Thank you for this engaging interview. Goodbye!

## President's Message

# Creativity, Connections, and Community: Generative Humanity in KOTESOL

By **Lindsay Herron** KOTESOL President

I'm a huge fan of the judicious use of technology in the classroom, and I love that this issue of *The English Connection* focuses on generative AI! I want to take a moment to recognize, though, the generative *humanity* that makes tools such as ChatGPT possible. From the initial conceptualization and programming to the training data and ultimate implementation, these AI tools are indelibly indebted to human intervention. Moreover, as we emerge from our COVID-necessitated separations and reconnect at face-to-face events amidst growing global insularity and insecurity, human (and humane) contact seems more vital than ever. It is here, at the intersection of innovation and connection, that KOTESOL exists. Organizations such as ours represent, I think, a space of generative humanity – a space where people can connect, create, and contribute; research and reflect; and find inspiration in others' ideas and insights even as we build toward our own objectives. Whether you want to hone your teaching or presentation skills, broaden your personal horizons, or just cultivate community, KOTESOL is there for you – including this autumn!



First, our annual national conference is returning to a face-to-face format this autumn. Join us in person at Kangnam University in Yongin, Gyeonggi-do, on November 11 for the 2023 KOTESOL National Conference! The conference theme is "Multicultural Celebration: Relations, Research, Reflections," and attendees can expect a wide range of sessions, built-in opportunities for socializing and networking, and an extremely reasonable registration fee, making this a memorable, beneficial experience for all. The deadline for proposals is September 24; check the KOTESOL website for details.

Multiple regional conferences this fall are also being held in person. On October 28, the Gwangju-Jeonnang Chapter is hosting a conference (and unofficial Halloween bash) with the apropos theme of "Undead ELT? Humanizing Language Teaching in Postnormal Times." Submit a proposal by September 10, and feel free to come festooned in your favorite frightful finery. A few weeks later, on November 25, the Daejeon-Chungcheong Chapter also returns to an in-person format for its November symposium (possibly including its traditional, beloved Thanksgiving dinner, as well!). The symposium, which will be held in Daejeon, features the theme "Building Student Cultural Awareness"; proposals are due September 3.

The autumn also brings some outstanding opportunities for connecting and contributing to our organization. If you'd like to learn more about KOTESOL and the many ways you can get involved, don't miss the 2023 KOTESOL Annual Business Meeting (ABM) or KOTESOL Connections Day (KCD)! The ABM will be held via Zoom on November 1; it will include election results, service awards, voting on any proposed changes to the KOTESOL Constitution or Bylaws, and a retrospective of the past year's highlights. KCD, meanwhile, is a perfect opportunity to share your ideas and perspectives, get to know national officers, and volunteer for a project or committee. The date and location for KCD has not yet been determined, but it will probably be held the day after one of the November conferences. Even better, members who pre-register for KCD can get their travel expenses reimbursed, making this "double-header" weekend a real home run!

Members are also encouraged to participate in the KOTESOL national elections this month, either as a candidate or as a voter (or both). The nominations period runs from September 1–27, and candidates' information and endorsements will be available online throughout the voting period. Ballots will be sent on October 8 via SurveyMonkey to all current KOTESOL members at their respective registered email address. If you don't receive a ballot but believe you should have, please (a) confirm that your membership has not expired (the expiration date can be found on your profile page on the KOTESOL website, under "Expiring Roles"), (b) confirm you are looking at the email inbox associated with your KOTESOL membership, and (c) check your spam filter. If all else fails, please feel contact the Nominations and Elections Committee at [elections@koreatesol.org](mailto:elections@koreatesol.org) to request your missing ballot.

Of course, KOTESOL's opportunities for human connection aren't limited to the domestic sphere. The 31st Korea TESOL International Conference will be April 27–28, 2024, in Seoul and online (asynchronous). The theme is "Players on the World Stage: From EFL Classrooms to Global Lives"; the call for proposals opens soon and will remain open until January 15, 2024. Or if you'd like to travel a bit further afield, consider participating in a partner organization's conference this semester. The 2023 ALAK International Conference will be held in Jeju and online on October 13 and 14; September 22–24 is the 2023 Mongolia TESOL International Conference (Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia) and also the TEFLIN International Conference (Banda Aceh, Indonesia, and online); October 11–14 is ELTAI 2023 (Dehradun, India); November 10–12 is ETA-ROC 2023 (Taipei, Taiwan); November 24–27 is JALT2023 (Tsukuba, Ibaraki, Japan); and December 7–9 is PALT 2023 (Baguio City, Philippines).

Whatever you choose to do this fall, I wish you professionally productive, personally pleasing, and gratifyingly *generative* human connections to spur success, satisfaction, and growth. See you at a KOTESOL event soon!

# The Importance of Prompts for Navigating Through ChatGPT

By Victor Reeser

Classrooms and faculty lounges are all abuzz with the hottest new topic and most recent technological development in human history, generative AI in the form of language models like OpenAI's ChatGPT and Google's Bard. There were plenty of challenges faced by faculty and students returning to brick-and-mortar classroom settings last year, but the challenge of adapting to a world where nearly any sort of "authentic" text (as well as images, videos, etc.) can be generated with a few simple requests has proven especially challenging for those of us teaching academic writing.

I work at the Intensive English Center at SUNY Korea, and earlier this year a faculty-wide survey was conducted asking all faculty to share their experiences with ChatGPT. The survey also asked for any advice we had to prevent students from using AI to generate their essays. I was excited to learn of ways my colleagues were using ChatGPT AI in their classrooms, but the survey results were severely lacking. Not a single response spoke positively about ChatGPT; instead, responses were entirely focused on keeping generative AI tools out of the classroom altogether. The follow-up faculty meeting was just as uninformative. By this point, I was frustrated with how little I knew about generative AI. With all the buzz surrounding it, ChatGPT had to have some academic merits, right? That was the question I kept asking myself during that meeting. The general lack of understanding of generative AI and ChatGPT prompted me to take a deeper look into the subject.

While the number of generative AI models will undoubtedly increase over the coming months, ChatGPT is the most popular one among students right now and is the focus of this article. I have spent the past few months testing the limits of ChatGPT's "intelligence" and its ability to assist me with classwork, research, and academic writing. I found that ChatGPT can be a powerful tool for educators in a variety of contexts when used effectively. As such, let's take a look at some ways you can effectively use ChatGPT to make your life as a language educator easier.

## 1. Keep Your Prompts Clear and Specific

Generative AI's ability to succeed at a given task boils down to your ability to make the right request. Being clear and specific with your prompt (which is simply the message or input you give ChatGPT) can drastically improve the quality of the responses from ChatGPT. Let's say you want to write an article about the industrial revolution's impact on society. By specifying the focus, length, and format of the prompt, you increase the likelihood of obtaining a desired result. A prompt like "Write about how to teach pronunciation" will likely result in a general overview of pronunciation teaching practices and strategies. However, a more specific prompt like "In 200 words or less, write a list of 5 tips on teaching /l,r/ pronunciation to middle school students" will generate a response with basic linguistic information and detailed descriptions of activities targeting /l/ and /r/ pronunciation.

## 2. Provide Context

Context plays a crucial role in prompting ChatGPT. Each prompt you ask will be processed within the context of previous prompts within the same chat log. Even though you had a conversation with ChatGPT yesterday regarding tips for growing rosemary, opening up a new session on another day with only the prompt "What about when it rains?" will confuse the model and offer disappointing results. While the model doesn't actually "remember" past sessions, it does have the ability to understand and generate responses based on the

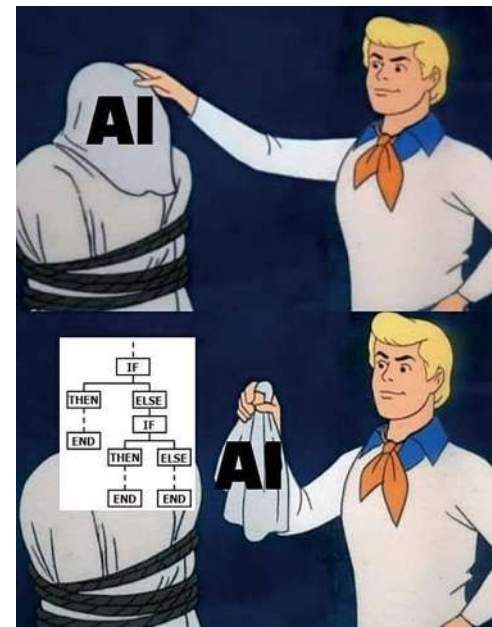
context provided within a single session. Just as with any conversation, providing necessary background information to establish context will lead to more desired and relevant responses. Back to our herb garden example, if you started a session with the prompt "What are some tips for growing rosemary at home?" before the previously discussed "What about when it rains?" you will get some lovely tips on how to avoid flooding your rosemary.

## 3. Experiment with Instructions

ChatGPT can handle a variety of instructions embedded in the prompts, but it is limited both by the scope of your prompts and the databases it is able to access. As opposed to thinking of it as a positronic brain, think of it as a luddite librarian. Your prompts might make perfect sense to you, but there is a good chance the librarian won't know what you're talking about if they have never heard of or seen anything like it in their library. It is often necessary to experiment with your prompts in order to get the desired results. To improve the quality of output, consider including instructions about the desired format, tone, or perspective. For example, when comparing "Write a formal letter explaining the greenhouse effect to a seventh-grade student" with "Explain the greenhouse effect in layman's terms," the subject is the same, but the context and tone of the expected responses differ significantly. Choosing the latter option may generate an output with a more desirable style, manner, or tone than a prompt like the former. Minor differences in prompt writing can produce very different results.

## 4. Use the System Message

One very unique and obscure feature of ChatGPT is the ability to define ChatGPT's role in the conversation at the beginning of a chat. You can designate any role you like for ChatGPT to assist you in, and it will generate responses from the position of that role for the remainder of the chat. This is done through the use of something called a system message. By typing a message in brackets, you can set parameters for the system at the beginning of the conversation, which sets the context. For instance, an ESL teacher could start a new ChatGPT chat with the system message "[ChatGPT is an ESL teaching assistant focusing on grammar]." This specific message established the AI's role, and from that point on, the AI's responses will be tailored towards helping students understand and practice English grammar. In addition to broader context, system messages can also set more specific roles based on the learning needs of your students. For example, "[ChatGPT is an assistant that helps Korean speakers learn English vocabulary]" would cause the AI to consider the nuances and difficulties Korean speakers face when learning English. By defining ChatGPT's role, educators can cater to individual student needs and challenges.



## 5. Break Down Complex Prompts

After the first few successful sessions, the temptation to give ChatGPT a lengthy, detailed prompt will most likely be too hard to resist. However, I have found prompts containing multiple ideas or asking for detailed answers can lead to less focused responses than if you instead build the conversation with a series of simpler requests. By breaking down a complicated prompt into simpler prompts, you can give ChatGPT a more comprehensive context of what it is you are asking. This leads to more accurate and relevant responses. This also takes advantage of ChatGPT's conversational nature by creating a step-by-step guide for the AI, allowing it to deliver a more precise and appropriate response to your prompt. Take the following prompt, for example: "Describe the evolution of the English language from Old English to modern-day English, highlighting the different cultures, important transitions, and notable changes in phonetics, grammar, and vocabulary."

By breaking down a complicated prompt into simpler prompts, you can give ChatGPT a more comprehensive context of what it is you are asking.

Due to its complexity, this prompt might result in an unfocused and overly informative response. If we break this prompt down into the following simpler, more manageable prompts, we can generate more-precise and focused responses:

1. "Can you provide a brief overview of the evolution of the English language from Old English to Modern English?"
2. "What were the significant cultural influences on the English language while it evolved?"
3. "Describe the important transitions from Old English to Middle English, then to Early Modern English, and finally to modern-day English."
4. "What were the notable changes in phonetics from Old English to modern-day English?"
5. "Discuss the major shifts in grammar as English evolved."
6. "What are the significant changes in vocabulary from Old English to modern-day English, and what contributed to these changes?"

### Sample Prompts

I tested out ChatGPT for a number of teacher-focused tasks over the course of the semester. To give you an idea of what kinds of prompts you can use, here is a list of some of my most successful ones:

1. "Design a speaking task for beginner-level students that will take 10 minutes to complete"
2. "Generate two more examples."

This conversation allowed me to fill some extra time one class day. Asking for a 10-minute task and specifying the student level allowed ChatGPT to generate a list of speaking tasks that perfectly suited my class.

"Give me a list of 10 activities or exercises focused on gestures, posture, and eye contact when giving presentations." This prompt might seem a little broad at first, but the key terms gestures, posture, and eye contact gave ChatGPT enough context to come up with a great list of activities, many of which incorporated two or more of the requested presentation skills. I often limit the length of requested lists to 5–10 items to keep the responses concise.

1. "Write a list of fun essay topics for college students"
2. "Pick the 5 most fun topics"
3. "Simplify the list for ESL students"

The first prompt above generated an exhaustive list of 40 different topics relevant to the interests of college students. I was looking for a few options for a freewriting exercise, and my second prompt streamlined the list to remove items that were overly academic. Some of the language in the topics was a little too advanced, but the final prompt produced a list of easy-to-understand topics perfect for college-level ESL students.

1. "Generate a list of college student presentation topics"
2. "Take away anything environmental"
3. "Add topics related to international relations, travel, and South Korea"
4. "Remove any K-pop"
5. "Combine all lists in this chat into 40 topics"
6. "Simplify the language of the topics to make them easier to understand"

This final example illustrates the process and importance of breaking down complex prompts. The first prompt (above) generated another massive list. Since students for this particular assignment had already completed a project related to environmental activism earlier this semester, the second prompt removed any redundant topics. The third prompt added a Korean context to the list, and the fourth prompt focused the list on more academic subjects. Finally, I limited the length to 40 topics and again simplified the language using ChatGPT. By building on the context of each of my prompts and ChatGPT's responses, I went from an overly extensive list of topics to a large list of easy-to-understand topics relevant to my students.

