The English Connection

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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,

As you know, all positions in KOTESOL are volunteer ones. We don't do what we do for a paycheck, but because we are passionate in our goal of helping fellow ESL teachers. Tim Thompson volunteered many hours over the course of his tenure as Editor-in-Chief of The English Connection. However, Tim has some exciting projects coming up at work, and could not devote the amount of time he would like to this magazine.

That's where I come in.
My name is William Mulligan, and starting with this issue, I will be the new Editor-in-Chief of The English Connection. It's not easy being the new guy, especially when the old one did such a great job. I would like to thank Tim for all the wonderful work he has done in the past, and his patience in dealing with me as his replacement. It's people like Tim Thompson who make KOTESOL such a great organization.
Like many of you, I've enjoyed the changes that Tim and his staff made to TEC. You will be seeing some more changes in the future, but overall TEC will continue to provide interesting articles to those of us in the ESL field.
An editor is only as good as his staff is. I am thankful that many members of the past editorial team have decided to stay on and help me out with this issue. As volunteers, they do more than they should. It really is a good feeling to know that you have a lot of support not just in Korea, but all over the world as well.

In this issue we look at what teaching in Jeju is like. Three teachers give us their own perspective on how it is to work there. We also have articles that cover teaching Business English, as well as writing. If you have an interesting idea for an article, please send your submissions to: tecsubmissions@gmail.com

Becoming Editor-in-Chief has been a lot of work, but it has been enjoyable as well. I've gotten to talk with so many other ELT professionals, and that is just one of the reasons why I joined KOTESOL in the first place.

Sincerely,

William Mulligan

William Mulligan

Editor-in-Chief

In the Fall issue of The English Connection

A preview of what's to come for the KOTESOL International Conference

Teaching English in Vietnam

Plus, Expat Life, Report Cards from the Edge, and much more!

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This is (More Than) Just a Test
Kevin Stein talks about humanistic techniques when it comes to testing

The other day I was interviewing students who wanted to enter my school's International Course Program, a two year, 15 hour a week high school English program based on Paul Nation's (2007) 4-Strand Model. We usually only accept 15 students into the program a year. I always ask the students about their first semester goals and not surprisingly, this year five out of the fifteen students said that they would like to pass the English STEP test second level, roughly the equivalent of a recent high school graduate. It's not a bad goal. Students who identify passing the STEP test as their first semester goal are highly motivated, spending more hours than average on out of class studying and participating in twice weekly voluntary prep-classes.

The STEP test is broken into two parts, a written and an oral component. The oral component is a fairly standard test which consists of reading a short essay out-loud, answering an information question about the essay, some picture descriptions or story building tasks, and finally two personal questions which might or might not be related to the essay read at the beginning of the oral exam. There are a number of books which provide examples of well crafted answers to sample sections of each portion of the test.

Unfortunately, even after my students have practiced for weeks and can produce a polished answer nine times out of ten, they still exhibit huge amounts of anxiety. When I ask them why they feel so nervous, they invariably reply with something along the lines of, "but what if I don't know the answer? What if the question is too difficult?" And while the students' motivation level remains high—less than 5% of students quit coming to the voluntary prep-classes—the atmosphere of the classes grows ever heavier and darker as the test approaches. In countries like Japan and Korea, where a student's future can seemingly rest on the results of one standardized test, it is not enough for us to merely teach language content, we also serve as de-facto counselors, providing students with an outlet to express their fears and help them stay focused on the task at hand. I have always felt that one of the best techniques we have for lowering student anxiety is to make the opaque process of standardized testing as transparent as possible.

This year, I decided to reassess what was going on in the STEP prep-classes.
It gradually became clear to me that the combination of the concrete answers found in the study guides and the way I structured my classes so students would give an answer which closely conformed to my knowledge of past tests, had all colluded to give the sense that students were expected to provide the one ideal answer. In some very real respect, the techniques I had used hoping to reduce my students' anxiety levels had actually served to increase their sense of apprehension.

When I was a social worker, one of my supervisors used to say, "In the face of incomplete information, assume good will. It will make your life that much more pleasant." The oral portion of the STEP test is supposed to measure a student's, "ability to speak and interact in English," and was revised in 1997 to more accurately measure, "communicative competence." So I decided to take the Society for Testing English Proficiency at its word and revise my prep-test classes accordingly.

According to Richards and Rogers (1986, p. 114), "humanistic techniques engage the whole person, including the emotions and feelings (the affective realm) as well as linguistic knowledge and behavioral skills." By focusing on model answers and step by step interactional instructions, I had implemented a prep-program in which there was very little room for the actual human taking the test to express themselves. So I decided to reconfigure the program to help students see the test as an opportunity to engage in a truly human encounter in which English was the medium of expression as opposed to the focus of study. With that in mind, I identified four areas in which test prep could be used to help humanize the testing experience.

1. While easy to forget, examinees should remember that the examiner is a person with interests, emotions, expectations and experiences of their own. Regardless of how many sample answers she might have been provided with, the answer she most wants to hear is a genuine answer that helps build a communicative bridge between herself and the examinee. Unfortunately, the test giver is limited in what she is able to do as far as interactions are concerned. Like the long-form portion of the IELTS test, the STEP test examiner cannot solicit more information or express interest in a particular portion of a student's answer. This can lead students to seeing the test giver as a test machine, merely tasked with collecting answers and assigning a number grade. In order to change the dynamic of the exam, students have to see themselves as interacting with a real person. To do this, I train students to play the role of the examiner, which merely requires prompting the examinee at the appropriate times. But the student as examiner has two other roles as well. The first is to press the record button on the voice recorder. Fairly simple. The other is to take notes (either in English or the L1) which keep track of her emotional reactions to what the examinee is and any follow up questions she might want to ask. After a practice session, which can last anywhere from 5 to 10 minutes, the student examiner and the student examinee listen to the recording of the practice while the student examiner, using her notes, relates her emotional reactions and asks her follow up questions. For example, during a recent practice the student examinee answered the question, "How do you like to stay healthy?" by saying, "I jog every morning." The student examiner stopped the voice recorder and said she had been really impressed with this answer and that it must be hard to run in the morning. The student examiner also asked the examinee why she had started jogging. By audio taping the practice exams, the students can get used to a fair approximation of the actual test conditions, while at the same time starting to see what types of additional information a partner would like to know even when they are unable to solicit it for themselves. In this way students can practice a form of unilateral negotiation of meaning.

2. How you feel is an integral aspect of communication. High risk-takers might answer the question, "How are you?" with a genuine, "I'm nervous," but once the general introductions are finished, students try to ignore their anxiety. In fact, no STEP test guide so much as mentions how to express an emotional state in relation to a test question. Which seems quite removed from what would pass as communicative competence for most people. Imagine asking someone if they enjoy watching movies more at home or in a theater and getting a response like, "Movie theaters have big screens with clear pictures and the sound is excellent quality, so I prefer a movie theater." As opposed to this type of logic first, preference second answer, I encourage students to start their answers with an emotional reaction to the question.

In general, when students began their answers with an emotional response such as, "I really like...," or, "It makes me happy to...," the number of grammatical errors decreased and their fluency levels showed marked improvements. And this aspect of humanistic test preparation also lines up nicely with the student in the role of examiner. Often, after practicing these techniques only two or three times, the student examiner will begin to ask the examinee for more emotional information, further validating the student examinee's affective experience and helping them to see the examiner as a genuine communicative partner.

3. Communication is born from personal experience.
In addition to how our students react emotionally to a given question on a standardized oral exam, they also have a wealth of personal experience to draw upon when answering. This doesn't mean that a personalized answer will necessarily be the best answer. The best answer is the answer that the student would most like to express. For many high school students, that answer also just happens to be a personalized answer. One interesting aspect of training students in a humanistic manner, is how lack of experience is actually a form of experience, as can be seen in the following answer
to the question, "When on vacation, do you like to stay in luxury hotels:
M-Chan: I can't stay in luxury hotels. I don't have enough money. If I were rich I would stay in a luxury hotel. I think everybody wants to stay in a luxury hotel. Seriously!

4. Redundancy is not a flaw of communication, but an important aspect of communication. As can be seen from the answer above, the desire to be understood naturally leads to redundancy. Most model answers for standardized oral test questions are made up of discreet pieces of information.
But to force students into providing answers which contain a distinct
part A, part B and part C, with no or almost no
overlap between, is to deny the natural human tendency to rephrase in hopes that our communicative partner will come to a deeper understanding of what we are trying to say. In short, denying our students the tool of redundancy is to devalue a set of feelings intricately linked with communication. The best way to keep students from self-editing these kind of responses is to solicit feedback from the student examiner on the emotional impact that these rephrasings have on what they hear.

I know in Japan that I rarely go a week without someone invariably saying something along the lines of, "I spent eight years studying English and I can't use it at all." I wonder, if out of all of these head-shaking-given-up-on English types, there is even one who feels that they would be an excellent speaker of English if they had just studied for the right standardized exam? In fact, if you talk to those head-shakers, none of them points to a standardized test as what was missing from their education. None of them tear-up and say, "if only there had been a TOEIC test when I was a high school student, I'd probably be fluent now." What they usually talk about is classes crammed with grammar rules choking off the oxygen of creativity; lessons dyed in the fear of not saying something right and so settling for silence instead; repetitive tasks and rote memorization in which there were no traces of the self to be found. But most of all, what former students of English talk about is missed opportunities; how they wish they had just taken the chance to communicate more in English.

Regardless of the style of the test prep classes we run and regardless of the country in which it is run, if we keep these humanistic principles in mind and create a test prep-system which
focuses on the whole learner—emotional, experiential, and interactional—perhaps we can help our students forget that it is a test they are preparing for and taking. If they can do that, even for a moment or two, they might actually feel as if answering the questions being put to them is just the kind of opportunity they had been hoping for when they started to learn English in the first place.

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Kevin Stein is a high school English teacher in Osaka, Japan. His areas of interest include use of literature in an EFL setting, reading, and standardized testing. He can be found on Twitter @kevchanwow and blogs at: http://theotherthingsmatter.blogspot.jp/ In his free time, he likes to cook strawberry pancakes with his daughter.

Making Writing More Familiar in English Class
Kong-ju Suh reflects on teaching writing

I felt embarrassed when I was writing about my future because I haven't thought of it yet, but while sharing my story with my partner, I felt good because this activity gave me a good chance to think of my future.

