

NUFS Workshop 2007

*Newsletter No. 9***Workshop in November (Part 1)**

Date: November 10, 2007, 10:30-14:30

Venue: Nagoya Sakae Tokyu Inn, Rose-room

Instructor: Mathew White (Nanzan University)

Title: “Teaching Global Issues in English”

The number of participants: 15

Abstract: In this workshop, participants will explore methods for introducing human rights and some of the global issues related to human rights in your English lessons. Students often fail to see how global issues are



connected to their own lives. My goal has been to help students learn how closely connected their lives are to global issues, to make them more informed about the various sides of the issues, and to empower them with ways in which they can make positive contributions towards solving such issues. I hope those who attend will leave with a toolbox full of ideas and activities for making fun and engaging lessons for their students, which students will not only find memorable, but will thank their teacher for sharing with them.

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

- Making dialogue based on the information we got – I’m wondering how to apply this to my English class. But I’m in charge of Student Association, and they plan several activities to talk about human rights for school festival every year. I’ll try to introduce this to them for next year.
- Mind-mapping will help the students think of the topics. They can get comprehensible input and meaning-bearing input.
- Mind-map – students have more unique ideas about some topics than us teachers, so if I choose a proper topic, they will be happy to express their ideas. ‘Disney’ is really good for them.
- I was interested in simulation and acting. These activities make the students experience the similar situation that the workers are forced. I want to put into practice in my classroom someday.
- Creating a dialog about sweatshop, because I could make sure how poor the labor conditions of the workers are and how extraordinary money Disney executives are making by sacrificing those poor people. Also, it was fun to make a presentation of an improvisation skit.
- ‘Simulation of a sweatshop’ activity was very interesting. Without any information, students start to work in a tough condition and they can realize what the low-wages workers feel. To start with the activity like this, although teachers don’t explain a lot, they will get something important by themselves.
- I’d like to use ‘Discuss the global issue’, because it may be a good chance for students to think about such a big problem. When the topic is popular one such as Disney products, they can be interested in it. Especially as my school is a business high school, they are interested in ‘selling products’, ‘employees’, ‘managing the employees’.

2. What you learned from today's workshop.

- I think it's a role of us English teachers to get students aware of or interested in more of global issues. I want them to expand their world through reading and learning about human rights and environmental problem. They will realize all the people and all the problems are closely inter-related.
- I didn't know much about the 'sweatshop'. So the topic itself was very interesting to me. The ways he introduced the topic were wonderful. Usually students don't show much interest in global issues, but using those methods I think I can get them interested in this kind of topic.
- Content-based language learning could be used in global issues, in which students are more interested than we imagine. All of today's activities were so interesting.
- Thanks to Mathew, I got much interested in kids' labor and fair trade products. As a teacher and as a mother, I must teach these facts to younger people. I want to say 'Thank you' to him many times.
- In a pair work or a group work, it's a good idea to use different handouts for members in a group. This idea is new to me. I'd like to use it.
- To teach English is one thing and to teach something in English is quite another. Our students will be happier to obtain some current topic information than reading through textbooks. Discussion or debating under those propositions must be very meaningful and fruitful, also.
- I didn't know anything about Disney products: how they are made and by whom. Today's workshop gave me a great impact. I think I should share this information with my students and try to do something to improve the situation.



2. Questions and Answers

Q (1): How can we get good materials to teach global issues? Is there a global issues program available for junior high or high school students?

A: In Japan, the Japan Association for Language Teachers has a global issues special interest group. This group provides information and lesson plans for topics such as war, hunger, poverty, environmental destruction, etc. Anyway, even non-JALT members can subscribe to the global issues newsletter. It's 2000 yen and comes out 4 times per year Contact Kip Cates at <kcates@rstu.jp>. In this year's September issue, there is an abstract from an article titled "How To Teach the 3 Important Global Issues" by Suwako Nagata, a teacher at Kobe Minato Junior High (neruda@mqb.biglobe.ne.jp). The abstract states that these are a series of articles in Japanese on how to teach about the environment, peace, and health in high school English classes in Japan. I haven't read these particular articles, which are in the journal *Shin Eigo Kyoiku* (New English Classroom) #452-457 April-September 2007, Japan (www.shin-eiken.com). Also, many organizations and campaigns websites provide materials especially for teachers, but keep in mind that websites do change, so I suggest downloading the information and creating handouts for your students. Try one world week www.oneworldweek.org , No More Landmines Day www.landmines.org.uk/163 , Buy nothing day www.adbusters.org/home/ , Int'l AIDS

Day www.worldaidsgiving.org and www.japanetwork.org , Human Rights Day <http://hrw.org/about/> , or if you want to have a calendar of international events, try www.countmeincalendar.info

Q (2): It was my first time to know about Disney sweatshop and it's a kind of shock to me. Many of the items around us are made in China and have no 'Fair Trade' sign (for example, my SEIKO IC dictionary and Adidas shirt I'm wearing now). Is it possible that they are made under hard condition like Disney? How can we know?