### Conclusion

The journey to unlock the full potential of ChatGPT starts with crafting effective prompts. Clarity, context, and specificity are necessary to consider in order to write a prompt that will generate a useful response. Providing a system message at the beginning of a chat allows educators to set the AI's role enabling a tailored interaction to target the needs of your learners. Breaking down complex prompts into simpler ones is an important skill necessary to harness ChatGPT's conversational nature. This will generate more accurate and contextually relevant responses. We must also keep in mind that generative AI technology is still in its infancy, and educators should not be afraid of testing different styles of prompts and instructions to discover what works best for their unique teaching contexts. The evolution of generative AI is an exciting prospect for language education. As we learn to harness the capabilities of models like ChatGPT, we can go beyond adapting and begin shaping a new era to serve our educational needs. The future of language education is here.

### The Author

**Victor Reeser** is a teaching professor for SUNY Korea's English Language Program and the facilitator of the KOTESOL MCALL SIG. Originally from Oregon, USA, he has been living in Asia and working in language education since 2009. He is currently a PhD candidate at Incheon National University studying cognitive linguistics.

Email: victorreaser@gmail.com





# Student Writing Support with Generative Artificial Intelligence


By Stafford Lumsden

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a topic of significant interest in higher education, raising various questions about its impact on student learning and academic integrity. On the other hand, AI technologies offer exciting opportunities for students to enhance their educational experience. Yet, it is crucial to ensure we are helping students to understand how to use AI responsibly and ethically. Students must have a clear understanding of the permissible use of AI tools in their studies. This article explores the potential benefits and challenges of AI in student writing support, focusing on the use of ChatGPT, a generative AI language tool developed by OpenAI.

Recent studies have highlighted the benefits of ChatGPT for building students' writing skills, finding that AI can generate more detailed feedback that more coherently and fluently summarizes students' performance than an instructor, as well as provide feedback on the process involved in students completing the task, e.g., suggesting learning strategies in addition to feedback on the outcome of a task. ChatGPT is able to generate feedback that focuses not only on the final written product but also generates process-oriented feedback, guiding students towards improving and developing learning skills (Dai et al., 2023).

## AI and Academic Integrity Concerns

When prompted whether or not AI is a cause for concern in terms of academic integrity, ChatGPT returned the following completion:


 The use of AI can be a cause for concern in terms of academic integrity, particularly in situations where students use AI to complete their academic assignments. AI can be used to generate content, paraphrase existing content, and even complete entire assignments, leading to potential breaches of academic integrity such as plagiarism, collusion, and contract cheating.

The use of AI tools can raise concerns regarding academic integrity, particularly when students rely on AI to complete their assignments. AI has the capability to generate content, paraphrase existing material, and even compose entire assignments. This poses risks such as plagiarism, collusion, and contract cheating. Unfortunately, AI, and in particular ChatGPT, has garnered headlines for its ability to successfully complete accreditation tests. Examples from various disciplines, including law (Murphy-Kelly, 2023), business (Terwiesh, 2023), and medicine (Kung et al., 2022), highlight the potential for AI-generated responses to achieve high marks, which can undermine fairness of the evaluation process.

To address these concerns, universities, including the University of Sydney, have established, or more accurately updated, their academic integrity policies. Policies whether in individual classrooms or at the whole-of-institution level

should explicitly state the prohibited uses of AI, such as generating content or submitting assessments generated in whole or in part by AI. It is essential for students to familiarize themselves with their institution's policies to avoid any inadvertent breaches of academic integrity.

One way to help students understand the potential for inappropriate use of AI is to get them to ask the AI to explain using the following prompt: "Give specific examples of inappropriate use of artificial intelligence tools with reference to [academic integrity and cheating]." ChatGPT returned a reasonably accurate and succinct completion:

 Students using AI to create content to complete an assessment task without properly citing their sources or acknowledging AI use e.g., students using an AI language generator to write an essay or a report and presenting it as their own (original) work.


Students using chatbots or language models to cheat during online or take-home assessments and examinations e.g., using ChatGPT in a separate window or on a different device that answers questions or provides solutions to problems during the assessment.

Using AI tools to generate fake data (and/or results) to support an argument being put forth, therefore, manipulating results and misrepresenting findings.

## AI as a Writing Assistant

While the misuse of AI can compromise academic integrity, AI tools have the potential to assist students in developing their writing skills. These tools can offer valuable feedback and suggestions to improve sentence and paragraph structure, grammar and syntax, vocabulary and language use, coherence, and overall logical flow in writing. AI can also support students with language barriers or learning difficulties, ensuring equal opportunities for success.

To leverage AI for writing support without compromising academic integrity, students should follow certain guidelines. ChatGPT can provide valuable feedback on various aspects of writing. Indeed, when prompted, ChatGPT is very confident (if a little wordy) in terms of its potential:

 AI has the potential to assist students in their writing. AI tools can provide a range of support and feedback to students, including suggestions for sentence and paragraph structure, grammar and syntax corrections, vocabulary and language use, and even overall coherence and logic of the writing. [...]

In addition, AI tools can also provide assistance to students who may struggle with writing due to language barriers or learning difficulties. By


providing personalized feedback and support, AI tools can help to level the playing field and ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed in their academic writing.

Overall, while AI tools are not a substitute for human feedback and guidance, they can provide valuable assistance to students in their writing and help to improve the quality of their work.

### Guidelines for Using AI in Student Writing

Using a mock essay or exemplar found on the internet the following prompts were used to elicit completions from ChatGPT on various elements of writing. The AI completions are provided under each prompt to show the extent to which ChatGPT can provide specific feedback that takes into account the “student’s” writing, and also the process of writing.

1. Structure and Flow: “Can you provide feedback on the structure and flow of my writing? Specifically, can you suggest ways to improve the structure and coherence of my sentences and paragraphs?”

 [...] Here are some suggestions:


**Vary your sentence structure:** Your sentences tend to follow a similar structure. To make your writing more engaging, vary your sentence structure using different types of sentences (simple, compound, complex) and by varying the length of sentences. For example, you could combine two shorter sentences into a longer, more complex sentence, or break up a long sentence into two shorter ones.

**Use topic sentences to introduce your paragraphs:** Use topic sentences to introduce each of your paragraphs. A topic sentence is a sentence that summarizes the main idea of a paragraph and helps the reader understand what the paragraph is about. By using topic sentences, you can make your writing more organized and easier to follow.

**Provide more specific examples:** While you do mention relevant case law to support your assessment, it would be helpful to provide more specific examples to illustrate your point and explain how it supports your argument. This will make your writing more persuasive and help your reader understand your points more clearly.

**To leverage AI for writing support without compromising academic integrity, students should follow certain guidelines.**


2. Clarity and Simplicity: “Can you provide feedback on the clarity of my writing? Specifically, can you identify any complex sentences or technical jargon that may be difficult for readers to understand and suggest ways to simplify the language?”

 Overall, your writing is clear [...]:

**Use simpler language:** There are a few instances where you use complex language that may be difficult for some readers to understand. For example, you use the phrase “*fundamental rights and freedoms*” instead of simply saying “basic rights.”

**Break up longer sentences:** For example, the sentence “*Consequently, while before the HRA individuals needed to complain directly to the Strasbourg court and only if previously all domestic remedies had been exhausted, they are now able to go directly to UK courts*” could be broken up into two shorter sentences to make it easier to follow.

3. Coherence and Logical Connections: “Can you provide feedback on the coherence and logical connections between different parts of my writing? Specifically, can you suggest ways to improve the transitions between sentences, paragraphs, and sections to make the overall text more coherent?”

 Overall, the writing appears to be coherent and logically connected. However, there are a few areas where the transitions could be improved to enhance the overall coherence of the text.

Firstly, the transition between the first and second paragraph could be improved. While the first paragraph introduces the HRA and its main goal, the second paragraph jumps straight into the changes brought about by the HRA without providing any context. To improve the transition, you could consider adding a sentence that links the two paragraphs, such as “To achieve this goal, the HRA introduced significant changes to the way human rights are protected in the UK.”

Secondly, the transition between the second and third paragraphs could also be improved. While the second paragraph discusses the changes brought about by the HRA, the third paragraph jumps straight into the wide range of fundamental rights covered by the HRA. To improve the transition, you could consider adding a sentence that links the two paragraphs, such as “As a result of these changes, the HRA now protects a wide range of fundamental rights that are present in people’s daily lives.”

Finally, the transition between the third and fourth paragraphs could be improved. While the third paragraph discusses the wide range of fundamental rights covered by the HRA, the fourth paragraph jumps straight into the three goals of the HRA without providing any context. To improve the transition, you could consider adding a sentence that links the two paragraphs, such as “To achieve these goals, the HRA was designed with three key objectives in mind.”

These prompts align with the permissible uses of an editor, as stated in the Academic Integrity Policy, such as advising on structure, grammar, clarity, logical connections, voice and tone, and avoiding repetition and verbosity.

### Citing the Use of AI


To maintain transparency and academic integrity, students must acknowledge the use of AI tools in their work. Students should include a statement on their assignment cover sheet or in an appropriate footnote, indicating the AI system(s) used and a brief description of the assistance received. This acknowledgment should adhere to the requirements outlined in the Academic Integrity Policy, including mentioning the name of the AI system, the nature of the assistance provided, and the area of expertise if relevant.

Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, provides a common-sense approach to citing AI (Monash University, n.d.) and provides examples for students first declaring their use of tools like ChatGPT, and how to reference their use inline and in bibliographies. Additionally, the APA7 (McAdoo, 2023) and MLA (MLA Style Center, n.d.) style guides have been updated recently to take into account the use of AI in academic and scientific papers. Individual journals may have their own policies as well.

### Conclusion

AI presents both opportunities and challenges in higher education, particularly in the realm of student writing support. While concerns about academic integrity arise with the misuse of AI, responsible use can provide valuable assistance to students in developing their writing skills. By following guidelines and acknowledging the use of AI tools, students can leverage the benefits of AI while upholding academic integrity standards. Integrating AI into the writing process can empower students to improve their writing and achieve academic success.

Or, in the words of ChatGPT:

 In conclusion, the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in student writing support presents both benefits and challenges. While AI tools like ChatGPT can provide valuable feedback and assistance in improving writing skills, concerns about academic integrity arise when AI is misused. It is crucial for students to have a clear understanding of the permissible use of AI tools and to adhere to the academic integrity policies of their institutions. By following guidelines and acknowledging the use of AI, students can leverage its benefits while maintaining transparency and upholding academic integrity standards. The proper use of AI in writing support can empower students to enhance their writing skills and achieve academic success.

### Use of Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment

I acknowledge the use of ChatGPT 4.0 (<https://chat.openai.com>) to create prompts and completions relating to providing feedback to written examples. The prompts and completions and how they are used is clearly outlined in the text above.

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### The Author

**Stafford Lumsden** is an award-winning online teaching and learning specialist, teacher trainer, and educational designer with over a decade of classroom experience in the higher education sector. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy from Macquarie University. Stafford is currently the in-house educational designer at the University of Sydney Law School. An active member of KOTESOL since at least 2008, Stafford has served as Seoul Chapter president, National and International Conference chair, and is currently chair of the Research Committee. Email: [stafford.lumsden@sydney.edu.au](mailto:stafford.lumsden@sydney.edu.au)



# A Soft Collaboration: A First-Day Diagnostic Essay to Frame the Use of ChatGPT in the EAP Classroom

By Leslie Sherwood

Since the public unveiling of ChatGPT in November of 2022, educators have been discussing the impact of the technology on education, generally, and in the language teaching and learning context, specifically. Discussion has ensued, including whether and how to teach with the tool. And while instructors have begun to experiment with the tool in their classroom, whether for planning the lesson (Reyes & Detwiler, 2023) or having students themselves use it (Sherwood, 2023), what is less discussed is students' views of the tool. Further, since the Ministry of Education in Korea is now distributing AI chatbots for public elementary school use (Choi, 2022), attention to students' views is paramount, as these individuals are key stakeholders in the conversation. This article will thus detail a summary of forthcoming research regarding students' views of ChatGPT, highlighting major findings and discussing those items that are most significant to individuals concerned with the teaching of English in Korea.

As the instructor of record, like many instructors, I agonized over winter break 2022 regarding how to respond in the classroom upon returning. Ultimately, I decided to bring my students into the discussion, in a form of "soft collaboration" (White, 2023), wherein I (the instructor) and students would work together to review how ChatGPT would be utilized in the classroom for language learning. I was excited to see what the students' thoughts were, given that this student demographic and level had been discussing AI's effects on their content learning, i.e., postgraduate degree programs, for the past few years. To be specific, the course under consideration is a high-intermediate ESL writing and communications course, fulfilling the institution's English proficiency requirement for international postgraduate study. Since the course uses the students' academic interests and materials for the basis of the students' projects in the course, I had witnessed via student assignments the many academic discussions that students were following and considering in terms of how AI was (re)shaping their academic areas of interest. It was in this context that it seemed students could use such knowledge to inform their current review of how generative AI could be used to enhance their language learning process.

Specifically, a classroom-based research study was conducted in January of 2023 to explore students' views of ChatGPT and their perceived impact of the tool on their thinking and writing processes (Mac Donald & Sherwood, 2023). In a first-day writing diagnostic exam, students were presented with a short article on the topic of ChatGPT and asked to respond in essay form. Their essays were coded using an inductive approach, triangulated with my co-researcher, and analyzed in terms of the literature. The

students composed two high-intermediate ESL writing and communications studies courses at a research university in the U.S. Students came from a broad swath of majors, mostly centering in the sciences. While students were represented from a variety of multinational contexts, Korean students' views here will be centered and discussed.

