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Knowledge & Assessment: Overcoming Failure in the EFL Classroom.

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As an EFL instructor teaching at various educational institutions, in my profession I am often confronted with the unpleasant notion that I should expect some of my students to fail the course that I am teaching. Or perhaps an even more distressing scenario is when my students are labeled 'failed' students and are actually expected to repeat the course that I am about to teach them. Naturally as a concerned educator, I am drawn to ask the following questions, namely- why do students fail EFL? To what extent can we as teachers give a proper value to and correct assessment of our learners' acquired 'knowledge' in the classroom, if indeed we should be even doing so in the first place? Is testing necessarily the best approach open to us in how we identify failure in the classroom or are there any better alternatives? To what extent are there any possible negative consequences of assessment and should we be even concerned? Finally, how could we provide a different route for our students to arrive at a better satisfactory goal for all concerned? This polemic tries to answer these questions and offers educators and curriculum designers alike a way to redeem language students from the unnecessary misery imposed on them from failing EFL courses.

Not to put it too bluntly but students of EFL are confronted with a myriad of challenges. Aside from the usual demands of adequately performing a range of basic classroom skills (often quite challenging in themselves and which we will explore below), the actual individual process of acquisitioning knowledge in a second language from a learner's perspective may for them seem insurmountable at times. However before we examine the concept of failure in relation to language knowledge acquisition by students it might be useful to

investigate the various concepts of knowledge itself. This is very important from an educational standpoint of view and especially so, if it is to be assessed in the classroom. Quite convincingly, Alexander argues that not only is teaching underpinned by the beliefs teachers may hold of what constitutes learning, but also educators of English can directly correlate this to their own views of knowledge and subsequently link them to teaching practice, thus ultimately impinge on their EFL learners' experiences and outcomes too.

Properties of knowledge

Alexander's framework demonstrates that even though knowledge as a component part of the curriculum can be viewed on three levels; namely the specified, the enacted and the experienced, it is however in fact the *properties* of knowledge that will influence educators what they teach and how they organize and conduct their learning activities. Nevertheless, in order for us to correctly understand the properties of knowledge, we have to start by comprehending the true nature of the mind. Educational psychologist Jerome Bruner explains it from two distinct perspectives. While the cultural approach is concerned with the subjective meaning-making of knowledge, the computational perspective, with its well-defined pre-fixedness, deals with how knowledge is processed and accessed. Far from being antagonistic to each other, Bruner makes the claim that both approaches can have a complementary relationship with each other. Crucially, this shows however that it is certainly feasible to consider knowledge as having more than one dimension, whether it is being created or applied under two very differently conceived parameters (Bruner, 1999, pp. 148-153).

Indeed, Scheffler identifies 3 distinct philosophical approaches to epistemology that all have had a bearing on the way knowledge has been perceived through time (Scheffler, 2005, pp.1-4). Based on mathematic platonic traditions, a rational view of the mind regarded humans as possessing innate capabilities of attaining external truths of knowledge. This theory however was displaced in the 17th/18th century by empiricists who, grounding

their beliefs on natural science, saw the mind more as a blank *tabula rasa* in which all external sensory experiences would each etch their impressions onto it. Consequently, they regarded that all such experiences offered the mind an opportunity for analysis and thus knowledge could ultimately be constructed from this. Finally, Scheffler outlines the pragmatic approach to knowledge, which originally came from functionalist ideas at the turn of the last century. Here, the mind's 'function' was supposed to be able to resolve any discrepancies a person may encounter by formulating theories of which he/or she could actively test them out e.g. by interacting with the environment as a method of confirming and consolidating their knowledge (Scheffler, 2005, pp.1-4).

In more modern-times, one could argue that the symbol-processing view of the mind (similar to Bruner's computational perspective) stemmed from rationalist ideology and displaced the then prominent theories held by behaviorists, which were themselves founded on empiricist thinking (Sacks, 2005, p.67). Likewise, it is equally possible to link the pragmatic approach of epistemology to the situated view of the mind (or what Bruner above termed as cultural). Roth explores in depth, symbol-processing views of the mind relating to how knowledge is constructed in contrast with ideas that are more situated. Making the connection with realist theories, he argues that the more traditional cognitive constructivists believe all meaning is symbolically represented and derived from that, knowledge is therefore built up in the head and owned by the individual. Furthermore, these individually constructed structures "stand in a one-to-one correspondence with the external world" (Roth, 2005, p.6).

