

# The English Connection

A Korea TESOL Publication

Autumn 2016, Volume 20, Issue 3

**2016 KOTESOL International Conference Preview:  
Interviews with Featured Speakers**

**Willy Renandya  
Burcu Tezcan-Unal  
Todd Beuckens  
Kara Mac Donald  
and Lynda Yates**

**Articles by Featured Speakers  
Robert Murphy  
Chuck Sandy  
and William Littlewood**

**Also: Profcasting 101  
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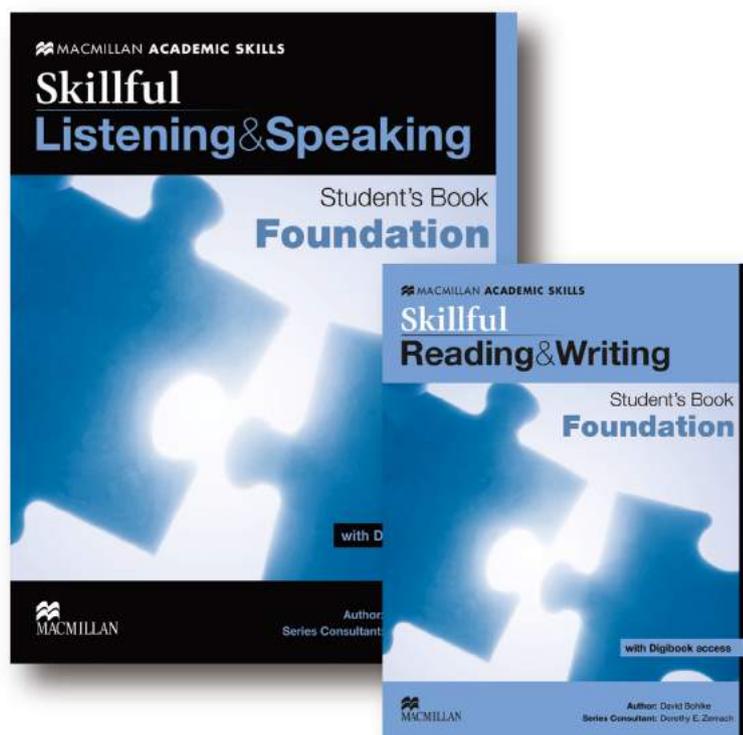
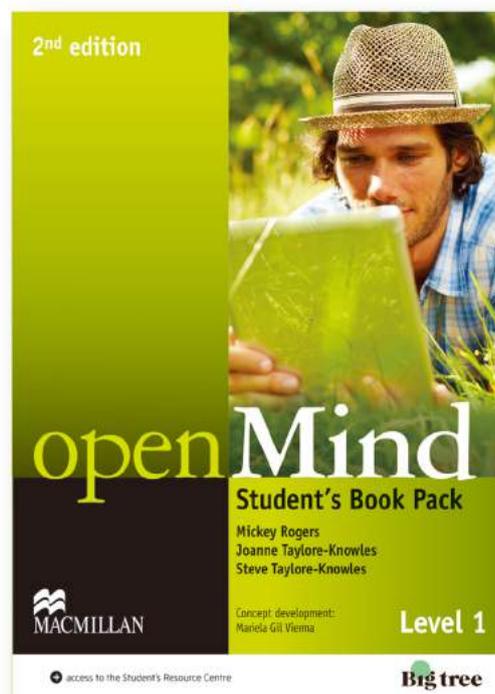
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# Editorial – 20:3, Autumn 2016

**By Gil Coombe** Editor-in-Chief

With temperatures cooling and leaves turning from various shades of green to resplendent bursts of color, fall is often the perfect time to reminisce about what has passed and to look forward to what is to come, both in life and in teaching. Anchored between the all-action, flashy summer and the chilly, serene winter, fall is about recollection and deliberation. Luckily, on the Korean EFL scene, KOTESOL provides an event that is perfect for those of us who are eager to expand our teaching skills and to build shared knowledge with like-minded individuals from a range of backgrounds and pursuing a range of interests. That's right, fall means the KOTESOL International Conference (IC) is back and ready to serve the EFL community.



This issue of *The English Connection* thus offers a substantial preview of the IC, with several of the featured speakers providing either an article or having been interviewed on the topics they are covering at the IC. We kick things off with an interview with Conference Chair Jamie Carson, who provides a rundown of the goals of the conference and what to expect. This is followed by an article by Robert Murphy, a featured speaker at the IC, who makes the case for neuroELT as a productive research area. After an interview with featured speaker Lynda Yates, Chuck Sandy highlights the importance of storytelling in reflection and professional development.

TEC then jumps into a series of interviews with featured speakers who, among other things, discuss their upcoming talks, their background and professional motivation, and their work-life balance. Those in the hot seat for this section are Burcu Tezcan-Unal, Todd Beuckens, Kara Mac Donald, and Willy Renandya. Gain tips and insight from these ELT professionals as they discuss their careers and future directions. Following this, William Littlewood explains his choice of memory as the subject of his IC presentation, and we have Thomas S. C. Farrell's latest column, this time looking at how mapping your experiences can help to foster an understanding of your teaching philosophy (Dr. Farrell is also a plenary speaker at the IC, so if you have been enjoying his columns, make sure to come along and see him in person). To round out the issue, we have two articles related to classroom technology: one on the benefits of using podcasts in the classroom by Cathryn Bennett, and another on the use of Google Classroom by Guy Smith.

Finally, this is my first issue as editor-in-chief of TEC, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Julian Warmington for his excellent guidance of the magazine over the past couple of years and to wish him the best in his future endeavors – though, thankfully, we haven't lost him completely; look for his interviews with key KOTESOL members in issues to come. Also, my gratitude goes out to Christopher Miller, who has done a fantastic job as Associate Editor and as a recruiter for article submissions. It is volunteers like Julian and Chris (and our crack team of senior editors and proofreaders that have made my transition simple and headache-free) that keep KOTESOL driving forward, and I welcome any new recruits to the team who would like to be involved in the publication of the magazine, whether it be as a copy editor, proofreader, writer, photographer, illustrator – you name it, we could probably use it. Contact me at [kotesolteceditor@gmail.com](mailto:kotesolteceditor@gmail.com) for further information. And see you in October at the IC!

*Gil Coombe*

**By Lindsay Herron**  
KOTESOL President

## President's Message

Welcome back! Are you refreshed, relaxed, and ready for new challenges? I hope you enjoyed a lovely summer – and also found some time to seek inspiration and reflect on new ideas for the coming term.

This autumn finds KOTESOL hosting a wide variety of events; between now and December, you can expect some truly exceptional opportunities for professional development. The fall months will include social and networking events both locally and nationally; fresh opportunities to apply for a research grant or submit papers for publication; regional conferences hosted by chapters such as Jeju, Yongin, Jeonju, and Daejeon; a membership discount to the 3rd AILA East-Asia and 2016 ALAK-GETA Joint International Conference, which will be held on September 9-11 at Honam University in Gwangju; and of course, our own annual International Conference in Seoul this October.



As you can see from the articles and interviews by many of our featured speakers in this issue of *The English Connection*, this year's International Conference boasts a formidable and noteworthy line-up. In addition to presentations by luminaries of ELT from around the globe, the conference will feature panels and colloquia from two of KOTESOL's own Special Interest Groups (SIGs), the Social Justice SIG and the Multimedia and CALL SIG, along with over two hundred workshops and presentations by KOTESOL members. I am confident that the caliber of the speakers and the quality of the presentations will be truly inspiring, leaving attendees ready to take a leading role in (as the theme says) "Shaping the Future: With 21st Century Skills."

I am also very excited to be returning to Sookmyung Women's University for this year's conference. Sookmyung has always been a very gracious host to KOTESOL. In fact, the first International Conference I ever attended was held at Sookmyung, so for me personally, returning to Sookmyung this year feels like coming home. The campus is indelibly associated with positive experiences and infused with good memories for me. If you have attended a past conference at Sookmyung, I hope this year's conference brings back good memories for you as well! But regardless of whether or not you have been to Sookmyung, or whether or not you've ever attended a KOTESOL event, I'm sure that this year's conference will provide some wonderful opportunities to meet new people, find new inspiration, and forge new and delightful memories.

