The Joy of Drilling
Rachael Roberts

Autonomous Language Learning
Gavin Farrell

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Contact Us:
tecfeedback@gmail.com

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To promote scholarship, disseminate information, and facilitate cross-cultural understanding among persons concerned with the teaching and learning of English in Korea.

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Editor's Welcome

Dear Reader,

Spring is here in Korea, and by the time you read this, many of you will be settled into the new semester. It's a great time here, with many teachers getting to know new students and continuing to teach old ones. Spring time also means that KOTESOL's National Conference is just around the corner. Smaller than the International Conference, but no less important, the national conference is a great way to meet fellow teachers. This year it will be held near Cheongju, and they got a great plenary speaker to attend. Dr. Keith Folse wowed the crowd at the International Conference in 2011, and now he'll be the main speaker in this year. You'll definitely want to check out our full page ad on pg. 21 for more information.

In our spring issue we have a diverse group of articles. We bring you articles on autonomous learning by Gavin Farrell and the joy of drilling from Rachael Roberts. If you are interested in improving your teaching career, we have a great article by Justin Trullinger that tells you what need to know about TEFL/TESOL training courses. We also have a feature from Nikki Webster about something you don't hear much about in Korea-substitute teaching. In this issue's KOTESOL Views, our Nico Lorenzutti tells about his time as a teacher trainer. If you enjoyed our cover photo, then you'll be happy to know that it was taken by a KOTESOL member! If you are interested in photography, and seeing one of your photos on the cover, email me at kotesolteceditor@gmail.com

Sincerely,

William Mulligan

William Mulligan

Editor-in-Chief

In the next issue of The English Connection:

The return of our comparison series

Working with a class leader

KOTESOL Views

Plus much more!

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The Joy of Drilling
Rachael Roberts shows us how to look at drilling positively

Some definitions of drilling….
To make a hole using a special tool or machine
A method of military training that involves practicing things such as marching or holding weapons.
A way of training people so they know what to do when there's an emergency.
To make someone learn or understand something by telling them about it, or making them practice it many times.

 None of these sound particularly joyful, do they?

In fact, drilling as an English language teaching technique came about through the so-called 'Army Method', an early audio-lingual approach, developed to train soldiers being dropped into enemy territory in World War II.

The approach was based on the structuralist idea of language: That language is a series of patterns or building blocks, and that to learn a language means learning the patterns and then using them with different vocabulary.

Typical audio-lingual drills got students repeating and transforming patterns like these:
T: I went to the theater
SS: I went to the theater
T: cinema
SS: I went to the cinema
T: We
SS We went to the cinema
And so on…

The audio-lingual approach was also firmly based on behaviorist psychology; the idea that we learn through a process of stimulus- response and reinforcement.
E.g.
STIMULUS: I went to the theater
RESPONSE: I went to the theater
REINFORCEMENT: Good!

Not sounding very joyful so far? Perhaps you'd agree with Scott Thornbury when he says:

"*There's something slightly unsavory about drilling – like hairspray. Or bicycle clips. Drilling belongs to another era.*" (Scott Thornbury)

Drilling has certainly fallen out of fashion, and yet it has never really gone away. Plenty of teachers continue to use it very successfully, and plenty of students are grateful that they do. It's just that these days we might call it "quality repetition", "re-signification of utterances", or "creative repetition" (Jeremy Harmer).

Scott Thornbury in his book, *How to Teach Speaking*, describes three steps to fluency, which are actually fairly close cousins of the old PPP (presentation, practice, production). There are some key differences though :

1. Awareness: Rather than simply presenting students with language, this takes much more account of the fact that students have to be ready to NOTICE language. Our job is to give them the opportunities to do this, to draw their attention to it.

2. Appropriation: This is equivalent to the old controlled practice stage, but it's more.   Appropriation is about taking something and making it your own. So it isn't just mindless practice of someone else's words, but working with the language so that it becomes part of your personal store.

3. Autonomy: Being able to use language confidently and fluently. (Scott Thornbury)

Drilling is one way, and an extremely effective one, of appropriating language and, eventually, being able to use it autonomously. Learning a language is a practical skill, not a body of theory. With any practical skill, we need practice- and lots of it.

So, is there a different way of looking at drilling, that will position it as a step towards fluency? Scott Thornbury thinks so. In his blog post, D is for Drilling (1), he makes the point that " ..drills are fluency practice (e.g. a form of rehearsal) and not – as was traditionally argued – a form of accuracy practice. In this sense they can help automate formulaic language ("chunks"), creating the 'islands of reliability' that speakers need in order to achieve pause-free speech."

Native speakers are fluent mainly because they don't have to consciously produce each word as they speak. They have a huge store of "chunks" of language, which can be strung together fluently. Drilling can definitely help to develop this kind of store.

It's also invaluable in just "getting your tongue round" language. Teachers, especially native speakers, can under-estimate how important this is. It seems easy to them, but, particularly for lower level learners, being able to produce chunks of language fluently is quite a challenge, and drilling provides very necessary support in getting the phrases to flow in a connected way, with appropriate intonation.

Although teachers often feel a bit self-conscious about drilling, it does need to be done with some confidence and "oomph" to really work. Some tips:

• Make it meaningful (don't drill something students don't understand)
• Make it clear whether students should be speaking or listening to you
• Provide a clear and natural model
• Keep the group together
• Use short phrases (especially with beginners)
• Back-chain where necessary

By a clear and natural model, I mean that, while you might slow down your speech slightly, you should make sure that you are not getting them to repeat something which sounds unnatural. Try to keep all the features of connected speech, so that 'Would you like a drink?' sounds like "woodjalaika" not "Would....you....like....a..."

Back chaining is a really useful technique when students are struggling to get their tongues round something. Basically you start with the last sound and get them to repeat it, then the penultimate sound and the last sound and so on. So, for 'Would you like a...?' you might say:
T: Laika
SS Laika
T: Jalaika
SS Jalaika
T: Woodjalaika
SS Woodjalaika

As well as repeating after the teacher, students can also practice repeating in pairs, or there are different formations such as an onion drill (students in two concentric circles, facing each other, repeat a short dialogue, then the outside students move to the right and repeat again), and shuffle drills (two parallel lines facing each other, this time the top student peels off and goes to the end and everyone shuffles up to provide new partners).

Students can also repeat in different ways. A mumble drill is where they mumble the words to themselves (less potential embarrassment). Alternatively, you could do a shouting drill where they get louder and louder (not if there's an exam going on next door!). You can ask them to repeat using different emotions (for example, say it lovingly, then say it angrily).

You can also play drilling games. For items of vocabulary, sit students in a circle. They have to pass around pictures of the items, saying the word as they pass. This sounds easy, but you can build it up so that there are lots of pictures going in different directions.

 There are also lots of ways to use drilling to work on longer monologues, dialogues or narratives.

A golden oldie is Mario Rinvolucri's The Coke Machine.

"You're standing in front of the Coke machine. Put your hand in your back pocket. Take out three 50p coins. Put them in one by one. You hear the machine click. Choose your drink and press the button. You hear a terrible groan from the machine. Clunk! A can drops down. Pick it up. Open the can. *I*t squirts Coke in your face. Take a tissue out of your pocket. Rub your eye. Lick your lips. Take a sip. Burp! "*(4)*

First read the text right through, just to orientate students. Then read again and elicit a movement for each line. Get all the students doing it. Then read a third time with all the students doing all the movements. You can make this stage

as fast as possible if you want a bit of fun. Then, give the students a version of the text with most of it missing. They have to work together to recreate the text.

If your students ever need to speak on the phone in English, drilling is a great way to help them. Pick up your phone and pretend to make a call appropriate fo your students.

For example:

"Hello, can I speak to the manager please?"

Then elicit what the receptionist might say. When you have agreed as a class, drill both lines of the dialogue. Then elicit and repeat the rest of the dialogue, going back to the beginning each time.

When they are confident with the dialogue, you can start to throw some spanners in the works. Perhaps the receptionist says something unintelligible and they have to ask her to repeat it, or perhaps they have to leave a message. This will help to prepare them for the unpredictable nature of phone calls, and indeed, any communication.

Since 1989 Rachael Roberts has worked as an ELT teacher, teacher trainer and materials writer, in the UK and abroad. Currently she spends most of her time writing, but still teaches whenever she gets the opportunity! She also spends quite a bit of time on Twitter(@teflerinha) and writing blog articles (www.elt-resourceful.com.*)*

You can also check out The English Connection online!

Go to Koreatesol.org and click on the publications tab, and then choose The English Connection!

You can also see back issues as well.

The English Connection online at Koreatesol.org

Autonomous Language Learning
Gavin Farrell explores this aspect of teaching

A popular metaphor for teaching in the West which is increasingly gaining traction here in Korea is "Teaching is not the filling of a glass, but rather the lighting of a fire." The first perspective implies that the role of teacher is one of explainer, a giver of knowledge, and that students are passive and not in control. In Korean schools and universities, this means listening to lectures. The latter perspective means that teachers light the fire and the students themselves are in charge of what happens next. In this latter perception, instead of passive recipients of knowledge, students are (or become) autonomous learners.

Central to autonomous learning, and to best teaching practices also, is the idea of student-centeredness. The teacher's responsibility is not so much to teach and explain as it is to assist students in learning. Popular terms for the teacher are guide, facilitator, coach, conductor (perhaps inferring arrogance to some), or even the inimitable "teacher as gardener."

How can we define autonomous learning?

So, what is autonomous learning? The central idea behind autonomous learning is that students "take charge of [their] own learning." (Holec, 1981)
The essential element of autonomous learning is that it is characteristic of students (though developing teacher autonomy is another area of research growth). According to Jacobs and Farrell, "The concept of learner autonomy ... emphasizes the role of the learner rather than the role of the teacher. It focuses on the process rather than the product and encourages students to develop their own purposes for learning and to see learning as a lifelong process." (2001 , p. 6) Autonomous learning is a productive tool for students to use and for teachers to know.

What can autonomous learners do?