Radical constructivism spearheaded by philosopher/psychologist von Glasersfeld, also share common traits with symbol-processing views of the mind. This theory likewise cannot be given the situated label because it states that we construct and inhabit our own world independent of and not connected to the perspectives of other individual structures. But even though radical constructivism similarly likens knowledge as an object in the head, it believes that what we know has to be supported by past-experiences and tested out to become personally viable. Furthermore, it does not see knowledge as an

objective reality or truth existing externally as something that can be reflected in the mind of the individual. When focusing on lower order functions of the brain, this theory gains in credibility especially if one considers recent neurological studies of how we construct colors. Even so, one can rightfully attack the legitimacy of radical constructivism, especially in the EFL world, where learning and comprehension is often dependent on group/peer activities essential for growth.

On the other hand, Roth places social constructivists firmly in the situated camp. This theory, as well, dismisses the notion that knowledge of the mind is an entity mirrored somewhere outside of it. However what fundamentally separates social constructivism apart from radical constructivism, is that knowledge here is very much more dependent on *action* for its validation. But while even though it may emphasize knowledge as being individually constructed in the head, however in line with pure situated views of knowledge, meaning comes about from the interaction with others, so that understanding in reality becomes a jointly negotiated collaborative production. Roth demonstrates this by referring to Vygotsky and how a teacher might use language as a cultural tool to interact with young learners in their zones of proximal development in order to provide scaffolding, and thus helping them appropriate their own knowledge (Roth, 2005, pp.9-14). From purely a situated perspective then, one could justifiably argue that knowledge becomes socially owned as opposed to belonging solely to 'in the head' of one particular person. As an entity then, can we say that knowledge even exists in the head?

In order for us to fully understand the properties of knowledge, it is perhaps important that we should approach this problem from another angle. Anna Sfard uses metaphors as an aid to expose our own personal preconceptions of how we may value things. By coining the terms 'acquisition metaphor' (AM) and 'participation metaphor' (PM), Sfard demonstrates that educators employ the former when referring to knowledge and view it more as a commodity or something that has the potential for development, which certainly ties in with many of the constructivist theories we have already explored above.

By contrast, teachers will attach the PM label to knowledge when they do

not regard it as an object to be owned but rather as a way of describing their learners knowing how to participate in particular activities or community of learners. One should note however that although both metaphors cannot be reconciled as one, we could still apply them side-by-side to help explain different learning situations arising from various theories of knowledge. For example within the confines of social constructivism, a classroom activity may entail a student successfully learning to know how to collaborate with other learners and yet the end goal might be for him/her to also acquire a pre-determined piece of information mentally.

Theoretical trends in knowledge

The participation metaphor itself can be very prominently visible in situated views of the mind, which are not part of constructivist thinking. This is especially so regarding Lave and Wenger's theories of communities of practice. They certainly do not give much credence to such a thing as a 'body of knowledge' per se and nor do not see it as something that can be transferable or transmitted from more centrally positioned members in a community of practice to those existing on the periphery (Roth, 2005, p.16). Rather, learning occurs between members through their joint participation in activities that specifically define the community of practice. What Lave and Wenger value more than knowledge is how a member will transform and strengthen their identity within the community as their participation becomes fuller in-time. It is *how* the learner forms and develops a sense of community identity, which is the real learning taking place. Both learning and identity are then verily inseparable so that we may equate them with knowledge, if we are compelled to adopt an AM stance (Lave and Wenger, 2005, pp. 30-4).

One can also utilize both of Sfard's metaphors as way to describe Scribner's own theory of knowledge. Just as Lave and Wenger attached importance to activities related to communities of practice, Scribner argues from a situated view of the mind that it is action, which guides the acquisition and organization of knowledge. And reciprocally, this knowledge once more in turn guides

further action. She illustrates this with how individual dairy workers using the social information available to them, creatively shape their work practices so that knowledge results in being better adapted for future human needs (Scribner, 2005, pp. 103-110).

