The English Connection

A Publication of KOTESOL

This Issue:

Young Learners and Montessori

KOTESOL Views

Korea vs. Saudi Arabia

Technically Speaking

Finding the Hero
Amanda Maitland

Special Conference Section

KOREA TESOL

KOTESOL
대한영어교육학회

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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.

The English Connection Editorial Team

Editor's Welcome

Dear Reader,

The International Conference just doesn't happen overnight. It is a process that takes almost a year to happen. Many KOTESOL members sacrifice their weekends, time with family, and many other things to make sure that the conference is a success. I'm happy to report that this year was no different. The IC committee hosted another successful event at Sookmyung Women's University. I got to meet many of the people who have contributed to TEC, as well as others who will hopefully see their work in print in the future. A special thanks has to go to Carl Dusthimer, Ralph Cousins, and the rest of the committee for all their hard work. If you were not able to make the conference, don't worry, we brought some of it to you. In this issue you will find articles from some of featured speakers, including Dick Allwright, Charles Browne, Annamarie Pinter, and others. TEC would like to thank all who contributed this year.

At this year's International Conference a new president of KOTESOL was elected. TEC would like to congratulate Peadar Callaghan, as well as all the other officers who were elected. Our new president has already started his own podcast. You can get more information about this on koreatesol.org.

Our feature article this month covers how you can use superheroes in the classroom. Amanda Maitland has taken one of her popular presentations and has adapted it for TEC. Seneca Ryan also shows us teaching from a Montessori perspective. In our ongoing comparison series we take a look at what it's like to teach in Saudi Arabia. I think you'll find the differences rather interesting. KOTESOL Views this month also tackles teaching in Saudi Arabia. We get a unique view of a woman teaching in a very male-dominated society. Our two newest columns continue this issue with great pieces about top ELT tech tools, and giving thanks for what we have (Korean style). As always, if you would like to contribute to TEC, please send your submissions to tecsubmissions@gmail.com.

I can't say enough how much KOTESOL relies on volunteers. Everybody from the conference chair, down to the student volunteers, worked this year because they wanted to put on a good conference. But the International Conference isn't the only part of KOTESOL that needs volunteers. If you want to help get TEC out quicker, then contact me at kotesolteceditor@gmail.com to see how you can help.

I hope that you have all enjoyed the fall season so far. Winter will be coming soon, and so will the cold, but KOTESOL and TEC will be here with you!

Sincerely,

William Mulligan

William Mulligan

Editor-in-Chief

In the next issue of The English Connection:

Teaching in Turkey

Summer camps . . . abroad

Technically Speaking

Finding the Hero in the Young Student
Amanda Maitland shows us how to use psychologic goals to teach children

The focus of this article is to encourage teachers to develop specific psychological goals for English language teaching. We have long had intangible humanistic goals regarding focusing on the whole person, but we can add more focus to the psychological aim and, at the same time, increase the literacy levels of our students. One way of achieving this is by applying superhero, war or fantasy themes to our classes.

Why use superheroes?

Literacy events that allow a young adult to adopt the persona of a superhero can be empowering and give the young adult a feeling of safety. They allow children to emulate a safe relationship and provide safe emotional play.

Active exploration of aggression through superhero themes can reduce aggression and promote empowerment. When Jones (2002) asked teenagers what it was about the comic books and superhero themes that they liked, one teenager stated that:

"*It's the fights. " the way Michael gets crazy when he thinks that Angela is in danger. Or looks angry with Ray but then instantly turns her anger against the villain instead, so you know she really cares (for) him." She paused to find words, "that's when you see their passion. And their passion really makes them powerful. I asked her what she felt like in those scenes. "Well", she said awkwardly, "I'm them when I'm reading about them right? So I'm powerful.*" (Jones, 2002, p.4)

The images and action that their superhero undergoes can be "acting out" personal fears of things that might harm them or their families. In the fantasy life of the superhero, the student usually succeeds in beating the darker characters, which allows for a greater feeling of inner security and positive feelings that it is possible to succeed and be in control of their lives. Superhero realia and multimedia allow the students to enact and discuss the complexity of the superhero and villain characters' personalities. In exploring the "dark" and "light" that exists in the superhero's personality, students develop the ability to think critically and move away from the child's black and white understanding of the world. It also arguably helps the young adult to gain a greater understanding of the heroes in their lives. It is important that young adults are able to understand that their hero is a person and, like all people, has failings and is generally just trying to do the best they can to survive.

The superhero theme may be adapted for young learners.(Jones 2002) observed a young learner who adapted a "telly tubby" persona, but when he was feeling more confident would become a "power ranger". As the child developed, he became the power ranger more frequently. According to Jones (2002) young learners have also been noted as projecting heroic protective qualities on the cartoon dog, Scooby do. It could be argued that Kung Foo Panda might also come into the category of young persons' superhero, as he is a superhero with soft and cuddly edges, enabling the child to feel both comforted and protected.

The role of the teacher

The feelings and ideas can be projected into stories, plays, poems, artwork, comic books or role-plays. The teacher's role is to provide the environment for "acting out", i.e. a place separate to the classroom where actual role play is encouraged. If role play takes place in the classroom, it is best to have a specific classroom area where the super powers work, so as to discourage rough housing during the class when this is not appropriate. The literacy tasks provided by the teacher should allow the teacher and students to record and edit emerging feelings and ideas.

Art and story workshops are adaptable from every level upwards from pre-school (Jones, 2002). According to Jones, they help "kids pull together images, thoughts and emotions in their minds, through individual storytelling in a comic strip form" (Jones 2002, p.6). Whether in soft toy play or superhero fantasy play, the dialogue can lead to a personal or shared narrative. However, the key ingredient in fantasy play and literacy events is the participation of the adult. Through questioning, the adult stimulates discussion, encourages the students to reconsider their aggressive urges, and promotes the discussion of better ways of dealing with their anger or with the situation. The participation of the adult and peers is therefore essential to a healthy psychological development.

Superheroes in the adult classroom

Even adults can enjoy the superhero or fantasy battle themes. Jones (2002) described his own experience of transitioning between different superheroes at different ages: "But I carried the monster slaying hero inside me all the time. First as fantasy. Beowulf gave way to King Kong, then Batman, then James Bond" (Jones, 2002, p.1).

The most notable aspect of Jones' transition from child to adult was that there was always a superhero helping him navigate his way. There is a huge amount of memorabilia and DVDs that can support these themes of super hero, war and fantasy, and all of the themes can be appreciated by young adults and adults. This fantasy play can lead to rich literacy events full of authentic communication and writing.

How to use superheroes in the classroom

When using the superhero theme in classes, use the superheroes popular at the time. It is prudent to use a wide range of heroes in the class, to promote a student's superhero identification. In the same way that a soft toy/doll becomes the voice of the young child, the superhero character, mask, action figure or doll supports the production of the voice of the young student. Thus, through the persona of the super hero the young student is able to air his or her feelings and safely act out these out. The masks become a means of representing the emotions that lie within.

Jones (2002) noted that, post 9/11, schools in New York have encouraged children to play with airplanes, with

themes of battles and crashes. It is natural for adults to move into denial when tragedy occurs. However, children respond by "acting out" and roleplaying the events until they feel safe. Thus, this play was thought to be cathartic for the children and real dialogue was produced that provided personal and shared narratives and psychological healing after the 9/11 events.

The more specific language elements developed by carrying out superhero projects are a development of comparative and superlative language features, and the use of the third person. Superhero classes or projects can be extended over several classes or limited to one lesson.

Students can be encouraged to consider who their superhero is at home and arrive at school in costume for the class. In addition, students can invent new superheroes. Inventing new superheroes is useful for focusing on the students' individual psychology and creative ideas. Or if the teacher wishes to focus on family issues a superhero family can be designed by students working in pairs, groups or individually. Students decide on the strengths and weakness of the family group and their superhero powers and vulnerabilities.

Another project, used in Malaysia, is to get the students to imagine that the teacher or principal is a secret superhero. The students must design his/her costume and decide on their powers and describe the day of the secret superhero.

The superhero theme can also venture into Classroom Management. In Elementary School, one child can be designated a superhero every day. The aim is that the child try to act as a superhero, helping everyone. If, at the end of the day, the class can guess which superhero the child is, the child is given a superhero certificate. In addition to this, there are superhero readings and reading comprehensions, poetry or storyboarding activities and textbooks that have a superhero base for Math and English.

The superhero theme has never ceased to surprise me in its ability to hotwire communication so that I am able to ascertain in-depth information about the students in my class. It also appears to provide a gender neutral subject where all students find something to appreciate. It has always seemed a no brainer to me that if you can increase communication, you can increase literacy levels and ultimately test scores. In my opinion, bringing superheroes into the classroom, with the psychological and literacy benefits this provides, makes this a "win-win " approach to teaching.

