

NUFS Workshop 2015

*Newsletter No. 5*Workshop in September

<Part 1 >

Date: September 12, 2015, 10:30-14:30**Venue:** NSC College, Building Minami, Room A-31**Presenter:** Takashi Miura (Shizuoka University)**Title:** "Language Classroom for Genuine, Meaningful Communication: Learning Processes that nurture Human Quality"

Abstract: This workshop introduces 14 or more activities that will enable Japanese students express themselves in English in safe, friendly, and interactive ways in the classroom. These activities not only develop students' language abilities but also gradually nurture interpersonal social skills and mutual understanding in the classroom. In this workshop, each activity will be first tried out by participants in small groups, and then the theories and principles laying their foundations will be discussed. By applying these theories/principles, teachers will be able to self-make genuine, meaningful communication activities even based on their school-assigned coursebooks. Applicable to any students, from elementary pupils to high school, college, and adults.

The number of participants: 28**1. Interesting activities you might want to use in your class. Why?**

- I found many activities that I want to use in my classes such as giving advice. I want to do this activity because asking for advice is very common and it's useful for my students.
- Activity 10, that is to change the passage in the textbook into the story in the way to apply to our real lives, is interesting and effective to my students' learning English, I hope.
- The giving advice activity was particularly interesting. I think teachers have a bigger role to play than just teaching language, we can shape our students' minds to make them become better versions of themselves.
- Checking the truth of the text. Many learners tend to regard texts as English materials, they therefore cannot get to the point of stories. This class activity enables learners to think deeply about the content.
- I think using the common likes and 'this is me' activities are great in establishing rapport between the students. The proposition activity is also good in gathering different perspective on different topics. I think it can help the students have a sense of their own individuality.
- Checking the logic of the textbook is really interesting, and also important for students. This activity can make



students connect the topic with their knowledge acquired from other subjects. Moreover, this helps students to contemplate the topic critically.

- I would like to use the Calling Card Exchange activity in order to develop rapport amongst a new group of students at the start of the year.

2. What you learned from today's workshop.

- We need meaningful goals for every lesson. We shouldn't stop teaching when the comprehension check-up questions have done. We should make the lesson meaningful for our students' lives.
- 'What do I want to learn from my students?' is a good question to ask. I learned that you can find ideas from anything – including women's magazines. 'I am like a monkey' is more interesting than 'I like monkeys.'
- I've been interested in meaningful communication and I've tried to work out such activities. My students are JHS students, so I have to know what kind of personal value they are interested in so far. I have to make activities based on their interests.
- Every activity he showed us today was very applicable to my teaching. I'm definitely going to use them from the day after tomorrow. The pink paper about principles of successful classroom communication is very clear and this makes me reflect upon my teaching.
- I learned how important critical reading is. I also learned through the Activity 4 Mr. Miura presented that the activity of making cards could give them much chance to reflect themselves.



3. Questions and Answers

Q (1): How should I start to change the content of the textbook more realistic? I appreciate very much if I could get some tips.

The basic approach is to add some element of conflict or challenging to the textbook story. Usually, the stories in the textbook are all peaceful, without any conflict. However the real world is frequently confronted by unexpected conflicts. After studying a peaceful-dull story in the textbook, we can add an element of conflict to the story, and make it more realistic and stimulating to students' mind. For example:

<shopping> Add charging mistakes, defected souvenir that is already broken in the box.

< ordering at the restaurant> Getting the wrong dishes.

<home staying> Add some food one hates, a lost perfume, messy house, unfriendly host sister/brother.

<hotels> Add noise problems, overcharging, stranger knocking on the door, etc.

I would have liked to be shown specific activities for adapting our own textbooks.

(Example from Unit 3 in *New Horizon English Course Book 2 for JHS*)

<Original Dialogue>

Sakura: I want to use English in my future job.

Becky: Oh, what do you want to be?

Sakura: I want to be a computer programmer in the United States.

Becky: That sounds exciting.

Sakura: How about you?

Becky: I'm not sure, but I want to work in Japan.

<Revised Dialogue>

Becky: What do you want to be in the future?

Sakura: I want to use English in my future job.

Becky: Really? Can using English be really a job.

You should first build up your specialty.