**Good luck for the rest of the academic year, and I look forward to seeing you at a KOTESOL event soon!**

*Lindsay Herron*

# KOTESOL International Conference 2016

## Two-Day Schedule Overview

### Saturday, October 15

08:00 –	Conference Registration
09:00 – 09:45	Concurrent Sessions
10:00 – 10:45	Invited Session / Concurrent Sessions
11:00 – 11:30	Opening Ceremonies
11:30 – 12:15	Opening Plenary Session: Thomas S.C. Farrell <i>Professional Development of 21st Century Language Teachers Through Reflective Practice</i>
12:15 – 13:30	Lunchtime Break
13:30 – 14:15	Featured Session / Invited Session / Concurrent Sessions
14:30 – 15:15	Featured Session / Invited Session / Concurrent Sessions
15:30 – 16:15	Featured Session / Invited Session / Concurrent Sessions
16:30 – 17:15	Featured Session / Invited Session / Concurrent Sessions
17:30 – 18:15	Featured Session / Invited Session / Concurrent Sessions

### Sunday, October 16

08:00 –	Conference Registration
09:00 – 09:45	Concurrent Sessions
10:00 – 10:45	Featured Session / Invited Session / Concurrent Sessions
11:00 – 11:45	Featured Session / Invited Session / Concurrent Sessions
12:00 – 12:45	Concurrent Sessions
13:00 – 13:45	Sunday Plenary Session: Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa <i>You Can't Get Apples from a Pear Tree: What Teachers Need to Know and Be Able to Do in the 21st Century</i>
14:00 – 14:45	Featured Session / Invited Session / Concurrent Sessions
15:00 – 15:45	Featured Session / Invited Session / Concurrent Sessions
16:00 – 18:00	Korea TESOL Annual Business Meeting (ABM)

Preliminary schedule; subject to change

Scheduling details will be available on the KOTESOL website at [koreatesol.org/ic2016/](http://koreatesol.org/ic2016/)

# KOTESOL 2016 Speakers and Session Titles

## Plenary Speakers

- **Thomas S.C. Farrell**

### Opening Plenary Session

*Professional Development of 21st Century Language Teachers Through Reflective Practice*

### Invited Second Session (Workshop)

*Standing Up for Your Principles: The Power of Reflective Practice*

- **Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa**

### Sunday Plenary Session

*You Can't Get Apples from a Pear Tree: What Teachers Need to Know and Be Able to Do in the 21st Century*

### Invited Second Session (Workshop)

*Creating a Personalized Professional Development Program to Enhance 21st Century Skills*

## Featured Speakers

- **Willy A. Renandya**

### Featured Session

*Enhancing L2 Learning Using Simple Technology*

### Invited Second Session (Workshop)

*Is "Dadok" (다독/ER) the Missing Link in L2 Learning?*

- **William Littlewood**

### Featured Session

*Back to Basics for the 21st Century: Language Learning as Memorization*

### Invited Second Session

*Time Past, Time Present, Time Future*

- **Robert S. Murphy**

### Featured Session

*7 Brain-Friendly Ways to Foster Deeper Understanding and Autonomy in Your Classroom*

### Invited Second Session (Workshop)

*Designing a Better Brain-Friendly Syllabus: 5 Major Points to Remember!*

- **Boyoung Lee** (이보영)

### Featured Session

*Second Language Teacher Education: Enhancing Teacher Training and Professional Development in CLT*

- **Burcu Tezcan-Unal**

### Featured Session

*The Demands of the 2020 Job Market, Transferable Skills, and ELT*

### Invited Second Session

*Timeless Interplay Between Learners, Teachers, and Learning*

- **Todd Beuckens**

### Featured Session

*PUSH Your Lessons Beyond the Classroom*

### Invited Second Session

*Build Your Own LMS – For Free*

- **Kara Mac Donald**

### Featured Session

*Communicative Instructional Approaches: A Framework for 21st Century Skills*

### Invited Second Session

*Making "Gwaoe" and "Hagwon" Lessons More Collaborative*

- **Lynda Yates**

### Featured Session

*Teaching Language and Culture for the 21st Century*

## Invited Speaker

- **Chuck Sandy**

### Invited Session I (Workshop with Josette LeBlanc)

*Answering the Call to Vocation: An (ELT) Idea Igniter*

### Invited Session II (with Timothy Hampson)

*Teaching Life Through Stories*

Abstracts, biographical sketches, and registration information available on the Korea TESOL website – [koreatesol.org/ic2016/](http://koreatesol.org/ic2016/).

# Interview with Jamie Carson, 2016 KOTESOL International Conference Chair

October 15-16 sees the return of KOTESOL's annual International Conference to its spiritual home at Sookmyung Women's University in Seoul. Always a significant event on the EFL calendar, this year should again prove to be an excellent chance to develop our professional practice by sitting in on a diverse range of presentations, meeting various people from across Korea and other parts of Asia, talking with representatives from universities from around the world that offer postgraduate degrees in EFL-related fields, and even just picking up an interesting new textbook from one of the stalls. Stepping into the hot seat as Conference Chair this year is Jamie Carson; TEC asked her a few questions about the upcoming conference.

**TEC: What is the theme of this year's International Conference and why was it chosen?**

The theme of the 2016 International Conference is *Shaping the Future: With 21st Century Skills*. In choosing a theme this year, the big interest



*Community collaboration: A workshop at the 2015 KOTESOL International Conference at COEX.*

was to dig into what was new in ELT/EFL. At first, that looked to be too tech-focused, so the idea to broaden the view to incorporate all areas of teaching and learning led to the use of "21st century skills." What is happening in the 21st century classroom that is new and exciting?

Are there changes in how we approach teacher training? How can we improve and find better ways to assess our students? How can we reflect upon our own teaching and develop new techniques in professional development? These are the ideas and questions we had in mind when we drafted our call for papers and selected our speakers.

**TEC: What are you most looking forward to at the conference?**

One of the things that I personally look forward to each year is networking. I always spend a couple hours every day of the conference catching up with other teachers from around the country that I have met through previous international conferences. Networking also gives me the opportunity to meet new people in the industry. Whether they are in the public or private schools, universities, or an educational support area such as publishing or educational services, I get to meet amazing people every year at the conference. The Korea TESOL International Conference is an excellent place to meet, greet, and network.

**TEC: Who are some of the key speakers and what will they be discussing?**

The emphasis for speaker selection was really based on what is innovative. One of our Korea TESOL members, after hearing our vision for the conference, recommended a speaker she had heard that she loved. When we looked into her, we knew she would be perfect for this conference. Connecting the fields of neuroscience, psychology, and education is an exciting area that is changing how we look at education. One of the leaders in this area is Dr. Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa. She is one of our plenary speakers, and she will also be hosting a workshop over weekend. Our other plenary speaker, who will also be leading a workshop, is not a stranger to Korea or Korea TESOL. Dr. Thomas Farrell is a pioneer in the area of reflective practice. He had a great influence and hand in the development of the Reflective Practice SIG in Korea TESOL. Dr. Farrell will be looking

at new developments in the area of reflective practice and how professional development has changed.

**TEC: In your opinion, what are the main reasons for a non-KOTESOL member to come to the IC?**

There are so many reasons to attend the International Conference! We have such a great lineup of invited speakers covering many different areas of ELT. One of the things we have stressed with our invited speakers is the importance of being practical and relevant, not just theoretical. Their response was positive and exciting. That same focus was conveyed in our call for papers, and we are looking forward to a great variety of interactive presentations.

Outside of the actual presentations, attendees have the opportunity to check out what's new from the major publishers in Korea and chat with their representatives. Many universities will be in attendance, showcasing their certificate courses, and MA and PhD programs. This is a great time to sit down with university representatives

and discuss your future education possibilities. Lastly, networking is one of the big draws to the conference. There are so many fantastic professionals to meet and connect with that will lead to connections, not only here in Korea, but around the world.



*At attention: A presentation at the 2015 KOTESOL International Conference at COEX.*

**TEC: What attracted you personally to the position of head of the IC?**

I have been involved with Korea TESOL for many years in different capacities. However, until recently, I lived on Jeju Island. I have always been interested in helping with the conference, but geography kept me from being actively involved. After I moved up to the mainland, I decided to get involved with the International Conference Committee. I was asked in 2014 to consider running for the International Conference Co-chair position, and that co-chair becomes chair the following year.

I am thrilled to be involved in the planning and shaping of the 2016 conference. The International Conference Committee is an incredible group of people who work hard and take such pride in their work. They are largely unseen behind the scenes and rarely thanked or acknowledged for their incredible dedication and work. I wanted to work with them. Every time I meet them, I learn and grow. I think that the two main reasons the International Conference Chair position appealed to me was the chance to shape a conference that gave so much to me and the chance to be involved with the International Conference Committee members.

**“The International Conference committee is an incredible group of people who work hard and take such pride in their work. They are largely unseen behind the scenes and rarely thanked or acknowledged for their incredible dedication and work.”**

# NeuroELT: It Is a Reality – But Don't Believe Everything You Hear!

**Robert S. Murphy**

Featured Speaker – KOTESOL IC 2016

## Introduction

What can English teachers learn from neuroscience? Quite a lot, I assure you. But there is an inherent danger with diving headfirst into neuroscientific research. Why is that? Well, here's the thing – most language teachers know that focused reading of general linguistics papers isn't going to make them better teachers, especially at the pedagogical level. Assumptions made based on general linguistics papers (and general psychology) is what put us on several of the long and tragic paths that our field has taken over the past several decades. The same logic holds true for generalized assumptions taken from neuroscience papers. We need to be careful. Well then, what should we be reading?

