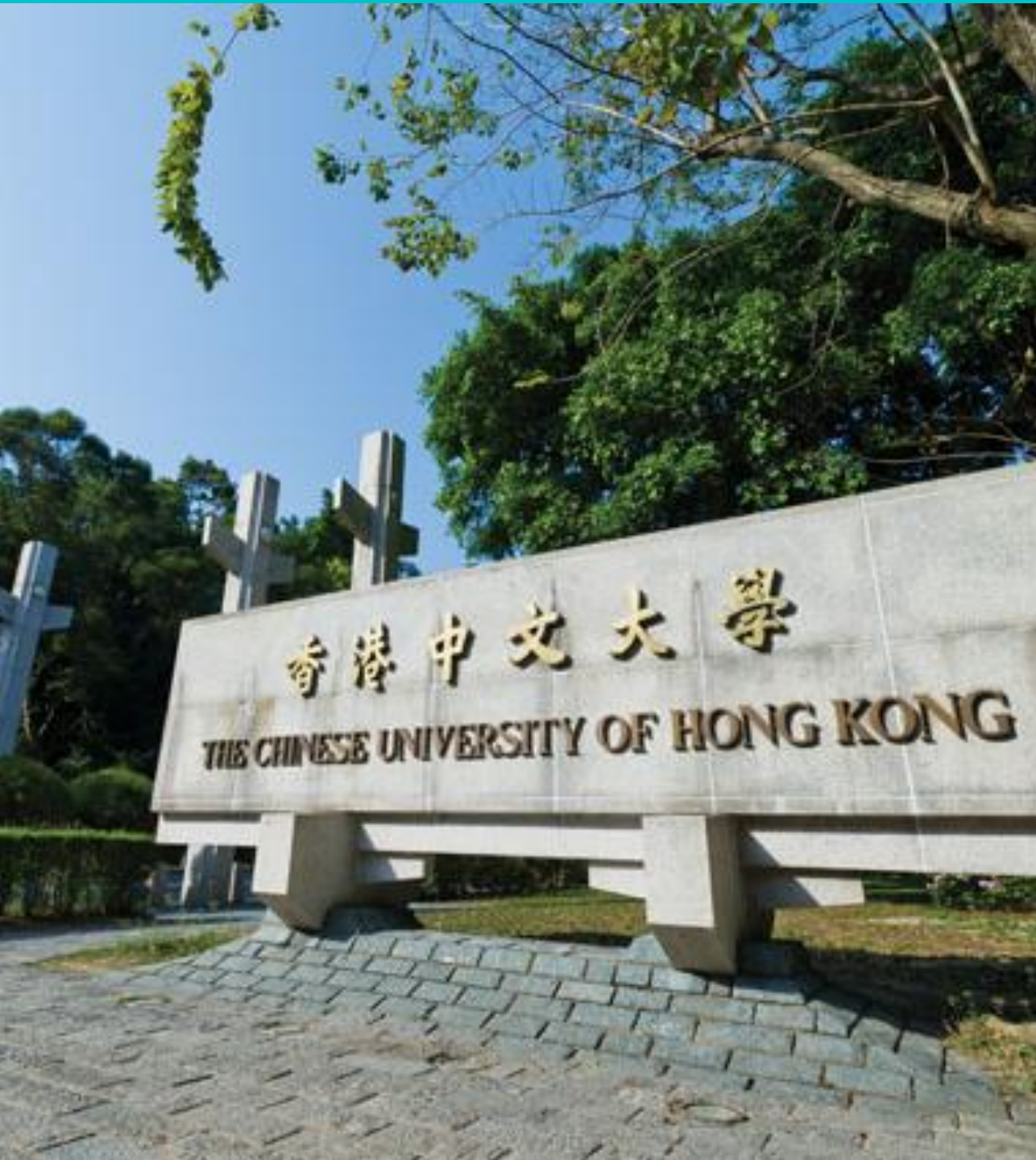OXFORD

Empowering Students to Play an Active Role in Writing during COVID-19 and Beyond

Icy Lee

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HK Secondary Students' Writing Motivation (Lee, Yu, & Liu, 2018)