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Website Review

My Language Exchange

Address: mylanguageexchange.com

INTRODUCTION

Launched in 2000, the My Language Exchange (MLE) website is the result of a collaboration between Helene Cormier, a language teacher, and Dan Yuen, an engineer. Yuen had enrolled as a student in one of Helene's language workshops in Montreal to study French. He was very impressed with Helene's method of teaching, and realized language exchange practice with a skilled interlocutor is very important to language acquisition. The two decided to team up on a website to bring the Cormier method of language exchange to people all over the world. Boasting the opportunity to chat in 155 languages, the site has gotten great reviews from *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, and other media, as well as being listed as one of *PC Magazine's* top 101 internet sites in the world in 2003. Friendship Force International, a Nobel Peace Prize nominated organization co-founded by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, also endorses the site. Cormier is no longer involved in the operation, having gone back to teaching, while Yuen still runs the site and practices his French.

EVALUATION

The MLE homepage is simple and easy to navigate. A list of various links on the left is clearly marked with easy to understand headings to take you where you want to go. New users are greeted with a section especially for them explaining the whats, whys, and hows of the site, including more information and where to sign up as a member. Special features detail certain programs such as penpals, group homestay exchanges, ways to edit your profile, and a special email inbox for users. A variety of boxed quotes of positive reviews and endorsements from various media sources and organizations assures users of the quality of the site. A search feature allows users to search for a language exchange partner based on various criteria such as native language, practicing language, country, or age.

Scrolling further down the homepage, you are greeted with a list of the 133 different home countries the website members are from. This adds an interesting dimension for learners as they have the chance to talk to native speakers in far off lands, which "seems a lot more interesting to many students than talking to the person sitting next to them in class" (Chapelle & Jamieson, 2008, p. 171). Simply click the links and you can view the profiles of the MLE members from those countries, their native language, and what language they want to practice, as well as a brief note of introduction.

Learning Materials

Clicking on the "penpals" link takes you to a page to search members based on the language you want to practice or the country the member is in. This feature can be extremely helpful if a language learner wants to practice a certain version of a language, such as American English as opposed to British or Australian English. A "how-to" guide at the bottom of the page gives pointers on how to search for a language partner and how to write to each other. MLE suggests only trying to write part of the time in your practicing language and the other time to write in your native language. They note that this kind of exchange allows for a more in-depth conversation for both partners that is not too overwhelming with practice for either. It also notes the task of giving each other feedback on one's writing is essential to this learning process. These conversations can allow "learners to try out their language, and in doing so, they find out what they do not know" (IBID). And if you are not sure what to write about and are at a loss for words, the handy Chat Companion offers lessons that you and your learning partner can complete in real time together. These tasks are especially helpful, as research has consistently found that it is important for teachers to provide learners with tasks that foster good communication, as opposed to allowing learners to interact on just a social level.

Clicking on the "How To" link from the MLE homepage takes you to extensive information on how to use the penpal and language exchange service. It details step-by-step how to go through the process of what to do before you even practice, such as judging your language level, forming a practice group of people, and selecting one member as a guide. Next, it details the kinds of actions to perform while you are practicing such as using a timer so everyone has a chance, taking charge of your own learning, how to be sensitive to your partner's needs for learning your native language, how to give corrections to each other, and how to be considerate in your communications. Additional help includes encouragement to practice regularly, as well as links to warm up exercises before you practice and urging you to relax and enjoy the experience. Every page has a link to report disruptive behavior on the site so everyone can continue to enjoy a safe experience.

Becoming a member is free and applying for memberships requires basic information such as a screen name, email address, country of origin, language you want to practice as well as your native language, and the types of contact you want to engage in. A welcome email is sent to you with well-organized links to the various components of the site and explains how things work.

A New General Service Vocabulary for 2nd Language Learners
Dr. Charles Browne

With more than 600,000 words in the largest dictionary of English, the task of learning English as a second language is an incredibly daunting one. Luckily, though, English is also a language that contains a lot of built-in redundancies, meaning that certain words are far more important in our daily lives than others (just the word the, for example, makes up 6-7% of all the words in any book, magazine, or newspaper, and the top 100 most frequent words in English account for an astounding 50% all the words we will ever meet).

The scientific study of the mathematics of English vocabulary is called "corpus linguistics," and, in 1953, Michael West published a remarkable list of about 2000 important vocabulary words known as the General Service List (GSL). Based on more than two decades of pre-computer corpus research including input from other renowned, early 20th century researchers such as Harold Palmer, and several vocabulary conferences sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation in the early 1930s, the GSL was designed to be more than simply a list of high-frequency words. Its primary purpose was to combine both objective and subjective criteria to come up with a list of words that would be of "general service" to learners of English as a foreign language. However, as useful and helpful as this list has been to us over the decades, it has also been criticized for being based on a corpus that is considered to be both dated, as well as too small by modern standards (the initial work on the GSL was based on a 2.5 million word corpus that was collected under a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation in 1938), and for not clearly defining what constitutes a "word."

On the 60th anniversary of West's publication of the GSL, my colleagues (Brent Culligan and Joseph Phillips of Aoyama Gakuin Women's Junior College in Tokyo, Japan), and I would like to announce the creation of a New General Service List (NGSL) that is based on a carefully selected 273 million-word subsection of the 1.6 billion-word Cambridge English Corpus (CEC). Following many of the same steps that West and his colleagues did (as well as the suggestions of Professor Paul Nation, project advisor and one of the leading figures in modern second language vocabulary acquisition), we have tried to combine the strong, objective scientific principles of corpus and vocabulary list creation with useful pedagogic insights to create a list of approximately 2800 high-frequency words which meet the following goals:

1. To update and greatly expand the size of the corpus used (273 million words) compared to the limited corpus behind the original GSL (about 2.5 million words), with the hope of increasing the generalizability and validity of the list.
2. To create a NGSL of the most important high-frequency words useful for second language learners of English which gives the highest possible coverage of English texts with the fewest words possible.
3. To make a NGSL that is based on a clearer definition of what constitutes a word.
4. To be a starting point for discussion among interested

scholars and teachers around the world, with the goal of updating and revising the list based on this input (in much the same way that West did with the original Interim version of the GSL).

The NGSL: A word list based on a large, modern corpus

Utilizing a wide range of computer-based corpus creation and analysis tools not available to West and his colleagues, we began the development of the NGSL with an analysis of the Cambridge English Corpus (formerly known as the Cambridge International Corpus). The CEC is a 1.6 billion-word corpus of the English language, which contains both written and spoken corpus data of British and American English. The CEC also contains the Cambridge Learner Corpus, a 40 million-word corpus made up from English exam responses written by English language learners.

The initial corpus was created using a subset of the 1.6 billion-word CEC that was queried and analyzed using the SketchEngine (2006) Corpus query system (http://www.sketchengine.co.uk). The size of each sub-corpus that was initially included is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. CEC corpora used for preliminary analysis of NGSL

Corpus	Tokens
Newspaper	748,391,436
Academic	260,904,352
Learner	38,219,480
Fiction	37,792,168
Journals	37,478,577
Magazines	37,329,846
Non-Fiction	35,443,408
Radio	28,882,717
Spoken	27,934,806
Documents	19,017,236
TV	11,515,296
Total	1,282,909,322

However, because the overwhelming size of the Newspaper sub-corpora (748,391,436 tokens) dominated the frequencies (and also had the problem of showing a marked bias towards financial terms), and the academic sub-corpus (260,904,352 tokens) was a specific genre not directly related to general English, both corpora were removed from the compilation. Table 2 shows the sub-corpora that were actually used to generate the final analysis of frequencies. While smaller than the corpus described in Table 1, the corpus is far more balanced as a result.

Table 2. CEC corpora included in final analysis for NGSL

Corpus	Tokens
Learner	38,219,480
Fiction	37,792,168
Journals	37,478,577
Magazines	37,329,846

Non-Fiction	35,443,408
Radio	28,882,717
Spoken	27,934,806
Documents	19,017,236
TV	11,515,296
Total	273,613,534

The resulting word lists were then cleaned up by removing proper nouns, abbreviations, slang, and other noise, as well as excluding certain word sets such as days of the week, months of the year, and numbers. Then we used a sequence of computations to combine the frequencies from the various sub-corpora while adjusting for differences in their relative sizes. Based on a series of meetings and discussions with Paul Nation about how to improve the list, the combined list was then compared to other important lists such as the original GSL, the British National Corpus (BNC), and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) to make sure important words were included or excluded as necessary.

The NGSL: More coverage for your money!
One of the important goals of this project was to develop a NGSL that would be more efficient and useful to language learners and teachers, by providing more coverage with fewer words than the original GSL. One of the problems with making a comparison between the two lists, indeed between any well-known vocabulary lists, is that the way of counting the number of words in each list needs to be done according to the same criterion. As innovative as the GSL was at the time of its creation, West's definition of what constituted a word was, by his own admission, non-systematic and arbitrary: "no attempt has been made to be rigidly consistent in the method used for displaying the words: each word has been treated as a separate problem, and the sole aim has been clearness" (West, 1953, page viii).