Educational neuroscience is a niche area within what is known as applied neuroscience. This is what we should be reading. Most of the other research fields in neuroscience are much too zeroed-in on tiny aspects of brain functions. However, sensationalist reporters nevertheless latch onto these micro studies and glorify them, and suddenly we have booming new businesses popping up, promising the greatest new teaching methods – providing, of course, that you buy their shiny new gadget based on neuroscience. As teachers, we need to know better. What can we do? What *should* we do?

As a researcher and promoter of educational neuroscience, and more specifically, neuroELT, I find that roughly a third of my job involves neuromyth busting. The other two-thirds is in classroom research and the presentation of our findings. In this article, I'm going to tell you about these areas and hope to get you hooked on them too!

## Diehard Neuromyths

Do your best Bruce Willis impression and ask yourself the following three questions: (1) Did beer kill your brain cells last night?, (2) Do you use only 10% of your brain?, and (3) Are you right-brained? I hope you said *no* to all three. The truth is, we use 100% of our brains all the time; our entire brain works much like a full orchestra, for even the most simplistic of tasks. That also means

that both hemispheres are going full-throttle all day long. The only people who are truly "right-brained" or "left-brained" are people who have had a hemispherectomy, which is exactly what it sounds like: having half the brain removed. And the beer thing? Well, put a smile back on that face because there is no direct neuron per liter-of-beer relationship. Alcoholism is of course very real, and very serious, but the beer you had last night has no connection to alcoholism unless you are in fact an alcoholic. But therein lies the inherent problem with neuromyths: They are often distantly related to some kernel of truth and are therefore easily believable and popularizable. For that reason, many of them become diehard myths. We can also blame Morgan Freeman and Scarlett Johansson for making the movie *Lucy*. (You won't believe how many people asked me about the "10%" thing after *Lucy* came out!)

What are some other neuromyths that teachers should be aware of? There are tons of them! But let's focus on a big one that we often discuss at neuroELT conferences.

*Big Neuromyth: The first language must be mastered before attempting to teach the second language.* I teach and research in Japan most of the time, and I hear this one several times a year. At language schools, typically an older person who is against their grandchild signing up for English lessons might come along to the enrollment process only to announce that little Kenichi is far too young to understand English – "He must master Japanese first, or it will confuse him." To that I respond, "Well then, please bring him back when he is 65. Will he have mastered Japanese by then? Perhaps 80 would be safer?" I don't say this to poke fun at the old man, but to make a point. At what age *will* little Kenichi master Japanese? This is a serious question and the answer is "never." Little Kenichi will never master Japanese, nor any language for that matter.

Although we use the word "master" in our daily lives, the hard truth is, we never really master languages. Languages are dynamically adaptive – it is not possible for a single person to know everything there is to know about any given

language. If you think about it, this is quite obvious. So the first part of the neuromyth is disabled. How about the intended second half? Will learning a second language confuse a child? No, it will not. This may be a shock to some people, but the truth is that monolinguals are the minority on our earth. That's right, the majority of the human population speaks at least two languages.

It is silly to assume that our brain has a built-in limiter for languages. What evolutionary purpose would that serve? Even monolinguals have the capacity to understand multitudes of dialects. There is no physical limit to how many dialects humans can understand. The very same goes for languages. Moreover, having a child observe differing cultural aspects representative of multiple linguistic contexts forces them to be more observant and therefore typically makes them more intelligent – they are trained to compare and contrast ideas from a much earlier age than a typical monolingual child. (We have plenty of research on this; see <https://www.oecd.org/edu/ceri/neuromyth5.htm>.)

### **Classroom Research and My Findings**

Over the past several years, I've devoted most of my research to neuroELT topics. What are the most brain-efficient ways of teaching? What forms of pedagogy should we apply the brakes on? Over the years, I've helped build a team of researchers, and we've collectively put together a list of neuroELT maxims that we believe will be helpful for most language teachers. We currently have 52 of these maxims. I've hand-picked four of them for this article.

*1. Emotion Drives Learning.* Sadly, many Asian teachers and textbooks shun emotion in the classroom and/or rely mostly on negative emotions. How often have you seen a language teacher kill a student's natural enthusiasm for language learning by focusing on how many errors the students made instead of focusing on how much improvement and creativity the student has shown? Those teachers need to learn more about how the brain actually learns languages – it's through emotion. No emotion, no learning. Think about the emotions evoked by the above teacher. If emotion guides learning, what will the student learn from such an exchange with their teacher? It is very likely that the student will also focus on the fact that they made many errors, and that they have less aptitude for language learning than they initially thought they had. Hardly ideal. As teachers, we need to help foster positive emotions in the classroom. We need to embrace those special moments in the classroom and turn language learning into

a non-hostile, thoroughly emotionally engaging environment (see Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007 for further reading on this).

*2. Choices Fuel Learner Motivation.* This is easy to implement and has huge benefits. The next time you feel the need to tell the class what they must do next, instead give them a set of choices. Let them choose the level of the upcoming task (say, Levels 1-3), or perhaps the modality of the task. Either way, by giving the students a choice, the students will internally nurture a strong sense of ownership for the chosen task – something hardly possible had it been a "top-down" mandate from the teacher. Why is this so? Each student will evaluate then choose the best task for themselves. After the choice is made, interestingly, the brain will start justifying their own choice automatically. They will nurture a personal investment in that choice, and will internally justify their reasoning ("I must be doing this for a reason...ah, yes...I've chosen this and am doing this because..."). Have students ask each other their reasons and they are quick to justify their choices to their peers as well – this justification process often brings on an even stronger feeling of ownership toward the chosen task. None of this "bonding" with the task would be possible had the teacher not set up the task as part of a list of choices.

Once you get the hang of this, you'll find yourself giving your students many more choices – and reaping the benefits of acquired student ownership in the classroom (see Tomasello, 2009; Montague, Dayan, & Sejnowski, 1996).

*3. Personalize the Content to Captivate Students.* Unless a student is super-motivated to learn the day's language forms, how fascinated will the student be regarding the dialogue that Ken and Jenny have on page 47? As we have just discussed, emotion drives learning, so unless they are nerdy about the language Ken and Jenny are using, the dialogue serves much less purpose than it seems. The cure? Personalization! Have the students take any "boring" text and spice it up by, say, asking them to cross out all the nouns and write in nouns they have in their house, or have them add colorful adverbs in front of every verb in the passage. Suddenly the page comes to life – often comically. It's super-personalized, and suddenly positively charged with fun emotions. Page 47 is no longer dull. It's now the highlight of their day, and they will remember the content much better now. Try it. You'll be amazed at how much fun it can be for your students (see also Fischer & Bidell, 2006; Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2010).

4. *Allow Prediction Time.* Our brains are there to keep us alive. For this, we have autonomic functions (managing the heart, lungs, etc.) and what else? Prediction. That's pretty much it. Emotions are our physical reactions from our predictions – often knee-jerk reactions to real-time experiences. This is why the maxim, "Emotion drives learning," makes so much sense – the process helps us remember how to keep away from danger, how to stay happy, etc. Unfortunately, our artificial language classrooms do not mimic the real-time, real-life learning that we used to have back when we lived in the jungle. Our brain evolution, however, is still stuck in "jungle-man" times, so therein lies a big problem. How can we make the artificial classroom more similar to outside conditions for more brain-friendly learning? As language teachers, we all know that extended field trips and long-term emersions are wonderful ways to get students to really get a feel for the language – in ways that the classroom simply cannot provide. Well, what if we can't set up an immersion experience for our students? We can at least let the brain do what it does best – make predictions! So, next time, instead of providing all the answers right away, give your students prediction time. Allow students to make meaningful predictions in gameshow-like contexts. Allow students to design their own quizzes/tests (prediction of content and understanding of the content). Humans are hooked on making predictions – look no further than the gaming and gambling industries for striking proof of this. Once you get the hang of it, it'll become progressively easier to get your students hooked on learning. It will make your life as a teacher easier, and more meaningful (see also Howard-Jones et al., 2011).

### Conclusion

Perhaps you remember my plenary from the KOTESOL 2015 conference. At that plenary, I discussed the neuro-benefits of Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL). I showed how changes to the syllabus can make a difference, but more interestingly, we uncovered that the order and timing of implementation significantly affected learning speed.

I hope you enjoyed reading this article and hope you will try out some of the ideas that I've presented. But as I discussed at the plenary last year, knowing this is great, but it is not enough. We should take it further. For this year's conference, I will be furthering this discussion by not only presenting what needs to be done, but also the how and the when for the ideal cognitive development of your learners' L2. I'm very excited

to be able to present my newest data to you.

