

NUFS Workshop 2016

*Newsletter No. 3***Workshop in July****<Part 1>****Date:** July 9, 2016, 10:30-14:30**Venue:** Nagoya NSC College, Minami Bldg. Room A-31**Title:** “Developing Elementary School Students' Communicative Competencies Through Cooperative Learning Structures”**Presenter:** Lemuel Mauricio (Teikyo-kani Elementary School)**Abstract:** We as language teachers have a responsibility to provide

our students with the best and most appropriate approach to teaching.

Our students' success greatly depends on how we conduct our classes and the type of activities that we use to make sure that they learn the appropriate vocabulary, target sentences, and communicative strategies, etc. We know that we are successful when our students are able to conjugate verbs, express themselves in different tenses, keep a conversation going for 5 minutes or pass all the assessment requirements.

But what if I tell you that we can do more than that? I will show you an alternative approach that does not only promise academic improvement but also fosters motivational gains and social skills development. In Cooperative Learning, students maximize their learning through the use of small groups where they work together towards reaching a goal.

Throughout the day, I will share Cooperative Learning activities called structures that are highly flexible and can be used with different themes or grammatical targets at any level. These structures will become a mainstay in your teaching repertoire as we cultivate a community of active and caring learners in our classrooms.

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

- Jigsaw – because it would be good for oral communication classes. Use of playing cards to divide classes into groups is also good because it's efficient.
- I have never used 'Round Robin'. It will give students more time to use English in the limited time.
- I want to use Jigsaw technique. I usually do group works in my class and five students different four information. However I have never done them share information who have the same information. It's new to me.
- Jigsaw is a great activity. Students can get confidence if they can talk about the same topic and get further information about it. Then they can share what they have learned with their own group.
- I think it is very important to provide students with enough time to communicate with each other. Cooperative learning structure is one of the ways to maximize the time. I want to



use the structures one by one and try to improve the learning environment.

- All Write Round Robin & Mix Pair Share – students can practice a lot in All Write Round Robin and use English confidently in Mix Pair Share.
- I'm going to try and use everything for my next class/lesson. The activities we did today are student-centered and I think that the students will benefit from it in the long run.

2. What you learned from today's workshop

- We have a lot of formation to have students try cooperative learning. Students sometimes don't know or understand how they should move according to teacher's instruction, but it's easy for them to move if teacher shows how to move using a computer like Lem.
- To foster students' communicative competence, we have to wait for their grown. My school is really low level so I try to introduce these kinds of activities little by little.
- I've learned that the teacher doesn't have to do everything but should know how to use the time efficiently so that each and every student gets equal participation.
- Like Lem said, because it's troublesome to prepare for it, I haven't done group works recently and am using more pair works. I need to go back to group work more. I'm doing to keep in mind the principles of cooperative learning.
- I learned the importance of scaffolding, the value of heterogeneous teams e expert groups and the importance of repeating activities with new people.



3. Questions and Answers

Thank you very much for participating. I had a wonderful time.

I have only one request.

If you find that what you have learned from the workshop is helpful, please SHARE it to others.

Be creative and never seize to amaze your students with your brilliance.

*Lem Mauricio
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Q (1): How much planning is required with the HRT?

It is very difficult for me to get time with HRTs at elementary school.

A: I really admire your desire to involve the HRT in your lessons. However, like what you said, it is quite difficult to find time to plan a lesson with them. Honestly, I myself did not have the leisure of planning with my HRTs when I was an ALT. This is what I did: I planned the lessons and marked activities where the



HRT could join in, even without having a meeting with them. It could be vocabulary review, modeling the target sentences or demonstrating an activity. If your activities are well thought of and clearly laid out for students to be able to follow, the HRT could definitely demonstrate it with you. I usually choose advanced students to help us in the demo. If the teacher makes mistakes in the process, don't blame them but instead, reverse the situation and thank the teacher for showing the students what they are not supposed to do. Remember to remind your students that making mistakes is a crucial part of learning and that it's perfectly fine to make errors. Having good rapport with the HRTs is also very important.

Q (2): Most of the activities were done in a group of four students. But if the number of students are not enough or over to make four-students groups, (ex. 17 or 18), how do you deal with them? Which is better, to make a three-member group or five-member group?

A: I usually follow these rules:

- 1 extra student (make 1 group of 5 members)
- 2 extra students (make 2 groups of 3 members)
- 3 extra students (they become a group)

I prefer a group of 3 members over a group with 5 members. Here are my reasons: (1) You need to provide extra time for the fifth member in an activity like Round Robin. In a group of 3 members, the teacher can always step in as the fourth member, or you can instruct the group to spend the extra time (originally meant for the fourth member) to give the weaker team member more time to practice the target sentences. (2) The bigger the group, the higher the chance for members to get noisy and lose their focus during tasks. (3) It is easier to assign 2 roles to a strong team member instead of adding/creating a new role altogether.



Q (3): 'Round Robin Jigsaw' was a good idea. But in this activity, each group of students didn't choose a country for presentation, but teacher (you) assigned one. Why? Do students have a chance to choose a country that they like and make a presentation?

A: I think you are referring to the Team Project and Team 2 Team structures (activities).

As I have mentioned during the workshop, Cooperative Learning structures can be used to in various ways such as to introduce a topic, to practice the target sentences or as a final information-exchange activity. The Team Project and Team 2 Team activities were intended as an add-on (extra) activity. Prior to these two activities, the students have individually presented their country of choice in their groups using Round Robin and to their classmates using the Mix Pair Share structure. However, as an observation, there is a limited number of countries that the students are interested in. Countries like France, Korea and America were so popular that almost all the students wanted to go there. I felt a responsibility to broaden the students' horizons and introduce interesting countries that are not quite popular. I wanted them to know that the world is filled with amazing countries and that they should not be limited to those that are already popular tourist destinations for Japanese. Showcasing several countries on my own would be very teacher centered. So I tried hard to come up with an activity where I could introduce several countries to the class without me having to do it. The result is the Team Project and Team 2 Team activities. I know that the students have already learned the target sentences to be able to talk about the countries that they want to visit so, why not use it to serve a different purpose. In the end, the students were able learn more information about other

countries, reinforce their recently acquired ability to introduce something, function successfully as a team, develop their presentation skills and persuade other teams to vote for them and appreciate their classmates' hard work by providing feedback. All of this in an active cooperative learning environment.

<Part 2>

Date: July 9, 2016, 14:30-17:00

Venue: Nagoya NSC College

Advisors: Kazuyoshi Sato, Duane Kindt, Juanita Heigham (NUFS), Robert Croker (Nanzan University)

Abstract: Monthly report on action research

The number of participants: 16



Workshop in August (Scheduled)

Date: August 6-7 10, 2016

Venue: Green Hotel Sangane (Nishio city, Aichi)

Title: Mid-term presentation on Action Research

Advisors: Kazuyoshi Sato, Juanita Heigham (NUFS), Robert Croker (Nanzan University)

August workshop is for Action Research members only.

Workshop in September (Scheduled)

Date: September 10, 2016, 10:30-14:30 (Part 1), 14:30-17:00 (Part 2)

Venue: Nagoya NSC College, Building Minami, Room A31

Presenter: Takashi Miura (Emeritus professor of Shizuoka University)

Title: "Developing Critical Reading Abilities Through the Use of J.H and S.H Textbooks"

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