There are seven main characteristics and practices associated with autonomous language learning. These characteristics and practices are not commonly linked with students. Omaggio (1978) lists the seven characteristics that define autonomous learners:
1.) They have an awareness of their own learning styles and strategies;
2.) They take an active role in learning tasks given to them;
3.) They are willing to take risks, that is, communicate in the L2 without fear of mistakes;
4.) They are good at guessing meaning from context;
5.) they pay attention to form as well as to content, critically examining both accuracy and appropriacy;
6.) They develop the L2 as a separate reference system (i.e. think and use English in English, not relying heavily on translation tools) and are able to reject and revise language rules as they see fit; and
7.) They are outgoing and have tolerance for the target language (as cited in Wenden, 1998)

Once autonomy has been developed, students can employ it in at least five ways:
- For situations in which they study completely on their own;
- As a set of skills that can be learned and used in self-directed learning;
- As a means of navigating a constraining educational system;
- To take responsibility for their own learning; and
- For the right to decide the direction of their own learning (Benson and Voller, 1997)

Autonomous learning skills can be used in any class. A good autonomous learner is a life-long learner: Persistent, resourceful, and likely to take initiative.

Can all students become autonomous learners?

All students are able to learn autonomously with guidance and training, though some of the higher order cognitive skills associated with autonomy are more appropriate for older and advanced English learners. Hagwons and after school programs do not always have good reputations, but good learning can take place there due to the freedom allowed to teachers and students. This is in contrast to the severe limitations imposed on Korean middle and high students who must take declarative knowledge tests. Korean public education is one of the systems where "teachers have little autonomy, as the system remains centralized, competitive and bureaucratic," thereby discouraging "effective teaching, and focus[ing] on lower order learning opportunities," such as memorization. (Raya, 2007, p. 32; cf. Farrell, 2010)

This article is aimed at putting autonomous learning strategies and practices into use with university students, looking at how educators can develop an awareness in their students so that they themselves can be in control of their own learning.

Another reason for focusing on the university level is because it is broadly agreed that many younger students and those fresh to English "lack the capacity to direct their own foreign language learning, at least in the early stages" (Benson & Huang, 2008, p. 425) First year Korean university students usually have little to no experience with autonomous learning, thus putting more responsibility on their instructors and professors to instill this valuable skill.

How can we promote autonomy in our students?

Autonomous learning as a field of study started in Western culture (Palfreyman, 2003), but has been successfully transferred to Asian countries. (see, for example, Aoki, 2001; Limuro & Berger 2010; Jiao, 2005; Lee, 1998) When autonomous learning is not native to the culture, autonomous concepts and strategies should be introduced methodically and slowly and be goal-oriented (Little, 2003;

Gremmo & Riley, 1995) It is crucial that an "autonomous learner is stimulated to evolve an awareness of the aims and processes of learning and is capable of critical reflection." (Dam, 1995 , p. 2) Building and developing awareness of their own learning is usually a new experience for students which may take time to develop. (Candy, 1991, as cited in Thanasoulas, 2000)

A maxim in student-centered education is to "meet the students where they're at." This is certainly the case for autonomous learning, where the teacher needs to respond to student work on a case-by-case basis. Strategies for autonomous learning must be incorporated into the curriculum if students are to become successfully autonomous learners (Wenden, 1991). Fenner (2000) suggests including students in the decision making process in areas such as topic choice, genres, degrees of difficulty, and tasks. Al-Shaqsi and Region (2009) propose encouraging students to achieve autonomy by practicing English with tourists, doing extensive reading, and trying to get their work published in a magazine or newspaper. Educators interested in including more autonomous learning in their classrooms can easily find many sources and methods online (Google Scholar is a good resource for this).

It is beneficial to students for a university to provide a Self Access Centre (SAC), or a library, with a large selection of English books and other English content easily available, and at various levels. SACs have been shown to be a productive tool for learners. Universities that have libraries or SACs with a significant selection of books (for Extensive Reading), videos, programs that play the news, and other media, provide their students with a valuable chance to learn autonomously and at their own pace.

One interesting tool available at major bookstores in Seoul is software for CNN stories with transcripts and a function to alter the speed of play. [Debates on slowed or "unnatural" or inauthentic speech aside, Korean students appreciate the ability to slow down speech when practicing listening. In addition, students could be asked to download and play video and audio files using VLC Media Player, which also has the ability to slow down speech.]

So why include autonomy?

Why teach autonomous learning practices and strategies? Because students taking more responsibility for their learning can:
- Learn more effectively because they learn what they want to learn;
- Carry on learning outside the classroom; and
- Transfer learning strategies to other subjects (Ellis and Sinclair, 1989).

In addition, autonomous learning increases learner motivation, which leads to more effective learning; it affords learners with more chances to communicate in English; it addresses the individual needs of students at varying levels; and it has a lasting influence. (Jiao, 2005)

Autonomous language learning in Korea

There is a dearth of research in Korea on autonomous language learning though some studies have found that strategies and autonomy can be successfully learned at the university level. Park (1997) found a linear relationship between teaching learning strategies and TOEFL scores. Another study by Jang et al. (2009) showed that autonomy was associated with positive learning experiences and in fact students found having autonomy to be "highly satisfying" (p. 656). A comprehensive profile of language learners in Korea (Finch, 2008) found that students were increasingly comfortable in the classroom when aware of certain strategies. They demonstrated an "ability to reflect meaningfully and autonomously" (p. 216). Lee (2005) conducted a study of self-assessment with interpretation students in Korea. In this study students indicated a positive learning experience with self-assessment, a key component of autonomous learning. Notably, Lee (2005) also states that it is important to find different ways of assessing autonomous learning.

Conclusion

A short paper like this cannot address all the issues related to autonomous learning. For example, the role of the teacher in encouraging autonomous language learning has been described only briefly above, which is a possible opening for researchers. The need for empirical research on autonomous language learning in Korea is great.

Gavin teaches at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in the linguistics and TESOL certificate departments. He is a teacher trainer for World Learning/ SIT in Vermont, and the Cambridge CELTA. His interests include immersion education, lexicography, and autonomous learning.

Book Review

Plagiarism, Intellectual Property and the Teaching of L2 Writing

Author: Joel Bloch
Publisher: Multilingual Media Matters

Cut. Paste. Share. Advances in technology have made it easier than ever to access, repackage and redistribute intellectual property. Many of our students have figured this out, and so have we. What teachers and students need to figure out is a legitimate way of balancing respect for another person's work with creative "remixing." Many writing teachers are familiar with the plagiarism that crops up in their students' writing and have tried explaining the issue in class, with varying degrees of success. Other intellectual property issues spring up in the teachers' own work when (and if) they ask themselves, "Is it okay to download this video for my class?" or "Can I paste this image in my Powerpoint slide?" The same sorts of questions will appear increasingly in relation to student work if courses aim for digital literacy and students experiment with new forms of media.

In Plagiarism, Intellectual Property, and the Teaching of L2 Writing, Joel Bloch attempts to help teachers of writing to understand these issues as they relate to second language learners. He points out that both plagiarism and abuse of intellectual property are often discussed with the same morally-charged metaphors, such as "stealing" and "piracy." As these metaphors indicate, these issues are often seen as crimes worthy of punishment, yet students, teachers and administrators may have difficulty defining the variety of behaviors that fall into these categories and then responding in appropriate ways. For example, students who are taught to memorize lexical bundles may have trouble distinguishing which strings of words require attribution and which don't. Teachers and administrators may wonder how to respond fairly to student A, who omits quotation marks and a citation for a single sentence, and student B, who constructs an entire paragraph by weaving together phrases from different cited sources. Further complicating these issues, the Internet has introduced new types of texts, along with new ways of accessing and appropriating sound and images along with written content.

To bring some clarity to these issues, Bloch places them in historical and cross-cultural contexts. He demonstrates that concepts of plagiarism and intellectual property are not static: They vary across time and across (or within) cultures. The right of authors/publishers to limit access to intellectual property has been balanced in different ways with the right of consumers to gain access to intellectual property. By portraying these issues as a balance of competing rights that change over time in response to the needs of communities, he allows teachers of writing to step away from a morally-charged discourse about these issues.

The morally-charged discourse itself can be counterproductive. When teachers and administrators see plagiarism and misuse of intellectual property as "theft," they may respond in a legalistic rather than a pedagogical way, doling out punishments rather than helping students gain the skills necessary to avoid infractions of rules. Instead of the "theft" metaphor, Bloch favors the "game" metaphor. As in a game, when people use intellectual property, there are rules for fair play and penalties for infringement of these rules. The rules may differ from one literary genre to the next just as they might differ from football to soccer. No one can participate in the game unless they learn the rules. Students are more likely to follow the rules if they see themselves as "players" in the game; i.e. they see themselves as creators of intellectual property who also have rights.

The last section of the book describes a content-based writing course that Bloch designed in order to raise awareness among his ESL students of copyright and intellectual property issues. Although many writing teachers would find it difficult to devote an entire semester (as Bloch did) to the exploration of these issues, some of his techniques could be helpful for teachers who, like Bloch, want to help students explore these issues in a safe context. Over the course the students read and summarize articles and stories about plagiarism. They are encouraged to appropriately cite one another's blogs as they build arguments in favor of certain approaches toward plagiarism. The students develop mixed-media digital stories, which provide them opportunities to practice proper attribution--not only for written work but also for images and sound. The students finish the project by applying for a Creative Commons License to share their work.

Bloch takes a constructive approach to both plagiarism and broader intellectual property issues. By encouraging students to express their own ideas, and to practice citing others in support of their arguments, he helps them to develop the skills they need to avoid plagiarism. By guiding students through the process of not only using and attributing intellectual property but also deciding how their own work may be used, he helps students to understand intellectual property issues. This positive focus on skill development, as opposed to a punitive focus on rule infringement, has the potential to help English writing students become more proficient users of intellectual property.

Heidi Vande Voort Nam (MA TEFL/TESL) teaches in the Department of English Education at Chongshin University. She is a KTT presenter, and she facilitates KOTESOL's Christian Teachers SIG.

TEFL/TESOL Qualification Preferred
Justin Trullinger shares some thoughts on TESOL certificates

I've been a teacher for 13 years, and a teacher trainer for the last 7. I've worked in several countries, trained English teachers in a wide variety of settings, and have been through more one-month intensive TESOL certificate courses than may be strictly healthy. So, when friends are considering pursuing a certificate in teaching EFL/ESL they often ask me which one I would suggest. The question is becoming more and more common. As I look at advertisements for teaching jobs in Korea, I see that nowadays most of them suggest that a TEFL/TESOL qualification is desirable or at least a benefit, even if it is not required. But which qualification? Obviously, every situation is different, and there isn't any one answer. If you're considering getting a certificate and all of this is new to you, it can be hard to arrive at any answer. This article is an attempt to suggest some factors to consider in deciding which TEFL/TESOL certificate might be best for you.