- Survey with 1,399 secondary students

- Three schools

- 472 from band 1 (most proficient), 455 from band 2, and 472 from band 3 (least proficient)

- Secondary 1: 386; Secondary 3: 503; Secondary 5: 510

- 40-item questionnaire covering: importance of writing, interest in writing, writing efficacy, self-regulation, classroom writing context

Salient questionnaire findings relating to writing motivation (5-point likert scale)

Items	Mean
I like writing in English	2.99
I enjoy the process of writing	3.04
I am good at writing in English	2.64
I am confident in my English writing ability	2.72
I like the atmosphere of my English writing class	3.19
I often long for my writing lessons	2.78
I want to have more writing lessons at school	2.79
I enjoy English lessons that focus on the teaching of writing	2.98
I like the way my teacher teaches writing	3.23
My teacher uses interesting materials to teach writing	3.15
I feel encouraged when I read my teacher's written feedback on my writing.	2.24
I have enough time to finish my writing.	2.37

Possible reasons for students' low motivation in writing

- Students' learning experience as pivotal to their motivation (Dornyei 2005; 2009)
- Negative learning experience results in demotivation in writing, e.g.
  - Insufficient time to write—to draft, redraft, revise and edit
  - Discouraging teacher feedback
  - Boring, irrelevant writing topics
  - Lack of (quality) writing instruction—students are under-prepared to write
  - Predominant focus on the language form (teaching and assessment/feedback)
  - Teacher-centred approach—students as passive receptacles

ENGAGING, MOTIVATING AND EMPOWERING

LEARNERS IN SCHOOLS

DES HEWITT &
BRITTANY WRIGHT

Engagement refers to 'energized, directed, and sustained actions' (Skinner et al., 2009, p. 225)—learners to be involved in learning processes

Motivation is the driving force that exerts influence on whether and how students set about learning tasks, how much energy they are going to invest, and how long they are going to persist (Wang & Littlewood, online).

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- Students benefit from a classroom culture of 'student engagement that involves a greater emphasis on self-motivation and self-regulation' (Nichols, 2006, p.150)

- Through empowering students, teachers can enhance student engagement, motivation and self-regulation

Empowerment

- Teachers have a principal role to play in facilitating student empowerment

- Empowerment—provides the tools to allow students to accomplish the tasks assigned; students need to be given the responsibility to take charge of their learning and writing

COVID-19

- Threw teaching and learning into disarray

- Required teachers to act with flexibility and resilience, e.g. to leverage online technology and implement strategies to maximize student learning in online or blended learning environments

- Teachers have lots of immediate tasks to attend to

Nonetheless

- It is important that teachers focus on <u>long-term goals</u> and use them to guide their writing practice

- Likely to take even greater effort to motivate and empower students to write

Empowering Students at Different Stages of the Writing Process

Before writing: Students may …

1. Choose or negotiate writing topic with teacher
2. Research topic individually (Internet research)
3. Engage in pre-writing planning individually or collaboratively
4. Conduct peer review of writing outlines
5. Co-construct feedback form with teacher
6. Set personal learning goals

Writing topic

- You suspect that your neighbours are treating their pets badly. Write a letter to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) showing your concern and give details of any incidents of abuse you are aware of. Suggest what could be done to ensure the welfare of the pets and say why these measures are urgent. Sign your name 'Chris Wong'.