In the context of education, Williams also believes that social processes cannot be separated from knowledge production. He advocates that the aim of educators should no longer be to place knowledge in the minds of the individual students so that instead there is a concerted move away from procedural to conceptual forms of learning and understanding. Consequently, "the teachers' role in...classrooms shifts from an authoritative dispenser of information to facilitator of discourse and construction" (Williams, 2005, pp. 203-8). This parallels nicely with Bruner's narrative tenet. However, when investigating various theoretical trends in knowledge, we as teachers must also relate these to different types of knowledge and observe how our learners organize them if such knowledge is to become pedagogically relevant for us.

Types of knowledge and their relationships

McCormick investigates the credibility of different types of knowledge. By comparing the teaching of academic knowledge with practical knowledge, he ascertains that much more attention should be afforded on the latter than what currently occurs in schools. Although Lave and Wenger dispute the concept of transfer, McCormick too has his own doubts about the transfer of academic knowledge, but for different reasons. He argues that if learners experience difficulties comprehending abstract things then this will only serve to be problematic when applied to different contexts later on. Although acquiring de-contextual knowledge is necessary, he argues, that which is connected exclusively to an educational setting is not. This lends some weight to Lave and Wenger critical reference to schools really being only made up of communities of schooled learners. In order to counteract these accusations, McCormick suggests that using everyday authentic situations are the best for making tasks culturally meaningful and genuinely problematic for students and

so these should be given priority in the classroom. Ideally, there must be a match made between the situation and knowledge with both procedural and conceptual forms linked together (McCormick, 2005, pp.112-133).

To illuminate further how knowledge may be organized and used, though this time from a symbol-processing AM approach, Glaser looks at these in relation to experts and the way they perform in their domains which he considers have significant implications for teaching. Just as McCormick found, he argues that experts also organize and integrate their knowledge in chunks so that they can take in and use information more speedily than others. Essential for education then, students should be encouraged to look for connections between procedural skills and structured knowledge acquiring them to construct their own organized knowledge, which may in turn be used for self-monitoring, performance and general thinking in schools (Glaser, 2005, p.89 & pp. 96-9). However, it is important to note that if we adopt a purely situated PM approach to the idea of domains as entities, instead of viewing them as a group of concepts or procedures, they therefore should be reconsidered as actions forming a part of the overall practice and so are automatically connected with identity. Regardless of the different viewpoints though, it still helps us as educators to consider domains as ways we may organize the worlds we experience.

Finally Greeno *et al.* examines various types of knowledge and their relationships between the different theoretical perspectives and how achievement is valued. From what they label as the 'cognitive perspective', which resembles all forms of situated constructivism (e.g. interactionist constructivism), they especially list concepts, strategies, schemata, meta-cognition, beliefs and contextual factors as being important here. A 'situated perspective' (resembling socio-cultural ideas, see Cobb, 2005, pp. 136-140) on the other hand, regards participation, identity and membership of communities, formulating problems, constructing meaning, fluency and representations as being more desirable. What one should note is that the cognitive perspective does not necessarily discourage all forms of socialization taking place as part of knowledge development. Just as Greeno *et al.* state, the situated perspective

may contain many of the concepts belonging to strategies and schemata of the cognitive perspective. The major difference being that each perspective prioritizes their own particular knowledge so that elements from the other perspective never become a major goal of studies nor are students ever tested in these areas (Greeno *et al.*, 2005, pp. 136-152).

