

June 20th, 2025

NUFS Workshop 2025

Newsletter No. 2

Workshop in June

Date: June 14th, 2025 10:30-14:30

Venue: NUFS Meieki Campus (BIZrium Nagoya)

Title: " Content-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) in Action"

Presenter: Dr. 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 EastWest 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.



Abstract:

Learning a language itself can be fun for some people but, for many, it is but a vehicle to accomplish other goals. Through CBLT, we can tap into student motivation through interesting content and allow them the opportunity to develop all four language skills (i.e., reading, writing, listening, speaking). In this workshop, participants will explore how to transform their classes into a student-centered one that focuses on content and active learning. We will explore some theories and frameworks that will help us better understand CBLT and how to use it in our classrooms. Through numerous activities and a model lesson, participants will experience, hands-on, the beauty of content-based language teaching.

The number of participants: 39

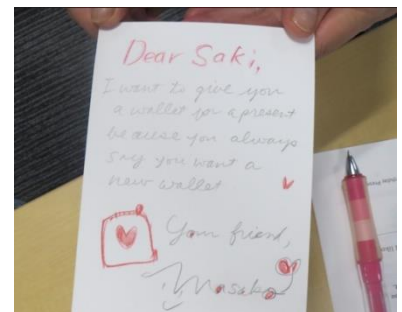
1. Interesting activities you might want to use in your class. Why?

- I'd like to try to do 'pre-reading quiz' activity - it will get students think about what they are about to read. Also, 'the present letter writing activity' was heartwarming and I think students like this kind of personal interaction.
- I liked the writing activities because there was a clear purpose to the writing and it was practical. Students were also able to use their imaginations.
- Making stories is interesting. It is very creative. I'll try a shorter one.
- Learning vocabularies with gestures is a good way not only for young learners but also junior high school students. They can understand meanings easily. Writing letter activity is lovely. We can have fun with classmates and use target sentences.
- Writing a thank-you card and receiving it was very interesting because they made me so happy.



2. What you learned from today's workshop

- Having a happy experience in the class is important to develop students' motivation.
- I got a good review of content-based learning, since I hadn't thought much about that since I was in college.
- I learned that connecting the topic and learner's interest is important. I also learned that CLBT is effective for learners to integrate four skills and it will lead to development towards learning English.
- Making topics more relevant to students is a good motivation to learn English for them.
- It is always important to let students be part of lesson delivery instead of always going by the traditional method of teaching.
- CBLT is really effective to learn English because students can focus on the contents and have fun using English.



3. Questions and Answers

First, I would like to thank each of you for taking time out of your busy schedules and spending an entire Saturday with me! Your passion and enthusiasm were invaluable gifts for me to take home and treasure. I also deeply appreciate these thought-provoking questions. I hope my replies make sense to you. If you have further questions, feel free to write me directly at:

tomokoyoshida414@gmail.com

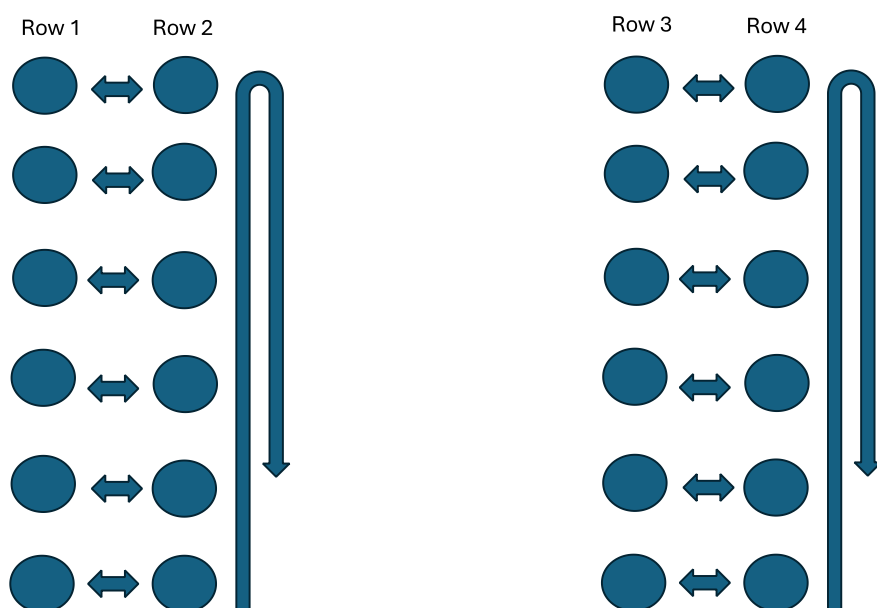
1) Sometimes my students are not very motivated in the class. I find it hard to make fun activities in that mood. In that kind of situation, what are the ways to make the class geared toward having fun?

