

## *Newsletter No. 2*

### **Workshop in June**

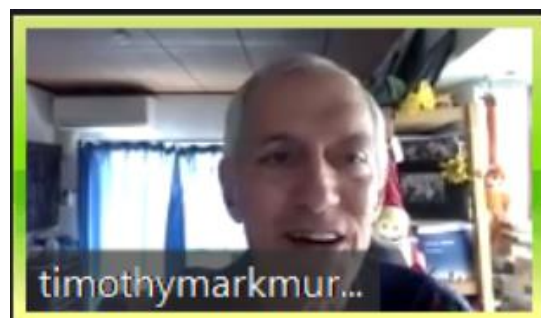
**Date:** June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 9:00-12:15 (Zoom Meeting)

**Presenter: Tim Murphey** (Kanda University of International Studies)

"Everything is Connected: The NeuroBioPsychoSocial Eco-Educational Well-Becoming Initiative"

#### **Abstract:**

The medical profession had for a long time a biological prejudice for looking at illness (for 200 years) and ignored people's contributing psychologies and social behaviors. Engel's BioPsychoSocial model (1977) argued that illness is also caused by psycho-social reasons and that doctors needed more social "bedside manner". Education can also benefit from understanding the biopsychosocial of students. The cognitive bias in SLA needs expanding for more ecological humanistic-partnership-education. These topics address basic human needs (Maslow hierarchy of needs), allow more agency and autonomy (SDT), and they still address language learning and support our students for the rest of their lives.



**The number of participants:** 38

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

- I thought there were many interesting questions and videos that I wish to integrate in my own classes. I liked the idea of students checking in with each other on a regular basis and see how they are feeling, what makes them happy and what are they looking forward to. I don't know if I would be able to fit that many questions at the beginning of my classes considering that I have to follow a pre-designed curriculum, but I definitely want to make sure that the first conversation of the day is for students to connect with each other. Moreover, I thought some of the videos that Tim shared (the one about Finland being the happiest country and the one about the environment) would be great for discussions in some of my classes since we touch upon those topics.

- I think I want to use the activity of social testing and BioPsychoSocial activity. The social testing will help students understand better. When I ask my students that you can ask me if you have questions, most students don't ask me until the test week comes. Thus, the social testing would be great opportunity for my students to know what they understand or not. As for BioPsychoSocial activity, I think it is good for students to speak English. When you always ask the same questions, they can ask them automatically. I also believe that this activity leads to see different perspective, which helps students' health.
- I liked the set of questions for students to ask each other in class. Especially the ones that students created, such as "What are you looking forward to?". I usually have some small-talk sessions with my college students, and I would like to include some of these questions in the themes. I've been using some general topics for the students' small talk sessions, but I felt that these "well-being" questions would definitely help them care more about each other, which I have been trying to achieve!
- The songs! Since I took Tim's class, I incorporated songs in some of my lessons, sometimes before class and mostly while the students are preparing to go home. Some students enjoy singing while others do not, but they all benefit from the input from the songs.
- I would like to tell my students the saying, "Asking is a short-term embarrassment while not asking is a life-long regret." This saying also reminds me of the importance to create an atmosphere where students can freely ask questions to a teacher during the class. Japanese students are afraid of making mistakes since they are trained to find a single correct answer.
- A discussion topic on how we can be partnered with other nations was attractive because we need to know the situation of the world first. We can offer students chance to search for necessary information before starting a debate. It seems to encourage students' thinking and eagerness to discuss.
- I'd like to use the reflective questionnaires which were also made by the students of Tim Murphy. I think it's important to ask the condition or state of our students in order to attend to their needs. And it is also a way to build bridges between your students.

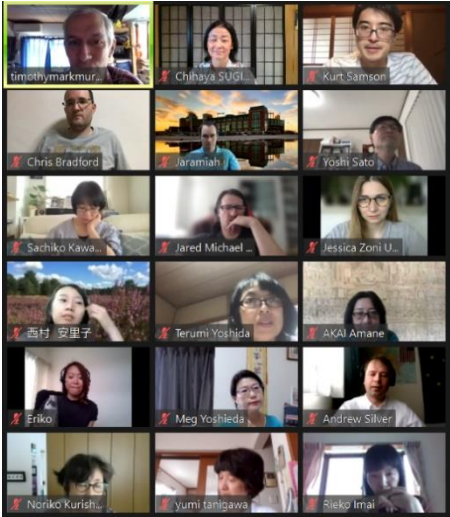
**Why We Sleep**  
**One Third of our Lives!**  
**Rich List of Functions**

- To recover our strength and health
- To allow information in the brain to shift to long term areas, thus to learn, memorize, and make logical decisions.
- Sleep recalibrates our emotional brain circuits.
- Restocks the armory of our immune system
- Refreshes your ability to absorb and create energy (metabolic state by fine-tuning the balance of insulin and circulating glucose)
- To dream and be creative through mixing our past memories, with our present, and imagined futures with our knowledge.

