

## NUFS Workshop 2012

*Newsletter No. 3***Workshop in July**

(Part 1)

**Date:** July 14, 2012, 10:30-14:30**Venue:** NSC College**Instructor:** Sakae Onoda (Kanda University of International Studies)**Title:** "Exploring Teaching Techniques for Increasing the Use of English in Class"

**Abstract:** This seminar will first look at potential factors that discourage teachers from teaching English in English, rather than in Japanese, based on survey results. We will then proceed to explore potential solutions by drawing on second language acquisition and educational psychology theories and literature. Finally, we will explore practical ideas that promote the use of English in class. Participants are invited to take part in workshops. Each person will experience tasks that utilize pedagogical principles that promote student language learning. A range of ideas, appropriate at secondary school and university levels, will be introduced for the participants to employ in their classroom.

**The number of participants: 29****1. Interesting activities you might want to use in your class. Why?**

- Dictogloss – because it's a good practice for listening and after that students can communicate and cooperate with their classmates focusing on grammar to reproduce the sentences in pairs or groups.
- When students have tasks of information gaps, information exchange or pair work, four strand are integrated.
- I think 'error-finding in the picture' game is interesting. It helps students to be willing to say something to find answers in English.
- 4/3/2 – I think it's a good way to practice English. Students can use what they learn in the lesson. As Onoda sensei said, students can improve their accuracy as well as fluency.
- TV News – it can make the students guess the content before showing the script. They can get involved easily.
- The discussion groups in class with the leaders or facilitators of conversation – I have a hard time facilitating group discussion. So dividing responsibility seems to be better than what I normally do.
- There were a number of interesting scaffolding ideas to make difficult news episodes more comprehensible to students. such as writing answers to questions before paraphrasing etc.



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

- I need to use more scaffolding techniques and make materials easier to enhance students' self-efficacy.
- I have learned several new theories related to second language learning such as expectancy-value theory and self-determination theory. Also, I've learned how to use materials in a communicative way by using pair work and follow-up questions.
- Even we know most activities on his presentation, I didn't often care the effects carefully. So, I'd like to think of and choose the activities carefully more.
- Flow of a lesson – starting from warming up to discussion is very important. I'm impressed with the idea that deep processing for vocabulary input and output.
- It was a good chance for me to reflect over if I am using "practical ideas to increase the use of English in class". Obviously I'm lacking of using fluency development tasks now. I would like to deep this list and check once in a while to include as many points as possible.
- I'm very interested in the self-determination theory and would like to learn more about it.
- Paul Nation's four strands are interesting for me. Reflecting my lesson, I found that there is lack of fluency development, so I'll try to implement it by adopting the new idea 4/3/2.



## 3. Questions and Answers

### Q (1): I am interested in how to adjust these techniques based on the English levels of students.

**A:** My answer to this question might take a book chapter, but for now let me briefly explain a teaching idea that encourages lower intermediate level learners to get information about news stories. In my workshop, I asked the participants to get information from visual images with the sound off, and encouraged them to get as much information as possible. This might be difficult for lower intermediate level learners, so I often prepare a worksheet that shows a list of both things they see and things they don't see in the news story. Then, I have them watch the story with the sound off a few times and circle those they see in the news story. This is a teaching technique adjusted for students with limited English with which you can teach vocabulary and part of the story in advance and make a difficult news story a little more accessible to students.

### Q (2): Are there any steps which have been shown to be effective at promoting intrinsic motivation? / I'd like to know some ideas to develop intrinsic motivation for slow learners.

**A:** I usually do not think about steps to take to make students intrinsically motivated. However, given the research results indicating that intrinsic motivation is closely related to self-efficacy, I employ strategies to improve their self-efficacy. For the self-efficacy enhancement strategies, please refer to my handout. If they become more self-efficacious, they will be more actively engaged in more tasks, and during the process they may encounter some tasks they are intrinsically interested in accomplishing.



Having said that, I do use a few strategies to improve students' intrinsic motivation and this can be applied to teaching lower level students. One of them is to encourage them to choose the materials and topics and give them opportunities to explain the information necessary to complete the tasks and make some comments on other students' performances. This technique will be brought into full swing when students are engaged in presentations and project work.



