Final Curriculum Design Report for March 2016
Robert Primeau

Lesson Plan: Final Speaking test and comparison

Teaching context

1. Level: Elementary School, Grade 4;
2. Class size: 7 students (3 girls, 4 boys);
3. Class time: 50 minutes, once a week;
4. Textbook: Let’s Go 3 (Oxford University Press);

Further teaching context: Nagoya University of Foreign Studies and Kawai Juku

5. a. Goal and Objectives:
   1. Let students have conversations together in English;
   2. Gain the confidence and the desire to speak English outside the classroom;
   3. Teach and use communication strategies while speaking English
   4. Get their opinions on the course as a whole;

5. b. Personal goals
   1. Learn how to make lessons more communicative.
   2. Find ways to make the lessons more interesting.
   3. Learn how to make a plan for the entire year.
   4. Discover the best teaching methods.
   5. Become a better teacher.

6. Research Questions:
   1. What communication strategies did the students learn and which strategies did they use?
   2. How have the students improved their English ability over the two years of research?

More on teaching context and what I did as a teacher

The research was conducted once a week over 2 years at a kindergarten/elementary school in an after school program. My teaching environment is essentially an English conversation school for elementary school students and the lessons were private. This meant smaller class sizes and there was an emphasis on keeping students and parent happy. While I had the freedom to teach what I wanted the parents were more comfortable with the idea of a textbook as a guide for the course. Without a textbook the parents may have complained. Therefore, it was beneficial to use a textbook; however, the activities used in class were related to what they were learning in the textbook.
The goal of the course overall was for information exchange to occur as much as possible. The difficulty was in the time management because on one side we wanted to cover the material in the textbook and on the other we needed some time for learning communication strategies and conversation practice. The lessons were conducted in English and the students had about 10 min of conversation practice a day.

I did not want to completely discard the textbook because of the sheer number of unique classes that I had to teach each week. One important aspect of this type of teaching situation is to have lessons that are easy to plan. I wanted to be able to apply the same teaching standards in all my lessons without become exhausted.

7. Procedure:

1. Teach from the textbook.
   Use the textbook material and make communicative activities.
2. Teach communication strategies;
   Learn a new strategy every one to two months.
3. Practice the strategies, with teacher and later with classmates;
   Use the last 10 min of class to practice and review the communication strategies.
4. Pair practice;
   Use basic pair practice at the tables with the textbook. Have standing pair practice and switch speaking partners as often as necessary.
5. Test students;
   Have one speaking test per semester and if possible record it and transcribe the recording.
6. Examine progress;
   Track the progress over the research period using the transcriptions and questionnaires.

The conversation strategies taught throughout the year.

1. **Openers**: To start a conversation.
   Ex: “What’s up?” “How’s it going?” “What’s new?”

2. **Continuers**: To make conversations deeper.
   Ex: “What else?” “And you?”

3. **Repair communication breakdown**: For when students encounter difficulties while speaking.
   Ex: “Sorry? Once more please.” “I don’t understand.” “I don’t know.”

4. **Closers**: To end a conversation.
Conversation results:

Final speaking test on February 25 2015

Legend:  Japanese (L1) in green  Grammar mistake in red
         Mispronunciation in blue  Pauses in (x)

Wakana and Ikuto 1:44

1. W: Hello.
2. I: Hello.
3. W: How are you?
4. I: I’m fine and you?
5. W: I’m fine. Thank you.
6. I: What can you do?
7. W: I can jump rope and you?
8. I: I can play the piano.
9. W: What do you like?
10. I: I like stew. And you?
11. W: I like grapes
12. I: What do you want?
13. W: I want hot chocolate and you?
15. W: What? (6) Where is, where where is the light?
16. I: It’s in the living room on the rug. (3) Where is the TV?
17. W: It’s in the bedroom. It’s under the bed. (4)
18. I: Thank you
19. W: Thank you

February 25 2015  Ikuto  Wakana
| # of words    | 41  | 48  |
| # of errors   | 0   | 0   |
| Error as %    | 0%  | 0%  |
| # of turns    | 9   | 10  |
| Pauses (time) | 3   | 10  |