The above was from the reflective journal of one of my students. The topic of the class was what kind of major they would like to choose when they go to university. Writing in the reflective journal was the last activity of each class in the second semester of 2011. I asked students to write what they did and how they felt in their reflective journal at the end of each class. When I saw the above reflection, I felt happy that this class was meaningful to her and I was pleased that the topic seemed to give students chances to think about themselves.

I'm so sad of today's topic. To be frank, I can't sure the university that I will go to. And sometime, I feel so bad because of our education system. Maybe most of students really want to go to the university because of their jobs, money, and even their happiness. There are many people who don't really want to study in the university, but many people believe they have to even though they do not like studying. I really want people to change their minds as soon as possible. And also, one of the bizarre thing is what we learn at school is not really helpful for our future. It seems that people only care about the name of the universities. It is not fair.
Due to these reasons, I don't want to participate on harsh competitive. Why I have to fight with someone who I really like, love, respect? I don't want to the studying machine anymore!

This is from the journal of another student, and this journal was written as a homework assignment and posted to the web-based café which my students and I shared in our 2011 English class (http://cafe.naver.com/englishclass2011). I was pleased to read this reflection because I could see that this topic made her think while doing her homework. I was happy to find that there are some topics that students can enjoy writing about.

This was my fourth attempt to teach writing in a high school English class since 2003. I tried to teach writing in my regular English class in 2003, 2006, 2007, and 2011. I enjoyed my class each year, but I cannot say I felt satisfied. The only thing I feel proud about in terms of teaching writing is that I have started teaching writing and I am still doing it. If possible, I want to continue and I would like to find a better way to teach writing in order to help my students.

Findings through my failures

"An essay with five paragraphs on any topic that you want" was the task I gave my students at Daegu Science High School, in 2003. Looking back, I feel sorry for them. They

might have felt embarrassed when I gave them the task of a free essay with five paragraphs – an introduction, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. They had just graduated from middle school and knew nothing about writing in English. After a few years, I learned that writing such a long essay must be difficult, not just for them, but for anybody. I started from too big a task. I cut the length into three paragraphs – an introduction, a body, and a conclusion paragraph in 2006, and cut again to one paragraph in 2011. I learned that it is not at all a good idea to assign overly demanding tasks. It will demotivate students.

It wasn't only the length of the essay which could have frustrated students in my first attempt at teaching writing. Students might have also found it hard to cope with their abrupt freedom. In 2003, I tried to implement a "Process Writing Approach" which I had read about in *Writing* by Tricia Hedge. I asked my students to follow the process of writing and re-writing, placing an emphasis on creativity and fluency. I truly believed in the idea of writer's choice and didn't specify the essay topics; my students were free to choose their own topics – any topics they liked. Some students told me that they had a hard time choosing topics. In 2006, I provided students a selection of topics. For one assignment, I asked them to write a descriptive essay about mathematics and science. It turned out that students had difficulties doing this task. I had aimed too high.

I often found myself saying things like: "You are going to submit three drafts of an essay." "Your essays need to include an introduction paragraph, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion paragraph." "Please send me your first draft to my e-mail address by next Monday." "Let's share our first drafts today. You write your opinion on the peer-editing sheet." "Please submit your final copy of your essay by next Monday." During that first year, the class was quiet except for the sounds of students typing on their keyboards while writing their essays. Writing was done in class, and I minimized teacher interventions. Of the 50 minute lessons, only 5-7 minutes was spent on my telling them what to do. Students' writing was done on a computer, which was available for each student. There were 3 chances to share their written work, one time each after they had finished the first, second, and the final drafts.

I asked myself, "What is a teacher for in a writing class?"

In 2006, I spent a little more class time explaining what a paragraph is. A lesson about sentences was also added. Whereas the essay length was shortened, the number of writing tasks was doubled. Students also had more sharing and peer-editing chances. I expected that students understood what I told them about paragraphs the first time. I didn't want to repeat again and again what they

already knew. Like in 2003, I gave students time to write using a computer during class. I strolled about the classroom and watched as they wrote. When asked, I gave them individual help. Writing seemed pretty much like an individual activity. Students succeeded in submitting what I asked them to, but I was still not satisfied.

I didn't want to interrupt students because I believed writing requires a lot of thinking. I do not like being disturbed while I am struggling to write. And I did not want to actively correct students' mistakes because I was afraid of hurting them. Personally, I do not really want to be corrected, either. Due to my prejudices, I tried not to intervene into my students' writing activities. These were my choices. Interacting with students in this way allowed me to give plenty of individual praise and raise students' confidence.

A few other questions arose after these attempts at teaching writing. Did I actually teach students writing? Or did I just give them time to write? Could I do the same thing with mixed group classes with students who are not as good at English as these science high school students? Would it be possible to teach writing to large classes even if it had not been easy teaching and evaluating with the small size class of 23 students?

New attempts in 2011

In 2011, I had an opportunity to teach writing in a different environment – physically and psychologically. Physically, I moved to a different school. Previously, I worked for Daegu Science High School, where all the students were highly talented in science and mathematics. In 2011, I was teaching at Daegu Girls High School, one of the normal high schools, where most students are studying English for the purpose of college entrance examinations. I taught 610 first-year high school students. They were in 14 mixed-ability classes and there were about 44 students in each class. It means it was generally a worse environment. Psychologically, however, it seemed a better environment. Since the government announced that they would adopt a new kind of English language test, the National English Ability Test (NEAT), I could feel the difference in students' attitudes and expectations. When I told my students that I would teach them writing for NEAT, most of them showed positive responses. I wanted to make new attempts, based on my previous experiences.

Easier and friendly tasks

Although my previous students of Daegu Science High School successfully submitted their essays, I knew that I couldn't do the same with the students in other normal high schools for several possible reasons. First, there were too many students, and I couldn't read all of their papers. Second, the gap between students was so severe that I could not ask them to write more than a paragraph.
I concluded that a paragraph might be challenging enough for most high school students, and it aligns with the government policies regarding the NEAT. I checked the rubrics for NEAT, and found that the requirements for NEAT are not very demanding. For the second level of NEAT, which is for the third graders of high school, the word limit is 120 words. I decided to choose the topics for the NEAT as well because students may be interested in doing something useful at school. I chose such topics as favorite books, movies, their travel experiences, or easy comparison

and contrast of advantages and disadvantages from the NEAT topics.

For the first semester, I focused on understanding paragraphs. For a whole semester, 5 different paragraphs were analyzed and studied by the students. Most of them were from the previous students. The second semester was spent on dealing with the NEAT topics. Four different types of NEAT topics were tried during the class. It turned out that students became active and very interested when they found that the topics were not difficult and were related to their lives.

Explicit instruction and enough practice

"What would happen if I ask my girl students in Daegu Girls High School to write an essay on any topic as I did in Daegu Science High School?" I asked myself. My answer was it must be chaos. They would come to me and complain. Some of them would start surfing the internet to ask for help or to copy something. Some others would give up. Only a few of them would take it seriously. It would not be possible for me to read all of them. With the 23 students in each class, and with 92 students altogether, I didn't think it was possible to give essay writing as a task.

In 2011, I decided to spend more time on pre-writing activities because I learned that teachers can help students to become more active through two teacher training programs I took during the interval while I was not teaching. What I learned there was that writing class, like all the other classes, cannot be separated from the other classes, and is better have writing integrated with the other skills. In addition, to encourage students to become active, it is crucial to have some pre-activities in all skills lessons.

My intention was to give students chances to read, talk, and think before they get to write about the topic.

Kong-ju Suh has been working as an English teacher since 1993 in Daegu, South Korea. She received her MA in Englisn Language Teaching in 2000. She received the SIT Best Practices in TESOL certificate in 2008 and also completed the Teacher Education Consultant Course in 2011. Since 2003 her major interest has been teaching writing in EFL situations.
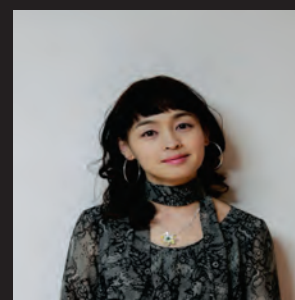
Expat Life
Ttompatz looks at the legalities related to extra employment

One topic that often comes up when English language teachers get together in Korea is the opportunity for earning extra money. The most often mentioned route is that of "teaching privates," or private tutoring. For those of you on an E-visa (e.g. E-1 or E-2) this is classified as an activity not permitted under your status of sojourn and can, if caught, result in legal ramifications that range from a fine to detention and removal from Korea.

There are hotlines set up in some cities, like the one set up by the hagwan association in Daejeon, where people can report you anonymously or collect a bounty if the information is accurate and you are charged with an immigration violation.

Another issue that often comes up is being asked by your employer to work at a 2nd location. Under the old rules this was forbidden without the expressed consent of immigration and with the notation added to your ARC (Alien Registration Card) prior to commencement of work at the 2nd location. This policy has now changed.

It is now possible for an employer to place you at a 2nd location owned and operated by the same employer without prior consent from immigration. Immigration does, however, require that notification is made within 14 days of the start date and the additional workplace will be added to your ARC. The same requirements apply to your employer subcontracting you to a 2nd employer outside of your regular place of employment.

This is, thankfully, not the only way to make some extra money while you are here working in Korea. There are legal options for you to find your own additional employment but there is also a right way and a wrong way to go about getting extra, legal work.

A few years ago the requirements for obtaining extra work meant that you had to get permission from immigration before you started the 2nd job and there were restrictions in place on the hours of work, amount of work, amount of pay, etc.

Over the last couple of years immigration has changed the rules in ways that make it easier for employers to better utilize the available labor pool and makes the process easier for foreign English teachers to get extra work legally.

So how do you go about getting the 2nd job? The requirements for obtaining the 2nd job are:
•That you must have written permission from your employer.
•The 2nd job cannot pay you more than your primary job.
•The 2nd job cannot take more time than your primary job.
•The 2nd job must be able to legally hire a foreigner.
•You must report the 2nd job to immigration and obtain permission for the additional employment within 2 weeks of beginning said employment.

The process is not complex but does need to be followed or you will be in breach of your status of sojourn and put your status at risk (immigration violation). To do it the right way you need to find a 2nd job – usually teaching in an area that does not compete with your employer. Now, you need the following documentation to keep immigration happy:
•Your ARC.
•Your passport.
•Permission from your current employer – in writing and with the employer's stamp on it.
•A copy of your current contract
•Copy of the current employer's business registration.
•A copy of the contract from the new employer.
•A copy of the new employer's business registration.
•An application form (from the counter in the immigration office).
•The fee (60,000 won) for the addition of an employer place of employment.

