

NUFS Workshop 2006

*Newsletter No. 6**<Summer Workshop, Day Three>***Morning Session****Date:** August 3rd, 9:30-12:30**Venue:** Nagoya University of Foreign Studies, Room 322**Instructor:** Keiko Takahashi (Ikeda High School)**Title:** “Integrating Language Skills in English I & II**The number of participants:** 18

Abstract: Although the new Course of Study has been implemented since 2002, the grammar-translation method is still dominant in high school classrooms. How can we increase the amount of English the students use and give them integrated practice in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing? Several activities and assessment activities are demonstrated, through which teachers can move away from the grammar-translation method. We will discuss how we can integrate four skills and make the class more communicative through participating in some of the activities and creating a post-reading activity.

**1. Interesting activities you might want to use in your class. Why?**

- I'd like to use rhythm practice in my class. I'm sure this practice is good for students. Recently I come to realize that in the classroom they must be active and enjoyable. This must be good for them.
- Rhythm practice. It's a good practice of speaking and reading aloud. Students will be more enthusiastic in reading English sentences aloud when we use songs than when we use some example sentences in the textbooks.
- Rhythm practice by using songs. I also use songs in my class, but I didn't use the dots to show stressed parts in the handouts. Students will enjoy this practice very much.
- I'd like to use shadowing in pairs, because just reading texts many times tends to be monotonous. So I should introduce many ways to make it colorful.
- Comparing reading speed at the beginning and at the end of class. This activity makes students conscious of their achievements.
- Chunk by chunk reading. This makes students repeat easily and understand more.
- Words and expressions. Pair test is effective to increase students' vocabularies. It seems to be fun for students. They like to be examiners.

2. What you learned from today's workshop.

- I can't change my school's traditional way of teaching, but with other English teacher's cooperation at my school, I think I can change it step by step. I'll definitely tell my colleague teachers what I learned through this workshop at NUS.

- We can learn something from teachers, students and even from failures I made. Learning from the feedbacks is very important.
- ‘Good’ education costs money, but it is worth paying for it. I learned that revising and making worksheet that covers integration of all activities is important.
- In order to teach how to cooperate with each other in groups, it’s a good idea to use songs and rhythm practice.
- When Keiko-sensei delivered many handouts about Lena Maria, students must have been very happy because they could get to know more about her. And that is a great help for them to think and understand about handicapped person and even their lives. So I learned that using only textbook isn’t sometimes enough. Expanding their thoughts is very important.
- In her way of training oral reading, students read text almost ten times. And she has them read silently about four times. Various ways of reading practice are so good. I’ll do them in my classes.



3. Questions and answers

Q: Can I ask you about evaluation? Will you give points to students for finishing all tasks in the handout?

Yes, we do. We give the points for worksheets as a part of portfolio assessment. Students are required to keep all the worksheets in a file so that they can use them for their portfolio assessment at the end of the semester. Twice a year, students look over all the worksheets in a file, and they write their semester report as a reflection on their study. They analyze how they study, find the improvements and set a goal for the next semester. We collect their file (that is, their worksheets) and their semester report, and we give points. This portfolio assessment can be counted for 10 % in the total grade. As for the post-reading activities, we evaluated each activity and give the points. This post-reading can be counted for 10 % in the total grade. (The portfolio assessment and the post-reading are different ones.)

Q: For homework, what do you think of ‘writing a five-sentence story’, in which the target expression would be used and students make a story of that situation in five sentences?

That’s a good idea and I’ll try it out in September. Last semester I sometimes asked students to make three original sentences using target expression, but many of them had difficulty in making a sentence without any context. “Writing a five-sentence story” would be fun and more effective in learning the target expression. For slow learners, I might ask “making a three-sentence story” or “making five-line conversation”. Thank you for your advice.

Q: In my class, there are students who do not participate in any activities, even in pair-work. I wonder what to do with them. What do you think?

We cannot carry out the class if students don’t participate in activities. This is a big difference between student-centered class and teacher-centered class. I often have this problem, and those students always give me a headache.

For example, I taught third-year students last year. The class was formed according to their prospective courses and academic proficiency. I used up all my energy to organize the class for students who wished to

go to work after graduation (就職専門学校コース). For the first six months, pair-work wouldn't work well, and I tried out many things using different and additional worksheets just for this class. In November, finally many of them started to enjoy the activity. What I tried are these: 1) I asked (ordered) students to move their desks and faced each other every time they did pair-activity. 2) I made it clear who started first and how they did the activity. 3) I asked them to write down something on a worksheet or blackboard during or after the activity. In this way, there should be some traces of the activity. 4) I collected the worksheets at the end of every class and gave points for participation. 5) I explained in Japanese how to study in class several times when we went through the lesson. 6) I introduced more activities where students could draw pictures. (Most of them liked drawing even if they hate writing.) 7) I often changed the partners even if it was a large class. 8) I gave a rhythm test (song test) in a group four times a year so that they could learn how to cooperate in a group.

This year, I teach first-year students. We spent three to four periods on an orientation for "English I" class. I explained in Japanese how we would study in class, how important it would be to participate in the activity and how wonderful if we could learn together. I introduced 先輩's comments as well. We spent two periods to meet the classmates through several activities. It worked better.