Please feel free to send me an email (murphy@kitakyu-u.ac.jp) if you have any questions, and please visit my website for further information on neuroELT: <http://fab-epl.com>.

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### The Author

**Robert Murphy** is an associate professor at the University of Kitakyushu, co-founder of the international FAB (neuroELT) conferences, and a PhD candidate in applied linguistics at the University of Nottingham, UK. He has studied mind, brain, and education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and neuroimaging at the University of Edinburgh. Robert is the founder of Murphy School of Education and is a leading voice for neuroELT in Asia.



# Interview with Featured Speaker Lynda Yates

**TEC:** Could you please tell us a little about yourself and how you became involved in English language education?

**LY:** At school, I loved learning languages and eventually majored in foreign languages (Russian and French) as an undergraduate in England. I had to learn languages the hard way – as an adult



Lynda Yates

and, in the case of Russian, with very little exposure – so that has really helped me understand some of the issues that older learners face. I became an English language teacher so that I could travel and live in different countries. I taught in France as an assistant in a high school, then in Egypt in a private college and Armenia in a teacher training institute.

Back in England, I taught academic English at various universities and colleges. I also became a consultant to industry, conducting short courses in communications, leadership, and French to middle managers in a civil engineering company involved in building the Channel Tunnel.

As a teacher, and then later as a researcher, I became fascinated by the way in which even very proficient learners with amazing levels of grammatical awareness and a great vocabulary somehow had difficulty conveying their meaning, and this led me to an interest in pragmatics. My PhD was on the endlessly engaging topic of requests – how to make them, what they show about the speaker, and about their relationships with others. It led me to a deeper understanding of what drives the choices we make when we speak, and that it isn't all only about linguistic competence!

**TEC:** What is the focus of your presentation, and how will it be useful to the EFL teacher new to Korea as well as to the veteran practitioner?

**LY:** My presentation focuses on how we can help learners acquire not only the linguistic but also the cultural knowledge and skills they will need to develop rapport and avoid misunderstandings in

their interactions with others. Even experienced teachers can be very wary of teaching about culture because we – quite rightly – hear a lot these days about the difficulty of defining culture, the dangers of assuming that people with particular cultural backgrounds all think and speak the same way, and also about the rise of English as a lingua franca among speakers from a wide variety of backgrounds. This raises enormous issues for teachers and learners: If we are not necessarily preparing learners to use English with native speakers, then whose “culture” should we teach? If we ignore this issue, then we deprive our learners of a vitally important means of understanding and communicating meaning. In my session, I will briefly present some findings from recent projects I have conducted that have investigated the cultural bases of communication. I then go on to explore the types of activities that teachers can use to raise awareness among their learners of the role that culture plays and how to deal with it.

**TEC:** Of all the ELT-related activities that you are involved in, which of them provide you with the most satisfaction?

**LY:** I love it when a teacher comes up to me to say that a presentation has changed the way they look at things or inspired them to look a little deeper into the way they use or teach language.

**TEC:** If you could change anything about ELT, what would it be?

**LY:** One thing that I am passionate about is that learning and teaching should not be boring. Language is such an endlessly fascinating and creative beast – there really is no excuse for being bored!!

**“If we are not necessarily preparing learners to use English with native speakers, then whose ‘culture’ should we teach?”**

# The Stories We Keep Telling and Why We Tell Them

**Chuck Sandy**

Invited Speaker – KOTESOL IC 2016

*"Reality is too complex. Stories give it form."* — Jean-Luc Godard

Earlier this year, I spent some time in hospital undergoing treatment for an asthma-like condition that almost killed me – but that's another story. This was around the time that Jerome Bruner, the cognitive psychologist, passed away, and so with a strong wifi connection and a lot of time on my hands, I decided I'd reread some of Bruner's work on narrative, storytelling, and his ideas on how we use the narrative structure of story to interpret lived experience. This led me (as Google will) into readings about narrative therapy, Mezirow's work on transformational learning, and eventually to the social anthropologist E. Bruner (no relation to Jerome), who says that "stories only become transformative in their performance" and that "every telling is interpretive."

Meanwhile, I also spent a lot of that time listening to strangers telling central stories from their lives on Storycorp.com, storytellers weaving more fanciful, but mostly true, stories on TheMoth.org, and swapping personal stories with friends

and family members who came to visit me or checked in by phone, email, or Skype. My central story back then was the one about how I'd wound up in the hospital. I told it again and again – each time in a

different way. I'd reframe the story, include newly learned details, leave other things out, offer up my most up-to-date interpretation of what it all meant, and throw it out there to whoever was listening to see how it sounded. Then I'd sit back and wait for feedback, which very often came in the form of a story from whoever was listening. The stories I'd be offered were often narratives I'd

already heard at some point in the past and often more than once. Why keep retelling them?

Jerome Bruner calls this narrativizing. Mezirow and others assert that narrativizing our stories is not only how we make sense of things but also how we create and recreate the self we are always in the process of becoming. Narrativizing our past experiences with empathetic listeners is how we open the door to new interpretations of past events, future change, and possibly even transformation.

When stories no longer serve any of these purposes, we tend to drop them from our repertoire. That's why I'm not telling that hospital story anymore. I no longer need it. That's what I told Josette LeBlanc and Timothy Hampson when we had the chance to spend a healthy and very story-filled day together in Seoul not that long ago. Many of the stories we told each other that day are stories from the teaching life that we've been telling people for years, narratives that need retelling because the experiences behind them are still being revised, refocused, reimagined, and reinterpreted.

Some of the things I'll be doing at the KOTESOL International Conference this year include working with Tim and Josette to open up opportunities for some different kinds of stories from teaching life to be told and retold, providing structures for these stories to get heard and perhaps more fully developed ... and doing a lot of listening. Meanwhile, here are a few of the stories that I keep retelling along with some of the questions I'm still asking about these experiences.

**Coloring.** Back in kindergarten, my teacher Mrs. Spenser passed around a farmyard scene for everyone to color. Her instructions were explicit: color the barn red, the donkey grey, and the chicken white. I was fine with the grey donkey, but the rest of it made no sense to me. I lived next door to a black barn and had a brown pet chicken named Rosita. I just had to be true to my own reality, so I consciously



*Chuck Sandy (right) with co-presenters Josette LeBlanc and Timothy Hampson*

ignored Mrs. Spenser's directives and colored the chicken brown and the barn black. When she saw what I'd done, she said, "You're nothing but a troublemaker. I'm going to call your mother." Fifty-some years later, I'm still telling this story and wondering if some of my past ELT work has involved trying to get everyone to color their chickens white and their barns red.

**Unicycles.** This summer, again, there are school children riding unicycles around the park across from where I live. Watching them today, I remembered the five from last summer. Two of them had joined hands and were spinning round

classroom door trembling with fear as I looked in at those BIG men. Then, I opened that door, walked in, and said, "Hi. I'm Chuck Sandy, and I'm going to be your teacher this year." They looked at me. I looked at them. No one said a word. Then I reached down as far into myself as I possibly could, pulled out some words, spoke them out loud, and taught the class. How did I do that and why? Immediately afterwards, I was absolutely sure I'd taught the worst class of my life. I was wrong. Now I know it was one of the best. What has changed and why?

**Happiness.** One of my seminar students called to say she was sorry but couldn't keep an important appointment that we'd scheduled for later that day. "What's wrong?" I asked. "Nothing's wrong," she said. "I'm just too happy to come to school today." There was silence on the line as she waited for my response. I took a deep breath and said, "Well then, enjoy that happiness while it lasts. Let's reschedule for another time." I don't remember her response, but I do remember how happy she was and how her happiness made me happy, too. That was twenty years ago. I still think about what she said that day and why she said it. Was I wrong to not insist that she keep her appointment? She graduated with honors, and now she's a teacher too. I hope she's still happy.



Chuck Sandy at the 2015 KOTESOL International Conference

and round, going faster and faster. Another two were slowly circling the park's perimeter. The other one kept falling and looked close to tears. I mentally assessed them: superb, pass, fail. I was wrong. Before long, the older man who used to be a social worker and who now has made himself responsible for what happens with school children in the park was scolding the spinning ones for doing something dangerous, encouraging the slow circlers to go a little faster, and had the falling one hanging onto his arm while he whispered something in her ear for awhile before letting her go, drift off by herself, and not fall. This summer, that one is now teaching this year's new unicycle riders how to do it. How did that happen?

**Doing It.** At the start of my second year of teaching, I fell into a clinical depression. Even getting myself up, dressed, and out of the house was a challenge. Things were that bad. Just when I thought things couldn't possibly get worse, they did. I was assigned to teach an English composition course to the freshman members of the university football team. All these years later, I can still see myself standing in front of that

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## The Author

**Chuck Sandy** is an author, motivational speaker, and educational activist. He is cofounder of the International Teacher Development Institute (iTDi), a Cambridge author, and enjoys building idea igniters like EdYOUfest. He has been invited to present two presentations at KOTESOL 2016 – one with Josette LeBlanc, the other with Timothy Hampson.



