

## In Praise of Praise

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 8/19/2010 7:30:00 PM

I sat down this morning, coffee at the ready, ready to write some advice to new teachers about the coming school year. I thought about the usual things - classroom management, organization, icebreakers, action research, personalizing, then for some strange reason I started thinking of Mr. Worth, my high school math teacher.

Mr. Worth was a string bean of a man always smiling. He always was standing outside of his classroom greeting every student and not just his own. Smiling, grinning, with a kind of Jim Carey stance - he'd shout out to each student, "Hey, James looking good!" or "David, wow, what a game yesterday!" . He would do this all the time, over and over. To me, he was my educational human growth hormone. I felt good, I believed in myself, I tried my best because of him. And he did this for everyone in the school AND outside of school. You'd meet him in the mall and as you tried to avoid contact, he'd come rushing up and pat you on the back, saying, "I heard you are thinking of coaching soccer - great idea, you'd be wonderful at it!" or something such.

Mr. Worth did a few other things that I think are important to note. He always spent time asking us about our lives and talking "shop". He'd sit at the front and blather back and forth with us about "Mork and Mindy" or the latest U2 album (I'm showing my age!). He'd laugh with us and be jovial - then, he'd roll up his sleeves and say - let's get to work!

Doug (I'll now call him Doug - I got to know him well enough after I left school) also had a unique way to give tests. We always had a review before a Friday

test. He'd wink and say, "I can't tell you these questions will be on the test but if you do these well - you'll see much the same on the test!". And we'd do the algebra problems and as we solved them, he'd keep winking and nudging as if it were a big game and he was telling us the answers. But HE WAS TELLING US THE ANSWERS! Sure enough, the next day, test day, the same questions were for the most part on the test. At least enough of them so a duffus at math like myself could do well and could learn.

Why am I telling you this - this personal stuff from my past? Well, I think that Doug knew what it takes to get a student to succeed - success! Nothing breeds success like success, so the old saying goes. Doug bred success not just through accomplishment but through the power of praise. We'd do well on the test and he'd personally say to those struggling (like myself), "wow, you did quite good, great work, keep at it!" And I did, I tried harder at math and though I didn't have the greatest mark, I learned, I really learned!

Praise is so, so, underrated by teachers. In my own years teaching, I've become convinced that teachers should be taught to praise students ad infinitum. We are as much cheerleaders as teachers. Failure is learned. Smart kids and not so smart kids can "fall off the map" if they don't encounter praise from their teachers. It happens every minute of every day in our classrooms.

However, there are several things that a teacher has to do right when praising.

1. Make the praise specific. Don't use generalities. Doug always praised a specific act, a specific state. He referenced the praise and in that way, we knew it was genuine and not just robotic, soulless. We knew

he was aware and connected to us as individuals.

2. Make the praise about the "doing", the achievement and not intelligence. Meaning, don't praise a student saying, "You are so smart", "You are the best". This actually demotivates students and turns them off of learning at school. Why try when you are so smart and teachers think so? [Read about Carol Dweck's amazing research into praise](#) and about the student Thomas - this should be read by all teachers at some point in their careers.

3. Praise is not encouragement. Praise is something that is sincere. If you endlessly encourage students, they will "achieve" to please others and not for the sake of learning. Praise can be an intrinsic motivator if it is sincere, spontaneous and without any intention of manipulating the student's behavior. Praise must be without conditions - encouragement usually comes with the unspoken, "you're still no good - you aren't there yet" feeling. [This article](#) outlines well these principles. [Alfie Kohn](#) scoffs at praising students - thinking we will create, praise junkies. I completely disagree. It is all in how it is done. Human behavior and psychology are not black and white or push button. I can only say he should stop self showmanship and aggrandizing and think a little deeper about things. If he ever wants to debate this - he knows where to find me.

So if I have one piece of advice to new teachers - accentuate success and the positive through praise. Be like Mr. Worth, as much as your personality will allow you.

And in ending, a big thank you to Doug. You've passed the torch and that's all that a life needs to do - to be a "success".

Interested in reading more on the notion of "Praise". Start with [Joe Bower's powerful essay in ebook](#).

## My Summer of Discontent

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 8/17/2010 7:42:15 PM

"Living is an affair for those who turn on the ovens"

Believe it or not - I'm usually a very positive guy. In life, in the classroom and online. I'm accused often of being too positive and forward looking, being naive and idealistic. I used to take those condemnations and wear them as a badge of honor. Optimism is my Pascal's gambit - there is no "win" in being negative so all things being equal - I'll be happy. NOW, I'M NOT SO SURE IF I'M RIGHT.

What do I mean? Well let me explain, using just one recent example that has led me to my summer of discontent.

I put heart and soul into "getting teachers the goods". Four or five years ago, I saw the future of Web 2.0 and started sharing resources and forming professional community online. Truly, I said to myself, "David, you make good money, you aren't starving, this is what you are good at - pay it forward!" So, I optimistically started and built many websites, platforms, applications for teachers and students. I shared and made thousands of resources and spoke in a thousand conversations (this blog is but a drop compared to what I write in forum discussions). I really TRIED my best to give what I got.

Now, to get to the point - my idealism got the best of me. During these 4-5 years, corporations have started to "consolidate" the wild, wild web. Consolidate is code word for "control" which is a code word for

"squeeze money out of those online". This is not just in education. I've become caught up in it.

Ning recently sent me this email for the umpteenth time....

5 Days Left to Choose a Plan

Friday is the final day for free Ning Networks

On 6/22/2007, a new social network popped up on the Internet. Yours.

<http://eflclassroom.ning.com>

Your network has grown up a bit since you started the ball rolling. You have grown to 16043 members who have collectively helped you add 2143 photos, 901 videos, and 1311 spirited discussions. Well done!

We'd like to see you continue

We're contacting you today to remind you that you still have time to choose a new Ning plan. But, time is running out. If you do not choose a new plan by this Friday, August 20, 2010, the community you built will ultimately be lost. Now you see - when I created EFL Classroom 2.0 and it "popped up" - it was under a TOS (terms of service) whereby I had control of the content and community. Ning sold me on this. They offered the "platform" but I controlled the code and the ability to transform, change and develop based on this. They also provided many free networks and said the world had changed - now anyone has a voice!

So I built many communities. 10 in total - 2 of which I paid \$19.99 a month for. I put up content, spent days designing, spent days promoting and now they will all disappear. All of them. And along the way, Ning just kept changing the TOS on a whim, just kept making changes that kept putting a noose around

those like me who believed in their "vision". Over the years you could do less and less. Now they are hanging a whole lot of people. The noose just isn't tight, they are pulling the lever. [Here](#) is just one of my communities that will be gone.

