The English Connection

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The Art in EFL issue:

Art, Graphic Novels, and Graphic Organizers

Also:
Presenting … Roger Fusselman

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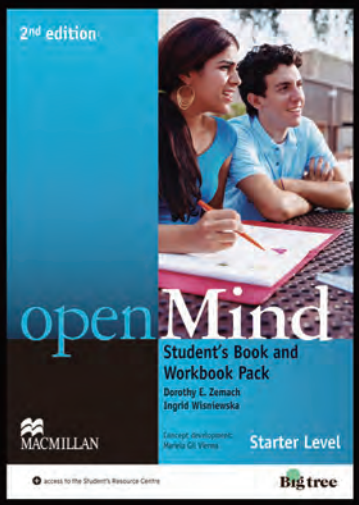

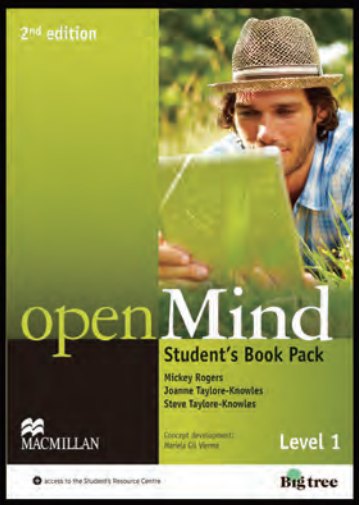

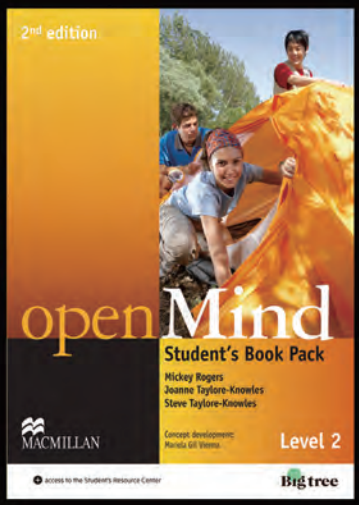

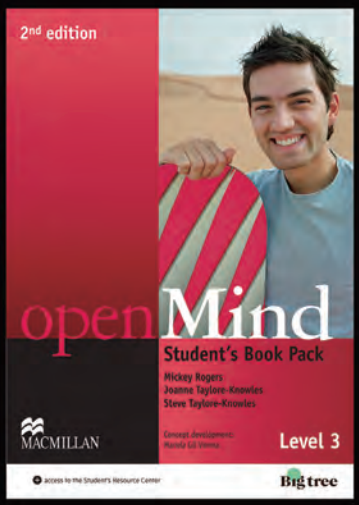

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To promote scholarship, disseminate information, and facilitate cross-cultural understanding among persons concerned with the teaching and learning of English in Korea.

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Editorial

By Julian Warmington Editor-in-Chief

And just like that, it's the end of 2014, with all its people met, skills acquired, ideas exchanged, and changes developed over the course of another year rocking the classroom with KOTESOL.

There are two more changes for you within the pages of this issue. First, we will include longer articles, on occasion, to offer you an even more engrossing, in-depth read. The worthy inaugural piece of longer writing comes from Martin Craig and Curt Porter, following their experimental study of the use of art in the English language classroom. You can find the complete set of their many references and the two appendices on our webpage. Also in this issue, you will find two more articles on the theme of the role of images in EFL education, looking at both graphic novels and graphic organizers.

Second, we are starting a new column, profiling some of the interesting characters you may meet at a KOTESOL conference or local chapter meeting in 2015. This is a direct result of KOTESOL President Peadar Callaghan's interest in people as KOTESOL's greatest asset: the human resource.

Peadar's first suggestion for the new column was someone who has both taken advantage of opportunities to learn and improve his own professional skills and, in turn, offered his experience and insight to other KOTESOL members: Roger Fusselman. Roger is an excellent presenter, and we are proud to introduce him with the launch of this new column.

Favorite regular columns are still included. The book review is by James Robertson, and the international EFL experience is by our ace associate editor Chris Miller himself, who spent some time in the exotic locale of Moldova. James reviews a top release for this past year: *Second Language Acquisition and Task-Based Language Teaching* (2014) by the notable Mike Long, who was featured at our international conference in October.

Lucy McCormick offers a useful, thoughtful reflection on assessment methods in Korean high schools, though most of her points are valid and applicable to classrooms of any level, on the peninsula and beyond.

Bringing the *techspertise* this issue, Jeff Lebow describes using Google Hangouts in the Korean classroom. Sara Peterson and Aaron Shayne offer some pointers for making the move to that dream university job.

We hope this issue helps springboard you into the exciting new year, and further reflects the rewarding and engaging new directions within KOTESOL, and the pages of *The English Connection.*

Julian Warmington

President's Message

By Peadar Callaghan
KOTESOL President

Everything KOTESOL does offers opportunities to learn. Indeed, we are developing our skills in accounting, web development, organizational management, leading meetings, graphic design, publishing, distribution management networks, technical services for conferences, stage management, negotiating with external businesses – the list is practically endless. However, only a modest number of members have taken advantage of the opportunities to improve the skills they already have or to pick up brand new ones. Why is this?

One possible reason could be the way we view ourselves. KOTESOL has been a teachers' organization since its very foundation. Our focus has always been to help teachers improve professionally by offering workshops, conferences, publications, and networking opportunities. Our goal has been to help teachers of English in Korea to become better English teachers. Yet, we haven't thought to publicize the other skills you can learn as a member of KOTESOL. Perhaps it is time to widen the perception of membership benefits.

Our focus thus far has also emphasized presentations and getting information out to as many members as possible about innovations in the field of English language teaching – and it should continue to be an important aspect of the organization. This has, however, had the unintended consequence of creating for some an image of KOTESOL as merely a group of theorists and researchers.

In a way, KOTESOL has been a victim of its own success. We are a successful teachers' organization, but I believe we can be so much more. As always, it starts with a very small change: In this case, it is how we view ourselves and, the image we project to our members and the general education community.

Instead of being an organization made up of teachers and educational professionals, we can refocus on becoming an organization full of life-long learners as educators. This may seem like a small distinction, but it has a profound effect on how we view ourselves and what it is we do.

If we are all learners, everyone has a valued and valid place in the discussion. Everyone within the organization has something new to learn, and most importantly, everyone deserves support and understanding if they make mistakes while learning. We would become more mentors than presenters, open to anyone who wants to learn a new skill from us and committed to giving them the opportunity to practice these skills. We do this because we all believe that by sharing we can learn what we might never have expected.

You may ask how this new vision will affect how KOTESOL works. In truth, it starts with openness. In the next year, National Council meetings will be open to any member who wishes to attend so they can see how we organize ourselves. In addition, every standing committee will be open to any member who wants to work with and learn from them. We will be rolling out our first online training seminars, and anyone who wants to learn about how to set up a similar program will be welcome to become involved.

We will endeavour to provide all our members with the opportunity to take part in work that they find both rewarding and challenging.

This simple change can have a huge impact on the future of KOTESOL, but it needs to start with you.

So what is it that you would like to learn?

Peadar Callaghan

KOTESOL People: Presenting Roger Fusselman

By Julian Warmington

Across cultural borders and national boundaries, one common fear is that of public speaking, yet Roger Fusselman seems to have completely mastered the art, using humor to maintain audience attention and making a name for himself on the KOTESOL scene. TEC introduces the first in a new series profiling KOTESOL people.

The voice that answers the phone is an interesting mix of calm and energetic. Roger Fusselman explains happily he has recently been "crazy busy," although the word around KOTESOL is this is no new development; "busy" is his lifestyle.

Asked whether keeping busy and maintaining a prominent place in KOTESOL circles are signs of being a victim of his own success, Fusselman answers, "No, I enjoy what I'm doing. It's just hard to keep juggling commitments and making choices about what I can and can't do." And he can do a lot.

Recognised on the KOTESOL scene as an ace presenter, courtesy of a string of memorable conference appearances over recent years, Fusselman has, as it turns out, done more than just hold a couple of decent talks. While he lists presentations among his favorite contributions, he also enjoyed being the "problem desk guy" at the international conference one year, writing a regular column for one KOTESOL publication and contributing to others as well. Most recently, he lent informal support to the KOTESOL president as promotional advisor. Fusselman acknowledges though, "There are a lot of people in KOTESOL who work behind the scenes. A lot of my work has been more glamorous, and other people have had to vet my abstracts for me to get accepted to present."

His most memorable recent "glamorous" moment was when an unexpected break in proceedings at the national conference this year left a gap for an extra pecha kucha, a very brief talk accompanied by slides. According to one witness, Fusselman asked the audience for three or four conference-related topics. When he stood to speak for the set time, Roger was able to relate the random slides he had on hand to the topics chosen by the audience, and had the delighted crowd in stitches with laughter. Indeed, at the international conference months later, at the mention of the name Fusselman, another audience member simply smiled and exclaimed, "Oh, that pecha kucha guy!"

When asked how he did it that day at the national conference, he replies,

> "That talk was the most thrilling for me because it brought together all my interests in six minutes. I don't know whether the audience learned anything, but I hope so. I was trying to be useful and not just talk off the top of my head, but it was totally improvised based on audience requests, and based on [performance] improvisation techniques, TESOL knowledge, and my Toastmasters experience."