Reasons to do a TESOL certificate

To choose the best certificate course for you, it's important to think about why you're considering doing a course. People pursue teaching qualifications for many different reasons, and there isn't any one "best course."   The best course is the one that helps you meet your own goals as a teacher. Some people are taking a course to help them find a job. Some are already working, but will get a pay increase for having a certificate. Some are looking to improve their skills in the classroom. Some want something that will help them in their job next year, and some want a course that they can get credit for in graduate school later on. Obviously, not everybody needs the same course.

A note on acronyms

As you investigate an English teaching qualification, it sometimes feels like you're swimming in alphabet soup. TEFL, TESOL, EFL, ESL, ELT, ESOL...where does it end, and what does it all mean? If I tried to address all the many acronyms that plague the English teaching profession, this article would not fit in this magazine. For our purposes here, TESOL and TEFL are treated as synonyms, as they are in common use. TEFL stands for Teaching English as a Foreign Language; TESOL, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. Most people wouldn't see a significant difference between these two phrases.

It's important to know that none of these acronyms is a trademark. Neither one is owned or controlled by any accrediting body, or guarantees course quality. If I want to start a course tomorrow called "Justin's EZ kik-butt TEFL certificate course," which you can complete in an afternoon for $19.95, nothing is stopping me. Only a few of the acronyms used in conjunction with short-course English teaching qualifications are actually tied to a specific course or organization (more on these later), so don't let an impressive sounding acronym sell you a course. It doesn't necessarily mean anything.

A word on accreditation

A friend of mine recently enrolled in an online TEFL certificate course for 125 pounds, which she clearly thought was quite a bargain. She asked me what I thought of it, and I briefly outlined some of the content of this article. She might have felt a little defensive, and retorted "It's accredited." No doubt it is, but accreditation doesn't mean what many people think that it does. "Accredited," in the US, the UK, or practically any country, usually means "evaluated and accepted as being up to a certain standard by government appointed educational authorities."

When we deal with short-course English teaching qualifications, though, this usually isn't the case. After all, if you're offering a certificate course in Thailand and most of your graduates go on to work in Korea, while your course may be accredited by someone, nobody will really be held accountable if it fails to meet any particular standard. In the world of TEFL/TESOL certificate courses, "accredited" too often means "accredited by an impressive sounding organisation we founded ourselves for the purposes of accrediting this course" or "accredited by a group of course providers just like us." Sometimes it's even "accredited by a completely irrelevant organisation." At least one US TEFL certificate course provider I know of lists "accreditation" by the Better Business Bureau on their website. Unfortunately, this is not a joke. I respect the work done by the BBB, but they aren't interested in academic standards. So, "accreditation" is no shortcut to knowing if a course is good or not.

Online courses

When I started teaching English overseas around 14 years ago, online teaching qualifications were practically unheard of. Within a few years, though, they became very popular. After all, they are cheaper, more convenient, and easier to take than a course with the same acronym that you have to attend classes for. After just a few more years, though, there was a backlash against these certificates in some schools and some geographical regions. With no observed practice teaching, many question how much practical value these certificates can really have. In many parts of the world where English is taught, an online qualification simply is not accepted as being a qualification at all.

 If you're considering an online certificate, you need to be honest with yourself about your reasons. These courses are definitely cheaper, and much more convenient, than travelling to a city with a good on-site course. You don't have to take time off work, or attend classes. If you just want "any TEFL certificate," in order to receive a pay increase at work, an online certificate might be enough. But be sure to check with your employer before you fork over your cash!

On-Site Courses

These courses are usually offered in a four-week intensive or longer extensive format. They are notoriously labor intensive. I have taught on a lot of on-site four week intensive certificate courses, and sometimes refer to it like this: I ruin your life for four weeks, and at the end, you will be able to plan, teach, and analyze an English class.

While onsite courses are generally quite a bit more expensive than online courses, you also get a lot more for your money. You have real face-to-face interactions with real trainers, and you get to know your peers. Most importantly, you also get to teach real English learners, and have trainers observe you and offer feedback.

Face-to-face courses like this clearly have the potential to offer you more if you are seriously looking to improve yourself as a teacher. They're also probably a better idea than online courses if you think you may be changing jobs or countries at some point in the future, because an online course may be okay with your current employer, but you don't know about the next one.

The Name Brand Courses

In the world of short-course English teaching qualifications, there are a few big names. They include CELTA, (Cambridge's Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults), as well as Trinity TESOL, and SIT TESOL. These courses are the best-known English teaching certificate qualifications on the market, and they bring some advantages that other less well-known certificates don't offer. Course instructors are trained and licensed through the accrediting organisation, so you know that they have a high level of experience and training. University credit is often available for these courses; many universities have programs allowing these certificates to be taken as part of undergraduate or master's degrees. They are also well enough known that changing markets, whether to a different job or a different continent, is not usually a problem.

These benefits come with a cost, however. These courses are generally somewhat more expensive than other on-site courses, and many participants report them to be more challenging. To get the potential benefits of these courses, you have to be willing to put in your time and effort. Remember, if a course is serious about offering a meaningful qualification, it is always possible to fail the course!

An online course may be quickest, cheapest, and easiest to take, but the benefits may not last as long as an onsite program . . .

The Final Word

In closing, I'd like to thank you for reading this far, and for thoughtfully considering which English teaching certificate will work for you. Given the number of courses there are to choose from, and the amount of sometimes conflicting information there is out there, this shouldn't be an especially easy or quick decision. You won't regret thoroughly researching any course that you're considering. An online course may be the quickest, cheapest, and easiest to take, but the benefits may not last as long as an onsite program that requires more commitment of time, resources, and effort on your part.

I'd also like to point out that, although you may be new to the world of TEFL/TESOL certificates, a lot of the age-old wisdom you've heard in other parts of life apply here; things like "You get what you pay for," "There's no such thing as a free lunch," and of course "If it sounds too good to be true, it is."

Justin Trullinger, an English teacher and teacher trainer, recently left Korea after 3 years. Justin is a licensed World Learning/SIT TESOL trainer and trainer of trainers. He just returned to Ecuador where he divides his time between his new bookstore (www.confederatebooks.com) and his newish daughter.

Cheongju will be the place to be for the KOTESOL National Conference this May 25th!

We hope to see you there!

Making Conversation Classes More Practical
John Steele gives some practical tips for conversation classes

Every spring I teach "Interview Skills" to my students at Chung-Ang University in Seoul. One of the underlying themes of the class that I stress and want the students to take away is the importance of tailoring in résumé writing and interview preparation. I teach them that making one general résumé to send to a number of companies, or preparing the same way for interviews at different companies is not effective when approaching the job search process. Instead, applicants should consider what each company is looking for in a new employee, and match, tailor, and present their prior experiences in a way that will highlight the skills desired by the employer. I then point out that tailoring will play an important role in their future jobs, as most workers need to tailor their work -their projects and presentations-to the guidelines set forth by their supervisors and clients.

A couple of weeks into the semester, the students are put to the test to see if they have started to grasp this concept. Another professor in my department, who teaches "Academic and Career Writing," and I, both assign a résumé assignment at about the same time. He requires that the students develop a functional résumé, whereas I ask for a chronological résumé. Not only do they have to tailor their résumés to the jobs that they are "applying for" (they also have to submit a copy of the job advertisement), but they have to tailor it to the guidelines of the instructor.

The reason for sharing this is that just as tailoring is critical for students, job applicants and workers in a variety of fields, I think it is crucial that we, as educators, tailor our classes to the styles and needs of our students. Obviously, in classes such as "Interview Skills," "Presentation Skills," or a paragraph or essay writing class, when teaching an unambiguous and practical skill, the direction can be less complicated for the instructor. However, in a broadly titled class such as "English Conversation", which many instructors teach at the university level, finding that focus, and, more importantly, imparting the usefulness of the content to the students, can be more of a struggle. Consider a possible goal of an "Interview Skills" class:

a) Build student confidence and practice structure in answering interview questions

In contrast, a typical goal for an "English Conversation" class might be:

a) Build student confidence in English conversation

In most cases there will be more than one goal for these classes, but contemplate the difference in scope between the specific "building confidence in answering interview questions" versus the vague "building confidence in English conversation," especially as it pertains to course design and preparation. That difference has always been quite daunting for me.

In addition, many teachers in this situation might feel shackled by the standardization of the program they are working in, which might limit their autonomy in curriculum design. Having taught in several of these programs over the years, each with a certain level of standardization, I have realized that the purpose of the standardization was to give direction in *what* to teach, not *how* to teach it. I did not recognize this difference during my first years as a teacher, and I encourage those that teach these classes to consider this. In this article I hope to offer some tips on how to find that focus for these broadly titled classes, and how to tailor activities for this particular setting.

Before I get to the tips, let's take a look at the typical layout of an "English Conversation" textbook. There are a variety of texts of course, and I have used most of them at some point. They seem to have the same basic blueprint. There are a number of units, and each unit has a theme, such as "Etiquette," "Technology Today," or "Staying Healthy," to list a few examples. Each unit is then broken down into a number of sections. For example, the book that I am using now breaks each unit down into "Background and Vocabulary," "Listening," "Grammar," and "Pronunciation." The unit ends with a "Speaking Activity" which is supposed to incorporate the theme and the previously covered sections.

The speaking activity is the section of the unit that my tips will concentrate on, for three reasons. First of all, it is generally the least specific section of most units. It's a generic activity that is meant to be relatable to all students, but never is. Second of all, it seems to be the section that, as far as flexibility goes in a standardized program, is most open to the discretion of the instructor. The content of the other sections, such as vocabulary and grammar, are usually tested directly on standardized tests. Therefore, most programs, or at least ones that I've taught in, don't want the instructors to stray too far off the scripted path. Finally, it is the conclusion of each unit, and it's always great to end the unit on a high note.

Now for the tips. The three tips that I discuss all have one aspect in common: They all put to use information that we know about the students or that can be easily obtained. By doing this, we can develop activities that are *tailored* to the styles and needs of students in a particular class, and not just follow a one-activity-fits-all philosophy.

Tip 1 – Casual Conversation

This tip sounds simple enough, but it's one that is often overlooked by many teachers. I looked past it myself for several years. When you have time, maybe during the first week of the semester or before or after class, ask a group of students what they like to do when it comes to speaking activities. University students have all studied English in

schools and academies, and it is an effective way of gathering information about them to tailor future conversational activities. This past semester, I had back-to-back "English Conversation" classes. Through casually interviewing a few students from each class, I learned that one class, the Acting majors, was interested in role-plays. Throughout the semester, I planned three or four role-plays for that class, something I normally would never do. On the other hand, the Urban Engineering majors were not into role plays, and I planned other activities for them, even though they were both using the same book and studying the same content. In addition to being a great way to get to know a little about your students, it's a fantastic way to pick up some activities that you have never thought of before. I have learned several activities from my students, who had done these in previous years with previous teachers, and I use them repeatedly now.