1. Negotiate writing topic

- Learner choice is possible

- Abuse of pets or children/old people/people with special needs

- Writing to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) or other relevant organizations

2. Pre-writing research

- Keyword search: animal cruelty, animal abuse, pet abuse, violence to animals/pets

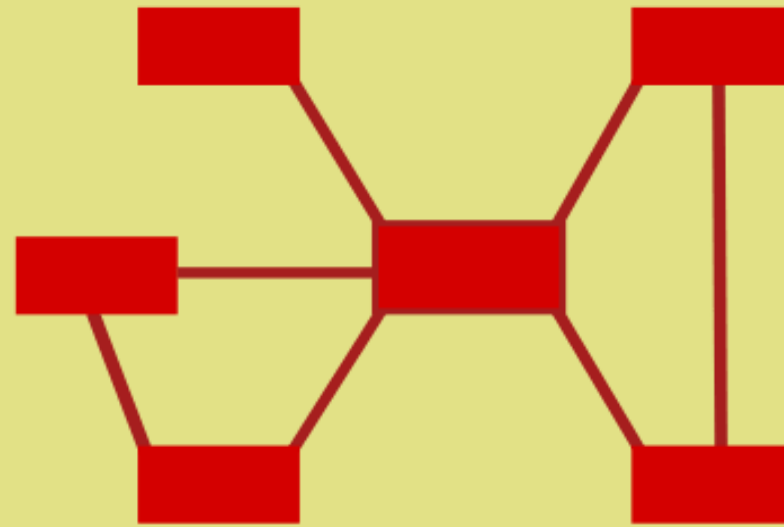- Plagiarism education/teach paraphrasing

3. Pre-writing individual/collaborative planning

- Students exchange/brainstorm ideas individually or in pairs/small groups (face to face or online)

- Students develop mind maps or concept maps, and/or writing outlines individually or collaboratively (e.g. with the help of eLearning tools)

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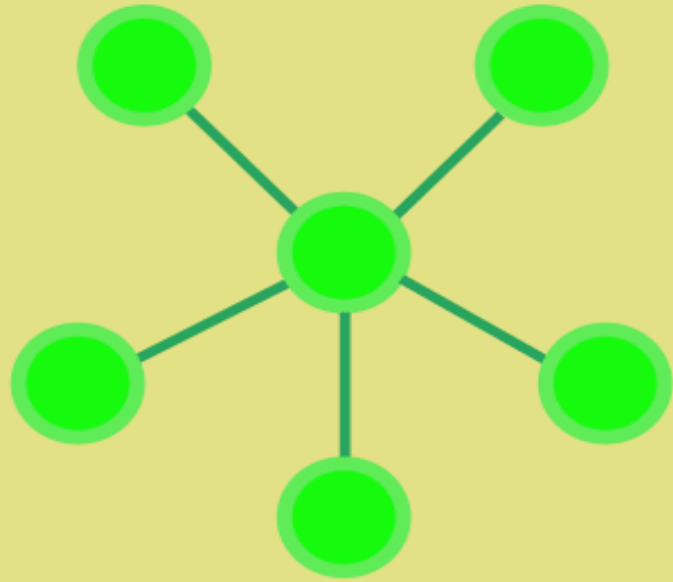
Mind Maps   vs.   Concept Maps

4. Peer review of writing outlines

- How can students be empowered to conduct peer review of writing outlines?

- Prerequisites:
  - They are provided with quality writing instruction and know the success criteria
  - They are trained to conduct peer review

Success Criteria: Content and structure

Situation: Neighbours treating pets badly		
Problem: Incidents of abuse	Solution: What can be done to ensure welfare of the pets	Evaluation: Why the proposed measures are urgent

Writing Outline

1. Introduction

Describe the situation

Identify the problem

State purpose of letter

2. Solutions

State the first solution; provide details

State the second solution; provide details

State the third solution; provide details

.....

3. Conclusion

Provide an evaluation of the solutions: If

action is not taken, what will the

consequence be?