In fact, Fusselman has extensive experience both delivering public speeches and training others to do so, including two years as a member of Yeouido Toastmasters, four years with Seoul City Improv theatre, and the writing of seven comedy scripts over five years for performances in and around Seoul. Clearly, he has practiced the craft of delivering funny lines, and also has the academic background to support his message.

With a degree in English with a view to writing graphic novels, Roger's interests diversified into the philosophy of language being for thinking even before communication, and the implications this raises both in terms of English epistemology and cognitive science. He incorporates such threads into talks on his experiences teaching vocabulary to young learners.

Asked about his biggest challenge during his time with KOTESOL, Roger replies that the first few presentations were the hardest, simply from the lack of knowing "how they'd be received." He adds, "Now I feel more comfortable in understanding the subject matter of teaching; when I first started I was drawing off my own

experience. It can be very challenging if you don't feel like you know what works. Sometimes chances work, sometimes not."

Having been in and around the KOTESOL scene for

more than a decade, Fusselman has seen changes in the professional development volunteer organization.

"KOTESOL has had to deal with major challenges within the organization in recent years. Outside of the organization, I'm never too sure how well it's growing in the outside public's view, but I think they've diversified to include new kinds of teachers. For example, when I first came to KOTESOL, it wasn't very open to teachers of young learners; it eventually became stronger in that and for helping prospective teachers, and I think there's a greater variety of people involved now. Before, it might have been predominantly North Americans; it feels more pluralistic now, and I think they've had to grow a little more because of that."

More generally, within Korea outside of KOTESOL, Roger has seen further evidence of change on the peninsula. "The quality of teachers has improved, and the expectations of them, too. There's a lot more regulation around certain aspects of the job that doesn't need to be there; some of it may be, some probably not. And I think now you have more people that seriously consider Korea as a long-term career option in teaching. Each year, I think it gets better and better for meeting people that enjoy teaching, and better and better for meeting other people that share common values: It's much easier for finding kindred spirits."

Roger continues to encourage kindred spirits enthusiastic about English education in Korea to share what works best for them, saying KOTESOL "should be more open to people who have found something they do that works in class but [some teachers] are too quiet about sharing it."

> ***"The quality of teachers has improved, and the expectations of them too."***

Asked about advice for first-time presenters considering sharing favorite practical classroom techniques in their local chapter meetings, Roger offers a collection of ideas.

"Ask yourself how much is specific to your context, and how genuinely helpful it was for your students. Did they really achieve or grow because of that? The test is not "Was it cool-looking?" but "Was it helpful?" That's the bottom line. Also, others may not have your class context: You really should conceptualize your experience; ask yourself broad questions about it, and that will prepare you for your presentation."

> *"That talk was the most thrilling for me because it brought together all my interests in six minutes ... it was totally improvised based on audience requests, and based on [performance] improvisation techniques, TESOL knowledge, and my Toastmasters experience."*

Roger distinguishes between a presentation and an old-fashioned speech. "You should make sure your presentation is not a strict monologue, and it should integrate ideas and application, rather than the usual theory and practise." He finishes by explaining how some presenters cite more academic research, and others include audience interaction, and both aspects are important and useful.

Roger Fusselman and other speakers, both experienced and new to presenting, will be available to watch and learn from at your local chapter meetings, and at national conferences in the coming months.

The Author

Julian Warmington teaches at the Busan University of Foreign Studies.

Exploring e-Readers and Digital Graphic Novels in EFL

By Norman Fewell and George MacLean

As e-books have established a solid presence in commercial markets, a wide array of digital content has become available. Similar trends have emerged in educational publishing, including a seemingly obscure and peculiar sub-genre: the graphic novel.

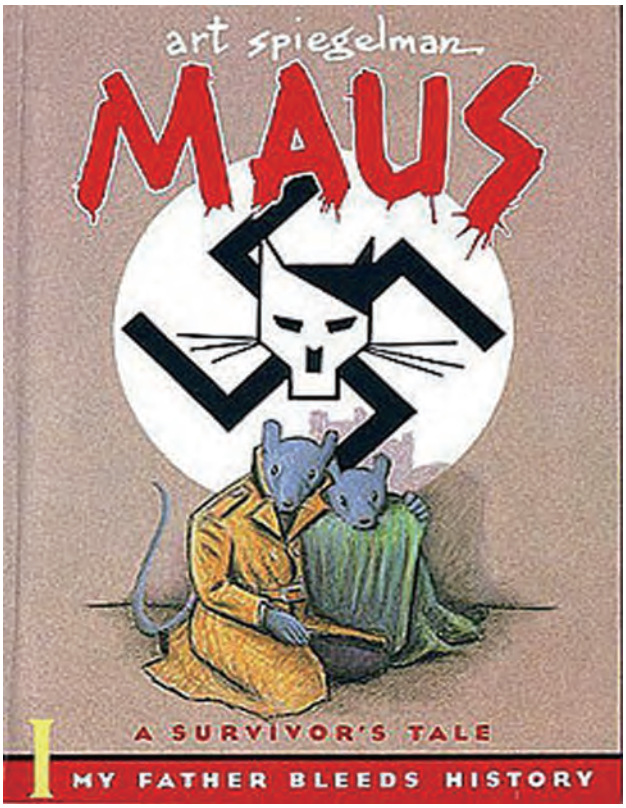
The emergence of graphic novels in education dates back a decade, following Art Spiegelman's graphic novel Maus's earlier Pulitzer Prize win. This led to the inclusion of these heavily illustrated books in schools and libraries across the United States.

Across the Pacific, the situation is remarkably different. In Japan, manga makes up 37% of all publications sold (JETRO, 2006) with over 90% of Japanese reading these materials (Cary, 2004). Eloquently described as being the size of telephone directories, comic books in Asia are sold by the million to adults on a weekly basis (Aleixo & Norris, 2007). However, despite their popularity in commercial markets, these materials have remained absent from school and university curricula throughout Asia. This is a shame, because English education in Korea would benefit from incorporating graphic novels into its curriculum.

Graphic novels provide text with illustrated panels that contain additional information. This visual support provides a reference for readers, allowing them to acquire a more thorough understanding of content that reinforces meaning. Language learners have less of a chance of becoming confused because these illustrations supplement the written information. L2 readers can also interpret simultaneous paralinguistic cues more accurately in the visual form when reading situational dialogues where characters are interacting with one another (Williams, 1995). Finally, language learners have access to some of the closest written representations of the spoken form through authentic conversational language. The dialogues have a structure and simplified format that can conveniently be integrated into language teaching. The culturally rich elements of colloquialism, slang, and humor offer students abundant sources of content appropriate for learning.

Attention-grabbing graphics not only assist language learners in understanding the content of the text, but may also motivate them to read more (McTaggart, 2008). The popularity of graphic novels for recreational reading outside the classroom establishes the necessity of their inclusion within it. In a more thorough examination of current reader preferences and trends outside the classroom, the inclusion of graphic novels is just a partial picture with one missing element: the digital reader. While the integration of graphic novels into education may be described as a late reactive response, and the proposition of using e-reading devices could be described as an early reactive response, the combination of these two elements should be considered a proactive response.

Experimental as it may seem, this idea is based on a logical blend of two converging trends: one in reading and the other in technology.



Technological developments have added a variable to the equation of accessibility: specifically, reading graphic novels on e-readers. Although the graphic novel is fulfilling in its traditional form by presenting valuable visual and verbal information to the reader, the numerous integrated reading aids available on e-readers can provide unimaginable benefits for EFL readers.

The Apple iPad and Kindle Paperwhite, for instance, have integrated dictionaries, highlighters, and online

search functions that enable readers to easily retrieve meaning and better manage their learning needs. This is particularly helpful for L2 learners who often need supplementary tools to undertake the challenges of reading in a foreign language.

In several EFL university classes, the authors have introduced graphic novels as reading assignments to their students with much positive response. Many students were not aware of these educational materials and have subsequently purchased other graphic novels for their personal reading initiatives. Some students were utterly disappointed that they did not know of these materials earlier. These reactions justified the continued use of graphic novels in classes, and a sizeable purchase of iPads soon provided an ideal means of delivery.

"Many students were not aware of these educational materials... Some students were utterly disappointed that they did not know of these materials earlier."

The students' reactions to reading graphic novels on iPads were phenomenal. The novelty of using iPads may have played a role, and the visual element of extraordinary vivid colors on these devices certainly did, but the most frequent and enlightening responses from students were to the availability of multiple reading tools. Students could retrieve the meaning of unknown words and phrases easily from integrated dictionaries and online search functions with a simple touch. Highlighting functions were also mentioned as helpful reading assets. These initial responses from students were extremely encouraging.

After a decade of successful integration in educational institutions throughout the United States, the presence of graphic novels in reading and language learning programs exemplify the possibility that these visual texts could be applied to the needs of EFL learners as well. The numerous barriers that have delayed the introduction of graphic novels in education in the United States are not necessarily pertinent in many EFL manga-friendly countries in Asia. Additionally, concerns of technophobia have been exponentially reduced in today's wired generation. The marketplace is now filled with an abundant selection of e-reading devices and a wide variety of digital graphic novels. It may be an opportune time for teachers to merge these cutting-edge trends, which have been revolutionizing the educational and technological landscape, and introduce them to the world of English foreign language education.