Tip 2 – Multiple Intelligence (MI) Survey

A multiple intelligence survey is designed to find out the learning styles of your students. As a group, do they tend to be visual learners? Or perhaps they are more musical, logical, or spatial. Make a survey, as below, in order to gather more information about your students.

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES TEACHER INVENTORY
Place a check in all boxes that best describe you.

LINGUISTIC
_____   I really enjoy books
_____   I hear words in my head before I write, read or
              speak them
_____   I enjoy word games such as crossword puzzles,
              Scrabble, anagrams, or Password

              _____ Total Linguistic boxes checked

LOGICAL

_____   I enjoy math and science in school
_____   I can think in abstract, clear, imageless concepts
_____   I can find logical flows in things people say and do
              at work or home

              _____ Total Logical boxes checked
SPATIAL
_____   When I close my eyes, I can see clear visual images
_____   I'm responsive to color
_____   I have vivid dreams at night

              _____ Total Spatial boxes checked

BODILY-KINESTHETIC
_____   I take part in at least one sport or physical activity
              regularly
_____   I like working with my hands (for example, sewing
              weaving, carving, carpentry)
_____   I enjoy spending my free time outside

              _____ Total Bodily-Kinesthetic boxes checked

MUSICAL
_____   I know when musical notes are off-key
_____   I play an instrument
_____   I often have a tune running through my mind
              during the day

              _____ Total Musical boxes checked

INTERPERSONAL
_____   People often come to me to seek advice or counsel
_____   I prefer team and group sports to individual sports
_____   When I have problems, I prefer to seek help from
other people rather than work it out alone

              _____ Total Interpersonal boxes checked

INTRAPERSONAL
_____   I regularly spend time reflecting, meditating or
              thinking about life questions
_____   My opinions and views distinguish me from others
_____   I have specific goals in life that I think about
regularly
              _____ Total Intrapersonal boxes checked

John Steele has been living and working in Korea since 2002. He currently teaches in the English Language and Literature department at Chung-ang University in Seoul. In addition, he is the workshop coordinator for the Seoul Chapter of KOTESOL. He is also interested in cycling and photography. He can be reached at steele@cau.ac.kr, and his photographs can be seen at www.johnsteelephoto.com.

Practical EAP Writing Assessing
Robert Gordon offers ideas for EAP writing

Assessing university students' academic writing can be a time consuming task for EAP (English for Academic Purposes) instructors, and it is often associated with insufficient and/or unsustainable practical improvements in student writing. I have frequently heard university instructors bemoan the fact that they have a stack of student writing, that it will take all weekend to grade, and that most students won't necessarily learn from the feedback.

I experienced similar situations with my students, and so I altered my assessments in order to encourage greater improvements in my students' writing., I transferred the workload to them with guidance that would hopefully encourage the development of learner autonomy in their writing, and focused instructor time on students who wanted to improve by exchanging editing time to face-to-face consultation time. Before we look at the details of this approach, let's consider one of its key objectives.

Learner Autonomy

Learner autonomy refers to a student's ability to take control of their learning through a variety of strategies, including self-monitoring, acceptance of responsibility for learning, and reflection on performance. Students who become autonomous learners often seek guidance or partnership with peers and/or their teacher to enhance self-monitoring and reflection on their work and progress. Additionally, they often employ metacognitive strategies of evaluating their progress and reflecting on their recurring difficulties, as well as achievements. Hopefully, through learner autonomy students also develop intrinsic interest in their studies, which they will continue to employ throughout their lives. By encouraging students through the writing process, students are exposed to some of these simple strategies, which they will hopefully continue to employ throughout their university education. This can be encouraged by clear objectives on a rubric and teacher direction to general areas of weakness.

Development of a Detailed Rubric

To accomplish my objectives, I first had to develop a detailed rubric with all the elements that I would focus on in assessing students' writing. I asked my students to submit the rubric with their writing to make sure they had had a chance to review it, and so that when I graded their writing, I could simply circle the element on the rubric that was weak or missing, and circle a grade for the category.
For example, in a rubric for a one-paragraph assignment, the category of "Topic and Concluding Sentence" would have numerous elements:

Topic and Concluding Sentence
Topic and controlling idea; specific for a paragraph assignment. Concluding sentence paraphrases the TS. No extraneous content. Interesting!
10 – 9 – 8 – 7 – 6 > 0

If a student submitted a paragraph that lacked a controlling idea or was poorly developed, I would circle the words "controlling idea" on the rubric, and then deduct some points.

This first step significantly reduced the amount of time I spent grading and I was then able to use that time for consultations instead. It was during this next stage where students really seemed to benefit from the process by developing autonomous learning strategies.

Revision and Optional Consultations

After receiving the graded rubric from me, students had the option to revise, but if they decided to revise they had to come to an optional consultation session (it was their decision if they wanted to resubmit). If students decided they wanted to resubmit their writing for a chance at a higher grade or to improve their English writing abilities, I specified a few caveats:

1) Optional Consultations: If they decided they wanted to revise and consult with me, they had to email me to request a session. This reduced the sense of obligation that might be felt if, for example, students had to sign up in front of the class with others watching, and simultaneously ensured that only those who sincerely desired to improve would request a consultation.

2) Reflection Based on Grade: Students could not ask me any questions about their writing until they came to consult with me because I wanted them to reflect on how they could improve based on the feedback they had already received on my rubric.

3) Revision Based on Reflection: They had to revise their writing based on the grade on the rubric and the circled information and arrive at the consultation with both their graded draft and their revised draft.

4) Prepare Questions for Consultations: They had to arrive at their consultation session with formulated questions to ask me. If they had none, we would sit until they came up with some (I wouldn't review their work for them – I saw this time as a teaching opportunity to help them to develop as self-conscious autonomous learners).

With these four caveats, students would have to reflect on their writing and assessment, the objectives of the course, what they understood, and what they didn't understand, and then come to the consultation prepared to discuss these elements. In this way, they would practice reflection, self-assessment, guided research, and become metacognitively aware of what they understood in the assignment, and what they didn't, and how clarifying these uncertainties could lead to improved grades.

Consultations

When a student would first come in I would ask them how I could help them, and let them guide the session initially. Sometimes it took some prompting, but generally the students quite diligently prepared questions.

We spent anywhere from 5-20 minutes together, depending on how many questions they had and how many others had signed up, and students could come back an additional time if they wanted to repeat the entire process. I have experimented with holding consultations both during class while other students were engaged in independent study and outside of class hours – the choice is up to the individual teacher. Holding consultations outside of class does take extra time. However, it is generally about the same amount of time I previously devoted to writing detailed feedback.

Results

Although I have done no formal experimentation or surveys, I noticed that students were generally very happy with the process. Those who didn't want to improve their writing, or were satisfied with their grade after the first draft, could use their time as they saw fit. However, I was very happy to see that the students who came in to consult with me generally showed significant improvement in adhering to the rubric and all of its elements in their second assignment.

Additionally, the same students who came to the first consultation would generally come to consultations for subsequent assignments and would really start to see improvements in their writing. This satisfied the element of autonomous learning where students started to see the value of reflecting on their learning and then seeking instructor feedback.

A secondary, but no less significant, result was that I got to develop a better relationship with those students who were interested in learning English and writing, they would get to know me, and they would also have the opportunity to ask specific questions about English learning (sometimes unrelated to their writing assignments) that would otherwise be difficult to address during class hours.

Conclusion

Training students in an EAP environment to become autonomous learners is a critical step for EAP instructors since generally university students will not have sufficient time to learn all the academic language and skills they require in class with such limited contact time. It is important that instructors of EAP who want to achieve this goal of autonomy in learning for their students are explicit about the value of the process they are guiding students through and how it will hopefully help the students to develop on their own in the future. Students must be cognitively aware of why they are performing a task before they can develop metacognitive strategies of their own to enhance their learning process.

Additionally, developing a rubric with very clear goals, that are reviewed in class and are verified through solicited examples from students, will ensure that students will understand the writing goal they must meet. Then they can track their own development, seek feedback in areas that are hazy, or students feel they need more work on.

Robert Gordon is an English Lecturer in the College English Program at Seoul National University, and has been working in South Korea at the university level since 2005. He is currently undertaking an MA in TESOL & Educational Technology at the University of Manchester.

Bridging the Gap
John Pfordresher shares thoughts on connecting classrooms

English language instruction in Korea is a key tenet of the government's educational policy. Students attend public school classes year after year and yet few reach anywhere near a level of proficiency commensurate with the hours of in-class instruction they receive. University professors frequently wonder why their first year students are communicatively incompetent after years of instruction in public and private institutions. In other words, Korean students have plenty of linguistic knowledge, but little ability to actually use it.

In the public school classroom students receive hour upon hour of grammatical and lexical instruction. They memorize key expressions and listen to sterile recordings of what many in Korea see as "ideal" English speaking (namely native speakers from North America). Native speaker proficiency is something to be strived for. Students are constantly told what they have done wrong when attempting to produce language, whether or not they've successfully communicated. Year after year students are spoon fed these bits and bobs of English and pushed on to the next level regardless of any ability to utilize their knowledge in any meaningful way. No wonder so many loathe the English classroom!

Upon arrival in Korea I was surprised by the advanced vocabulary that would come out of the mouths of my middle school students. Yet so many of those same students were baffled when asked a simple question like "Where are you going?" when passed in the hallway.

Throughout my time here I have reflected extensively on why exactly this occurs. I know part of the problem lies with the age group. Many students are shy or nervous or simply can't be bothered. Though when I looked deeper, what I began to see was how little authentic input the students received. The textbooks CDs are far from authentic. How many of the mini conversations in your school's textbook mirror real life? Once in a while students might be exposed to a pop song or short English movie clip, but that obviously is not enough.

Wondering how I can best serve my students in terms of authentic language, I began searching the internet. I found a number of quality websites that provide a variety of English material for teachers to utilize; however, the material was output from native speakers. This struck me as odd as I remembered reading about how the majority of daily global English communication is conducted between non-native speakers. I began to think, if my students have trouble understanding simple queries from me, how would they respond when confronted with speakers from Russia or Cambodia? Surely, if I were to best prepare my students for life outside of the classroom, I should provide some examples of the differences that exist between English speakers across the globe. I also theorized that this type of discourse would be far more stimulating than the typical textbook listen and repeat, and so my students may become more engaged with the language.

