



The Gwangju Communicator

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January 2014

Using Higher-Order Thinking Tasks in the Language Classroom

By Jessica Magnusson

When working with young learners in English Conversation classes, I found that they were having trouble when I asked open-ended questions but answered with ease when the questions had either a right or wrong answer. In working with university students, I've often noticed that many of them don't regularly back up their opinions and assumptions with supporting evidence during a debate or discussion. Do my students lack higher-order thinking skills or the ability to develop these skills? I believe that they do not lack these skills. Traditionally, the thought processes of students have not been valued in the classroom, so many find these tasks unfamiliar. With time and encouragement students become more able to express their thoughts and thought processes. I have often been surprised, amazed, fascinated, and moved by the experience, reflection, and ideas that students bring into the classroom when given the opportunity.

Implementing a higher-order thinking task in the classroom can be as simple as giving open-ended discussion questions to students, such as "What is one of your most significant childhood memories? Why is it significant?" Besides discussion questions, there are many other ways to implement higher-order thinking tasks.

Higher-order thinking tasks are tasks that involve increased mental activity. Why is higher-order thinking beneficial to English language learners? For

one thing, these tasks usually generate more language output than tasks that involve less mental power. Also, much research has shown that deep processing leads to increased retention of material.

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THE PRESENTER

Jessica Magnusson has been teaching English in Korea since 2006. She is a member of the Gwangju-Jeonnang Chapter of Korea TESOL and is dedicated to life-long learning and to professional development. She has worked as an EFL instructor and teacher trainer in Korea. Currently she teaches EFL conversation courses, teacher training courses, and special programs at Gwangju National University of Education. Prior to coming to Korea, she worked as an EFL instructor for four years in Gwangdong Province, China. She has earned a Masters in TESOL from the School for International Training (SIT) in Brattleboro, Vermont. Her main areas of interest include getting EFL learners actively involved in discussions and story-based instruction.

(Jessica Magnusson is presenting on critical thinking at the January 11 Gwangju-Jeonnang KOTESOL Chapter meeting at Chosun University.)



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■ 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?

- **Regular 1-Year Membership** (40,000 won).
- **Lifetime Membership** (400,000 won). Student and International Membership options are also available.

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

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

Membership payment may be made by:

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

Higher-Order Thinking Tasks

Jessica Magnusson

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This presentation will explore each of these areas in depth and get participants involved in activities that allow learners to demonstrate and explore critical, logical, reflective, metacognitive, and creative thinking skills. Higher-order thinking tasks for young learners to adults at different levels of language proficiency will be discussed and explored.

The purpose of using tasks that involve higher order thinking skills in the language classroom is not to tell students what to think or how to think. Rather, it is to give students an opportunity to experience different ways of thinking so that they can make informed choices. This presentation will enable you to more effectively incorporate higher-order thinking into your English lesson planning.

Chapter Highlights of 2013



◀ Chapter Conference plenary presentation by Mike Griffin (March).

Nico Lorenzutti presenting at the Mokpo Outreach (May). ▼



▶ Storybook reading presentation by Eul Soon Lee at the June Chapter Meeting.



▲ After-dinner entertainment: Belly-dancing.



▲ Turkey and Filipino cuisine for all.



◀ Year-End Chapter Dinner at the Gwangju International Center.

Gwangju-Jeonnam KOTESOL January Meeting

- Time: Saturday, January 11, 2014, 1:45 p.m.
- Place: Chosun University (Gwangju), Main Building (본관), Room 4211.

■ Schedule

- 1:45 pm:** Sign-in and Meet-and-Greet (Admission is free. Future membership is welcomed.)
- 2:15 - 3:45 pm:** FEATURED PRESENTATION
Using Higher-Order Thinking Tasks in the Language Classroom
 Jessica Magnusson (Gwangju National University of Education)
- 3:00 - 3:15 pm:** Refreshment Break
- 3:45 pm: Swap-Shop Session (Extended)**
 Everyone is invited to Share one of your Teaching Ideas, Classroom Activities, and ELT Games, Books, etc.
 (This month, Beginning-of-School-Year ideas/activities are especially welcome.)
- 4:30 pm:** Announcements / Drawing for Door Prizes / Closing
 After-meeting dinner at a downtown location.

Upcoming Chapter Events

February 15, 2014

Chapter Monthly Meeting, Chosun University
Stand Up and Read: Adding Movement and Excitement to Reading Activities
 Henry Gerlits (JETI)
Games and Activities for Young Learners
 Jacob Boer

March 15, 2014

Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter Annual Conference
 Theme: *Addressing the Multifaceted World of ELT*
 Plenary Session: *The Differentiated Classroom*
 Plenary Speaker: Peadar Callaghan
 (Korea TESOL President)
 Chosun University, Gwangju

Upcoming KOTESOL Events

March 29, 2014

The 11th Annual Seoul KOTESOL Conference
Think Global, Teach Local
 Sookmyung Women's University, Seoul

October 4-5, 2014

KOTESOL International Conference
Embracing Change: Blazing New Frontiers Through ELT
 COEX Convention Center, Seoul

May 31, 2014

KOTESOL National Conference
Change in the Classroom: Principled Pragmatism
 Kyungpook National University, Daegu

Upcoming Korea ELT Events

2014 KAPEE International Conference

Consulting in Primary English Education
 January 18, 2014; Chuncheon National University
 of Education, Chuncheon, Gangwon-do

2014 KATE International Conference

Making Connections in ELT: Form, Meaning, and Function
 July 4-5, 2014; Seoul Nat. University, Seoul