What I'm saying in a nutshell is that this is but one example of what is coming to the web. (see the comments at this article - [The Death of the Open Web](#)). Where there weren't any walls - walls are being built each day. In education, we think of the possibility of the internet but I now, discontented see a prison being built. I don't exaggerate. It is happening each and every ticking second. Companies are pulling in valuable teachers and one day they will spit them out or corral them as the walls close in.

People tell me - there is no such thing as a free lunch. Well, there is for these corporations such as Ning. They win and dined us with "free" and now they are whistling to the bank. "The loss" is the free flow of information - which is to wit - the basis of all our prosperity and wealth.

I don't begrudge companies or individuals making money online. They should be profitable. Just don't change the rules of the game while playing. That's disgusting. So be warned everyone - there are a lot of companies doing the freemium thing and they WILL change the rules.

When discontented, I turn to poetry. I'm losing all my thousands of hours of work. I'll remain positive, in some way, like my friend Basho who sang,

My barn having burnt down  
I could now see the moon

# Technology the RIGHT way

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 8/2/2010 3:30:00 AM

Around the education/technology twitterverse, there has been a lot of hand-wringing and "I told you so s" about THIS blog post on TES, "[Byte the Dust](#)". Basically, it outlines how tens of millions of dollars/pounds of educational technology are laying around gathering dust. This follows [another study](#) which reported that children with home computers had lower test scores. Some educators are (and I think without reading the article in full), clapping and saying - there you go, we don't need this waste nor technology in our classrooms! The traditional approach works just as well, thank you! - Like [these teachers](#) who comments on ELT Tech blog.

That's sad.

For one, they didn't read the article in full. If they did, they'd have seen there is a lot of common sense in the many quotes/responses of the teachers in those schools. I've outlined them below.

For two, the only thing the article highlights is how in cahoots education is with business - how education isn't about what works but rather, who can sell and buy from whom. It is an indictment of "Edubusiness" not the use of technology in the classroom.

Technology is an essential component of education. You can't throw out this pencil and go back to scratching with limestone. It has its place and effect/need. However, you don't need to spend billions on fancy doohickeys, widgets and doodads from Acme Inc. This is what you need.

1. Broadband internet access and a project/screen. All schools, all classrooms.

-- There are plenty of free, safe resources online for students. Web 2.0 as it grows, will only make this more so. [My own content rich community](#) is the shining example - it is ELT but you can learn everything you'd want there and it is all what is freely available on the internet, gathered and supported in one place/community/portal.

2. Teachers trained in the technology and the resources available. The overspending on useless techno gadgetry is only rivaled by the underspending on the training of teachers (and ongoing support for) in educational technology. There is a plethora of evidence that the bane of technology in education is how school administrators just throw technology into schools without any support or training.

3. Access to computers for all school children and new ways to integrate this within the curriculum. We NEED better curriculum developers in the school systems - ones with know how about technology.

4. The promotion of a new "paradigm" where learning can happen outside school hours and online AND be accredited. We have to find a way to value what students do on their own time/dime. The school system can't continue to have 4 walls.

Here are some quotes from the article which support

## LUDDITE OLYMPICS



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my contentions:

"ICT is essential in schools, but schools are in danger of buying white elephant technology," he adds. "There are so many flash salesmen and it is important that we're not swept into the mentality of 'new is always the best'." - too much business in the educational pudding.

"Every school needs to think about how it uses technology."

Technology isn't bad, we just need to do it better.

"Teachers don't want fancy new gizmos; they want something that does what they want it to do," =

Keep it simple (and cheap) - a screen / computer and the internet.

"If they have a bad experience with a piece of software they tend not to go back to it,"-

Teachers need support and ongoing training in technology

He'd make different decisions about the wireless network he had installed in 2002 as it proved too slow for pupils to be able to use portable kit around the school.-

Broadband for all schools - the governments MUST

do this

Mr Taylor says they are now looking to move towards tablets and hand-held devices.-

It's about the students having access - doesn't matter the device but get them access to one! (but I'd invest in cell phones - they are the future of educational technology and what students use every day.)

Yes, at the end of the day technology is a tool but a VERY special tool and I reject those who say that it doesn't count. For better or worse, like the book, it is transforming how we act, interact with the world. We'd better use it as educators - for the betterment of the world and to make sure our job still counts.

To the ELT luddites out there. Take a look at [my ALICE](#) or the [use of Karaoke](#) or our [Quizlet group](#) or this phenomenal online pronunciation site - [Phonetiks](#). Then tell me it doesn't matter or make a difference to student learning....

Find out more about using technology on my [ELT and Tech wiki](#). Take a watch of the PBS doc. "[Digital Nation](#)". Fascinating. And ponder these thoughts....

[Find more videos like this on EFL CLASSROOM 2.0](#)

# Making Picture / Story Books

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 8/4/2010 8:00:00 PM

Writing storybooks or making picture books is a great way to reinforce grammar and vocabulary. It also gives students confidence and pride in "producing" something visible and tangible to measure their English language learning experience.

There are several steps to making a storybook and I'll use my own Mr. X's incredible Day/Yesterday as an example. [Get the ppt/video here](#) for use with students.

1. Tell the story with students. Play a video / use a storybook / [use a ppt](#) but pictures are essential! Go slow and exaggerate and use your voice/gestures to communicate vocabulary and content/context. You might get inspiration on [the incredible Tarheel Reader](#) where you can also download the books as powerpoints.

2. Students re-tell the story. Note the vocabulary for the story on the board and students use this to make

sentences to retell the story. Or, just show pictures and use them as a prompt to retell the story. [See how I used Voicethread](#) to retell the Mr. X story. But you can just take the words off the ppt and use a picture only ppt.

3. Writing. Students are now more comfortable with the story and vocabulary. Get them to write 6-10 sentences to outline the story. For each sentence, provide a prompt on the board for lower level students. Higher level students can add more information for that sentence number. The teacher monitors and helps correct/edit. I use [this worksheet](#) for Mr. X.

4. Bookmaking. Give students some sheets of A4. They fold in half and staple to make the book. Or fold again and cut the folds to make a mini book (students usually like this smaller book more!). Students cut and paste their pictures into the book and also write their text from the worksheet. Color, make a title page, borders and personalize.