Types of knowledge to be acknowledged from an EFL perspective

Figure 1 shows various components of English language knowledge that are generally valued in the EFL classroom and beyond. Since the diagram represents an EFL student's perspective then naturally the learner should be placed at the very center. In the second innermost ring is the educator who I have labeled a 'facilitator' of English construction and discourses. Rather than being a "dispenser of information", the EFL teacher offers his/her students the means or tools in which they can construct their own English knowledge. Immediately beyond the facilitator are two types of cognitive English knowledge skills that students have to confront when they first learn English. The dark gray coded segments represent basic language skills and the lighter gray ones are language component systems, both comprising the foundation blocks found in most languages. What I mean by functions in figure 1 is language awareness, for example understanding how modal verbs may be used under different situations of formality. Just to clarify, reference made to English cognitive skills are usually never fully ditched in the EFL classroom and often course syllabi contents are still centered on them no matter how advanced the student may be, requiring them to be applied correctly when called for. However what generally happens as the student develops in the classroom is that there is more focus on a combination of skills rather than individually targeted ones or that these components may eventually be only present as the background elements of lessons becoming less prominent (certainly from the learners perspective).

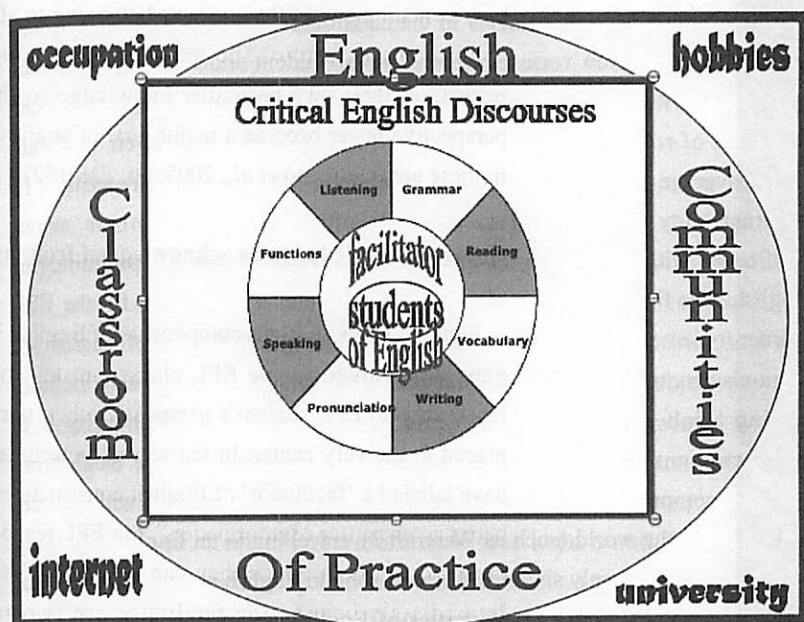


Figure 1 Components of English language knowledge.

When students have grasped even the most rudimentary of English cognitive skills ideally they are exposed to a wider a range of various English texts discourses as is possible within a situated context. These texts should be based largely on their authenticity. And in accordance with critical discourse theories, again it is preferable that learners are usually required to negotiate and construct their own joint meanings of these texts with other students in the class, applying their own conceptual knowledge. By doing so, they internalize, appropriate and adapt these texts so that this hopefully results in the learners taking ownership of their own English. Even if their English ends up being quite distinct from the original text, this is not important. What matters more is that once English 'belongs' to them, then the students' identities are transformed from simply being Japanese students of English into Japanese users or consumers of English.

Through participating in the various classroom activities, the learners forge

communities of English students in the classrooms. I use the plural since the level of participation varies from student-to-student and from the different types of activities that they do. For example, some students might become core members of role-playing communities of English because of their 'intense' above average demonstration of participation in those particular activities. In contrast, they may themselves languish in the periphery of others, when confronted with having to participate in 'task-based learning' communities of English. The final parameter of the figure 1 contains opportunities for the EFL learner to demonstrate their own transformed identities as 'Users of English' in extra-classroom communities of practice. These could miscellaneously include: having a job interview with an international corporation whereby it is conducted entirely in English, actively engaging in an online Real Time Strategy computer game by communicating messages in English with players from around the world (such as Warcraft 3), travelling to an English speaking country, or even simply singing a karaoke song in English etc. The point is that these are real authentic communities of English as opposed to 'schooled' communities of English practices, whereby it is the English knowledge specific to that community, that will determine their positioning in that said community.

