

Effort and Improvement-Based Grading for General Skills Language Classes

By Daniel Corks

Students often come into a general skills language class with a wide range of ability levels among them, and it is our task to help all of those students improve their language proficiency. When creating a marking system to assess these students, we want to be fair and make sure everyone has a chance to excel in our class. But, the most straightforward thing to evaluate – ability – is often the least fair in this situation, and we can end up rewarding students for ability they had before ever enrolling in our class. This can easily result in discouraging lower-ability students who know they can't realistically catch up to the higher-ability students within the span of just a few months. Such assessment doesn't help the high-ability students either as it doesn't encourage them to improve.

An assessment system that rewards effort and improvement over ability can solve this problem by giving low-level students a fair chance of receiving a high grade in the class (important in situations where there's a limit on how many students can receive an A, as is the case in many university settings). More importantly, however, it encourages all students to cultivate and demonstrate the skills and habits of effective language learners that will help them continue to develop their ability after the course is finished.

This presentation will briefly expand on the rationale for this type of assessment system, and then present a series of specific ideas for assessing both effort and improvement, including potential problems with some approaches. There will be ample time for group discussion, and participants are encouraged to bring their own suggestions to share with the audience.

THE PRESENTER

Daniel Corks is a graduate of Sogang University in Seoul, with a master's degree in applied linguistics



in the field of second language acquisition. He is currently an assistant professor at Dongshin University in Naju, Jeonnang, and a member of the Gwangju-Jeonnang Chapter and has most recently presented at the AsiaTEFL International

Conference in Nanjing.

(Daniel will be leading the workshop on effort and improvement-based grading for general skills language classes at the February 13th Gwangju-Jeonnang Chapter meeting at Gwangju Natl. University of Education.)

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



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Dept. of English Lang. & Literature
Email: jocelynmnu@yahoo.com



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Gwangju
Email: spiritmonger@naver.com



Officer-at-Large

Seongsuk Yun
Ojeong English Center
Email: yssdemi@hanmail.net



Chapter Email Address

gwangju_kotesol@yahoo.com
gwangju@koreatesol.org

Chapter Website

http://koreatesol.org/gwangju



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Creating an Edge as an ELT Professional in Korea

By Nancy Harcar

In the rush and confusion of moving to a new country, starting a new job, and getting acclimated to a new culture, there are so many new things to learn; it can be overwhelming and all-consuming. Especially in the harried beginnings of an overseas move, the important process of mindfully planning one's career and other further development often falls by the wayside. The habit of dealing with the day-to-day challenges of living and working in a different culture can too easily remain our only focus for too long. The reality is that this pause in career development can seriously hamper your future career progression. By the time you decide you want to move up in your teaching career, move on to another foreign country, or go back to your passport country, you may have spent years just spinning your wheels with no new career highlights to speak of in an interview. You may find yourself stuck and having to start over.

Professional Development

This presentation will introduce a number of different topics related to developing yourself personally and professionally while living and working overseas. It will outline some key points of the presenter's own personal and professional development since coming to Korea to become a middle school teacher, and the progression to her current position as an assistant professor of English at a local university. She will describe the conscious career decisions that helped to prepare her for her future, and also some personal community involvement activities that were a surprising fit with her overall professional development narrative. Nancy will describe numerous local, overseas, and online opportunities for involvement, growth, and education, while suggesting some tips to keep an

eye on relevance for future job considerations in other countries and repatriation back home. If you are looking to refresh your resume, this talk is a must. Topics covered will include language development, various avenues of furthering your education and acquiring certifications, accepting leadership positions, membership in professional clubs, and more.

THE PRESENTER

Nancy M. Harcar has been teaching English in Korea since 2009. She currently works at Kwangju Women's University in the International Education Center, where she is an assistant professor of English. She has been quite active in the Gwangju community as a fundraiser, volunteer, and event organizer. Nancy has



recently been accepted to the U.S. Department of State 2016-17 English Language Fellow Program, and is currently awaiting the news of her country and project assignment.

(Nancy will be leading the session on professional development at the February 13th Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter meeting at Gwangju Natl. University of Education.)

*Please join us for KOTESOL's national conference on May 28th at Sangji University in Wonju, Gangwon-do
For more information about the conference, go to koreatesol.org
We hope to see you there!*

Gwangju-Jeonnam KOTESOL February Chapter Meeting

- Time: Saturday, February 13th, 2016, 1:45–5:00 p.m.
- Place: Gwangju Natl. University of Ed., Teacher Training Bldg., Room 811 (1st Floor)

■ Schedule

Chapter Meeting: Main Session

- 1:45 pm:** Sign-in and Meet-and-Greet (Admission is free. Future membership is welcomed.)
- 2:00 – 2:50 pm: PRESENTATION 1**
Effort and Improvement-Based Grading for General Skills Language Classes
 Daniel Corks (Dongshin University)
- 2:50 – 3:10 pm:** Refreshment Break
- 3:10 – 4:00 pm: PRESENTATION 2**
Creating an Edge as an ELT Professional in Korea
 Nancy Harcar (Kwangju Women's University)
- 4:10 – 4:45 pm: SwapShop Session (Open to All)**
 Everyone is encouraged to share their Teaching Discoveries and Secrets with the group. Share your Teaching Tips, Ideas, Classroom Activities, Games, ELT Books, or other Teaching Wisdom. (Handouts welcomed.)
- 4:45 pm:** Announcements / Drawing for Door Prizes / Closing

After-Meeting Dinner at The First Alleyway, downtown Gwangju

Upcoming Chapter Events

March 12, 2016. Annual Chapter Conference
SERVICE: A Tradition in Teaching
 Plenary Speaker: Robert Dickey, JD
Four Strands of Parallel Sessions
 Service / Social Justice / General ELT / Research

Pre-conference Reflective Practice session
 Presenters from Japan & Indonesia

April 12, 2016. Monthly Chapter Meeting

May 14, 2016. Monthly Chapter Meeting

Upcoming KOTESOL Events

2016 KOTESOL National Conference
Our Provinces
 May 28, 2016; Sangji Univ., Wonju, Gangwon

KOTESOL 2016 International Conference
Shaping the Future: With 21st Century Skills
 October 15-16, 2016; SMU, Seoul

Reflective Practice SIG Morning Meeting

There will be no RP SIG meeting this month. The next meeting will be a special session before the Chapter Conference. See you in March!