

Writing and Composition in the Classroom

A summary by Tim Whitman (Chosun University) of his Nov. 13 presentation at the Chapter monthly meeting.

The teaching of writing in our classes is a topic which needs to be explored more. Many educators either do not do any writing activities in their lessons, or it is something that is seen as the “extra” activity and so is not done regularly. But there are many reasons why we should consider writing in our classes and there are a number of simple ways in which we can bring meaningful writing activities into the learning process.

Why Write in the Classroom?

There are a number of reasons for teaching compositional writing with all levels of learners. Most materials for teaching expect the students to be able to write, yet there are few learners who know how to effectively compose a piece of writing. By bringing composition into the classroom, we can provide opportunities for developing another channel for communicating while at the same time broadening learners understanding of language. With so much emphasis on spoken English in Korea, the learner is under a lot of pressure to produce. Writing is a productive skill that, by the nature of the writer-reader relationship, must be more error-free than spoken English. The writer then must think and reflect on what they are trying to communicate. This is an opportunity for them to “slow-down” their production, producing more accurate communication. An important part of writing for us teachers is that it allows us to see into the mind of our learners and helps us in development of teaching ideas and lesson planning.

How to Teach Writing in Class

How can we teaching writing and composition in our classes? There are two things which will make teaching

and learning easier and beneficial for all involved – modeling and process writing. Modeling involves the use of models, or samples, of writing that demonstrate the key features of different genres of writing. If we are teaching how to write a personal letter or an email, we would show the learner samples of what they should look like. The models will benefit all levels of learners. At lower levels, learners can essentially copy the model, changing words to make the letter or email more personal. Higher learners will have the language skills to add to and develop the model more. Yet for both kinds of learners, seeing the model provides them the comfort of not having to worry about what the writing genre looks like; they can instead focus on the language learning.

From Modeling to Process Writing

Process writing, is a manner of producing good writing by following a set of stages through which the writing *evolves* and becomes better. Through the teaching of process writing, learners become aware that writing is not “perfect” on the first try. The composition they are making needs to be planned, organized, drafted, revised and edited. Learners can be taught these stages, which are important in the organization of thought and, in the revise edit stages, language or communication errors can be corrected. Process writing allows the learner to reflect on the language they have chosen, thus allowing them an invaluable opportunity to understand language.

Writing and composition are important, yet underused, tools through which we as educators can help our learners to better understand and acquire language while teaching them the full range of communication skills.

■ Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter Officers

President

Dr. David E. Shaffer

Chosun University
English Language Department
Email: disin@chosun.ac.kr



Membership Coordinator

Kristine Dona

Nongseong Elementary School
Email: chris.tan92@yahoo.com



Vice-President

Maria Neliza Lumantao

Chonnam National University
Dept. of English Lang. & Literature
Email: ynell_alpha@yahoo.com



Membership Coordinator

Faith Fishley

Sunchon National University
ffishley@hotmail.com



Treasurer

Vivien Slezak

Chosun University
Language Education Institute
vivienlezak@gmail.com



Chapter Email Address

gwangju_kotesol@yahoo.com

Chapter Website

<http://www.kotesol.org/?q=Gwangju-Jeonnam>



■ Joining Korea TESOL

Who May Join

English teachers of any level or nationality are eligible to join KOTESOL. We welcome native and non-native speakers teaching at primary schools, secondary schools, language institutes, colleges and universities and other organizations. University students may join as student members.

What Memberships Types Are Available?

- **Individual 1-Year Membership** (40,000 won)
- **Undergraduate Student 1-Year Membership** (20,000 won, Documentation required)
- **International 1-Year Membership** (60,000 won / US\$60.00)
- **Lifetime Membership** (400,000 won)

How to Join

Apply by using the online membership form at <http://www.kotesol.org/>. Click on “Join KOTESOL” at the left and follow the directions.

Paper membership application and renewal forms are available at Chapter meetings for those who prefer making a hard-copy application.

Membership payment may be made by:

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

Teaching Young Learners

A summary by David Shaffer (Chosun University) of his Nov. 13 presentation at the Chapter monthly meeting.

How Are Young Learners Different?

Young learners are different from older learners in three important ways: they are still very much developing physically, cognitively, and emotionally/socially. Teachers must take this into consideration in the planning and execution of young learner lessons. For example, young learners may need assistance in using scissor, in holding a fat crayon, or in making the desired movements to a song because of the limited physical development. They may have difficulty following two-step instructions or discerning abstract concepts because of their cognitive development. And they may have trouble displaying positive behavior in taking turns, showing interest in others, gaining access to groups, coping with rebuffs, or otherwise interacting with others because of their social and emotional development level.

Young learners develop differently, some faster than others, and each young learner does not develop in all three areas at the same rate. Therefore, teachers need to observe each learner to discern how developed they are in each area. The teacher needs to observe them in and out of the classroom, how they interact with, peers, parents, and other teachers; and what their interests are. When learners are interested in learning tasks, they are not disruptive.