Call for action

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5. Co-construct feedback form with teacher

- Based on teacher sharing of learning goals/success criteria with students

Success criteria/learning goals of the letter writing task

- Content and structure

- Language

- Others

Success criteria: Content and structure

- Situation

- Problem

- Solution

- Evaluation

Success criteria: Language use

- Correct use of verb tense

- Appropriate use of connectives to link up ideas

- A good range of well-chosen vocabulary

- A range of sentence patterns

Others

- Clear paragraphing
- Appropriate letter format
- Appropriate tone for target genre and audience

Assessment Criteria	1-2-3-4-5	Comments
The letter begins with clear background information of pet abuse by neighbors (situation)		
Relevant details of the incidents of pet abuse are included (problem)		
Sound solutions to the problems are proposed (solution)		
The letter ends with why the proposed measures are urgent (evaluation)		
Appropriate letter format		
Clear paragraphing		
Correct verb tense, e.g. past tense (about past incidents), present tense (about pet abuse, problem in general and solutions)		
Appropriate use of connectives to link up ideas		
Appropriate tone for the target audience and genre		

6. Set personal learning goals

- Personal learning goals are based on
  - the teacher's sharing of learning goals/success criteria;
  - students' self-evaluation of their own ability (i.e. strengths and weaknesses) and needs with regard to learning goals established by teacher
- Throughout the writing process, students can monitor and reflect on their personal learning goals

Goal setting: Letter to SPCA

My goals for this writing task are to:

1. Write a letter with a clear situation-problem-solution-evaluation structure
2. Use an appropriate number of connectives to link up ideas (I tended to use too many in the past)

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During writing: Students …

1. Engage in self-monitoring and self-evaluation, checking relevance of content and structure through asking metacognitive questions

2. Check accuracy/appropriateness of language with the help of technology

3. Seek peer feedback to enhance their writing

1. Check relevance of content and structure through asking metacognitive questions

Metacognition is about

- Being aware of what needs to be done and what options are (thus important for teachers to share learning goals)

- Ongoing self-monitoring to stay focused on the goals and what needs to be done to achieve them

- Ongoing self-evaluation and taking steps to modify the goals, if needed

Metacognitive questions generating self-feedback on students' work-in-progress

- In the introduction, have I provided clear information about pet abuse in Hong Kong?

- Have I indicated the 'problem' clearly by providing details about the incidents of pet abuse?

- Have I included relevant solutions to the 'problems' raised—all about ensuring welfare of the pets? Is each solution clearly described and explained, addressing the specific problems shared?

- Have I included an evaluation that shows why the proposed measures are urgent?

2. Check accuracy/appropriateness of language use with the help of technology

- Automated writing evaluation (AWE) tools

- Data-driven learning

AWE Tool	Website
Write and improve	https://writeandimprove.com
Ginger Software	http://www.gingersoftware.com/grammarcheck/
Grammark	http://grammark.org/
Grammarcheckme	http://www.grammarcheck.me/
LanguageTool	http://www.languagetool.org/
PaperRater	http://www.paperrater.com/free_paper_grader
Queequeg	http://sourceforge.net/projects/queequeg/
Spellchecker.net	http://www.spellchecker.net/grammar/
SpellCheckPlus	http://spellcheckplus.com/
WhiteSmoke	http://www.whitesmoke.com/free-online-checker

Data-driven learning

- Guided discovery with the help of a corpus (e.g. British National Corpus)

- Teachers can encourage data-driven learning

- Training has to be provided

British National Corpus

Which is correct? (a) or (b)?

- (a) I concern that …; (b) I am concerned that …
- (a) The news is shocking; (b) The news are shocking?
- (a) keep abreast of; (b) keep abreast with

BNCweb Query result

Not secure | http://bncweb.lancs.ac.uk/cgi-binbncXML/processQuery.pl?theData=I+am+concerned+that&chunk=1&queryType=CQL&qMode=Simple+query+...

