

Newsletter No. 8

Workshop in December

Date: December 8, 2018, 10:30-14:30

Venue: NSC College, Room 31

Presenter: Darren Elliot (Nanzan University)

Title: “Technology for the EFL Classroom”

Abstract:

New technologies provide wonderful opportunities for language learning, yet teachers and learners alike should be aware of the potential pitfalls. When implementing educational technology, the fundamental question is whether the tool is an efficient way of achieving the pedagogical aims. In this workshop the presenter will outline some considerations for good practice, illustrated with examples from his own experience. Participants will discuss theoretical concepts, such as approaches to CALL and digital literacy gaps between students. These ideas will be applied to practical considerations like ethics, security, accessibility....and what to do when the technology goes wrong.



The number of participants: 17

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

- MReader – I have students do Extensive Reading. Some students read, others sometimes pretend to read. MReader can avoid this.
- I really liked the idea of video-making. Since I like movies so much, I was wondering how I can adapt activities that are related to movies.
- Making videos – I think they encourage engagement and creativity. I want my students to gain real experiences and knowledge about the world and these activities do that.
- I became very interested in X-Reading system for extensive reading.

2. What you learned from today’s workshop

- Now students need to read and understand not only written language but also pictures and videos. Teaching reading effectively, we should use some technologies.
- One interesting point was the digital literacy misconception/assumption people have. Another was the recording of group discussions and later transcribing them with part of the goal of correcting and adding to their original discussions.
- I don’t usually use these kinds of technology in my class. But I want to include some visual aids by using technology such as google slides.



3. Questions and Answers

Q (1): About assessment: do you use a certain website to make your own rubric?

A: No, I don't...although I have found the rubrics for standardized tests such as TOEFL and IELTS are useful as a starting point. Usually, I make fairly specific and tailored rubrics for each task. That way, students can focus on the points they have recently learnt. For example, although I correct my students' writing, I give more specific feedback on a grammar point which we have covered in class together (e.g. subject-verb agreement, use of conjunctions).



Q (2): It is tough for my generation (above 50s) to catch up with the latest technology (Instagram Twitter, etc.). Is it not good to stick to traditional style of teaching (WALL)?

A: It's absolutely fine! I strongly believe that teachers should find the methods which suit them best. Technology can help us do things, but only if we are comfortable. That is not to say that we should never try anything new, but I don't believe in chasing fads. Teaching is about making connections with students. A good teacher doesn't really need any tools at all!

Q (3): I use Instagram in my class. I make my original rules for safe use, but I want to know if there is a research group for language teachers around Nagoya that I can join for further study.

A: For Instagram specifically, I don't think so. But you may be interested in the Nagoya Google Educators Group. I haven't attended any of their sessions yet, but I've heard good things!
<https://sites.google.com/view/gegnagoya/>

Q (4): When I use a video camera of my school, the quality of the video is not so good. Do you have any suggestions to record students' presentations or conversations?

A: I ask students to use their smartphones, and the quality is good enough. I also use some very basic cameras made by Zoom (Q4n). They have excellent microphones, which is important for language tasks, of course.

However, the quality of the camera is not that important if you think about how to use it. Making sure there is enough light coming from behind the camera onto the subjects, that the camera is steady and not zoomed in too closely, and that the audio is not affected by echoes or wind, will all make a big difference.

Q (5): I'm interested in Kahoot to make fun activities. Please tell us again how to use it in junior high school English classes, for example.

A: I haven't used it myself, but some of my colleagues have recommended it to me, so I hope to try it out next year!



Action Research Session

Date: December 8, 2018, 14:30-17:00

Venue: NSC College, Room 41, 51

Advisers: Kazuyoshi Sato, Duane Kindt, Juanita Heigham (NUFS)

The number of participants: 7



Next Workshop (scheduled)

Date: January 12, 2019 10:30-14:30, 14:30-17:00

Venue: NUFS, Room 226

Presenter: Kensaku Yoshida (Sophia University)

Title: "From the Acquisition of Knowledge and Skills to their Application in Communicative Activities"