## 2. What you learned from today's workshop

- From today's class, I learned that I don't need to feel guilty about prioritizing my students' well-being over their English learning. Our institutions put such emphasis on our classes being the key to improving

English skills, that it sometimes feels as if that is all we should be offering. However, after seeing Tim's priority list, I realized that I am not alone in thinking that we can give students so much more than just language skills, and that before anything, we need to help them feel that they can connect with each other and with us too.



- I learned a lot. I especially want to think about the role of teachers. Since I have learned TESOL program at NUFS, I try to reduce the time of teacher talk. However, I think I still dominate my class in a way. I want to change my way of my teaching style not to dominate the class and I want give my students some options which they decide.
- I have been teaching online since the pandemic happened and faced some difficulties in communicating with students and seeing how they are doing. I, myself, have been stressed out with the situations dealing with the whole new systems and drastic changes in teaching, so there was some time that I was focusing too much on my teaching, not on students' well-being or happiness. But this year, I gradually started to be able to work fine under the "new normal" and to care more about the students. Today's workshop encouraged me to go for the direction even more.
- I learned that I should take care of myself more to be able to give my best to my students. Sleep has been one of my struggles, I consider myself a night owl, but I think I need to change my mindset on that.
- According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, our sociological and psychological aspects are based on biological considerations. Therefore, unless biological fulfillment is not accomplished, one can not feel self-actualization, which is a major driving force of learning. In other words, teachers need to be aware of students' well-being and help them create optimal learning environment.
- I learned that partnership is very important in every part of our lives. Whether it's a personal partnership or influenced globally. We create a room for improvement when we allow people to express themselves in a way that is not common to us. There we create diversity and embracing other people's individuality that promotes cultural diversity in our relationships.

8. How do you sleep well?  
Sing a lullaby. Who do you love?  
Who is the "I", the "you". Where is this  
happening? When?

**I'll love you forever  
I'll like you for always  
As long as I'm living  
My baby you'll be**

### 3. Questions and Answers

1) *I teach at high school and notice that students need rest and sleep. They are tired from study and club activities. I don't want to put too much pressure on them and sometimes feel guilty about giving them homework. Do you have any advice to high school students who can't afford to have a good rest?*

Tim's Response (1): My advice to you is simply to give them information that is on Walker's ppt and in his TED talks. We cannot make them sleep more, it is their decision. But what I notice in my own classes is that if we talk about it each day, we start being more conscious of how our sleep (the amount of sleep) affects us. I share my sleep results with a friend online and the fact that I know I will share the info, makes me want to have good info to share. This is accountability that pushes us a little to do better.

2) *Tim mentioned something about gathering his students' questions and sending them to the government to help students feel that they could feel a partnership with their own government. I have actually always wanted to help my students do that but I didn't know if/how that was possible. It would be great to know how that was possible and whether there was ever any word back from the government.*

Tim's Response (2): I have sent lots of students' ideas (booklets) especially to MEXT and I have never gotten a direct response back. But after several years of students writing about how they wanted more listening on the university entrance exams in the 1990's (instead of just vocab and grammar) MEXT changed their exams and recommended universities to change theirs as well to have listening tested. I have no evidence that my sending them my students requests helped, but you never know. We do what we can.

3) *I took Prof. Murphy's class last year. At that time, I sang some songs together. It was a great time to sing a song together again! I like his way of teaching. I feel it is "partnerism". I also like doing social testing because I can see myself what I need to review and what I understand. I will try to make those social tests with my students in high school. Do you have any advice?*

Tim's Response (3): One way to prepare for a test is to ask students to make up questions that they think should be on the test and give them to you, single or in pairs. Many questions might be repeated. Put them all on a handout for them and add your own as well at the end that you think should be on the test and give them the whole list (with no-one's name). Then give them the test with the questions you think are most important. You can still have a social part at the end get them to talk about the answers as well. Making up test questions and then answering them is a good skill for them to develop.

Thanks for your good questions and for your participation and partnering with me in learning. All the best  
Tim Murphey (June 16, 2021)

*(4) In regard to Tim Murphy's discussion, I'd like to know how open the students were able to express themselves after doing the exercises we did in the discussions. Students in schools tend to be passive even if they know the answer to a question. I'd like to know if the students act the same way in universities and what does he do in order for his students to speak up.*

Tim's Response (4): My students send in notes on Zoom or write them in a notebook and take pics of them. In face to face classes they used a regular notebook. I read the notes after each class to see what they understood and did not understand. These notes are feedback to me that tell me "Where to next?" (Hattie and Clarke 2019). I also regularly make Class Newsletters for students to read that contain student comments about the things we were talking about and doing in class. They read the newsletters in pairs and comment on them further in their notes. I show them that their feedback is valuable and used for discussion, so they feel a little at least partnered and involved in the class direction. I will try to attach a recent newsletter with these answers.

## **Workshop in June (AR Discussion)**

**Date:** June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021, 13:00-15:00

**Title:** Group discussion on action research

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

**The number of participants:** 20



**Next workshop will be held on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021.**

**Detailed information is on our web site:**

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