Go to the local immigration office and file your application. If the employer can legally employ you it will be quickly approved and you will be on your way with the additional place of employment appended to the back of your ARC. If the new employer cannot legally employ you or you cannot legally work at the 2nd job your application will be denied and you will be informed of the fact before you leave the immigration office.

One big note here is that civil servants, regardless of class, are not allowed to work at a 2nd job that is not a government job; or in simple terms, if you work at a public school you cannot take paid employment with a private employer. It is a violation of the civil servants act and can cost you your job, loss of your status of sojourn and get you an exit order from immigration. You can however take work in an after-school program at your own or another public school, or find additional hours at another public school within the limits of your current contract.

It is possible to legally take on extra work. You do, however, have to realize that E-visa holders are not citizens here in Korea and there are restrictions and requirements that you have to follow to keep it all legal and ensure a problem free stay here in the Land of the Morning Calm.

"Ttompatz" has been in the ESL game for some 16 years, most of which were spent in Asia and almost a decade of which has been spent here in Korea. As well as working as a teacher he has also spent many years working as a volunteer at one of the foreigner help centers here in Korea as well as posting on the more common internet ESL forums. Contact him at ttompatz@yahoo.com.

Teaching on Jeju Island
Three educators share their experiences teaching on the "Hawaii of Korea"

Hagwon – Hag-what?! A Hagwon Teacher's Experience in Jeju

Sink or swim. That basically sums up mine, if not most, hagwon experiences throughout Korea. I've been working in the hagwon system since October of 2010. The most experience I had with teaching before starting my job here was throwing children off a diving board when teaching swim lessons at my local pool. Did I mention I was in high school when I taught swim lessons? Needless to say, I had no idea what I was doing when it came to classroom teaching. I knew I loved kids and I knew I wanted to travel and thus, found myself in a hagwon on Jeju.

My first weeks were hard. It was a totally different experience living in Korea and working in a Korean establishment. I often found myself jealous of people I met that taught for EPIK because they had 10 days of training and came to the island with a group of friends. I was lucky enough to know someone on the island that helped me with the basics, but I had no other friends and after only two days of "observing",I was tossed into my first official class. I spent my first weeks just barely keeping my head above water.

Mary Rager-Summers
English Teacher
ESLR Institute

Overall my hagwon experience has been wonderful. The kids are amazing and I have a lot of freedom to incorporate fun activities or to teach subjects that I think are useful and entertaining for EFL learners. This freedom in the classroom is something I found special among teachers here – whether hagwon or EPIK. Teaching in a hagwon is a unique learning experience. There are times when it is tough to communicate to students with no English experience – but you figure out how to get your point across. There are times when you think your boss is absolutely nuts for wanting you to teach a certain way – but you find a way to satisfy both him and your own ideas of teaching. I have learned a lot about office politics and curriculum design – all without training. While at times I wish I worked 9am-5pm or had my lessons planned out for me, I would never trade my hagwon experience. I think I learned more while teaching than I actually taught my students.

Being on Jeju also made those tough days bearable. Since I don't go to work until 2:30pm each day, I can get up in the mornings and enjoy time on the beach, or a hike – things that I don't think I would get to do as an EPIK teacher. I can stay out late, sleep in, and still be able to function as a normal person at school. On the other hand, it is hard during the summer when my EPIK friends are heading to the beach after work, and I'm still in the classroom at 9pm. There's also less vacation time with hagwons, but if you count every morning as a half-day of vacation then overall hagwons win! It's all a matter of perspective.

As with every situation, there is always a time when the grass seems greener on the other side. Some days it would be nice to be an EPIK teacher (like when they have the day off for a school's birthday) and there will always be a friend whose hagwon sounds more relaxed than yours. But just as there are people with better deals, there are people with worse. My hagwon in particular is a pretty strenuous place to work – there have even been weeks I've put in over 50 hours – but my bosses are wonderful and I couldn't ask for a better group of co-workers. I've been taken out to dinner and given Christmas gifts. I work hard but I am rewarded and that makes it worthwhile. In hagwons you have to be willing to give your best in order to receive perks. Basically, if you can figure out how to swim, or at the very least tread water, while working in a hagwon, the experience is sure to pay off.

An EPIK Experience

I've been working for EPIK in Jeju since 2007 mainly in high schools but have also had short stints at a couple of elementary and middle schools. It has been a policy of the Jeju Office of Education that each school have a native English teacher visit at least once a week so there are many opportunities for native teachers within the Jeju public school system. Whilst the EPIK contract here is similar to that throughout Korea, there are some things that make teaching on the island stand out compared to the rest of the country.

There are many benefits to living and teaching on such a beautiful island and this can be particularly evident when planning extra-curricular classes and summer camps. At one high school summer camp last year we spent a day at the beach, and at an elementary school camp we visited a huge park with a completely unexpected baby pig show! The wide variety of activities available on the island allow for some very creative and different lesson plans that may not be possible elsewhere.

As for the benefits of being an EPIK teacher on Jeju – there are many. Students and co-workers are friendly and approachable and the quality of life here is great; finishing work comparatively early in the day allows the chance to spend time at the beach in the summer or to hike one of the many oreums in the winter. Jeju is certainly one of the better places to teach in Korea.

Simon Edmunds
English Teacher
Hamdeok Middle School

Higher Education in Jeju

I came to Korea in 1994, and settled in Jeju. I have only worked in the area of higher education, my first job being at a two-year technical college. I was the first foreign teacher hired by the college. I was hired, not as a foreigner teacher, but as a regular visiting professor with all the same rights and privileges as a Korean visiting professor: a 12-hour work load, annual pay increases, holiday bonuses, money for research, and overtime pay, but no housing or airfare. Although the base pay was rather low (1.3 million a month), with all the bonuses and overtime pay (typically 8 hours a week) it made it worthwhile.

At the beginning of my fifth year, the college hired another foreign teacher in the English department. He insisted on receiving airfare, housing, and the same pay as other colleges offered (1.8 million). The school changed my contract to match his. This meant nearly a 50% cut in pay as mine had increased considerably over the years. Additionally, I lost my overtime as the new contract set the work load at 18 hours per week. Furthermore, since I already owned a house I was not offered housing nor a stipend. Needless to say, that was my last year at that college.

I then became a full-time lecturer at Jeju National University of Education (now Jeju National University's Teachers College). The pay was close to what I had earned before the new contract at my previous school. The regular teaching load is 16 hours a week with a maximum of 20 hours. My work load varies from 16 to 18 hours a week depending on the courses I am required to teach during a given semester. I have only occasionally worked the maximum number of hours.

Class sizes at the university are much better. I usually had 50 to 70 students in a class at the college which made it impossible to accomplish anything. At the university, I have no more than 12 students in the English conversation classes and double that in lecture style classes. Also, the university students are much more dedicated to learning.

Most attractive to me, there was no set curriculum for the English conversation classes. This allowed me to develop a very successful program. I use Extensive Reading plus retelling. Students read books of their choosing, four hours a week out of class. In class, they retell the story to their group from one or two of the books they read. The freedom to design my own program led to a 97% success rate and 100% satisfaction among students. I can actually hear my students' English improving week by week compared to no discernible difference after two years of classes when I taught from a textbook.

Overall, I have been very satisfied with my employment and life in Jeju. The only problem is, there is no chance for promotion or pay increase regardless of my credentials, publications, presentations, or hard work. However, I am payed 12 months a year, unlike many colleges and universities that have gone to only paying teachers during the semesters. Additionally, I rarely have to do any teaching during the breaks. Thus, I am free to do programs at other schools to earn some extra money if I desire. It's a pretty good life.

Shaun Miller
Teacher Trainer
Jeju National University's
Teachers College

Picture courtesy of travionside.blogspot.com

Using Recorded Speaking Homework in a Discussion Class
Alexis Terrell helps students speak without needing a partner

As a native English-speaking teacher, I've predominantly been relegated to teaching speaking. Most of these courses promote basic conversation skills about students' hobbies and daily routines. Don't get me wrong – these are important skills. However, at the university level, I know students should also be expanding their ability to express complex opinions in oral situations. Encouraging students to think critically about major issues and feel comfortable and confident enough to express their own opinions in spontaneous speaking scenarios was the goal of a discussion course I taught for English majors (low-intermediate to advanced-intermediate). One of the main caveats to this goal was that all 3 hours of weekly class time were spent in discussion, and homework was assigned to further this skill – not written homework, but only solo recorded spoken homework.

While this type of homework may not focus on interactive skills such as turn-taking or follow-up questions, things we covered extensively in class, it was an excellent way for students to focus on many essentials for communicating their thoughts and opinions free of peer pressure or judgment. With some extra dedication to setting students up at the beginning, I found the results well worth the effort.

The majority of the work really is done by the students, though the listening and grading can seem tedious at times.

Over the course of 15 weeks, we covered a range of discussion topics from jobs to health to globalization. I loosely based the discussion topics off of *Study Speaking* by Anderson, MacLean, & Lynch (2004). While the majority of class time was spent with students discussing these topics in groups of 4, it's difficult to make individual students in a class of 30 feel like they're receiving the teacher's full attention. As a way to extend the conversations begun in class and to connect on a more personal level with each student, I assigned students a recording-centered homework assignment each Friday (due the following Wednesday). The assignments always reflected the general topic discussed in class and ranged in incrementally increasing time requirements from 1-2 minutes to 5-6 minutes by the semester's end. I gave students a lot of freedom in terms of how they could answer a topic. The only stipulation was that I didn't want them to write their ideas down as a speech ahead of time. Making short notes was encouraged, but these were limited to one to two words, never full sentences. Here's an example of one week's discussion topic, education:

Plan a talk (4-5 minutes) on any aspect of education that interests you.

After choosing your topic, make an outline. Make very short notes – just a few words – under each of the following headings:
 •Introduction
•Main point 1 (plus example or comment)
•Main point 2 (plus example or comment)
•Main point 3 (plus example or comment)
•Conclusion

Here's an example of one student's outline. (It doesn't matter if it makes sense to anyone except the student. The purpose is to aid the student in keeping his/her ideas organized.)