# Interview with Featured Speaker Burcu Tezcan-Unal

**TEC:** Could you tell us a little about yourself and how you became involved in English language education?

**Burcu Tezcan-Unal:** I am a Turkish citizen coming from Istanbul; that is, English is a second language for me. I started to learn English when I was 12 in secondary school, and I became completely fascinated with learning a new

schools, and at high schools and universities, to several different age groups at varying levels of language skills. I have been involved in teacher training since 1994 as I have also been passionate about sharing ideas, experiences, tips, and thoughts with colleagues from all over the world. I have benefitted a lot by being part of conferences as a delegate, a presenter, and/or an organizer.

**TEC:** Of all the ELT-related activities that you are involved in, which of them provide you with the most satisfaction?

**BTU:** I guess going and presenting at conferences is my favorite of all. I have met many colleagues from different parts of the world. I have introduced ideas or food for thought to them, and I have learned from them over the years. I find conferences both academically and socially rewarding. This year at KOTESOL, I am representing one of the two biggest international teacher associations, IATEFL, as a member of its Teacher Training and Education (TTEd) SIG.

**TEC:** A conference theme-related question: What skills – teacher skills and/or learner skills – do you think are needed to best prepare our English language students for the future?

**BTU:** “Communication” is the key word, both as a natural part of our job and for the future of our learners. They are expected to be effective communicators, both orally and in written forms, considering cultural nuances as the world has been increasingly becoming borderless. Collaborating in international teams using different media and working for certain goals by making use of various individual skills and strengths will also be distinguishing factors.

**TEC:** What is the focus of your presentations, and how will they be useful to the EFL teacher new to Korea as well as to the veteran practitioner?

**BTU:** Currently, I am a doctoral student studying



*Thanks, teacher!: Burcu Tezcan-Unal*

language. At the time, my dad took me to the British Council library, where I was introduced to thousands of colorful English books. I loved the experience, and as soon as I learned anything, I was trying to teach it to my brother (who was not as enthusiastic, I must say). However, that was the indication of my passion to teach. All through my high school years, I kept studying English, and my best subject was always English. Both the passion for teaching and the English language paved the way to my becoming an educator, I suppose. I have taught English in language

higher education, and the articles I have been reading led me to have a wider perspective while considering public needs in general. While having a good level of English is still globally important, that alone is not enough. There are many other skills that need to be cultivated, and ELT classrooms can be great platforms for learners to develop these while improving their language skills. I am hoping to offer food for thought to the participants who may wish to incorporate some

in the classroom, outside the classroom, even ELT conferences – what would it be?

**BTU:** Good question. I would probably add sessions, panels, or other activities that allow students to share their ideas on the given topics. I included this kind of component in two of the conferences I organized and the audience loved it. It was also very useful for them. Sometimes we think a certain thing is good for them, but it is also important (if not more important) to consider their input.

**“‘Communication’ is the key word, both as a natural part of our job and for the future of our learners.”**

**TEC:** Would you share with us a little about your life outside of ELT?

**BTU:** I guess, the most important thing for me now is to complete my doctoral thesis, which will be on quality assurance and becoming a learning organization. The more I study these topics, the more I realize how one’s life can significantly change thanks to receiving good quality education and how everyone has the right to access it. I would like to make a difference by contributing to it.

of the ideas in their own lessons, considering the age and language level of their learners.

**TEC:** Do you have any tips to share for novice conference presenters?

**BTU:** Make sure your abstract represents what you will present to the audience. Also, allowing a few minutes at the end for questions and comments is always useful.

**TEC:** How do you plan to spend your time at KOTESOL 2016?

**BTU:** Well, first of all, I am an attendee, a presenter, and the representative of the IATEFL TTEd-SIG. So I will enjoy the talks, I am especially interested in seeing the ones given by Korean colleagues as I have not been to South Korea before. I am also excited about my own talks and how they will be received by colleagues in this part of the world. Finally, I will introduce the IATEFL TTEd-SIG and mention our special interest group’s activities to attendees who may be interested. I will also try to see some places in Seoul, although I only have a short time; perhaps I will take a “hop-on hop-off” bus.

**TEC:** If you could change anything about ELT –



*In her element: Burcu Tezcan-Unal*

# Interview with Featured Speaker Todd Beuckens

**TEC:** Hello, Todd. Could you begin by telling us a little about yourself and how you became involved in English language education?

**TB:** I teach ESL in Kyushu, Japan, at Asia Pacific



University. I also create self-access learning sites for students to learn English, most notably [ello.org](http://ello.org), which is one of the larger and older ESL sites online. I started ELLLO in 2003 as part of a graduate school project to create authentic listening materials. Thus began my keen interest in blending technology and traditional learning environments. Even though I create online materials, I still feel the best learning environments feature face-to-face interaction, so I also love teaching with just a blackboard and chalk.

**TEC:** What is the focus of your featured session, and how will it be useful to the EFL teacher new to Korea as well as to the veteran practitioner?

**TB:** My presentation will show teachers a wide

array of free tools available to them and how they can incorporate these tools into their classroom. For example, the presentation will show how students can create their own online textbook in a very short period of time by first writing the conversation in class, then recording the audio on their phones, and then compiling them to make a book. Such a simple task like this is very effective for many reasons. It helps the teacher identify weak areas, it stretches the lesson beyond the classroom, it expands the student's exposure to natural input, and it serves as a posting board to highlight mistakes and areas that students need to work on. Also, the blend of technology and traditional classroom settings, especially with the help of smartphones, makes the learning environment more dynamic and accessible.

**TEC:** Of all the ELT-related activities that you are involved in, which of them provide you with the most satisfaction?

**TB:** What interests me most is still just the day-to-day experience of teaching students. With the advancement of various technologies, it is fun to continually be adapting and adjusting lessons to fit the needs and preferences of each younger generation of learners.

**TEC:** Here is a conference theme-related question for you: What skills – teacher skills and/or learner skills – are needed to best prepare our English language students for their future?

**TB:** It is a tough question, and there so many things you can say, but I would say the main thing teachers and learners need is just awareness of what is out there – what is available to them – and how to use it. There are so many great tools and resources that go unused because people simply do not know about them. A prime example is the smartphone. It can do everything from take pictures to record audio and video as well as organize lessons. With software like Evernote,

you can organize all this content into portfolios or lesson databases right from your phone. In terms of oral communication, the smartphone is a great tool for doing speaking tasks in lieu of standard paper-and-pencil activities. There are many other examples, too. Google Forms, for example, is a great way to give, record, and evaluate grammar tasks online. Blogger is a wonderful tool for creating a personalized class LMS in minutes. The same goes for Facebook. SoundCloud is a nifty tool for creating speaking blogs. QR codes allow students to instantly sync media online with printed material at hand. With basic HTML code, you can create web pages that can produce glossy printable materials that render on any device. You can learn how to code HTML in about thirty minutes. The list goes on and on. There are so many tools students can use to boost their learning, or that teachers can use to enhance their lessons, but people don't use them because they are not part of the norm.

**TEC:** Would you share with us a little about your life outside of ELT?

**TB:** I have to admit, I do not have much of a life outside of ELT, except that I love watching sports, travel about three months a year, and love hiking. Because of elllo.org and meals.org, I am always doing tech stuff when I am outside of the classroom, but it is a good thing because I enjoy it so much.

**TEC:** How do you plan to spend your time at KOTESOL 2016?

**TB:** This will be my third time to Korea to see a conference. Each time I go, it is such a nice time, so I plan to just attend as many sessions as possible, and meet new people, and catch up with old friends and familiar faces.

**TEC:** If you could change anything about ELT – in the classroom, outside the classroom, even ELT conferences – what would it be?

**TB:** We need to really work on creating more authentic listening and reading materials that are graded for all levels, as well as alternative textbooks and lesson content. There is a lot of great materials out there, but there could be more. The profession is at the stage where we could use more independent content creators to

supplement and augment mainstream publishing. Getting published and distributed can be a daunting, cumbersome, and drawn-out process, and it does not need to be. The production model for content creation for most publishers is really outdated and could be modified. For most books, the current model is to outline a syllabus based on grammar or talking points and then write the content. Later activities and media files are created to match the content. The process needs to be reversed so that we get more authentic materials and a wider range of materials. The production process should be inverted. First, we should record conversations and then adapt activities and learning units to match them. Also, most books waste a lot of pages (real estate space) with metalanguage or instructional language. It would be nice to see textbooks that consist more of actual language (transcripts, writings, etc.). We are at a stage in ELT where it is now very easy for teachers to "P.U.S.H." their content, meaning they produce, use, share, and host what they create, so it benefits not only their students but other teachers and students as well.