There are many types of books you can make by folding/cutting paper. The most incredible resource

for printable pdfs and videos showing bookmaking is Susan Kapusinsky's "[Making Books](#)". Here she describes how to make an accordion book. But look at all her pdf instruction sheets for many types. Also - [this kid makes an amazing mini book](#) from one sheet of paper! Learn more about instant books [here](#).

[Find more videos like this on EFL CLASSROOM 2.0](#)

5. Present/Publish. Students can read their books to the class or in small groups. Sharing is a must! Make a library for your student produced books!

Here are just some ideas for picture / story books:

1. Stories- Retell a traditional or just read story!
2. habits- My Day
3. routines- Trips/Holidays/Weekends
4. letters / words- alphabet books / word books
5. favorites- All about me books
6. comics- Adventure books of heroes/comedy
7. vocabulary- dictionary books describing the vocab category (ie. Sports)





# 18th ESL / EFL / ELL Blog Carnival

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 8/1/2010 3:30:00 AM

This blog carnival is REALLY a carnival! Click on the photo and enter the carnival. You'll "spin the wheel" and get a random blog carnival entry. [Download the ppt](#) too, it might work better! If you get lucky - one blog item is a download of this random selector ppt I made - great for use in class (just control with the "s" key on your keyboard).

If you like this, please visit the [Random ELT Blog generator](#) for more "surprise".

The next blog carnival will be hosted by Ms. Flecha's [My Life Untranslated: Adventures of a New ESL Teacher in New York City](#). Please participate and use the same [blog submission form](#).

Lots of fine entries, see them all described below. Enjoy - the ticket is free!

- \* Katie at Trip Base tells us about the Top 10 places to teach English
- \* Dani at Trying Out Web 2.0 describes some vocabulary strategies for adv. students
- \* Eva at A Journey in TEFL let's us in on how to improvise to create a quick game
- \* Larry at Websites of the Day shares one of his "Best" lists - The Best "When I Say Jump" online sites and also let's us know about "Common Core" Standards in the US
- \* Shelly at Teacher Reboot Camp tells us more about building characters and talking avatars using Voki
- \* Maria on her Student's Page outlines how to use nouns and adjectives to describe places and also urges teachers to participate in the "Flat Stanley" project
- \* Mau at Niftiness describes how he uses video

games to "Funnify" education

\* David at EFL Classroom 2.0 offers some thoughts and resources for using drawing in our lessons and also asks readers about their own educational blogging

\* Phil at Classroom 201x fully describes a lesson for interviews and using the Busbi/Flip camera

\* Vicky at Educational Technology in ELT speaks eloquently about her transformation from a part time to full time teacher

\* Karenne at Kalinago English offers up a challenge - plan a lesson around a poem to get students critically thinking

\* Johanna at the Spelling Blog offers up some tips and warning about lessons with homophones

\* Vicki at Learning to Speak 'Merican shows Bobby McFerrin teaching music and asks us if we could do the same in our English language classes

\* Jennifer at My Integrating Technology Journey offers many links and suggestions for using Flickr in our teaching

\* Brent at O Say Can You See Blog asks us to think more about our museums and using history in our teaching

\* Andrew at Lingo Match Blog offers some tips on learning or teaching British English

\* Mary Ann at Learning the Language asks readers to offer some wisdom to the new director of the U.S. Dept. of Education

\* Technology in Class Blog directs us to a vocabulary site - Learning Chocolate

\* Michael at Mr. Stout's Blog urges teachers and students to follow the advice of the Dalai Lama and speak "broken English"

## The buying of "community"

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 8/10/2010 8:00:00 AM

This is a reply I posted to Pearson's "new" social networking site. Hired guns drumming up business and time of hard working teachers. The post speaks for itself. I'm not against Jeremy Harmer or even Pearson. Just the notion that you can hire people to promote yourself without them explicitly noting they are paid and bought. End of story... Read on for more

....

Jeremy,

Can I be TRULY honest here?

Is your teacher talk time here, paid? And how much do you get paid exactly, to contribute your few paragraphs and enthusiasm? how many are others paid? Shares, dividends, what? What are the ethical boundaries to this "teacher talk time".

I like your blog. I read it like the bible. I buy all your books and tell thousands of students to buy your books. See a recent (one of dozens where I recommend) [here](#).

However, this is over the top and definitely too much TTT. A waste of time and I'm only participating to tell you that it is a waste of your own and anyone elses. Big publishers late in the game, buying their way into "community" is disgusting. They should have been on it and at it years ago like I was - if they had any real interest other than profit. This is "pandering" and commercialism at its worst. Get the teachers here and sell. Is that what ELT has boiled down to?

I quit my job teaching grad school this week after a big conversation with the dean. She questioned me about my classes after never even having visited a class all year. There is more to it . But to get to the point - I suggested that my own views on curriculum development were supported by you. She shot that down and said Jeremy Harmer knows nothing about curriculum development. So I let into her politely (as I usually am). Then quit. I believe in that.

I'll continue believing inyou when you stop this soulless garble. As someone said to me, "it is like watching my Dad chatting up my girlfriend". Speak from the heart or not at all. I have spoken (but held my tongue a lot).

I've been promoting, striving, instilling, inspiring teachers from my own heart for many years online. Why have you never dropped by to talk to the thousands that are in my community? Am I not paying? Where does "teacher" and "teacher online talk time" begin and end? I say all this with sincerity and the deepest respect.

David

PS. I've copied this and will publish on my own blog so teachers can decide for themselves. (even though "Pearson" won't even let anyone copy from their page! - fortunately, I'm a technophile and this is not beyond me. But mein gott - isn't that ridiculous, even making public comments uncopiable / unreproducible?????)

## The power of collaboration - a member's story.

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 8/3/2010 6:00:00 PM

The internet and associated technologies offers no greater boon to educators than cross cultural classroom collaboration. Making the world more beauty and small - through understanding and community.

Rawya Shatila has been a stellar member here - someone at the forefront of using video and web 2.0 with her elementary language learners. See [her student created videos](#) and visit [her inspiring website](#).

However, I'm writing mostly to congratulate her on her recent Microsoft Innovative Educator Award. Wow! A sterling project between her class in

Lebanon and their sister class in Colorado. A sterling example of how technology provides a "world changing" experience to children and does, "make a difference". Her efforts will make a difference to her students for the length of their lives.

I think all of us should think of how we can connect our classrooms with others around the world. Make friends here and get started!

Congratulations Rawya!