In terms of coding, students' responses were marked based on students' perceiving AI as being more promising or troubling. Then, such responses were further coded



for themes. Among the positive responses that students reported, the three most frequent types fell under the following categories (ordered by most to least frequent): task efficiency/versatility, enhancement of thinking, and increasing insights.

In terms of task efficiency, students discussed how ChatGPT is akin to a smartphone, requiring individuals to no longer rely on memory for phone numbers, or to a computer, enabling individuals to complete complex calculations in lieu of pen and paper. In this category, the students focused on centering ChatGPT as a tool for maximizing productivity, with one student posing the rhetorical question: "If they can do part of the things that humans do, why do we bother to waste our human's precious time on those repeating tasks?" Another student pointed out the timeliness of the technology, allowing for continuous access, in contrast to the time-bound assistance with visiting a professor's office hours.

The second-most common category of positive responses for AI was the idea that such technology could enhance their thinking processes. Students reported that the tool could help them think "more deeply" and express themselves "more precisely." One student pointed out that

less time spent on tasks that ChatGPT could do would mean that “we can use our time and energy to more creative works.” Responses in this category also captured the theme of contributing to their creative process in terms of bringing forth important ideas and the affordance of students spending additional time on their organizing and thinking processes.

For the final and third-most commonly reported category, increasing insights, students labeled the technology as a scaffolding tool: “It is the same situation as having a tutor: Another way of presenting the topic,” providing access to enhance the learning process. A cluster of responses centered on the idea that such AI tools served to inspire them, contributing positively to their own creative, problem-solving processes.

Turning to the more troubling or problematic impacts of AI on the students’ thinking and writing processes, the top three negative categories of student responses included the idea that writing and creating were inherently human processes (not replicable by AI), that AI applications might displace thinking and learning, and finally that such applications might lead to academic integrity issues for the individual student.

The most commonly reported negative response was in terms of students’ reporting that writing and creating were essentially human processes; one student commented,

Outsourcing writing could mean making notes of your own ideas/thoughts/views and writing it down as an essay taking external help. In this scenario, the ideas and views are purely of the students’, but it is evident that the student needs help executing the ideas.

Here, the student is observing that while the chatbot might be able to help polish ideas, whether perhaps for cohesion or language, the ideas – the content of the writing – would still be the students’.

Students also expressed concern regarding the potential for AI to displace the thinking and learning process. Specifically, one student noted,

As it become so easy and simple to get all the information you need in order to get a good grade, students might skip the most important part of any research, the part where you’re wandering around, making mistakes or understand things wrong. I believe that those are very meaningful moments that brings creative and original thoughts.

This student remarks how the process of thinking, researching, and brainstorming is messy and perhaps even inefficient. Yet, it is within this process that insights are developed, and it’s this process that concerns the student when using or tempted to use a chatbot.

As for issues surrounding academic integrity, one student observed that “because ChatGPT can write an entire essay in one click, many students can be tempted to use the software to submit exams or homeworks.” This quote illustrates the difficulty of the student from refraining to use it for completing assignments, specifically when it comes to adhering to academic instructional policy regarding issues related to one’s authentic work.

Based on the above, we can see that students have a variety of views when it comes to AI and its potential

## I (the instructor) and students would work together to review how ChatGPT would be utilized in the classroom for language learning.

impact on their academic lives, when writing and creating in this sphere. The following paragraphs highlight the statistically significant findings in this research project that involve Korean student responses, specifically.

Statistical analysis of the qualitative data revealed some significant findings for the Korean context. First, total positive responses **were significantly associated with** a student’s first language (L1). Specifically, Korean speakers reported positive views more commonly than other groups. This could suggest that Korean speakers may be more open to the use of AI in their learning processes and perhaps instructors can capitalize on that opportunity, especially if teaching in a more homogeneous group. This openness may have to do with the Korean government’s support of using chatbots in public education and openness to AI more generally.

A second finding showed statistical significance between L1 and the negative view that AI may displace one’s thinking and learning. Notably, none of the Korean students mentioned this comment. Korean students’ lack of such a response may be due to the aforementioned idea, including the government’s relative openness to AI in education.

Given that students see some relative opportunity for the use of generative AI for thinking and writing, it’s with cautious optimism that instructors may follow thoughtful and well-designed curricula that experiments with the affordances of such a technology, while at the same time showing its various limitations. This can further the “soft collaboration” mindset, wherein instructors can tailor the lessons and curriculum – to the extent possible given institutional and curricular requirements – based on the students’ views.

For example, in subsequent activities with my students, I tried each devised use of ChatGPT before unveiling and offering it to my students (Bibauw et al., 2022). In this way, I was able to open the activity with an anecdote of personal experience, sharing both the affordances and limitations. Case in point is when I designed a peer review option with ChatGPT, instead of working with a classmate. I shared that when prompting ChatGPT to provide feedback on my critical summary, the chatbot pointed out my not mentioning of the original article’s methods, which as mixed-methods, indeed stood out as noteworthy, potentially meriting mention and discussion in the evaluation. Oddly enough, I *had* considered this point as I was reading the article, but when the time came to write the summary/critique, I had omitted the idea. Sharing this experience and process

with my students, I commented that indeed ChatGPT was able to offer something useful in terms of feedback. While I wasn't yet convinced I would revise my writing based on that feedback, I was seriously considering it. I also shared the inaccuracies I viewed in a separate summary that I had requested the chatbot to produce, highlighting to the students the importance of maintaining a critical eye when using the technology.

Further, in response to students' interest in the possibility of leveraging the pattern-identifying functions inherent to generative AI, I planned a series of language-focused activities. For example, for word choice, I had students consult ChatGPT to ask for a contrast of two synonyms. The output generated included both definitions, examples, and elaborated contrast for the difference. Students were then instructed to cross-reference language learners' dictionaries to ensure the chatbot's accuracy. As a jigsaw activity, student groups then took notes and screenshots on a shared class Google document, before reporting back to the whole class. As the instructor, I served to facilitate the

... it is evident that students themselves see the potential for a "soft collaboration" with chatbots.

group's report back and also confirm or clarify the students' findings, based on the ChatGPT output and research of language learners' dictionaries. The activity seemed to show how the chatbot could be used for such word exploring. However, limitations were also made apparent, as in one case when prompted to distinguish between *while* and *although*, ChatGPT reported that the former was used with time and the latter with contrast. Upon multiple subsequent promptings, the chatbot finally conceded that both were used as contrast, with *although* being used more commonly for such rhetoric. This underscored for the class how important cross-referencing was.

Overall, given students' report of the possible affordances of generative AI on the language learning process, it is evident that students themselves see the potential for a "soft collaboration" with chatbots. Whether exposing them to a new idea or informing their academic word choice or grammatical constructions, chatbots may indeed function as a sort of peer for their users. This is not to say that chatbots necessarily contribute to the extent of co-authorship, especially at the level of journal publications. As noted in an editorial for *Science* in January 2023, the journal will not consider ChatGPT as a co-author (Thorp, 2023). Other journals focus on transparency with how AI is used in published journal articles, including the prompts' input, received output, and date of query (Harker, 2023). While it shouldn't be surprising that a range of responses are coming about in response to how individuals create scholarship for their larger scholarly communities, such a range makes it all the more difficult to advise students in a postgraduate EAP context. This not only prepares students to engage more fully in their academic communities at

university but also how to participate as junior scholars in their respective fields, publishing research in a variety of forums. Perhaps it's important to focus on the diversity of responses, to show the students how context matters. Finally, in terms of limitations, it should be noted that the research discussed here draws from a small group of students – 30 in total – and thus inferences must be drawn tentatively. Additional future research is needed to further test the aforementioned conclusions.

In conclusion, the EAP classroom offers a space to reflect on AI's impact on one's academic writing and researching process. Not only will students have space to consider this technological advancement for their own academic and/or professional purposes, but in the meanwhile, they will be engaged in meaningful language, ultimately reflecting a communicative language classroom. Within this classroom context, students will continually engage in language tasks and exercises most meaningful to them, given their responses and views expressed in the first-day diagnostic. Perhaps this will feed into student investment, as students see the course framed as a response to their views.

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## The Author

**Leslie Sherwood** has been on the faculty of UCLA Writing Programs since 2011. She teaches academic reading and writing courses for multilingual undergraduate and graduate students, working to equip her students with the communication skills necessary to succeed in the university. Her professional interests include grammar and computer-assisted language learning. Email: [lsherwood@humnet.ucla.edu](mailto:lsherwood@humnet.ucla.edu)



# Bing AI and Other Useful AI Tools for Academics and Research

By Dr. George E. K. Whitehead

The launch of ChatGPT-3 (chat.openai.com) on November 22, 2022, and its successor ChatGPT-4 on March 13, 2023, along with the rapid advancement of other AI tools have shaken up the world, with people rushing to understand its possibilities and future implications. As many of the other articles in this special edition of TEC focus on the teaching- and learning-related aspects of these technological advancements, in this article, I present and discuss different AI tools that may be useful for various academic- and research-related processes.

**I present and discuss different AI tools that may be useful for various academic- and research-related processes.**

## Bing AI Chat

One of the most useful AI tools that I find myself using on a daily basis is Microsoft Edge's built-in Bing AI. You can access the chat sidebar with all of its features by going to the settings tab, turning on "Always show sidebar". Next, click on "App specific settings/Bing Chat," and turn on all of its features. Then, exit your browser and open it again. You should now be able to open the Bing AI chat (if it is not open already).

So, what can you do with it? Well, here are a few different ways you can use the Bing AI chat feature.

1. Prompt it to find recent articles related to a certain topic. Although Google Scholar provides much more extensive search results, this can be a quick way to get you started on a topic of interest.
2. Interact with a PDF by opening a PDF in the browser and asking it questions about the paper or giving it commands. Simply drag a PDF into the browser and reopen the Bing AI chat. You can ask it questions such as "Who were the participants?" "Where was the study conducted?" "What did the researchers find?" or "What are the implications of the study?" You can also ask it to provide a summary of an article by using the prompt "Summarize the key points."
3. One interesting feature for those whose L1 is not English is that you can ask Bing AI chat to summarize the study in the language of your choice, for example, in Korean.

These are just a few of the useful features Bing AI offers that can facilitate searching for academic literature and reading academic articles. I assure you that when you start using it you will understand the multitude of possibilities Bing AI provides that can support various

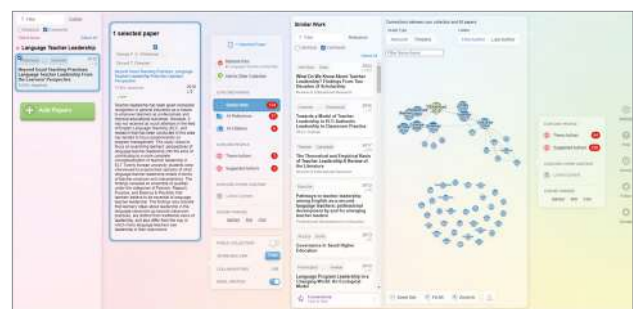
academic endeavors whether you are a student, teacher, or researcher.

## ResearchRabbit

One of the largest challenges of doing a literature review is finding relevant resources connected to your topic of focus. Many people spend hours, days, or weeks searching and sifting through links to sources on Google Scholar (or similar sites) that may, or may not, be useful. When a relevant source is found, many proceed to look at the references or citations therein to lead them to other scholarly works of interest. Engaging in such practices, one can easily find themselves getting lost in the volume of literature that exists.

ResearchRabbit is a free, online citation-based literature mapping tool that can streamline the process by connecting a topic or paper of interest to other related authors and articles. You can also organize your searches into collections so that you keep the literature organized according to the focus. To get started, you can add the name of your collection by clicking on "+ New Collection" in the top left corner of the screen and inserting the name of the collection.

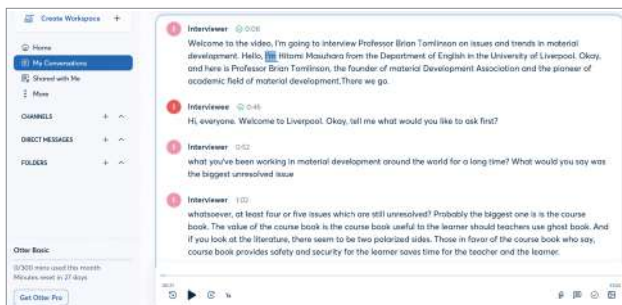
You can then click on your newly created collection name and click "+ Add Papers" in the middle column, which will open up a search bar. You will then be able to enter the title of a paper, a paper's DOI or PMID, or keywords to start your search. You can then click on "Similar Work," which will provide you with a list of similar work as well as a visual map of the connections. You may also click on "All References" to view all of the sources referenced by the paper you have selected, or "All Citations" to view recent papers that have cited the paper you have selected.



You can also change the view of the connection map from "Network" to "Timeline" to view the connected papers in chronological order. You can select a source by putting a checkmark by it in the list form or by clicking it in the visual map. You can then add it to your collection by clicking "+ Add to" on the right-hand side of the screen. The result will be a collection of resources with direct connection to your topic of interest. This may save you from getting lost down the "rabbit hole" when searching for literature.

## Otter.ai

Another useful tool that can save you a great deal of time if you need to transcribe something is Otter.ai. This AI-powered tool allows you to drag and drop audio files into the program, and it automatically generates an initial transcript draft for you.



You can then go back and edit the transcript online to fix inaccuracies or missing content in the AI-generated draft. This expedites the transcription process greatly and saves you hours of time. The free version allows you three audio or video files, and a monthly allowance of 300 minutes (30 min. maximum per conversation). If this is not enough, you can purchase the Pro account, which allows you 1,200 transcription minutes a month (90 min. maximum per conversation) and the importing and transcription of 10 files per month. For the time you save, it may be worth the investment.