Apps | english in | spot | Hong Kong Edition... | Imported From IE | [bnc] British Nation... | Enhancing Literacy... | BYU-BNC | SCT Class Blog 201... | » | Other bookmarks | Reading list

Your query "I am concerned that" returned 26 hits in 22 different texts (98,313,429 words [4,048 texts]; frequency: 0.26 instances per million words) [3.565 seconds]

| |< | << | >> | >| | Show Page: | 1 | | Show KWIC View | | Show in random order | | Show extended audio data controls | | New Query | Go! |

No	Filename	Hits 1 to 26 Page 1 / 1
1	A6X 642	'But now **I am concerned that** he might have a different response this year!'
2	B07 160	I will tell you plainly that so far as **I am concerned that** objective is the promotion of books … .'
3	C97 2033	As my garden faces south, **I am concerned that** the sun will affect the lining edge not covered by the water level.
4	CBF 8787	'**I am concerned that** they will feel insecure, but I am sure the Prince and Princess will make sure the boys don't suffer,' she said.
5	CL7 1302	**I am concerned that** your correspondent rang Climbline at 7.15pm only to have to listen to that day's forecast.
6	CR5 495	**I am concerned that** many young people with learning difficulties are not taking up the assessment offered in their final year of education.
7	EWX 633	**I am concerned that** you did not mention occupational therapists in your project.
8	FCK 284	'**I am concerned that** if I now have to respond fully to that part of the plaintiffs' order of 5 June dealing with the various alleged payments my position vis-à-vis the police investigation may well be prejudiced.
9	FSV 558	Sir: While fulling endorsing the sentiments expressed by Anne Waddington (12th March), **I am concerned that** she appears not to know that the word 'hopefully' means 'filled with hope', not 'it is to be hoped'.
10	HHV 10298	**I am concerned that** they should have all the help that they can get.
11	HHW 5005	I agree that they are important, but **I am concerned that** so little is made of freight.
12	HHW 8103	My borough has a large number of refugees, and **I am concerned that** the Bill may enable some authorities to avoid any responsibility for refugees.
13	HHX 8388	**I am concerned that** that will happen long before the community care changes come into force.
14	HKU 993	After consultations with other Western governments the United States adminstration on April 24 drew back from any punitive measures against the Soviet Union over its blockade of Lithuania (officials having previously hinted at possible limited economic sanctions), when President Bush gave a clear indication at a press conference that the administration considered Gorbachev's political survival and good Soviet-US relations to be more important than Lithuanian independence, explaining: "**I am concerned that** we do not inadvertently compel the Soviet Union to do something that would set back the whole process of freedom around the world. "
15	HPK 89	**I am concerned that** I have recently received from the National Westminster Bank an invoice for £10.58 which they have debited from the Parish Council account for 'Audit Certificate Fee', apparently on your instructions.
16	HPK 1643	But **I am concerned that** mass sponsored rides can be very chaotic and any difficulties caused could raise a backlash against both your cause and cyclists in general.
17	HPP 1764	As a cyclist who regularly uses rail to travel longer distances, **I am concerned that** the proposals to privatise BR should lay down the right conditions for operators from the outset and that any legislation involving the obligations imposed on operators should specifically mention the interests of cyclists.
18	J0V 2200	At the same time, **I am concerned that** genuinely valuable contributions be rewarded in the normal way.
19	J10 3395	**I am concerned that** you have a heart of stone.
20	J10 3396	**I am concerned that** with you one minute it is this, the next it is that.
21	J10 3397	**I am concerned that** the man who is here today is not the same as the man who was here yesterday.
22	JS8 492	Erm the reason for this is that Luton er is not an attractive proposition on a long term basis [pause] but [pause] it anti er and that, that is largely for an environmental point of view of the fact that it will also not provide an awful lot of additional capacity but it is a highly economic airport from the point of view of the number of er the cost required to expand it er further er passenger and

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3. Peer feedback

- Students can exchange drafts during the writing process and help each other improve their writing

- Modes of peer feedback:
  - Face-to-face (oral)
  - Pen-and-paper (written)
  - Online (synchronous or asynchronous)
  - Blended mode

Can students conduct peer review?