"Digital Stories: A Celebration of Learning and Culture"

Teachers: Rawya Shatila from Beirut, Lebanon & Cheryl Arnett

Project Overview: Two classes of children, one in Colorado, USA, and the other in Beirut, Lebanon, used technology to share stories, learning, and

activities throughout the year. In addition, two teachers who have never met collaborated and learned from each other. The students in Colorado were all English-speaking. The students in Beirut were English Language Learners. Students posted messages and drawings on a wiki, exchanged bookmarks on World Book Day, shared the holidays they celebrate on a wiki and VoiceThread and also shared their digital stories on a blog.

Significant Results/Learnings: Technology skills grew as students became experts at manipulating their wiki postings. They also learned about geography through online mapping tools, and time and weather sites. The most significant learning was an increased awareness of similarities and differences between similarly aged children from other countries.

# New Teachers - Essential Resources on EFL 2.0

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 8/26/2010 8:00:00 PM

I just finished a whirlwind 6 day week of workshops on technology and language teaching - given to mostly new teachers. I had a wonderful time and the energy of the teachers always renews me, no matter how tiring the 6 hour sessions a day truly are.

It got me thinking that I need to do a better job here - creating a directory of essential "go to" resources for new teachers. Would also benefit other teachers, new to the site. [This page](#), on my old training site does this and I highly recommend it. However, it could disappear soon so I'll list here what I think is great for new teachers/members on EFL Classroom 2.0. (I'll be building this so keep returning or bookmark! Most can be found through our very comprehensive [site directory](#))

Please comment and add your own gems. What do you find "really" works?

Use [our tag search!](#) It really works and is a god send to find things. Plus many tips on [the Number 1 blog series](#).

My Public blog: [Authentic Materials/ Coteaching/ Listening/ Using the board/ Flashcards/ Drawing/ Student created content/ Storybooks/ Teaching Writing/ speaking/ The teenaged Learner/ class design and decoration/ Karaoke to teach](#)

IDEAS and Lesson plans: [Lessons in a Can/ Lesson Plan Resources \(14 pages\)/ Teaching Recipes/ Lesson ideas handbooks](#)

Helpers: [Teacher Tools/ Language Lab/ Quizlet/ Worksheets/ Media Fire](#) (see the activity folder in particular)

Games: [PPT Games](#)

Video: [Top 100 Youtube videos](#)+ use [our video directory](#)- click the tags to get the videos you want! Download all the videos in [our A/V player](#).

Reading and Stories: [estory page/ printable leveled readers for your students](#).

Young Learners: Elementary page / [YL group/ Kids Songs](#)

Technology: [Software page](#) (download essential programs free, for your computer) / [ELT and Tech](#) (learn about the best technology for teaching languages)



Prof. Development. Our TESOL Training modules/ reading / [Main page/ Videos/ Knowing your Int. Student](#).

Get many links to other sites - all categorized, in our [SOCIAL BOOKMARKING DIRECTORY](#)

[NEWSLETTER ARCADE TED TALKS VOCAB SOFTWARE PRACTICE INFO STORIES PEOPLE KARAOKE POP GAMES JOB UNIVERSE CHAT TEFLIST DIALOGUES STUDY TARHEEL EDITOR STORIES ETEACHING VOICETHREADS NFB SONGS RADIO CLICKNLEARN VOICE ME JUKEBOX COTEACHING LISTEN blog LESSONS BOOKS READERS/QUIZ DAILY LESSON MINGOVILLE SPELL IT CURRENT EVENTS VIDEOS RESOURCES TEXTBOOKS SCRIBBLAR DOCS F & F LISTENING VIDEOS + PEACE BLOGS YAPPR EVENTS AUDIO TWITTER DISCUSSIONS PPTS PROF. DEV. TRANSLATIO N CLASSIFIEDS CLASSROOMS 24/7 CHAT KARAOKE NING DISCIPLINE](#)

# Getting to know about where you teach ....

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 8/18/2010 7:30:00 PM

English language teachers travel and like strangers in a strange land, try to learn about their new "home". It is important to learn about the culture and history of the people you'll teach. Language is about and in turn, wrapped up with culture and identity.

I've lived now 5 years in Korea and will be indelibly tied and connected to this amazing peninsula. Along the way, I've tried to understand my students and the people among who I've lived. You'll find a lot of the articles / essays / videos / audio I've collected in our [Korea resources area](#) Find [HERE](#), all the videos we have about Korea and/or teaching in Korea.

Here are a few more items I highly recommend about Korea. Helpful especially to the flood of new teachers that will be arriving or have arrived for the new semester. Wherever you are, why not post up in our resources, some videos or readings that are pertinent to the country you are from or where you teach presently? Or maybe do so in one of our [World Classrooms?](#)

The video above, "Tiger Spirit", is a beautiful rumination on the torn nation of Korea. On the surface it tells the stories of families ripped apart for decades but deeper, it deals with issues of identity and what is important in life. In our fractured, mobile, modern world - identity is a topic that will be more and more important - especially regarding language acquisition and learning. A must watch.

Korea - America is a video made by a teacher as a technology professional development project during a summer training program. She did a wonderful job using Windows Movie Maker and highlighting the divide between generations in Korea and in America.

Photographer Rich Smolan tells an amazing story about an Amerasian (Korean/American) girl and it is so thought bending. Really challenges traditional notions of "who we are" and "what we should be".

# Profit, Waste and Education

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 8/13/2010 10:00:00 PM

[This is a first in a series on how "profit" and corporations continue to erode and threaten the fabric of education - learning. There appears to be "learning" and "progress" but the results are limited except for profit statements.]

Putting 2 and 2 together.

Sometimes, "learning" is about connecting the dots and putting 2 and 2 together. The ancient Greeks valued analogy and thought it the basis of all thought. I do too. Show me a man who is vividly metaphorical and I'll show you what we should promote in education.

In that vein, I recently put "2 and 2 together".

First item: [English Language Instructor in Iraq](#). \$149,000/year. First \$99,000 tax free

+ Second item: [Montgomery Mobile Library service cut](#)

= Madness.

Now maybe you aren't adding things up like I am - so I'll explain a little.

Every day, libraries and [summer reading programs](#)

# Korea - military service

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 8/31/2010 10:12:06 PM

I thought this video news report would make a great



Governor Strickland's proposed budget cuts Public Library Funding by 50 percent. This would be devastating to our libraries in Ohio.

- For our Library system, this would mean shortened hours, Sunday closures, fewer books and DVDs, cut in children's programs and fewer staff to help you.
- We need to act now to stop this from happening!
- Send your objections to the Governor and six members of the Conference Committee as well as our legislators ASAP.