How we as educators may best assess knowledge of language

Despite the above criticism from certain quarters questioning the actual transfer of knowledge in academic settings, assessment however can still play an essential role in the learner's development. Basically there are two types of assessment procedures that educators usually employ as part of their classroom curriculum: namely summative and formative forms of testing. The former is concerned with providing students with an overall judgment of their own achievements in the course they have participated. Administratively, this is often reduced to a final grade or a certificate. Formative assessment on the other hand is used to test students throughout the course term to provide continuous feedback both to the teacher and learners alike. A couple of problematic scenarios can arise from them depending on the purpose of the

assessment and the manner that they may be carried out. Even though specific needs can be met through various forms of assessment, if utilized incorrectly, they may have the potential to actually negate the very objectives of student learning.

Not surprisingly, assessment has evolved tremendously within the last 200 years. Pre-industrialization learning favored apprenticeship systems implemented in a naturally occurring context whereby assessment was based on a prior analysis of the skill involved that was more subjectively based on the teacher's personal view of the student. With industrialization and the establishment of formal schooling, came the need for greater objectivity and de-contextualization testing that could be adopted and implemented widely. Tending to ignore the unique attributes of the individual, this same system today when applied is far from perfect (or even accurate) often causing more harm than good. Recently therefore there has been a call from leading educationalists (especially by Gardner and Black) for a return to or a greater application of apprenticeship systems to undermine the dominant role of formal testing models in educational institutions today.

Their argument can certainly be justified when looking at the outcomes of formal testing from the student's perspective. Gardner believes that all types of traditional testing largely favor learners who are skilled in logical-mathematical and linguistic areas. Unfortunately this ignores other inherent intelligences crucial for human development i.e. spatial representation, musical analysis, bodily-kinesthetic thinking, interpersonal knowledge (of other people) and intrapersonal knowledge (the ability to know ones own self and act productively on that knowledge). With regards to EFL learning certainly the last two shouldn't be ignored in the classroom though more often than not this is the case. We can observe this clearly in a traditional EFL writing class for example when students' essays are often marked down based on their grammar mistakes meanwhile the 'voice' in their writing is largely ignored. One might conclude that what classical testing does is in fact hide the main strengths of the learner exposing only their weaknesses.

When scrutinizing formative traditional testing, it tends to encourage mainly

rote and superficial learning. Quantity over quality is often called for. But perhaps the most damning aspect of such testing is the way grades and marks are functionally distributed. These are usually over-emphasized at the cost of useful advice being ignored. Actual teacher's feedback too largely serves managerial functions rather than offering any substantial learning. Student performance goals instead of learning goals are the main examiner's target. It not only can weaken the learners' motivation but also make them regard making mistakes as being bad. In turn, this can have a profound detrimental impact on the amount of control students may believe to have over their own learning as they might subsequently develop a fear not only of failing but of all feedback on performance no matter how positive it is. In extreme situations this can lead to hopelessness and place unnecessary stress on the students so much so that they may simply give up and resign from their studies (as did 11% from Japanese tertiary institutions in 2010-OECD Library).

To reiterate somewhat again, a more intelligence-fair approach to assessment acknowledges better its effects on context and creativity. Preferably assessment tasks should not appear to be too daunting for the student yet must be at the same time challenging enough. But validity here is also crucial. EFL testing must ultimately try as much as possible to reflect actual real-life conditions. Teaching simply for assessment should be avoided at all costs. Instead, assessment (particularly self-assessment/or peer assessment whenever possible) has to be carried out regularly to provide students with useful feedback so that they may develop into more reflective or meta-cognitive learners.

Although it is perhaps impossible to go back to a strictly pure apprenticeship form of learning in modern-day classrooms, these models of learning however could provide the underlying template in which to build the EFL curriculum upon. I especially bear in mind Lave and Wenger's Community of Practice model of learning mentioned above. Encouraging and worth noting at more progressive Japanese universities and colleges is the increasingly abandonment of a singular final exam on many EFL courses whereby the accumulation of student credits throughout the course term now counts instead for the final

grade. Student portfolios too have also made an appearance in EFL curriculums (though admittedly still very sparingly utilized in Japan). Whether they also actually serve to be instruments of learning rather than as a final showpiece is however also debatable (this is usually very dependent on each educational institution's approach). Nevertheless, not only do they have the potential to provide teacher assessment opportunities on a variety of learning dimensions, they can ultimately also act like a silent mentor for the student. If, for example, educators constantly demand learners to review and self-monitor their own portfolios, this forces the students to be greater reflective meta-cognitive learners and fundamentally they will learn from their own growth.