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Hanging Out for ELT

By Jeff Lebow

When Google first unveiled Hangouts in 2011 as part of their Google+ offerings, I saw them as a good video conferencing alternative to Skype. They have been that, but as Google has continued to add features, Hangouts have also played an increasingly vital role in my teaching and professional development.

Hangouts are private video conferences in which up to ten people can participate. Hangouts on Air (HOA) are Hangouts that are streamed live (publicly or to a limited audience) via YouTube and automatically recorded. Both kinds of Hangouts are free, relatively resource-light, and mobile-friendly. Hangouts also include text chats, which can be conducted with one or more individual Google+ users or with an entire circle of connections.

Classroom Uses

Speaking Practice

After making sure all students have the Hangouts app installed, I have students work in pairs and set up a Hangout with each other. Partner A leaves the room with a text or set of instructions.

Partner B stays in the classroom and is required to take notes on what their partner is saying.

Students generally find this an engaging way to do partner activities.

Hangout Midterms and Office Hours

In the past, I've conducted conversation assessments in my office. Using a private HOA instead allows for more flexibility in scheduling and provides a more interesting, relaxed setting. It also means the conversation is recorded, which allows me to go back and review what we discussed for assessment and language analysis purposes. Similarly, I have found that holding office hours online, usually in the evening, makes it easier to find convenient times to meet with students and creates a more casual atmosphere conducive to meaningful conversation.

Group Text Messaging

As long as students have the Hangout app installed on their mobile devices, group chats can be used for class announcements, reminders, and questions. KakaoTalk and Naver's BAND are both a bit more user-friendly in this regard, but if you want to avoid using too many different platforms, Hangouts will suffice for this purpose. Group chats can also be used for in-class game-show types of activities – rather than buzzing in, students need to text in.

Professional Development

I have been experimenting with live, interactive webcasting since 2005. The technical challenges of hosting a multi-party video conference, streaming it so others can watch, and recording

it so people can view it afterward were daunting and/or expensive. HOA has made it a free five-click operation that requires no special hardware or software. This creates all sorts of opportunities to connect with other teachers online.

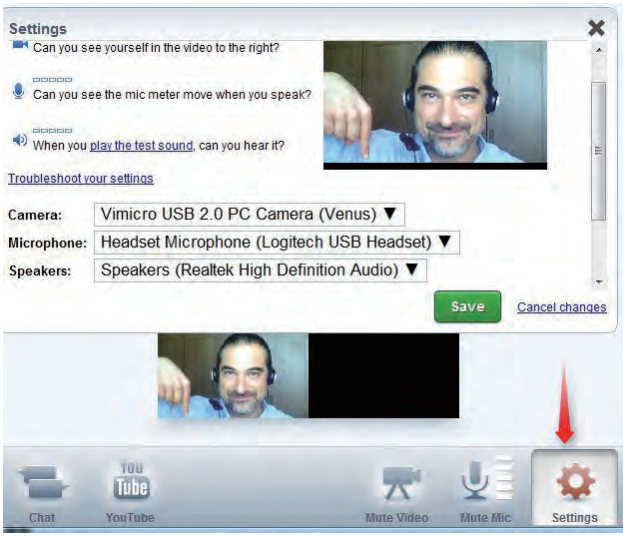
Collaboration Meetings

Whether it's meeting with colleagues or organization committees (e.g., KOTESOL SIGs or chapter officers), I find online meetings easier to schedule and more productive. They can also be recorded, which allows those who missed the meeting to stay in the loop. For people who participate in Massive Open Online Courses like those offered by Coursera or Edx, Hangouts can be a great way to hold study groups.

Google+ Hangout Communities

There is an ever-growing number of Google+ communities related to ELT. These are similar to Facebook groups, but I find them to have better

navigation and curation functionality. Some, like "Learn English" and "English Language Teaching & Learning," don't use Hangouts, but are great places to discover ELT resources and participate in asynchronous conversations with thousands of



language teachers from around the world. Other communities, like "Learning English Online," use Hangouts to connect with other members or to arrange synchronous meetings between two different classes. There are also communities like "English Practice Hangouts" that are designed to provide practice opportunities for language learners, with optional assistance from teachers.

HOA Webcasts

There are quite a few ELT- and EdTech-related online communities that use HOA to stream live webcasts and produce video podcasts. I think of these as global "virtual faculty lounges" where we are able to connect with like-minded educators.

Some of the ones I've participated in are ELT Live, Learning2gether, iTDi.pro, EdTechTalk, and Project Roundtable. These tend to be informal conversations and newcomers are welcome to join in.

An online version of this article with links and screencast guides can be found at: http://jefflebow.net/node/333

The Author

Jeff Lebow is an associate professor and teacher trainer at Busan University of Foreign Studies. His CALL site is at LearningCall.net and personal blog at JeffLebow.net. He can be found regularly hanging out at ELTLive, Koreabridge.net, and EdTechTalk.com.

Writing Effective Research Papers

By Tory Thorkelson

Since 2010, the undergraduate students at my university have been taught how to write a 3000-word, MLA-style research paper, one that represents their final graduation requirement. While the students are strongly urged to take all three of the writing classes our small group of teachers offers – Paragraphs, Essays, and Research Papers (which asks for a rough draft of their graduation paper as the final assignment) – it has been a challenge to get them to research, outline, and produce unique, meaningful reports. While the tools below have not made this process completely pain-free, they have made it easier and more accessible for our students. I hope they will do the same for you and your students.

1) Finding a topic: Some students spend far too much of their valuable time brainstorming in search of inspiration. Questia's topic finder enlivens (and speeds up) this process by generating random topics from within the student's particular field or discipline.

Link: http://www.questia.com/writing-center#!/topic-i deas

Tip: Click on a specific topic to go to the library, where thousands of sources related to that topic are available.

2) Brainstorming and choosing a topic are often the most difficult tasks for students; once that is done, however, the report needs to be outlined. Your students can use the free "Planning a Paper" tutorial on Questia

to get started on this.

Link: http://www.questia.com/research-tutorials

3) While students (and many Korean academic publications) prefer Hangul Word for word processing, the recent decision by Samsung to drop their in-house office software in favor of Microsoft Office only underlines why we only accept papers in MS Word. If students do not have access to this, they can use a similar program like LibreOffice for free. This particular alternative has a Korean version available as well.

Link: http://www.libreoffice.org

4) When a particular style (e.g., APA, MLA) is required, downloading a template and using it to automatically format the paper saves time and increases accuracy. Students can use the link below to find templates for the most popular styles, or they can directly search for one themselves. Microsoft Word does offer formatting tools for MLA and APA style (among others), but many students find them more confusing than helpful.

Link: http://www.wright.edu/~martin.maner/rptemp.htm

5) Once students understand why citing sources and avoiding plagiarism (the number one reason why students fail their graduation paper in our program) is important, an authoritative site with detailed information about the latest version of MLA or APA style guidelines can certainly help. A site like the OWL (online writing lab) at Purdue will help students understand how to correctly write a research paper in MLA or APA style.

Links: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/owlprint/658 https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/675/1

Tip: A number of online resources exist that offer practice activities for MLA formatting. Here are two that I use with my students.

Links: www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/tutorials/mlatutorial/tutorialindex.php https://depts.washington.edu/trio/quest/citation/apa_mla_citation_game/

6) Creating citations and formatting references are a problem for many students. Websites like EasyBib or Bibme can be employed to make these tasks easier.

Link: http://www.easybib.com or http://www.bibme.org

Tip: Easybib also has an application for Android and iPhone that uses a built-in scanner, but it only works on books with ISBNs, in my experience, which are relatively easy to cite, anyway. The website allows a number of media and print formats to be cited and also offers APA and other styles for a price, while MLA is free.

7) A number of sites will check your grammar for you for free, but most also have a maximum word count (usually less than 1,000 words or a couple of pages). Grammarly seems to be the most popular, but it is only free on a seven-day trial if you sign up and agree to a paid subscription. Students are recommended to use tools in MS Word or a free site to proofread their paper, such as PaperRater.

Link: http://www.paperrater.com

8) Another issue is how to distinguish academic and non-academic language. In addition to reading many papers (which the students should be doing as part of the research for their paper), there are tools available to help students properly express themselves in an academic style. Academic Phrasebank is an excellent site in this vein, offering a selection of common phrases commonly found in research reports, organized by section. Some students may confuse the use of generic, stock phrases with plagiarism, so it is important to explain the difference between the two.

Link: http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk

Despite the fact our students are able to attend three writing courses (about 45 weeks, or 90 class hours of writing instruction in total), many still choose not to take full advantage of these classes, or forget what they have learned because of the length of time between finishing the courses and heading abroad on student exchange programs. The tools listed above are the result of my attempts to find more efficient ways to teach our students how to successfully complete the graduation paper requirement. The suggested tools and tips will not magically produce perfect research papers, but when used properly by students and instructors, they will simplify many of the steps in the process and lead to higher-quality academic writing.

