

Newsletter No. 5

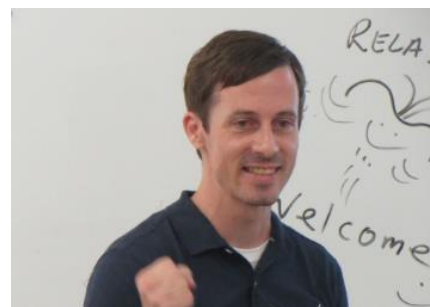
Workshop in September

“Using Communication Strategies to Develop Interactional Competence”

Presenter: Joseph Wood (Nagoya Women's University)

Date: September 28th, 2019, 10:30-14:30

Venue: Nagoya NSC College, Room A-31



Abstract: This workshop will focus on communication strategies (CSs) and their relationship to a learner's interactional competence.

Although there will be some discussion concerning theories and definitions related to CSs, interactional competence, and conversation analysis, the workshop hopes to focus mainly on introducing practical activities that teachers can actually use in their classrooms. Attendees will also gain experience in creating new activities for their own students based on CSs. The chances of getting new ideas or learning something interesting from this workshop are moderate to high. Hope to see you there.

The number of participants: 30

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

- Throwing a ball and saying anything and you interject and say something and then a follow-up question. Then say something else interesting. It's very fun and interactive.
- An activity to practice 'Asking for meaning', because students can practice CSs and new vocabulary at the same time.
- 'Getting time to think'. I want to revise this activity for JHS students. I make some sentences which have the key sentences I have students choose the sentence they want to use. For example, using 'If you have one million yen, how do you use it?', students talk about it using CSs.
- I like ball toss game because that makes students excited and active.
- Making difficult questions to answer. That will be a good way to think about them in English.
- Students should ask positive questions to make their partners feel happier.



2. What you learned from today's workshop

- I learnt the different types of communication strategies and how it improves communication: ex. Asking for clarify, asking to repeat, ending a conversation and changing a topic.
- I felt how awkward communication without CSs is. In other words, CSs are indispensable for natural communication.
- I agree that 'as long as keeping asking questions, you can keep talking'. I'd like to have my students practice to ask more and more follow-up questions.
- Giving students some phrases to use and chances to use in a fun way is very important. Thinking of fun activities is sometimes difficult when we have to teach something in rush, but teachers should not forget it.
- Counting numbers of questions is a good way to see the understanding of CSs. I agree with you that the important point of English class is to have fun.



3. Questions and Answers

Q (1): *In the morning, you mentioned "circumlocution". What's the difference between circumlocution and asking questions? Is it different word usage, but with the same meaning?*

A: Good question! Circumlocution is a useful tool we can use when we don't know the word for something, but still need to (or would like to) talk about it. It doesn't have to be used only when asking questions. Basically, it's using other words to describe the word you want to use, but don't know. It means to go around the problem of not knowing the word. In the video clip, Charlie doesn't know what cottage cheese is, so he literally describes it to Dennis when asking about it ("Dennis, what is this enticing bowl of white?"). To give an easier example, if a Japanese student were to study abroad and tried to explain what a セミ was, but didn't know the word, they could simply say something like "In Japan, we have large bugs in the summer that can fly, but they mostly just hangout in trees making lots of noise." Their foreign friend might then say, "Oh! You mean cicadas! We have those here also." In that example, there was no question asked and the speaker now knows the word cicada.

Q (2): *We could make the new activity using Interjecting with CSs. Maybe I can use it in class. Do you have any advice?*

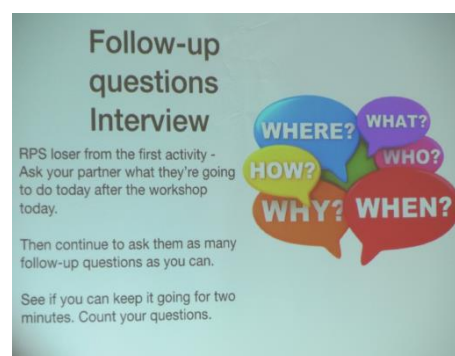
A: That's great! My advice? Try it out! Why spend time thinking of activities if you're not going to use them?

See how it works with your students and then decide if you need to adapt it or make changes. I like to joke (and be honest) with my students when I try out a new activity with them. I sometimes say, "I've never tried this before, so it may or may not work." When my new activities don't work, I try and find the problem and fix them for the next class. So, try it out and let me know how it went when you see me at the next workshop. If it went well, please share it with me! Good luck!



Q (3): How teachable are CSs? Does it depend on the type of CSs? To me, CSs are still mysterious. I'm not sure how to define CSs.

A: Another great question. Yes, some CSs are harder to teach or understand than others. From my experience it's good to start with the ones students already know and use in Japanese (interjecting, asking follow-up questions, etc.). They already know how to use a lot of these, they just don't know they're called "communication strategies" or they aren't aware of when and how they use them at times. When introducing CSs, it's useful to begin by telling students that they use them all the time in their native Japanese and then give them some examples they can understand. A big part of teaching students to use CSs isn't really teaching them at all, it's simply raising their awareness of strategies and encouraging them to notice when and how they use them. I explain to my students that everyone around the world uses CSs in their native languages. That's why I like to show my students clips of native English speakers using CSs. About defining CSs, just think of them as verbal tools that can help students overcome communicative problems or simply to show their partner they are interested and paying attention.



Q (4): Let me know the best app to analyze conversation.

A: When doing conversation analysis (or just transcribing videos of students' conversations) I always use Inqscribe. It's a software you can download online and is very simple to use. You just click on the video file you want to use, drag it into the Inqscribe box, and then you can watch and transcribe it. The software lets you slow down the speed of the videos, which is very helpful when you are transcribing or doing conversation analysis. The software also allows you to put timestamps in the transcripts and does other things that will help you stay organized. I usually transcribe the videos in the Inqscribe box and then copy and paste the transcript into Microsoft Word. I'm sure there are lots of great apps and software out there though if you have time to look. If you find something that you like and can recommend, please let me know. Good luck with it!

Workshop in September (AR Discussion)

Date: September 28th, 2019, 15:00-17:00

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

Title: Group discussion on action research

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

The number of participants: 6