Strategies

| Openers | 1   | 1   |
| Questions | 3   | 3   |
| And you? | 2   | 2   |
| Closer  | 1/2 | 1/2 |

Total time of conversation (net)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ikuto</th>
<th>Wakana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:44 (1:11)</td>
<td>1:44 (1:11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Yuto and Shoi 2:50

1. Y: hello
2. S: hello
3. Y: **How** are you?
4. S: I’m fine. **And you?**
5. Y: I’m happy.
6. S: I, **What** can you do?
7. Y: I can (2) jump rope. **And you?**
8. S: I can do a **sammyso**
9. Y: **What** do you like?
10. S: I’m (like) steak. **And you?**
11. Y: I like steak. (12)
13. Y: I want grape. **And you?**
15. Y: **Where** is (3) where is pasta
16. S: It’s living room on the sofa. (14) Living room on the sofa. (8) what telephone? **Where** is the telephone?
17. Y: It’s living room on the sofa.
18. S: Thank you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>February 25 2015</th>
<th>Yuto</th>
<th>Shoi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of words</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of errors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error as %</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of turns</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauses (time)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>And you?</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total time of conversation (net)</td>
<td>2:50 (1:53)</td>
<td>2:50 (1:53)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Second recording July 1 2015

Legend: Japanese (L1) in green Grammar mistake in red
Mispronunciation in blue Pauses in (x)

Tomoki and Yuto  (2:21)

1. T: Hello Yuto
2. Y: Hello Tomoki
3. T: What’s up?
4. Y: Not matching (much). (3) How are you?
5. T: I’m … terrible. (24) What’s what’s what’s lunchroom, Where is the lunch room?
6. Y: It’s next to the office. (4) What’s (where’s) the (4) classroom? (3)
7. T: Kore? It’s chair. (10) What’s (where’s) teeel, music room?
8. Y: It’s a chair
9. T: etto I to, I, fhest to go. (13)
11. T: Tank you.
12. Y: Thank you.
13. T: oh, Thank you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>July 1 2015</th>
<th>Tomoki</th>
<th>Yuto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of words</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of errors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error as %</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td># of turns</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauses (time)</td>
<td>3 (47)</td>
<td>5 (25)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tomoki</th>
<th>Yuto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Openers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And you? / I don’t know</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closer</td>
<td>$\frac{1}{2}$</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total time of conversation (net)</td>
<td>2:21 (1:09)</td>
<td>2:21 (1:09)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This conversation had a few pauses, about half the conversation was filled with pauses. They asked a couple questions but did not use the strategy for that week, which was I don’t know.
Shoi and Ikuto (4:30)

1. I: Hello Shoi
2. S: Hello You (6)
3. I: How are you?
4. S: I’m fine, ah, fine. (10) Hello You… (5) How are you?
5. I: I’m fine. (9) when, What the music room?
6. S: It’s … (4) next to the …(4) classroom,
7. I: えっと (13) What, what the? (23) Kore kore kore, nani the music room,
8. S: I don’t know (35) I don’t know. (7) What’s this?
9. I: I don’t know. (4) I have to goat
10. S: Nanndake? Nice …(37) toki? Nice talking with (18) Thank you
11. I: Thank you

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>July 1 2015</th>
<th>Ikuto</th>
<th>Shoi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of words</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42</td>
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<td>2.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td># of turns</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauses (time)</td>
<td>5 (55)</td>
<td>8 (120)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And you? / I don’t know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closer</td>
<td>½</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total time of conversation (net)</td>
<td>4:30</td>
<td>2:21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This conversation had many pauses, as a matter of fact, it was mostly pauses (roughly 2/3 was silence). They used the strategy for when they are not how to answer “I don’t know” once each. This conversation lacked fluency and accuracy as well, although the pronunciations were generally good.
Tomoki and Shoi 1:11

