

July 20th, 2026

NUFS Workshop 2026

Newsletter No. 3

Workshop in July

Date: July 11th, 2026 10:30-14:30

Venue: NUFS Meieki Campus (BIZrium Nagoya)

"Task-Based Language Teaching for Young Learners"

Presenter: Natsuko Shintani (Kansai University)



Bio: Natsuko Shintani is a Professor in the Faculty of Foreign Language Studies at Kansai University. Her research focuses on the intersection of second language instruction and acquisition, with a particular emphasis on task-based language teaching, second language writing, and L2 pragmatic development.

Abstract:

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is widely promoted as an effective approach to developing communicative ability. However, many teachers are unsure how to implement it in practice, especially with young learners in foreign language contexts. This workshop introduces the theoretical foundations of TBLT from a second language acquisition perspective. It examines how tasks can be designed for learners at different developmental stages. Participants will experience a range of tasks and evaluate them using key TBLT criteria. They will also discuss practical challenges and possible solutions. The workshop aims to show how insights from SLA research can inform principled and practical task design for young learners.

The number of participants: 47

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

- Pre-task activities. While fostering "awareness" is important, determining exactly what to draw attention to - and how to introduce it - is not always easy.
- I think the important thing is that we can put together the same tasks even with a limited vocabulary.
- Picture description task – It's easy for students who are not good at English if teachers show some phrases or words for the task beforehand.
- Secret card – Giving some conditions makes the activities more interesting and has students think deeply.



- Jigsaw reading task – with the description of lives of two children whose countries are currently being bombed at. It's a serious topic, it opens the eyes of the students to the reality of other children their age and also gives them knowledge about other countries.

2. What you learned from today's workshop

- We can have task-based lessons several times a month. So, I will definitely try one in my class.
- Procedural knowledge is from implicit instruction while declarative knowledge is from explicit instruction. That's why meaning-form integration is significant.
- Explicit instruction can improve implicit linguistic knowledge.
- There are three kinds of gaps, information, reasoning and opinion gaps. We can use them according to students' levels.



3. Questions and Answers

First of all, thank you very much for joining the workshop and for your active participation. I really appreciated and enjoyed the thoughtful discussions and the ideas you shared throughout the two sessions.

Thank you also for these excellent questions. All three raise important points that I was not able to cover during the workshop. I have shared my thoughts below. There are certainly other possible approaches, but I hope you find these suggestions helpful.

Q 1:) Group activities are great but what if one participant student always leads the group, any ideas?

It is difficult to avoid some imbalance in pair or group work because learners naturally take on different roles. Research has identified different interaction patterns in pair work, such as collaborative, expert–novice, dominant–passive, and dominant–dominant. Collaborative pairs tend to provide more mutual support, engage in more negotiation and language-related episodes, and achieve better learning outcomes. In group work, factors such as rapport, equality, and familiarity also affect learners' engagement.

One way to encourage more balanced participation is to give students clear guidelines for collaborative group work. For example:

1. Make sure everyone has a chance to speak – Give everyone equal opportunities to contribute.
2. Listen actively to your group members – Show that you are listening, ask follow-up questions, and respond to your partners' ideas.



3. Build on each other's ideas – Say, 'I agree because...', add new ideas, combine different opinions.

The second point focuses on active listening strategies. I often teach these explicitly through short conversation activities before students begin pair or group work.

You can also show students videos of effective group work to model this kind of interaction.

Q 2): I'm teaching 'English Communication' at high school. I'm struggling with how to create tasks based on the lesson content in the textbook. Could you give me some advice?

High school *English Communication* textbooks are mainly reading-based, and simply covering the textbook often leaves little time for additional tasks. One practical solution is to adapt the speaking or writing activities already in the textbook so they become more task-like.

For example, if the textbook asks students to give a presentation on ways to reduce waste, you can add a “non-linguistic outcome” by making it a competition: the team with the most effective ideas for reducing waste wins. Students should include an estimate of how much waste their idea would reduce in their presentation. This becomes the “task outcome”, and the team that can reduce the largest amount of waste is the winner.

If you have a little more time, you can turn it into a reasoning-gap task. Give students five possible ways to reduce waste, ask each group to choose the best one, and have them explain their reasons to the class.

Small changes like these can make textbook activities much more communicative without requiring a lot of extra class time.

What is a task?

1. A task involves a primary focus on message.
2. A task has some kind of 'gap'.
3. The learners choose the linguistic and non-linguistic resources needed to complete the task.
4. A task has a clearly defined outcome.



Q 3): Do you have some free TBLT materials available? We teachers do not have time to design materials from scratch.

Yes. Although it is written in Japanese, I highly recommend the following book. It contains many examples of TBLT materials created by TBLT specialists, including information-gap, reasoning-gap, and opinion-gap tasks. All of the materials can be downloaded for free.

Ideas and Materials for Communication Through Tasks:
Connecting the English Language Classroom with the Real
World

『コミュニケーション・タスクのアイデアとマテリアル―教室と世界
をつなぐ英語授業のために』

<https://www.sanshusha.co.jp/np/isbn/9784384059403/>



AR Discussion

Date: July 11th, 2026, 14:30-17:00 (Room: MW01, 02, 03)

Title: Action Research Report

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

The number of participants: 15



Next Workshop will be held on September 12th, 2026. Detailed information is here:

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

NUFS Workshop

Nagoya University of Foreign Studies

57 Takenoyama, Iwasaki-cho, Nisshin-shi

Secretary: Chihaya Sugiura