This means that for a meaningful comparison between the GSL and NGSL to be done, the words on each list need to be counted in the same way. As was mentioned in the previous section, a comparison of the number of "word families" in the GSL and NGSL reveals that there are 1964 word families in the GSL and 2368 in the NGSL (using level 6 of Bauer and Nation's 1993 word family taxonomy). Coverage within the 273 million-word CEC is summarized in Table 3, showing that the 2368 word families in the NGSL provides 90.34% coverage while the 1964 word families in the original GSL provides only 84.24%. That the NGSL with approximately 400 more word families provides more coverage than the original GSL may not seem a surprising result, but when these lists are lemmatized, the usefulness of the NGSL becomes more apparent as the more than 800 fewer lemmas in the NGSL provide 6.1% more coverage than is provided by West's original GSL.

Vocabulary List	Number of "Word Families"	Number of "Lemmas"	Coverage in CEC Corpus
GSL	1964	3623	84.24%
NGSL	2368	2818	90.34%

Where to find the NGSL
The list of 2818 words is now available for download, comments, and debate from a new website we've dedicated to this list: www.newgeneralservicelist.org

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(NOTE: This article is a revised version of "*The New General Service List: Celebrating 60 years of Vocabulary Learning*" which appeared in the JALT National Conference Featured Speaker issue of *The Language Teacher* in the summer of 2013).

Charles Browne is Professor of Applied Linguistics and head of the EFL teacher training program at Meiji Gakuin University in Japan, and a well-known expert on English education in Asia. He received his Ed.D. from Temple University and is a specialist in CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) and Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition.

We would like to thank Dr. Browne, and all are other featured speakers at this year's international conference.

If you could not attend any of the sessions, many of them were recorded and available through Youtube.

Check KoreaTESOL.org for more information about' which sessions are available to view online.

See you next year at COEX!

Doing Things Again and Again!
Annamaria Pinter

Repetition is an important principle in language learning. However, it often associated with rather negative ideas such as mechanical practice, drilling phrases and sentences, memorizing lists of words, and generally engaging in activities that are considered a bit boring.

However, repetition and doing the same thing over and over again does not need to be boring. Those of us who have worked with children have all experienced their natural need and desire to do things again and again when they are enjoying the experience. Children enjoy listening to the same story again and again, or playing the same games again and again. Whenever they enjoy an activity, quite spontaneously they ask for more!

"Spot the Differences": learner A's and learner B's pictures

In this short article, I would like to share two activities that I have used with children again and again, with a great deal of success. The first example is a game called "Spot the Differences." The object of the game is to find six differences between two pictures (learner A and learner B) by talking about the pictures and asking questions. It is important that learners do not look at each other's pictures.
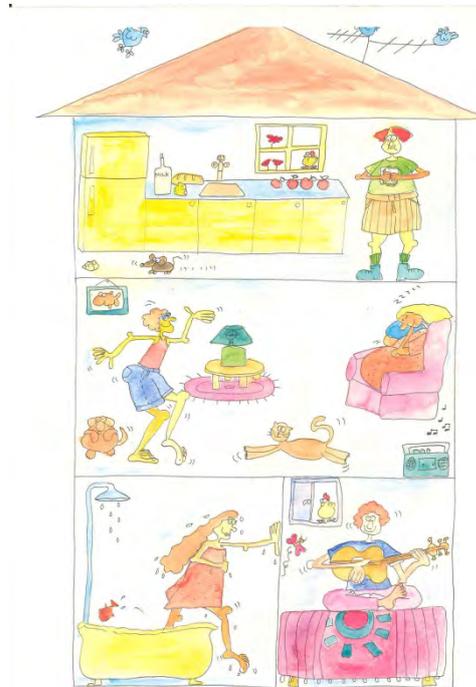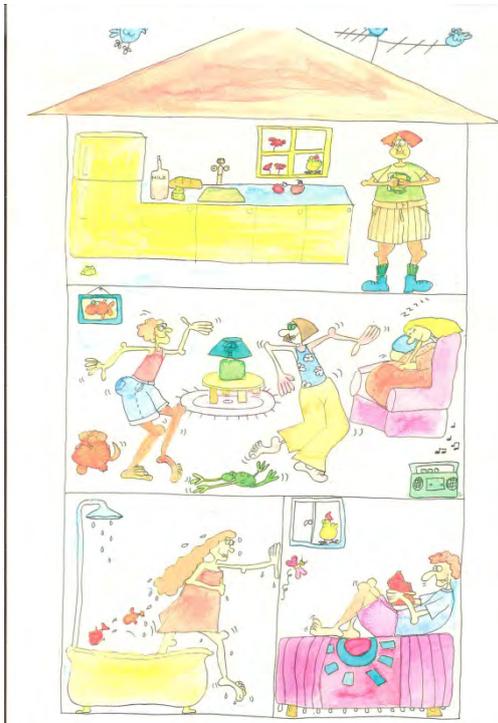
The children that I worked with were 10-year-old beginners. They found the game challenging but enjoyed it. After class I noticed them drawing their own pictures and played the game in the break. I decided to capitalize on this and encouraged them to draw pictures for each other to practice with in class.

Here is an example:

Drawing for further practice with "Spot the Differences" in A and B

Having practiced with houses, suddenly, someone had an idea, and instead of houses, they drew parks, zoos, shops, and other places. I helped with the designs and decisions regarding the six differences, but most of the children worked autonomously and enjoyed creating challenges for one another.

The benefits of this repetitive activity were many. The children were motivated to draw and play the game, they were practicing their English, and they were fully engaged in class. As a teacher, I was genuinely pleased that the children themselves generated such good language practice. Even after a few months, many of the children remembered the game and asked if we could play it again!

My second activity also grew out of the children's suggestion. The children I worked with were reading books regularly from the Oxford Reading Tree (Hunt & Brychta, 2003). A typical page from a lower-level book is below. There is usually a short story with pictures and just one sentence to read on each page. Most children like these books because the storylines are excellent and the children can easily identify with the lives of the characters. One day I noticed that some of the children were copying the books. Some copied the original stories and others enjoyed making their own stories. All followed the format, the style and the general presentation of the original books closely. In a sense they copied the general structure of the stories and practiced writing new stories within this 'safe' framework.

Everyone pushed the snowball.

Floppy barked and barked.
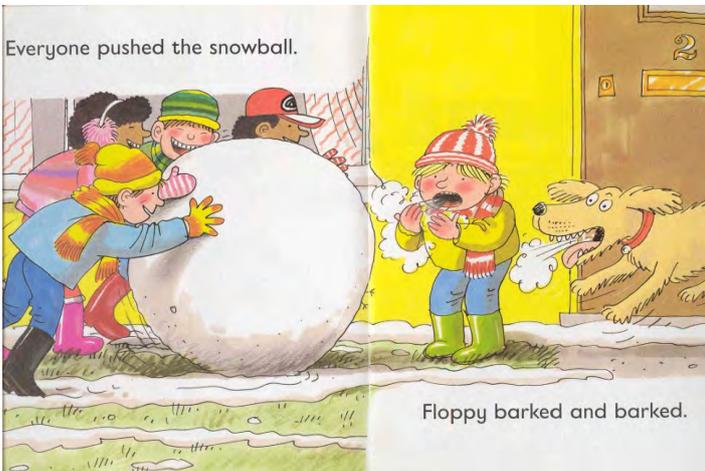
Annamaria Pinter was trained as an English language teacher in Hungary at the Eotvos Lorand University in Budapest after studying linguistics and literature. She completed her Masters and PhD in ELT/Applied Linguistics at the Centre for Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick, and is now an Associate Professor at the Centre, teaching on the Masters in ELT and the EdD programs and supervising doctoral students.

And here is a page created by an 8-year-old English as an L2 learner.

The little bear is going out to play. He is going to wear hat and dress

He was going out. He said I think is snowing outside. 2

Inspired by the children's enthusiasm, I decided to promote this activity in class and encouraged the children to make their own books. Some children made several books and some continued making them at home. The activity was successful because it was feeding off the children's original spontaneous desire to do something that they enjoyed. I simply encouraged them to do it again and again.

Children will give you direct feedback about what they enjoy. In your classes, you could try the following:
1. Observe what activities children enjoy;
2. When you notice they enjoy something, offer to do it again;
3. Encourage the children to take control and repeat the activity a few times, perhaps allowing some variation;
4. Stop the activity just before the children get bored with it

In a nutshell, as long as the children enjoy whatever they are doing, they will be highly motivated, and actively involved in learning and practicing English. Encourage this natural process. Have fun!

Reference

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We hope to see you in Daejeon on Nov. 30th for our next nig KOTESOL event!

Want to get more involved in KOTESOL? Check out KoreaTESOL.org to find out how!

Philosophy of (Language) Teaching and Beyond
Dr. Graham Crookes

When I began drifting into this field, let's say 33 years ago in 1980, the default setting was that there was research, and it would tell us how to teach. Or at least, that's how I recall matters. This position may have been one that I myself arrived at, or derived, filtering the various professional experiences I possessed (e.g., in a certificate in Applied Linguistics and the Teaching of English at the University of Essex in 1980) through my own scientistic lenses. But at any rate, professional practice seemed highly distinct from personal values at that time. My personal values at that time were a rather unexamined set of individualistic but somewhat alternative positions derived from growing up during the late 1960s and early 1970s (a time when my home country, the United Kingdom, had a socialist government, when the USA was in retreat from its most recent imperialist adventure in Vietnam, and South Korea was encased in the military dictatorship of Park Chung-Hee).