Introduction: Korean education system problems
1. teacher-centered ≠ active and creative
2. competitive educational system   pressure   suicide
3. early-childhood education
Conclusion: appropriate level

Based off of these notes, the student was able to give a 4-minute "impromptu" speech about her feelings on this topic. Along with each recording, I asked students to transcribe their speeches and include a self-evaluation (what did you do well and what would you like to improve).

After listening to each student's speech, I also offered my own feedback based on the following categories:

Grammar and Vocabulary: _/3
Fluency: _/3
Pronunciation: _/3
Organization: _/3
Content: _/3
TOTAL: ___/15

The majority of the work really is done by the students, though the listening and grading can seem tedious at times. However, I found grading these speaking assignments went much faster than grading essays from my writing classes, and it was extremely interesting to hear students expand their thoughts beyond the terse answers they often gave to me in class. Even by the end of the semester, when the speeches were longer, it never took me more than 3 hours to grade everyone's; the average time for the majority of the semester was only 1-2 hours of grading per week.

Many of my students complain that they don't get speaking practice outside of class because they have no conversation partner.

Many speaking classes at my university are adept at improving students' conversational skills. They are learning the basics of polite conversation. However, they are still too timid about their own opinions on deeper subjects. My goal was not for them to be great public speakers, though this approach could certainly be adapted for that purpose. My purpose was getting students to really hear themselves and take ownership of their own opinions and speaking abilities – without relying on others to prompt them. And, based on the feedback received from students, many of whom had never heard their own voices recorded before, it definitely worked.

Here is the technical info I used:

1. Sign up for an account on www.edmodo.com. It's an entirely free and secure social networking site geared toward students and teachers. You can maintain a classroom blog as well as share links, post assignments, and privately assign grades to students. Whereas it's always possible to have students e-mail their recordings to you, I preferred the organization that edmodo.com provides. Once a teacher has signed up for an account, he/she can make different groups and share a password that enables students to link to that group. Then, students can link their homework directly to each assignment the teacher posts.

2. Introduce students to a few recording options. Some students may already have their own digital recorder or audio recording software on their computer or smart phone. As long as students uploaded their recording so I could hear it, it really didn't matter what they used. However, for students who say they don't know how to record themselves, the Internet offers some free and easy alternatives. Personally, my favorite is http://vocaroo.com/ because it requires one simple push on the opening screen button "click to record." Most computers have microphones built in, but if not, a cheap headset could do the trick.
Another web site is http://recordr.tv/. Once again, it offers free recording capabilities, this time video or audio only. I tell students they don't have to worry about their looks – just click on "record" in the top left corner, then push "audio only" followed by "record" in the middle of the screen.

3. With both of the above options, it is possible for students to review their recordings, and when they are satisfied, there are a few options for sharing:
a) Send to a friend/teacher (by e-mail).
b) Post on the Internet (with html code or web link – both easy to do with edmodo.com by clicking on the assignment, then "attach link" and copy and pasting either the html code or web link into the appropriate box).
c) Download as a WAV file.

Once I walked through the process with the class, they seemed to catch on quite quickly.

TIPS:

1. Remind students that perfect speaking is overrated. It took my students a long time to realize that native speakers make mistakes, too, especially when speaking without a script. I believe a few grammar mistakes are all right. A pause here and there is not a problem. Take the pressure off and encourage the students to focus more on their strengths rather than their weaknesses.
2. Stress that students should not be reading from a script or memorizing a script. Break this habit early because it won't help them improve. The goal is for a more free-talking style. If you worry that students are cheating in this aspect, you will likely be able to tell. Compare how fluent they sound in class to how fluent they sound on the recording. Listen for unnatural phrasing, with pauses only taken at the end of a sentence. Lack of intonation is another clue that students are reading a script rather than thinking about their content.
3. Encourage students to continue the practice of recording themselves after the semester has ended. Many of my students complain that they don't get speaking practice outside of class because they have no conversation partner. Instead of keeping a written journal, recommend they keep an audio journal. It can work wonders for improving students' speaking confidence.

As a final note of encouragement to try this in your own classes, here is some anonymous feedback given by my students:

"I feel my pronunciation and speaking English is getting much better by these assignments, making notes and speaking with recording. I can practice any time, so I think recording is good education! Yeah~~"
"I never heard my voice before. Frankly speaking, it is really strange to me. But now I am speaking longer and maybe I still make a lot of mistakes but I am not so afraid of my voice now."
"Every week I can feel my improvement. I was scared in the beginning, but now I speak more freely and with more confidence."
"I listened to my past recordings, and I really felt that I have improved a lot, especially my pronunciation. You know I used to care about my accuracy more than fluency, and now I know it's also very important to speak naturally. I will work hard to improve more and more. Fighting!"

References

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ELFER or SNAC? Which side are you on?
Nick Shepherd talks about the debate over English as a lingua franca

How much should our teaching be based on native speaker norms, and how much on the variants, noticeably in pronunciation but also in grammar and lexis, which have appeared, and continue to change and develop, in every country in the world? Who owns English?

Elizabeth Jenkins from London University's Institute of Education backs it1; Mario Rinvolucri, a well-known ESL writer and teacher, "utterly rejects" it. What do they disagree about?

It's the question of ELF, English as a Lingua Franca. A lingua franca, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is: "a language that is adopted as a common language between speakers whose native languages are different."

Over the last fifty years or so, English has become the most widely used international language in the world. It has replaced French, which in its turn had replaced Latin. Thomas More published one of the best-known books of the sixteenth century, Utopia, in Latin. Of course he did; he wanted educated people all over Europe to read it. Today, scientific journals in Russia and Italy are largely published in English. Of course they are; the writers want scientists all over the world to read their work. We can all agree that English is now the major lingua franca in the world, and is used more extensively as a lingua franca than it is as a native language. As such, it has ceased to be the language of the English speaking peoples, and has become a world language. The name "Globish" has even been suggested as an appropriate name for a subset of this language (in 1930 Ogden developed something similar, called Basic English) Perhaps we should even consider calling it "the common language", to separate it from its original creators, who are no longer the 'owners' in any real sense.

So what do Jenkins and Rinvolucri disagree about?

Before I address that question, I want to note the important differences between the role of English in the world now, and the roles of Latin and French in earlier times. A great deal of the use of the previous lingua francas4 was in written texts, which were mostly addressed to an educated elite. By the early 18th century, literacy in France had risen to about 35% (for men; for women it was about half that), though we need to remind ourselves that the definition of literacy was commonly the ability to read a short passage from the Christian Bible, and in many cases not the ability to read long texts, so true literacy would have been a good deal less than that. Not many people were reading those books, which anyway remained prohibitively expensive long after Gutenberg invented movable type. So Latin and later French were the languages of a small percentage of educated people with international connections – diplomats, philosophers, theologians, scientists, and even the odd aristocrat, though many of these confined themselves to drinking, brawling and womanizing.

English has turned out to be quite different. It functions as an international language at many levels, from diplomacy to pop culture, from international business to blogging, from literature to sport. Huge numbers of people from all kinds of backgrounds now use English as a communicative tool in addition to their own first languages. We are no longer talking about the refined, elitist speech and writing of the few, but rather of the multi-purpose language use of the many.

And that is what they disagree about.

The "elfers" (proponents of ELF) take the view that learners should aim at intelligible communication and not native-speaker accuracy. We should think about non-native speakers talking to each other, not to native speakers, and that as teachers we should supply teaching tools for that purpose, and not worry if people break a few (native speaker) grammar rules, collocations, colligations and so on, as long as the hearer knows what they're talking about. A simplified, cut-back version of the language is fine. It'll have errors and infelicities, but it'll work. So the "elfers" would accept the following non-standard sentences (taken from Erling and Bartlett):

I am here since two o'clock.
I'm a student for ten years now.
She is looking like her mother.
Mark is having many books.
He is allergic against penicillin.
They do not know how to react on the situation.

The "snacs" (seekers after native speaker competence), on the other hand, say that all learners should set their sights on native speaker accuracy. They argue that there is a great deal of consistency between the various versions of English, and we who are from Australia, America, the UK, India, Jamaica and elsewhere have little difficulty understanding each other, though there are variations. Indeed, it is sometimes harder for a Londoner to understand somebody from Glasgow than it is for either of them to understand somebody speaking English from India or Canada.

But I have a problem with the "elfers". Most non-standard features derive from the language and culture of the area where they appear. Some of these features may derive from idiosyncratic features of English itself (eg the use of do and did in question formation), but many will come straight from the learners' first language. This is especially noticeable in pronunciation, which always owes much to the first language of the speaker, but applies also to lexis and grammar. In my view, there is not, and never can be, a consistent world-wide model of ELF.

And who will these learners of English be talking to? Certainly not to people from their own culture (why would they? They already share a language); they are likely to be talking to people from different, even very different, cultures from themselves, who will bring variants in their speech which come from their own first languages, or from teaching

styles popular in their own country.

So what, really, are the "elfers" and "snacs" talking about? They seem to be busy talking about what we teachers should do – how we should teach, what materials we should use, what our attitudes should be. It is true that we do need to think about how we should behave, and what materials and models we should offer in the classroom. We need to include something else in this debate: what learners want and need.

Learners are a bit like children growing up. Children need a lot of help at the beginning of their lives, and a lot of clear rules to set boundaries to their behavior. Quite a few of these rules are only appropriate for children: you tell your children not to touch the pots on the stove, but you don't say that to an adult. As the children get older, they gradually start to make their own rules: they touch pots when it is sensible to do so. Grown-ups don't always like their children to start making their own rules, but the wise grown up is the one who has established sound attitudes and principles in the children's minds early on, together with a realistic confidence in their own abilities to decide how to act, and is willing to let them strike out on their own, offering a nudge here and there to try to keep them productive and safe. They'll make a few mistakes, which one hopes will not be life-threatening.

So it is with learners. When I started learning Spanish (which I did informally, without many classes), I accepted completely what I heard and repeated it verbatim, sometimes with hilarious or embarrassing results. But as I got up to intermediate level, I started to make my own judgments about what I wanted to say, because I started to notice – rather as children do - that some native speakers used language a lot more effectively than others. And when I reached an advanced level, I started to use Spanish productively, saying things that I had not heard anyone else say ever. That's what learners do.