**“The profession is at the stage where we could use more independent content creators to supplement and augment mainstream publishing.”**

# Interview with Featured Speaker Kara Mac Donald

**TEC:** Could you tell us a little about yourself and how you became involved in English language education?

**KMD:** I believe my attraction to foreign language and culture, and the proficiency of others in English as a second language derived from my father's job in Brazil for a US company, which brought me in contact with kids from a variety of countries. I also spent my summer vacations at a camp with children from not only the US, but also from Western Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. Of course, these experiences led to friendships, pen pals, and vacations to visit friends. These experiences afforded me the opportunity to be exposed to multilingual and multicultural contexts at home and abroad,

provoking me to think about the relationships between nationality, prestige, power, and being proficient in more than one language.

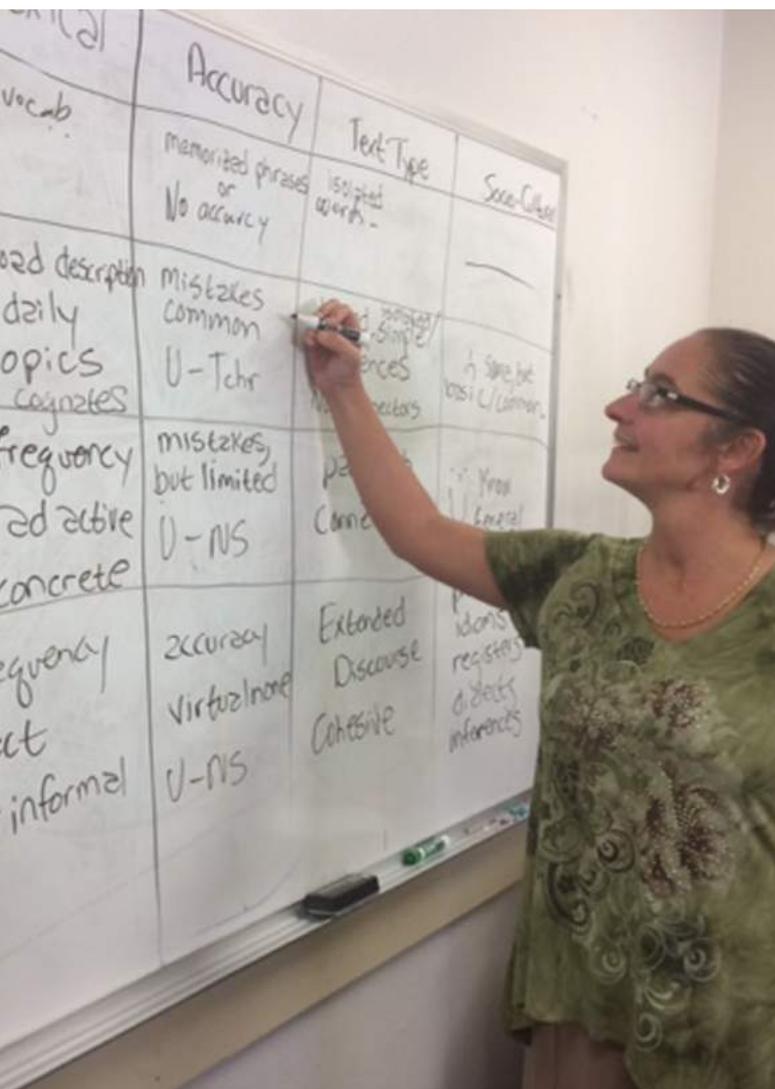
I earned a bachelor's degree in Spanish language and literature, and taught Spanish in a variety of contexts. Additionally, I earned a master's in TESOL and Languages Other Than English (LOTE), and taught English, Spanish, and Italian in several countries in a wide range of educational contexts. I then earned a doctorate in applied linguistics. I further pursued a master's in educational management, which has informed many aspects of my work in language teaching, faculty development, and departmental administration in my past and present positions.

**TEC:** What is the focus of your featured presentation, and how will it be useful to the EFL teacher new to Korea as well as to the veteran practitioner?

**KMD:** "21st century skills" is a common phrase, and sometimes we get so used to hearing terms in the field that they become less specific in meaning. The information-based global economy is no longer new and some of the characteristics under 21st century skills seem like skills students always needed. So, I will address the topic by considering that 21st century skills are not necessarily uniform across contexts. Each country and context requires specific linguistic, interpersonal, and sociocultural skills to effectively participate in that community. The needs of students headed for corporate positions in their home country are not the same for those hoping to do graduate studies in the UK or work for a multinational in Asia, Southeast Asia, or beyond. The session explores how a variety of communicative instructional approaches can be used as a framework to build 21st century skills for a specific context or several, depending on students' needs.

**TEC:** Of all the ELT-related activities that you are involved in, which of them provide you with the most satisfaction?

**KMD:** It is hard to say, as I really enjoy the



variety of ELT activities I participate in outside of work. Yet I would say the two that have been the most rewarding personally and professionally for me have been serving as a previous editor-in-chief of *The English Connection* and as the current editor-in-chief of *The Korea TESOL Journal*, and serving on governance committees in TESOL. First, being able to serve as editor of KOTESOL publications has provided me with the opportunity to read articles and research on a wide range of topics from a variety of countries. I feel that I learn personally, as I read articles submitted for review, and I also enjoy the mentor role in guiding authors in revising their manuscripts for

**“Students are so focused, understandably, on course grades, overall GPA, and standardized test scores that they lose focus of what it is that they are really learning”**

publication. Second, the opportunity to serve on TESOL governance committees (Employment Issues Committee and NNEST Interest Section) have provided me with the ability to develop advocacy skills through various means while working with and being guided by veteran TESOL members. I have also enjoyed the experience as I have learned more about TESOL as an organization and how vital it and the affiliates are to our field.

**TEC:** Here is conference theme-related question for you: What skills – teacher skills and/or learner skills – are needed to best prepare our English language students for their future?

**KMD:** Students need time to reflect on the process. In advising students and working with faculty to provide academic support to students,

it seems that an awareness of the process is often overlooked. Students are so focused, understandably, on course grades, overall GPA, and standardized test scores that they lose focus of what it is that they are really learning when learning a language (e.g., what do I know about myself as a learner, what strategies do I use). Without self-awareness and an awareness of the process, students are unable to “fail forward” and trust the process without thinking about the results. I think athletes “fail forward” all the time in their training, as they learn something from every workout and every missed point in competition. They reflect on what it is that creates the gap between where they are and where they need to be. Language learners, in many contexts, are so pressured to meet required results and work under such tight schedules that there is no time to effectively track progression and reflect on the process to identify what components of the target language are missing to meet the next highest level and how to best strategize to get there.

**TEC:** Would you share with us a little about your life outside of ELT?

**KMD:** I love food as much as I love language and culture. I am not sure what it is, but when I am in the kitchen, I feel at peace and alive. (I also get a similar feeling being in the classroom.) After high school, I completed a culinary arts and hospitality degree, and worked in the field as a pastry chef for ten years working at several hotels and restaurants. I wanted to study for a BA in linguistics after high school, but my parents feared I would be unemployable, or end up being a teacher (funny that), so they suggested a more reliable first degree that could then fund a BA in linguistics later if I wanted. I did follow through on the plan for studies in linguistics, enjoying a fabulous career to this day. I am fortunate now that I not only cook, but I also grow and have access to homegrown fruits and vegetables, and so, the saying “from the garden to the table” is often the case for me.

**TEC:** How do you plan to spend your time at KOTESOL 2016?

**KMD:** I am always pleased to visit Seoul for the KOTESOL International Conference to attend sessions and collaborate with KOTESOL members and friends. I also enjoy catching up with friends in Seoul from when I lived here, and I always try to visit one tourist or historic site that I did not manage to get to when I lived here.

# Interview with Featured Speaker Willy A. Renandya

**TEC:** Dr. Renandya, could you tell us a little about yourself and how you became involved in English language education?

**WAR:** I am a language teacher educator, currently teaching at the National Institute of Education (NIE), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. My students are mostly student teachers who are training to become public school English teachers in Singapore. Before joining NIE, I worked in SEAMEO RELC (Regional Language Centre), where I managed its teacher development division. It was there that I began my career in language teacher education and had a lot of opportunities to work with English teachers from many countries in Southeast Asia (e.g., Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam).

published when I was at RELC.

**TEC:** What is the focus of your presentations, and how will they be useful to the EFL teacher new to Korea as well as to the veteran practitioner?

**WAR:** I'll be giving two practical presentations. The first is about how L2 teachers can use simple and accessible technological resources to enhance L2 learning. I will begin by reviewing key L2 learning principles and then provide practical examples of technology-mediated tasks and activities that reflect these principles. The second presentation is a workshop on extensive reading (다독 or *dadok*). I will highlight the language learning benefits of extensive reading and provide practical tips on how it can be implemented in schools.