Another option for educators to adopt a more apprenticeship type of assessment would be to incorporate so-called domain projects into the teaching curriculum. These are sets of exercises designed to present an idea, concept or even a practice, which is central within a specific domain. They could cover various concepts (such as composition or expressiveness), techniques, procedures and also background knowledge. Applied to both EFL writing or communicative classes, attention might largely be on the development of character and dialogue in making a short play or video. Or in poetry writing, one could look at students' skill of imagery, use of figurative language, sense of rhythm, thematic development etc. These projects should be carried out within a few lessons however they equally could be designed to be flexible enough for their manipulation by both students and teachers to serve their own specific needs/aims as part of the wider curriculum. Domain projects might each feature several assessment components, some uniquely used by students (e.g. they might judge each other's final product/or performance for their overall impact) and other's solely by the teacher (e.g. he/she might be only concerned with the quality of language used). Scoring could span the range from novice to expert-student in various different categories of assessment. Ideally these projects could be repeated again in the same term (perhaps changing only the theme) so as to encourage the students to apply what was learnt from the one beforehand to facilitate greater meta-cognition and reflection.

These ideas are maybe all well and good however there exist major stumbling blocks for the full adoption of such measures as part of a national EFL curriculum especially here in Japan. So strong is the entrenched political desire reflected in the demands for uniformed national testing that they are hampering the implementation of better forms of assessment and learning in general. Japanese tertiary institutions however could resolve this problem by deliberately adopting a dualistic approach. EFL courses may appease the politico by forcing students to take standardized tests such as the TOEIC tests periodically (the results of which would be then sent on to MEXT to justify future governmental funding), while simultaneously, educators should also be given greater freedom to adopt more apprenticeship-like methodologies into their curriculums (one that would be fairer and more conducive for learning). Even so and despite all of our good intentions, some students may still fail the newly adapted courses for several other reasons. Since it is the aim of this paper to investigate why students fail in the EFL classroom, we ought to finally question what other possible causes are there for student failure and in what way can we as educators help redeem them?

Why hope is necessary

As a teacher of freshman EFL students who had previously failed their English courses, my main duty assigned to me was to teach them in very small classes so that they might 'catch-up' with their contemporaries. For 5 years I have had a golden opportunity to find out and understand better why those students had failed in the first place. What struck me immediately was often their above-average competency in the various English subjects that they were supposed to repeat (such as in listening, writing and discussion). I soon realized that those students had failed not because they were bad at English per say but rather because they had not adequately mastered to cope with the university system of learning currently facing them. A system that was certainly different from the one in their high school years, whereby the onus for learning was now mainly the sole responsibility of the student.

Nevertheless, this still did not properly explain why all the other students in their grade managed to get through their own studies satisfactorily? It was then that I turned to the work of the late C.R. Snyder, a specialist in positive psychology, for some answers.

In his *Handbook of Hope*, Snyder defined what hope is and how he believed its very essence is instrumental to a person's success applicable to many of life's situations that they may need to overcome. He argued that there are 3 elements that make up hope: goals, pathways and agency. Goals are not in themselves ever 100% certain nor however should they be ever set completely unachievable. What is important for us educators is that the goals we establish for our students ought to be very precise from the very commencement of a course while at the same time also be both challenging yet doable. Finally, while pathways are the route(s) taken to reach such goals, the agency is the individual effort propelling that person along the pathway to the goal.