[Email to our State Legislators](#)

[News Release](#)

are closing throughout America (and Canada!). EVERY DAY. [I wanted to put up [this article](#) but some corporation wants me to pay \$35 to read it!) [Stephen Krashen](#), bless his fixated heart, continues to pound this pulpit and press for students to have access to reading material and support - it is the best and quickest way to educate our youth.

However America wants to spend millions on lessons in a secure compound to teach the Iraqi elite

lesson for teachers in Korea. Watch and discuss. After, students can write a personal letter to the young man/student. They should state 1. Agree or disagree with him 2. Reasons why they think so. 3. Suggestions for future action - what he should do.

and military English. Is that absurd, or am I the only sane person in ELT?

I don't mind the hard working teachers (30 of them) getting great money. Not at all. However, where an English language teachers is making this much cash, there is a lot more being wasted away, thrown away. It is education by dollar bills. Corporations enter the teaching market extensively to milk governments dry and at the end of the day - little will be shown for this except the stretch marks on the cash cow (libraries closing, budget cuts to schools). It is taking away other ways to use that money - instead of a secure compound, take it to the streets, build schools and teach "the people". Or support a library in America. One teacher's salary would keep a library and staff of 5 in "smallville" America open! Kaplan [reported a profit of \\$109 million last year!](#) - I ask (rhetorically), how much "learning" really happened?

Isaac Asimov wrote, "When I read about the way in which library funds are being cut and cut, I can only think that American society has found one more way to destroy itself." Amen.

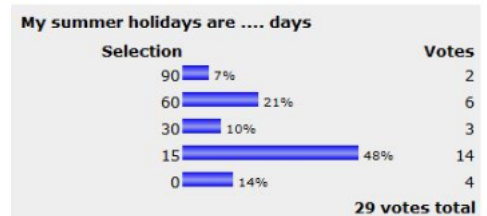
Next up for me- the corporations in ELT and how they "pretend" to make learning happen. The Confidence Game.

It would also make a good lesson for a mini debate. Get resources for organizing a debate in our resources under Debate and Discussion (hit the tab at the top)





LINC City Hall Excursion  
Nov. 2001



## How is your summer holiday going?

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 7/24/2010 8:00:00 PM

It is summer holiday for many of us teachers. I'd love to find out more about what other teachers are doing this summer holiday. Blog about it or throw up a few comments here! I was inspired to write this by [Anton's amazing post](#) and pictures about his summer rafting trip.

I only have time for a mini getaway (but will have time this fall for my "real" holiday - visiting my beautiful parents and writing a book I've long been planning). I traveled east from Seoul to the beautiful [city of Sokcho](#). It is a quick 2 hour and 20 min (or 3 hours if you take the scenic bus over the mountains) and is on the east coast, up north near the DMZ (demilitarized zone with N.Korea).

It is a jewel! Not heavily visited but lots to do! It has great beaches, lots of lakes and clean streets. Seorak mountain is its backdrop - one of the most famous mountains/national parks in Korea. It is also the main place for the ferry to Russia and Vladivostok - so you'll meet quite a few Russians. I stayed a few days in the city and took in the sites and baked on the beach. Then a few days in the mountains in a nice luxury hotel.

I highly recommend the following.

1. Seorak Nat. Park- the cable car, the views! All the hiking you'll ever want. All levels. Best in fall but great any time of year.
2. Sokcho beach. Clean, not crowded at all (unless you go during the 2 week peak summer period)
3. Chongchoho Lake. Right in the middle of the city, it is a place of quiet respite, horseback riding, leisure sports and peace and quiet.
4. The "pull boat" and the N.Korean village. Right downtown, you take a small pullboat across the river. Made famous in some Korean soapopera, it is something all Koreans do. Then, stop in the N.Korean village for some great grilled fish or famous "sondae", a specially made sausage.
5. The city tour bus. I usually hate these things but it is a double decker with great views. You stop at all the sites and for \$7, can't be beat.

Here are some photos from my trip. How about you? What are you doing this summer to recharge your teaching batteries?

Also, you might find interesting this recent survey on EFL Classroom 2.0 about the length of teacher's summer holidays.

Sokcho Port  
Seorak San - very high up.  
Seorak from below  
Try some Pajeon!  
The Beach  
Me and the Mermaids

## What teaching gives me

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 7/28/2010 11:06:03 PM

So often in teaching, we get caught up in ourselves. What we do and what we contribute. Me, me, me, us, us, us. However, it is often the case that once we get some distance, we see how much our students have given us. How much they've made us grow and learn. It is this oft neglected theme I'd like to comment on today.

I had the pleasure to be a LINC teacher in Canada for a number of years. LINC is short for "Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada" and it is a program funded by Immigration Canada to help new immigrants to Canada get their English "up to scratch" and also with life skills training.

I can't say enough how indebted I am to my former students. I had the honor of in most cases, being the first Canadian they formed a relationship with. I was like a father figure and it changed me.

Often, my students had just come off the plane the very same day! (the sooner they were in class, the sooner they got a "pay check"). So many memories. I got bags of pistachios from the Iranians, bags of dumplings from the Chinese, so many flowers from the Serb/Croatians! We'd have pot lucks every month and it was a buffet of United Nations proportions.

My students taught me so much about the world! They got me to see through different eyes and know there are so many ways to live and be. Most importantly, they made me see my own country for what it is - its good and bad but mostly as a place of refuge and hope. A place that where people are for the most part, "decent".

We used to go on many excursions - my fav. was the free tour bus to the Casino on the Indian reservation! An hour free bus ride there and back plus a free buffet. Not a student gambled but they loved walking outside and the trip. The casino sure lost money on us! We'd sing and teach each other folk songs from our respective countries as we drove along

My classes would have 10-12 adult students and it was such an experience to see the Tibetan guy chatting it up with the Chinese grandma. Or the Iranian student sharing tea with the Iraqi. Or the Tamil and Hindi dancing and laughing together to Abba. These things happened every day!!!!!! When I think of them, I'm ashamed of the world we live in, twisted as we are by politics, armies and "good intentions".

I remember so well one day teaching 5 floors up, Bay and Bloor downtown office building. Suddenly two women get up and start screaming. And I mean, SCREAMING! Everyone was bewildered. What were they screaming about? Well, it had begun to snow. And there they were dancing in front of the big glass windows. All I could do was say, "Welcome to Canada" and then trash my lesson plan as we talked about big, "firsts".