The Author

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Different Voices: Artwork in the English Classroom

By Martin Craig and Curt Porter

This classroom research project was born out of the challenges that came with trying to bring our teaching philosophies into English classrooms in South Korean public schools. We believe that our work is about more than teaching grammar and stock phrases, that schooling is an inherently political process, and that Korean students are more than capable of complex and critical engagement in the classroom (Shin & Crookes, 2005). We also acknowledge that teachers play an important role in educational change (Shin, 2012).

We conducted this research project in a high school on the outskirts of Seoul. At the time, the school was ranked near the bottom of the 150 schools in Gyeonggi Province. This meant students were generally regarded as beginner to low-intermediate users of English, and the vast majority used English only in the classroom. Most students were from socio-economically disadvantaged neighborhoods.

"For learners with limited English proficiency, the ability to complete a classroom task using simplified English grammar and limited vocabulary while expressing distaste for political and economic leaders seemed to offer rich opportunities for personal responses to power."

The school's English curriculum included weekly readings from The Korea Herald. This decision was unpopular with the students and some expressed their displeasure by doodling on textbooks and desks. One day, we discovered that many of these scribbled comments were in English. So, we decided to take advantage of this display of teenage rebellion to start an English-language art project relevant to their life experiences.

Art in The Language Classroom

The use of art in formal educational settings has surged in recent years (Dai, 2010; Hanauer, 2011; Murphy, 2013; Robinson, 2011; Rothwell, 2011) with artistic expression helping to reduce learner anxiety (Kennedy, 2008; Piazzoli, 2011; Spina, 2006), engage critical thinking (Dai, 2010), introduce opportunities for meaningful expression and personal discovery (Gamwell, 2005; Hanauer, 2011), and even facilitate language proficiency (Dai, 2010; Murphy, 2013). Robinson (2011) sums it up by saying that arts-integrated curricula can lead to greater student success.

The use of art in language-learning classrooms does more than provide new avenues of teaching. We are interested in how artistic practices can change the significance of authoritative texts (Juffermans, 2012), and how we can use art to pursue politically engaging work in our classrooms. We would especially like to explore how arts-based pedagogies alter what is to be learned and what it means to learn. Our challenge is to put together a politically engaged arts-based curriculum that embraces and extends local readings and local uses of texts.

Local Languaging as Art-Work: "Tagging Up" in the Classroom

Since schools favor certain kinds of literacy practices, they limit the ways learners can engage with texts (Gee, 2003; Wollon & Otto, 2014).

We agree with Spina (2006) that increasing the modes through which learners interact encourages a greater range of voices and possible outcomes.

Multimodal texts can create new relationships between learners and their contexts (Holloway, 2012). These various modes introduce broader ranges of perspectives and meanings. Juffermans (2012) suggests the term *local languaging* to describe the "little bits and pieces of language" (p. 278) that individuals use and have available to them.

Our objective is to deal with text in a new way in a classroom environment. Literacy pedagogy is not a matter of simply discovering how a learner feels about or interprets text, but it is also a matter of creating/producing the possibility of new readings and practices that surround and produce classroom texts.

Figure 1

Instead of just decoding, interpreting, and summarizing the required newspapers, we sought new ways that learners might interact with these texts. We took our cue from visual artist Nancy Chunn's 1996 "Front Pages" project (see Figure 1 above). This bright and transgressive work consisted of her "tagging up" the front pages of The New York Times every day for one year.

"The most insightful work in these lessons was produced by students who had struggled to perform satisfactorily in the literacy modes usually preferred by school structures."

She used markers and rubber stamps to create a kaleidoscope of color and icons, text and images, arranged in multimodal responses to the stories of the day, their coverage, and their positioning.

Chunn re-editorialized the text into a colorful and irreverent multimodal "speaking back" to power, transforming the nature of writer-reader interaction from monologues to dialogues.

We decided to explore how this activity could inspire new practices and new ways of reading and "speaking back" to authoritative texts in classroom settings.

Class Activities

First, we asked students to scan copies of *The Korea Herald* for stories they felt represented their lives or interests. This was difficult because the real lives of the working class are not

well represented in the newspaper. Next, we provided an oppositional reading handout to help learners question the newspaper's emphasis on certain stories and certain types of people. We asked questions about whose worldviews were represented, and we discussed the significance of certain editorial decisions.

After this discussion, we showed photos taken from the front page of the newspaper and asked participants to predict the story of each photo.

Without textual support, students asked more questions about the photos' importance and relevance to their own lives. This developed an increased sensitivity to the distance between their lives and the "important life" depicted on the front page. The perception of the very real socio-economic distance between themselves and those depicted as important created a space within, encouraging more nuanced readings of the image and text.

At this point, we shared Nancy Chunn's work with the students. After examining her work, the students received recent copies of The Korea Herald's front page and felt-tipped pens in different colors. They were told they could make art. If they wanted, they could speak back.

Any response they had to the front-page stories was valid. They were free to interact with the newspapers in any way they saw fit, including doing nothing.

Learners' Art-Work

In her work, Chunn used no more than eight words to respond to any of the stories or images displayed, and yet the simple iconography and slogans left no doubt as to how she had chosen to relate to the texts. She demonstrated to our students that they did not need high-level English to make profound political observations. For learners with limited English proficiency, the ability to complete a project using simplified English grammar and limited vocabulary while expressing distaste for political and economic leaders seemed to offer rich opportunities for personal responses to power.

In Figure 2, for example, one student uses only two words as a headline, positioned to demand attention, yet slightly covering the heads of the "Rich Men," which seems to indicate they have less respect for these nine giants of the financial industry than the newspaper does. This is underscored by the rudimentary blue faces each man is given, drawn over his own. We think this is commenting on the anonymity of power.

Figure 2

Concerning their involvement in the students' lives, these bankers might as well be wearing masks. The following interaction from the post-project interview shows there is more meaning here than cursory disrespect:

> Student A: "This newspaper has no consideration of me."
> Student B: "Because you are not rich."
> Student A: "Yes. My life is... not important! (Laughs)"

Figure 3

In Figure 3, the writing and drawing of Korean currency signs on the eyes of Samsung chairman and Korea's richest man, Lee Kun-Hee, show the students' critiquing capitalist excess. They exhibit in seven words both an awareness of zero-sum economics and how the social class they belong to marginalizes their voices: "Too Much Money;

No money for us!"

Figure 4

In Figure 4, the student has responded to the story on underpaid migrant workers in Korea by creating a multimodal text. The comment "unfair discrimination" is in the foreground, and the typography gives it more impact. The drawing of "zero-dollar" bills is an eye-catching, immediate, and imaginative way of conveying an awareness that foreign workers are being poorly treated.

Figure 5

In Figure 5, the focus is the perceived distance between the student and the people depicted in newspapers. "What KOSPSI?" is the "new" in response to the "given" photo where people are not only aware of what the KOSPI is, but appear to be happy about the fact it is going up. (The KOSPI is the Korean stock market index.) To accentuate the point, the student redraws the movement of the markets but communicates that he does not see how it is relevant to his life.

Despite working alone, this student uses the first person plural, suggesting he is just one member of a community of individuals where financial information is an abstraction.

Again, the post-project interviews clarify that this expression was more a critique than a confession: Student C: "I don't know it. KOSPI goes up, KOSPI goes down, my life is the same."

Caution needs to be exercised when claiming insight into a local understanding of these texts as cultural and ethnic outsiders. However, the simple clarity of the messages, coupled with post-project interviews, does allow for a level of confidence in the analysis of student intention.

Discussion

Through the production of written texts and visual images, participants were able to convey messages of greater personal and social relevance than through written English alone.

Recognizing this as a valued form of expression changed the shape of the learning in the classroom. Different rituals allowed students to play to their strengths, producing different results.

It brought a voice to those who had struggled in traditional English classes, which practice a more linear view of literacy. This openness allowed a noticeable change in what classroom work was produced, how it was produced, and most

"We were delighted to rediscover some of our students' social worlds and find that even those with more basic levels of English proficiency were able to produce nuanced, politically salient opinions ..."

importantly, who it was produced by. Now the voices most heard were those relegated to the periphery of traditional English classes.

Critical literacy challenges omnipresent and unstated social agendas of power, one in which language is imbued with politicized ideologies (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993). Our students were capable of using a variety of semiotic and multimodal resources to convey their subjectivity in novel meaning-making events (Ajayi, 2009).

Our analysis indicated that despite their English-speaking limitations, they were able to participate in such critical literacies.

We cannot claim with absolute certainty that we have local understandings of these texts. If we borrow from Pennycook's (2010; 2012) notion of the local, however, teachers are a part of this eclectic mix of texts, languages, histories, and practices that make up any local classroom setting. We found that learners made complex expressions with The Korea Herald newspapers when given the opportunity to engage with them in new ways. While they seemed to be expressing informed and intentional critiques, we can also think of this work as a sort of "playing" because of the "non-school-like" nature of the project.

In response to claims that Korean learners do not routinely engage in critical thinking (McGuire, 2007), we suggest that the richness (or lack thereof) of students' work is a response to the limitations and potential that activities and modalities invoke. Students' expressions would thus be a response to the kinds of literacy practices valued. The goal of politically engaged, arts-based pedagogies is to use artwork to transform our typical understandings and meaning-making rituals in the classroom setting – to interrogate and expand the notion of what is possible in a particular space.

