

Newsletter No. 9

Workshop in January

Date: January 17th, 2026 10:30-14:30

Venue: NUFS Meieki Campus (BIZrium Nagoya)

Title: 'Preparing Students for a Multilingual World: Innovative Ways to Promote Language Awareness, Linguistic Curiosity and Global Citizenship'

Presenter: Kip Cates (Professor Emeritus, Tottori University)



Kip A. Cates is professor emeritus in the Faculty of Regional Sciences at Tottori University. For 35 years, he has been active in the field of global education and language teaching as a writer, speaker and teacher trainer. He has a B.A. in Modern Languages (French, German, Japanese) from UBC in Canada and an M.A. in Applied Linguistics from the University of Reading in England. He is a founder and past chair of the "Global Issues" Special Interest Group of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) and edits its quarterly "Global Issues in Language Education Newsletter". He's also chair of the Asian Youth Forum (AYF), an occasional guest speaker on Peace Boat and has written over 250 essays for English learners for the Japan Times. He has worked, lived or travelled in 50 countries and speaks 9 languages.

Abstract:

To function effectively in our global age, our students need a basic knowledge of the world's major languages and writing systems. The EFL classroom can be an exciting place to promote this linguistic awareness. This workshop will introduce ideas for designing thematic units that stimulate student interest in language and languages, foster language learning motivation and empower students to engage more effectively with foreign people. Participants will become "instant linguists" and take home a variety of ready-to-use handouts. They will experience how thematic teaching about world languages can promote English skills, global awareness, cultural understanding and curiosity about the wider world.

The number of participants: 70

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

- Greeting phrases in many different languages. When I communicate with foreign people, I can feel confident. This experience will give students interest in foreign languages and chances of communication. So, I want to introduce greetings in my class.
- Conversation practice using different language expressions because it makes us realize it's easy for us to use these languages. The experience of using a language motivates us to learn the language because it's the most important thing to use the language we learn.
- Learning seven languages: even if I learned several expressions, I felt so excited and became interested in the countries of the languages I spoke.
- I enjoyed practicing the writings of different languages. I would like to encourage students to practice these writing systems so that students would appreciate the existence of other languages around the world.



2. What you learned from today's workshop

- I learned that some languages don't use vowels in their writing systems. It's so interesting. I learned about beautiful writing systems. I want to find a way to teach them in my classes.
- I learned that it is not too late to get into learning a foreign language. And if we can do it, our students can do it, too.
- I learned Esperanto. I learned that we can use English as a vehicle to teach about other global languages or topics. I feel like I can approach my lessons with a fresh and different perspective.
- I learned how important it is to learn other languages. I would like to apply the things I learned today into my classes. Especially guessing game (what language is it?) will develop students' writing skills as well.
- Languages are closely connected to the cultures. When we speak, write, read the language, even if our mother language, we meet different cultures. So more and more people learn or become curious about another languages, we become more interested in another culture. This is the first step to make a peaceful world and to become a global citizen.

3. Questions and Answers

Q (1): How do you manage to have your Tottori students motivated? I guess local students are not always well motivated to learn and use English or foreign languages.

Teaching foreign languages to local students in a rural area (inaka) is a special challenge! But that's what makes education interesting and exciting. Our task as language educators is to raise students' awareness, stimulate their curiosity, provide them with knowledge, develop their language skills and inspire them to continue learning. Even though Japanese students in rural areas may not be as cosmopolitan as students in big cities like Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya, they still bring an inherent curiosity about the wider world to our classrooms that we can build on. As you saw during my workshop, I try to motivate my Tottori students through a combination of tactics:

- starting the class with fun-but-challenging quizzes and tasks. These get students working in pairs or groups, engage their knowledge and curiosity, energize the classroom and start the lesson with bang.
- engaging students with international themes (world languages, world writing systems, foreign loan words, Esperanto...) that promote global awareness, international understanding and cultural comparisons.
- personalizing my EFL lessons by sharing (in English) my stories and experiences of world travel, cross-cultural adventures and learning foreign languages
- creating a content-rich student-centered classroom experience that engages learners in a variety of tasks and activities ranging from PowerPoint lectures, classroom handouts, video clips and pair interviews to group discussions, classroom simulations, “guess the country” card games and student presentations.
- offering students multiple choice homework tasks that range from reflection and research to surveys and contact assignments with foreign students from different countries. Students like being offered different options and appreciate the freedom to choose a task or challenge that fits their talents, moods or interests.
- integrating a “global education” strand into my content-based lessons by including knowledge and information about our multicultural world. I try to design my lessons so as to practice language skills, educate students about the wider world and build curiosity about other peoples and countries. When things go well, students leave the class saying, “Thanks to our teacher, we not only improved our English but also explored international themes, learned about other cultures, deepened our knowledge of the world and took another step towards becoming global citizens!”