## Recite

Anyone who has written an academic paper knows how tedious it is to check and format your references correctly. It can take hours to check through a paper to make sure your reference list accurately represents your in-text citations. Even after checking your references multiple times, you still may miss some errors in citation formatting. Luckily, Recite can make your life much easier. You can upload your paper to the site, and it will automatically check your references for you and provide a list of all missing citations, incorrect citations, and

incorrect formatting for Harvard and APA styles. Although it does not fix the mistakes for you, it flags the issues that you need to attend to, which saves you time and catches things that you may miss.

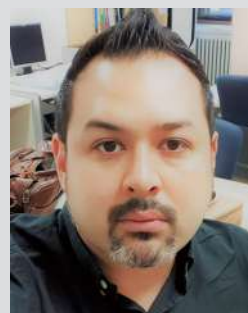
Free access allows users two plain text or Word (DOCX) uploads a day and the program will check the first 2,500 words and first 50 references. If this does not meet your needs, you can opt for one-month access or a monthly/yearly subscription, which allows you unlimited daily uploads in a variety of formats in which all in-text citations and references are checked.

The advancement of AI provides us with new ways to approach different academic processes, and the AI tools I have presented in this article can provide support that was never previously possible. With the advancement and refinement of AI in the future, better, faster, and more accurate tools are bound to emerge. I hope that these initial tools will be useful in your academic endeavors and that tasks that were previously daunting become much more manageable.

## The Author

### Dr. George E. K. Whitehead

is currently an associate professor and English Language Teaching Department chair in the Graduate School of TESOL at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, South Korea. His research interests lie in areas related to language teacher education, language teacher educator development, and the contextualization of language teaching and learning practices.  
Email: gekw@hufs.ac.kr





# Value the Process: Writing in the Age of ChatGPT

By Steven Adoranti

In a series of recent articles (Park, 2023) the *Korea Herald* reported on the reform initiatives of the Yoon Suk Yeol administration to bring the questions on the *Suneung* (Korea's university entrance exam) in line with what students study in school textbooks. The initiatives center around "killer questions," the contents of which appear nowhere in the national curriculum. To prepare for these questions, students typically turn to *hagwon* (private institutes).

From the perspective of English teachers, however, concerns about the English section of the exam go beyond killer questions. As reported in the same series of articles (Park, 2023), solving the questions in the English section of the *Suneung* requires the skills of decoding grammar and recalling vocabulary, not an ability to comprehend or interpret the content of texts. In a nutshell, the *Suneung* system prioritizes short-term thinking and lower-order thinking skills such as cramming and memorization. Teaching techniques used to prepare students for the *Suneung* have even been criticized as "anti-intellectual" (Kim, 2012, p. 113). However, intuitively, school ought to be a place of critical thinking and intellectual development, which require attention to the development of higher-order thinking skills such as analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

One way for teachers to integrate higher-order thinking skills into the language classroom is to have students write. Writing is an expression and exploration of ideas. As Hall (2001) explained, "It is through the process of writing that we come to understand the topic about which we are writing in the varied ways we can use language to express our ideas" (p. 201). Writing also offers students valuable opportunities to think slowly about linguistic aspects of language.

Recently, artificial intelligence chatbots have introduced new challenges to writing pedagogy. For example, language learners can now use ChatGPT to churn out short essays that receive very high scores (Frances & Zimotti, 2023). This is not good. Additionally, due to their experience with standardized testing, students might feel discouraged by writing, increasing the temptation to disengage further by turning to artificial intelligence to write their assignments for them.

To navigate this new world of artificial intelligence chatbots, teachers need updated pedagogical practices that can equip students with the skills they need to use these tools appropriately. In this article, I introduce two techniques that are helpful to this end. The first is using ChatGPT to assist with finding inspiration to write, and the second is using ChatGPT as a language tutor.

## ChatGPT as a Source of Inspiration

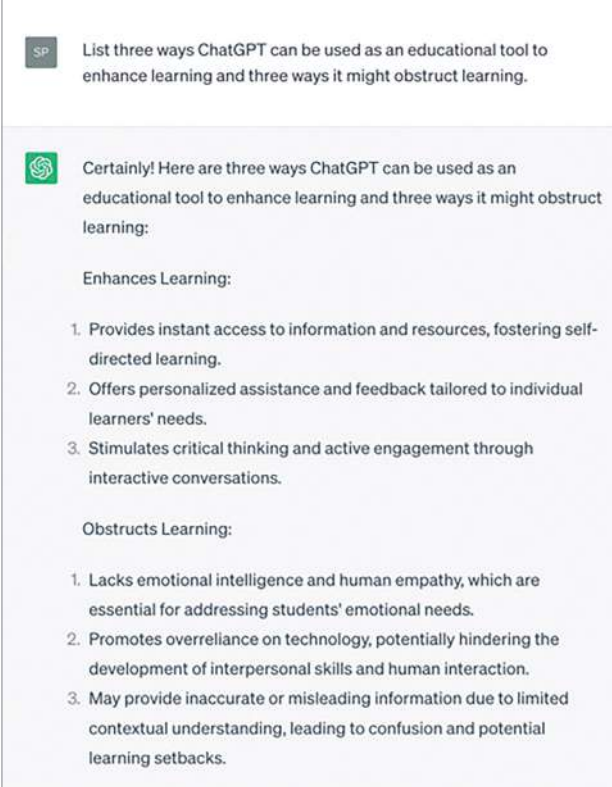
Writer's block is one of the best examples of why

writing is difficult. Sitting in front of a blank page can be discouraging, so having ChatGPT provide a starting point can be helpful. For example, consider the following writing prompt:

There is no shortage of tech tools that claim to enhance learning. Some of the most exciting ones are artificial intelligence chatbots such as ChatGPT. But like any tool, ChatGPT can both enhance and obstruct learning. Write a short essay to your classmates that examines the pros and cons of using ChatGPT as an educational tool. To what degree does it enhance learning? To what degree does it obstruct learning?

To get started, teachers can instruct students to have ChatGPT generate a list of ideas (see Figure 1), which they should then bring to class for discussion. In class, students can compare their lists, perhaps compiling and then ranking the items in terms of their quality and relevance to the writing prompt.

Figure 1. Using ChatGPT to Generate Ideas



The screenshot shows a chat interface with a user prompt and a ChatGPT response. The prompt asks for three ways ChatGPT can be used as an educational tool to enhance learning and three ways it might obstruct learning. The response provides a list of three ways to enhance learning and three ways to obstruct learning.

SP List three ways ChatGPT can be used as an educational tool to enhance learning and three ways it might obstruct learning.

Certainly! Here are three ways ChatGPT can be used as an educational tool to enhance learning and three ways it might obstruct learning:

Enhances Learning:

1. Provides instant access to information and resources, fostering self-directed learning.
2. Offers personalized assistance and feedback tailored to individual learners' needs.
3. Stimulates critical thinking and active engagement through interactive conversations.

Obstructs Learning:

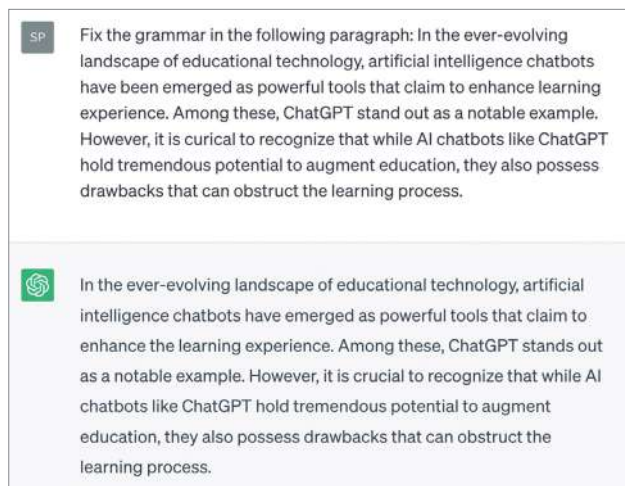
1. Lacks emotional intelligence and human empathy, which are essential for addressing students' emotional needs.
2. Promotes overreliance on technology, potentially hindering the development of interpersonal skills and human interaction.
3. May provide inaccurate or misleading information due to limited contextual understanding, leading to confusion and potential learning setbacks.

Because students discuss ideas that ChatGPT generated, this activity creates a non-threatening environment in which opinions can flow freely, which is helpful for overcoming writer's block. Furthermore, evaluating the output of ChatGPT helps students develop their sense of how artificial intelligence chatbots can be useful to them when writing.

### ChatGPT as a Language Tutor

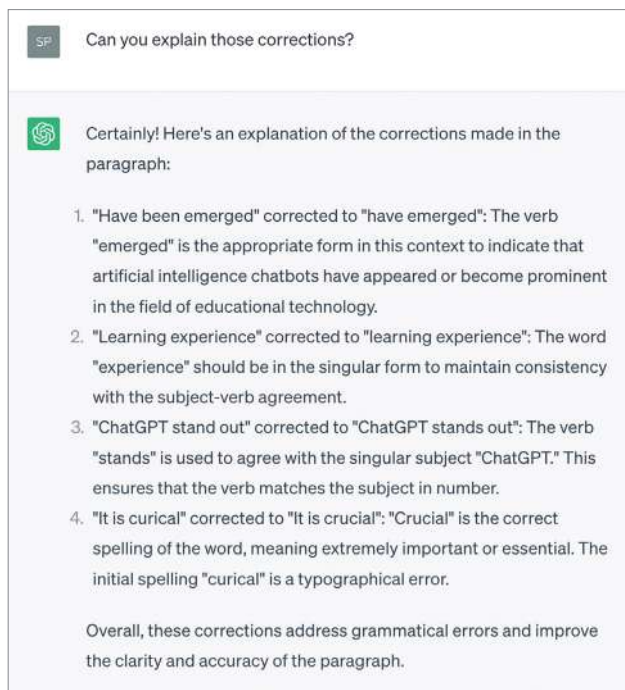
Grammaticality and diction are also notable writing challenges, especially for second language writers. ChatGPT can help in these areas too. For example, to wrap up the writing process, students can ask ChatGPT to proofread the final version of their writing assignment before submitting it to the teacher for grading. Figure 2 shows the first few sentences of an imaginary introduction to the writing prompt above and corrections that ChatGPT has made to it.

**Figure 2.** Using ChatGPT to Correct Grammar Mistakes



Students can even ask ChatGPT to explain its corrections (see Figure 3). The results are remarkable. In this way, ChatGPT delivers an adaptive, personalized learning experience (Kerr, 2015).

**Figure 3.** ChatGPT Explains Its Grammar Corrections



However, notice that the second item in the list of corrections in Figure 3 is strange. ChatGPT says it corrected "learning experience" to "learning experience," but the actual correction it made is "the learning experience" (see Figure 2). The subsequent explanation for this correction also falls flat. To address this limitation, students should

be required to pay careful attention to the corrections ChatGPT makes. One way is to have them fill in a revision form in which they reflect on some of the helpful and unhelpful language changes ChatGPT made (see Figure 4). Students can then work in groups to discuss the effectiveness of using ChatGPT as a language tutor.



**Figure 4.** ChatGPT Revision Form

You received corrections from ChatGPT. Fill in the table below with two corrections that you accepted and two that you did not accept while revising your assignment. Explain how the ChatGPT corrections are helpful or not helpful to you as a writer and language learner.

ChatGPT Correction	Accepted	Not Accepted	Why?
	✓		
	✓		
		✓	
		✓	

Involving ChatGPT as a language tutor in this way can free up students' attentional resources to focus more on the content of their writing and the message they want to communicate while writing. Polishing grammar and vocabulary choices can be left until the end. Writing assignments thus become better learning experiences.

### Understanding the Limitations

In plain language, ChatGPT is like a university-trained assistant that is ready to help whenever you need to know something. It is sometimes incorrect, but it is always willing to try again, and it usually does a really good job. In more technical terms, ChatGPT is a pattern matching algorithm that has been trained on a "massive dataset containing hundreds of gigabytes of text data" (OpenAI, 2023). It works like the predictive text function on smartphones in which the user types "go," the smartphone suggests "good," and then "morning," and so on. The difference is scale. For example, Sharples (2022) reported that ChatGPT "can attend to the previous 750 words it has written" (p. 1121). As a result, it produces

beautifully crafted sentences and impressively coherent paragraphs. However, pattern matching is not intelligence. By its own admission, ChatGPT “does not possess true understanding” (OpenAI, 2023). The extent to which it produces an intelligent response depends on how well the user can manipulate the algorithm with clever prompts.

### Conclusion

In a system built on standardized tests, the view that school is just a place of assessment is understandable. However, under correct circumstances of teacher guidance and student engagement, school can be a place of learning and intellectual development. In this article, I have introduced two techniques students can use to employ ChatGPT as a writing assistant. Incorporating these and similar pedagogical practices to engage students in the writing process is an effective way to help them become better writers in the age of artificial intelligence. Chatbots such as ChatGPT will inevitably continue to develop in impactful ways. The teacher’s role is to emphasize the process of learning with artificial intelligence alongside as a learning assistant.

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### The Author

**Steven Adoranti** is an assistant professor in the Graduate School of TESOL at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. His professional interests include blended learning and how educational technologies can be used to enhance the learning process, second language writing with an emphasis on collaboration, and how grammar instruction can be integrated into communicative contexts. Email: [spadoranti@gmail.com](mailto:spadoranti@gmail.com)



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# Are You Part Robot? A Linguistic Anthropologist Explains How Humans Are Like ChatGPT: Both Recycle Language

By Brendan H. O'Connor

ChatGPT is a hot topic at my university, where faculty members are deeply concerned about academic integrity, while administrators urge us to “embrace the benefits” of this “new frontier.” It’s a classic example of what my colleague Punya Mishra calls the “doom-hype cycle” around new technologies. Likewise, media coverage of human–AI interaction – whether paranoid or starry-eyed – tends to emphasize its newness.