These thoughts and realizations led me to believe that educators and students need, and deserve, a resource for non-native English output from which to draw upon. A resource, that can provide examples of the English output students will find when they leave the classroom. For these reasons I teamed up with Alex Walsh to create a website called the ESL Learners Output Library (esllol.org).

The ESL Learners Output library is dedicated to providing written and verbal material that has been created by non-native English learners. On the forums teachers will find a growing library of output from students of various cultural, ethnic, and language backgrounds. The forums are broken down by students' primary language (L1). A submission to the library is tagged for L1 and ability level. In addition, every post has a short description of the task the teacher used to help their students produce what is contained in the sample. Written, audio, and video samples can be posted directly to the library.

Through the library teachers are able to share tasks that have been successful in generating meaningful student output. As a forum, the library allows visitors to comment and discuss different aspects of each submission and its task. This makes the library an invaluable community for educators, as well as being a unique resource for non-native English output. Visitors are urged to not only share successful tasks and samples of output that they produce, but also useful links to content outside the library that relate to the submission. In doing so, the ESL Learners Output Library serves as a central hub for a global community of learning, in addition to sharing hard-to-find samples of global Englishes.

In addition to this project, I have worked to make connections with teachers through Twitter. That is how in early in 2013, I was able to connect with Alexandra Guzik, an English teacher in Russia. She's a teacher who believes deeply in the beneficial effects that cross cultural exchanges can have on her students' learning. She approached me with an idea. She wanted to create a linked classroom magazine that would feature articles from students on all manner of topics. I eagerly accepted the opportunity. So far this project has created 49 articles on everything from students' beliefs on capital punishment to famous foods from their countries to information about their favorite musicians. In addition, multiple groups of students conducted recorded interviews with their peers abroad.

. . .students take pride in their work and see real achievement in what they have done.

This project not only gave our students a valuable opportunity to share what is important to them with a wider world, but also provided them with insight into the lives and beliefs of students far removed from what they have grown up with. It was an incredible learning opportunity. This project has aided learning for the students involved today, and has provided numerous examples of non-native output for students to learn from in the future.

I believe this project was so successful because it took the classroom and connected it to the world outside. Many teachers advocate putting student work on the classroom wall. In doing so, students take pride in their work and see real achievement in what they have done. Through tools like blogs, Twitter, and now, the ESL Learners Output Library, teachers take that achievement and widen the audience with whom the student can share. Students can thus share their work with distant family members as well as with those at home. This creates a bridge between the learning of the classroom and the world outside of it.

A great example of how bridging this gap can lead to student engagement and motivation, as well as a great learning experience, is a project I conducted this past semester. A friend of mine is currently teaching in Ghana. We arranged for her students to record a few questions to ask mine. The resultant engagement and motivation to communicate took me by surprise. My students cooperated fantastically to transcribe the questions, often using English with each other to describe what each thought they had heard. Afterwards they eagerly chose the questions each wanted to respond to. The first recordings were difficult. The students were very concerned with their accuracy and pronunciation. They really wanted to write down an answer and record by reading. Though they were not thrilled about conducting the recordings without written help, they remained motivated and determined to communicate their thoughts to their Ghanaian counterparts.

After a few weeks of this exchange, I worried the novelty of the task might wear off and students would be less motivated and engaged. This was not the case. The students came in to class every week eager for the responses and follow up questions from their new audio pen pals. After the first few recordings they became more confident in their ability to communicate. They retained a desire to be as accurate as possible, but fought through their stumbles like I have never seen in typical tasks done with their classmates. In fact, I saw a noticeable improvement in their grammar during recordings as compared to regular classroom activities.

Bridging the gap between the classroom and the world outside accomplishes a number of positive goals for students and their learning. Firstly, by doing so educators can show students why they are learning English, beyond the next school assessment. I believe one of the major inhibitors to

student progress here in Korea, is that so many see learning through the prism of a test. By creating a bridge to the world outside the classroom, teachers can not only give students meaningful input from authentic sources, they can demonstrate how the knowledge learned in the classroom will be useful once they move beyond the school and its tests.

In writing this article I sought to achieve three aims. First, I hoped to demonstrate where I believe English instruction is lacking in South Korea and how we might better serve our students by introducing more authentic English into our classrooms. Recognizing the high percentage of daily English communication conducted between non-native speakers, I believe the ESL Learners Output Library is a valuable resource with which to accomplish this goal. Secondly, I wanted to share a few anecdotes of personal experience which I believe serve to illustrate the benefits of introducing authentic language into our classroom. Thirdly, I wished to show how introducing language created by non-native speakers from outside the classroom, and bridging the gap between the classroom and the world outside, can help our students become more confident in their abilities and improve their communicative competence.

The world is becoming more connected by the day. It is easier than ever to give our students a platform from which to engage with that world. By doing so we will better serve our students' needs, and hopefully, give them the confidence and desire to continually improve their abilities with the English language.

Prior to arriving in Korea John worked as a student teacher at the University of Maine's Intensive English Institute. He began his career in Korea as a middle school teacher in Busan. In February 2013 John became an English instructor at the University of Ulsan. In addition, John maintains a reflective teaching blog and is continually involved with professional development.

Look for the return of our comparison series in the summer issue of TEC!

Please note that MI theory emphasizes that:
1) no one set of teaching strategies will work best for all students at all times
2) teachers are best advised to use a broad range of teaching strategies with their students
3) Each person possesses all seven intelligences
4) Most people can develop each intelligence to an adequate level of competency
5) Intelligences are always interacting with each other

Hence, if you decide to use this strategy, and you discover that your students are musically inclined, for example, it's advisable to use a variety of activities covering several learning styles.

Tip 3 – Student Majors

Typically, "English Conversation" classes are grouped by major. I use this information to tailor my activities and make them more practical to the students. If you can connect the content in the book to a possible situation they might face in the future, and base an activity on that, great! If we do things this way, it's easier to attract and keep students' attention. Let's look at an actual example. A couple of semesters ago, I had two conversation classes: the first with Nursing students, and the second with Urban Engineering students. Both classes were at the same level (called English 2 at my university), we used the same book, and I taught the other sections of the book (vocabulary, grammar, etc.) the same way. But I tailored the speaking activity at the end of the unit to make it more relevant to that particular class. The theme of the unit was "Etiquette"and we discussed polite and impolite actions. For the Nursing students, I created this activity:

• Think about life in the hospital; it's very hectic and fast-paced. This environment can lead to some impolite behavior by both staff and patients. With your group, brainstorm some possible situations, and create a role-play using vocabulary and expressions from the unit.

I had the future urban engineers work on this:

• Think about Heuksuck-dong; it's very narrow and crowded. As far as the infrastructure goes, what are some improvements that can be made to the area to make it a more polite and livable place? Brainstorm some ideas with your group, and prepare a three-point presentation for next class.

Both classes were motivated by these activities, and they were excited to get a chance to use vocabulary and content that they were studying in their major classes.

I hope that one or more of the suggestions will be helpful to teachers out there to make your classes more relevant, practical, and fun.

Have you presented at a KOTESOL event? Would you like to adapt that presentation into an article for TEC?

email your article to tecsubmissions@gmail.com

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Korea TESOL National Conference 2013

Developing Professionally:
Plug-and-play SLA pedagogies

May 25, 2013
Korea National University of Education

Plenary Speaker:
Dr. Keith Folse

The KOTESOL 2013 National Conference is a forum where educators share their research, teaching methodologies, and experience, as well as a venue for increased networking abilities. This year, the Daejeon-Chungcheong Chapter, coupled with the revamped Professional Development SIG (special interest group), is in full gear, bringing in an international powerhouse speaker with the focus on professional development.

The theme for this year is *Developing Professionally: Plug-and-play SLA pedagogy*. This theme will be addresses by our plenary speaker, Dr. Keith Folse, of the University of Central Florida. Dr. Folse was a 2011 KOTESOL International Conference plenary speaker and is returning by popular demand.

A full-day on Saturday, balanced with professional development and planned networking opportunities among KOTESOLers nationwide, will be followed by a wine-and-cheese meet-and-greet that evening. Scheduled for Sunday is a half-day, hands-on workshop lead by our international speaker, Dr. Keith Folse, completing a weekend of great camaraderie and professional improvement. (Assistance with Saturday hotel arrangements available.)

Post-Conference Workshop
Dr. Folse Facilitating

The Sunday (May 26) Post-conference Workshop will be a separate event with separate registration. It will be approximately a three-hour event lead by Dr. Folse. Online registration will be available for both the Conference and the Post-conference Workshop. Details will be made available on the KOTESOL website: www.koreatesol.org

Please direct any Conference Program-related inquiries to the Program Committee:
NCProgram@koreatesol.org

Between All or Nothing in Error Correction
Catherine Peck gives us some ideas on error correction

Common questions for EFL teachers are whether, when and how to correct the many (and frequently repeated) errors our students make on the long road to competence in a foreign language. Suffering from a multitude of negative associations – mistake, failure, embarrassment, shame – errors seem to inspire a polarized response: some of us feel obliged to pounce at every misused preposition or omitted article, while others advocate a "hands off" approach, nodding blithely as students stumble through a succession of half sentences and almost words. This article outlines a simple but principled alternative for teachers uncomfortable with such "all or nothing" approaches to error correction in speaking skills development.

Teachers wishing to navigate a middle ground between providing too much or too little corrective feedback need to make 3 distinct but interrelated decisions regarding the questions below:
1. Why is this error being made?
2. What are my aims for this lesson or lesson stage?
3. How can I best provide corrective feedback for this student, at this moment?

Why is this error being made?

The basic framework for error analysis explained here sets out three main categories of error, and is helpful for teachers reflecting on why an error is being made - and consequently whether or not to respond to it.