Final Thought

What we found led us to conclude that far from being limited to decoding and comprehension, literacy in the Korean high school context can be expanded beyond normal school-sanctioned practices to include multimodal, critical, and enjoyable literacy practices (Lesley, 2008). These practices produced unforeseen results.

The most insightful work in these lessons was produced by students who had struggled to perform satisfactorily in the literacy modes usually preferred by school structures. We were delighted to rediscover some of our students' social worlds and find that even those with more basic levels of English proficiency were able to produce nuanced, politically salient opinions of power structures, to see themselves as subjects within them, and to engage in artistic practices that made their resistance to such positions a visible and viable part of classroom literacies.

The work collected strongly suggested that using the front pages of a national newspaper could function extremely effectively in fostering critical literacy practices. It offers English language learners the opportunity to openly challenge and subvert discursive practices that they feel marginalized by and illustrates to ELT professionals that Korean students do "get it;" they can speak back when challenged to express a critique as long as the project is relevant and the modes of acceptable expression are not limited to textual responses alone. Even within the profound structural constraints of the Korean high school situation, a locally engaged pedagogy can manifest relevant, dialogical, and fruitful classroom practices.

The Authors

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English Education in Korea and Moldova

By Chris Miller

The Republic of Moldova is nestled between Romania and the Ukraine. It has the dubious distinction of being the poorest country in Europe. I lived in Moldova as a United States Peace Corps volunteer from August 2007 to August 2009. On the surface, one might think a place like Korea, which is brimming with ambition, would have little in common with a country often associated with fatalism. However, in my experience, these two countries have many parallels in English education. I will detail some of the similarities and differences between the two teaching environments, then address some of the more memorable and pleasant aspects of my brief time in Republica Moldova.

Similarities

Much like Korea, tests really drive education in Moldova. The Moldovan equivalent of *suneung* (the Korean university entrance exam) is the Baccalaureate. Unlike Korea, students only start preparing for the Baccalaureate around their junior year (11th grade, or one year before high school graduation). As a naïve American TEFL instructor, I led a voluntary 12th-grade English conversation class. I had prepared a series of activities that were intended to provide a light, "fun" classroom environment. After about ten minutes, one of my students informed me: "We want to study for the Baccalaureate." I granted their request.

Vestiges of the Soviet Unioin are still observable in Moldova.

Student study time is similar as well. I was quite shocked listening to my students describe their routine of leaving school at 2:00 p.m., when classes ended, but studying until 10:00 p.m., only pausing for dinner. However, there was a sharp divide between motivated and unmotivated students. Since I lived in a rural, predominantly agrarian village of 5,000 people, students either went home to study or work in the fields. Some did both quite adroity, though many students refused to do homework, for English or any other subject.

Moldova has the coldest winters.

Moldova and Korea also share something which America lacks: an official teacher's day. In Moldova, the day's emphasis is on the teachers. Students are given extra responsibilities including delivering speeches and assisting in organizing school events.

During the school events, all teachers are presented with fresh cut roses, and many also receive bouquets of flowers or other tokens of appreciation. Since I had expressed my fondness for classical music to one of my students, she performed Beethoven's famous Polonaise in my honor. After the event, teachers gather for a private *masa*, or feast, with traditional foods such as sarmales (similar to tamales, but stuffed with duck) and recreational beverages.

Differences

As Moldova is still developing, there were some shortcomings in the classroom. Technology was absent; there were no smartboards or video devices in the classroom. The school did have a computer lab, where students learned typing and basic computer skills. However, the internet was extremely slow. It often took 15-20 minutes to check my e-mail. With such limited infrastructure in many places, there was a strong sense of fatalism in the country.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Moldova's economy was devastated. According to my Peace Corp orientation, the unemployment rate in the country may have been as high as 40%. There was mass emigration

to Russia, Italy, and the United States, where many found work in factories or housekeeping.

In many respects, it was the opposite of the disheartening "wild goose father" phenomenon in Korea, where the father stays and works in Korea while the mother and children go abroad to attend school. In the Moldovan case, it was the father – but quite often the mother as well – who would leave the country to send money home.

I perceived two common responses to these challenges among Moldovans. First, many more or less threw in the towel and developed a bitter attitude to life, often accompanied by alcoholism. Second, many achieved relative success through hard work. One success story was the principal of my school. He managed to serve as principal, teach history 10 hours a week, sell clothes at the weekly market in our village and a neighboring town, and rent an apartment in the capital city of Chisinau.

Another lady in our village would travel five hours to attend university in Chisinau during the week and returned home on the weekends to help manage her family's restaurant.

Lifestyle

Without the pressures of family or professional responsibilities, I thoroughly enjoyed my time in Moldova. I was a TEFL responsible for 18 hours of weekly classroom instruction. However, there were many holidays, both scheduled and spontaneous.

I once calculated that I spent approximately 30 weeks in the classroom per year. To compensate for such lacunae, the Peace Corps encouraged secondary activities. So, I led student requested after school clubs for chess and checkers and offered gratis tutoring. As Moldovans generally don't like receiving things for free, my students (or perhaps their parents) would pay me with fresh fruit or homemade dishes, such as sarmales or cherry and apple preserves. In the summer I volunteered with a variety of camps, either English or general "sports day" camps designed by my more ambitious Peace Corps colleagues.

Nevertheless, I had extra time. The Peace Corps provided a 10 week intensive Romanian course upon arrival. Volunteers were encouraged to learn the language and were provided with a stipend to continue studying with private tutors. Thus, I spent a lot of time studying the Romanian language. I managed to work through a collection of poems from Romania's most famous writer, Eminescu. Every Moldovan's education is peppered with references to Eminescu's tragic relationship with Veronica Micle, ending with her suicide two months after Eminescu's death. Through my Romanian tutor, I was able to find a piano tutor, for $2.50 an hour, to help me pass the time.

The food was amazing. Two adjectives to best describe Moldovan cuisine are "plentiful" and "fresh." As mentioned previously, my village was rather agrarian. While that might not make for a great night life, it did have other charms. In season, my plate was filled with fresh cherries, strawberries, and, to the amazement of my Korean students and colleagues, watermelon. As I lived with a host family, most meals were provided. When I did buy food, it was rather cheap. Finding a kilogram of peaches for approximately $1 was not uncommon.

However, salaries were also low across the board. During my stay, I received a "volunteer stipend" on par with what local teachers made, averaging out to US$220 a month. For a brief time, I considered ways to stay after my volunteer service. I even interviewed with another U.S. government agency, where I would be able to earn approximately US$90 per class every semester. Shortly after, a fellow colleague shared his plans to go to Korea, which opened the current chapter of my life.

Molova, Eastern Europe.

While there were, and still are, many differences between Korea and Moldova, the key to enjoying my time is similar for both countries: participate in the culture, attempt to learn the language, keep culturally based frustrations to myself or a small group of trusted confidants, and have a positive attitude. Follow these rules and good things are bound to happen!

The Author

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Reading Strategy and Graphic Organizers

By Hyeong Jun Chae

Graphic Organizers

According to Kang (2004), graphic organizers are "visual frameworks such as figures, diagrams, charts, etc. used to present structural knowledge spatially in a given area with the intention of enhancing comprehension and learning" (p. 58). When making instructional plans, for instance, teachers are apt to use them to organize information in a manner that makes the information easier to understand and learn. When applied to EFL settings, graphic organizers have been proven to enhance reading comprehension.

Skilled readers are equipped with a wealth of reading strategies to utilize when reading written texts; they are apt to comprehend written texts quickly and effectively. According to Dymock (2005), EFL readers have problems understanding written texts, and this is attributed to the absence of reading strategy instruction: Many EFL students are not given enough instruction on reading strategies. They find it a time-consuming and head-spinning job to comprehend texts.

Young English language learners (YELLs) in particular have a limited repertoire of reading strategies and are more likely to improve their reading comprehension with reading strategy instruction, which is why EFL teachers are asked to help YELLs by incorporating reading strategies into the class.

Namely, they serve as a visual tool in depicting organizational patterns of texts graphically, thereby facilitating greater reading comprehension. A variety of graphic organizers are available and some examples are presented below.

Web-like	Hierarchical	Linear	Matrix
Semantic Map	Concept Map	Chain of Events	Inquiry/Input Table

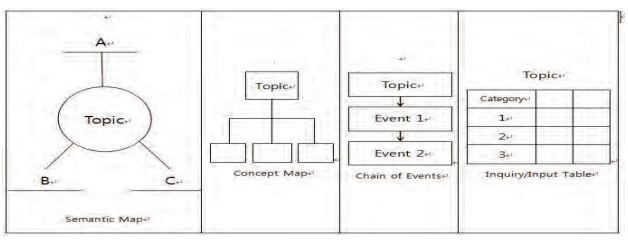

Figure 1: Examples of graphic organizers
(from Kang, 2004)

Expository Texts

Graphic organizers are effective for visualizing text structures of a particular text type. According to Durkin, Ferguson, and Sperring (2006), written texts can be divided into five types: report types, narrative types, procedural types, persuasive types, and expository types. Their research indicates that graphic organizers work well with expository texts, which aim to inform the reader of general information. To do so, they put forward ideas in a well-arranged manner, using structural elements to organize ideas and convey them via such text structures as "compare and contrast," "cause and effect," "problem and solution," "time order," and "description." For instance, a brief article explaining the relationship between global warming and climate change is likely to organize ideas in a way that shows global warming causes climate change.

