

Newsletter No. 3

Workshop in July

“Content-based Approach for Deep Learning”

Presenter: Junko Yamanaka
(Chukyo University, Aichi Gakuin University)



Date: July 13, 2019, 10:30-14:30

Venue: Nagoya NSC College, Room A-31

Abstract: It has been said that traditional foreign language pedagogy suffers from overemphasis on memorization and structural knowledge. This is causing demotivation among students. The presenter believes language learning can be more enjoyable for students, more effective and deeper, and the key is for language teachers to have an understanding of unconscious cognition, the intuitive mind. She suggests that we get hints from our first language acquisition, and proposes taking content-based approach. An effective example of content-based instruction is students presenting and exchanging their opinions. Materials that can engage students deeply and promote natural communication will be introduced to the audience

The number of participants: 22

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

- Impact Issues “Are you addicted?” – It’s a familiar topic for students. I want to use this in my class.
- Using unfamiliar topics (glass, seeds, lightning) – they aroused my interests to know more.
- Using books (story-based approach) and expressing opinions – mainly because our students are very shy in stating their opinions. They just agree with their peers.
- Dramatic reading for lower level students and maybe the easy survey – I think that even if they don’t understand every word, they can feel like they are using English and have fun at the same time.
- I’m teaching at a junior high school. I can’t do the same activities as today’s workshop. But at least I will try to make the class more enjoyable and I will change the contents much easier in my classes.

2. What you learned from today’s workshop

- The importance of communication and opinion gap. I’d like to give students chances to speak and express their ideas in pairs or in groups more often.
- I learned many varieties of activities based on task-based learning. I found it’s very effective for language learning.



- We can learn English having an understanding of unconscious cognition with fun.
- The usefulness of writing down classmates' opinions and then ranking them into a list.
- A lot! I want to know more. I took an online TEFL course before. It was informative but classroom base is more interesting.
- Often I had felt that I have to teach every word before the students start the activity, but now I think that we don't have to do this all the time to develop the good activity.



3. Questions and Answers

Q (1): How can we apply content-based approaches to the school textbook? There are too many topics items to cover in a textbook.

A: It is not difficult. When you teach a topic, think of ways to make your students get interested in the topic. Let them pay attention to the content of the topic. You can make interesting true or false questions about it at the beginning, or you can provide some useful information about it (even in Japanese) so that students will become curious or interested in the topic. Even when you teach grammar and structure, keep this notion in your mind, that you are teaching the students a content, and that the language is what is helping them learn about the content. Just having this in mind will make your lessons more content-based and I believe that will make changes in the students' learning.

Q (2): Unfortunately, my students aren't interested in English. What activities are fun for them?

1. Matching activities: matching words and pictures, matching words and translations. At that time, include a few unusual and interesting words. For example, star fish, sea lion, bamboo shoot, etc.
2. Odd man out activities: give a list of words or several pictures or photos, then have students choose one that does not belong. For example, an apple, a pear, a cucumber, a melon. The cucumber is the "odd man", because it is a vegetable and others are fruits. Another one: a lion, a zebra, a giraffe, a koala. A koala. It lives in Australia, but the others live in Africa. Or, the answer can be a lion. A lion eats meat but the others are vegetarians.

(Students can give their reasons. They might have some interesting or unique reasons)

3. "Which is a lie?" game. Give three English sentences which are facts about a famous athlete, singer, animation character, or anybody students know very well about. Include one sentence that is a lie. For example: 1. Doraemon likes dorayaki. 2. Doraemon comes from the 23rd century. 3. Doraemon is afraid of mice. Students tell which sentence is a lie.



Q (3): My students can't read the sentences in the book. Where should I start?

A: How about "dramatic reading" contest? Choose a short paragraph or a few sentences from the book. (Or

even one sentence!) After students practice reading with the teacher, they make groups, and they try to read smoothly and dramatically. They decide a winner in each group. Winners then read to class and a class champion can be chosen.

Q (4): I would like to be more careful about choosing the topics to make students more motivated and make the learning more effective. In short, what should I keep in mind?

A: Probably you already know what your students are interested in. Even so, it is a good idea to take a survey among the students. Give them a list of topics and have them choose the top three, or top five, for example. Also, have them add to the list some topics they like. Taking a class survey always helps. Often, you get some unexpected results!



Workshop in July (AR Discussion)

Date: July 13, 2019, 9:00-12:00

Venue: Nagoya NSC College, Room A-52, A-62

Title: Group discussion on action research

Advisers: Duane Kindt, Juanita Heigham (NUFS)

The number of participants: 9

