

## NUFS Workshop 2006

### *Newsletter No. 12*

#### Workshop in February

**Date:** February 10, 2007 10:30-12:00, 13:00-14:30

**Venue:** Nagoya NSC College, Room 62

**Instructor:** Nancy Mutoh (Nagoya University of Foreign Studies)

**Title:** 'Movies as Learning Materials'

**The number of participants:** 21

**Abstract:** Most junior and senior high school students enjoy movies. But they believe English language movies are too difficult for them to use for language learning purposes. In fact, by combining extensive viewing of whole movies with intensive attention to short segments, learners can enjoy the entertainment value of movies as well as benefit from their value as language learning material. In this presentation, participants will try out a variety of techniques for using movies for both classroom learning and independent study. They will then collaborate to adapt the techniques to their own teaching situations.



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

- I really enjoyed every activity today. Among them I want to use 'split viewing' in my class. Students will participate actively in class because they have responsibility to tell the partners what is happening in the scene.
- 'Silent viewing' – it attracts students' concentration and have them want to see more. When one student sees a movie without sound and another listens to the sound without seeing it, students are under necessity of speaking in English.
- I think the most interesting activity was listening to the sounds of 'ET', and then having brainstorming of the video. I'm interested in how to develop this activity, and the activity with writing the vocabulary from 'Mrs. Doubtfire'.
- 'ET'. It was really interesting to imagine what was happening without seeing the scene. And I thought the pair work (one sees the scene and the other asks questions about it) was good and enjoyable because this activity didn't make me think that I was studying English.
- I'd like to use the activity of making summary of 'Mrs. Doubtfire' in groups. It is not too much pressure for students to memorize one or two sentences and put them in the right order. I think this activity is available for 'English I' and 'English II' classes.
- 'Memory game' is a fun and useful way for vocabulary expansion. I'd like to use this activity for my students in general class. 'Silent viewing' is very interesting. Guessing the story will help them understand the movie well and will motivate them to notice language when they watch the movie with sound.

## 2. What you learned from today's workshop.

- There are lots of ways to use movies. In the afternoon session, I learned the important rules for making movie-based activities, which may be applied for any activities. By discussing with other teachers we were able to make a splendid lesson plan. This experience will help me a lot in the future for preparing for the class in a communicative way.
- I learned that movies can help develop learning skills. This is an interesting area, and admittedly, I don't know much about it. I'd like to try out more of these strategies.
- Even watching a small part of a movie can be very interesting. Teachers should enhance students' imagination by not letting them show all the parts.
- I didn't know there were so many ways to use movies as teaching materials. We tend to use movies when we try some listening dictation or listening comprehension, but we can come up with many other ideas if we have another point of view.
- Movies are great materials to show how important it is to show our emotion when speaking English. Nancy's smiles are great! I should be a happy and energetic person in my class. This might be the best visual aid for my students.
- By showing a movie, we can do various kinds of activities. I've used movies in my class and then I only had a 'questions on the sheet to check their understanding' style and 'dictation' style by having students filling blanks. Now, I can do more!
- I learned movies as learning materials have a lot of possibilities. I'll use movies as not only grammar or vocabulary exercises but also to simulate students' imagination and make them learn social context.



## 3. Questions and Answers

### Q (1): I'd like to know the list of good movies for English class.

A movie clip needs to match your students and teaching activity. First, it needs to be interesting for your students. You can ask your students what movies they like before choosing.

And of course the language in the movie should not be too difficult. People often recommend

- ✧ animated movies intended for children: any of the Disney movies or those from other animation studios
- ✧ (non-animated) stories about family or school life: comedies or dramas like Mrs. Doubtfire, Home Alone, Edward Scissorhands. Chihaya Sugiura told me at the workshop that she had just read Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and then watched the movie. She found them both very suitable. I'm planning on trying Charlie out this year!
- ✧ English versions of familiar Japanese stories: such as Miyazaki Hayao's animations in English translation (Spirited Away, etc.)

We can also sometimes find a useful scene in a movie that may be too difficult as a whole. Patch Adams is a movie about a man who fights the medical establishment in order to make medical care

more humane. But the scenes we saw in the workshop were not so difficult to understand. When you watch a movie, try notice scenes that might be useful in the classroom.

And the kind of activity you plan to do also affects your movie choice. If your activity includes

- ✧ guessing
- ✧ predicting
- ✧ noticing details
- ✧ arranging the parts of a scene in the right order
- ✧ summarizing

then students may enjoy using an unfamiliar movie more, or at least a movie they don't remember in detail.



But for other activities, you can save time and frustration

if students are already familiar with the story. Examples include activities in which students

- ✧ notice communicative purpose and language use
- ✧ notice new usages of familiar words
- ✧ notice sentence patterns or grammar points
- ✧ learn new vocabulary
- ✧ practice fluency (shadowing, reading subtitles aloud or memorizing)

With familiar movies, students understand the meaning and feelings quickly, so they can get into the activity itself more easily.

In general, it's a shortcut to learn new language with familiar content. Studying a reading that has unfamiliar content and unfamiliar language makes students more dependent on the teacher. With familiar content, students can help themselves a lot, as they match their knowledge of the story or topic to the English.

**Q (2): Having students move around is a bit difficult in our audio room because it's full of desks and chairs. Do you think it's too late to do 'making a story by putting pieces of paper in order' in a following class in a normal classroom on a different day?**

Give it a try! If students have made some notes while watching the scene, you could give them 5 minutes first to compare their notes again and recall the scene before the strip story activity. At the end of the class period in the audio room you might tell them they'll do an activity on the scene in the next class.

A variation, for the audio room, might be to make the story about 6 lines long. Have students sit in groups of 3 and give each student 2 strips of paper. Again, they are to study the lines and then say or read them to their partners in order to put the story together. They can see which group finishes first.

**Q (3): To use of Hollywood movies in class seemed to be quite difficult to me. Therefore, I mainly use some Japanese animated cartoons for the similar activity, such as Totoro or Miffy. What do you think about that?**

Familiar content is a language learning shortcut, as I wrote above. So your choices are fine. How do the students find Miffy? Does the story have enough content for them? I've only seen drawings, but don't know the cartoons.

**Q (4): I'm a little confused as how to sort and apply the activities on the large sheet in the back. It would be great to read a short example for each goal or activity. Would you please explain more?**

Yes! The chart needs examples. But I think putting the name of an activity without the explanation of it would not be informative enough. The quickest route for you to understand clearly is to borrow or buy the book *Film* by Stempleski and Tomalin (2001, Oxford University Press) The whole book consists of "recipe-style" activities with step by step instructions. I just now found it at amazon.co.jp for 2,700 yen.

### **Group Session**

**Date:** February 10, 2007 15:00-17:00

**Venue:** Nagoya NSC College, Room 62

**The number of participants:** 16

**Advisors:** Kazuyoshi Sato, Nancy Mutoh

**Abstract:** The participants made discussion about their lessons in the group. They talked how they can change grammar-centered lessons to more communicative ones, for example.



The meetings in March 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> are only for Action Research Group members. Each of them will make a final report on the result in his/her presentation.

*Thank you very much for your devotion and cooperation to NUFWS Workshop 2006. In total we had 14 meetings and the number of participants was 259, including 92 junior high school teachers and 156 high school teachers. I was always impressed at your enthusiasm to get some ideas to make your English classes better. I hope NUFWS Workshop 2007 will also attract your attention and meet your expectations. I'll release the new schedule soon, and please be one of the NUFWS Workshop members again. Thank you.*