

Curtis Kelly



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About the speaker

Curtis Kelly (EdD), is a popular speaker and writer as well as Professor of English at Kansai University in Japan. He has spent most of his life developing learner-centered approaches for “3L” English students, students with low ability, low confidence, and low motivation. Dr. Kelly believes that learners should be pulled into English study rather than pushed. He has written over 30 books, including *Significant Scribbles* (Longman), *Active Skills for Communication* (Cengage), and *Writing from Within* (Cambridge). He has also made over 300 presentations on adult education, motivation, brain science, and teaching writing.

About the Presentations

Solving Classroom Problems with Neuroscience

My own classroom problems have been eager students whose learning does not hold, uneasier students who don't even try, and what I call 3Ls: students with Low ability, Low confidence, and Low motivation. Educational psychology provided some solutions for these problems, but neuroscience provides the reasons. The presenter will describe typical classroom problems like these and some of the amazing, and often unexpected, insights on them coming out of neuroscience. Neuroscience has given us a new understanding of why there are a multitude of critical ages, why some learning sticks, how emotion shapes memory, and why classroom teaching should be more like computer games.

How Preschool Might Save the World: Executive Function and Success

A major study found that under-privileged children put in preschools made immediate gains in IQ, but more surprisingly, kept them into adulthood. Another study found the claims for IQ gain were questionable, but found that other merits were gained, such as self-control and cognitive flexibility. Such children were found to be more likely to have better incomes later, to have fewer teen pregnancies, and to be less involved in crime. So, preschool education has a huge impact on the lives of children, and might be the answer to many societal problems, but why does this happen? The reasons lie in the form of interaction provided and how executive function is developed. Executive function takes place in the pre-frontal cortex and includes: a) inhibitory control, b) working memory, c) attention focusing and shifting, and d) cognitive flexibility. Can executive function be improved through training? Scientific evidence with various degrees of dependability shows that certain means of instruction, from computer software, to Vygotsky's “Tools of the Mind” to taekwondo, have a positive effect on EF. Let's examine how these approaches work, what benefits they bring, and how we can incorporate them in our own classrooms.

I deal in drugs! (Pecha Kucha)

“I confess. I am an English teacher that deals in drugs. I sell them to my students all the time, though maybe I am the only person that really knows, and now I want to sell them to you. I have one to offer you that works just like every other illegal drug on the market, but it's more addictive. People have lied, stolen, and killed to get it. What will you do to get it?”