

Newsletter No. 4

Workshop in November

“From reading ‘to’ children, to reading ‘with’ children - An Interactive Approach for Using Children’s Literature in the English Classroom”

Presenter: Alison Hasegawa (Miyagi University of Education)

Date: November 7, 9:00-12:15 (Zoom Meeting)

Abstract: Learners of any age love entering the magical world of fantasy and make-believe, so reading picture books aloud can be said to be both an ideal introduction to learning English as a foreign language for children, but also if used appropriately, an engaging classroom activity, sparking discussion, critical thinking and creativity for any ability level. In this presentation I will show how the new educational goals in Japan, which include a more learner-centered focus, as well as communicative and deep learning, can be achieved in our own classrooms with picture books if we plan effective questioning techniques and develop challenging pre-reading, during-reading and post-reading activities. Let’s think together how we can move learners from being passive listeners to active thinkers in a read aloud activity!



The number of participants: 26

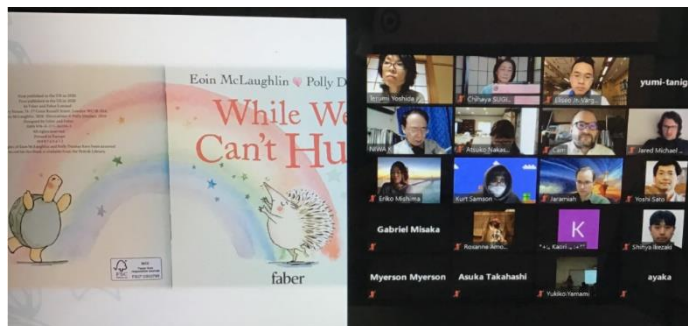
1. Interesting activities you might want to use in your class. Why?

- I wanted to use idea that my group thought questions and activities after we read "fish is fish" book. Sorry I forget the title. Because I usually think questions that there is a certain right answer because of exams. But at that time I thought a question that there are various answers. Then I felt fun to imagine and think many answers. My students also will think so too, if I give them quizzes having many answers. Also activities are interesting to related the book. In junior high, there is not plenty of time to do activities, but I think I want to try.
- Thank you, Alison, for an interesting and stimulating workshop on the teaching of reading in young learners. Although I have never really taught students at this level, I appreciate the importance of instilling in children the joys of learning language through books. The picture describing activity was a lot of fun to try in the breakout rooms and I can see myself trying this out with my own high school levels students. After creating our own creature(s) we could make a story based on it.

- I teach junior high school at the moment, so I'm thinking about how I can use picture books in my classes. Maybe I can find some that use a specific grammar point repeatedly, or I can use one for a review activity. Also, maybe I can adapt a picture book and get students to use their answers to questions (like what do you think the monster looks like) for them to retell a story.
- There are so many good ideas I found useful, but I think the activity of drawing monster in groups was the most enjoyable and adoptable for my college online classes. I thought that this drawing activity could give students chances to use the vocabulary they know to really communicate with a common goal with teammates, and it's perfect for Zoom because students really need to listen to each other. Also, because this happened in the middle of a storytelling, we could easily get into the fantasy world, which could make us a little more creative than usual!
- I would like to use "Interactive Read aloud" in my class. I find what kinds of questions to ask and when to ask very significant and effective to improve students' reading proficiency.
- I want to use "After reading activity" because my students intake the story as a part of a character of the story. Then, they will not forget about the story.
- I particularly liked The Fish and The Monster stories. As I am teaching low level university students, these kinds of activities can be easily transformed into something fun that would stimulate learning. Asking learners questions at the end of the reading exercise is one way this activity can be conducted, but also the more advanced students in a mixed-level class could be the ones responsible for thinking of questions while the lower ones try to answer.

2. What you learned from today's workshop

- Asking a closed question for picture speculation/reading, but then going into only open questions. Seeing it from the perspective of a student was enlightening. I see the benefits of asking questions which probe us to think deeper.
- The picture describing activity done in small groups shows the value of collaborative learning. It enables motivated students to influence their peers in a positive way and then acts as a building block to create fun and creative storylines. It is also a great way to review important vocabulary. It could also form the basis of a "retelling" activity whereby students recall and summarize their stories to other members or groups in the classroom. There are many variations on which these activities can be taught to stimulate students.
- My biggest learning moments came through Allison-sensei's way of storytelling. I felt that she told us stories in a very engaging manner and it drew us into the story very deeply. I was just simply able to enjoy the books and discussions as a student. I learned the effective way of talking and how important and valuable it is to be a facilitator for students. Often, we forget to give students enough time to think, or could not get students a chance to share their feelings for a lot of reasons. After listening to Allison-sensei, I really want to try making some changes in my class instructions!
- Effective questions are inevitable to make students think deeply. It is also important for teachers to come up with effective questions to make classes efficient.



- I was wondered how interact with others through storytelling. At first, I felt storytelling is for only children because picture books are used. Now I fully understood that there are a lot of possibility to make activities not only children but also students.
- I come to like the book" While you can't hug." I learned many examples of open question.
- My takeaway from this workshop was that even books that are actually meant for children can provide interesting activities to all kind of levels. It was a helpful reminder that with a bit of imagination and some clear goals, many kinds of content can be adapted to productive and engaging classroom activities.

3. Questions & Answers

Q (1): What other books do you recommend for elementary school students?

My reply: Please find the list of recommended books in the PDF I provided, after the sample questions you can ask at a read aloud, there you can see the booklist of over 50 titles compiled by myself and three other picture book fans for the JALT conference forum on this topic last year.

I also recommend you check the PEPELT website for more suggestions;

<https://pepelt21.com/>

Q (2): So if you wanted to use one book multiple times (grammar focus, young class that likes the story, etc), you could ask the same questions but the outcomes of the story would be different? Like, A version, B version, C version, etc.

My reply: Sorry, I'm not sure exactly what you mean. But I suggest using more difficult books, like, "Fish is Fish," numerous times and moving the focus from, (a) a general understanding of the story, to (b) an analysis or personalization of the story, to (c) focus on new vocabulary and grammar.

If you are looking for stories with different endings, chosen by the reader the series, Atama ii books has that option;

<http://www.atama-ii.com/>

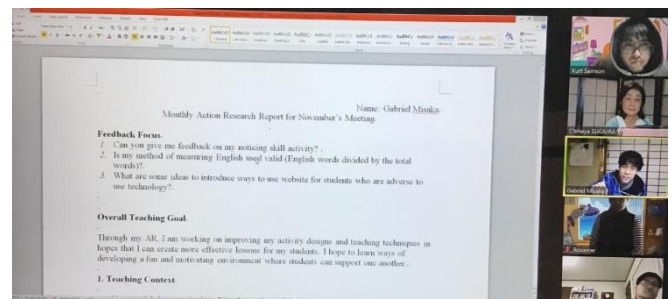
Workshop in November (AR Discussion)

Date: November 7, 13:00-15:00

Title: Group discussion on action research

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

The number of participants: 16



Next workshop will be held on December 12th.

Detailed information is on our web site:

<https://www.nufs.ac.jp/workshop/news/>