

Newsletter No. 6

Workshop in October

“Making Content-Based Classes Fun and Engaging Through Student-Centered Activities”

Presenter: Tomoko Yoshida (Keio University)

Bio: Tomoko Yoshida has been in the intercultural field for more than thirty years. She has also been teaching content-based English classes in the Faculty of Business and Commerce at Keio University since 1998. Prior to her academic career, she was a Training Director at ITT Sheraton Hotels in Hawaii and Project Fellow at the East-West Center in Hawaii, where she worked with Dr. Richard Brislin. She has numerous publications including *Intercultural Communication Training: An Introduction* (1994, Sage Publications), *Improving Intercultural Interactions* (1994, Sage Publications), *Ibunka Training* (2009, Sanshusha Publications), and *Academic Writing* (2018, Keio Publishing). She has published many articles on various topics such as returnee adjustment, bi-ethnic identity, and raising multicultural children in Japan.



Date: October 14th, 2023 10:30-12:00, 13:00-14:30

Venue: NUFS Meieki Campus (BIZrium Nagoya)

Abstract: Creating exciting activities and simulations is key to making a content-based class engaging and effective. In this workshop, participants will learn how to create fun and interactive activities to deepen students' understanding. Participants will take part in activities I have created for my classes. Some of the topics and theories covered in my classes include: Theories Explaining Lack of Women in Power Positions, Geert Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions, Happiness, and LGBTQ+. In addition to this, participants will have the opportunity to participate in different ice breaking activities and improvisational drama games I use in class. I hope that these techniques will be helpful to teachers from various levels of education (i.e., elementary, junior & senior high, university).

The number of participants: 35

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

- Every activity was interesting and FUN! It's amazing how Mrs. Yoshida broke up the highly academic activity into easily accessible pieces.
- Icebreaking – Make a group and tell your names and your favorite thing using your first letter of your first name. They can use vocabulary and memorization competence. It needs not only English competence.
- I enjoyed the '8 questions' activity, and I think it could promote students' talk in an authentic way. Also, this could naturally teach them the work of their parents and situation of work-life balance as a side effect, which could also be used in a discussion. I love it.
- CSR activity – We should find some problems to solve in our daily life to improve our living environment like schools, society, and so on. This activity is very creative and organized based on plan, do, check and act.
- Nonverbal communication activities, especially looking at one's partner's face for one minute and talk without verbal communication.
- I like all activities. I tended to teach the grammar in the textbook mainly. I realized that I could teach the content in a more student-centered way.



2. What you learned from today's workshop

- I learned to have more fun in what I do. I'm too caught up with deadlines and grading the students. Sometimes, I just sit down and try to think if what I do ever add any value to my students' lives. And somehow, with workshops like this I get to teach my students in a way that they are unconsciously opening up about themselves. Because I think that building rapport with students is an integral part of teaching.
- How to do intercultural activities, even got an idea how to adapt them for first grade elementary.
- I want to keep in mind Mrs. Yoshida's 3 philosophies: experience, presentation, fun. They are very important for students to learn communicatively.
- There are many things I found helpful in this workshop. Mainly, I learned that any topic can be adapted to be fun, and that it's okay for students to discuss in Japanese at times if it contributes to their learning, as long as there is English involved in the process at the end. For example, researching and discussing in Japanese but presenting in English.
- I learned there are so many interesting and fun activities. I always have the difficulty to have students join the class more actively.
- I learned a LOT. This was my first time attending the workshop. I personally wanted to know how you are so energetic and how you were so successful as a woman.



3. Questions and Answers

Q (1): What is the objective of the 'Eye-4C-D' activity?

The Eye-4C-D activity is a flexible activity that can be used in many ways. Please see the article written by Jon Dujmovich for more details.

https://otemae.repo.nii.ac.jp/record/2143/files/2019_I_p019-028_Dujmovich.pdf

I use it for several purposes: 1) To help students improve their conversational fluency. 2) To help students appreciate the importance of eye contact, interjections, and nonverbal reactions. 3) To help students make friends.

I often use this at the beginning of class, especially at the beginning of each semester or when I have a difficult discussion (e.g., ethics in business) planned. If I start the class with Eye-4C-D, students seem to be much more willing to speak up throughout the class. In two of my intermediate-level classes last year, I used it only during the fall semester but at the end of the year, when I asked students how I could improve the class, many of them said I should do this throughout the year.



Q (2): What should we do if our students' level is so low that there are not good materials to read?

Thank you for asking this question as I meant to talk about this but forgot! I mentioned in the workshop that because I teach advanced level students, I have them read academic journal articles (about 20 pages) but depending on the students' level, I might assign something from a magazine or a newspaper or I might even write a short essay myself. Alternatively, if students have a textbook, I will pick topics from the textbook and create activities to reinforce their learning.

Q (3): Please explain the activity with a diamond card. I didn't understand how to conduct and what it was for.

Thank you for this question. This activity can help students develop empathy for those in the LGBTQ+ community. Here is the link:

https://www.thetrevorproject.org/wpcontent/uploads/2017/08/75ea657f061737b608_6pm6ivozp.pdf

Basically, you have the students fill out the colored paper and then you read out what to do depending on what color paper they have. By doing this activity, students will vicariously experience the rejection that members of the LGBTQ+ community often face. By having to fold over a corner or rip them off and throw them on the ground, students can actually feel (a little bit of) the hurt that is a daily occurrence for many LGBTQ+ teenagers. My students often comment on how powerful this activity is for them.

Q (4): What is the academic term to explain the competence when students say words spontaneously (impromptu)?

I am not a linguist, but I think the term is “spontaneous speech production.”

Q (5): I can't use group work because there is no time in class. Are there any good and easy ways to use group work effectively?



For me, most of my class time is spent on groupwork. Students read an article for homework and submit a written response to the reading comprehension questions. In class, I pick one concept from the reading that I want them to truly understand and create a mini in-class project. For example, when I teach branding, I teach certain concepts such as: Corporate Name Recognition/ Familiarity, Corporate Image, Corporate Reputation, and Corporate Loyalty/ Commitment. In class, I will pick a product (e.g., Keio Water) for them to market. In groups, they must develop a marketing plan that will target all four of these concepts. At the end of class, the groups will present.

In other words, instead of the instructor lecturing about a topic, students learn about it through engaging in a mini group project. In my presentation class for intermediate students, not only does the textbook include lots of groupwork but I also have them do group presentations a couple of times a semester. I give them one or two class periods to prepare and then they present the following week.

AR Discussion

Date: October 14th, 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: 12



Next Workshop will be held on November 11th. 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