

NUFS Workshop 2006

Newsletter No. 2

The NUFS Workshop was adopted into the 'Workshop for Developing English Teaching Ability' authorized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in 2006, which recently appeared in the Chunichi Shimbun on June 13, 2006.

Workshop on June 10th

Date: June 10th , 10:30-12:00, 13:00-14:30, 14:30-17:00

Venue: Nagoya NSC College

Instructor: Juanita Heigham (Sugiyama Jogakuen University)

Title: Communicative Grammar

The number of participants: 21



Abstract: Once students have gained a basic understanding of a grammar structure, they can begin using it in spoken communication. By employing a variety of communicative activities that focus on a featured structure, teachers can help students immediately use the grammar that they have studied in their textbooks. The presenter will demonstrate a sample lesson based on this type of curriculum and then give step-by-step instructions on how to create similar lessons. Following these steps, participants will work in small groups and make their own communicative grammar lesson plans.

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

- I was interested in the drawing game in pairs, and the description game of the animal. These games can focus on grammar and easily shift to communicative exercises.
- I enjoyed every activity we had during the morning session. "Following Directions" includes variety of activities students can have fun and actually do. So I want to make my own original "Following Directions" sheet.
- It's very interesting to make a teaching plan. What was the most exciting was that we can share other groups' teaching plan. We didn't have enough time to make a teaching plan, but at the end we could get many types of plans. Sharing something with others is very good.
- "Animal Habits", because it gave us time to think of clues which will lead to a certain animal. We could cooperate to accomplish the task and after that we could use the quiz in communicative way. i.e. we had to guess the answer by listening to the clues given by the partner.

2. What you learned from today's workshop

- We talked about many activities and got many ideas. As Juanita said, sadly in the classroom, students always care for the test and how much they learned, but we can do something different, something interesting in the class. For doing it, teachers must be enthusiastic. "Communicative approach" is fun way to learn English. I wish we have more time to do this.
- I learned that I shouldn't give up doing communicative activities in my class even if my students' responses are not good.
- Basic grammar is really necessary for communication. And that skill can be acquired through activities, especially through fun games.
- The importance to change the ways of teaching grammar to our students. As Juanita mentioned, we should design some activities to get the students to use the grammar points in communicative manners.
- A good way to have students learn grammar. I want to try the same procedure as Sugiyama Jogakuen University are doing. I have long wanted to spend my class time for grammar class doing communicative activities, but I long thought it was necessary to check their answers for the grammar textbook in class. That's why I had only a short time for communicative activities. But now I think I can let students finish the textbook at home and I will have time to do these activities. It's a good idea to give them a quiz at the end of the lesson and if they get a low score, they will have an extra homework.



3. Questions and answers

Q: I sometimes wonder if the Japanese textbooks of English grammar used in class are really appropriate for the students. What do you think?

A: I think that there is no "perfect" book for learning anything because people have different learning styles. As a result, no single book can "perfectly" meet all our students' preferences. However, some books are definitely better than others. If you aren't happy with the textbook being used at your school, I hope you try to change it because there are good books on the market. If you don't have the power to change the book, rest assured that any given textbook, no matter how bad, can be supplemented with other material so students can learn effectively. Focus on what you believe to be good in the book and use your own ideas to fill in the gaps.

Q: What are the memory and teaching theories behind this type of teaching and how can they be supported under scrutiny?

A: The activities that we used in the June 10th workshop were all based on the communicative approach to language teaching. This approach has existed since the 1960s and has been growing in popularity here in Japan over the last 20 years. If you are worried about proving the validity of this type of English

teaching, I would recommend you turn whoever might be questioning your methods to the MEXT 2003 Action Plan where a communicative approach to language teaching is promoted. In fact, when talking about teachers' abilities, it states, "Almost all English teachers will acquire English skills (STEP pre-first level, TOEFL 550, TOEIC 730 or over) and the teaching ability to be able to conduct classes to cultivate communication abilities through the repetition of activities making using of English." This is the address for an interesting article published about the Action Plan by Yoji Tanabe former president of JACET. You might find it interesting.

<http://www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/articles/2004/03/tanabe>

Next Workshop

Date: July 15th (Sat), 10:30-12:00, 13:00-14:30, 14:30-17:00

Venue: Nagoya NSC College (Tel: 052-241-2131, <http://www.nsc.ac.jp/access/>)

Instructor: Brad Deacon (Nagoya City University)

Title: Super Performance Learning Strategies!

Abstract: Recent changes in the language curriculum for junior high school and high school students, by the Monbusho, are stressing the need for more active and learner-centered lessons. This workshop aims at helping students to become more active by providing a wide range of language learning strategies for teachers to use and that cover the 4-skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In addition, the strategies will span visual, auditory, and kinesthetic sensory modalities in order to appeal to all learners. Specifically, participants will experience firsthand the following strategies: brainstorming, mind-mapping, shadowing, summarizing, jazz chanting, timed conversation, and still others. Bring your enthusiasm and energy and be prepared for an exciting session of super performance learning strategies!

If you can take part in this workshop, please send an email to [chiha143\(atmark\)nufs.ac.jp](mailto:chiha143@nufs.ac.jp)