

NUFS Workshop 2006

*Newsletter No. 3***Workshop of this month**

Date: July 15th, 10:30-12:00, 13:00-14:30

Venue: Nagoya NSC College

Instructor: Brad Deacon (Nagoya City University)

Title: Super Performance Learning Strategies!

The number of participants: 16

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, mindmapping, 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!



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

- Shadowing. Shadowing is effective to improve listening and speaking ability and activate vocabulary.
- I'd like to introduce 'hints' for English conversation. If my students learn this, I hope they can continue their conversation.
- Listening to popular songs while filling the blanks in lyrics are lots of fun for students and let them motivated to get more interested in living English.
- Brainstorming and Mindmapping, because these activities give the students to take part in the class and give opportunity to express their ideas or opinion.
- I have no ear for music but I want to try jazz chants for a warm-up exercise. My students like music very much so it will motivate them to learn English more positively.

2. What you learned from today's workshop

- I have already introduced some of the activities in my English class. But the most impressive and important thing I learned from today's workshop was that "The answer is in your hand." I would like to be a good English teacher who can motivate and encourage the students to learn English as a means of communication.
- All the activities are lots of fun and of great help motivating students to join English classes with more interest. The point is the way of modification or arrangement of these activities or materials so that they can match the level of students' proficiency and meet their interest and curiosity.

- People have varieties of interests. Some like music, some like exercise, and some like drawing pictures. So there are different methods of teaching English focusing on students' interest. I have to learn about multiple intelligence more.
- So many techniques can be used to improve students' English abilities. Today's workshop has given fundamental ideas for using techniques. It's difficult to think of and reflect on how English is taught and learned in my English classes.
- To build a learning community is important when we introduce interactive activity. Or interactive activity helps build a learning community in class.



3. Questions and answers

Q: Does "Super Performance Learning" mean that there is a method to learn language?

A: Everyone who teaches has their own method (and approach) to impart to their students. Super Performance Learning (SPL) is not a method per se but rather a part of my teaching method. SPL is more a set of tools and techniques that fit within my overall method of teaching. Specifically, SPL attempts to achieve the following: reach many student modalities (visual, auditory, kinesthetic), get students into more productive learning states, teach the 4-skills in ways that challenge and motivate learning communities.

Q: How can we teach the responsibility and discipline in class?

A: We are always a model for our students and thus what we say and do should always provide positive examples for our students to emulate in terms of what is acceptable behavior. It is also good to point out examples of responsibility and proper conduct from the students in our classes if appropriate (some students don't like to stick out). I find it useful to make a list of what I consider to be appropriate actions and responsibilities at the beginning of the year. Then I hand copies to students and we discuss the importance of the list and negotiate to make it fair for both parties. We also discuss what to do in cases where the "rules" are not being followed. Basically I have found that as long as students are being challenged and that they are curious about learning and engaged in worthwhile activities then behavior issues are rarely a problem.

Q: I have used 'Timed reading activity' before. I made up pairs at random in class, but one of the pairs had a big ability gap; one spoke English very fluently and the other couldn't understand him well. Do you think this activity is efficient even for this pair? Or should I choose students with the same level to make a pair?

A: When I taught at Nanzan we used a series of books from the SRA and also graded readers. Thus, students could work at their pace and be challenged according to their level. In classes of mixed abilities students can do the same activity but be working on different tasks within the activity. For instance, with a listening activity a higher level student could do a dictation and a lower level student could do a fill-in-the-blanks exercise. In general students will probably find it best to work with others according to level, but can benefit from working on multi-levels too. Sorry but the best answer in this case is "it depends".

Q: Contractions are interesting expression and easy to remember for the students, and some of them use them even in writing exam sheet, for example, "I wanna be a teacher in the future. So I'm gonna

study hard." Do you think they are acceptable?

A: Contractions are not acceptable in writing but in spoken language they are acceptable in most cases. Informally they are commonly used but are less used in more formal situations where most people adopt a different spoken register such as in a more formal customer-employee relationship. I would need specific situations to say whether or not the use of contractions would sound natural and/or appropriate. Context is very important in all communication.

Report Meeting of this month

Date: July 15th, 15:00-17:00

Venue: Nagoya NSC College

Advisor: Kazuyoshi Sato (Nagoya University of Foreign Studies)

The number of participants: 9

Abstract: The participants made a 15-minute presentation reporting what problems they have and/or what activity they did this month.

Next Workshop: Summer Workshop 2006

Title: "Expanding your Language Teaching Repertoire: Alternatives to the Yakudoku Method"

Date: August 1st, 2nd and 3rd, 9:30-12:30, 13:30-16:30

Venue: Nagoya University of Foreign Studies, Building 3, Room 322

<http://www.nufs.ac.jp/access/01.html>

August 1st

(9:30-12:30: Workshop)

Title: "Teaching Reading Passages and Dialogs – Alternatives to the Yakudoku Method"

Instructor: Nancy Mutoh (Nagoya University of Foreign Studies)

Abstract: An important question for teachers is how to use textbook reading passages and dialogs more effectively. In the *Yakudoku* method, activities focus largely on translating, memorizing vocabulary and doing grammar exercises. Participants in this workshop will experience a variety of alternative activities based on junior and senior high school textbooks. Some activities aim to increase learners' comprehension at the whole-text discourse level by using the English passage and Japanese translation as "paired texts." At the sentence level and word level, learners use the newly-encountered English in all four skill modes, in activities that range from controlled language-practice tasks to freer application tasks.

(13:30-16:30: Group work)

Advisor: Kazuyoshi Sato & Nancy Mutoh (Nagoya University of Foreign Studies)

August 2nd

(9:30-12:30: Workshop)

Instructor: Kazuyoshi Sato (Nagoya University of Foreign Studies)

Title: "Developing a Lesson Plan"

Abstract: How do you start your lesson? Do you use chorus reading before checking the content of the text? Do you usually skip discussion or a writing activity at the end of the unit? Do you spend most of the time on grammar and translation? Why? In this session, I would like you to

challenge your views about your familiar way of teaching. I will demonstrate several useful techniques so that you can experience alternatives that will help to make your lesson more interactive. Finally, I will summarize main points by showing principles for developing a lesson plan.

(13:30-16:30: Preparation for group presentations)

Advisor: Kazuyoshi Sato & Nancy Mutoh (Nagoya University of Foreign Studies)

August 3rd

(9:30-12:30: Workshop)

Instructor: Keiko Takahashi (Ikeda High School)

Title: “Integrating Language Skills in English I & II”

Abstract: Although the new Course of Study has been implemented since 2002, the grammar-translation method is still dominant in high school classrooms. How can we increase the amount of English the students use and give them integrated practice in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing? Several activities and assessment activities are demonstrated, through which teachers can move away from the grammar-translation method. We will discuss how we can integrate four skills and make the class more communicative through participating in some of the activities and creating a post-reading activity.

(13:30-16:30: Group presentation and discussion)

Advisor: Kazuyoshi Sato & Nancy Mutoh (Nagoya University of Foreign Studies)

Mid-term Presentation

Date: August 4th, 9:30-12:30

Venue: Aichi Kenko Plaza (<http://www.ahv.pref.aichi.jp/>) Tel: 0562-82-0211

Advisor: Kazuyoshi Sato (Nagoya University of Foreign Studies)

If you have any questions, contact me to chiha143@nufs.ac.jp, 0561-75-1722 (Tel) or 0561-75-1723 (Fax).