So this one, this blog goes out to all my former LINC students wherever you are. I hope you have found success and I thank you for all you made me be.

I'll leave you the most amazing video I know about new refugees to Canada. A must watch! You might even use this with higher level students....

## The #1 ... (misspelled word in English)

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 8/14/2010 10:30:00 AM

\*\* Not your ordinary endless [list](#) - just what's number 1. Just the BEST.

Misspelled!

Yes, if you caught the mistake in the title, you are well on your way to being a great speller! Almost everyone, native speaker or 2nd language learner, has a problem spelling certain words. It usually comes



down to how we processed the word when we first "learned" the word. Not our first encounter with the word but the first time it was "acquired" and became

part of our standard inventory of recallable language. Here's the best list I know of [the top most misspelled words in English](#). Which one(s) do you have particular trouble with? I can't spell "accommodation" if my life depended on it!

Also try [this quiz](#) and see how you do. But remember, recognizing a word's spelling it and spelling it are actually two different things/skills!

# The "migrant" English language teacher

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 8/8/2010 9:00:00 PM

I'm feeling in a very "sanguine" mood - must be the sweltering heat and humidity! I go from sweating profusely to cold chills when I turn on the AC (and suffer too the guilt).

I wrote the poem below the other day - about my inner feelings and present "mind". I think it might speak to other teachers too. We travel so far from home and indeed make "many homes". So what is home?

Robert Frost wrote that home is, "the place where, when you have to go there, / They have to take you in."

Maybe so - I'll have to think on that....

It isn't easy to be a traveling teacher, trading our talents in different places around the globe. It is a two edged sword. The excitement and freedom of being "elsewhere" (and this reminds me of Kundera's first and most perfect of novels - "Life is Elsewhere"). And on the other hand, the estrangement and incompleteness of being separated from "the womb" which is home.

How do you feel about "home"? How do you survive and bear those times when the melancholy descends?

Here's my poem - I'll also suggest Roger Cohen's

recent column " [Modern Odysseys](#)" - a nice rumination on this topic, from one of the best journalists around.

What I learned from the Chinese poets

More than 40 years  
have spun by me like  
a drunk hurricane.

I have spent my life  
going here, doing there  
a homeless mind.

Now, I ache for  
my land,  
the unswum lakes and  
fields of pine.

Two oceans away  
gray hairs sprout on  
my inflated head,  
the travels only kept  
me dizzy, busy.

I skipped between continents,  
got As and gave As.  
Spoke to applauding audiences  
and slept in Hyatts, on satin sheets.

What for?  
Better I stayed home  
and chopped wood.



## The #1 ..... (teacher training course)

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 8/10/2010 2:51:47 AM

\*\* Not your ordinary endless list - just what's number 1. Just the BEST.

Teaching on the job

So maybe you don't think on the job training counts? Maybe that without training teachers will just be the blind, leading the blind? Well, there is a lot of evidence out there that points out that training may even hinder teacher development! Yes, it is true. For me, in English Language Teaching, (and for the most part, teaching in general) your time on the job counts BIG time.

I say this as a teacher trainer, one who really knows of the benefits of teacher training. I say this because all things being equal - I'd take a teacher with a year of teaching under their belt over a teacher with a year long teaching course under their belt.

In our business, it is character, will, disposition, effort, creativity and the ability to "think as the student" that count most. Not the paper and the pretense.

Oh yeah, you have so many selling so little. This course will make you teach like your hair is on fire! This course will make you effortlessly glide through your semester. This course will call up nirvana and you'll be praised by principals and parents. Poppycock! For the most part in ELT, snake oil salesman and quackery.

With the advent of web 2.0 and wide access to the internet - teachers can learn, share, talk, build ideas, grow through discussion online. It is and can be your BA/MA/PhD in ELT. There is no other more apt example than our free [EFL Classroom 2.0](#). Search and find all kinds of information on any teaching component. [Watch teachers teaching](#) in their classrooms. [Read articles](#).

But you say - what about practical experience? Well, let me say again to wit, "that's why the #1 teacher training course is "the deep end" and actually teaching". And god bless that. We DO need support and training but in the same vein, not at the expense of acknowledging that necessity is the mother of invention. The credo of the working ELTer.

\* If this post interested you - you might like, " [In praise of the Backpacking teacher](#)"

## The Speed Reader

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 7/28/2010 7:30:00 AM

This is a cool tool. Type/paste any text in and then press continue. Set the speed, set the chunk size and font size. . You can then read it at that speed (words/minute). Get it in our [Teacher's Tools](#) or full screen [HERE](#). Try it, you'll like it. Big hat tip to Jason at English Raven for the lead on this.

## Chopping Wood

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 9/7/2010 6:00:00 PM

I'm returning to my home and native land Canada in a few weeks and I've been thinking incessantly about "chopping wood".

Chopping wood isn't easy! Most city folk who try it, look like bumbling fools. Even if they manage to do okay, they last only a few short minutes. It's a workout!

I've chopped many a pieces of wood back of the house on our farm - so let me share a few of my insights into this very misunderstood art.

1. Force is not what it is about. It is all about striking in the right place. Not dead center but thereabouts. Find that spot and you are a winner, she'll give way like butter to a hot knife.

2. Your axe is you. You are one with the tool. Respect it and keep it sharp, constantly sharpen it.

3. Each piece is different. Some will give way with one blow. Others, wet, old, knotty - you'll have to turn over and hit with the back of the axe head. Those are the victories you'll remember.

4. The chopping block matters. Low, flat, hard and wide. Steady and stable. It should stand the test of both time and energy/force. Old and cranky is the best.

5. Listen to the sound as the axe meets the wood. There is a lot to be learned from that.

6. If you keep at it, you can chop wood with your eyes closed. I swear you can, it is an art of the most ancient kind - the art of interacting with the physical forces around us.

7. Choppin wood is a necessary but very lonely job. I



know of no machine that can chop wood. It is one person and one swing at a time, over and over. The winters keep coming and the labor must be done.

8. Chopping wood is very important. Our house needs wood to last the winter, to keep the cold away. We chop wood not for sport but of necessity. Respect that, honor that. It isn't a weekend hobby.

9. The wood has to be stacked. Yes, it is fun chopping but at the end of the hour or the day - you have to measure it all. Find a way that suits you - cross pile, stack straight, lump and cover with a tarp. Whatever works for you but you'll have to do this. We need the security of knowing we are safe, there is that pile there to keep the cold away.

So there you have it. My few words of wisdom straight from the chopping block.