2. Y: Hi Tomoki. What’s up?
3. T: Not much. How are you?
4. Y: I’m happy.
5. T: How do you go to school?
6. Y: I go on foot. And you?
7. T: I go on foot.
8. Y: What do you like?
10. Y: What else?
11. T: I like soccer. And you?
13. T: What else?
15. T: What can you do?
16. Y: I can play soccer.
17. T: What else?
18. Y: I can swim. And you?
19. T: I can play soccer.
20. Y: What else?
21. T: I can play basketball.
22. Y: What do you want?
23. T: I want money.
24. Y: What else?
25. T: I want games. And you?
27. T: What else?
29. T: Nice talking with you.
31. T: See you.
Maika and Ikuto 1:27

1. T: Hello Maika.
2. M: Hello Ikuto. What’s up?
3. T: Not much. How are you?
4. M: I’m tired. How do you go to school?
5. T: I go on foot. And you?
7. T: What do you like?
9. T: What else?
10. M: I like Kendo. And you?
11. T: I like electone.
12. M: What else?
14. M: What can you do?
15. T: I can swim.
17. T: I can play electone. And you?
18. M: I can play the piano.
19. T: What else?
20. M: I can swim.
21. T: What do you want?
22. M: I want money. (laugh)
23. T: What else?
24. M: I want game. And you?
25. T: I want money.
26. M: What else?
29. T: See you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>December 16 2015</th>
<th>Maika</th>
<th>Ikuto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of words</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error as %</td>
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<td>3.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td># of turns</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauses (time)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions (5W 1H else?)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And you?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total time of conversation</td>
<td>1:27</td>
<td>1:27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of Conversations

1. Student fluency and accuracy increased.
2. They used more strategies.
3. They spoke with more confidence.
4. They had more turns speaking and asked more questions in a shorter amount of time.
Questionnaire results:

To measure student interest in English

1. How much do you like English?

- Like very much: 29%
- Like: 57%
- So so: 14%
- Don't like: 0%

n = 7

1. How much do you like English?

- Like very much: 50%
- Like: 50%
- So so: 0%
- Don't like: 0%

n = 6

To see if the recording were beneficial according to the students

2. Did you like being recorded?

- Liked very much: 14%
- Liked: 29%
- Not so much: 0%
- So so: 57%
- Didn't like: 0%

n = 7

2. Did you like being recorded?

- Liked very much: 17%
- Liked: 83%
- So so: 0%

n = 6
To measure student confidence and self efficacy

3. Did you enjoy having a conversation with your classmates?

- Really enjoyed: 43%
- Enjoyed: 43%
- So so: 14%
- Not so much: 14%
- Didn’t enjoy:

n = 7

4. Do you think you could talk with a foreigner now?

- Yes: 16%
- A little: 33%
- May be: 17%
- Not really: 17%
- Not at all: 14%

n = 7

For sociocultural theory

3. Did you enjoy having a conversation with your classmates?

- Liked very much: 67%
- Liked: 33%

n = 6

4. Do you think you can talk with a foreigner now?

- Yes: 16%
- A little: 33%
- May be: 17%
- Not really: 17%
- Not at all: 14%

n = 6
Analysis of Questionnaire

Q1. Students liked English slightly more at the end of the second year.

Q2. They enjoyed being recorded more at the end of the second year.

Q3. They enjoyed speaking with their classmates more in the first year.

Q4. They felt like they had more confidence to speak to a native English speaker at the end of the second year.

Some student comments

1. English is my favorite subject because of you.
2. My mom makes me go to English class.
3. You taught me how to read, write and speak in English. Thank you.
4. I want to visit Canada someday.
5. Thank you for being our teacher, I tried my best.
6. English is hard for me but I like it.
7. I want to improve my pronunciation.

8. What happened:

Over the two years of doing action research I have tried to reduce my dependency on the textbook. It was hard at first and I have still not completely gotten rid of it yet.

Using the recorders put the conversational power in the hands of the students. They enjoyed playing with buttons and listening to themselves after the performance ended.

9. What I learned, what I might do differently next time:

Practice is very important for the students.

Learner/student- centered activities are the best for increasing student speaking competence.

Communication strategies give necessary tools to students in any language.

Speaking tests give student a target to aim for, so they should be a part of all English courses.

CLT is good for young learners.

Communication strategies are essential tools that students should learn, particularly when they are beginners.

Recording is a lot of work but can be beneficial for all learners especially beginners.