

## Creativity and Theatre in Language Education

By Caleb J. Sekeres

English education, and education in general, frequently "misses the mark" in not focusing on creative skills and fun. In the frequently dull and architecturally uninteresting classrooms of the university, the idea of "play" is not encouraged. In Korea, while music seems to have a strong foothold, theatre is not a common artistic offering at the university level. This is unfortunate, because a classroom is a natural theatre – there is an audience, or spectators, and performers at all times, namely, the teacher and the students, who are both spectators and performers alternatively. It is time to change the idea that a classroom is a place for only "serious" study, and accept the idea of the classroom as theatre. It is time to focus on the resources present in every student and teacher, the body, voice, and naturally creative intellect, as a means to improve and enjoy language education.

In this workshop, participants will be introduced to theatrically based games in order to activate basic observational skills, practice language observation and word association activities, and gain firsthand experience of how language (text and subtext) is both flexible and musical.

Beginning with a simple observation of a partner, workshop members will witness how simple change provokes intellectual curiosity while engaging a childish instinct for fun. Moving on to language-centered work, attendees will cooperate in groups to brainstorm and then manipulate language, creating simple sentences which other groups will alter. These

sentences will then take on further meaning through funny, theme-based associations.

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### THE PRESENTER

Caleb J. Sekeres came to Korea from the United States in the summer of 2008. In America, he spent many



years as a university instructor, theater educator, and stage actor in and out of New York City (Off-Broadway and regionally), where he also founded The Breakaway Theatre Company. In addition, Caleb has played the piano since he was six years old, and

commercially released his second CD of original folk-style ballads, *The Gift*, on January 1, 2013. Since arriving in Korea, Caleb has performed his one-man show, *Bad, Bad Boy* (in Chuncheon), appeared on the TV programs *Heart to Heart* and *Surprise*, recorded two CDs, written a nonfiction novel (*Out of Providence*, which he hopes to publish in the coming year) in collaboration with his brother, and taught English to thousands of students of all ages. He is currently an Assistant Professor of ESL at Chosun University, and has also served as an interviewer for the Gwangju Biennale and Gwangju Universiade. Caleb is married and has one beautiful son, with another child on the way.

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**How to Join:** Apply by using the online membership form at <http://www.koreatesol.org/>. On the front page, click on “Join KOTESOL” in the menu, and follow the directions.

Alternately, paper membership application and renewal forms are available at Chapter meetings for those who prefer making a hard-copy application with Chapter assistance.

## Membership payment may be made by:

- Bank transfer to **KOTESOL:** Korea Exchange Bank account number 630-006952-841
- Payment in cash to the Chapter Membership Officer at a Chapter Meeting

## Creativity and Theatre in Language Education

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The workshop will continue into deeper physical, (non)verbal, and creative "performance" work. Students will learn to take their observation and language communication skills to another level, performing select vocabulary words in a charades-type theater game. Again, while the emphasis is on fun in the classroom, the exercise reinforces the notion of creative (and non-verbal) communication (theatre as a visual art) as a highly useful tool in the language education classroom.

Finally, to come around to the ultimate goal of practical language communication, of dialogue, the workshop will focus on text and subtext in an effort to connect language, rhythm, and meaning. Participants will again work in groups to produce short phrases or sentences from everyday life, and then observe how easily meaning can change when in the hands of another person. A simple phrase is given a context within which the text and subtext breathe and transform, and this new creation, this "new language," will be proven to have a basis in rhythm and music.

While most academics do not embrace theatre as worthy of "serious" intellectual study, as an equal in

a university setting, this final theatre-based game will in fact prove that language acquisition and practice is both musical and interpretive, and thus creative.

A classroom is worthless if it does not invite the artistic imagination of its teacher and students. All the world's a stage.



*(Caleb Sekeres will be speaking on and showing how to bring creativeness and the theatrical into the classroom situation at the February 14 Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter meeting at Chosun University.)*

## Gwangju-Jeonnam KOTESOL Conference

*A Journey in Professional Development*

**March 14, 2015 — Chosun University**

★ Plenary Speaker: **Dr. Joo-Kyung Park**, Honam University

◆ Pre-Conference Morning Reflective Practice Session

**4 STRANDS OF CONCURRENT SESSIONS**

Professional Development ■ ■ Teaching Techniques  
Digital / Technical ■ ■ Research / ELT

Details at: <http://koreatesol.org/content/gwangju-jeonnam-kotesol-annual-regional-conference>

## Gwangju-Jeonnam KOTESOL February Chapter Meeting

- Time: Saturday, February 14, 2015, 1:45–5:00 p.m.
- Place: Chosun University Main Building (Gwangju), 4th Floor, Room 4211

### ■ Schedule

#### Reflective Practice SIG Morning Session

Winter Break – No February RP Session

#### Chapter Meeting: Main Session

**1:45 pm:** Sign-in and Meet-and-Greet (Admission is free. Future membership is welcomed.)

**2:00 - 2:50 pm:** FEATURED PRESENTATION

*Creativity and Theatre in Language Education*

Caleb J. Sekeres (Chosun University, Gwangju)

**2:50 - 3:10 pm:** Refreshment Break

**3:10 - 4:00 pm:** ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION on ELT Topics

Co-teaching: Problems in Practice

Staying Motivated in Adverse Job Situations

Classroom Management Problems

How Much L1 in the L2 Classroom?

Winning Warm-up Ways

Wrap-up Review, and More

*(Bring your topics, concerns, curiosities to the table.)*

#### 4:00 Swap-Shop Session

Everyone is invited to Share one of your Teaching Ideas, Classroom Activities, Games, Books, or other Teaching Wisdom. (Handouts welcomed.)

**4:30 pm:** Announcements / Drawing for Door Prizes / Closing

6:00 pm: After-Meeting Dinner

## Upcoming Chapter Events

**March 14, 2015.**

#### Gwangju KOTESOL Regional Conference

Plenary: *To Live Like an ELT Professional in Korea*

Dr. Joo-Kyung Park (Honam University;

KOTESOL Past President; ALAK President)

Concurrent Sessions all afternoon.

**April 11, 2015. Monthly Chapter Meeting**

*Reflective Practice: Reflecting on the Learner*

■ Tyson Vieira (Muan Englishtown)

*Music, Chants, & Video-making for the Classroom*

■ Chad LaRoche

**Chapter Calendar of Events:** <http://koreatesol.org/content/calendar-events-1-gj-chapter>

## Upcoming KOTESOL Events

#### Jeonju-North Jeolla KOTESOL Chapter Conference

Jeonju University, Jeonju, Jeonbuk

May 9, 2015 (Saturday)

#### The 2015 Korea TESOL National Conference

*Bridging the Digital Divide: Examining Online*

*Language Teaching in Asia*

May 30, 2015; Sookmyung Women's Univ., Seoul

**KOTESOL Calendar of Events:** <http://koreatesol.org/content/1-kotesol-events-major>

**Upcoming Korea ELT Events:** <http://www.koreatesol.org/content/2-domestic-elt-events-non-kotesol>