

NUFS Workshop 2010

Newsletter No. 10**Workshop in January**

(Part 1)

Date: January 22, 2011, 10:30-14:30**Venue:** Nagoya NSC College, Room 31**Instructor:** Brad Deacon (Nanzan University)

Bio: Brad Deacon teaches and researches as a member of NEPAS (Nanzan English Program at Seto) in the Policy Studies department at Nanzan University. He is the coordinator of the freshmen English Communication program that serves over 300 students. Brad has a Master of Arts in Teaching from the School for International Training in Vermont. He has extensive experience conducting workshops on vocabulary, designing language programs that target goals for vocabulary acquisition, and has been rumored to serve on committees that involve the testing of vocabulary. In his spare time he enjoys cycling, traveling, and hanging out with his family.

**Title:** “Teaching and Learning Vocabulary: A Way and Ways”

Description: In a well-balanced language program, what kinds of opportunities should exist for developing student’s L2 vocabulary? The focus of our workshop will be to answer this critical question through lively discussion and practical hands-on activities. Specifically, we will learn 1) what kind of vocabulary students should be learning, 2) proven techniques for learning vocabulary inside and outside of class, 3) ways to more effectively teach vocabulary across the four skills, and 4) relevant theory that supports the above. You will leave this workshop with both useful strategies and techniques for teaching vocabulary, and a greater sense of how to plan for effective vocabulary acquisition in your language programs.

The number of participants: 26**1. Interesting activities you might want to use in your class. Why?**

- To introduce the new vocabulary or expressions with gestures and drawing. Using gestures and drawing is a great way for students to guess the meaning of the words in the context.
- Vocabulary games (every other letter game, mimicking) – it’s fun to review and recycle the words. Especially it’s fun if we do these activities with the partner. When we talk about the vocabulary with our partner, we can remember those words better than we do by ourselves.



- I would like to try web-site 'luxtutor' and make proper material for my students.
- I liked how we review what we've learned a lot. The idea of students helping each other exchanging the things they remember is great. Using a different color pen to write down your partner says is good, too. I didn't notice how effective it is.
- Mind mapping as a listening activity and to review vocabulary.
- I want to use 'some corpus lessons' like 'go skiing', 'play baseball' or 'do karate', because if students learn collocations of words, they will be interested in words and learn quickly.
- I liked 'adjectives for people' handout. I enjoyed it and thought that it will be helpful for students to test themselves.
- Filling the missing words by two people – because I think it's very fun for students and they can help each other by using only a sheet of paper Students have to negotiate and learn each other by explaining the meaning of words.
- The idea of giving students a list of adjectives and having them form sentences about their family members was interesting. Students can start with the model and they expand.

2. What you learned from today's workshop.

- I've confirmed that to teach vocabularies, strategies are important. Many teachers believe that giving vocabulary quiz is the best way for students to learn vocabulary, but it's not true. Teachers should work hard to make students be exposed to a lot of vocabulary out of classroom.
- I learned a lot of great activities to use in my classes as well with my own personal study. I'm teaching classes where I'm not extremely comfortable teaching the material as it is my first year. But I find myself not focusing on the material at times because I'm not so familiar with material. I need to really know my material before I step in the classroom.
- Introduction of the new words based on collocation is a good approach. Letting them use the target words as often as possible – recycling – is important.
- I thought learning vocabulary was always challenging and less interesting for students, but I learned that teachers can make it interesting and let students learn more in a meaningful way.
- I learned that I should focus on three points at a time when teaching vocabulary – meaning, pronunciation and form.
- I learned important teachers' and students' job to learn vocabulary – planning, learning strategies, testing and high frequency vocabulary. I should remember these four jobs.

3. Questions and Answers

Hujambo!

Thanks for the useful questions everyone. The following answers are not necessarily meant to be prescriptive, but more as possible ways to work with vocabulary in language teaching and learning. Additionally, as teachers we all can find lots of others "answers" to these questions through our own experience and continued professional development via workshops, presentations, books, articles, and so on over time. Anyway, here we go...



Q: I'm interested in graded listening (extensive listening). How do you introduce extensive listening to your students at Nanzan? What materials do you use? How much do students listen to?

A: I start by passing a few levels of graded readers/listeners to the students in class. Then we practice reading/listening to a few pages from each level during class time so that they can understand how to use them, notice the level that is most appropriate for each student, and allow for questions to emerge about the process of using the readers/listeners in class. I explain the merits of using the readers/listeners to the students and then invite them to sign out two books per week over a three-week period in order to “try on” the activity. Afterwards they write a short reflection based on how useful and interesting they feel graded readers/listeners have been. I then encourage, but don't force, students to continue this practice by signing out materials from our LL (Language Lab) Support Office. The materials come from the series that are available from publishers such as Oxford, Cambridge, Penguin, Black Cat, and so on. Many students get hooked and even borrow materials during the spring, summer, and winter breaks!