The first category, *pre-developmental*, refers to errors made because our students are trying to say something that is beyond their current level of competence. In other words, they are trying to say something they have not yet learnt how to say. For example, a student in the early stages of language learning who wants to express a hypothetical situation in English might say "I have a million dollars I travel". Recognizing that a beginner has not yet studied the language needed to express the idea, a teacher may decide to simply ignore it, or alternatively plan to spend some time working on the language point in the near future. The key questions here are: *Have they learned it yet? Are they ready to learn it right now?*

The second category, *developmental*, refers to errors students make as they attempt to apply the rules they are learning, but struggle with accuracy or consistency under the pressure of "real time" communication. An example of this might be a beginner over-generalizing a regular past simple ending to produce something like "goed" or "wented", or inserting a superfluous auxiliary verb with "I did went there." These errors are a signal that learning is underway (but not complete!), and so should be considered a positive sign. A teacher might decide to provide correction, to prompt a learner to "try again," if they feel the learner can reformulate their output correctly by focusing a little more, or, alternatively, see this type of error as a signal that rules or patterns should be reviewed and clarified in an upcoming

lesson. The point to remember here is: *It may be 'two steps forward and one step back'… but they are applying their learning, and this is a good sign.*

The third category, *post developmental*, refers to the "slips" or minor and occasional errors more advanced learners often make, even well after they have learnt and absorbed a rule. The learner knows the rule, can and does produce the correct form at other times, and can easily self-correct. Typical examples of this are intermediate or advanced students omitting a present simple third person 's' and producing "She study a lot" or confusing subject-verb agreement to say "She were very tired". A teacher may decide to simply ignore these errors in favour of focusing on more complex or challenging aspects of language that the learner is still working toward mastery of, or – if a slip seems more than occasional – draw the student's attention to the issue for self-monitoring. If an error is post-developmental, lengthy review or clarification of the language point is likely to be a waste of valuable class time.

What are my aims for this lesson or lesson stage?

After establishing that an error should be responded to, an important question for foreign language teachers to ask themselves is: What is my larger aim at the time the error occurs? *Accuracy* is typically a goal in the activities that occur immediately after new language has been introduced, and demands that teachers attend to errors in pronunciation, form or use "on the spot." However, during a highly communicative or more loosely structured task (for example, discussion, problem solving, brainstorming) *fluency* development is more likely to be the goal, and an immediate response will only serve to inhibit the flow of communication. During these stages of a lesson, "delayed correction," which involves taking note of common or problematic errors students are making and highlighting them after the activity has finished, is a useful strategy. With delayed correction, students can still benefit from the teacher's corrective feedback without being constantly interrupted during a fluency focused task.

How can I best provide corrective feedback for this student, at this moment?

Having established *whether* to correct (by making a judgment that the error is likely to be pre-developmental, developmental or just a slip), and *when* to correct (on the spot or delayed, considering the goals of the lesson or lesson stage), a teacher is faced with the question of *how* to draw attention to the error without having a negative impact on the student's confidence or the classroom atmosphere. When considering the corrective feedback techniques listed and described in brief below, a teacher should draw upon their intuition and understanding of the individual student's character (with particular consideration to sensitivity, maturity and motivation), the classroom atmosphere

(cooperative, competitive, relaxed or formal) and the significance of the error (incidental to the class goals or central to the language learning aim of the class). Teachers should also keep in mind that incorporating a range of corrective feedback techniques into their classroom practice is beneficial in maintaining student interest and engagement – avoid becoming "predictable" by expanding your repertoire beyond those strategies that are immediately comfortable.

"On the Spot" Corrective Feedback Techniques

• **Indicate problem area** (if the form practiced is written on the board or displayed on a screen in the classroom, tap the displayed form over the problem area)
• **Gesture** (use the "wobbly hand" to suggest things are not quite right, or use a gesture code; point over your shoulder to indicate past tense, "pick up" and invert the position of two things for word order mistakes or use your hand as a conductor might to indicate rising or falling intonation patterns are needed)
• **Verbal Prompt** (cue the student again to the point of error, for example if the student produces "*Yesterday I go shopping'*"say "*Yesterday I ...*".
• **Queried Repetition** (repeat the error in a questioning tone, emphasizing the error, for example *"Yesterday I go shopping?".*
• **Reformulation/recast** (rephrase the student's utterance correctly, but without "stopping" the flow of conversation, for example, S:"*Yesterday I go shopping*" T:"*Oh, you went shopping yesterday? What did you buy?*")
• **Explicit** ("*No, try again...*")

"Delayed" Corrective Feedback Techniques

• **Error Correction Time** (in the final 5 minutes of a class period, the teacher displays common errors that students have made during the class, and which the teacher has made note of, on the board or the screen – encouraging students to suggest corrections).
• **Weekly Quiz** (student errors are noted by the teacher and presented in the form of a quiz each Friday, with students able to work in teams and compete for prizes).
• **Reports, Counselling or Guided Goal Setting** (the teacher provides a mature student with an oral or written assessment of their individual "problem" areas or the language issues they should focus on over the coming weeks)

Importantly, several of the techniques described above also entail a constructive approach to error correction, prompting students to "try again" by eliciting self or peer correction rather than simply providing them with the answer. This is often a difficult habit for teachers accustomed to working in highly controlled or teacher focused classrooms to develop, but is certainly worth the effort as it encourages students to engage their underlying knowledge of the language and actively draw upon their

prior learning. In a cooperative environment, peer correction can also be a valuable way to maximize all students' attention and involvement. However, peer correction must be managed carefully if students are unfamiliar with one another or the class members are not mutually supportive.

Other Issues

Error correction is an important but undeniably sensitive area of foreign language teaching and learning, and can be challenging for teachers at all stages of their careers to effectively manage. In addition to the considerations discussed thus far, teachers need to be aware of socio-cultural issues that may arise in EFL contexts, which can impact upon the errors of "appropriateness" that learners make. For example, it is common in some languages/cultures to use an imperative form (*Give me a piece of paper*) to enact a request, to use *please* and *thank you* far less frequently, or – as is the case for Korean learners – to directly ask a person their age or marital status. In such situations it is necessary for a teacher to convey to learners not only how things may differ in an English language context, but also what the negative effects of transferring first language habits may be in their interactions with English speakers. Socio-cultural issues should also be taken into careful consideration by teachers who do not share the cultural background of their students: strategies that prove effective in one context may not work as well in a classroom halfway across the world.

Like our students, we teachers are only human and will always make mistakes in our attempts to achieve the right balance for each new group of learners we encounter. However, just as we expect our students to keep making an effort to improve, so should we – a task that for some of us may entail reassessing our current habits or pushing ourselves out of our comfort zones at times. Developing a principled and appropriate strategy for responding to student errors is just one aspect of this much larger, but ultimately very rewarding, journey.

Catherine Peck is a TESOL trainer and Invited Professor at CNU, Gwangju. She studied, taught and trained in Ireland and Spain before moving to Korea, and holds a TESOL certificate, a DELTA, and a Masters of Applied Linguistics/TESOL. She is a PhD candidate in the Department of Linguistics University, Australia.
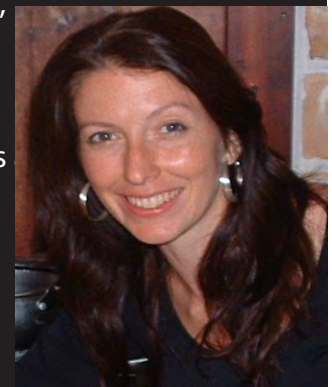
Comparing TESOL and Korean Language Courses
Miranda Kerkhove compares TESOL courses and Korean language classes

With both of my experiences with Korean lessons I took in the Netherlands and stories I've heard from peers who have attended at least three different language schools in Korea, Korean language education tends to use a traditional style of language teaching with traces of Confucian ideas. The teacher is regarded as almighty and students should simply obey and listen to what he or she has to say. Common practices include repeating after the teacher and memorizing enormous amounts of vocabulary.

After having heard and experienced all this, I was happily surprised to find a Korean language school in Korea that used very modern and effective teaching methods. I was lucky enough to be able to attend Sogang University's language school in 2011, and again for the next level in 2012. At the time, I had no knowledge of language teaching methodology and could only conclude that their way of teaching, based on speaking, was working very well for me. However, towards the end of 2012 I had the opportunity to take a TESOL course and learned about various teaching methods and techniques. During the course I found that the principles of TESOL were very similar to the way I was taught Korean at Sogang University. In this article, I would like to highlight some of the most effective principles that I experienced while studying both Korean and TESOL. I have found these principles to be missing in some other Korean language schools in and outside of Korea, and I was glad this school applied them very effectively.

As I mentioned earlier, my Korean classes emphasized speaking. Students were divided into groups of three or four and had to change places regularly so we had an opportunity to speak to many different students with different backgrounds and accents. All lessons were held in Korean - other languages were forbidden in class.

A typical lesson plan from my Korean lessons was spread out over two days, followed by a repetition day. Every day started with small talk within your own group about things we did the previous day. After that, each group had to pick the best story and that student or appointed group member had to tell it to the rest of the class. Then the teacher introduced the topic, let students figure out what might be the right grammatical pattern or the correct way of using new expressions, after which, the teacher explained the rule without having corrected any wrong answers. Students then practiced what they learned in groups, with the teacher monitoring. The last part of the lesson was used to make variations on the newly acquired topics by means of fluency activities.

In my TESOL course, I learned why these factors attributed to better lessons. Grouping students allows the teacher to use the teaching technique of TPS or Think, Pair, Share. This means that when asking questions, it is best to have students first discuss in small groups and come up with the answer together, instead of asking a specific student for the answer right away. In that way, you can avoid embarrassing

moments for students, which might make them feel too self-conscious and thus hesitant to speak in class. This might be why my Korean classes helped me to overcome my embarrassment of speaking in a foreign language as a beginner. During the TESOL lessons on listening, I learned that it is a good idea to expose students to authentic clips with real conversations, instead of only scripted clips that are closely matched to the students' level. Having students of all nationalities together in our Korean language class meant it was the perfect combination for exposing us to both authentic conversations between people using different accents, and ways of expressing themselves. With being peers, our conversations were also automatically simplified to fit our level. Also, the TESOL principle of using only L2 (target language) in class was applied, so students would only use the language they were learning. The native Korean teachers of the two levels I attended were really good at explaining everything in very simple language and spoke slowly, two other points my TESOL course emphasized. Hearing explanations only in Korean also made it easier for us to remember and use the definition of the word in the language we were learning, and thus gave us the tools to express ourselves better in that language.

The next day, students elaborated on the newly learned topics by means of role-plays. This gave them extra practice time instead of overwhelming them with new material all the time, and let students learn actively. Apart from this main lesson, there were lessons in reading, listening and writing, all elaborating on what was learned in the main lesson, creating repetition, and students practiced different skills with the same grammar, vocabulary and/or expressions. The third day was always a repetition day in which everything learned was repeated in an active way, by means of word games, memory games, and guessing games in which students explained to other students what a word meant. Because this was done in group competition form, with sometimes small prizes to be won, students became

enthusiastic and learned how to think fast and talk at a speed normal to native speakers of Korean. Also, by means of teaching your peers about certain words or grammar patterns, students were likely to remember better themselves, too.