We must recognize that it is the *type* of pathway chosen by the individual (the waypower) that is just as important as the goal. More often than not, a student might all of a sudden face a barrier along his chosen learning path. Does he then simply give up on the task pursued or is he able to successfully circumnavigate that barrier to achieve his goal? If the waypower in the student is strongly established, the barrier could perhaps have then been anticipated beforehand so as to make it less surmountable. Or ideally, maybe that person

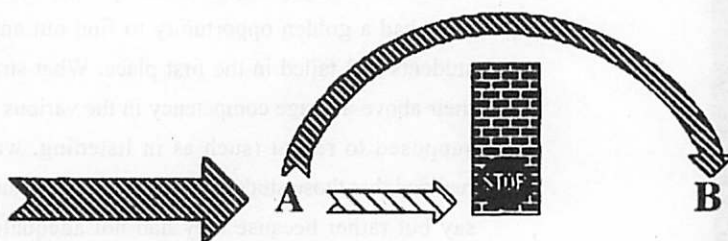


Figure 2 The protagonist (A) encountering a blockage to desired goal (B), and thereafter perceiving herself or himself as having the agentic motivation (thick striped arrow) to apply towards an alternative route (thin curved striped arrow) to that desired goal.

has even managed to create several pathways to reach his or her goal. Fundamentally however, it is down to personal agency that provides the student with the motivation or willpower to create suitable affirmative dialogues that drives him forward to overcome all barriers standing in the way.

Using Snyder's theory of hope as an analytical tool on my class students and in subsequent questionnaires and spoken interviews with them, I found out that they were usually lacking in two or all of the components of hope. To begin with, most of them had very low self-esteem about themselves. My students also often reported that they had found themselves 'lost' in their large classes (and within the university system itself) or felt that their English abilities were lacking when compared to their fellow students. Certainly they did not seem to have the capabilities for navigating unforeseen barriers nor those for creating multiple pathways. One student remarked that because she had been late for class twice in-a-row that she felt she could never make it to class on time again and so therefore she just simply abandoned her studies altogether. Other types of barriers such as what Snyder labeled 'attention robbers' were also often the culprits. A couple of my students were so caught-up in their part-time jobs or in participating in club activities that they could not put the necessary energy into their studies. As for the goals set out by their teachers, indeed a few of my students had stated that they had not understood properly the aims of their original courses and had thus found them unclear and confusing.

Snyder considered that hope was reflected in an individual's, 'optimism, perception of control, perceived problem solving ability, competitiveness, self-esteem, positive and negative (hostility, fear and guilt) affectivity, anxiety and depression'. Of course learners as agents have to take some steps themselves in order to nurture their own hope (by working on all three components) however we as educators are essential for giving or even rekindling the hope in our students too. Already mentioned above was the way teachers are instrumental in establishing the particular types of goals for their students preferably by offering a multiple of aims instead of a singular one. Enthusiastic and empathetic teachers can also provide motivation, build student confidence in their abilities and skills, help them anticipate common roadblocks and

contribute to their understanding that making mistakes is not part of some character flaw but instead however is part of the essential process of trying various routes to arrive satisfactorily at an end-goal. This resonates nicely with Freire's characterization of his preferred attributes of teachers namely being persons who not only dispenses material and facilitates in the classroom but can also act as a life coach motivating and guiding their learning. Something that we educators should certainly be bold enough to emulate, adopting this type of role model for ourselves in our classrooms everyday.

Summary

In order to overcome the failure of learning in EFL classrooms first we tried to determine how educators should understand what knowledge actually is if its very acquirement by our students is subsequently assessed which in turn may lead to a negative outcome for them. This introduced a myriad of different concepts and models of knowledge including those from an EFL perspective, all of them being significant though in varying degrees. Next we looked at how the assessment of knowledge is implemented in the classroom and the arguments for possible changes. The emphasis of this paper was to move away from traditional de-contextualized mass assessment with its negative consequences on the student, to one that focuses more on multiple-intelligences of the individual while also offering opportunities for developing student reflection and meta-cognition. Finally we examined the work of C. R. Snyder and his concept of hope, which included goals, pathways and agency in relation to learning. Important here was the crucial role hope plays on a student's success or failure in the classroom and how we as educators might instill the properties of hope into our students' learning so that their endeavors may be rewarded most favorably.

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