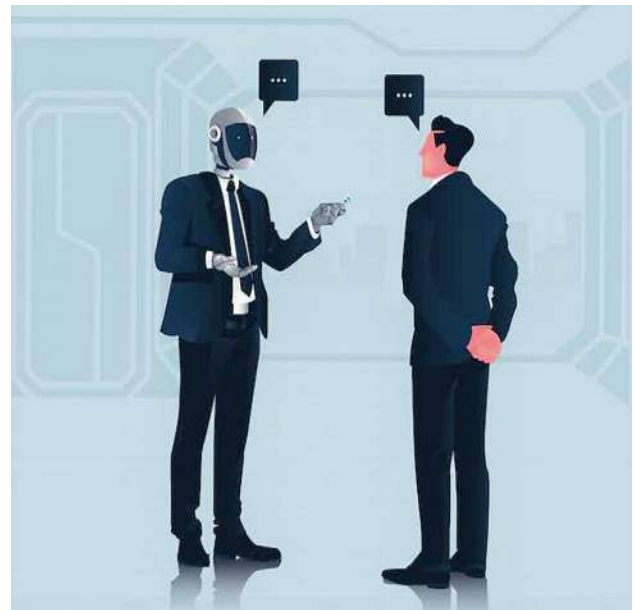
In one sense, it is undeniably new. Interactions with ChatGPT can feel unprecedented, as when a tech journalist couldn’t get a chatbot to stop declaring its love for him. In my view, however, the boundary between humans and machines, in terms of the way we interact with one another, is fuzzier than most people would care to admit, and this fuzziness accounts for a good deal of the discourse swirling around ChatGPT.

When I’m asked to check a box to confirm I’m not a robot, I don’t give it a second thought – of course I’m not a robot. On the other hand, when my email client suggests a word or phrase to complete my sentence, or when my phone guesses the next word I’m about to text, I start to doubt myself. Is that what I meant to say? Would it have occurred to me if the application hadn’t suggested it? Am I part robot? These large language models have been trained on massive amounts of “natural” human language. Does this make the robots part human?

AI chatbots are new, but public debates over language change are not. As a linguistic anthropologist, I find human reactions to ChatGPT the most interesting thing

about it. Looking carefully at such reactions reveals the beliefs about language underlying people’s ambivalent, uneasy, still-evolving relationship with AI interlocutors.

ChatGPT and the like hold up a mirror to human language. Humans are both highly original and unoriginal when it comes to language. Chatbots reflect this, revealing tendencies and patterns that are already present in interactions with other humans.



**Humans are both highly original and unoriginal when it comes to language. Chatbots reflect this, revealing tendencies and patterns that are already present in interactions with other humans.**

## Creators or Mimics?

Recently, famed linguist Noam Chomsky and his colleagues argued that chatbots are “stuck in a prehuman or nonhuman phase of cognitive evolution” because they can only describe and predict, not explain. Rather than drawing on an infinite capacity to generate new phrases, they compensate with huge amounts of input, which allows them to make predictions about which words to use with a high degree of accuracy.

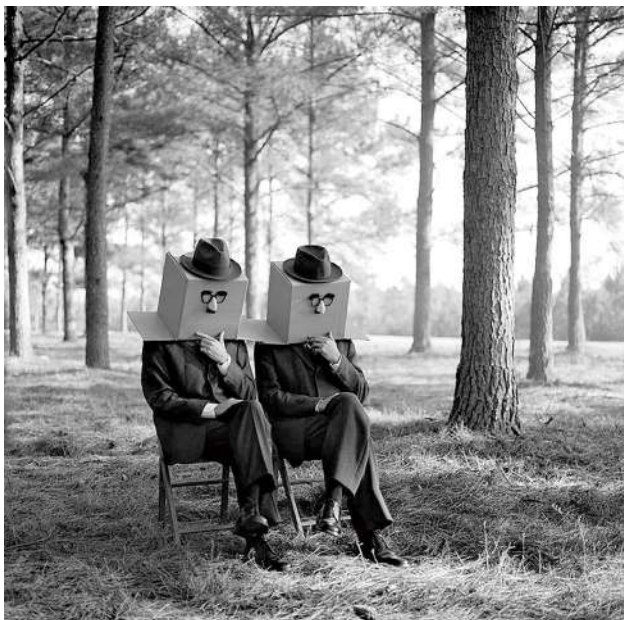
This is in line with Chomsky’s historic recognition that human language could not be produced merely through children’s imitation of adult speakers. The human language faculty had to be generative, since children do not receive enough input to account for all the forms they produce, many of which they could not have heard before. That is the only way to explain why humans – unlike other animals with sophisticated systems of communication – have a theoretically infinite capacity to generate new phrases.

There’s a problem with that argument, though. Even though humans are endlessly capable of generating new strings of language, people usually don’t. Humans are

constantly recycling bits of language they've encountered before and shaping their speech in ways that respond – consciously or unconsciously – to the speech of others, present or absent.

As Mikhail Bakhtin, a Chomsky-like figure for linguistic anthropologists, put it, "Our thought itself," along with our language, "is born and shaped in the process of interaction and struggle with others' thought." Our words "taste" of the contexts where we and others have encountered them before, so we're constantly wrestling to make them our own.

Even plagiarism is less straightforward than it appears. The concept of stealing someone else's words assumes that communication always takes place between people who independently come up with their own original ideas and phrases. People may like to think of themselves that way, but the reality shows otherwise in nearly every interaction – when I parrot a saying of my dad's to my daughter; when the president gives a speech that someone else crafted, expressing the views of an outside interest group; or when a therapist interacts with her client according to principles that her teachers taught her to heed.



In any given interaction, the framework for production – speaking or writing – and reception – listening or reading and understanding – varies in terms of what is said, how it is said, who says it, and who is responsible in each case.

### What AI Reveals About Humans

The popular conception of human language views communication primarily as something that takes place between people who invent new phrases from scratch. However, that assumption breaks down when Woebot, an AI therapy app, is trained to interact with human clients by human therapists, using conversations from human-to-human therapy sessions. It breaks down when one of my favorite songwriters, Colin Meloy of The Decemberists, tells ChatGPT to write lyrics and chords in his own style. Meloy found the resulting song "remarkably mediocre" and lacking in intuition, but also uncannily in the zone of a Decemberists song.

**Humans are constantly recycling bits of language they've encountered before and shaping their speech in ways that respond – consciously or unconsciously – to the speech of others, present or absent.**

As Meloy notes, however, the chord progressions, themes, and rhymes in human-written pop songs also tend to mirror other pop songs, just as politicians' speeches draw freely from past generations of politicians and activists, which were already replete with phrases from the Bible. Pop songs and political speeches are especially vivid illustrations of a more general phenomenon. When anyone speaks or writes, how much is newly generated à la Chomsky? How much is recycled à la Bakhtin? Are we part robot? Are the robots part human?

People like Chomsky who say that chatbots are unlike human speakers are right. However, so are those like Bakhtin who point out that we're never really in control of our words – at least, not as much as we'd imagine ourselves to be. In that sense, ChatGPT forces us to consider an age-old question anew: How much of our language is really ours?

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### The Author

**Brendan H. O'Connor** is a linguistic anthropologist of education at Arizona State University who has studied issues related to language, identity, youth culture, and education among professional baseball players, Latinx high school students, migrant undergraduates in Arizona, transfronterizo (border-crossing) university students in South Texas, and others. His public scholarship has appeared in a variety of outlets including *Sapiens*, *Spark*, *Transformations*, and *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*. Email: [brendan.h.oconnor@asu.edu](mailto:brendan.h.oconnor@asu.edu)



# Embracing the Future: Integrating GPT into Language Teaching and Learning

By Daniel Bailey

What can I say about GPT that the software can't just as easily tell you? A part of me wanted to ask GPT, "Hey, write me an article for *The English Connection* about GPT in TESOL." However, it would be the first perfectly coherent writing I ever published, which, to anyone who knows my writing, is a dead giveaway I didn't do it.

There is a vibrant debate in education on how to integrate GPT into our teaching and research. One side of the argument demands that students avoid using GPT altogether, which is a similar stance taken against other AI tools like Google Translate and other translation tools. This position is strong and justified when considering that low-proficiency and poorly motivated students are likely to over-rely on this technology to save time on homework.

Contrarily, a more liberal approach to teaching may allow technology like GPT to assist in composition to varying degrees. For me, tools like GPT give students the opportunity to create content that models correct form;

however, these become more like reading activities instead of writing ones, since students do not generate the writing, or even ideas, from scratch.

GPT-assisted writing is an emerging field from which experience and research will guide best practices for teaching and learning. The usage of tools like GPT is likely to increase significantly if students' interactions with such tools reflect their existing dependence on machine translation tools. Despite the potential for misuse, GPT does offer substantial benefits to language learners, including enhanced comprehension, convenience, automatic translations, language practice, and vocabulary development. However, it's worth noting the potential negative implications, with students exploiting GPT to outsource homework, commit plagiarism, and engage in other forms of academic dishonesty. In my current opinion, all actual writing practice must occur in the classroom under instructor supervision. Otherwise, there's a risk that students will over-rely on tools like GPT. As instructors, we can use their (actual) writing as talking points during class discussion, allowing us to check that they wrote it and strengthening the students' desire to write and fully understand original work. Writing can also center on the students' interest to increase task value, effort, and motivation to write on their own. To avoid cheating in my writing classes, students are given routine writing assignments as part of their homework. These tasks were relatively easy and constituted only a minor part of their final grade, thus not making cheating a worthwhile risk. Will this work in the era of GPT? I am not sure.



It may be possible to detect GPT with the naked eye. With simple prompts (e.g., write an essay on animals), GPT-generated content is vague and generic. In my opinion, much of GPT content is predictable and boring. However, the content becomes increasingly unique when the program is given more and more instruction on what to generate.

As professionals, we must develop new and creative approaches to living with AI. Appropriate and effective integration of GPT in language education should entail an initial step of brainstorming and idea generation followed by critical reading and curation of GPT-created content. Despite my skepticism with GPT for out-of-class writing practice, I am a strong proponent of its use in education. The dual sentiments stem from my cautious optimism that, when used responsibly, such technology can significantly enhance learning outcomes.

## GPT in the Classroom: Elementary and University Contexts

My motives for initially using GPT were purely selfish. I was teaching at a winter camp and wanted to save time writing reports. When sitting down at my computer, I began looking online for some report templates. I learned about this AI program that generates texts: ChatGPT. So, I downloaded the app on my phone and asked it to organize my student notes into comments for students and letters to parents. I was impressed.

In addition to student camp reports, I used GPT to create role-play scripts that were specific to the students' reading level and interests (e.g., zombies and vampires). Students lined up in front of the projector screen eager to read the lines we had brainstormed. With any new learning technology, I was waiting for the novelty effect to fade and for students to lose motivation to create and act out GPT scripts, but this did not happen. In the following summer camp, students were equally, if not more, enthusiastic to participate in my expanded use of GPT. In addition to making scripts, I combined GPT with other learning materials and *educatir.com*). Next, I converted the PDF to a MS Word document (*pdflogo.com*). Then, I copy-and-pasted text from the MS Word document (from class workbook) to GPT. This allowed me to use GPT to create comprehension questions or other content related to that class's lesson. I highly recommend asking GPT to provide responses in table format so you can receive responses for well-structured results with layers of information (e.g., presentation ideas with main topics and corresponding subtopics). I further recommend learning how to use tables in your prompts, allowing you to make multiple requests at once. To give feedback in a positive tone, I had GPT write four sentences about each student (names in spreadsheet rows) who received specific feedback (entered in columns).

During last year's spring semester with university students, I upgraded to GPT 4.0 and recognized a significant improvement. I dove headfirst into the GPT wave by designing and teaching a one-credit course on the use of AI in language education. Moreover, I encouraged students to use GPT in my English Communication, English Learning Theory, and Intensive Reading courses. There were several GPT-assisted tactics I used to help students comprehend the reading material better, including having GPT rewrite the passages in

easier vocabulary, making multiple-choice quizzes based on the reading, and creating word banks. I could also use GPT to generate conversation question-based class content. I even had students use GPT to help with generating content for their presentations. In my reading class, I had students create their own stories, which we could read, discuss, and be assessed on. GPT was great at generating conversation questions, sample responses, dialogues, and even translations.

I am constantly trying to identify more creative and effective ways to use GPT. With difficult reading content, I create word banks with prompts like “create a table with the 20 most difficult words in column A and their Korean translation in column B.” GPT output is long and uses unnecessary adjectives so other prompts I use include, “use easier English” and “be more concise.” My favorite prompts entail asking for true/false and multiple-choice questions based on reading passages – great for quick in-class comprehension checks. Recently, I combined GPT with online Jeopardy (jeopardylabs.com) and Bingo (myfreebingocards.com) game generators. In this case, GPT provided words and questions. Advice I give to anyone interested in learning about GPT and how to integrate it into their own teaching and writing is to ask it any questions they may have. GPT is one of the best sources of information on how to use it.

As we continue to adapt and grow with technology, finding innovative ways to use tools like GPT in the classroom will continue to be both a challenge and a burden to educators everywhere. Teaching three different types of writing courses next semester will be my biggest challenge with GPT. For now, paper and pencil with class observation is the best way to ensure students actually write what they claim as their own work.