I came across this same lesson plan structure in my TESOL course. I learned it is good to start your lessons with warm-up activities. In my Korean classes there were warm-ups the first few minutes of each lesson by means of small talk with fellow group members. The rest of the lesson was built on the EIF framework for teaching speaking. EIF stands for Encounter, Internalization and Fluency. In the encounter part of the lesson, the teacher introduces the topic and any new material. After this initial stage students practice what they learned in the internalization stage by means of drilling exercises, which is best done in groups or pairs. The teacher monitors, and if necessary corrects students. For the last section students will practice fluency. For this, the teacher provides communicative situations and allows students to speak freely without being afraid to be corrected. This is exactly the framework that was used on the first day of the three-day series in my Korean course. The second and third day we had even more internalization and fluency activities on the same topic. Apart from the use of the EIF framework, there were several other principles this Korean language school used which turned out to match the teaching methods from my TESOL course; including, a lot of repetition and student-centered or inductive learning where students learned the grammar and vocabulary by trying to figure out how it worked themselves before hearing the explanation by the teacher. Some schools tend to skip the repetition stage because, perhaps, they feel students should be learning new things all the time. In my opinion, however, repetition seems to be the most crucial part of this lesson method system it will give students more opportunities to remember what was learned, in a way they are not likely to forget.

In my TESOL course I learned the rules of teaching grammar. One of them was called the rule of economy - providing as much practice time as possible for your students. Another was the rule of use - always providing opportunities for learners to put the grammar to communicative use. Both of these principles were applied in my Korean classes by giving us two extra days after the initial lesson to practice what we learned, and by letting us do role-plays and apply the newly learned grammar and vocabulary in authentic situations. The third day gave us even more valuable learning. In my TESOL course I learned that one of the best ways of remembering what you learned is by teaching it to others. By means of word guessing games, in which students had to explain a word in Korean and the others had to guess what it was, we essentially taught vocabulary to our fellow students. In doing so, we remembered the word better ourselves as well.

To me, this creates lessons that are well balanced, stress fluency, and actively practice what is learned. It provides students with a slow enough pace to be able to absorb the language fully. It also minimizes teacher talk drastically, which was quite different to my experiences (and my peers' experiences) with other language schools in Korea. It also makes it easier for students to memorize new vocabulary and grammatical patterns because they have used it so often already, instead of having to memorize many words they are likely to forget in a week or two. Moreover, students learn how to talk in two different situations: interactional and transactional. As I learned in my TESOL course, interactional speech means communicating for social reasons. We practiced this with small-talk warm-up activities before the start of every lesson; which also made students get better acquainted to each other, so they would more likely talk in the target language with each other outside of the classroom. Transactional speech is communicating to achieve something in set situations, such as going to the bank to deposit money. This was practised every other day by means of drilling and fluency activities, often involving role-plays.

It seems thus that a lot of what I have learned in my TESOL course is being put into practice at my Korean language institute. I think it really worked for me, and would think it wonderful if all language teachers were to embrace these same techniques.

Miranda Kerkhove received her MA in English Literature from the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, in 1998, and has been working as a translator for 13 years. She is currently learning Korean and will start studying for a Ph. D. in English Education through Literature at Sogang University, Seoul, in September.

Dr. Keith Folse will be the featured speaker at this year's national conference.

Don't miss him at this great event!

Making Decisions In and Out of the Class
German Gomez outlines a two-step process for decision making

Inside and outside the class, teachers often find themselves in a world of decision making, which may require making choices about using specific strategies in a lesson to integrating specific aspects to their course's program over the long term. No matter the choice to be made, certain parameters may inform the decision-making process. These parameters are often deeply rooted in beliefs or ideas about a particular practice, theory, or technique. Though useful, such a belief-focused process can sometimes cause the teacher to discard possible concrete actions that are, in reality, beneficial to students. It is, then, of great importance to ask whether or not the choices made are a result of a surface level understanding of teaching practices compounded by a deeply engrained belief system, rather than a clear awareness of the usefulness of that practice and a developed attitude towards it. Moreover, decision making may be well served by taking two specific steps, which develop awareness and an informed attitude towards a specific practice, technique, or approach .

The first step tends to be the most difficult one since it may require a letting go of one's own beliefs. It is, in fact, a process that entails trying out a particular practice or technique without making a judgment about it by simply "eyeballing" it. It is in this first step that oftentimes a surface-level decision can be made to the detriment of student learning and professional growth. Surface-level decision making involves not even considering the possibility of implementing a practice or technique, which may originate from a desire not to go outside of one's comfort zone. One observed example of this type of decision making is very quickly discarding the use of technology for learning purposes based on the idea that "it is just too complicated." This decision may be made at the surface level rather than at a deeper level. The real reason for a reluctance to use it might stem from a lack of knowledge of how to use it, a lack of time and desire to implement it, or outright indifference towards it. Deeper level decision making would actually require technology to be tried out in the class and then be judged on its usefulness based on the experience using it .

If something is not experienced or tried out , an appraisal of its usefulness may not be complete or may be asymmetric. Unfortunately, this simple principle is very often neglected in the teaching decision- making process. Accepting new ideas and practices may be complicated by such thoughts as "The way I do things in the class has always worked" and "My students always learn, so there's no need to change things." Not venturing to explore other techniques and practices can lead the teaching experience to miss out on the possible benefits they offer for the students and their learning. This is ultimately a teacher-focused approach to decision making and a sure way of fossilizing pre-conceived teaching ideas and potentially harmful teaching practices. Awareness thus requires experience gained by trying out a technique or practice.

The appraisal of the usefulness of the practice or technique is richer since it is based on an experiential process rather than a pre-conceived idea or belief system.

The second step deals with the development of an attitude based on experience. The "trying it out" process can lead to forming a particular attitude towards such a practice or technique based on its effectiveness and observed benefit for the learner. Returning to the use of technology example, a teacher can come to realize that the initial stages of implementing it in class may indeed be difficult, but that such difficulty is overshadowed by the greater benefits later reaped. These benefits, such as a greater degree of engagement particularly by younger students and access to more authentic material and learning content, may lead the teacher to acquire a positive attitude towards the use of technology. This is, in fact, a deeper level attitude since it is formed based on experience rather than perception or pre-conceived ideas. As an added benefit, the teacher may also come to realize the need to further improve their knowledge and use of technology in the class, thereby leading to further professional development. On the other hand, the teacher may realize that teaching "unplugged" works best. In either case, this realization could not have occurred without experience.

The development of informed attitude is further solidified by a process that includes trying something out multiple times, appraising the events vis-à-vis their student learning, and realizing where their teaching skills stand in relation to the technique or practice. The attitude forming process may also include the following questions: How did the technique or practice help my students? What are some observed benefits of this technique or practice? What have I been doing or not doing along this line to help my students? The ultimate goal is for an attitude about a particular technique, practice, or approach to be formed and turned into part of our teaching lifestyle. This requires certain actions to become a habitual part of living. In teaching, certain practices may become a lifestyle by implementation in the classroom, further research with the intention of refining the practice, and on-going reflection on its usefulness for learning. These three steps can only occur after having formed an attitude based on experience.

One example that shows the previously described two-step process comes from my own teaching experience. As a new teacher, my notion of teaching reading and listening included the idea that all passages to be used in the class must contain the grammar structures learned in the unit. My view on the teaching of these two skills was greatly linked to the excessive emphasis placed on grammar in my own learning of English. When selecting listening and reading passages, I often found myself frustrated

because I could not find material that would highlight the target language. Quite frequently, I would be forced to write passages that would fit my grammatically focused teaching. Unfortunately, in this process I discarded many good options for reading and listening material based on their lack of grammar compatibility. Though these passages addressed really up-to-date and interesting topics for my students, they were simply not good enough based on this premise. In retrospect, my decision-making process was based on a pre-conceived wrong notion of teaching listening and reading fostered by either my lack of training or having learned foreign languages with a grammar emphasis. In any case, I decided at the surface level based on my own set of beliefs and principles.

Having gone through a formal training process, I quickly learned that teaching reading and listening addressed such aspects as strategies rather than grammar. My first reaction was reluctance to accept these ideas. I distinctly remember these questions floating in the back of my mind: What are the students supposed to learn? How does grammar figure into this equation? How can strategies be more important than grammar? Having no other choice, however, I had to plan and teach a reading lesson with this strategy focus. Having finished teaching my lesson, I realized that I had been missing out on a great experience. During this lesson, my students read the article, demonstrated clear mastery of the strategies, and enjoyed the topic. This was an eye-opening moment of awareness and the beginning of teaching receptive skills with a different focus. I soon tried planning and teaching reading and listening the same way with my other groups finding similar positive outcomes. I also read more on the topic and asked for further help from my trainer. After a few weeks, I had fully adopted the idea of teaching reading and listening to develop comprehension and the use of strategies. I was well on my way to making this view on teaching receptive skills a teaching lifestyle. I quickly learned about the infinite amount of material available previously discarded by making decisions purely based on a set of previously conceived ideas about teaching these skills. My decision making evolved with two simple steps.

Teaching English is a fascinating and complex world that requires on-going decision making. As professional practitioners, teachers can look towards possibilities in new techniques and practices from the perspective of what will benefit students. However, in encountering such practices and techniques, any evaluation of their usefulness must be done through actual awareness and the resulting developed attitude towards them. These two steps include taking specific actions/efforts that require experience and an honest appraisal of such practices and techniques. The road ahead may be long and require a lot of effort, yet it will also be of great benefit for students.

German Gomez has worked as an EFL teacher and teacher trainer for the past 18 years. German´s teacher training experience includes presentations in various TESOL international conferences and teacher training programs in the US, Central American, South America, and South Korea. German currently works as the academic director at Instituto Guatemalteco Americano-IGA in Guatemala City.
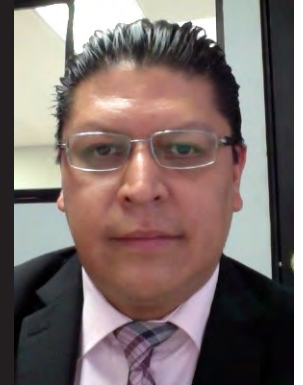
And finally, drilling is also great for building narratives. If you teach adults, you might think that they don't need to tell stories in English, but, in fact, we all tell stories all the time. One example is making an excuse for being late to class. You could elicit a long excuse using a series of pictures. For instance:

I'm really sorry I'm late.
My alarm didn't go off.
So I overslept.
And I missed the bus.
So that's why I'm so late.