Just teaching a second language as "efficiently" as possible seemed the major goal of the work of young English language teachers in those days, and as I went on to graduate studies and was trained as a researcher, that was still the default position in the early 1990s. I began, however, to have doubts, and to encounter some colleagues whose personal separation of values and research practice seemed to weaken both aspects of their activities, and other colleagues whose unification of values and research seemed to strengthen them.

Academics in our field often have to combine the responsibility of researcher and teacher educator. I found this difficult to do, given that the identity of a junior or student language teacher tends to be bound up with a role of helper of language learners, rather than implementer of research-based practices. The helping role, even if minimally articulated, is a moral position in which personal relationships and personal values concerning the nature of teaching, the classroom, or the school are uppermost, if not implicit. It is difficult to make a connection to this social and values-based context from the depersonalized and individualized research conception of second language learning that used to be dominant.

There are many ways to make a values-based perspective on our field more visible. Having grown up in the mainstream of old-line SLA, it was when I was responsible for the practice teaching of junior language teachers that I found it necessary to assist the integration of research-based knowledge with the development of a language teacher's personal values. In some cases, I was faced with language teachers who had no particular affinity with research-based knowledge of language learning, seeing it as having no real-world implications, given the nature of the English language teaching classrooms they had already been in. They also had no values associated with language teaching, seeing it as primarily a financial transaction between themselves, their school, and their students.

So where does one turn under these circumstances? What point is there in talking about "professionalism" when there isn't adequate professional knowledge, there aren't professional working conditions, and the real desire to learn, if there is one, concerns learning something that claims to be English but is actually some kind of abstract knowledge unrelated to communication in the real world?

Gaining some command of the domain of "teachers' values" is an initial move. And, if we have the time and conditions to do this, we should do so within a historical perspective. It is always valuable to ask "where did this come from?" For language teachers, whether international or domestic, this subsumes a question like "how did I arrive at this position?" Gaining command of this area means, for me, developing a statement of one's philosophy of teaching. There are many sources for this, including one's own life experiences, reflected upon, but a major academic area is the philosophy of education. And that is something I provide entry to, as a resource, in my book *Values, Philosophies, and Beliefs in TESOL*.

But then, let us return to the matter of the likely conflict between one's aspirations as a language teacher and the common, usually inadequate, working conditions. Or let us return to the matter of the conflict between what language teachers want to teach and what students (in South Korea, and elsewhere) want to learn. Or to the conflicts between what the government wants teachers to do, and what teaches themselves want to do. Or the conflict between what the rich in South Korea are able to achieve in English proficiency for their children, and the concomitant entry to prestigious universities, and what the poor are (not) able to achieve in this area. What does that imply for the values-based (and research-based) language teacher? One response is to attempt to articulate a critical perspective in one's actions as a language teacher: for this, conceptual and practical resources that are hard to come by are needed, and this is what I work through in my book *Critical ELT in Action*.

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Using Neuroscience to Understand 3Ls
Curtis Kelly

Unless you work at one of the top schools, you have probably encountered what the field calls "reluctant learners." In fact, if you teach English in the kinds of schools I did for 20 years, the majority of your students might be of this type. In two of the schools I worked at, attendance was normally about 50% and homework completion (not counting scribbled copying just before class) 10%. It was not that these students were less intelligent or from a lower economic class than other students, they just didn't have the inclination to learn what we were teaching. And I believe that lack of inclination was often based in a lack of ability as well. In fact, I called these students "3Ls," meaning they are caught in the self-reinforcing cycle of *Low ability*, which causes *Low confidence*, which leads to *Low motivation*. Since low motivation results in less study, they get even further behind in ability.

For twenty years, finding a way to reach these 3L students has been my passion, probably because, to some degree, I was once one of them. After my first Japanese class at the University of Hawaii, I went to the language lab to do the required daily tape practice. It was a listen and repeat exercise, and it simply overwhelmed me. Simple phrases, but they baffled me, and they came far too fast (I never realized I was supposed to push the pause button). I was so disturbed after that one experience that I never went back. Then too, since all the other people in the class had lived in Japan or had some contact with the language, while I was starting from zero, it was hard for me to keep up. I got further and further behind until I too slipped into the world of 3Ls.

Because of my own difficulties studying language, I decided to try to reduce this debilitating problem for my students. I am sure you have seen the same misery, dejection, and complete loss of self-esteem in some of your students' eyes that I have, and it angers me that we allow this to happen to our young learners. If they have become 3Ls, the blame ultimately lies with us. So, I decided the mission of my life would be a simple one: to relieve the suffering of the language classroom, or at least to try. To accomplish this mission, I turned to the fields of education, psychology, and more recently, neuroscience for understanding. In addition, with the generous support of certain publishers, I have tried to implement what I have discovered in the way I wrote ELT textbooks, but I had only limited success getting them out there. It seems that the primary requirement for reaching lost learners – making the activities playful, creative, personalized, open, and at a level they cannot fail – although popular with students, does not fit the academic image most schools wish to project.

So what have I learned from neuroscience that has helped me understand 3L students? There are a number of things, some expected and some completely unexpected. The expected includes a better understanding of: a) how the brain learns, especially in regard to dopamine, and b) what the brain learns. The unexpected includes: a) the critical

roles of sleep and exercise, b) the importance of preschool for adult success, and c) the role of gender in stress.

The expected: It does not take long in teaching English to realize that some activities and topics activate students more than others. Nor is it a surprise, that when activated, students retain more of what they are being taught. This is related to the role of dopamine. Dopamine is an important neurotransmitter for a number of brain functions, including movement, drive, and reward, but its presence also facilitates long-term learning. Right there, that dopamine connects drive, reward, and learning gives us a picture of how the brain learns: your brain remembers things related to what you desire, and things that make you feel good. That makes perfect sense in evolutionary terms. Remembering a rich food source, a victory, a way of speaking that influences others, enables future success. That memory management occurs in the emotional center of the brain (which ascribes all value) supports this conception of learning. Emotional apparatus determines what is relevant and meaningful to us and tags it for retention. The task then, is to find out what is personally meaningful to your students and use it as a vehicle to get the language in.

The unexpected: Although old information now, when I learned 15 years ago that sleep was critical for long-term learning and understanding, it was a complete surprise. Before that discovery, there was no clear theory as to why humans slept at all, with popular (wrong) theories being that sleep allowed the body to remove toxins or cool off. Now we know that the key gain from sleep is in learning. No sleep, no learning. Less than adequate sleep – say only 7 hours a night for a high schooler – and after awhile that student will slip from the top 10% to the lowest 9% of those who do get sleep. Exercise too, is critical for good brain function. Suddenly, it became clear why so many of my students, who seemed to master something in English in one class, had totally forgotten it by the next. Lack of sleep was probably the culprit. Sleep might also be the key factor for who gets into what universities.

This spring, I found another reason for the disparity in student performance. It has always baffled me why some students do so poorly in school and some do so well, or more accurately, why some try so hard while others hardly try at all. The 3L cycle and role of sleep might explain some of it, but not all. Then, in brain studies related to teaching children, I found the answer. There are certain prefrontal cortex skills gained at preschool age, called executive function. If these skills are not adequately developed at that time, they can only be gained later with great effort. The offshoot of these skills, which include flexibility, inhibition, and working memory, is character. They form the basis for the tolerance, reasoning, and conscientiousness needed for success in adulthood. Research has found that conscientiousness, far more than IQ, is a good predictor of success in school and also in life. So maybe the reason some students study so hard while others do not comes from the quality of their preschool experience.

Practitioner Research *Must* Be Good Pedagogy
Dick Allwright

Research in the classroom takes time, and it can waste a lot of class time. But it need not, and it should not. If we teachers don't want to waste anybody's time, but do want to do research in our classrooms, then the question is: HOW? Experience has shown, over more than twenty years, that it can be done, and it can work well, if you:

(1) Use your normal pedagogic activities, and their language content, as your investigative tools. The language learning will continue un-interrupted, and no time need be lost from teaching and learning.

(2) Focus your research on whatever puzzles you and/or your learners about your teaching and learning lives together, rather than getting your research topics from anywhere else (academic publications, for example).

(3) Turn your learners into researchers, too, to get them properly involved. And if they are investigating their own puzzles about being a learner, they will neither waste time, nor resent whatever time it takes.

As an extra bonus, they will develop not only their language skills but also their understanding of classroom language learning. So, if you:

(4) Get them working together, with you, to develop your understandings in a process of mutual development, all can benefit.

(5) Better still, take the sharing into the world beyond the classroom.

Hopelessly Unrealistic?

Perhaps, but a good number of teachers and learners around the world are finding these ideas all possible and highly valuable. I developed the idea of Exploratory Practice (EP), with Brazilian colleagues, in the early 1990s (see the "Epilogue" to Allwright and Bailey, 1991). EP is entirely based on the good teaching I found in Rio in 1990. Brazil is where the most, and most adventurous, development work has been done since then, by Ines Miller and her colleagues (teachers and learners) in the Rio Exploratory Practice Group. The whole story is told in the book Judith Hanks and I published in 2009.