Advanced learners are usually interested in expressing themselves in ever richer and more complex ways, but they want to express themselves, not some hypothetical native speaker. They always seem to want to get as close to educated native speakers as they can, while saying things that native speakers would probably never say. As you get more fluent, so you want to say what you want to say, and not what a native speaker would say; you come from a different world, with different beliefs and attitudes, and different know-how. When my Spanish became fluent, I began to lose interest in being taken for a native speaker, because although I almost sounded like one (no longer, alas!), I always managed to say things in conversation that native speakers didn't say. People said to me more than once: "It's not your accent that gives you away, or your grammar, it's the things you say". And that was when I stopped caring if people asked me where I was from; I was from England, and happy about that. I didn't want to be taken for a native speaker of Spanish any more. I wanted to be me, and say what I wanted to say in my way.

So can't we leave it to the learners to make their own decisions?

Not all students are ready to make their own decisions. This is especially true of younger students, and especially true of beginners, both of whom may well not have formulated any clear ideas about which version of the language they want to speak. In those cases, we teachers – much like the parents of young children - make the decisions for them.

In making that decision myself, I can't imagine offering students any version of English other than the one I speak. Simplified and slowed down at low levels, but up to speed and complexity as soon as possible. That's clear to me, and I think it applies equally to native and non-teachers of English. Most teachers of EFL in the world are non-native speakers, which in many ways is an advantage: they have gone through the same learning processes that their students now have to face, and overall are better able to understand their difficulties than native speakers, who have never had to learn English.

Another issue altogether is how much and when we correct.

Nick Shepherd has written about 20 books on EFL, and he's been a teacher, a teacher trainer, Director of Studies and Head Teacher, mostly in Mexico and the UK, and he's talked at so many EFL conferences he's lost count.
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Managing Classroom Behavior Through Reward Systems
Colin Walker introduces two reward systems

'Stampfest'

In a public middle school classroom, it is frustrating to see students arrive to class without their textbooks. In an effort to change this behavior, I developed an individual reward system that encourages students to not only arrive to class with their textbooks, but also encourages students to participate in class. The individual reward system, called Stampfest, uses ink-stamps to recognize student progress or desired classroom behavior. At the beginning of the school year, I list a number of ways students can obtain stamps. This includes completing homework, volunteering in class, demonstrating quality work, or finding ways to practice English outside of the classroom (such as writing book/movie summaries). If a student performs any one of these behaviors, they are rewarded with a stamp in the back of their English textbook.

Students eager to receive their stamps

At the end of each year, the student with the highest aggregate total of stamps is awarded the Top Student award and a gift card to the Kyobo Bookstore to be spent on an English book. Not to hinder the motivation of other students who perform well, I award consolation certificates of achievement, such as Best Speaker, Most Improved, Leadership, and the Student's Choice award – which allows students the opportunity to vote to determine the top student. I use 123certificates.com to make the certificates; this website offers a variety of options and templates which allows you to tailor the certificates to your preference.

On the last day of class, I host an awards ceremony, complete with a PowerPoint that recalls highlights of the year. I believe that this kind of public praise can increase the students' confidence and will promote motivation to learn English outside the classroom. For the others who perform well in class but fall short of winning an award, I offer compliments on their achievements, and in some cases, provide justification if they were not picked for an award. At the end of the ceremony, the award recipients have their picture taken as a group and posted on my website. You can see these photos at http://chosenresume.com/museum-of-extraordinary-students/

Class reward system

The class reward system aims to encourage teamwork and class participation. Each class is awarded a daily score out of ten. The score is based on a rubric that is weighted into four categories: participation and speaking (40%); respectful behavior (30%); preparation (20%); and following the teacher's cues and instructions (10%). Students are given a copy of the rubric at the beginning of the school year, which is then pasted into their textbook. The daily score is recorded at the end of each class. At the end of the semester, the class with the most aggregate points (cumulative sum of their daily scores) is rewarded with a pizza party.

To help illustrate the competition throughout the semester, I use the theme of a horse race. Each class's horse is displayed in accordance to the number of points they have. For instance, the class with the most points will have their horse displayed as leading the race. Each class is given an equal amount of opportunity to get points. If a class is canceled, the following class is worth double points.

A horse race is used as a visual representation to show how classes compare to each other.

I made the horses by searching for "horse outline" from Google Images. Then, I adjusted the size by pasting the picture into a word document. The horse outlines were printed, cut and colored manually of the time lost, therefore encouraging students to speak more. These tasks gave students a really good chance to practice free speaking and express their opinions; I was amazed at some of the language that students produced. Finally, interacting with students in this way allowed me to give plenty of individual praise and raise students' confidence.

I use the class's horse as a visual reminder when managing their behavior. For example, if the class is participating and showing excellent effort during their tasks, I point to the horse race and use vocabulary such as, "Wow, you are performing well in the speaking and participation category. Keep it up and you are destined for a perfect score, which will put you ahead of class 3-8 and into first place." Conversely, students arriving late to class or students who

forget their textbooks often understand that these behaviors will take away from their class's score of the day. In this case, I use language that does not humiliate the student(s). For example, "You did great today. Next class if you want to get a perfect score everyone must arrive on time with their books. In doing so, you have a chance to surpass class 3-8." I have found that using positive, encouraging statements like this is more effective than directly pointing out the student's misbehavior.

Conclusion

In this article, I presented two reward systems aimed to encourage language learning: Stampfest and the Horse Race. The Stampfest competition uses ink stamps to acknowledge desired classroom behavior. The Horse Race encourages class participation and can hold students accountable to one another. Both reward systems aim to create a positive learning environment. If used fairly and consistently each day, they can both be effective in encouraging motivation and managing classroom behavior over the course of a semester.

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ELFER or SNAC?

We ourselves will offer our students the version of English that we speak, with neutral comments on other versions of the language, and we correct them to varying extents, depending partly on whether they are communicating effectively or not, partly on what type of activity we're doing, and partly on what they themselves want. And what many learners at all levels want, as I learned and in many, many discussions with students, is to be corrected.

Every time we speak, sensitive listeners will guess where we are from by our accents and our choice of what to say and how to say it.

But what if the "snacs" are saying is that we've all got to learn to speak like Professor Higgins in *My Fair Lady* (sorry Bernard Shaw, I mean *Pygmalion*), then I'm with the "elfers". Both learners and teachers will – and should – retain their own accent and way of speaking. I am English, you are Korean, she is German. Every time we speak, sensitive listeners will guess where we are from by our accents and our choice of what to say and how to say it. That is as it should be.

Actually, I'm not really with either "elfers" or "snacs". This shouldn't be about what we think we should teach, but rather about what learners want and need to learn. They will have their own needs and goals, and our aim should be to help them achieve those goals. Sometimes we will decide for them, or help them to decide, but the goals will ultimately be their own.

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Journaling With Young Learners
Gordon West shows us how to use journals with younger students

Many teachers of young learners face the pressure to adapt textbooks and create materials that will capture the interest of their students. At the same time, they face the pressure of time constraints in lesson planning, especially at private language institutes. This is the situation I faced with two 2nd grade elementary school classes at my school. The classes were focused on writing with students who had been studying English for three years. My solution was to create journals to supplement the textbook for the class.

Problems

Our first problem was the textbooks. While I enjoyed the vocabulary-focused approach to writing that they offered, the learners could not relate well to the contexts presented. One writing task involved writing a report to a boss about improving facilities at a summer camp. I have never met a second grader who really wanted or needed to know how to structure a business report. Also, all of the writing was heavily guided through sentence frames and guiding questions given throughout the writing practice worksheets. This made writing boring for the learners and difficult for me to assess if they understood the concepts we covered because there was no free practice. As one learner wrote in his journal, "Books I don't like at all are the writing books. It just waste time, and make fun times to boring times."

Because the textbook did not offer a teacher's guide, all of the supplementary materials and activities had to be created from scratch by the teachers. It is ideal to be able to tailor lessons to your specific learners and class, but it takes a lot of planning time. To cope, I decided to introduce a 10 minute daily journaling routine to begin our writing classes. The learners had five minutes of free writing on a given topic along with a "challenge" to use target language we had covered in the textbook, and another five minutes to work on revising the previous day's writing. This became the opening to our bi-weekly 45 minute class.

Planning the basic structure of the journaling task (matching topics with a language focus and drafting a basic revision plan) took about an hour of planning time to prepare for 3 months of 10 minute journaling blocks. Day-to-day plans had to be adjusted, but establishing a journaling routine helped solve the problem of adding supplementary material without having much planning time since the only thing that had to be adjusted was the content.

Getting the learners to help choose the topics also helped reduce my planning load and got them to take on more responsibility in the class.

Process

The first step was to ask my learners what they wanted to write about. I passed out a slip of paper and asked them all to write and rank five topics they would like to write about in class. I compiled these into one list and ranked them in order of popularity. Next, I went through the writing books and pulled out the main target language (lexical sets, functions, etc) from each section. I tried to match the language focus from the book to the topics they had chosen, and to use the most popular topics. One example was the topic "my house," matched to a set of locating prepositions "behind, in front of, next to, etc..."

I printed out lined paper with the topic at the top of the page. Because I wanted this to be freer use practice, I presented the target language focus as a "challenge" with the wording "try to use [insert target language]." In the case of the topic "my house," I worded the challenge to say "Try to use the phrases behind, in front of, and next to one time each in your writing." I introduced a small incentive – one stamp (tradable for prizes) - per challenge met. If they used the challenge language, they got a stamp. This was enough to give a gentle push, but not a mandate.

I made one major change in this process a few months into the project thanks to overwhelming learner feedback. They hated writing about pre-determined subjects, even though I thought they were the ones who chose the topics. Learners wanted more control over what they wrote each day, rather than just having input at the beginning of the process. After that, our most common topic became "free topic" which really improved the quality and amount they were writing. I continued to provide challenges based on the target language we were covering in the textbook. At first, I was apprehensive that they would no longer use the challenge language, but they continued to include it in their own contexts.

The last step was to establish a revision guide. Self-editing was a major goal for this project not only to help the learners become better writers, but also to increase learner ownership of the project by seeing that theirs was the only writing on the pages, even the corrections. We started slowly by only correcting punctuation and capitalization mistakes and then moving onto mistakes with the target

language,as well as common grammatical, and word choice mistakes I noticed they were making (e.g. using "trash" as a verb to mean throw something away).

Outcome and learner feedback

Daily reviews of their work to see if they were able to complete the challenges provided me with feedback on which learners needed additional help. It also let me gauge if the process was successful in reinforcing concepts and vocabulary we covered in the writing textbook. This activity could serve as a standalone journaling process, but I felt it was important for their morale if the learners could see the relevance of the rest of the lesson in connection to their journaling.

