

## *Newsletter No. 2*

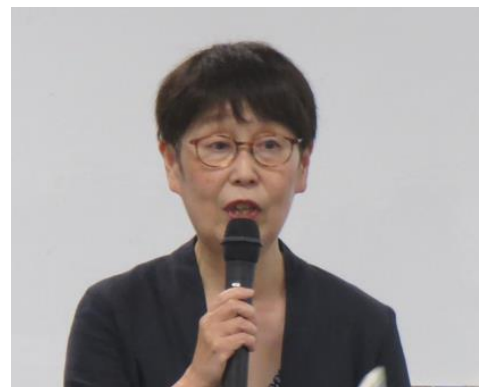
### Workshop in June

## **"Fun activities to develop intercultural competence in the English classroom"**

**Presenter:** Eiko Ujitani (Emeritus professor of NUFS)

**Date:** June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023 10:30-12:00, 13:00-14:30

**Venue:** NUFS Meieki Campus (BIZrium Nagoya)



**Abstract:** It is crucial to teach intercultural communication at a young age and the language classroom is the best place to develop students' intercultural competence. However, busy teachers are not sure how to include intercultural aspects in their language classrooms. In this workshop, simple yet effective classroom activities for improving both linguistics and intercultural skills will be introduced and participants will have opportunities to experience them. Time for reflection will be provided after each activity and participants are encouraged to modify them for their own teaching situations.

**The number of participants: 37**

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

- All the activities are interesting and I want to try them in my class. Thinking about 'Intercultural thing' is to think about myself. I thought 'Who am I?' today throughout this workshop. For junior high school students, it's important to think about their own personality or what they want to be in the future.
- D. I. E. activity – It is because they tend to have stereotypes and I want them to notice the differences.
- Line-up is very interesting. I can use this activity in my class because students don't need to talk but somehow they have to communicate each other.
- Stereotype activities – I think it is a very interesting activity because there are a lot of stereotypes in Japan. I want to ask students how they feel about stereotypes. Japanese stereotype is changing because their society is changing too. It might be a useful activity for them to exchange their opinions.
- I developed a handful of ideas how I could tailor these four activities and use them in my classes. For



‘Live up’, I could also ask them to group themselves according to certain criteria e.g. birth month, home city, favorite subject. This would be a good way for them to learn about their classmates and the similarities they have.

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

- It’s important to teach how we can see other cultures. We tend to see other cultures based on our ideas. We need to teach the importance of evaluating things after making deep descriptions.
- Learning other languages means not just learning the languages but also what’s behind the languages/different cultures/interpretations/evaluation.
- We usually focus on similarities but it’s important to talk about differences as well.
- I’m not good at speaking English. I don’t have confidence of speaking. But I learned that output is really important. I think using only English is good for the learners of English.
- I learned how important it is to know about student’s backgrounds. In order to be able to help students discover their fullest potential it is important that we can do activities in class that are inclusive cultural, social and gender sensitive.
- We should be careful when evaluating. It is easy to evaluate incorrectly.



## 3. Questions and Answers

### *Q (1): What are the aims of not using words to line up in order of birthday?*

I usually introduce this activity before I teach a section about “nonverbal communication” One of the purposes of doing this activity is to raise students’ awareness of how important nonverbal behavior is in communication. Dr. Mehrabian says that our body language makes up 55% of all communication. When students go to a place where they don’t have a common language, they will have similar experiences and this activity let them realize that they could still communicate without depending on verbal communication. A reflection question asking what strategies help them to communicate each other will give them a tip about effective strategies in similar situations. I hope that students will learn how important it is to initiate communication even in this difficult situation.

### *Q (2): How and when do you recommend introducing inter-cultural activities?*

This is a question I would like to ask you since I am not very familiar with your teaching situations. In my course for TESOL graduate students, I always ask them how they would adapt activities for their own students. I would appreciate it if you share your adapted versions in the future.

### *Q (3): I am interested in trying the ‘Who Am I’ activity in my high school classes, but I am worried about introducing stereotypes to young learners. Do you think there is a safe way to do this without offending?*

I believe students have been exposed to all kinds of stereotypes since they were born. This activity will let students realize that we all put unfamiliar things in categories, but that fixed ideas might make some people uncomfortable. Their classmate's sharing their experience of being stereotyped will provide the other students a new way of looking at a group of people from another perspective. Of course, teachers will encourage only students who don't mind sharing their experiences.



***Q (4): How can teachers know/learn about interculture well or properly? It's difficult for us Japanese to understand other cultures. If I tell/teach students cultural things, I must know that well.***

It is not possible to know about all the existing cultures in the world and probably it is not necessary. It is good enough to be curious and willing to learn about other cultures. As I said in class, it is more important to develop students' awareness, attitudes and skills than knowledge. Having them be aware of cultural differences, respect them and practice a skill such as postponing judgment is the purpose of intercultural communication class.

***Q (5): Thank you for introducing these activities to us. However, teaching Intercultural Communication could discuss sensitive topics. We have to be careful discussing other people's culture. Specially, when talking about Filipino culture, there are underlying reasons why Filipino women have to migrate as maids in Hong Kong. They are also stereotyped as irresponsible mothers. Because they choose to take care of other people's children instead of taking care of theirs. This is a social and economic problem. What do you think?***

Thank you for sharing your interpretation and evaluation of the picture of domestic workers in HK. Actually, what the picture is about is not very important in D.I.E. activity. One of the purposes of this activity is to notice multiple perspectives of the same picture.

People who are familiar with the culture see women in the picture as domestic workers, but others might interpret the same picture as children waiting for their parents to pick them up. If everybody interprets the picture in the same way, they will be asked to evaluate in the opposite way. For example, some might say, "I admire these domestic workers who work so hard for their family members back home". If you still find it uncomfortable to use a certain picture, choose other pictures that none of the participants is familiar with its cultural background.



***Q (6): Can you please introduce books or activities you recommend for CCC?***

Other than the ones I shared in our class, I would recommend the following books.

原沢伊都夫(2014) 『多文化共生のための異文化コミュニケーション』 明石書店

<https://www.akashi.co.jp/book/b183431.html>

八代京子他(2001) 『異文化コミュニケーションワークブック』 三修社

<https://www.sanshusha.co.jp/np/isbn/9784384018516/>

Barry Tomlin & Susan Stempleski (1993) *Cultural Awareness*. Oxford English

***Q (7): I think DIE is useful as a good teaching method theoretically, but a little difficult to introduce it in my class. Do you have any advice?***

Yes, some students find it difficult to come up with different interpretation and evaluation based on a picture. It might be helpful if you provide statements representing “Description”, “Interpretation” and “Evaluation” and ask students to which category each belongs. Easier version using a picture of three men eating noodles is as follows.

1. Would you like to join people in this picture? Why or why not?
2. Read the following statements and write which category each belongs to.  
 Three business men are eating lunch.  
 Three men are eating noodles.  
 I would like to join them because the food looks good.  
 All of them are wearing black.  
 I don't want to join them because they have bad manners.  
 Colleagues are eating budget meals after work.

## **AR Discussion**

**Date:** June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 15:00-17:30

**Venue:** Meieki Campus, MW 10, 11

**Title:** Group discussion on action research

**Advisers:** Kazuyoshi Sato, Duane Kindt, Kevin Ottoson (NUFS)

**The number of participants: 11**



***Next Workshop will be held on July 8<sup>th</sup>. Detailed information is here:***

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

**NUFS Workshop**

Nagoya University of Foreign Studies

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Secretary: Chihaya Sugiura