For me, I try to set the stage on the first day of class by doing lots of fun icebreakers and games from the very beginning so that they come into my class expecting to have fun each week. Here is one that I use on the first day of each semester. I pass out paper and pens and have them write down four key words or draw

pictures that have a story about themselves (in the fall semester, I ask about their summer). I begin by showing the students my pictures and pick a volunteer to ask me: “Please tell me about” When a student asks me about a picture, I make sure I provide extra information or tell a story. Once I am done demonstrating, I give the students five minutes to write and/or draw. Then I have them line up in two or four rows (depending on how many students there are; see below). Once they are lined up, I give them one minute for the students in one row to show their pictures to their partner from the other row while their partner asks them questions. I tell students to use key words and gestures and not worry about finding the perfect word or using correct grammar for this activity. I also encourage them NOT to give one-word answers but to give extra information or a story for every key word or picture.

After that, the people who asked questions now show their pictures. Then, it is time to rotate. Repeat until everyone is done or you feel that they are starting to get tired. At this point, ask the students to stand in a circle and pick a student to introduce him/herself and pick one picture to introduce. This is a chance for everyone to hear everyone else’s stories. Keep going until everyone is done. This is a simple activity that seems to work well for students of various English levels. It is a flexible activity so you can use it at any time during the school year, for example, as a review of what they learned that semester (e.g., write four key words or draw pictures about things you learned this semester) or as a pre-reading activity (e.g., write four key words about SDGs).

Despite all my efforts, there are days when the students’ energy level is low or when my own energy level is low. I accept that and do what I can to get them to engage in tasks. The activity I described above will take the entire class time, so it is a great activity to do when your (the teacher’s) energy level is low!



2) If you evaluate students after taking this lesson, what kind of evaluation will you make?

I would have them turn in their textbooks and grade them. Or you could have them turn in the letters they wrote and grade them. In terms of participation, I might penalize students who are clearly not participating but my goal would be to get the whole class to participate. In my classes, students usually make a group presentation at the end of class, and I grade that, but I am very lenient with my grades so if they are participating, they get the full grade since my goal is for students to have fun and enjoy English.



3) Which textbook adapts both to employing this approach and these activities?

I am sorry but I do not know. The textbook I used for the demo lesson, *True Stories* (Pearson) seems to be quite good. You can download a sample pack so it might be worth a look.

4) The textbook we used today was great, but we must use a designated textbook, which is not interesting and related to students' interest. How can we make the boring textbook more interesting? It's so tough for teachers to modify the textbook.

It is unfortunate that you cannot choose your own textbook, but you can add some fun activities or tasks to complement the text. For example, during the morning session, I showed a few things I would do if I were using New Horizon 3. You can, for example, create a fun pre-reading quiz or a homework assignment that would help personalize the lesson for the students or show a clip from an *anime*. If you are teaching vocabulary, you can use the techniques I showed you in my afternoon session. Another thing you can do with vocabulary is to play some fun games to test their vocabulary in class. Two games that I often use are called Taboo and Pictionary (or you can have them act out words using gestures and/or sounds). I do a variation of Taboo where students are NOT competing in teams but simply sitting in a circle. Each student is given a card with the word that they want the others to guess (target word from their vocabulary list) and under it, you list a few taboo words they should not use (these are words that will make it too easy.) If they use a taboo word, you squeeze a noise maker (or just say "taboo") and they have to pick another word. Once someone guesses their word, move on to the next player. You can also play a variation of Pictionary where one player who stands in front is given a vocabulary word, and must draw some clues so that the class can guess that word.

<https://www.hasbro.com/common/instruct/Taboo.PDF>

<https://www.hasbro.com/common/instruct/pictionary.pdf>



5) *When the students in junior high school communicate with the other students or making stories, they have difficulty to do them because of lack of vocabulary. I think that choosing a topic that is easy and relatable to them is one of the solution. But there are many difficult topics in the textbook. Youtube, videos, anime can help that problem. What do you think?*

I also struggle with finding a topic that is both intellectually challenging and yet at an appropriate language level. Yes, using Youtube, videos, and *anime* might help. For the pre-reading story making activity that we did at the workshop, I would let them do it in Japanese, if necessary, because the goal is to get them interested in the story, so they become curious about what the story really is about. In terms of other activities, I would encourage students to focus on communication by using key words and gestures instead of worrying about finding the perfect word or using proper grammar. Obviously, grammar and vocabulary are important but when communicating, they should focus on conveying the message to their partner.



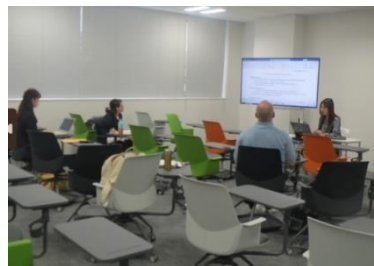
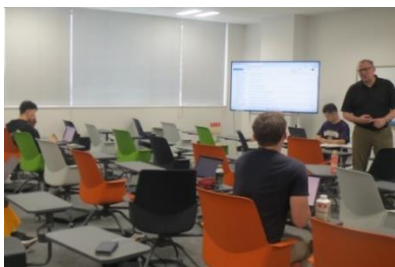
AR Discussion

Date: June 14th, 2025, 14:30-17:00 (Room MW01, 02, 03)

Title: Action Research Discussion

Advisors: Sato Kazuyoshi, Duane Kindt, Kevin Ottoson (NUFS)

The number of participants: 12



Next Workshop will be held on July 12th, 2025.

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