A linear form of graphic organizer can be utilized to display the text structure of the article as below.

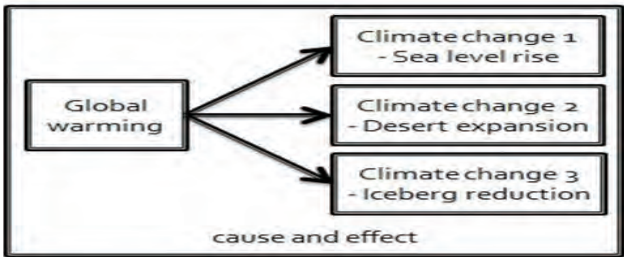

Figure 2: Cause-and-effect graphic organizer

Practical Applications

Hudson (2007) claimed that the Pre-, While-, Post-reading (PWP) Model, or process-oriented reading instruction, provides a framework for lesson design involving expository texts and graphic organizers. In the pre-reading part, teachers are expected to help students make connections between students' prior knowledge and new knowledge. Students tend to learn best when asked to activate relevant knowledge. In other words, students can identify links between what they already know and what they are being taught once their background knowledge is activated. The activation then plays a role in facilitating learning in a manner that helps process new information. In the pre-reading section, therefore, teachers should ask YELLs such questions as, "Can you say anything that you already know in relation to the text?" and "Can you guess what kind of text structure the text presents?"

While the students read, teachers should assist them in visualizing text structures with graphic organizers.

When engaged with the active processing of new information, students are likely to process it to the extent that the new information stays with them for a long period of time. Students thus need to get involved with an active construction of new knowledge, and this can be carried out through graphic organizers.

For example, students using graphic organizers approach a written text by splitting it into smaller parts and then putting the parts together into bigger chunks to discover text structures. In doing so, the organizer can engage students in actively forming new knowledge, thereby contributing to the retention of new information. In the while-reading section, teachers first need to explicitly teach YELLs that expository texts have many structures by demonstrating how to diagram text structures with graphic organizers. Teachers then need to provide guided practice by working alongside YELLs as they depict text structures.

Finally, teachers need to allow YELLs to complete organizers on their own.

In the post-reading part, teachers are expected to aid students in critiquing content, structures, and strategies. According to Schunk (2012), metacognition refers to overseeing cognitive activities such as activating background knowledge and using graphic organizers. Students utilizing metacognitive approaches can evaluate the effectiveness of strategy use and improve it over time by reflecting on their own strategy use. For instance, YELLs are likely to develop metacognitive abilities when asked what kind of text they analyzed, why they used a particular graphic organizer today, and what other graphic organizers they can use to diagram the text. Furthermore, an opportunity should be provided to students for meaningful practice in the post-reading section.

Students need to apply what they have learned to new topics because application promotes a greater transferability of new knowledge. As an example, YELLs can be given an assignment where they are required to find a compare-and-contrast text and diagram the text with their own graphic organizer.

Final Considerations

As discussed throughout this paper, reading strategy instruction with graphic organizers can contribute to YELLs' reading comprehension. However, YELLs are more likely to increase text structure awareness over time by reflecting on their use of graphic organizers and extending the use of graphic organizers outside the classroom. Hence, reading strategy instruction using this technique needs to be planned from a long-term perspective. In the meantime, a piece of written text does not necessarily present a single text structure. Authors tend to employ a set of graphic organizers to structure their own texts. For instance, the writer of this paper adopted a graphic organizer to draw a big picture for the paper and then made use of some other graphic organizers to formulate smaller parts. Therefore, graphic organizer instruction should include some texts that present the complexity of text structures to promote YELLs' reading comprehension.

Suggested Links

http://my.hrw.com/nsmedia/intgos/html/igo.htm
This website provides a wide range of ready-made graphic organizers. Visitors can download them in the form of PDFs, type in their comments, and print them out. The website also presents visitors with tips on how to use graphic organizers in class.

http://creately.com/Free-K12-Education-Templates
This website provides a broad range of graphic organizer templates such as flowcharts and mind maps. It also offers an opportunity for visitors to draw a graphic organizer online in a user-friendly way.

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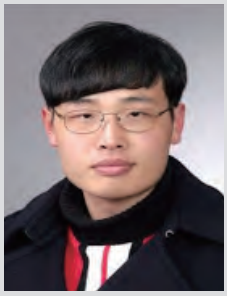

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University Jobs in Korea

By Sara Peterson and Aaron Shayne

For long-term native English teachers (NETs) residing in Korea, university jobs are highly sought after. But applying for these jobs can be confusing because of the introduction of new university regulations and a lack of knowledge regarding the hiring process. In this article, we want to shed light on university restructuring, the different kinds of university positions available, possible pathways into Korean universities, what hiring committees look for in a candidate, and how to set yourself apart and stay competitive in an increasingly difficult job market. This article summarizes both our own personal experiences and the views of others. Exceptions and unique situations exist, of course, so this is not meant to act as a universal guide to university employment.

To begin with, there has been a great deal of confusion surrounding recent university restructuring and reform. The Korean government is overhauling the higher education system to reduce unemployment among college graduates. The government is currently evaluating universities and will continue to do so through 2016. Those given low rankings will be forced to cut student enrollment numbers in three stages scheduled to run through 2022. The first stage requires 40,000 university places to be eliminated by 2016 (Tai, 2014).

> *"The job market in Korea is becoming increasingly competitive. With the new requirements for NET positions, and a large community of well-educated teachers, everyone needs to distinguish themselves."*

The evaluation process will scrutinize many aspects of university administration and educational quality, particularly budget efficiency. Schools that are deemed more academically rigorous and those that produce a higher percentage of graduates who find employment will be given preference. The government also wants professors working reasonable hours, continuing professional development, and conducting research. It is unclear how much weight is given to each category, but it is clear that this extra scrutiny will shake up higher education in Korea and influence the job market for native English instructors.

Currently, universities tend to offer three types of position. The first is in a university language center, in which instructors teach non-credit courses to university students or members of the community, often without grades or assessment. The second position is geared toward general education and English conversation. These classes are credit courses that students must pass to graduate. Depending on the university, teachers may be referred to as either instructors or professors. The third position is someone who teaches academic content or English for specific purposes. Usually, people in this position are qualified as professors.

Every university is different, so roles and benefits may vary. Many positions have approximately 8-24 weekly teaching hours. One to four months of vacation a year is common, but this depends on the school. Depending on overtime pay and availability, most of these jobs have a monthly salary of two to three million won. Some universities offer housing, but most offer a housing allowance. Others offer no housing amenities whatsoever.

The Korean government's ranking system has also created specific new requirements for the hiring of native English instructors at universities. A candidate should have at least four years of university experience with a bachelor's degree or two years of university experience with a master's degree. Those with a PhD are not required to have teaching experience. Universities have the option of ignoring these requirements, but must forego government funding if they do so. If you do not have the required teaching experience, you can find a job at a university language center as an instructor and accrue the experience needed. Keep in mind, however, that universities have no standard guidelines for qualifying experience; some universities accept language center experience, while others do not.

University jobs are advertised in a number of places. You can visit Dave's ESL Cafe, Pete DeMarco's Profs Abroad, and the official TESOL website. The "Foreign Professors and University English Teachers in Korea" Facebook page is probably one of the most useful resources to monitor. Finally, do not discount traditional word-of-mouth.

Attending regional and national KOTESOL events around Korea, as well as seeking other general networking opportunities, are great ways to meet university staff and find out about jobs.

When you find a vacancy you are interested in, put careful thought into your application. First, do not apply for a job if you do not have the requested qualifications. If the school is clear about requirements and applicants do not meet them, those applicants will not be contacted since they will often be seen as wasting the hiring committee's time.

Make sure you read the advertisement carefully and prepare the necessary documents. Many hiring committees we spoke to related stories of embarrassing and unprofessional mistakes that immediately disqualified applicants. If the school requests a special application document, take the extra time to fill it out correctly. This shows that you can follow directions and are truly interested in the position. Korean resumes generally include pictures, so have a professional photo taken. Lastly, when you submit your documents via email, make sure to include a cordial message, not simply state, "See the attached documents." This shows the committee that you are professional, enthusiastic, and interested in the school and position.

"Make sure you read the advertisement carefully and prepare the necessary documents. Many hiring committees we spoke to related stories of embarrassing and unprofessional mistakes that immediately disqualified applicants."

When you land an interview, make sure to prepare well. First and foremost, learn about the school and its curriculum. Be ready to ask questions that show you are diligent and interested in the position. You may be asked to prepare and/or teach a sample lesson. This is a great opportunity to show your skills as an educator and your presence in the classroom. Lastly, make sure to show the hiring committee you are someone who they want to have around. Often it seems to come down to people who simply "fit in" with their future co-workers.

Between the application and a job offer, the hiring committee often asks around for the opinions of current colleagues. This is why it is important to carefully guard your personal and professional reputation. Someone may be an excellent teacher but have the reputation of a heavy drinker who gets into arguments. This type of person is often disqualified even though they meet the qualifications and interview well. The hiring committee wants someone who will represent the university with distinction.