A: Unfortunately, it's very possible that the items that most of us own were made in sweatshops. However, there are many organizations which are trying to find solutions. The November 10, 2007 Japan Times had an article titled "Gap makes commitment to stamp out child labor". In the article, it explains how Gap Inc. plans to label its products "Sweatshop Free" or "Child Labor Free". In order to do this, they will need to create a system in which the factories have to allow surprise and random inspections, so factory owners or supervisors who normally abuse the human rights of workers will have no time to hide what is really happening.

This is probably because of a news story last week in which the London based Observer newspaper found an Indian factory which supplied clothing to the Gap was employing children as young as 10 years old to make the clothing. In the past, when a big corporation like the Gap has been connected to child labor, the public has responded very angrily, and refusing to buy that company's products. Companies worry about losing their positive images, so the Gap is acting quickly. As the article explains, a similar system was developed for India's carpet industry, and it claims that the RugMark label system had successfully eliminated child labor in India's carpet industry.



Q (3): Low wages, harsh working conditions,... these are not only the problems of other nations, but also the ones that occur in Japan, too. Should we pick up global issues more than domestic issues?

A: Good question... For students, perhaps the domestic examples of global issues are more meaningful, and the students may even be able to provide different perspectives based on their own knowledge and experiences on the issues. Personally, I like to include both international and domestic examples. However, it's been much easier for me to find stories written in English about global issues outside of Japan, and there's less of a chance for me to be discussing a subject that students may be sensitive about. You have to take into consideration how these topics may affect your students. I've had classes about domestic violence before, and once a student burst into tears and explained how her father had hit her mother...

Q (4): There were many activities in your today's presentation; reading article, listening and watching a Disney DVD, writing a dialogue and acting. If I have only a few class hours to deal with this issue for the students, what activity should be picked up to make them know the fact of Disney?

A: I think your decisions on what to use will depend a lot on the English proficiency of your students, the importance you place on learning the issues themselves (such as the example about sweatshops and whether refusing to purchase a product really helps those involved), how much emphasis you want to place on vocabulary or functions, such as persuading someone to do/not do something, etc. However, in the workshop we just had, I think the one that would probably be the most effective in showing the situation in sweatshops would be the sweatshop simulation.



I would definitely want to follow the activity with an explanation that it is not just Disney that profits from sweatshops, and bring in a newspaper article or simplified version of one so that they know it is happening right now, not just something that happened a long time ago. The Disney DVD, dialog writing, acting, etc. are just ways of focusing on language learning through the content, so again, which of these activities you include depends on your purpose. For example, depending on the level of your students, they may not be able to catch the fact that the cricket's job in Pinocchio is to be his conscience. However, they could probably write a dialog based on what they experienced in the sweatshop simulation, in which you pretended to beat them when they worked to slowly or talked, and then paid them close to nothing.

Well, thank you for your questions. In case I forgot during the presentation, I'd also like to point out that many of the materials I use were provided by other teachers, who were generous enough to share their work, such as Louise Haynes (founder of Japanetwork) and Sarah Winslow. If you do put together materials for your classes, be sure to share them. It's really helpful to see what others are doing and then modify those activities to fit your teaching style and the needs of your students.

Workshop in November (Part 2)

Date: November 10, 2007, 14:30-17:00

Venue: Nagoya Sakae Tokyu Inn, Rose-room

Advisors: Kazuyoshi Sato & Chihaya Sugiura (Nagoya University of Foreign University)

The number of participants: 11

Abstract: The participants discussed their own monthly report in groups. Yoshi and Chihaya joined the groups and gave them some advice.



Workshop in December (Schedule)

(Part 1)

Date: December 8, 2007, 10:30-14:30

Venue: KKR Hotel Nagoya (<http://www.kkr-nagoya.jp/access/index.html>), Kiku (4F)

Instructor: Tim Murphey (Dokkyo University)

Title: Ecologies of Linguistic Contagion

(Part 2)

Date: December 8, 2007, 14:30-17:00

Venue: KKR Hotel Nagoya

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

Topic: Monthly report and group discussion

Please email Chihaya (chiha143@nufs.ac.jp) if you will attend this workshop.