As time passed, I noticed learners would reuse target language from past challenges without prompting. Terms we covered like *however*, *furthermore,* and *in addition* appeared regularly in their writing. They also began writing phrases with "would" and "could" to express politeness. The more often a word or phrase appeared in challenges, the more likely the learners were to use that word or phrase spontaneously later.

As a teacher, it was great to watch my class develop new confidence in their abilities as they became more independent learners. Journaling was a nice way to use my limited planning time efficiently, and when the process became set, it was a peaceful, focused beginning to classes that were before quite hectic.   Finally, the journal entries also became a discussion point that helped build a great rapport.

 At the end, we took one class day to decorate construction paper covers, sort the entries, and bind them with staples and colorful electric tape for the binding. The learners left with something they had created that showed their hard work and progress over the past three months.   An inscription written on the inside cover of one learner's journal captured what the journals came to mean to the learners. He wrote, "I am remembering these days with my friends that I am trying to tell you the story now." On the back of cover, it said, "The End – Be ready for next journal."
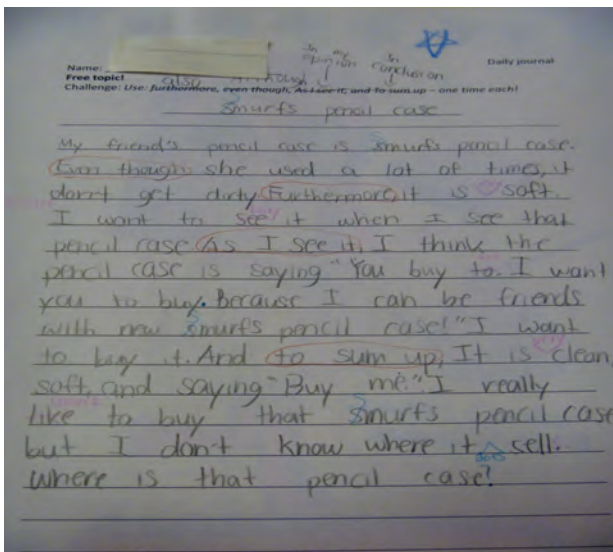
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Taking Care of Business English
David Pierson tells us how to encourage corporate students to speak up

As many EFL teachers have noticed, Korea's lecture-style education system does not necessarily promote an interactive classroom environment. Korean students are often accustomed to a more passive style of learning, which presents a dilemma for EFL teachers who are trained to engage students and elicit responses during conversation classes. Upbeat teachers with well-prepared lessons have often been met with prolonged silences and delayed responses from students. During business English classes, this passivity can be compounded by the hierarchical structure that is created by ranking of the students, the age, and gender. Teachers can encourage discussion, however, by focusing on small group work and developing effective speaking activities.

Thinking Outside of the Textbook

Business English classes use various materials, depending on the company. Some teachers are required to follow a selected course textbook while others are free to use supplementary materials. If the content in the textbook does not generate conversation in your class, try to gather articles from newspapers and magazines. Students can decide which articles they will read as a class. Prepare your students for success by assigning an article for homework. Then, do your own homework and create a lesson plan that will circumvent some of the social issues that affect class participation.

Back to the Basics

Advanced students usually have a high reading comprehension level. Despite this, many of them need a foundation upon which to build their speaking skills and express thoughts and opinions. By giving students a frame of reference to work with, they can improve their language skills comfortably. Start the next business English class by doing pair work. Have students summarize the first and second halves they were assigned as homework to each other. After this warm up is complete, model the next speaking activity with one of the more talkative students in the class. Use conversation cards that you have printed out beforehand in conjunction with appropriate target language. For this example, the target language will be, "I agree/disagree because..." If the assigned article was about 'financial aid and developing countries' the sample conversation card might read:

Wealthy countries have an obligation to help developing countries.

Model a response to the opinion that uses the target language and incorporates useful vocabulary words and expressions from the article. Prompt your talkative student to do the same, and then allow the class to begin the activity. Use about ten conversation cards for each pair of students.

Also, to add some fun to the activity, a coin can be flipped to decide whether a student must agree or disagree with the statement on the next card.

Group Work

Continue to create a speaking environment that shifts the focus of the class to the student. The teacher can keep the floor in the sense that they give instructions and monitor the class, however, the conversation cards will gently guide the students into new areas of discussion. Groups should be no larger than three or four students, and the next set of conversation cards will entail open-ended questions. Once again, model an answer using any target language that would be appropriate for the activity:

Is debt forgiveness for developing countries a good or bad idea? Explain your answer with details.

Next, let a student in the group answer a conversation card. Respond to their answer by saying, I agree or I disagree because. In this way, you build upon the previous speaking activity and encourage interaction within the group. As the discussion wanes, students simply choose another card and move on. The teacher can allow the groups to proceed on their own at this point. It is advisable to wander between the groups to answer questions or provide error correction when the students are speaking. Teachers can also remain in the groups since some students believe it is preferable to learn directly from them rather than their peers.

Continue to create a speaking environment that shifts the focus of the class to the student.
Production

Another useful activity is role-playing, which allows students to apply what they have learned and practice their English in a safe setting which can begin to transcend the hierarchical structures of age, gender, and company ranking. Simulations can be carried out in pairs or in small groups. To help students begin a discussion, you can write some 'natural beginnings' on the board that pertain to their roles. Likewise, you can write some 'natural endings' that could be drawn on to conclude the discussion. Role-playing cards for the topic of 'financial aid and developing countries' might include:

Student A

You work for a relief organization. You are trying to persuade government officials to increase financial aid to developing countries for the following reasons:
-it promotes economic growth
-it increases political stability
-it is used for health and education
-it allows a country to become self-sufficient

Student B

You are a government official working on next year's budget proposal. You are trying to tell people that it is difficult to provide financial aid to developing countries for the following reasons:
-it makes countries dependent on financial aid
-some of the money is wasted on unnecessary projects
-it can be taken by corrupt leaders and bureaucrats
-the global economic crisis has strained the budget

Conclusion

With the right activities, teachers can gradually modify the structure of the class and improve student participation. Teachers also transform their role from that of an authoritative lecturer to a facilitator who leads by example. Business English classes present a unique challenge for teachers given the difference in social position, status, and power that might exist between students. Small group work allows the teacher to respect the socio-cultural values of the students while at the same time providing learners with a comfortable enviroment in which they can improve their speaking skills.

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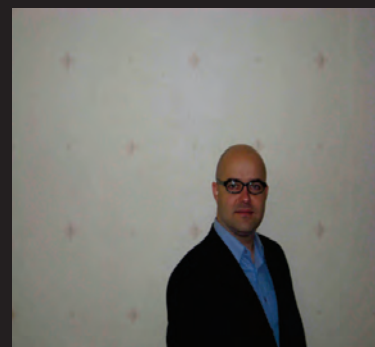
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Smarter Use of Smartphones
David Kent and Michael Jones recommend using QR Codes in the classroom

In Korea, 47 million people (or 97.2% of the population) own a cell phone (Wireless Federation, 2009), over 80% of elementary school children have one (Shuler, 2009), and smartphone use is on the rise from 1.7% in 2009 to 40% in 2011 (Brian, 2011). While some of our colleagues ban the devices from the classroom due to decidedly non-educational use by learners, others embrace the technology and the pedagogical opportunities they provide. As smartphone ownership increases in popularity, it seems likely that a steadily increasing number of learners will come to use the devices in the classroom. This is something that educators are going to have to deal with, whether they wish to or not, as smartphones are becoming increasingly ideal tools for meeting the changing needs of educational provision in the upcoming era of mobile learning (Chu, 2011).

Many of those who have taught in Korea can tell you that learners of all ages are enamored with the use of their smartphones. Indeed, Kolb (2011) views the smartphone as a technological "Swiss army knife", useful in a myriad of ways in the classroom for pedagogy and learning. To this end, this article will present a number of ways in which educators can practically integrate smartphone use into their classroom, while simultaneously harnessing student interest in technology to increase participation in second language learning. Instead of reducing the phones to nothing more than glorified electronic dictionaries left to, as Shuler (2009) laments, sit idly (in an educational sense) in the pockets and backpacks of our learners, this article will introduce how to effectively use smartphones, QR codes, and the internet in the classroom with practical language teaching and learning examples. These examples will include how to deliver authentic content, set up paperless tasks, create easily accessible multimedia projects, assign homework, and create the QR codes themselves using both mobile and desktop-based platforms.

Quick Response Codes

Quick Response (QR) codes were developed by Toyota in 1994 as a way to track parts during the manufacturing process (Rivers, 2009). The code was designed to be scanned and read quickly, hence the name. Data can be encoded within the QR code itself or the code may simply contain a link to an online version of the target data. One popular business use of QR codes is v-cards. V-cards are business cards that contain all of a person's contact information embedded in a QR code that is printed on the card itself. The information can be read and automatically entered into a user's smartphone address book with the use of a scanner application. These scanner applications use a smartphone's built–in camera to read and decode QR codes. A wide variety of free scanner applications are available such as Barcode Scanner for Android or QR Reader for i-Phones.

QR codes have spread beyond the factories of Japan and can now be seen everywhere; from product packaging, to billboards and movie posters, to Facebook pages, and even the cover of *The English Connection*. All one needs to access the content is a scanner-equipped smartphone. QR codes have allowed advertisers to make multimedia content available everywhere. No longer do you have to worry about typing long, awkward URLs into your smartphone's browser. Just scan the code and get taken to the content almost instantly. The ability to access all kinds of content quickly and easily from QR codes provides educators with a variety of opportunities in the classroom and language learning context from administrative uses, to in-class tasks, right through to content delivery.

QR codes can be created by just about anyone. There are several web sites that allow users to create QR codes for free. One popular site (among many) is QRStuff.com. The site allows users to create codes with embedded data, links to web sites, and even v-cards. The site is free and does not require a sign-up. Its ease of use makes it a popular tool for creating QR codes. The codes used as examples in this article were all created using QRStuff.com. Mobile apps such as Barcode Generator for Android allow for the creation of QR codes right on the smartphone itself.

