

NUFS Workshop 2012

Newsletter No. 2

Workshop in June

(Part 1)

Date: June 9, 2012, 13:00-16:00

Venue: NSC College

Instructor: Tim Murphey (Kanda University of International Studies)

Title: "Ways to Increase the Amount of English in the Classroom"

Abstract: This workshop will look at a variety of ways to increase students' exposure to English in and out of the classroom. First we will experience some classroom routines which can create lots of scaffolded language use. Second, we will experience how students can interact with each other in the target language in a variety of ways in and out of class. Finally, we will look more closely at the use of media and how we might use it in class or assign it for homework. Crucial in all of these procedures is to make them experiential, social, and appropriately challenging at the students' levels.



The number of participants: 38

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

- I loved all of the creative activities. I could definitely see myself using gestures. I really enjoyed the 'snowball game' and 'hot potato', as well 'mentions' and 'my mistake'. I feel that these games will challenge students to use language in a more entertaining and creative way. It was amazing and fun.
- "Mention" conversation – I feel more comfortable to say English words without worrying about grammar mistakes.
- Shadowing – through shadowing, I've learned that it's very important to listen carefully to what your partner says. It is a good way to improve the students' abilities of listening and understanding and even speaking.
- Song – very easy and short song can be routine in English class. Students think and learn while singing. Gestures – to connect English and gestures can expand students' interest in learning English.
- I enjoyed "snow ball game" and "mistake story" activities a lot. These are really fun so students practice English with less stressed and pressured. For me, I am focusing on how to reinforce words that students have learned and "snow ball game" would be a great one. I would use it and ask students to describe scene by using target words.



2. What you learned from today's workshop.

- I learned 10 action idioms for sure. I also learned that knowing my students, following their leads, inviting them to help each other, and showing the good near peer role modeling are very important.
- I learned that there are many ways to engage students in fun-filled activities that will keep them attentive and happy. I loved the activities, so why should it be different for them? Also, I realized it is okay to make mistakes, which is something I needed to remind myself this week. Humor is a great tool.
- I haven't been a student (sitting and learning like a student) for a long time. That reminds of me being frustrated if I understand or answer right or not. But being here was different. It was comfortable while I'm learning something new without any pressure.
- Repeating is important. I should let my students repeat words, phrases and sentences more often during the class, otherwise they can't remember them.
- To help expand students' English world, teachers struggle to prepare for classes. I do, too. As Tim said, routine is very important. To repeat makes the students confident in learning. Tim's teaching style is amazing for me.
- Make yourself "human" to your students and show them that you make mistakes too. Show them that you "let yourself fail".
- I have learned that how we could make classrooms a more fun, relaxed and dynamic with activities. The video of Japanese high school teacher who told a mistake story to his students shows that we could make students to practice listening skills with telling fun stories.



3. Questions and Answers

Q (1): What activities can I use to help students with listening? Any ideas?

A: Anything that has sound! My favorites are activities that scaffold listening so that they can also involve other modes of understanding (visuals, text, actions, etc.). Shadowing and summarizing a partner reading a class newsletter has become my routine for class and students tell me again and again that they are learning from the activity. Google "shadowing" or "Action Logs and Newsletters."

Q (2): Unless they are exposed to authentic English, will students never be able to write English sentences that are not directly translated from their Japanese sentences?

A: I fear you may restrict your understanding of "authentic" to native speaker English in this question. Any purposeful use of English between any speakers (whatever their L1) is to me an authentic use of English and with learners this "purposeful use" can be a learning scaffold leading to better ways to make one's self understood in particular contexts and situations. There is no one "true" English. Today we talk of World Englishes and Asian Englishes and accents and varieties are acknowledged and expected.

As far as using the L1 (Japanese in our context), many are now saying that your first language can help you learn an L2 and so it should not be totally banned but used appropriately. This is not a return to *yakudoku*, but rather a realistic acknowledgement that people naturally use their L1 to scaffold learning in L2s.

Q (3): Seriously, why is a turtle trying to fly more beautiful than a bird sitting in a tree?

A: Seriously, if I told you an answer, I would be robbing you of the pleasure you would have at figuring it out yourself. My grandmother did not give me an answer; she gave me a quest. And so occasionally I find it useful to give questions without answers. They are gifts. Try it in your own classes and trust your students to figure it out, in their own way.

Q (4): About the Action Log, how often do you read their action log? Do you correct it, ex. grammar errors wrong spellings? Do you make any comments?

A: At my university students drop off their action logs once a week in a box outside my door. I return them in the next class. Often they have two classes a week and so I am reading about two classes each time. I do not correct usually, I underline things that are wrong and I tell them to try to correct it first, asking their classmates and friends. If they can't get it they can ask me. I put ** (big ones) by things I like and want to call notice to, or ☺ smiley- faces. I comment usually briefly, in a few words, unless they have asked questions or there is a problem. I go through about 140 logs a week but each one may only take a minute. And from the student feedback I know better how to teach the next class, or what was not understood that needs attention.

Q (5): I was wondering if it would be better to correct students' errors or mistakes after the 'snow ball game'. Or it would be better to use the game as encouraging students to talk more even though they make mistakes or errors?

A: Exactly. We do not want to interrupt students during fluency exercises. You can circle around as they talk and take note of what they need and some of the errors perhaps and talk about them on the board after the exercise. After explaining something on the board, it is nice to use it right away in a follow up activity, or at least get them to explain what you just told them to each other (summarizing).

Q (6): I really enjoyed the conference and the interaction between other great educators. However, I was wondering if we could talk more directly about increasing English use in the classroom. Please give us some suggestions.

A: I'm glad you liked the presentations. I suggest teachers try to increase incrementally, every day just a little more, through telling a story, giving a speed dictation, increasing the amount of class instructions that can be given English. But more than teachers increasing the amount they use, I think we need to think more about increasing the interaction between students in English in the classroom. They can have routine dialogues starting with speed dictations. They can play hot potato with paper balls. They can tell their own stories to each other after having written them for homework. This does not mean you have to have a whole new teaching style, it means just turning things into English little by little, while perhaps also gradually becoming more of an interactionist.



(Part 2)

Date: June 9, 2012, 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: 17



Workshop in July (Scheduled)

Date: July 14, 2012, 10:30-14:30 (Part 1), 14:30-17:00 (Part 2)

Venue: Nagoya NSC College

Instructor: Sakae Onoda (Kanda University of International Studies)

Title: "Exploring Teaching Techniques for Increasing the Use of English in Class"

Please send an email to Chihaya ([chiha143\(at-mark\)nufs.ac.jp](mailto:chiha143@nufs.ac.jp)) to attend this workshop.