## The Power of Getting Personal

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 8/28/2010 2:00:55 AM

I just read [this amazing blog post](#) about the best things a blogger can do to be successful. Amazing! (thanks [Larry F.](#)). I'd love to sit down and have coffee with this guy. He hits many nails on the head and the point that most impressed me was "being personal". I've always championed this to teachers - it is fundamental to good teaching. But it also applies to blogging. So here is a little more about me! Check out more about my life and what I'm into. This photo is me, circa 1998 - on the brochure of advertising our school's TEFL Certificate course. Apt photo given all



my travels and teaching!

Thank you to the people who gave me feedback on [my personal page](#). Invaluable!

Find out more about me through [my personal profile](#).



# The #1... (person answering grammar questions)

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 8/20/2010 6:15:06 PM

\*\* Not your ordinary endless [list](#)- just what's number 1. Just the BEST.

[Richard Firten - Grammatically Speaking](#)

Richard has been answering grammar questions from teachers for years. They are all collected on one nice page and you'll find the answers to most anything that has puzzled you about the use of the English language.

I've been reading his stuff religiously for a number of years and I particularly love his simple, clear explanations. Usually you get a lot of "fluff" from language mavens (the term Pinker uses for those who pontificate over etymology and usage). Not with Richard. He also answers readers/teachers direct questions so there is a very practical vein to what he writes. Here's an example where he describes why we often say, "computer mouses".

Dear Richard,

Here's a quickie. When talking about that indispensable part of a computer in the plural, do you say mice or mouses? None of us at my school can decide which it is!

Aidan O'Roarke  
Grand Rapids, MI USA

Dear Aidan,

There is a tendency in English to change an irregular plural noun back to a regular plural form when that noun takes on a secondary meaning that it never used to have. For example, the Canadian hockey team is known as the Maple Leafs, not the Maple Leaves. When talking about people of ill repute, we refer to



them as low-lives, not low-lives. This seems to be the way the word mouse is heading when it refers to the computer tool instead of the animal. Even though this has not been set in stone yet, the more accepted plural of computer mouse seems to be computer mouses. (I bet a lot of readers are saying, "Aha!" right about now.)

Read Grammatically Speaking from time to time and your knowledge of the peculiarities or just regularities of English grammar will grow and that will show in the classroom - without a doubt!

# The # 1 .... (pronunciation site online)

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 8/18/2010 6:54:39 AM

\*\* Not your ordinary endless [list](#)- just what's number 1. Just the BEST.

[Phonetics](#)

There are some good pronunciation online sites, video or otherwise - but none beat the Univ. of Iowa's [Phonetics](#). I've been using and promoting it for almost 3 years and I'm always rewarded by how happy teachers are when they find the site. (how do I know they've found it through me online - well, I won't tell you all my secrets but if the link is the above, it is probably scooped from me. I'll avoid the discussion about "headsets" but enjoy the link just as it is...).

[Find more videos like this on EFL CLASSROOM 2.0](#)

Students with distinct problems will find the site a wonder. It does two things that are SO crucial to the learner.

1. Shows a face slowly pronouncing.
2. Shows the articulation of the sounds in a clear fashion.

Pronunciation is one area where I do heartily believe in transfer - that we do have difficulties in pronouncing certain English phonemes based on our mother tongue. Students of many L1s will benefit practicing on Phonetics.



I've will also mention that I've spent A LOT of time collecting [the best videos and links for pronunciation on the internet](#). Lots of great material in one handy place for teachers or students. I'm streaming daily pronunciation from youtube's API in HD format. Enjoy, great quality.

[Here](#) too, are all of EFL Classroom's pronunciation videos.

# The #1 .... (video for teaching about mother nature)

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 8/31/2010 12:30:00 AM

\*\* Not your ordinary endless [list](#)- just what's number 1. Just the BEST.

[HOME](#)(with subtitles)

I've been spending some time zooming through



Japan's country/city side this week. A fascinating blend of nature and man and it got me thinking about

# Zen and the Act of Publishing a Book (Part 1)

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 8/16/2010 12:00:00 AM

Jeremy Harmer made a comment in defense of big publishers the other day. He said, " the cost of producing a book is horrendous these days, the investment staggeringly high."

I took that as a challenge so within 8 hours I CREATED and PUBLISHED a book. Not some frothy, blablabla book but something substantial and which practicing teachers or teacher training programs can use. This book and wisdom came from my own experience using reflective writing in my teacher training courses.

Later this week in a detailed post, I will describe the steps I took to both publish AND market this book. I think it will be highly beneficial to all - writers or even those who might still be only thinking about it, "one day".

Admittedly, I have a sound tech background and so could do all this quicker than the regular Joe - however, it isn't difficult and the costs and investment AREN'T staggering - unless you want to justify your billion dollars in profits (after expenses / before taxes - [Pearson's 2009 financial statement](#)).

[Get the book on Lulu to order or download](#).(and be so kind as to write a review/comment!)

Also, everyone who is supportive enough to [donate](#) whatever amount to EFL Classroom 2.0 to cover our rising costs (from Ning, another profit hungry bemoth), will get it free. The license is [Creative Commons and Sharealike](#). Meaning, once you get it - do whatever you want with it and copy, spread around as much as you like! Teacher trainers, you can contact me and get [the powerpoint](#) for instructional purposes.

# Google's Earth - what's next for google and us?

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 9/1/2010 6:29:58 PM

I've written numerous times about the "ubiquitous" form of Google. In admiration and also about their rare "flops". So today when reading William Gibson's NYT's "[Google's Earth](#)"- I thought I'd take the opportunity to share some of my past posts on Google. The article is a great read about google's reach and how we turn to it so much. "What's next?", he asks.

As Raul Midon sings - does Google really have all the answers? A nice karaoke I made of his amazing song. Get him live on TED.

Previous "Google" related posts. - [Google: how do you use it/them? Google Logos for teaching Google Sets Google Fast Flip](#)

this gorgeous video. It is a perfect way to learn/discuss our relationship and responsibility with "spaceship earth". Get students reading the subtitles and stop and have discussion or prepare questions. A truly amazing video to teach with, in HD. Here's the trailer but get it at the link above.

# The #1 ... (conversational game)

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 7/23/2010 9:43:37 PM

\*\* Not your ordinary endless list - just what's number 1. Just the BEST.

Pass the Paper

There are many conversational games but I have found none so popular and powerful as "Pass the Paper".