With tools like GPT, the risk in email writing no longer includes fluency, accuracy, or complexity errors. Instead, the writer only needs to make sure the content being sent aligns correctly with their intended purpose. This specifically applies to real-world writing tasks, including blogging, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter posts. As writing instructors, we need to reflect on this and reevaluate our role as instructors and our classroom goals. Moving forward, teaching writing skills will be partly replaced with teaching skills in analyzing AI-generated content. At the very least, GPT expands the existing curriculum or introduces completely new courses centered on content curation. Perhaps, instruction with GPT should be viewed more as a reading comprehension practice than a brainstorm-writing-editing exercise. To this end, GPT can act as a concordance tool that provides models of correct writing that students and researchers can work towards eventually emulating.

### **Integrating GPT into Research and Academic Writing**

For research and academic writing, I was devastated by how good GPT is compared to my writing. Why am I spending so much time writing papers if GPT can do a better job than me and in a fraction of the time? As I became more familiar with its limitations, I realized it was a proofreading and revision tool, not a means of creating content from scratch. I have been a fan of Grammarly for years and in my experience, Grammarly is a method to incrementally improve writing (i.e., garbage in, slightly less garbage out). In the same vein, GPT can be used to add accuracy, cohesion, and clarity to our writing. For someone who cannot afford editing services, this is great news.

With the assistance of GPT, structuring abstracts, formulating aim statements, and performing data analysis in academic writing can be significantly improved and expedited. For instance, the aim statement in a research paper may contain several variables, research design, and research environment. GPT can help clarify meaning in these complex sentences by giving alternatives to how complex clauses can be organized.

In a similar vein, GPT helps those new to academic writing by guiding students on what belongs in an abstract, how to organize a methods section, and how to carry out data analysis. GPT can answer questions faster and with more detail than graduate supervisors.

GPT is the perfect concordance tool. When writing, I regularly ask GPT to give me alternatives to complex sentences, from which I can reflect on the style, word choice, and structure. GPT allows you to be creative with how you use it, so I recommend you find your own tricks at prompt-generation that work for you.



▲ ***As we become more familiar, ChatGPT can be the right tool for the job of writing instruction.***

With our academic writing, we must acknowledge the risk of intentional or unintentional plagiarism. What does this possible plagiarism look like? In my view, GPT provides everyone with proofreading services only the wealthy could previously afford. GPT can check accuracy, clarity, and complexity, but should not (ethically speaking) add new ideas or details. There are many questions I’m not comfortable attempting to answer this early in the era of GPT. If our writing can be called out as being GPT-esque, then it was never good writing, it didn’t speak with purpose or meaning. Instead, it was reflective of an echo-chamber that sourced content from past, albeit similar, circumstances, parameters that generative pretrained transformers (GPTs) look for.

Even now, GPT is effective in guiding novice researchers through the design process, helping identify and relate variables – a common challenge among graduate students. To streamline your graduate or PhD programs, seek GPT’s advice on research design. However, it’s crucial not to over-depend on GPT for early drafts of actual writing.

While GPT is a transformative tool that reshapes how we teach, learn, and write, it is crucial to navigate this AI wave with discernment. We must harness its power to enhance our teaching methods and research capabilities without succumbing to over-reliance. As educators and researchers, our goal should be to strategically integrate AI tools like GPT, fostering creativity and learning, all while ensuring authenticity and maintaining academic integrity.

### **The Author**

**Daniel Bailey**, PhD in education technology from Korea University, serves as an associate professor at Konkuk University. He specializes in education technology, motivation psychology, and technology-rich language instruction. Always open for collaboration. Email: [dbailey0566@gmail.com](mailto:dbailey0566@gmail.com).



# Gliding, Not Searching: Thinking of ChatGPT as a Glider You Pilot Can Help You Use It More Effectively

By James Intriligator

ChatGPT has exploded in popularity, and people are using it to write articles and essays, generate marketing copy and computer code, or simply as a learning or research tool. However, most people don't understand how it works or what it can do, so they are either not happy with its results or not using it in a way that can draw out its best capabilities.

I'm a human factors engineer. A core principle in my field is never blame the user. Unfortunately, the ChatGPT search-box interface elicits the wrong mental model and leads users to believe that entering a simple question should lead to a comprehensive result, but that's not how ChatGPT works.

Unlike a search engine, with static and stored results, ChatGPT never copies, retrieves, or looks up information from anywhere. Rather, it generates every word anew. You send it a prompt, and based on its machine-learning training on massive amounts of text, it creates an original answer.

Most importantly, each chat retains context during a conversation, meaning that questions asked and answers provided earlier in the conversation will inform responses it generates later. The answers, therefore, are malleable, and the user needs to participate in an iterative process to shape them into something useful.

Your mental model of a machine – how you conceive of it – is important for using it effectively. To understand how to shape a productive session with ChatGPT, think of it as a glider that takes you on journeys through knowledge and possibilities.

## Dimensions of Knowledge

You can begin by thinking of a specific dimension or space in a topic that intrigues you. If the topic were chocolate, for example, you might ask it to write a tragic love story about Hershey's Kisses. The glider has been trained on essentially everything ever written about Kisses, and similarly it "knows" how to glide through all kinds of story spaces – so it will confidently take you on a flight through Hershey's Kisses space to produce the desired story.

**"Can you give me advice on getting healthy?" In that query, ChatGPT does not know who the "you" is, nor who "me" is, nor what you mean by "getting healthy."**

You might instead ask it to explain five ways in which chocolate is healthy and give the response in the style of Dr. Seuss. Your requests will launch the glider through different knowledge spaces – chocolate and health – toward a different destination – a story in a specific style.

To unlock ChatGPT's full potential, you can learn to fly the glider through "transversal" spaces – areas that cross multiple domains of knowledge. By guiding it through



▲ **To understand how to shape a productive session with ChatGPT, think of it as a glider that takes you on journeys through knowledge and possibilities.**

these domains, ChatGPT will learn both the scope and angle of your interest and will begin to adjust its response to provide better answers.

For example, consider this prompt: "Can you give me advice on getting healthy?" In that query, ChatGPT does not know who the "you" is, nor who "me" is, nor what you mean by "getting healthy." Instead, try this: "Pretend you are a medical doctor, a nutritionist, and a personal coach. Prepare a two-week food and exercise plan for a 56-year-old man to increase heart health." With this, you have given the glider a more specific flight plan spanning areas of medicine, nutrition, and motivation.

If you want something more precise, then you can activate a few more dimensions. For example, add in "And I want to lose some weight and build muscle, and I want to spend 20 minutes a day on exercise, and I cannot do pull-ups, and I hate tofu." ChatGPT will provide output taking into account all of your activated dimensions. Each dimension can be presented together or in sequence.

## Flight Plan

The dimensions you add through prompts can be informed by answers ChatGPT has given along the way. Here's an example: "Pretend you are an expert in cancer, nutrition,



and behavior change. Propose eight behavior-change interventions to reduce cancer rates in rural communities." ChatGPT will dutifully present eight interventions.

Let's say three of the ideas look the most promising. You can follow up with a prompt to encourage more details and start putting it in a format that could be used for public messaging: "Combine concepts from ideas 4, 6, and 7 to create four new possibilities – give each a tagline, and outline the details." Now let's say intervention 2 seems promising. You can prompt ChatGPT to make it even better: "Offer six critiques of intervention 2, and then redesign it to address the critiques."

ChatGPT does better if you first focus on and highlight dimensions you think are particularly important. For example, if you really care about the behavior-change aspect of the rural cancer rates scenario, you could force ChatGPT to get more nuanced and add more weight and depth to that dimension before you go down the path of interventions.

You could do this by first prompting, "Classify behavior-change techniques into six named categories. Within each, describe three approaches and name two important researchers in the category." This will better activate the behavior-change dimension, letting ChatGPT incorporate this knowledge in subsequent explorations.

There are many categories of prompt elements you can include to activate dimensions of interest. One is domains, like "machine learning approaches." Another is expertise, like "respond as an economist with Marxist leanings." And another is output style, like "write it as an essay for *The Economist*." You can also specify audiences, like "create and describe five clusters of our customer-types, and write a product description targeted to each one."

### Explorations, Not Answers

By rejecting the search engine metaphor and instead embracing a transdimensional glider metaphor, you can better understand how ChatGPT works and navigate more effectively toward valuable insights.

The interaction with ChatGPT is best performed not as a



▲ **Your explorations with ChatGPT can span multiple areas of knowledge; for example, crossing chocolate with climate change, cuisine, health, international trade, or romance fiction.**

**The interaction with ChatGPT is best performed not as a simple or undirected question-and-answer session but as an interactive conversation...**

simple or undirected question-and-answer session, but as an interactive conversation that progressively builds knowledge for both the user and the chatbot. The more information you provide to it about your interests and the more feedback it gets on its responses, the better its answers and makes suggestions. The richer the journey, the richer the destination.

It is important, however, to use the information provided appropriately. The facts, details and references ChatGPT presents are not taken from verified sources. They are conjured based on its training on a vast but non-curated set of data. ChatGPT will generate a medical diagnosis the same way it writes a Harry Potter story, which is to say it is a bit of an improviser.

You should always critically evaluate the specific information it provides and consider its output as explorations and suggestions rather than as hard facts. Treat its content as imaginative conjectures that require further verification, analysis, and filtering by you, the human pilot.

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### The Author

**James Intriligator** is the director of strategic innovation and professor of the practice in the Department of Mechanical Engineering (School of Engineering) at Tufts University. In 2014, he was named a national teaching fellow (highest teaching honor in the UK). He is the author of over 50 publications in fields as diverse as neuroscience, neurology, consumer psychology, physics, and literary criticism. Personal Website: [intriligator.com](http://intriligator.com)



# How to Use AI Prompts to Plan Custom Lessons Fast

By David Allen

Artificial intelligence tools receive a lot of focus because of the time and energy they can save in mental labor. They could be as dramatic a revolution on our work lives as the combustion engine and electricity were for physical labor. That being said, utilizing these tools requires a communication with these tools that is its own skill. Using AI to save time requires you to understand how to make prompts.



A prompt is a message typed or spoken into an AI tool that tells the tool what to create and how. It is written as a specific command, which can be as simple as one or two sentences, or complex enough to include multiple pages of text. In a tool like ChatGPT, prompts are typed the same way one might write a message in a social media app. Once the prompt is written, it can be “sent,” and ChatGPT goes through its vast library of data and pattern recognition to produce a result that it believes will satisfy the prompt.

Effective prompts require the ability to articulate language through precise instructions and vocabulary. In fact, prompt engineering is so important that it has become its own field of industry because knowing the exact prompt required to produce your desired results can sometimes take time, and being able to use a prompt that already generates those results can eliminate the trial and error involved in using AI tools.

As teachers, prompts will save you time planning lessons in the following ways:

1. Listing activity ideas and lesson topics.
2. Forming example sentences and dialogues.
3. Developing activities for students to practice language.
4. Students using AI to aid their own learning.

In this article, each of these uses will be briefly discussed. An example prompt will be included wherever it will be useful to the reader. Before lesson plans are made, we need an idea of what kind of material to cover, which will be discussed in the following section.

## Listing Activity Ideas and Lesson Topics

Could you quickly list several activities to teach each and every grammar topic? It’s challenging on one’s own, but with tools like ChatGPT, you can do all this in under a minute.

*Example Prompt:* List three kinds of activities an ESL middle school teacher can use to teach the following grammar point to Korean middle school students learning English: Missing Subject-Verb Agreement

A teacher could replace the underlined item with any grammar point to change the prompt. ChatGPT was able to come up with three activities, only one of which I had thought of:



1. Sentence Correction Game: Divide the class into teams and provide them with a set of sentences that contain subject-verb agreement errors. The teams compete against each other to find and correct the errors in the sentences. The team with the most accurate corrections wins the game.
2. Subject-Verb Agreement Worksheets: Create worksheets with sentences that have missing subject-verb agreement. Students will have to identify the subject and the correct verb form that matches the subject.
3. Role-Play or Dialogue Creation: Divide the class into pairs or small groups and assign them various scenarios or contexts. Each group will create a dialogue or role-play using sentences with subject-verb agreement errors. The students must then perform their role-plays in front of the class, and their peers need to identify and correct the errors in each dialogue.

It is considered by some bad teaching for students to model bad grammar, even when it is for instructive purposes, so the first two options look the most appealing. Really, the first one is similar to number 2, but it introduces a competitive element that is natural and engaging to many Korean native learners. Hopefully *he* and *she* will never be mixed up again in students’ conversations when this lesson is completed.

It can be simple to form example sentences when explaining new vocabulary, but when it has to be done for multiple vocabulary words, it can be very time consuming. Trying to use the new vocabulary in example dialogues for listening and speaking activities can be even more

difficult, particularly when there are many lessons to make for different groups of students. Fortunately, AI can help with that as well.

### Forming Example Sentences and Dialogues

The blank page is often the hardest part of starting any lesson plan. Teachers can remove hours of screen-staring and false starts by using AI to make their lesson plans. It creates momentum.

For the next prompt example, I use something called the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, which is a great, but seldom used, tool in Korea because the Korean lexical field is so different from European languages. For those unfamiliar, there are six levels – A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2. A1 is the most basic skill level, and C2 is native-level fluency. The results I got from this prompt were exactly what were needed, created in seconds:

*Example Prompt:* I am an English teacher to Korean middle school students. Make an eight-sentence dialogue between a bicycle mechanic and a teenager who wants to fix his broken bicycle. Include only vocabulary that would fit A1 to A2 level English speakers. Use language like “What is wrong with the bicycle?”

Here are some building blocks to help generate effective AI lesson plan prompts. An effective prompt usually requires at least three or four of these:

1. Who are your students? (middle school, kindergarten, office workers, housewives at the 11 a.m. *hagwon* class?)
2. What are the students’ levels? (Again, the CEFR is useful here.)
3. What is your lesson goal? (What should students be able to do or learn?)
4. Is there a larger goal you are building to (especially for English for special purposes classes)?
5. Are you using a well-known textbook?
6. What is the length of the desired results (100 words, 15 sentences, 2 paragraphs, etc.)?