Administrative Uses

QR codes linked to Google forms can be used to track student attendance. Create a Google form and link a QR code to it using a site such as QRstuff.com. The code can be posted in a convenient location (e.g. the classroom doorframe) and learners can scan themselves into class as they enter. The timestamp function on Google docs will also let you know who was late. Some prior knowledge of Google docs will help educators with this chore.

Another use of QR codes for administrative purposes is to create online surveys, using Google docs or Survey Monkey, and then link to them with QR codes. Learners can scan the codes and be taken immediately to the survey. The survey itself can be a teacher evaluation, a task designed to elicit target lexis or forms, or a vote on class content in following classes. This method allows the learners to answer anonymously, and the data can be monitored in real time by educators using either a smartphone or a classroom computer and viewing the results as they appear on the chosen platform (eg: Google docs, Survey Monkey, etc).

Daily homework assignments can also be encoded directly into a QR code. Learners simply scan the QR code on their way out of the class to find out their homework assignments. A paper copy of the code could be posted on a wall in the classroom, or it could be displayed in digital format as part of a PowerPoint presentation or Prezi.

[HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT]

In-Class Tasks

Educators with large classes of 40 or more learners know exactly how much photocopying that can entail. By using QR codes to link learners to online versions of worksheets and materials, teachers can create paperless tasks. Again, the codes can be presented to learners on a piece of paper, or projected on screen as part of a PowerPoint or Prezi. A good example would be two QR codes, each linked to a different worksheet as part of an information gap exercise. Each student scans a different code and is linked to their copy of the worksheet. Without revealing their content to the other, the learners can then work together to complete the task.

[INFO GAP A]   [INFO GAP B]

QR codes can also be linked to digital activities such as multiple choice tests, mixing and matching activities or cloze exercises. Free software, such as the University of Victoria's Hot Potatoes package, is an excellent resource for creating these tasks. Once created, the tasks can be posted online and presented to learners via QR codes and smartphones. QR codes containing answer keys can also be created and printed on the back of a paper quiz that learners complete in class. Upon completion of the quiz, learners can turn the paper over, scan the code, and instantly be able to check the answers themselves.

[MULTIPLE CHOICE TEST]

Learning Content Delivery

A QR code, when you get down to it, is essentially a content delivery device. What makes them unique is that they can deliver content in ways that we haven't been able to do before. In a country such as Korea, where smart phones are ubiquitous, QR codes make it possible to turn any classroom into a computer lab. The possibility of linking to the internet allows instructors to deliver streaming video, music, or any other online content right to a student's desk. Learners can be taken to news sites, Google Earth, blogs, Twitter, Facebook – anywhere the educator wants to go. Placing learners in groups overcomes the issue of some learners not having smartphones, or other limitations such as data usage caps or expenses. Again, the rapid scanning feature of QR codes makes it possible to swiftly access online content without having to type in long and unwieldy URLs.

[VIDEO CONTENT]

Conclusion

The use of QR codes in the classroom is limited only by the imagination of the educator and his or her learners. The technology, in the Korean context, is readily available and easy to use. QR codes with an internet connection allow educators to complete administrative functions, setup paperless tasks, and deliver content quickly and easily straight to their learners' desktops. Smartphones combined with QR codes can transform any classroom into a computer/media lab.

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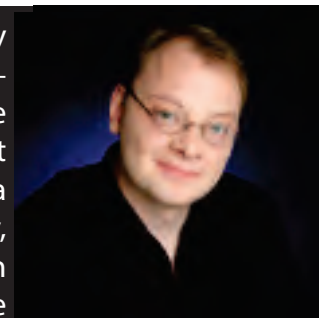
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Self Reflection
Vivien Slezak tells us how self reflection can help us in our job

After a lesson, English-language teachers may walk out of their classroom into their office, put down their teaching materials, prepare for their next class, or contemplate which pizza to eat for lunch. Teachers may not come back after alesson and think about what just occurred with their students. If you ever thought to yourself post-class, "Phew! I'm glad that's over! What should I do now?", then maybe it's time to consider self-reflection as a valuable activity that can take as little time as ordering that pizza.

Sometimes we feel like our lesson failed; moreover, we feel like a failure as a language teacher. Language teaching should encourage instructors to view themselves also as learners. We learn through our students and we learn by experience. Self-reflection is a learning process and a tool to help teachers develop themselves professionally.

Maintain the ideas and activities that worked with students, and modify those teaching techniques and tasks that were not so successful.

The flip-side of the coin of failure is a cult of positive thinking. There are a variety of teachers who believe their skills as educators are satisfactory; moreover, they believe that self reflection (SR) is not necessary, and they view this practice as a waste of time. They don't even want to think about it. You can be a great teacher and still practice SR regularly. Hari (2007) claims, "It seems essential to openly acknowledge the inherent frustrations and heartbreaks that may be encountered during a teacher's life from the start" (as quoted in Graves, p. 3). Bearing this in mind, self-reflection starts with you and your role as a teacher. Seamless lesson plans and problem-free lessons are difficult to achieve, some say impossible. If this is so, why not think about what did happen in the classroom and take action: Maintain the ideas and activities that worked with students, and modify those teaching techniques and tasks that were not so successful.

Self-reflection needs to begin at the beginning: the lesson plan. Expecting a flawless lesson when there is no blueprint to follow can prove to be more than challenging. Teachers from Nova Scotia, Canada developed the following idea:

> Planning, whether it is for a year, a unit or daily, is the act of uniting content, context, technique, timing,and sequencing. It is the what, the how and the why of instruction. It is both
> the most time-consuming and the most important work we do. It is the foundation
> of our interactions with the students. (p. 9)

It is of course apparent that no lesson plan will be followed exactly as prepared; however, it is the lesson plan itself that spells out the language goals of the class. It expresses how the instructor aims to reach those goals. It also includes anticipated problems students may have with the target language, coupled with suggestions on how to solve these problems. Finally, a lesson plan provides a structure which teachers can follow in order to give their students an exciting and educationally rewarding class.

Whether we view a lesson as successful or unsuccessful, what is the point of self reflection? Why should we devote time to it? Is the only purpose of SR to improve teaching skills? Consider these veins of thought: SR helps you strive toward teacher autonomy; SR can help prevent you from becoming a stagnant, outdated teacher; SR can help you stay motivated to consistently develop and improve your lessons, which in turn helps avoid that rut where you no longer enjoy your job. Students are not interested in seeing their lethargic teachers slink into class day after day. It is not fair to chastise students for showing you their sheer unmotivated faces and being clearly unfocused in class, if you are a mirror image of them.

One way to begin self-reflection is to start with broad ideas. Think about your role as a language instructor. Ask yourself some open-ended questions. Be sure to dig deep and ask things that may be uncomfortable or perhaps painful: Are there aspects of my profession that I am ignoring out of fear or lack of knowledge (i.e. technology)? Do I bring additional stress upon myself ? How have my beliefs about learning and pedagogy changed over the years? Do I still enjoy teaching?

Reflecting on one's past behavior in the classroom is only truly valuable if you intend to improve on areas you deem unsuccessful.

The next step in self-reflection involves digging deeper and narrowing the focus of your thoughts, which you can perform immediately after a lesson. Queries to consider are: If something did not seem to go right or as planned, what went wrong? Why didn't the lesson work? Why did the students not respond as I thought they would? Did the students really understand the task? Was the activity leveled appropriately? Was I just being lazy?

After recognizing some frustrations and challenges in the classroom, it is crucial to take self-reflection to the final step: Action. Reflecting on one's past behavior in the classroom is only truly valuable if you intend to improve on areas you deem unsuccessful. If instruction, an activity, or a task did not work out as you had planned, alter it, tweak it, add or omit certain elements, and then try it again. Failed instruction and/or activities should be improved, not abandoned.

I would like to put forth that self-reflection does not only focus on what went wrong in a lesson; conversely, the positive aspects of any lesson should also be highlighted. Success is something to be acknowledged, shared, and celebrated. Effective activities are useful tools to help design new tasks, building on what worked well in the classroom with the students and with your teaching goals. Self-reflection needs to begin with you.

Fight back against any anxiety or reluctance to confront your frustrations from a lesson.

It is an effort teachers ought to put forth as a way to demonstrate that they care about their craft. At times, language teaching is not only about what you do, but it's about how you do it. Self-reflection is a two-step process involving thinking and acting. Development cannot occur if your ideas to improve yourself do not make it into the classroom. Students are mindful of their teacher's attitude, demeanor, and zest for teaching. They notice teachers who attempt to improve their skills. Fight back against any anxiety or reluctance to confront your frustrations from a lesson. Your students may feel indifferent with a class that is ordinary, but think about how they would feel when your class is engaging and enjoyable; think about how you would feel.

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For example, one of the topics students enjoyed most was cell-phone usage at school. First, as a group they decided if they agreed or disagreed that cell phones should be allowed in school. They came up with three reasons for their decision and wrote them on the worksheet. Then, with the teacher's guidance, each group gave their worksheet to a neighboring group. The teacher gave 30 seconds to add any new ideas to the worksheet. The worksheet rotated around clockwise or anticlockwise until each group had a few more ideas. My intention was to give students chances to read, talk, and think before they get to write about the topic. After this group brainstorming, students started writing about the topic individually.

Results

"Well, now I have 870 students' writing samples." I said to myself last February when I arranged my stuff. I have collected students' written work each year, and now one shelf of mine is filled with them. In December 2011, when I finished all the grading, I felt like I couldn't do it anymore because it took me nearly one week to evaluate 610 students. There were times when I deeply regretted having started this writing class. I wasn't happy about the piles of paper that were waiting to be read by me at the end of each semester. I wasn't happy when I had to work even on Sundays. What did make me happy, however, despite all the hard work, was that I could see students finding it less difficult to write something in English. Compared to the first semester, it took less time for students to write more in the second semester. Another thing that made me smile was that, especially in the second semester, I found a lot of positive feedback through the reflective journal from each class. I read comments like, "I found this class fun and useful," "I like studying difficult words," "I like graphs. It is easy and fun."

What made me feel unsatisfied was that time constraints and all the student work prevented me from giving students any written comments, including any suggestions or my general impressions of their writing. I know that nobody will blame me for that, but I feel sad that this situation is actually beyond my ability to change.