Yes—if

- Students are taught how to do it (hence peer feedback training/ coaching is needed)

- Students are taught the success criteria—hence, the importance of quality writing instruction

- The peer review task is manageable, i.e. no need to require students to comment on everything; there could be selected focuses

Student writer taking charge during peer feedback

Student writer: May I have your feedback on (first goal) …

Peer reviewer:

1. you did well on …

2. but this part needs to be changed because …

3. you can improve it by …

Student writer: Could you clarify/explain a bit more on …?

Peer reviewer: Clarify and explain

Technology-enhanced peer feedback

- Wiki

- Google Docs

- Peerceptiv: http://www.peerceptiv.com/wordpress/ (where multiple peer reviewers could be both deliberately or randomly assigned into pairs or groups)

- EduTech

- Kaizena app—a web-based application and Google Docs plugin that facilitates the provision of multimodal teacher and peer feedback on student writing

  Pearson, W.S. (2021). A review of the Kaizena app for feedback on second language writing. *RELC Journal.* Advanced online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/00336882211045776

- During writing, students refer to the success criteria established by the teacher, as well as their personal learning goals

- They remain active throughout the writing process

After writing: Students …

1. Reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses in writing based on teacher and peer feedback

2. Evaluate the goals they set earlier and the extent to which the goals were achieved, and set new goals for further improvement

3. Write reflections in their learning log, and their self-feedback can be documented to showcase their development as a writer throughout the writing course

1. Self-reflection based on feedback received

- After reflecting on the teacher and peer feedback, I think my strengths are:
    (1)
    (2)
    (3)

- I need to further improve on:
    (1)
    (2)
    (3)

2. Evaluate own learning goals

My goals about story writing	My post-writing self-evaluation
Write an interesting story that can entertain the readers	From the teacher and peer feedback, my story could make them laugh. So I think this goal was achieved.
Write an attention-grabbing story-opening to capture my readers' interest	Although I used a proverb to begin my story, it was not appropriate to my story. Next time, I will finish the story first and return to the beginning to see how best I should begin it. In this way, I should be able to choose a more appropriate proverb that attracts the readers' attention.
End my story in an impressive way so that my readers can remember it	My teacher and peer both remarked that they liked my ending. This goal was achieved!
use appropriate dialogue to make my characters come to life	I think I over-used dialogue in the story. It was a bit confusing especially in the middle of the story. I will remember that more is not better.

3. Learning log

- Students can write self-reflections on each piece of writing
- They can reflect on the following:
  - *What goals did I set for myself?*
  - *What did I do well?*
  - *What did I do less well?*
  - *What problems did I encounter?*
  - *What did I do to solve the problems?*
  - *What are the goals for my future writing?*

Early 'Summer' Holiday

What can students write?

- Class blog
- Online forum, e.g.
  - I bought a new game. It's fun!
  - Who has got the third shot?

- Creative writing, e.g.
  - A class book—Tips on how to stay healthy during the pandemic
  - Writing competitions, e.g.
    - Story writing
    - Digital storytelling
    - Riddles and jokes – e.g. *You wear pyjamas at night. What do you wear in the daytime? What's the difference between working in an office and working from home?*
    - Rewriting lyrics - e.g. using songs students are familiar with

COVID song (ABC song)

Don't forget to wear a mask

You can put on a face shield

If you wear your goggles too

You won't catch COVID-19

You don't want to look funny

But they help you stay healthy

Teachers' FAQs

Self-fulfilling prophecy in education

- Teacher expectations create self-fulfilling prophecies in the classroom
- When a teacher holds a negative expectation about students' ability to do certain things (e.g. to play an active role in the writing classroom), such an expectation will become a reality

- Some of my previous MA students were skeptical about peer review
- Through undertaking small-scale classroom inquiry, they developed new beliefs about peer review.

