

NUFS Workshop 2011

Newsletter No. 2

Workshop in June

(Part 1)

Date: June 11, 2011, 13:00-16:00

Venue: NSC College, Room 31

Instructor: Tim Murphey (Kanda University of International Studies)

Title: "Confluence Strategies: Student Training for "How to be an exciting foreign language conversation partner!"

Abstract: I will be looking at some research which shows that part of every student's success depends on their classmates and their ability to help their partners talk and interact fluently and make a good environment. The idea of two rivers flowing together is called "confluence." Mike McCarthy in his research says that two people talking together can do it confluently or not, that part of our ability to talk well depends on fluent listeners. So how can teachers train students to be better listeners so their partners can speak better? This workshop will look at many ways to do that.



The number of participants: 30

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

- I'd like to use the joint speed dictation to introduce a short rhyme that students remember and then ask them to repeat it throughout the lesson. This seems like a good way to 'give' language to the students that they feel like 'belongs' to them.
- It's effective for JHS students to play using the numbers from one to fifty. To remember or write the numbers is very boring for them. So if they know this, they will be excited and try.
- Having a conversation by using numbers could be fun in class. I would also like to use the 10 year reunion game. I think students would enjoy it.
- From the split story I learned that we should make them curious by using some ways. Once they are curious, they will learn more. It is the most important task for teachers.
- I'd like to try 'Mention' in my class. Since my students have not acquired enough speaking ability to talk with long sentences, 'Mentions activity' help them to keep their conversation longer. That could make them feel confident to work on speaking tasks in class.
- The video 'The Girl Effect' would be an effective activity for model United Nations class I teach. We are talking about the food crisis that exists throughout the world. One of the factors of hunger is the education of women. So I think that students would see value in this in two ways: linguistically and content-wise.



2. What you learned from today's workshop.

- Getting students to interact even in their L1 can dramatically increase their learning. I have been thinking about this topic lately because my students don't help each other enough. I have started asking them to talk about what they should do after giving instructions. I have had some success with this. I want to learn more.
- The concept of 'confluenting', I'm sure, works in every field and stage of our lives. I'd like to build up much more collaborative fluency with my students as well as my families.
- Confluenting is very important when we want to develop fluency. The reason for learning language is to communicate. So as to communicate better, we need to have nice relationship with the partner.
- Being fluent doesn't mean speaking correctly. I realized that I've been creating a wall in front of the students by correcting their mistakes too often or much. The wall was stopping them from speaking freely or enjoying it.
- Getting learners to participate is a crucial step in building up confidence in the language learning process. I need to find better ways to get students to participate and build-up their confidence by experiencing some success with language learning. Also showing them how it can be useful to them will help.
- I learned that developing fluency is not something done by a person, but helping each other and working together is very important.



3. Questions and Answers

Q (1): Today, we used a simple Q and A; “How do you write? – Write, write, write it down...”

Do you have other examples Junior and Senior high school students enjoy?

A: How are you? Superhappyoptimisticjoyfulandfantastic (to the tune of Mary Poppins, supercalifragilistic...) I have about 10 or 12 I do regularly, but you and I can always make up more of them. Also they don't have to be songs, just sayings like, “What is asking?” *“Asking may be a moment's embarrassment, not asking is a lifelong regret.”*

Q (2): I'm wondering what “scaffold” means. I think this is the key word of today's lesson.

A: In Japanese “Ashiba”, it is temporary help to help you build something more substantial. It can be simply steps. So to learn to juggle we play with one ball first, then two balls and finally three balls.

Q (3): How can we get students who have given up to try learning through interaction? If they won't try, they cannot learn that it is worth trying.

A: I am not sure if you mean given up trying to learn, or given up learning through interaction? Students actually learn all the time out of class through interaction, it is much more natural to learn that way. I have never had any who refuse to interact. Some are shy and need some help to start speaking, (frame sentences with just filling in the blanks, for example). I have had lots of students fall asleep in class after a 5-minute lecture, but never when they are interacting. Yes, there are some non-productive interactions and ways to organize it, but almost anything done together becomes more interesting than done apart.

Q (4): I would like to know more interesting conversation activities like “mentions”, “1-50”, etc. Is there a good resource to access more activities like this?

A:The OUP resource book series (Alan Maley, series editor, e.g. my own Music and Song) or TESOL’s New Ways series has lots of ideas like these that are adaptable and that I go to from time to time. Maybe we should write another one with these!