Q (2): Do you have any advice to connect to Esperanto community? I want to learn and talk with people.

I’m glad to know that you’re interested in Esperanto and encourage you to learn more about this unique global language. My mother was actually an Esperanto teacher in San Diego, California and helped to encourage my interest in learning – and teaching – about Esperanto. Soon after I began teaching about Esperanto at Tottori University, one of my students chose “Esperanto in Japan” as her graduation thesis topic. She had a great year of research during which she met many Japanese Esperantists and attended an Esperanto conference in Tokyo.



There are many ways to learn more about Esperanto and to connect with Esperantists here in Japan and around the world. In my experience, the Esperanto community is very welcoming and always happy to answer questions. I suggest you do some online surfing, visit some Esperanto groups and, if possible, attend an Esperanto event or two. Here are some resources to get you started:

- ◁ Organizations:
- * Japan Esperanto Institute: <https://www.jei.or.jp/>
 - * Universal Esperanto Association: <https://uea.org/info>
 - * List of Esperanto links: <https://uea.org/info/en/ligiloj>

- <> Wikipedia pages: * Esperanto / Esperanto movement / L.L. Zamenhof
- <> Youtube: * There are lots of great videos about Esperanto and how to study it!
- <> Books: Browse Amazon to see lots of great books on Esperanto. Sample titles include:
 - * English: Bridge of Words by Esther Schor
 - * Japanese: 武器では地球を救えない by 和田
ザメンホフ: 世界共通語を創ったユダヤ人 by 小林
- <> Learn Esperanto: * Free English site: <https://lernu.net/>
* Free Japanese site: <https://lernu.net/?hl=ja>

Q (3): Why do most universities encourage students to study in academic settings overseas only when students could work overseas and save money and learn languages in work settings?

Thanks for a good question! I've experienced this same issue at my own university. Back in 2013, a colleague and I submitted a proposal to take students on a "North America Study Tour" to San Francisco. Our administration told us we could only take students to California if we enrolled them in a 2-week ESL program at our sister university. However, we didn't want students to spend all their time in the US studying classroom English. We wanted to take them out into the local community to use English to research "ethnic Americans" in San Francisco's Chinatown, Japantown, Little Italy, Jewish quarter and Hispanic neighborhood. It took us a lot of time, energy, diplomacy and negotiating to persuade our faculty that this was a valid educational use of students' time. In the end, our argument won out, our program turned out to be a great success and the university began proudly using our program in its recruitment and publicity.



Like you, I believe that universities should be pragmatic and flexible in finding innovative ways to have students acquire languages and experience life in other countries, not just through academic programs and classroom study but also through community volunteering, NGO internships, student research projects and work-study programs. Our task here in Japan is to push more Japanese universities to consider these exciting options. One good example is the "Co-op Work-Study Program" at Waterloo University in Canada, a sister school of Tottori University. Students on this program are required to do one semester of academic classroom study followed by one semester as an intern working at a local company. You can read more about this at the following link.

<> Waterloo University Coop Program: <https://uwaterloo.ca/future-students/co-op/study-work-sequences>

Q (4): Do you feel new language creation could solve division and prejudice online? An online language, perhaps but how to base it?

Language creation is a fascinating topic. A first point to make is that creating languages is in our DNA It's something that human beings do instinctively. The rich diversity of languages that exist around the world show how creative people can be. Children at play make up new words. Teenagers create their own slang. Sub-cultures devise their own dialects. Even science fiction writers and Hollywood film-makers create new languages. Examples include languages such as Na'vi (Avatar), Klingon (Star Trek) and Elvish (Lord of the Rings). A second

point is that languages impact culture, customs and character. American English promotes a casual, direct, personal style. The Japanese language promotes a polite, formulaic, indirect style. In the same way, created languages can be designed to promote certain styles, attitudes and values, including tolerance, empathy and peace. A third point is that language is basically a tool, just like a knife. Knives can be used for good to feed people (when cooking) or save lives (during hospital operations). Knives can also be used to attack, injure or kill people. Tools are neutral. It all depends on what we do with them. The same goes for language and created languages. Esperanto is an example of an artificial language that was designed to promote peace, friendship and mutual understanding. It should be possible to create something similar as an online language designed to reduce division and prejudice. At the same time, we have a duty to work hard now to ensure that the language people use online promotes civility, respect and tolerance. To explore this topic further, I'd suggest you look into the field of "peace linguistics" and check out the following books written by two colleagues of mine:

- "Language for Peace" by Rebecca Oxford
- "The New Peace Linguistics and the Role of Language in Conflict" by Andy Curtis

Q (5): How we can say that someone is multilingual, understanding vocabulary passively or actively or both? What are the criteria for someone to know many languages / be multilingual?