Betty's experience with peer review (Lee, 2010)

Through peer review, I find that students are helping each other. Students benefit from one another. Why not do something like this more regularly to make students learn from one another, rather than only from the teacher?

Cindy's experience with peer review (Lee, 2010)

When I designed the peer feedback form, there was a hesitation to include the 'Praise and Polish' parts as they might be difficult for young learners with limited proficiency of English. Also, I wondered if students could give constructive feedback to their peers. However, I was inspired by a scene while I was observing the writing class. One of my students, who has been very quiet and has low motivation in class, took out his English textbook to look for words for writing the peer comments. This picture reminds me that learning is a process and not a product and students should be encouraged to take challenging tasks in order to explore their potentials.

About Google Translate

- Discourage students from writing in Chinese and using Google Translate to convert it to English
- As part of the class honor code, tell students they should not cheat by translating a Chinese text to English (can make them sign a contract); spell out expectations, create a classroom culture where mistakes are a natural part of learning
- Show students that oftentimes Google Translate does not work, e.g.
    - 一山還有一山高 - There are mountain high mountain (X)
    - 大材小用 - Great talent and small use (X)
- If students have to use Google Translate for certain expressions - mark them in the text; encourage them to check accuracy, appropriateness and/or usage with the help of a corpus, e.g.人山人海 – 'crowd of people'

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BNCweb Query result

Not secure | http://bncweb.lancs.ac.uk/cgi-binbncXML/processQuery.pl?theData=crowd+of+people&chunk=1&queryType=CQL&qMode=Simple+query+%28i...

Apps   english in   spot   Hong Kong Edition...   Imported From IE   [bnc] British Nation...   Enhancing Literacy...   BYU-BNC   SCT Class Blog 201...   Other bookmarks   Reading list