Q: Since teachers are language learners as well, would you recommend teachers taking part in the vocabulary learning process? Do you show your students how you study Japanese as well?

A: Without question teachers should learn another L2.

Modeling by example is a wonderful way to stimulate our own students. To illustrate, I let my own students know of ways that I have used to learn Japanese such as the strategies like mnemonics. For instance, I taught them how I learned the word *saboten* (cactus) in Japanese by imagining ten green-colored, spiky images of my verbally vicious Japanese friend Sabo san. By creating this cactus-like image of my friend I could then remember the word easily. I could

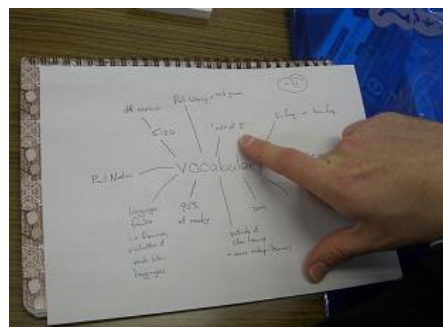


remember this by using the power of imagery, personalization, and association in general. For homework, I asked the students to do a similar activity for five new vocabulary in a textbook unit and to then explain how they used mnemonics to do so with class partners. We all learned a lot from each other and were inspired to use mnemonics even more. Any student who thinks that learning vocabulary is boring can potentially shift their way of thinking by tapping into their powers of imagination a little more.

Q: How do I introduce high frequency words to my students when the words are not in the textbook?

A: In the workshop I commented that many teachers typically use their texts as their only course material and thus rely on it to supply vocabulary to their students. This is not always a great way to teach, unfortunately, since students may miss out on some of the frequent words. Corpus-based textbooks such as Touchstone are better choices, but even they may not be enough. In order to introduce the K1 and K2 words, teachers need to first get these lists (Mat White used a good example when we used to work at Nanzan together). Students can be tested to determine the words they know/don't know and then be encouraged to use the Spaced Repetition technique with vocabulary cards (see Rob Waring's site) to gain mastery of the K1 and K2 words.

Q: How are K1 words defined as the category? Are they based on the frequency of the real corpus or ideal words that learners should know? How about AWL words? How are they chosen?



A: The K1, AWL, and other word lists are all based on real corpora. Basically a massive amount of language from various resources such as books and newspapers are then analyzed for their frequency range. The end result shows the words and the order in which they most frequently occur in the target language. To illustrate, the British National Corpus (BNC) has over 100,000,000 running words of English! This means we can be quite confident that the lists that emerge from such a corpus are accurate. AWL words, in particular, emerged from a corpus from a wide range of academic subjects. Thus, the AWL is a more formal vocabulary and is useful especially for people who have academic purposes for learning English.

Q: I wonder how we can teach for example all K1 words in the limited time without forcing students drilling on using ‘tango-cho’ cards. I don’t teach at a school, but realistically is it possible to teach those words in a meaningful way?

A: Indeed, time needs to be effectively managed both within and outside of class. Deliberate vocabulary learning is actually very time-efficient since students are focused mostly on the vocabulary that they have not yet mastered instead of lists of both known and unknown words. This “language focused learning strand” (see Paul Nation) is very meaningful and an essential component within the four strands in order to create a well-balanced program.

Q: Should teachers often give words level (K1, K2 etc.) to students? Will the information help their vocabulary learning?

A: Yes. Yes.



Q: How do we choose which words should be productive or receptive for the students? When students are making sentences using receptive words and that they are not natural sentences, should teachers say to them not to use them or is it a chance to upgrade their receptive words to productive words?

A: The word frequency lists include both lists of productive and receptive corpus researched vocabulary. If you are teaching speaking, for instance, then refer to the productive list. Students will struggle with accuracy no matter how much controlled practice they have had or opportunities to absorb language incidentally through graded-readers and other materials. They should be encouraged to use the vocabulary they already know and have learned in a productive manner and to have opportunities to both self-correct, peer-correct, and receive teacher feedback. It takes time for input to become intake, but the constant cycle of studying and practicing language over time can lead to positive gains.

Kwaheri! ☺

P.S. Lextutor showed that my answers, excluding the Swahili, included: 80.14% K1 words, 5.46% K2 words, 6.04% AWL words, and 8.36% off-list words.

(Part 2)

Date: January 22, 2011, 14:30-17:00

Venue: Nagoya NSC College, Room 31

Advisor: Kazuyoshi Sato (Nagoya University of Foreign Studies)

Abstract: Monthly report on action research

The number of participants: 12



Workshop in February (Scheduled)

Date: February 19, 2011 10:30-14:30, 14:30-17:00

Venue: NSC College, Room31

Title: “Extensive Reading Activities: Now It’s Time to Act Locally”

Instructor: Junko Yamanaka (Trident College)

Please email Chihaya ([chiha143\(at-mark\)nufs.ac.jp](mailto:chiha143@nufs.ac.jp)) to attend this workshop.