We have many pre made Pass the Paper games [on EFL Classroom 2.0](#) but you can also do it low tech, without a powerpoint. However, I like the ppts because you can just set a slide transition interval and it takes care of itself and you are free to wander the classroom - helping, monitoring.

What is it? Basically, the students are in a group with one crumpled piece of paper among them. The music plays and they "Pass the Paper". When the music stops, the one with the paper must do something preset by the teacher. It can be many things.

1. Answer the question on the ppt.
2. Do something the group asks.
3. Answer a question the group asks (with target language the teacher has on the board. ie. Have you ever .....?)
4. Finish a sentence or expression on the powerpoint.

## More on Reflective Teaching

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 8/13/2010 3:44:15 AM

I'm a big fan of reflective teaching and use it extensively in my teacher training programs. Especially reflective writing / journal writing. There is something about the act of writing in this way, that makes one intimate with oneself (as Schon, the grandfather of this subject once put it). It gets one growing as a teacher and I still look at my teaching journal from my first year teaching and learn a lot!

In ELT, you can't go wrong visiting some of Thomas Farrell's books on the subject. He's a great "teacher's teacher" and I've attached a review by David Nunan about his latest, " Reflective Teaching Practice: From Research to Practice(see below). He's a wonderful writer/speaker on the subject. If you get the chance to hear him speak - do so. He'll be in Seoul for the International Kotesol conference this fall.

[Reflective Teaching Practice review Nunan](#)

Also, over the last year, I've compiled this ebook - The Tao of Teaching. It sprung up through [a forum conversation](#) and just grew and grew.

Presently, I'm editing it and will make it into a reflective journal, using the passages as a prompt, along with a nice quote about learning/teaching/



5. Truth or Dare (for higher levels).

I've used this game to good effect at workshops as an icebreaker. See below and example of the many available in our resources.

[Try "Pass the Paper"](#), it really lowers the affective filter of students and gets them relaxed and learning English without even knowing it!

[Finish It Off! - PTP game \(full screen\)](#)

## The #1 .... (creative writing site for language students)

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 9/6/2010 7:01:18 PM

\*\* Not your ordinary endless [list](#) - just what's number 1. Just the BEST.

[Storybird](#)

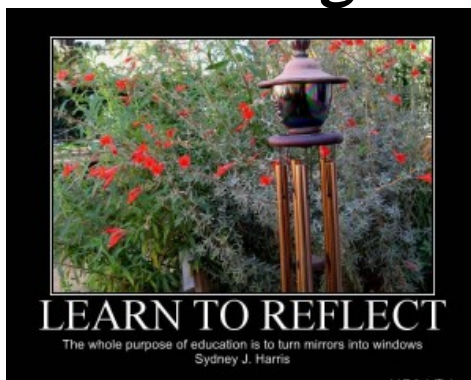
Without a doubt. It features beautiful illustrations which students choose to create a "story bird" or book. Sharable, beautiful, motivating - they really, really unleash the creativity and language of students. It is the ultimate story writing site.

I use this with my Materials Development students and with many other technology oriented courses. Always, what the students come up with amazes me. Further, the students are always inspired to the nines by their "creation". And this is so important to mention - the notion of an end product. Language is so ephemeral and it disappears as soon as it is born. Storybooks or birds, give students tangible evidence of their learning (and also give parents that evidence!).

See [our discussion about Storybird](#) and many fine examples. Also, [this blog post](#) about using plain old fashioned storybook making activities with your students.

Here's a nice example of a Storybird created by one of my former students. Luv it!

[I wish...](#) by [eflclassroom20](#) on [Storybird](#)



education for reflective writing. A journal professors/teachers can use with practicing or inservice teachers.

Do you have any suggestions for this? What questions do you think teachers should ask themselves and write about?

If you liked this post, you may enjoy these two "full" posts on Reflective Teaching, [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

[The Tao of Teaching.ppt](#)

## The #1 ..... (icebreaker for language classes)

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 8/4/2010 12:30:00 AM

\*\* Not your ordinary endless list - just what's number 1. Just the BEST.

2 Truths and 1 Lie.

I thought long and hard about this one and despite some other candidates, this activity due to its simplicity, personalization and structured language use - gets the vote. Plus, I've heard more good reports about this game than any other. It also has many variations.

Truths and a Lie- Each group/class member writes 2 true facts and one lie on a card. The teacher collects the cards and reads them aloud. The rest of the group/



class tries to guess who it is and which fact is the lie. For lower level classes, put sentence fragments on the board and the students just finish them off.

The teacher should be the first to do this and should

write his/her sentences on the board. Students can vote on which they think is the lie. This will clearly model the activity. Here are my own standards - can you guess correctly?

A) I wish I were more muscular.

B) I wish I could play a musical instrument.

C) I wish I had a dog.

I like using the 3 wishes variation for higher level students. This can become a full lesson where the students afterwards get their wishes granted. See the explanation [here](#). Also see the "[snowball fight](#)" [variation](#) of this great icebreaker!

For more ideas, see this discussion on "[The First Week](#)" and [this one](#) on icebreakers.

## Teaching is .....

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

Submitted at 7/27/2010 12:30:00 AM

This is an abridged version of my closing graduation speech I recently gave where I work. Words to those entering the teaching profession. Sorry for the bad

audio but I did this in one take and without any notes.... just thoughts in my head.

[FULL SCREEN](#)

Here are a few photos (I'm horrible about taking photos!)



# The #1 ... (way to quiet down students)

by ddeubel (Ddeubel's Posts - EFL CLASSROOM 2.0)

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Submitted at 9/2/2010 6:30:00 PM

\*\* Not your ordinary endless [list](#)- just what's number 1. Just the BEST.

Speak softer

In all my years teaching, this is one of the most powerful things I learned. It also directly had an impact on my classroom and student learning.

Often, (because it is human nature), we speak louder in an noisy environment. Everyone then responds in kind and the volume just keeps getting louder and louder. It leads to a noisy environment and for a language classroom, a hard time for students to hear clearly. I don't agree with the adage that "a noisy classroom is a good classroom". Yes, students should be talking/communicating - that's a great classroom. But forget the noise.

So if you want to quiet down your students, begin speaking to the whole class or individual groups in a soft voice. Everyone will naturally follow suit. It works!

Another nice trick is to put on "soft" music, music



without voice. My "go to" music for this is Edward Satie. Put it on and it really calms down everyone. Get a nice selection in our "[Study Music](#)" [pop out player](#).

How do you "calm down" your class? Further, take our poll on the main page and [view what others do to get students' attention](#).