Aline Santiago's Story

In the beginning of this year, I was in a quite difficult situation because I had to face an eighth grade group that has been seen as the worst at school, principally in relation to discipline. After some bad moments together, I was quite irritated and could not stand the situation. So I decided to start some work based on an Exploratory Principle using the subject I was dealing with according to the course plan ("must" X "should"). The starting point was a brainstorming considering "Quality of Life" immediately linked to "Quality of Life in class" – one of the EP principles. The following moment was to write sentences using "should" or "must" regarding the role of students and teachers in class. I collected the sentences made in groups, and in the following class, the sentences were shared with the whole group. On that day, they had the chance to write their comments about our work and future life in class, taking into consideration the sentences made by them. In addition, they could try to guess what my initial puzzle

was: "Why am I so irritated when I have to face the 807 group?"

To my surprise, my terrible group was able to understand that it was necessary to improve our life in class and really took part in the talk and process of understanding what was happening. They realised that the responsibility of having a pleasant class needed to be shared, it was not only my own concern.

Also, they helped me realise that I was partially responsible for our bad relationship, because I was unable to listen to them. After three classes sharing ideas, we could understand that respect from both parts was necessary. Also listening was part of our life in class, although we were not exercising this ability. I can say that we have grown with this simple way of understanding something that has made us so uncomfortable in class. Now, we really are a group! Our life in class is much better!

(Santiago, 2006; also in Allwright & Hanks, 2009, pp. 191)

Aline used her normal teaching activities and normal language content (Suggestion 1) to investigate her own puzzle about her relationship with her students (2). She involved the students quite directly in working with her on the investigation (3), and the bonus was, through all the shared work for understanding (4), a much better understanding all round of how to work together.

All that's missing is sharing beyond the classroom (5). In Rio, that is done through the annual EP Event, when teachers and learners (up to 300, mostly school-age children) bring posters of their work for understanding to a joint conference.

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Dick Allwright is one of the most influential applied linguists in the field. His main areas of interest bridge theoretical and practical concerns in the area of language education. An early enthusiast for observational classroom research, Dr. Allwright is more recently the originator of the innovative and increasingly influential pedagogical movement called Exploratory Practice (EP).

Fostering Autonomous Language Learning With e-Portfolios
Lillian Wong

Interest in learner autonomy has increased substantially in recent years with the promotion of student-centered pedagogy and the growing awareness of the need to address learner diversity. New directions and developments in technology are driving and, to a certain extent, enabling more innovative approaches to learning and teaching by providing more and more varied online resources, network services, and educational platforms, which create opportunities for interaction and support for learning outside the classroom. More recently, developments in mobile technologies and the explosion in the use of social media have accelerated and extended opportunities for autonomous language learning, both in the classroom and beyond.

What Is Autonomous Learning?
Autonomous learning promotes student control over their own learning. It is associated with self-direction, motivation, and individual differences. Learners are stimulated to evolve an awareness of their learning goals and paths. They participate actively in the processes of learning to meet their needs, interests and preferences. They are motivated to act independently and collaboratively with others and are encouraged to reflect on their learning and find ways to improve it.

Using e-Portfolios to Foster Autonomous Language Learning
Recent advances in new technologies offer great potential and support for autonomous language learning. The use of technologies encourages the learner to take more responsibility for learning, which helps to motivate them in their learning processes. In the following, we are going to focus on the ways in which e-portfolios provide the technological personal learning environment that promotes autonomy in language learning.

What Is an e-Portfolio?
An e-portfolio is a diverse evidence-based process that combines inquiry, reflection, documentation, and representation. It engages learners in ongoing, reflective, and critical analysis of learning. It focuses on purposeful, selective outcomes for both improving and assessing learning. It is a personal record of learning and growth over time and an expression of self-identity in a digital medium.

Processes of the Language Learning e-Portfolio
1. *Setting Goals and Making Plans*
Learners set the learning goals for their e-portfolios and describe how they envision the e-portfolio process will serve them. Teachers can help learners by negotiating their learning goals, giving them suggestions on learning activities and resources, and discussing their plans and strategies with them. Learners post their goals and self-analysis to the e-portfolio. They revisit these at various points of the e-portfolio development process and reflect on their learning progress.

Having learning goals and plans for the e-portfolio encourages learners to explore a wide range of ideas for sharing their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. It also places them in the active role of setting goals and making plans on achieving their targets. Learners are motivated to take control of their learning.

2. *Building the e-Portfolio*
Learners save artifacts that represent a wide variety of achievements, skills, and knowledge of the specific learning targets and growth opportunities. This e-portfolio development process involves numerous possibilities for learning.

For *writing,* learners can post various drafts of the same written work, such as academic papers, to show how they have dealt with research challenges, citation and referencing, arguments and organizing of ideas, and so on. The various drafts include annotations demonstrating learner awareness and improvement in language and writing skills. The process involves learners' responses to teachers and peer feedback, and their self-analysis and reflection on their learning.

For *speaking*, learners can record their presentations using their smartphones, upload them to YouTube, and link them to the e-portfolio, together with their presentation slides. Learners keep records of various rehearsals and of the final presentation. These demonstrate their achievements, as do reflections that focus on self-analysis of feedback from peers and teachers. Other speaking artifacts can include videos of student participation in discussion and debates, and audio clips of pronunciation and intonation activities.

For *reading*, students can post summaries of journal articles they read for writing a research paper, reviews of books, and so on. They can also post vocabulary logs from reading, with examples showing usage of new words learnt. Learners can illustrate their reading process with annotations that show their analysis of a text, such as author's voice, claims and arguments, structure and organization, and use of language. In addition, they can also paraphrase some parts of a text to show understanding.

For *listening*, learners can post comprehension activities with their marks and teachers' feedback, and summaries or notes showing understanding of listening materials.
Learners can also be encouraged to reflect on and evaluate the strategies they used, and what they learnt by using various strategies in different activities and for different language skills.

Finally, I have always wondered about the effect of stress on learning. After all, stress is ever-present in the classroom, often by design. We know that long-term stress, or distress, has serious effects on health and learning, but what about the little stresses we create with quizzes, competitions, class presentations, and chiding? The literature is contradictory. Some writers say stress inhibits learning, while others say a little aids learning. It was not until I read research coming out of Europe that I understood that both views are right. Cortisol, the main stress hormone, both helps and hinders learning at the same time. This model has implications for the classroom and another unexpected finding. A little stress usually has a positive effect on men's cognitive processing, but almost always a negative effect on women's.

I suppose I understand the 3Ls a bit better now. I doubt I can solve all their problems, but what I have learned has helped me design methods and materials that relieve a bit of the suffering. And that leads to the final surprise. I no longer teach 3Ls – the vast majority of my students are diligent and hard working – but the highly personalized, playful materials and methods I made for the 3Ls work just as well with them. Maybe they have been suffering too, but are better at managing it. After all, a brain is a brain. Each might have different contents and strengths, but the means of processing is conserved across all learners.

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Learners can also be encouraged to reflect on and evaluate the strategies they used, and what they learnt by using various strategies in different activities and for different language skills.

3. *Identifying and Selecting Artifacts*
Learners review and evaluate the artifacts they have saved, and identify those that best demonstrate their achievements of specific standards, and reflect the learning goals of the e-portfolio. It is important to state clearly in the introduction section the specific goal or purpose of the e-portfolio. The selection of artifacts should only focus on samples which provide evidence of the highest competencies of specific targets.

4. *Reflection on Learning for Improvement*
Learners explain their thinking about each artifact selected in their e-portfolio, evaluating their growth and achievements over time. Through reflections, learners analyze their knowledge, skills, strategies, and attitudes as well as changes within themselves in the processes of development and learning. Learners state their rationale for choosing each artifact to demonstrate their reflections. The reflection process also involves self-assessment and critical awareness of what is going well and why, and stimulates changes for future improvement.

5. *Connection and Presentation*
E-portfolios can be presented on Facebook, which many learners are familiar with and are probably constantly connected to. A group is set up for each class, it is private to the learners in the group, and they can control the setting of their own e-portfolios to not show any private matter. Peer feedback can be easily done as comments or document attachments as well as by posting videos and audio clips. Teachers can post activities and messages to the whole class in the same way as the learners, if they prefer. The message function can be used for private dialogue between learners and the teacher. Learning management systems such as Moodle or the e-portfolio platform Mahara can also be adopted to present e-portfolios.

Conclusion
The development of e-portfolios adds a new dimension to learning and creates new opportunities to enhance learners' autonomous learning and self-development. The process encourages learners to take an active role in engaging themselves in critical thinking and self-assessment in their learning and in choosing representations of what they have learnt. E-portfolios offer authentic and readily updated information on individual achievements, strengths, and potential by incorporating appropriate evidence. They provide a comprehensive and systematic personal record of learning and a dynamic expression of the learner's own identity through multimedia technologies.