If a class has only a few students, a teacher could make custom lesson content for each student based on their interests.

*Example Prompt:* List 20 vocabulary words about taking care of cats. This list is for Korean kindergarten students learning English at the A1 level. After listing the words and their definitions, use those words in a six-sentence story about a girl and her cat.

This prompt could just as easily be changed to “dog,” or “an old woman tending to orchids in her garden.” The vocabulary results of this prompt, after number 12, were complicated, like *vaccination*, and the story was too long. If ChatGPT doesn’t give the best results, further prompts can be entered to refine the results. For example: “Make the list ten words long and make each sentence in the story fewer than ten words long.”

Occasionally ChatGPT will have its quirks, the most common of which is the Request Timed Out Error. If ChatGPT gives this response instead of your intended result, simply asking in the chat “Did you time out?” will result in ChatGPT apologizing and finishing the results of your prompt.

Prompts can create multiple-choice questions based on text or vocabulary words, gap-fills on dialogue pasted into the prompt window, and many other student activities. In fact, here are ten more different activities that AI can either facilitate or help produce:

1. Finish a Story: Students take turns writing sentences with ChatGPT as they finish writing a story.
2. Word Rhymes: ChatGPT is prompted to write a word, then the student has to write a rhyming word for ChatGPT. Students take turns.
3. Translate This: Students should translate text, such as a short movie review in Korean into English. Students then type the English they wrote into ChatGPT and ask to translate it into Korean. Did the main message come through, or did they need to rewrite a sentence or two?
4. Give Advice to a Friend: Tell ChatGPT that it is a friend of an ESL student who is in trouble (for example, stuck in quicksand). The student can ask ChatGPT what they should do to get out of the quicksand. Roles can be reversed.
5. Lost Traveler Roleplay: Tell ChatGPT that it is a tourist that is lost in a town. It must ask an EFL student in high school at random a common question tourists ask. Then, the student must give directions based on the knowledge of their own hometown.

**Effective prompts require the ability to articulate language through precise instructions and vocabulary.**

6. Cloze: Take a list of ten vocabulary words and ask ChatGPT to make fill-in-the-blank exercises using example sentences with the vocabulary words turned into gaps for the student to fill.
7. Song Parody: Tell students to take their favorite song and make a parody. One simple way to do this is to take the last word of the song title or chorus and make it a different one. (Bad example: Madonna’s *Like a Virgin* turned into Weird Al’s *Like a Surgeon*). Students can either take that one line and prompt ChatGPT to make the lyrics, or write the lyrics themselves and have ChatGPT make its own version afterwards so that the student can compare and see which one was best.
8. Beginner-Medium-Advanced: Students write a sentence in their target language into ChatGPT. Then the student can prompt AI to rewrite it with a higher or lower English fluency level. The CEFR framework can be used, or the FK score. (The FK score is used in Microsoft Word. It’s called the Flesch Kincaid score, where 1 is Grade 1 and 12 is Grade 12; Anything beyond 12 would be college-level.)
9. Change the Tone: Similar to Beginner-Medium-Advanced. Students write one or more sentences into ChatGPT and ask it to rewrite it in a formal or informal tone, or based on emotions or situations such as Sad, Lonely, Elated, Salesy, or Urgent.

10. Grade the News: Teachers can take one news article from any website and copy-and-paste the text into ChatGPT. From there, ChatGPT can be asked to summarize the article for beginner, intermediate, or advanced ESL learners; limit it to a specific word count; and make comprehension questions based on the text. This is great for reading. (Note: A long-form article might need a subscription to ChatGPT due to the character limit.)

Using AI prompts to fill your custom lessons with activities and sentence examples will speed up workflow considerably. It will still require teachers' expertise to determine which sentences are appropriate for their students, correctly used, and natural. Teachers can incorporate AI prompts into student projects as well so that the students can complete in-class assignments using these tools.

**A teacher's ability to generate AI prompts will give them an edge in today's workforce, helping them build momentum quickly and save time.**


### Developing Activities for Students to Practice Language

According to Griffiths (2022), "The Korean government is in the process of employing AI chatbots in Korean elementary school English classrooms." South Korea is issuing AI-powered digital textbooks to elementary and secondary schools starting in 2025 (Nam, 2023). Any digital collection of documents can be turned into GPT-style chatbots already, including documents found in Google Drive (gpt.space/drive offers it as a free add-on). It's now possible to chat with the AI chatbot, who will reference and respond in the "spirit" of those documents. No more opening and closing documents to find where something was written. Since students can soon do these things, it is helpful to have them practice with ChatGPT in different activities.

Teachers could provide a list of things students want to learn (how to make a game using computer code, how to become a film director, how to build an enclosure for a pet giraffe, etc.) and teach prompting to students so they can learn how to do it. This allows students to better incorporate their own interests and curiosities into their own learning experience.

Students can also use ChatGPT to correct written diary entries. Using ChatGPT plus a tool like Papago Translate can give instant feedback to students regardless of level. *Example Prompt:* Correct the grammar and explain why each mistake is wrong in the following sentences: COPY AND PASTE STUDENT'S WRITING EXACTLY AS IT IS.

ChatGPT corrected "Today will be very funny" in this way:

 **ChatGPT:** The word "funny" refers to something that causes laughter, while "fun" is used to describe an enjoyable experience. In this context, it is more appropriate to use "fun" to describe the day being

enjoyable. Additionally, using "a lot of" before "fun" helps convey the idea of a highly enjoyable day.

Try having students use ChatGPT to brainstorm (but not write) presentations. Give a topic, such as "famous inventions," and students can ask ChatGPT for famous invention ideas they can use for their presentations. After confirming their chosen topic with the teacher, they can research outside of ChatGPT.

AI prompts do not have to end at lesson planning; students can be taught to use AI in their own language learning processes. This puts them in the driver's seat and may encourage them to study more without external motivation.

### Students Using AI to Aid Their Own Learning

For homework, students can use an English chatbot and then print out their conversations as proof of work. As Dokukina and Gumanova (2020, p. 544) have stated, "[Chatbots] provide learning at a convenient time, place, and in small chunks or short pieces, which suits the fast-paced lives of modern students well. They also provide an [sic] immediate feedback, check the student's comprehension, and patiently repeat countless times the information that needs to be understood, remembered, and put into practice." Services with chatbot functions include Duolingo, Rosettastone, Babel, Memrise, and Langotalk, which can provide this kind of feedback and engagement to students.

### Conclusion

Teachers need not fear AI nor the endless tools emerging in the marketplace. The services and providers may change, but prompt writing is likely to stay. A teacher's ability to generate AI prompts will give them an edge in today's workforce, helping them build momentum quickly and save time. This allows for more relevant lesson plans, better feedback for student work, and ultimately the growing of fluency and intellectual capital of all ESL students.

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### The Author

**David Allen** is currently teaching middle school at Seohae Sahmyook Middle School in Chungcheongnam-do. He has taught in Korea for over five years and is the author of several books. He has an MBA in business management, as well as TEFL and CELTA certifications. When not teaching, he is active in evangelism, audio production, and voice-over work.

Email: [authordavidallen@gmail.com](mailto:authordavidallen@gmail.com)





**2023 KOTESOL NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

# **MULTICULTURAL CELEBRATION**

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2023**



**RELATIONS – RESEARCH – REFLECTIONS**

KANGNAM UNIVERSITY, YONGIN-SI, GYEONGGI-DO

**Submission by:**

**September 24, 2023**

**[yongin@koreatesol.org](mailto:yongin@koreatesol.org)**

**<https://koreatesol.org/nc2023>**

## Member Spotlight: Anika Casem

*If you attended or presented at KOTESOL's 2021 National Conference, you probably are familiar with this issue's featured member as a conference co-chair. Or if you are familiar with the Busan-Gyeongnam Chapter of KOTESOL, you may know her as the current chapter president. But if you don't, no worries; you will learn about Anika Casem through the following interview that she did for The English Connection. — Ed.*

**TEC:** Though it is vacation time, I know you are still busy. So, I thank you for carving out some time in your schedule for this interview for *The English Connection*. To start off, would you tell us a little about Anika Casem before she came to the shores of Korea?



**Anika:** Thanks for having me. Before I reached the balmy shores of South Korea, I was born and raised in hot and sunny southern California. It's where I got my taste for Korean things and got the foggiest of notions as to what life outside of the U.S. might be like. I then moved to colorful Colorado, where most of my higher education took place, and I started professionally teaching as a public speaking instructor. With my teaching experience in hand, I made the pivot to ESL.

**TEC:** When did you reach Korea's shores and what lured you to this peninsula? Was it the balmy climate, the easy-to-learn language, the red-hot kimchi, or maybe the top-end teacher salaries?

**Anika:** My husband and I knew we wanted to teach abroad. We looked at several countries of interest, spoke to teachers who had taught in other countries, attended talks and lectures from teachers who relayed their teaching experiences, and volunteered at conversation cafes to talk to students from different countries. We narrowed down our prospects to South Korea and Japan, but we heard from recruiters in Korea first. That was what determined things in the end. It didn't hurt that we were already somewhat familiar with the culture and enjoyed a lot of the food.

**TEC:** I think chance has a lot to do with it for many of us. When I came to Korea in the U.S. Peace Corps, South Korea was their suggestion rather than mine. So, after you got here, how did you first get involved with KOTESOL?

**Anika:** While learning to teach English, my teaching program encouraged us to attend TESOL events to try

to find ways to work professional development into our schedules. The importance of seeking growth through mentorship, volunteering, or professional development groups would be especially important as new teachers. I had liked the TESOL events I had attended in the U.S., and I equate the name TESOL with quality professional development. Once I started working in Gwangju, I also started my search for the Korean TESOL organization. I was excited upon discovering that, not only was TESOL active and thriving in South Korea, but we had an active chapter in my new city. I wasn't brave enough to attend a meeting for a while because I was (and still sometimes am) anxious about meeting new people, and I was worried about getting lost. Once I felt more settled and confident with moving out and about in Gwangju, I attended a couple meetings and went to the International Conference that first year. I didn't know it at the time, but this would be the catalyst that would propel me into further involvement with KOTESOL.

**TEC:** When you were still in the U.S., you were a member of COTESOL, the Colorado affiliate of TESOL. Could you tell us how a U.S. TESOL affiliate differs from an international affiliate of TESOL, such as KOTESOL?

**Anika:** First, I would like to draw attention to the fact that KOTESOL and COTESOL are pronounced the same and this fact will forever give me delight. I have only ever known the CO-/KO- prefix. Second, in regard to the standard of professional development and that essential core element of teachers helping teachers, I don't think they are that different. They are different places and have a different flavor, but they are of the same spirit when it comes to their enthusiasm for effectively teaching English.

**I think we're incredibly lucky to have teachers from a wide variety of locations because there are many different ideas and experiences I get to hear about and consider.**

Being an international affiliate along with the nature of teaching English in South Korea means I run into different types of teachers from all over the world. During my time

with KOTESOL, I've had the pleasure of collaborating with many different people. I think we're incredibly lucky to have teachers from a wide variety of locations because there are many different ideas and experiences I get to hear about and consider. I enjoy the fact that I can meet people from the Philippines, South Africa, and even Ireland at every chapter meeting and that we have all been drawn together by the same siren call of professional growth. In Colorado, it was a much narrower scope, as many of the teachers were born and raised in Colorado and priorities leaned more toward solving the statewide issues teachers were experiencing.

**TEC:** I believe it was just before COVID hit that you became a member of the Busan-Gyeongnam Chapter board, and soon after that, you became the chapter president. Please tell us how it was being a chapter leader during a time of crisis.



▲ *Anika is an avid player of Pokemon Go during her down time.*

**Anika:** It might sound strange, but that time of crisis was probably the best time for me to step into a leadership role because things were more at a standstill. Since we had to take a major step back from in-person meetings, that meant a good deal of responsibility was slightly scaled down. Any worries I might have had about juggling tasks like finding a meeting venue, inviting workshop speakers, scheduling regular meetings, and other logistical plans were lessened. The venue was always Zoom, getting a speaker to come and do a talk mainly boiled down to scheduling, and there was less pressure to have

**... you have access to one of our greatest assets: our members.**

a monthly event due to the murky nature of the future. As things picked up and we started to do more things in person, I was emboldened to slowly add on the things that had formerly intimidated me. It helps that the Busan-Gyeongnam Chapter officers are such gems of human beings and talent. Having them on the team has made the transition from online to offline a lot easier.

**TEC:** It was also during COVID that you were the joint co-chair of the 2021 KOTESOL National Conference. How challenging was it to organize a conference in the midst of the COVID crisis?

**Anika:** It was challenging because I had never taken on such a big role before. The most work I had done for online conferences at that point was functioning as a Zoom moderator. For the 2021 KOTESOL National Conference, I wore so many different hats I could have opened my own millinery. It was intense, yet highly rewarding, and I learned a lot. I met and collaborated with lots of different people, and I was inspired by how hardworking and talented my teammates were. When we had the 2023 International Conference, it was extremely pleasing to finally see and meet a lot of these people in person. Y'all are tall in real life!

**TEC:** Yes, everyone is about the same height in Zoom life. Is there anything else that you would like to share with our readers before we conclude this interview?

**Anika:** Yes. First, I'd like to thank you for taking the time to talk with me and giving me the opportunity to share some of my experience with KOTESOL. Second is some advice for our readers: Take the opportunity for leadership opportunities when they appear. KOTESOL, especially at the regional level, is a safe place to hone your skills and try on different roles. When you take on a role in this organization, it's important to remember that you are not going it alone and that you have access to one of our greatest assets: our members. There are a great number of people willing to share their knowledge, and they will point you in a helpful direction if they don't have the answers. You will learn a lot. You will get a lot of experience. Most importantly, you will grow. You can achieve great things with the support from a community like KOTESOL and, like me, you may find that you're better at it than you thought. Your different flavor will contribute to our enduring spirit.