What kind of specialty do you want to have?

Sakura: I want to be a computer programmer.

Becky: That sounds exciting. And if you are fluent in English, you'll have the more advantage.



(Reason for the revision: The original dialogue can give a false idea as if speaking English could be a job itself. The fact is otherwise. A good English speaker without any specialty will not be able to get a job outside Japan. Becky's "Really?" is meant for this.

I have given another example activity in my workshop handout. Please look at Activity 8 on page 4. It tells how students, when encouraged, can point out the wrong information contained in the textbook story.

Q (2): Did the host-family daughter really steal the perfume?

Not known, but it is highly possible. The coordinator arranged to move the student to another host family, but never really probed into it.

Q (3): How do the various Boards of Education react when approached about these new, more diverse and open teaching methods? Will they consider editing textbooks for these kinds of activities?

The activities which encourage students' novel-creative utterances will be appreciated by the boards of education, as long as students are actively participating in them. MEXT and boards of education always emphasize the need to "Teach with the textbook, instead of teaching the textbook."

Q (4): How do you teach grammar? Do you ever teach elicitly? Do you make everything personal?

As to my own classes, now I have only two college reading classes. In those classes I teach grammar inductively by Focus on Form, concentrating on 1) discovering the sentence subject and verb and 2) discovering phrasal modifiers.

As to JHS and SHS classes, I never think grammar-teaching and communication are mutually exclusive. Quite the other way, I think grammar is a very important part of communication abilities. That is why I demonstrated Activity-3 'Interview' in my workshop, which is really a grammar exercise in a communicative way. You will find additional examples of teaching grammar in a communicative way in pages 103 to 129 in my book 'Eigo Jugyoeno Ninghen Keiseiteki Approach.'



Q (5): What advice can you give for a JHS ALT that has limited time weekly with their

students? I want to give students the opportunity to use the language in a meaningful way, but what I teach is not reinforced in the other 3 classes during the week.

Since three years ago, MEXT has been strongly urging SHS teachers to 1) combine the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) integratively and 2) utilizing communication activities as the core of the class procedure. MEXT is planning to apply the same policy on JHS classes in the new Course of Study they are going to announce in a few years.



Sooner or later, all the JHS teachers will be urged to change their way of teaching, from imparting piece-by-

piece knowledge to organizing experiential learning, i.e. learning the language by actually using it. Of course, JHS teachers will not change so quickly – take 5 or more years. What we can do to accelerate the change will be:

- 1) to let JHS teachers know the accurate policy change by MEXT, (surprisingly, not many JHS and SHS teachers have actually read through the Course of Study)
- 2) to let JHS teachers know that their students are more competent than they think (surprisingly, some teachers believe their students are totally incapable of using English for real purpose.)
- 3) to let JHS teachers know how happily their students are actually using English creatively, (5 years ago I actually did this at a SHS in Mie-ken in a one-shot visit class, where the students understood and responded to my all-in-English class.)
- 4) and help those JHS teachers who are willing to change. (I think it is more fruitful to help those who are trying to change than try persuading those who are unwilling to change.)

Q (6): How can we be such a heart-warming person like you, Mr. Miura?

Oh, no, not really. I feel so flattered! But most people are heart-warming and I want to be like them. The word ‘heart-warming’ reminds me of the kindness of nameless people shown in the movies of Charlie Chaplin, particularly *City Light*.

<Part 2>

Date: September 12, 2015, 14:30-17:00

Venue: NSC College

Advisors: Kazuyoshi Sato, Nancy Mutoh, Duane Kindt (NUFS), Robert Croker (Nanzan University)

Abstract: Monthly report on action research

The number of participants: 11



Workshop in October (Scheduled)

Date: October 24, 2015, 10:30-14:30 (Workshop), 14:30-17:00 (Action Research session)

Venue: NSC College, Building Minami, Room A31 (1-9-6 Shinsakae, Naka-ku, Nagoya)

<http://www.nufs.ac.jp/cms/cms-files/20150218-113526-1680.pdf>

Presenter: Eric Kane (EFL Learning)

Title: "Proven Practical Activities for Larger Classrooms"

Please send an email to Chihaya (chiha143@nufs.ac.jp) to attend this workshop.