I know that I will try teaching writing again. What makes me continue is the students' feedback. Feedback like this, which was from the last reflection, in which I asked them to evaluate themselves:

I think I did my best in this class. Sometimes my focusing on the class was distracted but I satisfied with this class. I was glad to get a chance to develop my writing skills, and could learn from teacher, Princess-Suh. Next time, I think I can do many things which related to English. Also, I got much confidence about writing even it's Korean or English. I hope to meet this class next year again. Thank you^^* lol

Station Teaching
Gemma Lunn looks at the practice of station teaching

Using the same format in a classroom can become boring and predictable for both teachers and students. Consequently, we need to always be thinking of different ways to keep students engaged: pair work, games, mingling activities to name a few. Trying new activities and teaching methods in public schools is somewhat constricted by challenges such as large classes, the syllabus and mixed ability groups.

Station teaching, however, favours larger classes, can follow the syllabus and allows students of all abilities to work together and participate in the class. In addition it offers a completely different format to the typical Korean public school English class. It is a format which can engage all learner types: kinesthetic, visual and auditory while giving the students the opportunity to work individually, in pairs, and in small groups. I have tried station teaching in all three grades of the girls' middle school where I am currently working and would like to share this idea in the hope that it can be of use to other teachers.

What is station teaching?
Station teaching involves having three or four "stations" - areas/desks where students participate in different activities. Students move stations every 10-15 minutes depending on the number of students and length of the class. One of these stations is monitored by the Native English Teacher (NET), another by the Korean co-teacher and at the others, one or two students are left alone to complete activities. One of the advantages of station teaching is that it is conducive to almost any topic: jobs, hobbies, places etc. This format can be used to practice any of the four skills and also to integrate skills in order to maximise learning opportunities for different students (Harmer 2007). Station teaching can be incorporated into teaching from a textbook, as students can complete textbook activities at some stations and then be involved in speaking activities related to these at others.

Before starting the station lesson, clear instructions must be given to the class so students know where they are going when the timer goes off and also what they are doing at each station. Additionally, it is useful to put written instructions (with Korean translations if necessary) at each station.

For my first station lesson I used the topic of 'The City and the Country'. The stations for 'The City and the Country' lesson were set out as below:

Station 1: vocabulary worksheet and a crossword
This station was most suited to visual learners. Here, students completed a vocabulary worksheet and a crossword (worksheets varied with each grade). For fast-finishers, there were extra worksheets. Depending on your students' behaviour you may have to visit this station to check if students are completing the worksheets and see if they need

any help. I normally ask one of the more advanced students in each group to help the others and check that they understand the task. I have a points system in my classes whereby tables receive and lose points depending on their participation/behaviour. I therefore told students their table would only receive a point if every member completed both worksheets. This had the effect of students encouraging each other to finish the work, taking the responsibility for staying on task away from the teacher. This station allows students to work and interact independently, thus promoting learner autonomy. However, students were not forced to work independently; they were told it was fine to work together if they preferred, and in this way, help each other and discuss their answers.

Station 2: Guess the place game with co-teacher
At this station the Korean co-teacher helped students play a word guessing game. One student took a card, which had the name of a place in a city / the country on it. The student then had to describe the place to the rest of the group, for example: "it's a place where you can buy bread". While the co-teacher gave students the grammatical structure to follow--in this case "it's a place where…" but I did not want students to feel they needed to follow it strictly. More importantly I wanted to encourage student speaking as much as possible. Note: Students can also be given the option to act out the word in addition to describing it; the activity will then appeal to kinesthetic learners as well as auditory learners.

Station 3: Design a poster
In pairs, students designed a poster to promote their city – Busan. I provided an example with some useful expressions, encouraged students to not only think about which places tourists should visit in Busan, but to also use a variety of adjectives and phrases. As an incentive students were told that the best two posters would win points and be displayed in the classroom. This task appeals to all three types of learners.

Station 4: Debates / Q&A with NET
This station appeals most to auditory learners and is a mix of debating and Q&A activities. For grade 1 I did a 'speed dating' type Q&A, which I participated in. Students asked each other questions from a handout such as "what are the 3 best/worst things about your city?" Allowing students to formulate their own answers and use whatever language they could was a welcome break from the rigidity of the textbook. For grade 2 and 3 students I split the station into two groups and they debated topics such as "Which is a better place for children to grow up: the city or the country?". Each group was given a side to debate and several minutes to brainstorm ideas; this gave lower level students a chance to understand any new vocabulary and revise what they were going to say. During the debates I ensured everyone spoke by asking students to take turns

making their points. This can be done effectively through the use of a straw or similar object; students hold the straw when speaking; after finishing, they pass it to a member of the opposing team who makes their own point. To add an element of competition you can debate against the clock and the team holding the straw at the end of the time loses, therefore encouraging students to speak more. These tasks gave students a really good chance to practice free speaking and express their opinions. When run in my class I was amazed at some of the language which students produced. Finally, interacting with students in this way allowed me to give plenty of individual praise and raise students' confidence.

At the end of the class it is a good idea to allow time for feedback. In the case of this class, this involved eliciting some answers from the worksheets, reviewing some new vocabulary, choosing the best posters and awarding table points. It may also be useful for future lessons to establish which stations students enjoyed the most and which they found most useful.

Benefits for students

There are many benefits of station teaching for all parties involved. First and foremost it offers students a different class format which immediately gains their interest and adds variety to the predictability of sitting in the same seat during every lesson (Scrivener 2005). The regular movement and change of tasks maintains interest and motivation, something which is especially difficult to achieve with young learners and teens. Offering different types of activities ensures you are appealing to more, if not all learner types; therefore engaging a wider variety of the class. Working in smaller groups provides a change of pace in the classroom and increases the amount of student participation and speaking time (Richards & Rodgers) On the other hand, the stations which are not monitored give students a chance to work alone and at their own pace.

Benefits for Teachers

The benefits for NETs and Korean co-teachers are obviously closely linked for students. In my opinion, the main benefit of station teaching is the increased 1:1 time it allows a teacher to have with their students and the rapport that can be built as a result of this. It also allows teachers to take on a different role as a participant rather than controller.
As an NET I am often speaking to the class as a whole, but rarely do I get the chance to sit down and speak with each student individually. I think the flexibility of station teaching offers teachers a good opportunity to deliver a fun, alternative lesson structure. If you are in the position where your Korean co-teacher leads most of the classes then this will offer you a chance to be more involved with activities and vice versa. Obviously, you need to share your plan before the class so you both know what your role in the lesson will be.

Conclusion

When I have delivered station lessons I have always received positive feedback from my Korean co-teachers and students. The level of student participation in these classes clearly demonstrates that students respond well to and enjoy this format of lesson. It is a noisy and busy type of lesson and it can be tiring for teachers, as you need to keep an eye on un-monitored stations whilst participating in activities and ensuring everyone is at the correct station. However, I believe the benefits gained are well worth the extra effort.
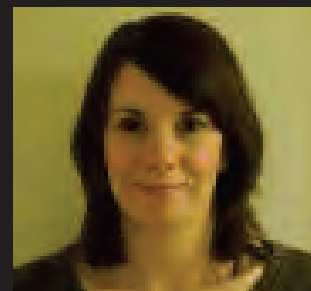
Recommended Reading

Harmer, J. (2007) The Practice of English Language Teaching (4th ed.). Harlow: Pearson Longman ELT.
Richards, J & Rodgers, T (2001) Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching (2nd ed.). New York: Cambridge University Press
Scrivener, J. (2005) Learning Teaching (2nd ed.). Malaysia: Macmillan Education.

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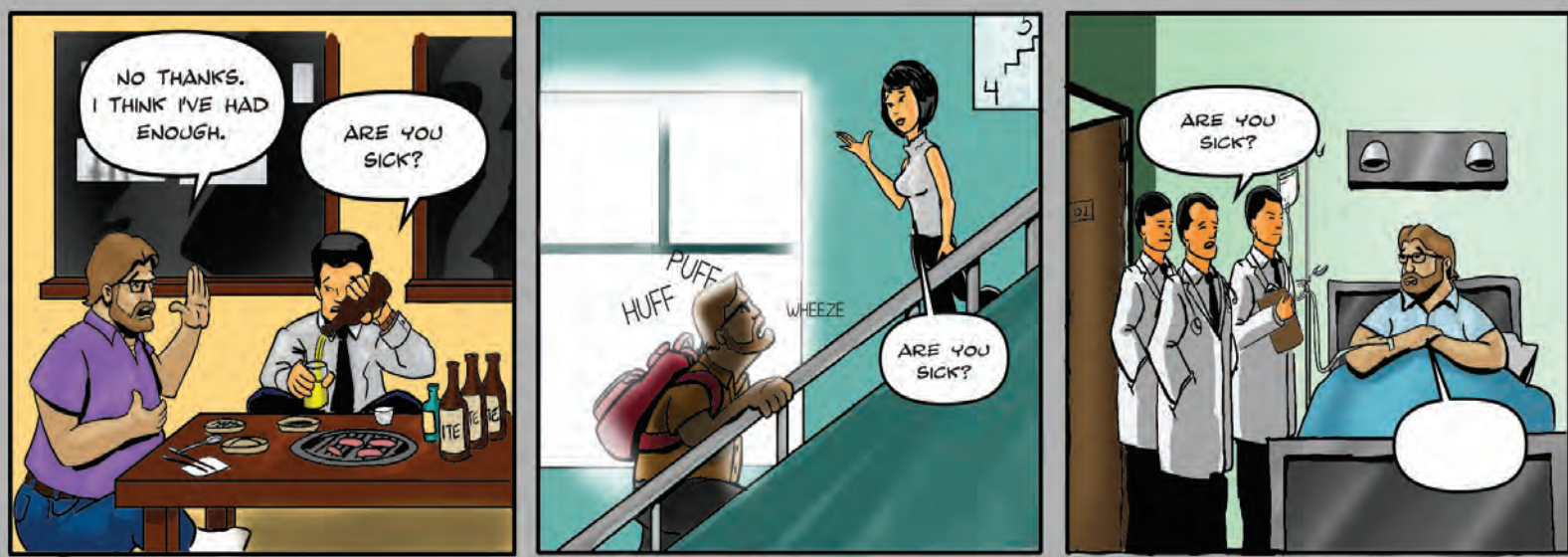
Report Cards from the Edge
Jason Burnett

Best Submission from Previous issue

"Do we need to know this for the exam?"

submitted via the internet by
Matt Freer

Report Cards from the Edge is intended to be a fun and interactive comic strip.
We encourage readers to submit caption ideas and use the comics in class.

Send your captions to tecfeedback@gmail.com to complete for inclusion in the next issue.