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Summary

Overall, this is a very well organized and easy to use website. The layout is clear and attractive, and not cluttered by advertisements. MLE does a very good job of preparing members for learning through the pre-practice exercises and lessons on how to participate in productive chat sessions. The website also supplies numerous lessons, games and other kinds of assistance to keep the practice flowing. The lessons guide the users through exercises designed to activate schema, and then concentrate on listening comprehension, pronunciation and vocabulary. For a free website, MLE is surprisingly high-quality and well designed.

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Korea vs. Saudi Arabia
Steve McNally

I spent over 3 years teaching in South Korea. I worked for both universities and private schools experiencing the professional and business mindset in education. I had an excellent time in Gwangju, and I have certainly not ruled out a return sometime in the future. Yet I am now based in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). I have had two stints in Saudi Arabia with two private employers.

The culture in KSA is very different from anything that I have ever experienced, and is not for the faint-hearted. However Saudi Arabia is certainly not full of "Western-hating" inhabitants, as we may be led to believe by the media.

On arrival in KSA, the first thing that strikes you is the heat. When entering the airport, there is a pecking order to how quickly you are dealt with: first, Saudis (or Muslims), then Americans, British and other "Western" visitors, with Filipinos and Bangladeshis at the bottom of the pile. It's a very long and laborious wait to get through passport control, as the staff constantly have cups of tea, wander off, check the latest text message they've received, or simply just sit and do nothing. Why? The reason is because they can, and they're in no hurry to process visitors.

Security is a big deal, whether you work for a private company where you sign in using your handprint, or for an oil company where you go to a special office to be fingerprinted and give a blood sample before you receive your ID badge.

Accommodation varies greatly, but males and females are separated. If you're a direct hire for an oil company, you have the luxury of living in a Westernized compound, where females are allowed to drive, and you can wear what you want.

On a Western compound you may also have the opportunity to drink alcohol. This is one big difference between South Korea and Saudi Arabia, as Saudi Arabia is a dry state – there is no alcohol, even in hotels. (Behind closed doors, the locals will drink, but strongly deny it, because of their religion). One Western compound I visited actually had five bars, which catered for all tastes. The drink they sold, was a home brewed carbonated draught, and only cost 7SAR (almost $2) for a glass. Bars included a nightclub, a sports bar with pool, darts, poker, and a live music bar. There was even one that was in a house. The problem is that you need to get invited onto these compounds at least one week in advance, and you can never be sure that it's safe. For example, last Christmas, forty-one people were arrested for drinking in Riyadh. With there being no constitutional law covering this offence, punishment can vary, but includes one or all of the following: jail, lashes, deportation.

Employees of private companies, including oil companies' contract hires, are given accommodation of their choosing. At one company, I had to share with fellow teachers: we had a room each, but shared the communal rooms and the facilities.

The other company had a "compound" that looked like Stalag 17, with high concrete walls topped with barbed wire, and two police cars (including one with a machine gun on top) guarding the entrances. Inside it wasn't too bad, although it was like living in a trailer park. The restaurant was good, and there was a gym, a swimming pool, and a tennis court.

You can also opt to rent your own apartment, where there is a huge variety, from the unfurnished one-bedroom for about 1,000 SAR ($270 per month), a furnished two-bedroom ($490), to a type of compound ($2,475 - $3,250) with unfurnished or furnished two-bedroom apartments. You pay six months rent in advance, and then don't pay rent for six months, so a deposit or key money isn't usually required. Contracts are also for one year.

When eating out, it's more or less the same as any Western country. If you eat at a well-known Western restaurant, such as the Outback Steakhouse, you'll pay the same prices as you would elsewhere. If you eat at local restaurants, then you'll pay the same as you would in a local Korean restaurant, paying about $2-5 for a basic meal.

Social life in Saudi Arabia consists of going to shopping malls. These malls are huge and each one has a miniature amusement park for kids, with big rides, even roller coasters , to keep them occupied while mum and dad shop. There are also big food courts like you'd see in any other shopping mall. There are a lot more malls here than you would normally see, as the favorite pastime (or, as they say here, 'time pass') is shopping - what else is there to do? Clothes are sold for the same price as you would pay in the UK, so designer clothes are just as expensive, and there is an abundance of them.

Male teachers will only ever teach other males. Class sizes vary greatly, from 12 to 50 students, and, as often seems to be the case in EFL, the teachers, who are the real experts in teaching, are never consulted about the materials or syllabus.

You have to be constantly wary when teaching, as you can't mention religion (other than Islam), family (especially female members) or having a girlfriend or any type of relationship with a female. A simple exercise like "What your sister's name?" cannot be used, and to be safe, you shouldn't even mention any of your female relations.

You will likely be asked about your religion, but you are strongly advised not to talk about it. If you're an atheist, you won't even get a visa. You should also avoid giving your opinion on anything, as the students will suck you in to a false sense of security, becoming your 'friend', and then using your revelations against you, when it comes to exam time or being absent. You should also refrain from playing any music.

The amount of work the students do is usually negligible, and they have to be the laziest students I've ever taught. They will use any excuse possible to try and get out of doing anything. They will blame prayer times, or fasting (during Ramadan). Even when they walk, they drag their feet, as if it's too much effort to actually lift their feet.

The students do have flashes of intelligence, and they can have strong opinions too. If you hit a subject that they like, they will become very passionate, and will do anything you ask of them: it's just rare to find such a subject, other than cars.

When it comes to exam time, once again you will get excuses, and they will try in every possible way to cheat. They don't see this as a problem. This is a problem that some teachers in Korea may be familiar with. Even bringing a pen or pencil to class can sometimes be a major production.

They are almost guaranteed to pass, even if they fail, as the senior management want everyone to pass. You will also come across "wasta" which is a hierarchal influence that is sometimes reminiscent of Korea. In addition to this, all the students are paid to come to university (about $800 per month). When you live with your parents and all you've to pay for is your mobile, that's quite a lot of money. You can never berate a student for not doing work, or being silly in class, as it's deemed very offensive. You not quite given the same respect as a teacher, as you would receive in South Korea.

Religion is what life is all about here, but despite many things being "haram" (forbidden), they still go on. The culture is quite difficult to get used to, as male teachers will only ever interact with males, and will never see a female face or even speak to a woman. However, because of this, Saudi Arabia pays very well.

For university or a private company, you will get about $3,100 salary + $775 housing allowance per month. For an oil company your total package is about $7,000 per month. All tax free, of course. The cost of living varies, as you can rent a luxury apartment, or stay in a trailer park ($700 per month). Clothes cost the same as in UK, but food is usually much cheaper, akin to South Korea.

It's certainly a unique experience in KSA. If you're Muslim, then you're in "heaven" so to speak. If you're not, then there's a lot of adjustment. There are prayers five times per day, when all the shops will close for 30 minutes, and then reopen again. There is also the male dominated environment, but, I have to say, the camel is delicious.

Steve McNally is a proud Scot who has been travelling around the world with his wife Aneta, and teaching English throughout Europe, Australia, Middle East, and Asia. His first full-time teaching job was at a private school in Gwangju, South Korea back in 2007. In 2009 He completed a CELTA in Australia, and then returned to Gwangju. He is now teaching English at an oil company's training school in Saudi Arabia.

Movement in the Young Learner's Classroom
Seneca Ryan gives us a Montessori perspective

"*One of the greatest mistakes of our day is to think of movement by itself, as something apart from the higher functions. . . .Mental development must be connected with movement and be dependent on it. It is vital that educational theory and practice should become informed by this idea.*"

Maria Montessori

Maria Montessori uttered these groundbreaking words in early 20th century Italy and in an educational climate that had never considered such an idea before. A trained medical doctor, Montessori would later go on to become famous for her work with children and contributions to education. After several years of extensive research, she developed a system of education that was entirely unique in her time. While her theories on education were extensive, this article will focus on two key principles she proposed: 1) that cognition and movement are somehow fundamentally linked, and 2) that, in the classroom, movement can be used to encourage autonomy through exploration and strengthening of the community. Therefore, movement and learning became intrinsically tied in the Montessori environment. Children are given the basic freedom to move as they feel inclined in order to explore and accomplish their objectives. These theories continue to be confirmed and reconfirmed by modern research today.

Types of Movement

Before continuing, it's important to define the word "movement" and how Montessori envisioned it being used in the classroom. Movement can be divided into two types: fine-motor and gross-motor. Writing is the most obvious example of fine-motor expression, although coloring, cutting with scissors, pasting, picking up small objects, or anything that requires refined hand-to-hand coordination can also be included in this category. Gross motor skills are considered walking, jumping, throwing or anything that requires the use of the large muscle groups or the whole body. In the Montessori environment movement is free and spontaneous; the vehicle through which exploration and self-expression take place, and inner-discipline and social connections are encouraged. Montessori believed a child's movements were a window into his inner world.

Memory and Cognition

Teachers today often incorporate movement into their classrooms through a game or communicative activity, thinking it a fun but rather superfluous exercise. However, much research has indicated that, in fact, movement supports cognition and memory. Studies where an individual is moving while uttering phrases show an increase in memory and recall (R. L. Cohen, 1989; Engelkamp, Zimmer, Mohr & Sellen, 1994). One study by Engelkamp, Zimmer, Mohr & Sellen (1994), where students' actions were in agreement with a particular phrase uttered, showed they were better able to recall the sentence than if

they had been stationary during the exercise. In other words, memory is improved when one's movements are aligned with their speech. Actors have shown similar results. They demonstrated better memory and recall over a longer period when they enacted dialogue while moving on stage rather than staying in one place, (Noice, Noice & Kennedy, 2000). Once again this supports the idea that movement and memory are linked.