There may also be an extensive review of your references and letters of recommendation. Make sure to ask your references if you can list them and how they would like to be contacted. Ask for a reference letter before you leave a job so you have it filed away for the future. Remember to ask for a reference letter well before you need it.

The job market in Korea is becoming increasingly competitive. With the new requirements for NET positions, and a large community of well-educated teachers, everyone needs to distinguish themselves. Job listings are beginning to ask for research experience and publications. To develop these skills, we recommend following KOTESOL and the "Foreign Professors and University English Teachers in Korea" Facebook pages. Both of these groups offer opportunities to share ideas as well as notify members about publishing opportunities. Finally, remember that even if you land a good position, job security is seldom guaranteed. As EFL educators in a constantly changing field, we should always aim to stay one step ahead.

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The Authors

Aaron Shayne and **Sara Peterson** have been living in Korea for five years and working at universities focusing on teacher education for the past three. They have experience serving on hiring committees and like to share their knowledge with others. They both have a Master of Education from Fort Hays State University in Kansas, USA. Sara also runs an informational blog for teachers that can be found at teachinkoreablog.wordpress.com.

Rethinking Speaking Assessments in Korean High Schools

By Lucy McCormick

Language learning is an arduous undertaking for students of any nationality, and anxiety in speaking assessments is apparent worldwide. In the Korean context, however, speaking anxiety is disproportionate and hinders effective in-class language acquisition as much as it does test performance. The cause of this seems to rest in great part on the Korean system's blanket reliance on standardized, summative assessment: high-stakes, end-of-unit tests, which reward the ability to quickly recall standard answers.

Though summative assessment can be a useful tool for determining what has been learned, it cannot stand alone as an accurate measure of achievement in language acquisition. Add to this the impossibility of devising standard answers for spoken language assessments; with so many possible variations in students' ideas and modes of expression, it becomes intensely difficult to judge one student as objectively "better" than another.

This goes some way to explaining the low status spoken language holds in a system primarily concerned with standardization for the purpose of ranking. It also reminds us that our students spend the vast majority of their time in a learning environment that demands and rewards rote learning. This leaves them unaccustomed to and uncomfortable with learning environments and testing methods that depart from their expectations.

In seeking to alleviate student anxiety and improve test performance, the creation and maintenance of a supportive learning environment is key. An approach I have found effective in this regard has been the inclusion of formative assessment in the classroom. In contrast to its summative counterpart, formative assessment does not grade students against a pre-determined standard; it consists, rather, of an ongoing cycle of teacher-student feedback, which allows instructors to improve their teaching, and for students, their learning. Specific strategies for the integration of formative assessment into the classroom curriculum will be discussed further in this article through the prism of four pertinent areas of practice: teacher-student relationships, teacher-student feedback and reflective practice, differentiation, and setting expectations.

Teacher-Student Relationships

It is important to recognize that teachers, as well as students, have been conditioned through our own education to view speaking assessments as necessarily stressful and to understand the teacher's role as a judge. Two strategies in particular can be useful in moving away from this perception and towards a more collaborative learning environment; namely, encouraging peer-peer communication and taking a tactful approach to error correction. Peer-peer communication has consistently proven to be the surest route to foreign language fluency. Controlled and freer practice of target language with a peer increases student talking time while allowing students to hone their skills in a safe space with a peer who is also learning. This activity is far less stressful than the prospect of interacting with a native speaker in front of the whole class. Delayed, student-

"Two strategies ... can be useful in moving away from this perception and towards a more collaborative learning environment..."

led correction of errors (noted by teachers while monitoring activities) allows students freedom during an activity to speak fluently, without fear of teacher interruption. After the activity, checking corrections then becomes a collaborative, student-centered learning experience rather than a teacher-centered occasion for embarrassment.

Student-Teacher Feedback and Reflective Practice.

The photograph below is taken from a class scrapbook in which student feedback is collected throughout the year. Typically, students are given short, written feedback tasks at the start, midpoint, and end of term. In these, they are asked to state their perceived strengths and weaknesses, their goals for the term, and any worries or questions they have.

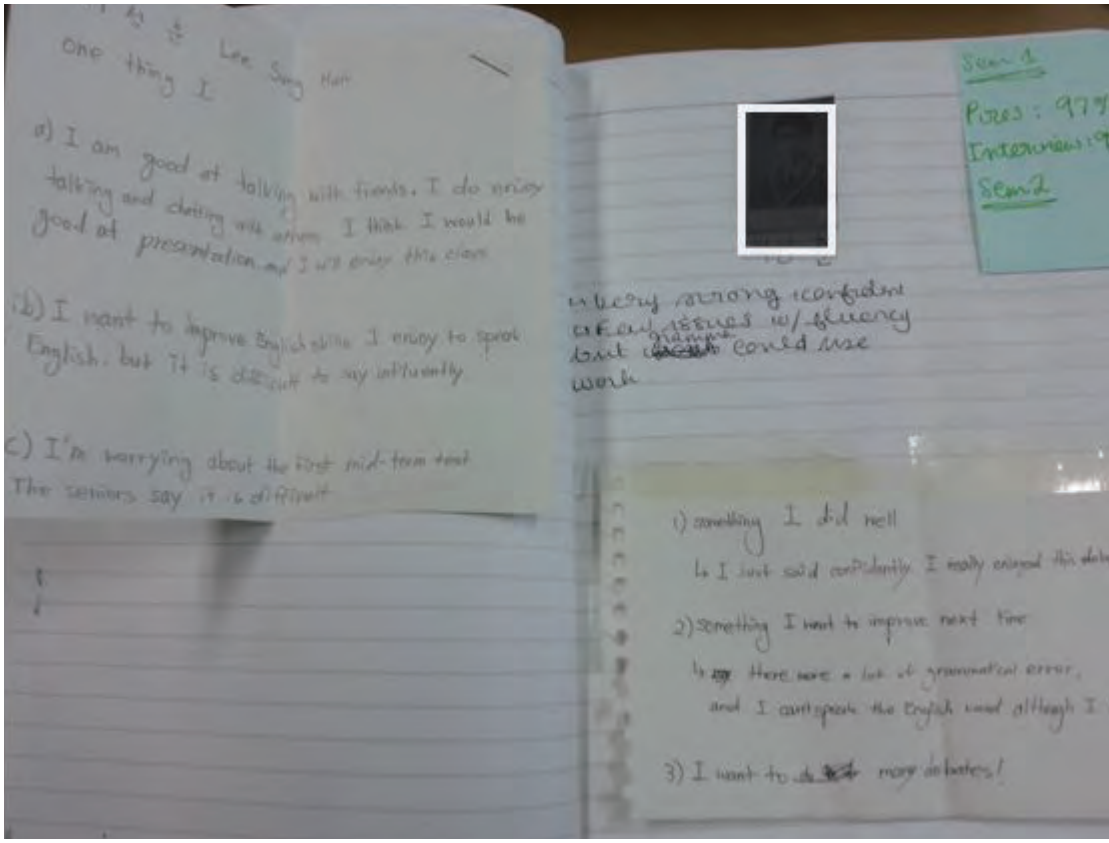
After group tasks, such as debates and presentations, they are asked to evaluate their performance against their goals, choosing points they are pleased with and those they would like to improve. In both cases, students are also invited to offer feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of lessons and to suggest ideas for improvement. After each lesson, lesson plans are amended as necessary, based on issues encountered in the previous session, student feedback, and the differing dynamics of class groups.

The setting and regular reviewing of personalized goals for each student and the opportunity to contribute to the content of lessons involve students in the learning process and empowers them to take control of their own learning.

Meanwhile, teachers gain insight into each student's mindset, needs, and progress. Especially when paired with the teacher's own reflections, this makes for the creation of ever more effective lessons. Even in cases where student feedback is not practically useful, the opportunity to build trust and respect between teachers and students through student feedback should not be underestimated.

Differentiation

Variation in student ability is an issue close to the hearts of Korean high school teachers. Differing access to *hagwons*, depending on economic and geographical circumstances, as well as the standardized methods of teaching and learning discussed above, have led to classrooms of wildly mixed abilities all striving towards a single "right" answer via a single method (namely, lecturing and memorizing). Faced with different levels and without a standard answer to memorize, creating lessons that cater to all students regarding the spoken language can be a daunting task.



A class scrapbook in which student feedback is collected throughout the year.

Well-differentiated lessons can go a long way to addressing this issue. Defined by the UK's Training and Development Agency for Schools as "the process by which differences between learners are accommodated so that all students in a group have the best possible chance of learning," differentiation constitutes another integral part of formative assessment. Differentiated lessons are tailored and re-tailored to students, based on a continuous assessment of their needs. They also

allow students to reflect on their level, needs, and processes.

The simplest way to approach differentiation is by grouping students based on ability and/or motivation. Groupings will depend on the needs and personalities of each class as well as the teacher's goals. For example, there are situations when it is beneficial to create same-ability groups in order to allow high-ability students to stretch themselves while offering focused support to lower-ability groups. At other times, mixed-ability groups in which higher-level students support and encourage lower-level peers are preferable for reasons of both classroom management and desired learning outcomes.