**Q (3): I think motivation is one of the important factors to learn language. I know some students who became motivated in specific culture or a person. But Monkasho-approved text can't satisfy their interests. Could you introduce me some materials which raise their motivation?**

**A:** To tell you the truth, you can modify Monkasho textbooks to suit them well to students' interests. My friend, a high school teacher, is well versed in modifying the textbooks. She has provided me a host of creative ideas, but given the space limit, let me explain one of them. After teaching one whole lesson, you encourage them to review the main points of the lesson by giving a lot of comprehension questions on a worksheet as an assignment. This facilitates understanding of the text. You can also test their comprehension in a team competition like Jeopardy: make a few groups of students and allot one of them to a particular question. Students who have to answer stand up and wait for the particular question. A student who raises their hand first and gives the correct answer gets the designated points to the question. The total scores are calculated at the end of the activity and the group who has the highest score is the winner.

**Q (4): Do you make most of your materials or do you use a book when planning activities in your classroom?**

**A:** When I use TV news clips, I usually use a textbook I have developed with my colleague: *BBC: Understanding the News in English* (Kinseido), and news stories downloaded from websites. However, when I use newspaper articles, I usually download them from websites, such as *The Japan Times*, *The Daily Yomiuri*, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*. For your reference, you can get news stories, ready-made task ideas, and worksheets immediately usable for your classroom teaching from <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/>.



**Q (5): What are some factors that you consider when selecting a news articles to use in your class?**

**A:** I usually select news stories based on the following criteria: (a) length (usually less than 3 minutes), (b) language level, (c) the amount of background information needed for comprehension, i.e., familiarity, (d) topic, i.e., reflecting their interest, (e) news value (i.e., whether the information is worth learning and discussing using 90 minutes)

**Q (6): Do you encourage or how do you encourage the students to use these activities for watching TV/movies on their own?**

**A:** I do not encourage them to use all the techniques I introduced to you in the workshop, but I do encourage them to first try to understand the lead of the news story because it is a brief summary of the news story. Also, I explain to them that in the news stories, the same information is explained a few times using different expressions and in more details as you listen or read further down. Finally, I tell them to pay attention to particular expressions or words that suggest the writer's or reporter's slant or views about the issue.

**Q (7): Why were there students of different grades studying in the same classroom?**

**A:** I sometimes ask good language learners who are 3<sup>rd</sup>-year or 4<sup>th</sup>-year students to participate in my class as discussion facilitators. They are expected to perform jobs such as accommodating 1<sup>st</sup>-year and 2<sup>nd</sup>-years students who are not good at speaking English, scaffolding their performance, empathizing with their lack of confidence, encouraging them to speak, summarizing group opinions, reporting them to the class, and demonstrating model discussion techniques. Research shows that students learn to self-regulate their learning from peer role models.

**Q (8): Where can I find an online link/resources for the puzzle?**

**A:** I am sorry, but "the puzzle" you are talking about here is not clear to me. If you are referring to the activity of finding six differences between the two pictures, I am afraid I do not know any online resources. I got the task sheet and idea that I used in the workshop from a friend who is also a teacher.

**Q (9): How do you improve your English? Do you teach or do extensive reading?**

**A:** This will be a long story, and if you want to know how I have studied English since I first encountered English, please read the 8-page document (Personal Language Learning Narrative).  
For a short answer, I read and listened to English extensively, spoke a lot to native speakers while I was working as a volunteer guest speaker in California, and taught mainly in English when I was a high school teacher. In addition, studying at Columbia University Teachers College and Temple University had a profound impact on my academic speaking and writing skill development. Finally, preparing teaching materials and teaching English in English goes a long way in keeping my English in good shape and even still enhancing it.

(Part 2)

**Date:** July 14, 2012, 14:30-17:00

**Venue:** Nagoya NSC College

**Advisor:** Kazuyoshi Sato, Nancy Mutoh (NUFS),  
Robert Croker (Nanzan University)

**Abstract:** Monthly report on action research

**The number of participants:** 17



## **Workshop in August (Scheduled)**

Date: August 4-5, 2012

Venue: Green Hotel Sangane

Advisors: Kazuyoshi Sato, Nancy Mutoh (NUFS)

Title: Mid-term presentation on action research



**This workshop is for action research group members only.**