Combining music with movement is another means through which memory can be supported. It is well known that many children take great pleasure in listening to music. Allen and Boykin found that when music and movement were incorporated into their environment, students were better able to remember more picture pairs than those who were in a setting without these elements (Allen & Boykin, 1991). It seems that when music is used in the classroom, it is not only a way to make the class more dynamic and enjoyable, but can also be an effective tool in supporting cognition.

It has been long suggested that gesture assists in cognitive function. We use simple gestures in conversation or to help us convey ideas; the more complex the idea, the more gestures we typically use. Some even believe that gesturing assists in word retrieval (Krauss & Hadar, 1999). Considering that gesturing is such a common part of everyday speech, it is easy to surmise that it must have a deeper purpose related to cognition.

Each of these studies supports the idea that when movement is combined with thinking, mental function is improved.

Autonomy

It is unfortunate that the immobile student has long been associated with the "good" student. This is too often the case in Korean classrooms today where students spend countless hours drilling, cramming and test taking, and are given little latitude to question, challenge or think independently. In other words, students are expected to ingest knowledge and then prove their ability to reproduce it, all while sitting immobile for hours in order to passively receive information from their teachers. In such a system, incorporating a love of learning at times seems almost unthinkable. Interestingly, the classrooms of Montessori's time were quite similar. Montessori, however, saw movement as a gateway to independence, a way in which to address the development of the whole person rather than simply one's intellect. For example, when given the opportunity to move freely, children must make continuous choices about their behavior, and the appropriateness of their actions. When students are allowed this basic liberty, teachers are indirectly communicating their trust and respect. As if by default, children in the Montessori classroom subsequently build an inner sense of independence, responsibility and maturity. Those who are free to exercise self-governance on their own behalf are participating in their own development as individuals.

Community and Peer Teaching

Movement can also be used as a way to develop community by fostering meaningful relationships and encouraging peer teaching. Traditionally the teacher has been the holder and imparter of knowledge. However, this stance gives little gravity to students' responsibility in their own education or the valuable knowledge of the collective group. When students interact freely with one another, they strengthen their relationships in the environment, building a stronger community and consequently creating other avenues through which to receive information. Moreover, a student who readily shares his or her own knowledge with a peer feels proud, has a sense of accomplishment, and is thus more motivated to learn. The result is students taking further responsibility for their own education, while drawing on the collective knowledge of the group and becoming less dependent on the adult.

Incorporating Freedom of Movement into the Classroom

There are numerous ways we can encourage more movement and independence into our classrooms. Ultimately it is up to each individual teacher and their own personal preferences. In my case, I've implemented a system of small group activity, which works on a rotation. To do this, I first break the class into small groups. Each group is then given a task which requires limited assistance from me, and which the students are capable of carrying out successfully on their own. This task could be in the form of a game, a communicative activity, or anything that is suitable for the students' age and skill level. They may then choose to rearrange their desks if they like and can decide whether to sit, stand, move around the room, and so on, as they feel comfortable. Most importantly they are not required to remain seated. As long as they are working successfully in accomplishing their tasks, they are free to work independently. Finally, while each group is working individually, I choose one group to give a lesson to. This group receives my immediate and individual attention. In this way I have the opportunity to assess my students' level and progress more closely and address any areas of concern. During the week, I rotate the groups so that each student has an opportunity to participate in each of the tasks. In this system, students not only develop inner discipline but also have the chance to assist one another, a practice which again builds confidence and camaraderie.

Criticism of Free Movement

It should be noted that when we speak of freedom of movement in the classroom, we do not mean complete freedom without limits. Critics of Montessori often misinterpret this idea as a giant "free-for-all". On the contrary, as teachers it is our responsibility to provide a sound structure in our classrooms. Young learners cannot be expected to respect or follow the guidance of their teacher without such a foundation with clear expectations and swift consequences. In essence, students have the liberty to move as they feel comfortable and as is required to complete their task. They may choose to sit, stand, rearrange their desks as necessary, use gestures, and much much more, but are never expected to remain seated at their desks for the duration of the class. One should also note that because most children have never been given the freedom to fully monitor their own behavior, there is usually a period of adjustment. But I find in my classrooms, when kind but firm boundaries are set, my students quickly understand my expectations of them. They are happiest, feel safest, and respond best overall to these fair but clear limits.

Conclusion

Maria Montessori believed it was a great mistake to separate mind and body in the learning environment. Today, the evidence is clear: movement is a crucial part of our development. So one must consider why the archaic system of student immobility is still so readily in use. Perhaps it is reasonable to assume that many of today's teachers were taught in this traditional method where immobility was passivity and passive students were believed to be easier to manage. Likely the old method remains deeply engrained in many of us. But separating these two fundamentally tied aspects of an individual proves a disservice to our students for the reasons which we have seen. By understanding the important connection between learning and movement, we can take positive steps towards developing more autonomous and successful classrooms for our students.

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Imagine not being able to leave your apartment by yourself. Like a small child, you must always ask permission, or even be accompanied by your male guardian--a family member or a representative of your employer. Imagine always having to wear a black, long to the ground, loose, polyester cloak (abaya), a headscarf, and (in the conservative areas) a face veil (niqab). Hot, clumsy, impractical. Alien.

Women in Saudi Arabia are required by law to wear abayas. Scarves and veils are technically optional, especially for non-Muslims—"to the discretion of a male family member"--but in practice, even in Riyadh, you may be approached by a *muttawa* (religious police officer) and asked--or rather ordered--to cover your hair. When I stayed in Al Baha, a province in western Saudi Arabia, I was also pressured to cover my face. Being there with my husband Steve, gave me enough confidence to refuse, but my three single female colleagues did not want to risk a conflict with the school security guard, so they conformed. I must admit that if I were in their position, I would have done the same; you feel pretty vulnerable living there as a woman.

Another huge advantage of living in Saudi with my husband, was a lot more physical freedom. Employed as a couple, we were given a housing allowance rather than being put in company accommodation, so we rented an apartment downtown. We mostly went around town together, but I could do some shopping on my own. We could also hire a car and drive around the area and to Jeddah, one of the biggest and most liberal Saudi cities.

Life was much harder on my single colleagues, though. They were provided with a big, 3-bedroom apartment, with shared kitchen, bathroom and living room, but it was within a 'compound,' which in Al Baha was nothing more than a semi-prison. It was a big building with strictly separate sections for men and women, with locked-up gates and guards on duty 24 hours a day, where they were confined at all times, except for being taken to work, and shopping trips two or three times a week. Men could come and go as they pleased, but women had to sign a statement releasing the employer from any responsibility for their safety and wellbeing every time they wanted to leave, even to just go for a walk or to a nearby convenience store. The accommodation was located 17km from town, so there wasn't much to do anyway. Men however would just hitch-hike to town or share a taxi. The girls very much regretted having agreed to be transferred to Al Baha from Riyadh, where they had had access to a swimming pool and could freely walk to a nearby shopping mall, although for safety reasons they would always do that in pairs or groups. Kidnappings and rape are very real dangers in Saudi Arabia, so one must really use common sense when venturing outside.

So why do it? The money, of course, is a very tempting factor. Not only do you earn a lot and pay no taxes, but also don't have much to spend on, unless you decided to shop in the American and British designer stores that stock the same items as the ones at home, only ridiculously priced. If you like reading or have some other mind-occupying hobby, and did well on your 'marshmallow test' as a child, in a year or two you can really set yourself up for whatever venture you plan to pursue next, be it travelling, paying off chunks of your student debt, or saving up for a house deposit.

But with the right attitude, you can get much more out of teaching English in Saudi Arabia. First, you do gain teaching experience (it's much easier there to get a university job than in other countries), and even if a large proportion of it is learning how teaching ESL shouldn't be done, if you put in an effort and really care about your students, you will collect small victories like precious gems, and after a while you'll realize how huge a difference your work can make to a lot of the students.

Like in every classroom, you'll likely get the full spectrum – from the really smart and ambitious ones, through average and semi-motivated, to downright lazy and disrespectful – but overall, with the right approach, you have an amazing opportunity to act as a mentor and touch on many of those girls' lives. I observed with delight as within a few weeks they accepted my rules and started appreciating the structure I introduced, even if some of them openly rebelled against it at first. From "rubbish belongs in the bin" to "you always do your homework" and "you study the list of irregular verbs regularly, five each day," my students started behaving better and realizing that to take true responsibility for their education meant a lot of hard work, not just turning up at school. In a country that teaches women that they don't have to, or even shouldn't earn a living, it was really something.

Last but not least, living in Saudi Arabia is a great opportunity to learn Arabic, and to make friends with Arab women, not only Saudi, but also Egyptian, Syrian, Jordanian, and others. If there's one thing that brightens up your stay in Saudi Arabia, it is the friendliness and helpfulness of the women. Even if occasionally they try to convert you into Islam.