Differentiating by learning style (in other words, delivering the same material in different ways suited to visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and reading-writing preference learners) also highlights to students how they learn. This knowledge is a powerful tool for lifelong learning and empowers students to become more effective independent learners.

Once groupings are fixed, teachers can also choose to differentiate the tasks set, outcomes expected, and support offered accordingly. This leads to a learning environment in which every student is able to make meaningful progress at a level appropriate to them.

Clear Expectations

When applied well, the techniques of formative assessment discussed above can equip students with the skills and confidence to succeed in summative assessments. Once summative assessment comes around, however, issues of anxiety can arise again, typically ignited by the absence of standard answers, the clinical conditions of speaking tests, and by students being expected to speak on dry or intimidating subjects. This can be alleviated by applying the principles of formative assessment in the run-up to the test.

Communicating the format and rubric of the test to students in advance alleviates fear of the unknown and allows students to understand clearly how the grading system will work. It can be helpful to allocate class time for peer-peer practice of the test format in which students use the rubric to grade themselves and each other. As well as helping to reduce stress, this method is another way to give students agency over their own learning. In terms of subject matter, if there is little room for negotiation where the school is concerned, a good option can be to give students a choice of topics: Even if the choice is really only a choice between undesirable options, students at least feel some sense of ownership.

Conclusions

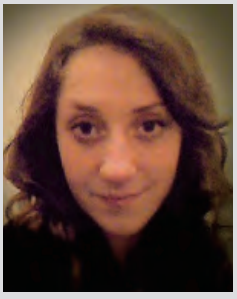
The teaching and assessment of spoken language becomes particularly challenging in a system which places disproportionate emphasis on standardized, summative assessment. As teachers, we witness the effects of this system on both language learning in the classroom and performance in speaking assessments, which leads us to seek creative solutions in order to best equip our students for success. The method proposed in this article is to introduce formative assessment into our classrooms with the goal of reframing our own and our students' conception of assessment itself, rather than focusing on a single test, a long-term collaborative process which affects every area of our practice is embraced.

By building strong teacher-student relationships, engaging in regular student-teacher feedback and reflective practice, creating differentiated lessons, and setting clear expectations, we can cater to our students as individuals and propel them to success in their final, summative assessments.

Perhaps most importantly, however, by the time the test occurs, students will feel less like they are performing for a judge and more like they are communicating meaningfully with a partner in learning.

The Author

Lucy McCormick is a Native English Teacher at Gangwon Foreign Language High School who has previously lived and worked in China, France, and the UK. She is an avid collector of languages, having studied French, German, Mandarin, and Korean, and is always looking for innovative new ways to share her passion.



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Book Review
The Need to Know Basis

By James Robertson

Second Language Acquisition and Task-Based Language Teaching

By Mike Long
ISBN: 978-0-470-65894-9
456 pages
July 2014, Wiley-Blackwell
Kindle Edition

Mike Long has a vision of a world in which education means learning by doing. Long has been involved in defining and debating task-based language teaching (TBLT) since the beginning. His book is both a rationale for TBLT and an argument for it being the natural expression of a broader educational philosophy.

This is not an impartial guide; faithful to one version of TBLT, it is openly a polemic against everything else, including competing versions of TBLT. Long presents a specific concept of TBLT, one in which a task is not merely an option within language teaching, but the basic element, not to be focused on or seeded with predefined linguistic features. He holds that a syllabus for language learning should not consist of an inventory of linguistic features that need to be learned, but rather of a series of tasks to be performed that are determined by a thorough needs analysis before the beginning of a course. Achievement would then be assessed via criterion-referenced performance tests.

In the context of the Korean education system, this question of assessment is perhaps where the proposal is most liable to break down; given the overwhelming emphasis on university entrance tests, it is questionable whether schools would support, or students invest in, language courses entirely divorced from the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT; known in Korean as *suneung*). On the other hand, the recent trend of students seeking admission to specialised universities based on tests of course-related knowledge and skills (*susi*) may provide an incentive for schools and students to seek out and support Long's preferred form of TBLT.

I say "seek out" because, if Long's argument is correct, then the graduates of his style of task-based courses ought to display superior communicative competence within a specific range of language behaviours, rather than native-like language production. This is ultimately the assumption that underlies both the book and the task-based teaching movement in general.

Long provides a clear, detailed, and often satirical overview of TBLT's competitors, driving wedges into every weakness in their defense and then piling on research supporting TBLT until those weaknesses become gaping rents. It is worth noting that researchers tend to be less forthright when discussing their own findings, but Long does an excellent job of supporting his bold approach. Although individual teachers may not hold positions of sufficient authority to be able to fully institute

task-based courses, the book provides a sound argument that might support proposals for such action.

His arguments for egalitarian classroom practice as an element in a larger movement for social justice are liable to provoke different reactions depending on the reader's educational philosophy and their responsibilities as a language teacher, particularly if they are not a citizen of the country in which they teach. History is littered with examples of well-intentioned but deeply misguided attempts to share the fruits of "progress." On the other hand, the acquisition of English proficiency can provide many benefits, and once the learner gains this proficiency, they are free to employ it according to their own needs and desires. Language teaching is therefore always about empowering learners, and this book is a thoroughgoing effort to enhance this process of empowerment. Whether you agree with Long's prescription, you cannot fault his conviction.

If you already agree with Long's position, or if you do not hold a view one way or the other, you will probably judge it on the question of utility; in other words, can it help you teach? The book provides high-quality coverage of all phases of TBLT, including needs analysis, syllabus design, lesson planning, teaching, and assessment, and is likely to become required reading in ELT methodology courses. However, the pedagogy section focuses more on principles than on detailed guidance for classroom practice and could thus be supplemented by reading the work of Rod Ellis, David Nunan, and Jane and Dave Willis. Long would doubtless consider this heresy, and his arguments and vision may ultimately win out, but if you are interested in TBLT, you owe it to yourself to explore what he offers and what he is arguing against.

The Author

James Robertson has an MA from Nottingham University and teaches English at Daeil Foreign Language High School, Seoul.

"Long provides a clear, detailed, and often satirical overview of [Task-Based Language Teaching]'s competitors, driving wedges into every weakness in their defense and then piling on research supporting TBLT until those weaknesses become gaping rents."

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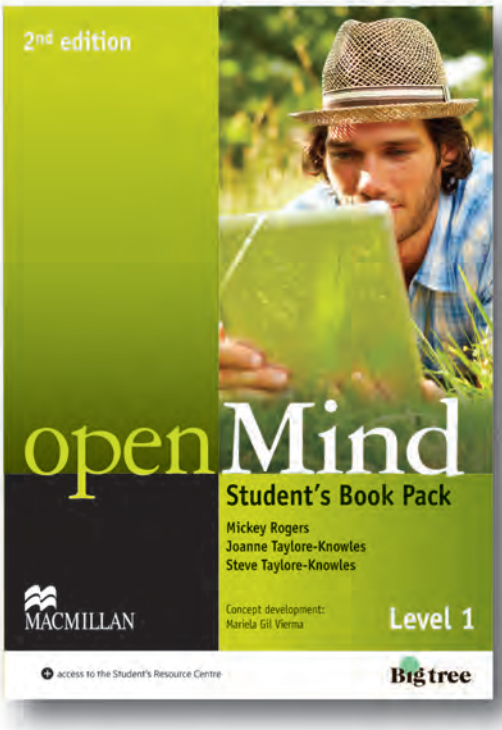

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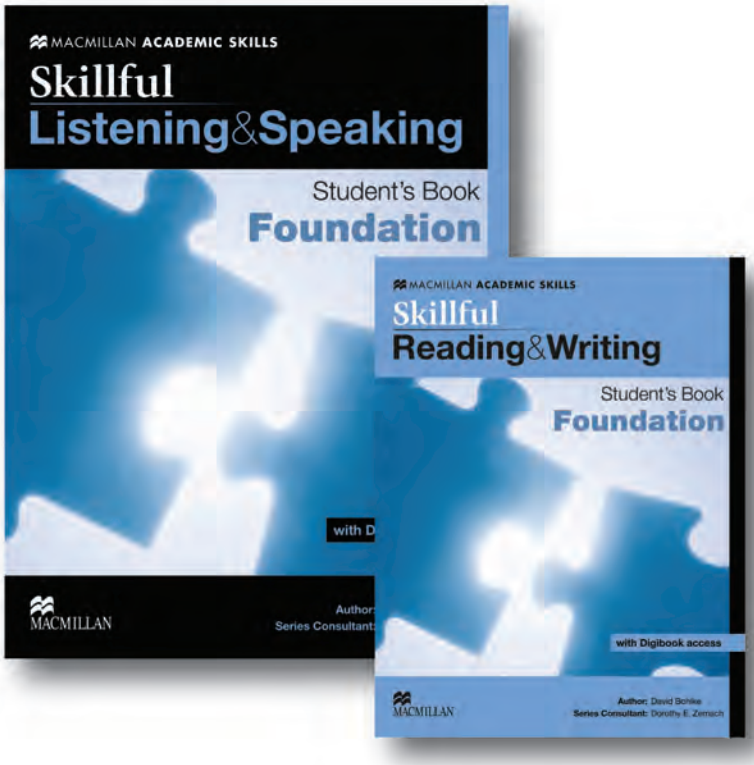

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