Q (5): You said that it is important to remind students that they will one day have to use English. Do you use any activities which are specifically target this?

A: Actually, I think I said, “If their only motivation is that they will ‘someday use English,’ they will not be very motivated to learn today – some day is too far away and vague. They need to have a reason for learning something that is more immediate, in class, today. So if I tell them “You are going to use this phrase every 5 minutes in class” they tend to try to remember it, because they know they are going to use it (every 5 minutes). If you tell them you will use it someday...they don’t bother with it usually. It is not needed immediately.

Q (6): What makes you keep on working to be even a better teacher/researcher? Did you have this passion from the beginning of your teaching?

A: Early on, I hated high school and collected articles criticizing the education system—my father gave me a file to keep them in and encouraged me. I think when I saw I could make a difference in some students’ lives it became more and more interesting and challenging and I wanted to help more and more. I am not always successful, but I try to enjoy the Challenges. It can be a creative and thrilling job if you have the right conditions. I think some organizational structures do not however encourage this in teachers. Lastly it is a dopamine rush for me to see students get excited about learning new words and singing a song or juggling. Their dopamine shoots off and my mirror neurons recognize it and it is a thrill for both of us.

Q (7): How do you evaluate fluency in the test?

A: My workshop was about the idea that there are different types of developmental fluency. That getting students to participate fluently first was important (e.g. I like your shirt video – embodied fluency); intonation and emotional fluency with DADA/Updown/1-50; one-word fluency with mentions, etc. The boys who touched the right clothes items were fluently participating. With my students, I record them and count things (words, rejoinders, shadowing, etc.) As my workshop suggested, your partners help to make you fluent or not. And you help your partners. SO shadowing, commenting, questions, rejoinders all make you sound fluent but also help your partner to sound fluent. Counting just the number of words can be misleading. A student who does a good job of helping their partner speak may not have many words or say much, but they are confluent speaker who helps others speak. So judgments should be made about the pair together, since conversation is a joint task. I recently saw research showing that pairs of students actually were evaluated higher as speakers when speaking with each other than when speaking with teachers. To get to your question, if I am looking at a beginner who fluently engages and participates but does not necessarily have much language yet, I would evaluate them highly as someone who is probably going to learn a lot quickly. Whereas someone with poor rapport and mirroring skills who has just studied



the language and can speak it reasonably well may well score high on the language part but not necessarily in the communicative rapport building that human interaction grows on. Still, the present tests tend to look at a person's language only, not their strategies and attitudes that predict better learning in the long run. I did see in several presentations on Saturday that teachers were teaching strategies as much as language and I think that is a great way to go. Your enthusiasm for learning as a teacher will also develop their attitudes.



Q (8): Are there any good books explaining about rapport? I'd like to read and study more.

A: Take a short NLP course with Richard Bolstad in Osaka or Tokyo (offered on weekends and in the summer), or maybe now with Brian Cullen in Nagoya. Or get Brian to come and give a workshop on Rapport Building. You can also get Bolstad's book *Transforming Communication* (2004) on Amazon. I use to use it in my university seminar classes.

Q (9): Tim, what did you learn from giving your presentation today?

A: (This sounds like Roberto Croker! Or maybe a student of his.) I reinforced my belief that I can challenge myself and an audience (learners or teachers) and they may find it frustrating at first (and that is OK) but if you give them the tools (scaffolding) and good partners (human support and belonging), they can enjoy only partially succeeding and learn a lot and get a rush of satisfaction with what they did! The human mind craves and thrives on a good degree of challenge, not just success.

Q (10): How do you write?

A: Write write write it down, set your

(Part 2)

Date: June 11, 2011, 14:30-17:00

Venue: Nagoya NSC College

Advisor: Kazuyoshi Sato, Nancy Mutoh (NUFS), Robert Croker (Nanzan University)

Abstract: Monthly report on action research

The number of participants: 25



Workshop in July (Scheduled)

Date: July 9, 2011, 10:30-14:30 (Part 1), 14:30-17:00 (Part 2)

Venue: Nagoya NSC College, Room 31

Instructors: Noriko Ishitobi (Ueda Junior High School), Mie Kato (Hida High School)

Title: “My Action Research”

Please email Chihaya ([chiha143\(at-mark\)nufs.ac.jp](mailto:chiha143(at-mark)nufs.ac.jp)) to participate in this workshop.