KOTESOL Views is a column written by members that cover a wide variety of topics.

Aneta McNally grew up near Krakow, Poland. She completed her MA in Tourism and Recreation before moving to Scotland in 2004, and since 2006 she's been travelling and working abroad with her husband, Steve. She taught English in Gwangju for over 3 years, and Australia for one year before taking on the challenge of living in Saudi Arabia, where she taught for 3 months at Al Baha University.
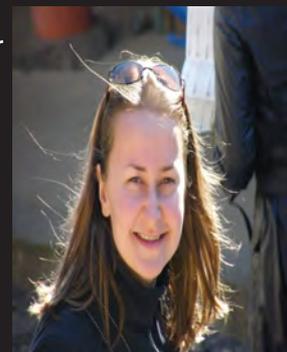
Technically Speaking

The buffet of tech tools available to language educators is constantly morphing and expanding. Here are my current favorites. An up-to-date version can be found online at koreabridge.net/kotesol/tech-tools-2013. Please feel free to share details about your favorite tools.

Google+ Hangouts- On- Air & YouTube Live

A few years ago, Hangouts were introduced as part of Google+. Up to 10 people could can participate in a free mobile-friendly video conference conference that supports screensharing, document sharing, and text chat. The Hangout-on-Airair option allows the conference to be streamed live on YouTube, which is then automatically recorded and posted on the user's channel. 'YouTube Live' provides higher quality video streaming for YouTuberstubers in good standing with at least 100 subscribers. I used Hangouts last semester for my students' final projects. They prepared a 10 minute talk show style segment and had the choice of presenting it in a live stream or an off-air Hangout. KOTESOL will be using YouTube Live to stream plenary and featured presentations at the 2013 International Conference.; Perhapsperhaps in the future, chapter-level presentations across the peninsula might be streamed live and archived.

Kakao Talk Group Chats

Use the force for good, teaching Jedis! The biggest source of distraction in Korean classrooms can be used constructively. Recently, I've created Kakao 'English Only' group chats for all my university classes. These can be used as an interactive game show type of tool, a brainstorming aid during class, or as a useful homework reminder and last minute announcement maker between classes. I've also found that it helps develop class bonding as students engage in off-topic English banter with each other.

Google Drive (Google Docs)

Aside from being an awesome way to access my teaching docs and presentations anytime from any computer (or mobile device), Google Docs makes it quite easy to post presentations and class surveys online, using Google Forms. Additionally, I use a Group Notes document for each class in lieu of a whiteboard. This way, there's a record of all vocabulary and teaching points made during class that students can edit afterward by adding translations and comments. I also use Google Docs for all my writing classes. I create one document for each student, which makes it easy to comment on students' writings and track all revisions without dealing with email attachments or messy hand-written assignments.

Chrome & Chrome Portable

I could write an entire article about the virtues of Google Chrome. It's lighter and faster than most browsers (especially MSIE).; Chrome has great extensions like Google Dictionary, Speakit, OneTab, and PrintFriendly. What has been most useful for teaching, is installing Chrome Portable on my USB. Instead of struggling with old versions of MSIE on slower university computers, I simply run Chrome from my flash drive with all my bookmarks and extensions pre-installed and ready to go.

Google Translate (for pronunciation practice)

Its English-Korean sentence translations are still mediocre at best, but its speech recognition functionality has been very engaging for students as they tweak their pronunciation skills. Trying to teach the difference between 'woke-walk'' or 'pressure-pleasure'? Have the students click the microphone and practice until they get the correct result. It's not perfect, but it's pretty good and improving all the time. When logged in, students can also build their own phrasebook (audio input function only works in Chrome-based browsers and mobile apps).

Quizlet

This is a flashcard activity site that's a big hit with teachers and students. Each set includes six different types of activities and games. There are thousands of usable sets on the site already and it's easy to create your own cards that are mobile-accessible, printable, and easily posted online. There is multi-lingual audio support and the Korean voice even speaks accurate Konglish when reading English words.

Diigo

Diigo is social bookmarking at its finest, allowing you to create private and public online bookmarks, and making it accessible anywhere. Follow others whose bookmarks interest you, join collaborative groups, like Resources for Languages, or Language Learning and Technology. You can also ; track popular links based on tags. The Chrome extension enables you to take screenshots and annotate pages with a highlighter and sticky notes which can be shared publicly with non-Diigoers.

Blogger

Other blogging options have their virtues. WordPresspress is more robust, but for class blogs and student sites, I still prefer Blogger. With a single Google account, users can create up to 100 blogs, making it easier to create (or duplicate) a blog for each class and/or semester. Blogger integrates easily with other Google tools and provides different levels of user permissions and access that might be desired by teachers.

Jeff Lebow is a teacher trainer at Busan University of Foreign Studies. His CALL site can be found at LearningCall.net and his personal blog is at JeffLebow.net. Archives from the 2013 KOTESOL IC Media Stream he helped produce are at Koreabridge.net/kotesol2013

As the leaves begin to change colors here in Korea (something that didn't really happen in my home state of Florida), I am always reminded of my first Thanksgiving here in this country. I'm not talking about Chuseok, which many non-Koreans refer to as Korean Thanksgiving, but the American holiday. I know it isn't celebrated here, but I will never forget the unique Thanksgiving dinner that my students gave me.

Thanksgiving is one of my favorite holidays of the year. I could go for the politically correct choice and say that it's one of the few times of the year that you can get together with family, but that's not really my style. I like Thanksgiving for really one reason: the food. In particular is the main course that features on many a table on this day of giving thanks, turkey. Now, I should probably say that I am a turkey junkie. A lot of people can eat chicken three times a day, but the bird I prefer is turkey. Thanksgiving dinner was the one time of the year where I didn't mind having to eat vegetables; as long as I had my white meat, I was fine.

So, imagine my horror when I came to Korea and realized it was not a turkey country. As we all know, the most popular poultry here is chicken. I was in Korea for over two months before I had my first taste of turkey. I was in Seoul checking out one of the five star tourist hotels when I noticed they had a deli serving sandwiches. At the bottom of the menu I saw one word: turkey. Needless to say, it didn't take me long to hand over whatever amount the sandwich cost, which ended up being almost 9,000 won! It was the best tasting sandwich I'd ever had.

My first job was working at an academy that taught students ranging from high school to adults. I tried to have free talking with a lot of my classes, but they were either shy, or weren't really interested in what I had to say. There was one class, though, that really tried their best when it came to free talking. We never talked about anything serious; they really just wanted to know what my life was like in America. They were especially interested in holidays - Halloween, Christmas, and Thanksgiving Day. They wanted to know what kind of foods Americans ate during the holidays, so of course I mentioned turkey. Most of them didn't know that it was a popular food for the holiday, and many of them had never tasted it. I told them that it "tasted like chicken". That got a laugh out of the class.

As my first November rolled around, I began to suffer my first serious case of homesickness. Until then, I had never been away from my family on Thanksgiving. Even when I was in college, I still made it home for the turkey and the trimmings. My family never even really traveled anywhere on Thanksgiving. For most of my life, the holiday was spent at home. I was getting emails from friends telling me what they were going to do for the day, and glumly I wrote back telling them that I had to work. In Korea, it was just another Thursday.

I think my students picked up on my depression that week. They noticed that I wasn't in the best of moods, no matter how hard I tried. It was especially hard when Thanksgiving Day had actually arrived and there was no turkey, no stuffing, and no cranberry sauce! A couple of my students that night told me that they would be right back. I just assumed they had to use the restroom, or were getting a cup of coffee. After about ten minutes, I asked the other students where they had gone. All I got back was a lot of confused faces. Finally, with class just about over, the students came back. I was angry at first, but when I saw what they had, my attitude changed immediately. It wasn't turkey that they had, but it was definitely a bird! Right next to my academy there was a KFC. My students had decided to surprise me with fried chicken for dinner. They explained to me that it wasn't turkey, but since I had told them it tasted like chicken that it would be just the same! My class and I sat there eating the Colonel's original recipe of 11 herbs and spices, and I have to say that it was one of the best Thanksgiving meals I have ever had. The students that I had in that class were definitely something to be thankful for.

Eventually, I learned that getting turkey wasn't as difficult as I had thought. Sometimes the hard part wasn't getting the turkey, but finding some place to cook it. I've had Thanksgiving dinners at co-workers' apartments, and at universities where I've worked. Even KOTESOL puts together a fine Thanksgiving meal, and you don't even have to be American to enjoy it! It was actually at last year's dinner, enjoying good friends and good food, that I thought again about that first Thanksgiving in Korea. I don't know where all those students are now, but I hope they've gotten a taste of the real thing.

Oh, and one more thing, thank you, Colonel. Thank you very much.

William Mulligan first came to Korea in 2001. In that time he has taught many different types of students, and many different types of classes. He currently resides in Gwangju with his wife and his young son. He just finished up two years as National Membership Chair, and has been Editor-in-Chief of The English Connection for almost two years. He can be contacted at kotesolteceditor @gmail.com