*Dr. Renandya in action.*

My stint in RELC (which lasted some ten years) also gave me an opportunity to meet and work with numerous international TESOL scholars such as Prof. E. Sadtono from Indonesia, Prof. Melchor Tatlonghari from the Philippines, Dr. George M. Jacobs from the US, and Prof. Jack C. Richards from New Zealand. My first book with Jack Richards – *Language Teaching Methodology: An Anthology of Current Practice* (CUP, 2002) – was

**TEC:** Of all the ELT-related activities that you are involved in, which of them provide you with the most satisfaction?

**WAR:** I enjoy running workshops for both beginning and experienced teachers. Working with teachers helps me understand the challenges that they face when they try to implement research-based ideas into their classroom practices. I get the most satisfaction when I can help teachers make meaningful connections between theory and practice.

**TEC:** Next, I'd like to ask a conference theme-related question: What skills – teacher skills and/or learner skills – are needed to best prepare our English language students for their future?

**WAR:** Technology provides rich (yet untapped) resources that both teachers and students can use to support out-of-class language learning. Since language is best acquired outside the classroom, both teachers and students should develop skills that can help them make the best

use of technological resources (e.g., web-based learning resources). Technology and the internet can, for example, (a) offer a wider access to interesting and comprehensible language and (b) provide excellent opportunities for meaningful language practice. When these two sources of learning are abundantly available, L2 learners' language development is greatly facilitated.

**TEC:** Please share with us a little about your life outside of ELT.

**WAR:** I make regular trips to the local library



Dr. Renandya explaining extensive reading.

to read non-ELT books (although more often than not, I end up connecting what I read to the ELT world). Recently I picked up a nice book called *The 11 Laws of Likability*, by Michelle Tillis Lederman, about how people can improve their likability index (and in turn, increase their chance of success in their career, relationships, etc.). After reading this book, I couldn't help thinking that the laws are also applicable to us in the TESOL profession. We know that students enjoy working with likable teachers, but how many have a high likability quotient?

**TEC:** If you could change anything about ELT – in the classroom, outside the classroom, even about ELT conferences – what would it be?

**WAR:** Acquiring a new language takes quite a bit of time, but the process is, in my view, not that difficult. If students are willing to invest their time for a period of time, they should in theory be able

to develop sufficient proficiency in the language. The key thing is how we can make language learning more enjoyable and interesting so that students become more willing to spend more time and effort in the learning process.

So I would like to see a bit more emphasis on the affective side of language learning in our teacher development curriculum. Such a curriculum would equip teachers with a range of tools that they could use to motivate and engage their students. I recently published a small practical booklet entitled *Motivation in the Language Classroom* (TESOL International, 2014). In it, I discuss a set of practical strategies that I call the "Five Ts" of motivation (T1 = Teacher, T2 = Teaching methodology, T3 = Text, T4 = Task, and T5 = Test) to help teachers design and deliver more motivating and engaging lessons.

**TEC:** Please share with our TEC readers your most recent publications.

**WAR:** I've got two new books for 2016, both published by Springer. The first one is a practical book entitled *Simple, Powerful Strategies for Student-Centered Learning* (<http://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783319257105>) that I co-authored with Dr. George Jacobs and Michael Power. This book contains lots of practical ideas for implementing student-centered learning.

The second one is called *English Language Teaching Today: Linking Theory and Practice*, co-edited with Handoyo Widodo (<http://www.springer.com/us/book/9783319388328>). This book contains a collection of papers written by well-known people in our field. The chapters discuss practical topics (e.g., teaching speaking and teaching writing) and provide practical suggestions on how teachers can teach language skills in a principled manner.

**TEC:** How do you plan to spend your time at this year's Korea TESOL conference?

**WAR:** I enjoy meeting old friends and making new ones. So in addition to attending academic sessions, I will spend time catching up with old friends during coffee and lunch breaks and also at the dinner reception.

# Why I Chose “Memory” as the Topic of My Featured Talk

**William Littlewood**

Featured Speaker at KOTESOL IC 2016

Memory is a rich and many-sided topic. From romantic popular songs that pull at our emotions (“Memories are made of this ...”) to complex experiments that try to unravel its cognitive underpinnings, there seems to be no limit to how



its mysteries can be portrayed and explored. For myself, I have always marveled – to take just one example – at how incapable I was, at school and university, of sitting down to memorize suitable quotations for literature exams, yet even now, decades later, I can remember whole poems that I never intended to memorize at all. Comparatively recently, I’ve come to understand the first phenomenon as (failed) “intentional memorization” and the second as (successful) “incidental memorization.” And theories of memory tell us exactly what my experience shows: that successful memorization depends not on whether it was intentional or incidental, but on the “depth of processing” that the original material stimulated. That insight is important to us as language teachers.

Here is another example from my experience. Some students compliment me on my good memory because I remember their names more

quickly than most of the other (much younger) teachers. But actually I cheat (and I confess that to them). I take photos of them in groups, ask them to write their names to correspond to their picture, and then between (or even during) class sessions, I practice matching faces with names. I know now that memory theorists call this “spaced retrieval practice,” which is much more effective than “massed practice.” Again, we can build on that insight as language teachers.

So my choice of topic for my featured talk stems firmly from my personal interests and experiences in life. In fact, I am probably less interested in memory as an academic topic than in memory as it appears in all areas of life, including popular songs (e.g., mentioned earlier) and literature (e.g., Proust’s “search for lost time” and that heartrending story by Chekhov, *The Kiss*). But the topic enables me, too, to make satisfying connections of an academic nature: from personal experience into theory and then from theory into the practice of language learning and teaching.

I have found that the standard works on memory make disappointingly little reference to language and, when they do, they focus mainly on the intentional learning of discrete items – which, to those interested in helping students to use language for communication, is probably not the most

**“I am interested in the ‘space’ memory theorist and the language teacher.”**

interesting area. There are of course exceptions, such as Michael Ullman's work on declarative and procedural memory for language (which I will refer to in my talk). Conversely, as Alan Maley points out in a 2013 review in *ELT Journal*, there has been surprisingly little discussion of memory in the language teaching field (again, with exceptions, some of which I will mention in my talk).

So I am interested in the "space" between the memory theorist and the language teacher. Now I have formed a conception of the main content, written an abstract, and even sketched out a memory-based "model" for language teaching. But, to adapt the words of the popular song, "it's a long, long time from July to October." I hope that the cognitive networks do not become entangled and that the "model" does not become, like so many before it, a "muddle"!

I hope to see some of you at the talk and look forward to visiting Korea for KOTESOL 2016.

### The Author

**Bill Littlewood** worked in schools and teacher education in the UK before moving to Hong Kong, where he is currently Honorary Professor at Hong Kong Baptist University. He has published widely in applied linguistics and language teaching. His books have been used widely in teacher education.



## Teacher Stories Through the "Tree of Life"

By Thomas S.C. Farrell

*Editor's Note: Our regular columnist Thomas Farrell will also be presenting at the KOTESOL International Conference this year, so be sure to go along and speak to him in person regarding ways to reflect on and boost your teaching career. He will deliver the opening plenary session on Saturday, October 15th at 11:30 am.*

### Introduction

In the previous three articles, I focused on the "teacher-as-person" lens for reflecting with the idea that the more self-knowledge we gain from such explorations, the better teachers we can become. As Palmer (1998, p. 3) noted, "Whatever self-knowledge we attain as teachers will serve our students and our scholarship well." Teachers can gain more self-knowledge about the "who" of teachers through autobiographical sketches called the Tree of Life, which map out our personal history from our early experiences growing up to the present, either as a teacher or as a teacher-in-training.

### Teacher Stories

People are experts when it comes to their own selves, so teachers can make better sense of seemingly random experiences in their own lives, especially when it comes to personal intuitive knowledge, and the expertise and experience that comes from their accumulated years as language educators. At the same time, teachers also have a safe and relatively non-judgmental environment where they can share any emotional stress they may have built up over the years, along with the isolating feeling of being in a classroom for many years without much reflection (Farrell, 2015). As Elbaz (1991, p. 3) succinctly put it, "Story is

the very stuff of teaching, the landscape within which we live as teachers and researchers, and within which the work of teachers can be seen as making sense." I now outline and discuss one way teachers can establish their story chronologically using the Tree of Life.

### **The Tree of Life**

The Tree of Life is divided into three parts: the roots, trunk, and limbs.