So, why the joy of drilling? Perhaps "joy" is a slight overstatement, but drilling can certainly be fun. It builds confidence, it's materials light (no photocopies needed), it doesn't require much preparation and it can certainly be a great help in building fluency. What's not to like?

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Substitute Teaching in Korea
Nikki Webster looks at the unknown world of substitute teaching

Substitute teaching in South Korea is a great way to make quick money and a way to network extremely fast. I have only lived here for about eight months but I learned within the first month that everything moves at lightning speed in Korea. If you are fluent in English, have a university diploma, and don't need visa sponsorship, you can easily find a substitute job and go from an empty bank account to enough money for a week or two. Substitute teaching is only a viable option for those who are in Korea on F-type visas or any type of visa that allows them to be employed without visa sponsorship. This means anyone with an E-2 or tourist visa is ineligible to substitute teach.

Depending on what kind of school you are subbing for, you may be able to create lasting connections with directors and established English teachers. Substitute teaching is usually for some kind of "emergency" situation, for example a full-time teacher getting sick suddenly or returning to his or her home country because of a family emergency. Teachers in these positions are grateful to those who can help them take care of their personal obligations and avoid leaving a bad impression on Korean academy owners.

As fast as you can make good connections, you can also tarnish your reputation within the English teacher community if you decide to cancel at the last minute or have to cancel because you find a steady part-time or full-time job. I promised a lady in November that I would sub for her for a week in December, but I had to cancel because I was offered a part-time position at another academy. So, I essentially lost a contact that could have helped me find full-time work in the future.

Subbing almost always leads to a regular part-time or full-time job offer. The English teachers who offer the jobs are really just interested in getting the few days covered, but most of the directors who employ those teachers are always on the lookout for hardworking, reliable replacements when contracts expire.

Substitute teaching is also a great way to get a lot of experience in a short amount of time without facing many of the normal consequences found at a full-time teaching job. Substitute teachers don't have to worry about being fired without warning because they stay with a school or academy for a short amount of time. Subbing can be stressful or laidback: some academies have a rigid curriculum and stringent evaluation methods while others are quite easy-going. Workplaces can also vary: I have subbed at a private academy run by a woman in her apartment and I have subbed for a school attached to a public school.

Subbing can also give you a good idea of how not to run an academy or behave as a teacher . . .

If you sub often, you learn to become adaptable, which is one of the most valuable skills you can have in any field in South Korea. Some schools have complicated grading and report card systems. Usually, a substitute teacher is not asked to learn the system but it's to your benefit to at least attempt to learn, even though you're working extremely short term.

Subbing can also expose you to different teaching techniques and discipline methods. You find things that work for you and things that don't, and sometimes a teacher at a school will teach you a cool game or teaching trick you can use in your classroom.

Subbing can also give you a good idea of how not to run an academy or behave as a teacher and how not to teach kids English. I subbed for a hagwon (private academy) once where the only form of discipline was to strike fear into the childrens' hearts by asking them if they wanted to go to the director to be punished. It was an effective punishment each time I asked them, but, over the week that I was there, their behavior did not improve. I decided then that I would not work for a hagwon where fear is the only motivator for students to behave.

When subbing, you experience different types of management which will help you once you are looking for steady work. Some schools have amazing directors and staff while others, unfortunately, are lacking in this area. If you pay attention closely to the attitudes of the directors and their relationships with their staff at different substitute jobs, you learn to evaluate the type of environment you'd like to be working in once you sign a contract. This is useful as it can help you to start a new teaching position off right.

Nikki Webster is a Korean adoptee from Maryland living and studying Korean in South Korea. She is currently an English teacher for the INKAS Language Bound program which serves families in low-income neighborhoods of Seoul. In 2014, she will pursue a Master's degree in International Relations.

KOTESOL Views

I never set out to be a teacher trainer. I came to Korea in 2008 to work as a conversation teacher, planning to stay 12 months and travel through a few countries in Asia before returning home. But like many teachers in Korea, I was presented with opportunities that I probably would not have gotten in Canada until I had obtained further qualifications. When I was offered work at a national university and subsequently roles in TESOL and teacher training programs arose there, I gladly accepted. Pursuing these roles has had a profound impact on my development as a teacher and subsequently my career.

So how does teacher training differ from teaching? Certainly, it's more demanding, though in many ways also more rewarding. In Korea, many teacher trainees are not novice teachers, but undertaking in-service professional development. This means most have already been teaching for a minimum of five years and the average age is mid to upper 30s. They are highly motivated, mature and experienced. Many have lived abroad and most are consumers of Western culture: They watch movies, TV programs or read popular novels and magazines. Most are open-minded with a strong desire to learn new things, a welcome change to the "my-mom-is-forcing-me-to-be-here" vibe one sometimes gets in hagwon classes. On the other hand, expectations are higher, and simply "being a foreigner" is no guarantee of success; trainers need to model good teaching practices at all times to maintain credibility in their role. This means being well-prepared, professional and aware of contemporary methods and approaches in ELT.

There is no standard model for in-service training programs in Korea. Some are skills heavy, and in these teachers focus on improving language proficiency. Others focus heavily on teaching practice, and still others combine the two. Programs vary in length from 1-3 week intensive courses, to 6-month pull-out programs that may include a short stay overseas.

So what is a day like in a typical teacher training course? Where I work, trainees practice their language skills in the morning and take methodology classes in the afternoon. Our skills classes may be similar in structure to the conversation classes foreign teachers are familiar with. They are usually 50-75 minutes long, and may be designed around a textbook. Skills classes allow me the opportunity to introduce trainees to new methodology and materials through experiential activities. By participating as "students," trainees can better evaluate the methods for themselves and decide if they would be suitable for their own teaching context. I teach listening skills and introduce new approaches to using songs, film and TV clips in this manner.

One key to getting trainees to adopt new approaches is to link them to their current teaching practices. For this reason, methodology classes that focus on providing teachers with the opportunity to learn new approaches for the four skills, and then apply them to the course books they use in their schools are beneficial. This direct application enables trainees to reflect upon how to create communicative supplementary material and provides them with a bank of activities they can employ upon return to their own teaching environment.

People often ask me what qualifications are needed to become a teacher trainer. I obtained my CELTA in 2006 after already teaching for more than a decade in Canada and Japan. The CELTA gave me a better understanding of methodology and the theory behind various teaching practices. This qualification gave me the foundation I needed to get started on a career as a trainer, but in order to further my career I have found more study is necessary. The Korean EFL industry is steadily becoming more competitive, and a CELTA, DELTA or MA in TESOL and a few years practical experience would give a candidate an edge. Every institution is different of course, but the better qualified you are, the better your chances.

Since starting work as a teacher trainer, I have been active in furthering my education, upgrading my qualifications and expanding my skills. I have presented at national and international conferences in Korea and abroad, and these presentations have formed the basis of forthcoming articles in peer-reviewed magazines. I am fortunate to work in an environment that encourages teachers to experiment with methodology and curriculum, which allows me plenty of freedom to innovate and stay engaged with my work. So is being a teacher trainer worth it? It's more demanding than preparing for conversation classes, expectations are higher and more qualifications are required. Sometimes the pace can be grueling, but overall I would highly recommend it to teachers wanting to broaden their experience, develop new skills or build a longer term career in EFL.

KOTESOL Views is a monthly column written by members that cover a wide variety of topics.

Nico Lorenzutti has taught in Japan, Canada and South Korea for over 15 years. He teaches in the TESOL and Intensive Teacher Training Program at Chonnam National University where he has worked since 2008. He holds a CELTA and is currently a candidate for an MA in Applied Linguistics/ English Language Teaching at the University of Nottingham.

The Internet is Your Oyster
Jackie Bolen shows us how to take advantage of the Internet

I know that many teachers come to Korea just for a year, but that that year somehow turns into two, then three, and four, and eventually you find yourself with a spouse, children, a car, pets and more things that you could ever hope to stuff into those two suitcases that you brought here. In those first and second years, I would venture a guess that most of us were probably harmless, but ineffective teachers. I know that I certainly was. However, as time goes by, teaching becomes more than just how we make money, and most of us genuinely want to improve our teaching skills so that we can help our students actually learn and improve their skills for wherever life may take them.

Reinventing the Wheel
One of the best ways that I've found to improve my teaching is by taking advantage of the resources available on the Internet. In this case, the ESL Internet world truly is your oyster, and you really should be grabbing with both hands the opportunities given to you. These days, the Internet serves as the great equalizer, giving a chance for all teachers in Korea to make an impact upon our students. I will give three easy examples of how you can do it.

Professional Development
In terms of professional development, I use the Internet almost exclusively (with a little help from KOTESOL too!). I love listening to podcasts while I'm on the subway or exercising, and some of my favorite ones that are relevant to English teachers are: ESL etc., Edgycation, ESL Teacher Talk, Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips, and Public Speaker's Quick and Dirty Tips. Just search on iTunes.

I also try to read at least one or two ESL teaching theory related pieces a week. Some of the sites I like are: Heads up English, An Introduction to Task-Based Teaching by David Nunan, and Learning for Life. The links to these sites (and more) can all be found on my blog (link below). Take the ideas that you read about and incorporate them into your teaching, talk to your colleagues about them, make them your own, and do a presentation at a KOTESOL conference, or blog about them.

Blogging
Speaking of blogging, five long years ago I started a blog about teaching (My Life: Teaching in a Korean University www.eslteacherinkorea.blogspot.com), mostly as a way to force myself to think more deeply about what I was doing in the classroom instead of just drifting along from semester to semester as is easy to sometimes do. It has served that purpose, but it's done a lot more as well. I've been inspired to present some of the ideas that I've developed on the blog at KOTESOL conferences. I've made lots of interesting contacts throughout the ESL world, even with some of the more famous people (mostly through my textbook reviews).

I've been able to help lots of people by answering their questions they send me.

I've been able to help lots of people by answering their questions they send me. I've compiled a resource for myself (and hopefully others) of lesson plans, games and activities. I use the search bar on my blog a lot to find a certain game, or Internet site, or book that I know I've blogged about but can't quite remember what it is. And finally, I'm pretty sure that I've become a better teacher though doing it. A little self-reflection on the good and the bad of a week, month, or semester is a practice that is useful for anyone in a classroom.

Jackie Bolen has spent almost a decade in Korea, teaching everyone and everything from kindergarten kids to adults, and the A, B, C's to advanced TOEIC listening. She has spent most of her time in the Cheonan/Asan area, working at Hoseo University, but has recently moved to Busan where she works at Dong-A University. Check out her blog: My Life: Teaching in a Korean University (www.eslteacherinkorea.blogspot.com).