These are two good questions about multilingualism! Let me try to answer both of them here. We can start by looking at some basic definitions of multilingualism. Here are a few:

Definitions of multilingualism

- * Cambridge dictionary: able to use more than two languages for communication
- * Oxford Reference: the ability to use 3 or more languages, either separately or in various degrees of code-mixing.
- * Google AI: In essence, you're multilingual if you can successfully use multiple languages to navigate life, communicate needs, understand others, and engage with different cultures, even if some skills are stronger than others.

As the Google AI definition implies, multilingual proficiency is like regular language proficiency. It consists of various degrees and levels, and can be both active and passive. In our NUFS workshop, we spent 15 minutes studying basic conversation expressions in 7 different languages (French, German, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Chinese and Korean). Technically, this now makes all of you multilingual – although at a very basic level. Even just knowing the word "Hello" in several foreign languages (Bonjour, Guten Tag, Buenos dias, Ni hao, Zdrastvyutye) makes you multilingual in the speech act of "greetings". Just as it's impossible to be perfectly bilingual (with exactly equal proficiency across all four skills in two different languages), it's impossible to be perfectly multilingual. And that's OK. It's totally natural to have different levels of knowledge and skill in different languages. For Language #1 (e.g. Japanese), you might be fairly fluent in spoken conversation but a beginner in reading. For Language #2 (French), you might be an intermediate-level reader but be weak in speaking. And for



Language #3 (e.g. Spanish), you might be able to chatter away with native speakers in Mexico via Zoom but find it hard to write.

At the beginning of our workshop, I said that “Language learning is a journey – a journey full of adventures that you encounter on the way to your goal”. This is especially true for multilingual learning. Knowing several foreign languages (at whatever level of proficiency) can enrich your life, lead to exciting cross-cultural encounters and improve your effectiveness as an English teacher. I’ve profited immensely from my time learning and using 9 different languages. I wish you all well as you set off on your own journeys to multilingualism!

Q (6): I’m a university student, and my major is Spanish. I’m going to be an English teacher in April. I’m thinking that how to use learning Spanish experience in English class?

Thanks for your question! It’s great to hear that you’re a Spanish major at university who’s preparing to be an English teacher this spring. In my view, English teachers who know other foreign languages bring a number of benefits to the EFL classroom. They have a broader view of what language is, they have a deeper experience of the language learning process and they have a more global outlook on our multilingual world. This can help them stimulate their students’ linguistic awareness, empathize with the language learning challenges students face and open students’ eyes to the rich diversity of languages and cultures in the world. They can also be good role models of what it means to be a “global teacher” who both speaks English (our current global language) but also values and respects other foreign languages. In my university EFL classes, I work hard to help students become effective users of English, become curious about language itself and become interested in other languages. You have a great chance to do the same in your teaching.

All teachers have unique skills and experiences. I believe that these can enrich our EFL classrooms. If you’re good at art, you can impress students and stimulate their learning with your great blackboard drawings. If you’re good at guitar, you can perform English songs for the class and show a different facet of your life. If you speak a foreign language, that can also be a great way to enrich your language teaching. So, I’d recommend exploring principled ways to bring your Spanish experience into your English classes. This could include using English to tell stories about your Spanish experiences, sharing photos of your trips to (eg) Mexico, teaching students how to say a few cool Spanish expressions (Hola! Vamos! Adios!) and showing video clips that stimulate students’ interest in Latin America. Becoming a good teacher means experimenting with new ideas. It’s fun to try different things in class that stimulate students’ interest and engage them with the wider world. I wish you all the best in starting your EFL career as a Spanish-speaking English teacher this coming spring. Good luck! ¡Buena suerte!



AR Discussion

Date: January 17th, 2026, 14:30-17:00 (Room MW01, 02)

Title: Action Research Discussion

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

The number of participants: 14



Next workshop will be held on February 21st, 2026.

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