Making Input Meaningful

It is very important to ensure that input, the material that young learners hear and read, is meaningful. Before providing aural input, it is helpful to set the stage by providing visual material. For example, before talking about farm animals, pictures of them can be placed on the board. Teachers can also build schema for them by relating the topic to the learner's knowledge and experience. Input needs to be varied: visual, auditory, and tactile. This can be achieved with props, realia, pictures, and music, as well as the teacher's gestures and sounds. The classroom needs to be a language-rich environment. Items around the classroom can be labeled; posters with words can cover the walls; children's books can be made available. Instructions should be modeled; language should accompany teacher actions.

Teaching the Macro-skills

Listening: Listening is the foundation skill. This means that when new material is being introduced to young learners, whether it is new vocabulary or a new structure, it should be introduced aurally first, followed by spoken production. One needs to *hear* a word before they can *say* it. They need to *say* the word before they can *read* it. And they need to *read* the word before they can *write* it. TPR (Total Physical Response) activities are great as listening activities. So are songs and finger-plays, TPR storytelling, TPR drawing, and yes-no-cards for comprehension checks.

Speaking: Speaking is as important as listening to the young learner's overall language development. It is incorrect, though, to think that speaking comes easy for young learners. They do not develop sounds rapidly, so unrealistic expectations should be avoided. Choral response drills work well with young learners, as does using puppets to introduce dialogues. TPR songs and finger-plays and simple chants all work well as speaking activities.

Reading: Reading consists of decoding written letters. This can be very challenging for a learner of English because of there being only 26 letters to represent over 40 sounds. It is essential that learners are not just sounding out but comprehending what they are reading. This can be achieved by introducing and practicing all material orally before learners meet it in reading activities. Phonics is a great technique to get young learners started with reading. Young learners should be doing a lot of reading for pleasure, i.e., extensive reading. Reading for information can gradually be introduced into the young learner reading program.

Writing: Oral skills are refined through writing. Writing is a combination of process and product: gathering ideas, working with them, and producing a final piece of writing. The process approach to writing works well with young learners: prewriting, writing, revising, editing, and publishing. Any genre can be employed, and length can range from one word to a mini-novel.

Gwangju-Jeonnam KOTESOL Dec. Chapter Meeting

- Time: Saturday, December 11, 2010, 2:00 p.m.
- Place: Chosun University, Main Building, 2nd Floor, CU TESOL Room 2123

Schedule

- 2:00 pm: Registration and Welcome
- 2:30 pm: Presentation 1: ***Learning English in the Public School System***
Han Seungwoo & Kim Choyeon (Chosun U., English Dept.)
- 2:55 pm: Presentation 2: ***Learning English from NESTs*** (Native English-Speaking Teachers)
Oh Soohyun (Chosun U., English Dept.)
- 3:20 pm: Refreshment Break
- 3:30 pm: Presentation 3: ***Autonomous Language Learning***
Kim Aron, Sun Hongmin, & Park Hyegyung (Chosun U., English Dept.)
- 3:55 pm: Presentation 4: ***Teaching English as an English Learner***
Ko Eunae (Chosun U., Law Dept.) & Jung Munkyoung (Chosun U., English Ed. Dept.)
- 4:20 pm: Teaching Idea & Activity Share-time: Everyone
Bring your activities/ideas to share with us (about 3-5 min. each)
- 5:00 pm: Announcements
Chapter Matters
Book Drawing
Closing

(Admission is free. Membership is encouraged.)

Upcoming Chapter Events

March 12, 2011.

Chapter Monthly Meeting/Workshop

April 9, 2011.

Chapter Monthly Meeting/Workshop

Upcoming KOTESOL Events

January 8-9, 2011.

KOTESOL National Leadership Retreat

March 16, 2011.

Seoul Chapter 8th Annual Conference

Serving Students Through Technology

Seoul

April 23, 2011.

The 3rd Franklin Global SpellEvent with TESOL

Korea Preliminary Round hosted by KOTESOL

Sookmyung Women's University, Seoul

May 14, 2011.

The 2011 KOTESOL National Conference

Advancing Korean TESOL in the 21st Century

Woosong University, Daejeon

Deadline for Submissions: Dec. 31, 2010.

Upcoming Korea ELT Events

2010 KATE Winter SIG Conference

Korea Association of Teachers of English

January 8, 2011; Konkuk University, Seoul

KAPEE 2011 International Conference

National Curricular Changes in Primary English Education

January 22, 2011; Korea Nat'l Univ. of Ed., Chungbuk

Asia TEFL 2011: The 9th Asia TEFL Intl. Conference

Teaching English in a Changing Asia: Challenges & Directions

July 27-29, 2011; Hotel Seoul Kyoyuk Munhwa Hoegwan

Proposal Submission Deadline: February 10, 2011

For KOTESOL, Korea, and International ELT Events:

<http://www.kotesol.org/?q=Conferences>