

Newsletter No. 1

Workshop in May

Date: May 9th, 2026 10:30-14:30

Venue: NUFS Meieki Campus (BIZrium Nagoya)

"Developing Learners' Interactional Competence through Communication and Discussion Strategies"

Presenter: Kazuyoshi Sato (Professor Emeritus at NUFS)

Bio: Kazuyoshi Sato is a professor emeritus at Nagoya University of Foreign Studies. He holds an MA and a PhD in Applied Linguistics from the University of Queensland, Australia. He established an MA TESOL program for inservice teachers in 2006 and has been promoting action research. He has published several papers on communicative language teaching and teacher development in journals including the Modern Language Journal, Teaching and Teacher Education, and Language Teaching Research.



Abstract:

Although studies on L2 interactional competence (IC) have gained prominence, little is known about pedagogical steps to develop IC. According to Young (2011), IC is “not what a person knows, it is what a person does together with others” (p. 430). Then, how can teachers develop learners' IC in the classroom? Yoshi will introduce communication and discussion strategies as interactional resources and demonstrate interactional practices. Participants are expected to join hands-on activities actively so that they can adapt some of the activities to their own classrooms.

The number of participants: 56

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

- The first session about communication strategies was very interesting. I can use that for my students to increase their communicative competence gradually.
- In addition to Communicative Strategies, I would like to use discussion strategies in my teaching. It seems to be very useful for



students to improve their speaking competence.

- I want to use and teach my students the words in 'Let's Talk in English'. This year, I am in charge of special needs classes. I want them to have confidence to talk by using strategy like reaction, shadowing etc.
- There were a lot of activities in today's session, but I'm especially interested in debate activities because the procedure was very understandable so that it is easy for students to learn how to debate.
- The process of improving communication in English. Using handouts and by following the small steps, students can learn how to continue communicating in English.
- I learned how to conduct CSs properly because I had messed up some orders. I had taught follow-up questions too early in my class.



2. What you learned from today's workshop

- I learned how the students would feel while participating in communicative activities. I found how much effort they make in order to improve their communication skills. It was a good experience.
- To develop IC (interactional competence), having the same topics to debate makes students have the common background and which helps students have conversation smoothly.
- It was the first time to be able to see how to organize the discussion. It was really helpful to develop learners' discussion skills. I especially like to have students research websites as an assignment and apply it into classroom.
- I didn't know debate discussions can be organized well. It's great each member of the group has to be responsible.
- The importance and enjoyment of interaction. Interacting among peers makes them improve their English ability.

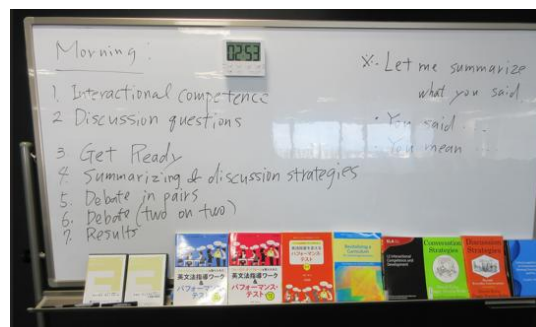
3. Questions and Answers

Q (1): How should we teach students about English tests (Eiken and TOEIC) communicatively?

There are many studies which show that students improved their TOEIC scores when teachers teach English communicatively integrating four skills. In addition, extensive reading is more effective to improve the reading section of TOEIC.

Q (2): How do you explain to students the meaning of difficult vocabulary, such as 'nuclear power'? / Where does learning vocabulary fit into this?

We gave "Vocabulary Sheet" to students (a list of 20 key words with each definition) before starting a new topic so that students can understand the meaning of new words. We also gave a vocabulary test after the topic was over.



Q (3): In the morning session, it was said recording is held twice with a different partner. I'm wondering why and also, if it is used for grading, how to manage?

Students were assessed based on how they could evaluate their performance well and set up the next goal. It means students were allowed to make mistakes. However, teachers assessed students' speaking test performance based on the rubric including accuracy.

Q (4): How important to teach fillers in CSs?

As I commented, students will learn reactions (rejoinders) first because using reactions is natural even in Japanese. After that, you can introduce fillers such as “Un-hun,” “Well,” and “Let me see.”



Q (5): What other major steps are needed in teaching debate? Is it just a repetition of today afternoon activities with other topics necessary? / I want to know more about group discussion.

Basically, students practiced a debate in pairs and recorded their debate for self-evaluation for each topic. They repeated the procedure for a different topic. Finally, they worked on a two- on-two debate. However, I used both pair discussion (debate) and group discussion. For example, as for “Discussion questions” I used group discussion. I made groups of four and had them play Janken. A winner became a discussion leader. Then, I made new groups and tried group discussion again.

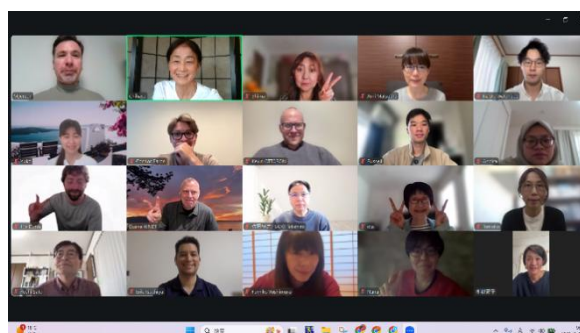
AR Discussion

Date: May 10th, 2026, 9:00-12:00 (Zoom)

Title: Action Research Orientation

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

The number of participants: 15



Next Workshop will be held on June 13th, 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