It just takes time for those students to change their attitude, but I keep encouraging myself to build up a learning community in class by using several strategies. So let's take it easy. Eventually they would change in some way.

Q: I found that the video worked so well to let students know the content of the text, but if you don't have the video related to the text, what kind of ways would you do instead?

I use songs, newspaper articles, pictures and interesting information from internet. We can get a lot of information from Internet. Japanese TV program are helpful if the lesson topic are featured.

The length of the lesson is usually too short to appreciate the content and some kinds of support materials are needed to deepen our understanding. In order to get such support materials for the lesson, 1) we look over the topic in April and, over the year, we try to find and keep any information related to the topic. 2) from this April, I started to share the support materials and handouts with other teachers who are in charge of different grades. For example, I gave all the supported materials I used last year (Videos, CDs, recorded TV programs and articles from Internet) to the teachers who use the same textbook this year. They will add more support materials this year and we can share and find better support materials in this way, I hope.

Q: How many hours do you spend in making the handouts of one class?

It depends on the topics, but as we did during the workshop, it usually takes several hours to decide a goal, pre-reading activities and post-reading activities. And it takes several hours to develop the actual handouts as we did in a workshop. Thus I would spend more than ten hours (?) to develop the materials. You can guess from your group presentation. How long did it take to develop the materials?

Last year I shared the materials with other teachers, but we didn't develop the materials together. This year, unfortunately, I haven't shared the materials yet. However, I've started to share the materials with other teachers as I mentioned above. We exchanged all the materials and handouts used in the previous year in April. This is very helpful and can save time to make a handout because I don't have to start everything from the beginning.

I should make more effort to develop the materials with the teacher in the same grade. We can save time and we can get better ideas. We learned it from our group presentation.

Q: As a post-reading exercise, what kind of homework do you think is effective to make students' interest confirmed?

I hope you've already gained many ideas from the workshop. In general, it would be good if it was connected with their lives so that students can express their ideas and opinions. Also, it would be good if writing activity and speaking activity were integrated at least. (Integration of four skills is good, of course.)

Last year, I tried out different post-reading activities; 1) writing and sending e-mail 2) Interview and essay 3) making a CM using power point software 4) Making a class poem as a mural project 5) Debate 6) making their own story and creating a story book.

Also we tried to integrate "Reading class" and "Writing class" for one lesson. This is an effective and ideal way to give a post-reading activity. Students tried "debate" and "writing essay" in "English Writing" class after they studied Lesson 7 in "English Reading" class. When a post-reading activity of "English Reading" class was done in "English Writing" class, we could spend more time on post-reading activities and students could learn a lot from the lesson (topic). Please start thinking about how to integrate "English I & II" with other subjects; it will be more effective and interesting.

Q: How and when do you reflect on your lessons? Do you keep a kind of note for reflection? Do you have a meeting to review with your co-workers?

I should keep record for reflection but I don't. (I'm lazy.) I usually reflect on my class when I report "my action log" in a monthly workshop. Also I reflect on my lesson at the end of the semester when I read semester reports students write. I learned a lot from their semester reports.

As for a regular meeting, the answer is "Yes" and "No". For example, last year we had a weekly meeting, where we developed the materials for "English Writing" class. We sometimes talked about "English Reading" class, but we couldn't make enough time. This year, we have a weekly meeting for "OC" class but not for "English I" class. It would be easier to start having a meeting for "OC" and "Writing" classes than having a meeting for "English I and II". BUT.....we should start to work more on "English I and II" with other teachers at our school. Thank you for asking me such a question.

Q: My students often leave the handouts somewhere and ask me to give extra again. How do you have your students keep all the handouts? Do you ask them to have a binder?

We had the same problem three years ago. Now we collect the money from students and WE BUY the binders for them. In this way, all the students can get binders in the first class. Then WE PUNCH TWO HOLES in all handouts so that students can file right after they are given handouts in class. I know WE SPOIL our students, but it works well.

Afternoon Session

Date: August 3rd, 13:30-16:30

Venue: Nagoya University of Foreign Studies, Room 322

Advisors: Kazuyoshi Sato & Nancy Mutoh (Nagoya University of Foreign Studies)

The number of participants: 18

Abstract: The participants made a group presentation of their lesson plans.



Mid-term Presentation

Date: August 4th, 9:00-13:00

Venue: Aichi Kenko Plaza, Conference Room #2

Advisor: Kazuyoshi Sato (Nagoya University of Foreign Studies)

The number of participants: 13

Abstract: The participants made their presentation of their action research plan. They reflect on what they did and modify their plan. They showed 1) Report (Level, Subject, Problem, Goal, What they did, Result including students' comments, What they learned, Future issues including how to modify a plan), 2) Lesson plan (a sample lesson plan for one unit), and 3) handouts (sample handouts they used).



Members are supposed to send their modified 'Action research plan' and 'Lesson plan' to Prof. Sato by September 4th, 2006.

Next Workshop

Date: September 23, 10:30-12:00, 13:00-14:30, 14:30-17:00

Venue: Nagoya International Center, Lecture Room 1 (<http://www.nic-nagoya.or.jp/home.htm>)

Instructor: Philip Suthons (Nagoya University of Foreign Studies)

Title: 'Building Effective Persuasion Skills'

I'll put the abstract of this workshop on the web page later on. Please check it out. If you can participate in it, email to chiha143@nufs.ac.jp