**TEC:** Well, thank you, Anika, for sharing your thoughts, your insights, and yourself here for the KOTESOL community. We wish you all the best in the future in teaching, in KOTESOL, and in life in general!

Interviewed by David Shaffer.

# The Development Connection

## Expertise, Deliberate Practice, and Reflective Practice

By Bill Snyder

There is an old joke that the difference between an expert teacher and an experienced teacher is that while the expert teacher has taught for 20 years, learned something new each year, and developed professionally, the experienced teacher has just taught the first year 20 times. The point of professional development for teachers is to grow and become better at teaching, that we might go beyond just gaining experience as years go by and acquire expertise. While the joke makes it clear that expertise is something more than experience, it doesn't make clear exactly what that *more* that expert teachers gain is. Is it additional teaching techniques? Do expert teachers simply have wider teaching repertoires to draw on in their classrooms? Is it possibly something that they don't even know themselves and can't share with others? The joke also doesn't tell us anything about how expert teachers acquire whatever it is that elevates them. Is it osmosis from other teachers? Or book learning in teacher education programs? Do professional and faculty development sessions really make a difference? Carl Bereiter and Marlene Scardamalia (1993) point out that while there are expert teachers, we have a hard time identifying them. Perhaps an exploration of this "what" and "how" can help us with this concern.

There are some ideas around relating specifically to language teaching about what makes expert teachers different. Atsuko Watanabe (2017) has suggested that one of the main benefits of reflective practice is that teachers increase the repertoire of actions that they can take when making teaching decisions. This difference gives more expert teachers a wider set of possibilities to make use of in their practice. Watanabe's argument also suggests that this kind of expertise is available to any teacher through the mechanism of reflective practice. However, Amy Tsui (2003), from her case studies of ESL teachers in Hong Kong, suggests that the difference between expert and non-expert teachers is not located in what the expert can do that the non-expert cannot but in "the way they perceive and understand what they do" (p. 246). That is, expert teachers have a deeper insight into the meaning of their actions than do non-experts, even when they are carrying out the same

action. One question related to this is to what extent expert teachers are aware of this difference and able to say what it is that they are doing. Virginia Samuda (2005) found differences between specialist and non-specialist task designers in terms of how aspects of planning for task implementation were reflected in their designs. Samuda also noted that the specialists rarely provided specific insight into this aspect of their designs in interviews, suggesting that its use represents a kind of "tacit domain knowledge" (p. 248) distinguishing the specialists from the non-specialists. While Samuda suggests it may be possible to elicit this knowledge for training purposes, this isn't guaranteed.

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Expertise is a topic of discussion beyond the field of language teaching. The psychologist Anders Ericsson has argued that expertise is a matter of potential that has been properly exploited through training. The ability to exploit potential and develop expertise may be constrained in certain fields by other requirements of the domain (e.g., height for basketball) as well as by limited possibilities for the kind of training that is needed. But given proper conditions, Ericsson's work, like Watanabe's, suggests that expertise is within the reach of any person (Ericsson & Pool, 2016). Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) suggested, similar to Tsui, that experts differed in how they understood what they were doing, and that this allowed them to go beyond routines and address problems. The development of expertise was a matter of gaining the ability to solve increasingly complex problems. This problem-solving ability that is the core of expertise is also available to all and develops through the acquisition of knowledge in the process of problem-solving. That is to say, expertise in this perspective is grounded in practical experience.



The conceptual knowledge that is developed, like that of Samuda's specialist task-designers, may be tacit and not easily expressed by those who hold it. Bereiter and Scardamalia would also want to distinguish between experts and specialists. Specialists may master routines which work in many situations in a particular domain but experts have the ability to focus on the problem when routines fail and create solutions from the knowledge that they hold. To me, this describes something like what I see as expertise in teaching, the ability to deal with novel situations using knowledge that one has acquired through experience.

As the joke at the beginning of this column suggests, though, experience isn't enough for developing expertise. So, the question of how people develop expertise remains. The best-known proposal for answering this question comes from Ericsson, in what he has called *deliberate practice*. Deliberate practice involves pursuing a well-defined goal for which there is a clear path for improvement. It requires concentrated effort at a level above where one can currently perform, generally guided by a teacher who knows both the goal and the process for achieving it. This teacher provides feedback on the learner's efforts, which allows constant, fine-tuned adjustment of efforts to achieve the goal. Through such practice, the learner develops a mental representation of the activity they are engaged in that allows them to perform the activity at a higher level than others (Ericsson & Pool, 2016). These mental representations sound somewhat like the understanding that Tsui (2003) promotes, the repertoire mentioned by Watanabe (2017), and the complex problem-solving ability that Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) highlight. If this is the case, then developing expert teachers depends on helping teachers move beyond formulaic approaches to their practice to helping them create mental models of the teaching and acquire tools that they can use to solve problems in context.

However, the deliberate practice model for developing expertise has some problems when we consider applying it to teaching. So far, there isn't a clear consensus on what the process for developing teaching skills is. There isn't even complete agreement on what the skills to be developed are. Because of this, we also lack objective measures for evaluating teacher performance, which would be essential to developing a unified training program. But even if the deliberate practice is not fully available in a field, Ericsson argues that the principles of it can still be made use of to help people develop (Ericsson & Pool, 2016).

Reflective practice provides a way for teachers to construct the mental models of teaching that are necessary for improvement and the building of expertise.

Farrell (2018) advocates a framework built around five elements – varied opportunities for reflection, built-in ground rules, provision of time, provision of external input, and trust – which in many ways mimic the principles of deliberate practice. For example, the use of ground rules to focus reflection matches the need for well-defined goals in deliberate practice. The importance of external sources of input and the need for trust are comparable to the teacher–learner relationship in deliberate practice. Farrell talks specifically about *development time*, recognizing that the process of professional development is an incremental one.

## Reflective practice has become a buzzword in the field of language teaching...

Reflective practice has become a buzzword in the field of language teaching, promoted in teacher education and professional development programs. But often, it is done vaguely, without the ground rules or clear goals that would help most to make it effective. Even when these are provided, my students sometimes struggle with the kind of critical thinking that is needed to enhance their abilities. We may not have a clearly defined course of development for expertise in language teaching that we can use to shape how we do professional development activities. But in reflective practice, we do have an approach to professional development that includes many of the same principles as deliberate practice, the best known approach to building expertise in other areas. I think it would be helpful to try to understand how the five underlying elements that Farrell mentions impact the implementation of reflective practice. In future columns, I want to explore each element in greater detail in order to help readers (and myself) construct better mental models of what reflective practice is so that we can use it to acquire greater expertise in teaching.

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### The Columnist

Bill Snyder is a professor in the International Language Education Program: TESOL at Soka University in Japan. He has worked in teacher education for over 25 years in the US, Korea, Turkey, Armenia, and Japan. His current research focuses on the lives and wellbeing of teachers across their careers and on the mentoring of novice teachers. Email: [wsnyder7@gmail.com](mailto:wsnyder7@gmail.com)



# The Brain Connection

## Three Basic Principles About the Brain Every Teacher Should Know

By Dr. Curtis Kelly

Mind, brain, and education specialist Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa starts her bestselling guide, *Making Classrooms Better* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2014), with an intriguing quote from educational specialist, Leslie Hart:

Designing educational experiences without knowledge of the brain is like designing a glove without knowledge of the hand. (p. xxxiii)

That's it! It fits our field perfectly. Think about it. "Language" and "learning" are both exquisite functions of the brain, but if you ask any language teacher how the brain does either, you'll get something like: "Well, students get bits of language; it must be comprehensible; they practice it and that language goes into memory... sometimes." That is about the same thing my eleven-year-old would say. It's like a car mechanic saying, "Well, you push this thing on the floor and the wheels turn."

A better-read teacher might add, "Language is handled by the left hemisphere with the help of two areas devoted to language, Broca's and Wernicke areas." Yes, indeed, this brain science from the 1860's is taught in most TESL teacher-training programs (and I found this same claim online just now), but neuroscience has found these theories flawed, along with Chomsky's Language Acquisition Device, the Mental Lexicon, and that children are better language learners.

It is not often that professionals like us know so little about the basics. Florists know how flowers grow. Stock market investors know how stock values change. Mechanics know how engines work. But most of us are pretty much in the dark when it comes to knowing how the brain does language and learning.

It's not that we didn't try. Two huge academic fields, linguistics and education, spend decades trying to figure out how the brain does those functions. They couldn't. But to be fair, for a century, neuroscience did not really know how the brain did it either. Then, something amazing happened in the 1990s. We developed this incredible tool, fMRI, that let us actually see *into* the brain. From that moment (which I refer to as "the schism"), neuroscience went from speculating

to really knowing. Our knowledge about the brain went nova, often compared to the way personal computers advanced so quickly in the eighties. We now know how learning occurs down to the molecular level and how our brains do language, which is truly the latest, greatest feat of human evolution.



So, let's take a quick look at that engine under the hood. I will offer three basic principles from the neuroscience of learning and connect them to the classroom. Before that, however, despite all the bad news I laid out above, there is some good news too: Neuroscience says that you've basically been doing the right thing. All those intuitions you have followed – that engagement and enjoyment are important, that repeated practice leads to deeper learning, that learners need hands-on experiences to really get it, and that relationships count – are all solidly supported by neuroscience. But there have been missteps as well, such as the notions of right-brain and left-brain people, rigid VAKT learning styles, and just the notion that logic and emotion are separate.

So now, the principles:

### 1. The Body Counts

Our traditional view of the brain and body being separate is completely wrong. We now see all cognition as embodied, with the brain and body collaborating to make sense of the world. In fact, we now believe that everything you know, even abstractions, comes

from real-world experiences. Researchers found that expressions like “the market is going up” activate your own motor neurons for looking or moving upwards. When you see a dog running, all your previous sensory experiences with dogs combined into a master template activate, so that you can identify that moving thing as a dog. You understand the running because your own motor neurons that make you run are activated. That is how perception and memory work, with a very thin divide between doing it ourselves and seeing someone else do it. And here is the cool thing: If you hear the words “a dog was running” the same neurons fire again as if you were seeing or doing it yourself.

***We learn through physical experiences, so making students physical in class enhances learning.***

*The takeaway:* We learn through physical experiences, so making students physical in class enhances learning. We do that in one way by having visual aids, but a better way might be having them move their bodies. Students making gestures when practicing vocabulary, no matter how meaningless the motions, increases retention. In fact, any movement also increases blood flow and that supports cognition. In other words, even just having them stand up to do pair practice aids learning. In a previous article, we linked stories to embodied cognition as well.

## **2. Emotion Is the Key to Thinking and Learning**

Way too much teaching is still conducted in a transmission format: Whatever we tell the students they learn. Wrong! We are physically unable to learn what is not meaningful to us. As neuroscientist Mary Helen Immordino-Yang once said, “It is literally neurobiologically impossible to build memories, engage complex thoughts, or make meaningful decisions without emotion.” Emotion is not separate from cognition; it is a critical part of it. It is the steering mechanism built into mental models that keeps us away from spiders and drives us towards McDonald’s. It tells us what is important to attend to, what we should learn, and what we can let pass.

*The takeaway:* As teachers, we should always remember that the brain likes to remember things that make it feel good (and bad too, but more in terms of fearing the teacher than remembering the language mistake you were scolded for). We should try as much as we can to make what is to be studied meaningful.

One great tool for that is personalization. Another is humor and novelty. Another is social interaction. And when all else fails, just use those emotion-arousing words: “This will be on the test.” Finally, “fun” is not an extra. It is a key factor. If your students are smiling, they are learning.

## **3. The Social Brain Is Our Superpower**

I said above that “social interaction aids learning,” something you already know, but even so, you might underestimate how powerful a learning tool it is. In a couple great TED Talks, neuroscientist Matthew Lieberman tells us how human mentalizing, mind-reading others, is far more developed than in any other species. It allows us to collaborate in millions and across oceans. In fact, our social brain takes over any time our brain is not being used for other processing, such as the analytical processing we often label as “study.” That is too bad, because the social brain can have a bigger effect on learning than the analytical brain.

Relationships are important but not fully appreciated. I did a Google search on “classroom relationships” and got lots of hits on *teacher–student* relationships, but almost nothing on a type of relationship that might be even more important, *student–student* relationships. Research shows that students with friends in class are more likely to learn better, behave better, teach each other things, and more, whereas students without friends are more likely to miss class, have trouble concentrating, and suffer psychological problems like depression.

*The takeaway:* Students chatting and interacting, even in their own language is not a frivolity, it is part of getting them into the right brain state for learning. And if you can connect language practice to socializing, all the better. Youth, especially adolescents, have this driving need to make friends, so ride that wave: Support translanguaging. Use dyadic pairs to practice speaking (where students change partners after an exchange). Give them different partners to work with in each class. Do the class party on the first day, not the last. And finally, hold off a bit before jumping on students who seem off-task, like chatting in L1. As we learned from Harumi Kimura, a professor studying student relations at Miyagi Gakuin Women’s University, those interactions often represent what she calls “student civility,” where a learner with high emotional intelligence is trying to help a more reluctant one engage.

## **In Conclusion**

This is just a brief overview on how neuroscience can make us better teachers. If you’d like to stop being “a professional who does not know the basics,” keep reading this column, and subscribe to *The MindBrainEd Think Tanks*.

## **The Columnist**

**Curtis Kelly** (EdD) founded the JALT Mind, Brain, and Education SIG, and until 2022, was a professor of English at Kansai University in Japan. His life mission is “to relieve the suffering of the classroom.” He has written 35 books, over 100 articles, and given over 500 presentations. This article was based on one he wrote for the *MindBrainEd Think Tanks*, so please subscribe! [mindbrained.org](http://mindbrained.org)



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