20	CJN 23	There were more deaths on 31 January as troops fired into a **crowd of people** calling for justice and democracy.
21	CKD 335	He heard a gasp from the **crowd of people** gathered below, he seemed to hang forever in mid-air and then, miraculously, he was crashing down on to the opposite roof.
22	CS4 1646	I made my way slowly through the **crowd of people**, pausing now and again to chat briefly to people I knew.
23	E9T 861	A **CROWD of people** fought with police officers as they tried to stop a council bailiff taking a car to pay for an outstanding poll tax bill, a court was told yesterday.
24	EDA 950	He found a **crowd of people** 'strolling about'.
25	F9C 3048	He found his mum in the drawing room showing off her Inchbold original to a **crowd of people** he didn't know.
26	FNS 398	Alice turned round and saw a great **crowd of people**.
27	FP7 3272	'It's a great **crowd of people**,' he said, 'all saying sorry, sorry, sorry …
28	GUY 15	Thus, a group is more than an aimless **crowd of people** waiting in an airport lounge or at a bus-stop.
29	GW3 1495	Quite a **crowd of people** had gathered on the quay, but they were well behaved and they allowed ample room for the Wheel to be dragged ashore and stood on its rims.
30	GWF 3371	The **crowd of people** who remained there stared at him as though he were a ghost.
31	H8G 608	Soon I could see the beach … and a **crowd of people** standing and watching me.
32	HA9 59	'In which case I don't suppose you desperately want to join the **crowd of people** currently queueing up to tell him how wonderful he was?'
33	HGY 153	When a **crowd of people** surged from a side-room, all talking and laughing, she pulled a face of mock-exasperation.
34	HGY 2453	Peering past Terry's shoulder, Ellie stared down at Feargal, the dog at his heels, confronting a **crowd of people** all waving their arms about — and Terry was right, he didn't look in the least fazed.
35	HJM 800	Back to the edge of the island and there was already a **crowd of people** looking down at the rocks.
36	HTT 46	A **crowd of people** of various races, clutching passports and sheaves of official documents, were clustered around an office in the foyer of the Questura.
37	JNB 431	I've er, thank you, I've never seen a fox hunt [pause] erm [pause] I've er [pause] I think once [pause] er, once [pause] I got along to Cutts Close where the Boxing Day meet occurs [pause] and I can well accept that this Boxing Day meet [pause] draws a larger **crowd of people** from Oakham than any other activity through the year.
38	JY2 54	When they had passed under the Ponte di Rialto, with a disappointing view of the backs of its double row of shops, she checked the directions given to her by the hotel clerk, and, along with a jostling **crowd of people**, some tourists, some locals, disembarked at Sant'Angelo.
39	JY5 2805	He'd called her Rory earlier in the evening — when they'd been dancing, when he'd kissed her and made her completely forget she was in the middle of a **crowd of people**.
40	JY6 3794	There was a **crowd of people** milling around, and she pushed through them impatiently.
41	K63 26	Now if you come to Caldmore, you'll find out then that the majority of the [pause] married ladies had worked in [gap:name] I mean [pause] I should say that erm I know my mother was very snooty she'd been an apprentice to some dressmakers in [gap:address] Street and work for one year for nothing she always used to tell me, and she was quite er toffee- nosed about these [unclear] girls that used that er that used to go, well they were very respectable people, and when I was a kid when I growing up in my teens a lot of the girls I used to know were in the offices at [unclear] er it they employed about fifteen hundred people at [gap:name] in those days you know I mean coming out of at night it was fighting your way against the crowd if you were going towards it, and the same thing going through the square for people who have worked in [gap:name] when they left that's why all those shops in the square used to do reasonably well, it was the [gap:name] people walking through to go up the other side of Walsall, but there was a **crowd of people** I can, I can always remember as a kid a crowd of people and then there'd be [pause] well you can tell it was along [gap:address] Street in those days I can remember [pause] fruiters' carts where the girls used to go and buy apples, and that all sort of going along there you know people used to wait for them coming out, these are my impressions as a kid I mean I [pause] can remember the, the er and the men of course were cutters and various people and a quite a lot of my father's friends were, were er had er skilled jobs at [gap:name] as cutters and managers of the cutters' department and that sort of thing.
42	K63 26	Now if you come to Caldmore, you'll find out then that the majority of the [pause] married ladies had worked in [gap:name] I mean [pause] I should say that erm I know my mother was very

Beyond COVID-19

- Need sound educational principles that can stand the test of time—
  - the need to establish clear learning goals and assessment criteria for learners
  - to get them to set their own goals, monitor and evaluate their learning so that they are <u>empowered</u> to take charge of their learning and play an active role in the writing process

- With 'student empowerment' as teachers' long-term goal and if they work consistently towards it, students will gradually learn to take greater responsibility for learning.

The innovator's mindset (Couros, 2015)

https://georgecouros.ca/blog/archives/8389

Situation	Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset	Innovator's Mindset
Challenges	Challenges are avoided to maintain the appearance of intelligence.	Challenges are embraced stemming from a desire to learn.	Challenges are sought out, and seen as an opportunity for growth and development.
Obstacles	Giving up in the face of obstacles and setbacks is a common response.	Showing perseverance in the face of obstacles and setbacks is a common response.	When obstacles arise, the thinking is shifted to look for opportunities and possibilities.
Effort	Having to try or put in effort is viewed as a negative, if you have to try, you're not very smart or talented.	Doing hard work and putting in effort paves the path to achievement and success.	Hard work and effort are continuous, and we look to make time to create new solutions and ideas for growth.
Criticism	Negative feedback regardless of how constructive is ignored.	Criticism provides important feedback that can aid in learning.	Criticism provides important feedback which creates the opportunity to implement new and better ideas for learning from others.
Success of Others	Other people's success is viewed as a threat and evokes feels of insecurity or vulnerability.	Other people's success can be a source of inspiration and education.	Other people's success is learned from, and something we modify and apply in our own context to create our own success.

Thank You