#### **Roots**

The roots of the tree provide the foundation of what has shaped our early years, such as our family values, heritage, ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic background – anything that has shaped us in any way. I will use a real example from a teacher in Japan for each section of the tree:

*Born Tokyo, Japan to Japanese mother and American (Caucasian) father. Japanese was my L1 until move to US age 4. No Japanese in my US community so had to speak English only. In school bullied because kept Japanese first name. I consciously rejected Japanese language and culture at this time because of these experiences.*

#### **Trunk**

As we move from our early experiences at home, we move our storytelling to capturing experiences from early school years all the way up to our high school years, and we also focus on any experiences that may have led to developing our perspectives on teaching and teachers, such as a teacher you admired or did not admire:

*Family trip to Japan at age 10. Partial reincorporation of my Japanese identity.*

#### **Limbs**

This represents all of our experiences beyond high school and includes all our most recent experiences and influences. For example, each limb can represent an adult experience and/or action that has influenced or shaped our teaching selves:

*After US university education returned to Japan to teach English in the JET Program. Reconnect with my Japanese grandparents and as a result adopted a new cultural identity with a positive*

*view of Japan and Japanese, but a negative view of English Education/TESOL. After a few years studying TESOL, got a "real" teaching job in Japan and began to see TESOL teaching as a viable career for the first time.*

### **Conclusion**

Reconstructing one's life experiences is to simply tell or write an in-depth biography that can offer insight into the past to uncover a philosophy of practice. This can be done by mapping out various past experiences on the Tree of Life and examining how these may have been impacted by one's culture, family upbringing, education, religion, community, and the various experiences that have helped shape someone as an individual and as a teacher. When teachers have reflected on their story, they can then consider how these past experiences have shaped or may have shaped their philosophy of practice. By reflecting on our chronological story, we can gain some insight into who we are as teachers, which is the essential foundation of our philosophy of practice.

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#### **The Author**

##### **Thomas S.C. Farrell**

is Professor of Applied Linguistics at Brock University, Canada. Professor Farrell's professional interests include reflective practice, and language teacher education



and development. He has published widely in academic journals and has presented at major conferences worldwide on these topics. A selection of his most recent books are available at: [www.reflectiveinquiry.ca](http://www.reflectiveinquiry.ca)

Living in tech-savvy Korea, we practitioners are always looking to infuse more technology into the classroom. One fun way I've found to do this is by creating podcasts, or "profcasts," which marry the worlds of technology and education beautifully.

## What's a profcast?

A profcast is an audio-digital recording made by a professor to be downloaded and listened to by students for inside or outside the classroom. Similar to podcasts, profcasts can be short episodes uploaded to your school's website for students to subscribe to automatically.

## Why create your own podcast?

1. *The research.* Studies by Chabolla and Ley (2009) and Heilesen (2010) have shown that students are highly satisfied with podcasts because they deepen student engagement and interaction in the lesson. Podcasts are perfect tools for practicing blended and collaborative learning. Additionally, podcasts can be used to give class announcements, serve as a supplement to a lecture, or lead to fun student-led projects. Language learning podcasts, in particular, allow students to learn at their own pace.

2. *The sky's the limit (on post-task creation).* Studies by Ducate and Lomicka (2009) and Vess (2006) have shown that podcasts help students study, practice pronunciation, and provide out-of-class speaking practice, which frees up more time in class for other activities. They can also improve listening for gist and details, and provide opportunities for creativity such as recording their own talk show. The tasks are endless and effective at achieving, at minimum, the development of specific skills and, at maximum, further practice in

the new language.

3. *It's fun!* Studies have shown that podcasts help to connect students and their professor to each other by creating a sense of informality in the traditional learning process (Edirisingha, Salmon, & Fothergill, 2007). Your voice is a powerful instrument, so demonstrate to your students how cool you really are by showing them a new side of you. Invite a coworker to join you as a guest speaker and talk about the theme of the unit you're teaching. Don't worry too much about making mistakes either: The goal is authentic listening at its best.

**"Don't worry too much about making mistakes ... the goal is authentic listening at its best."**

## Tips

- Keep it short, about the length of a song depending on your learner's level.
- Grade your task! Don't forget that the real learning comes in the post-listening task, so keep that in mind, and don't lose your students just to use technology.
- There's a delicate balance between sounding like a drone or their best friend. Students want an entertaining yet informative voice when listening to podcasts.

## Considerations

- Technology matters: Good equipment makes clear recordings! There are some sites such as Open Source (<http://opensource.org>) and Audacity ([audacityteam.org](http://audacityteam.org)) out there to help you.
- Good podcast lessons take time to prepare, so be prepared for it to take a while to get into the swing of things.
- Students may not have much exposure to podcasts, so consider showing podcasts like NPR ([www.npr.org/podcasts/](http://www.npr.org/podcasts/)) or Grammar Girl

([www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl](http://www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl))

### Want more info? Check this study out:

"There's Something in the Air: Podcasting in Education" (Campbell, 2005). This article provides a great introduction to podcasting. An online version is available at <https://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/erm0561.pdf>

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### The Author

#### Cathryn Bennett

is CELTA-trained and teaches at the Catholic University of Korea. She has taught in Korea and Europe on a variety of topics covering test preparation, job and interview skills, and



using technology in the EFL classroom. She holds an MA in migration studies from the University of Kent at Brussels.

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## Ease Classroom Management and Increase Professional Development with Google Classroom

By Guy Smith

Teachers always seem short of time; administrative requirements, classes, and responsibilities to learners all make heavy demands. This means sitting down and doing some professional reflection and development is a task that many teachers move to the bottom of to-do lists. It is difficult to justify cutting the time invested in preparing interesting and thought-provoking lessons that can help learners become more confident communicators, provide opportunities to help create knowledge, and encourage learners to approach their learning in a critical way. It is also hard to justify reducing the time spent building mentoring and supportive relationships with learners. However, reducing the time spent on routine class management tasks such as handing out, collecting, and returning assignments is an achievable, even

welcome, goal. Google Apps for Education (GAPE) and Google Classroom, an application within a Google Educational Domain, offer teachers this opportunity.

### Google's Educational Domain

Google Classroom is available to teachers through their institution's participation in a Google Educational Domain. Registering as a Google Educational Domain is an option educational institutions should consider as Google handles the internal email system, institutions have administrative control over access to applications, and the services are provided free by Google. In the US alone, it is estimated that over 50 million learners use GAPE in their educational environment. In addition, a large number of universities in Japan, perhaps around 70, are

Google Educational Domains. In some cases, however, teachers may be unaware that their institution is a Domain. If your educational institution is using Gmail as its internal email system, but you do not have access to Google Classroom, it may be because your institution has turned off access to the application; as teachers, we may want to ask that our institutions consider allowing access to Google Classroom if they are already using Gmail.

### **Let Google Classroom Handle the Routine Tasks**

Google Apps for Education has become familiar to many educators across a wide range and

**“Teachers, from all kinds of educational institutions, always seem to be short of time”**

variety of educational institutions. The applications include Google Drive, Google Sites, Google Groups, and a variety of others. To facilitate the efficient use of these applications, Google has built a hub for teachers in Google Classroom. Google claims that over fifty hours can be saved on classroom management by using its GAFE applications. This can be particularly helpful for teachers of writing courses who may spend a significant amount of time collecting

assignments, returning drafts, and writing feedback. By using Google Classroom, teachers are largely able to automate the following tasks:

- **Collection of assignments and papers:** Students submit these themselves through the classroom interface.
- **Checking deadlines:** Teachers set deadlines for assignments when creating assignments in Google Classroom, and Google Classroom automatically checks this under student submission histories.
- **Returning papers:** Assignments can be returned with two clicks in the interface.

Furthermore, as Google Classroom manages and collects learners' work, there is less concern over the possibility of lost and misplaced papers. These tasks on their own are not particularly time consuming; however, when teachers automate many of their management tasks over several semesters and a number of

courses, time savings can mount rapidly. For the teacher, this means they are able to make more time for professional development, focusing on learners, and reflection, some of the most important investments in a teacher's practice. Teachers who are interested in encouraging their institution to become a Google Educational Domain should find other like-minded teachers, investigate how the Google Educational Domain can support their classrooms and learners' needs, and approach their administration with the benefits and advantages of doing so.

**“GAFE and Google Classroom ... offer teachers an opportunity to make significant reductions in time spent on such routine classroom management.”**

### **The Author**

**Guy Smith** is currently a contracted lecturer at International Christian University in Japan, where he works teaching Academic Reading and Writing, Academic Tools and Strategies, and in the Graduate School, supporting graduate students writing their graduation theses. His interests are in ed-tech, critical thinking in language learning, and self-determination theory applied to student and teacher wellbeing.





# The 24<sup>th</sup> Korea TESOL International Conference

Oct. 15-16, 2016

Sookmyung Women's  
University, Seoul

## Plenary Speakers

Thomas Farrell

Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa

## Featured Speakers

Willy Renandya

Boyoung Lee (이보영)

William Littlewood

Kara Mac Donald

Todd Beuckens

Burcu Tezcan Unal

Lynda Yates

Robert S. Murphy

And also....

Chuck Sandy

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