

## NUFS Workshop 2012

*Newsletter No. 5***Workshop in September**

(Part 1)

**Date:** September 15, 2012, 10:30-14:30

**Venue:** NSC College

**Instructors:** Takemi Morioka (Takinomizu Junior High School), Reiko Iwai (Agui High School)

**Takemi Morioka:**

**Title:** "Focus-on-Form Instruction"

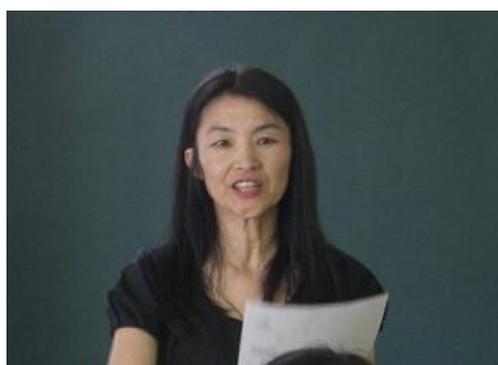
**Abstract:** Though junior high school teachers know that they need to improve students' communicative competence, we always feel pressure to cover all the grammatical items in the textbook in each year. How can we teach grammar and how to communicate in English, which seem to be incompatible?

I will demonstrate focus-on-form instruction, in which students learn grammar through activities. There are two kinds of focus-on-form instruction: planned and incidental focus-on-form. Planned focus-on-form instruction gets students to pay attention to target grammar in communicating in English. Students experience using English more practically in incidental focus-on-form, talking in pairs and writing on a topic, etc.

**Reiko Iwai:**

**Title:** "My Six Years of Focus on Form. 2007-2012"

**Abstract:** Recently, an idea of 'Focus on Form' (F on F) seems to have come under the spotlight in reaction to the implementation of the new curriculum guidelines next year. The number of in-service training introducing F on F has been increasing. However, still many English classrooms have still been teaching traditional grammar drill method. Moreover, many newly introduced textbooks of 'English Expression' authorized by MEXT make out openly with grammar drills and exercises. This shows there remained a strong belief that grammar drills are of benefit for entrance exams. Is it totally true? How should we adjust F on F to such context? In this presentation, I would like to show you my six-year of struggling for implementing F on F and put our heads together to a better solution.



**The number of participants: 28**

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

- Focus on form activities by Reiko sensei, especially conditionals, counter reality and so on. We, teachers, use a lot of grammar terminology such as 仮定法過去 that is confusing for students. By introducing readings including conditionals, and writing advice with conditionals, students learn the grammar point more naturally.
- I liked the personality profile. This is very useful and helpful for students as they have to choose which course to enter. I use a test that helps me get an idea of what strategies the learners employ. Of course the students already choose their course by the time I meet them but I think this profile would be helpful for students to think about their future, write about it, and share with each other students.
- Information exchange tasks (by Takemi) – they are very exciting. Students must talk to everybody during the class. This situation is wonderful for them.
- “Draw a picture what a teacher said and retell” activity (by Reiko) – it’s difficult but interesting.
- Questions printed on different colored paper – a nice and good way to have students talk to others.



## 2. What you learned from today’s workshop.

- Spiral methods are important, in which students use several grammar items they previously learned. Without review or repetition, they can’t acquire grammar.
- Reiko sensei analyzed entrance exams for universities. It was very interesting. Many teachers spent a lot of time teaching grammar and vocabulary, but in the exams, students are tested mainly on reading skills. In entrance exams for senior high schools, reading skills are required, too.
- Focus on form, which I’ve learned in U.S. TESOL program, was not so clear at that time. But it is one of the good ways to teach grammar in meaningful contexts. So I would like to explore the field.
- I was more aware of the struggles Japanese teachers have when try to teach grammar communicatively. I think there are many teachers who want to teach more communicatively, however they may feel they are on an island and helpless. Communicating these feelings is very important to make a change.
- Rubrics can encourage students to work on the assignment harder. Making goals and letting students know the goals is very important.

## 3. Questions and Answers

**Q (1): How important is Monkasho’s textbook? If we don’t use textbook so often and have various other activities, students might not think textbook is important. What do you think?**

**A (Takemi):** We have to use the textbook. It’s not so difficult to teach grammar without the textbook, but we need to teach vocabulary and develop reading skills. Moreover, two other teachers are teaching the same grade as me now and they don’t use so many activities, though I give my handouts to them. In addition, many students go to juku and learn with the textbook.



Therefore it's not so easy. I think publishers should make better textbooks.

**Q (2): If a high level student and a low level student make a pair and they are not friends, the activity between them will not work well. What should teachers do for them?**

**A (Takemi):** Not being friends is a bigger problem than the difference of their levels. If they are sociable, they help each other and work well. It is sometimes hard to have some students get along well, but communicative activities give them opportunities to know each other. Although it might take time, we teachers should exert ourselves.

**Q (3): I'd like to know the difference between passive voice and active voice. Do you think we should teach the difference in class?**

**A (Reiko):** I can't get your true meaning of this question through this two lines. Passive Voice and Active Voice, each has its own function in contexts. I sometimes see some strange sentences in my students' writings used passive voice. In most cases, the choice of subject should be the causes. Novice students tend to use 'I' or 'people' such as 'my mother', 'my friend' as a subject many times. In that sense, his/ her sentence has no choice but to use 'passive' voice, which sometimes makes unnatural sentences. However, after many times of trials and errors, they began to choose inanimate subjects in their writings and learn to use active voice. I recommend my students to read Extensive Reading books so as for them to expose themselves to more natural English.



**Q (4): Where can I get the wonderful handouts? Is it on the book?**

**A (Reiko):** Thank you very much. Some are in the book that was recently published, I mean, an orange one. You can access the Internet with ID number which is written on the front page, and you'll reach the other many handouts that 'we' made. Every year, I modified the previous ones or some are newly made. Unfortunately, the two handouts that I introduced at the last minutes, 'Reiko's Unlucky Day' (infinitive) and 'Which Course Should You Choose' (gerund) are the latest ones that I made this summer. And I have many other ones which I could not introduce this time due to the time limit nor on the books. Let me know if you need the data. I also recommend other three teachers' handouts, Ms. Kusiho, Ms. Kato and Ms. Yanagida's on that book and the Internet, too. You can see them as well.

**Q (5): I had my students rewrite their essay twice last year. Some students were reluctant to do it. How can I motivate those students?**

**A (Reiko):** I have two things to do for my students. This year I asked my students to use typing or WORD. If they are available to use WORD, rewriting will be much easier and faster, in addition, the output will be more beautiful, which let them feel a sense of achievement. My high school has a room for students using computer. I asked some students who are not available to WORD to stay with me after school, and let them know how to type or how to use WORD. I found that they quickly learned and in about half an hour, they finished typing and handed in their rewriting works. The other way is that I give my original bookmarks with an



encourage comment to wonderful or dedicated works. When each student gets it, s/he seems to be secretly contented. I learned praising and admitting make students motivate.

**Q (6): Before comparison activity we did today, do you teach grammar points, (ex. ~times, by ~centimeters)?**

**A (Reiko):** It's on a case by case basis. Usually I don't explain them first. My recent procedure is showing two popular characters on the board by projector. To begin with, as they have already learned how to use basic comparison, I make sure how much they can follow. And most cases they can do the basic one. (I praise junior high teachers). T: "Which is younger, Doraemon or Konan?" Ss: "Konan is younger than Doraemon." T: "That's right. And Konan is 10 years younger than Doraemon. Let Ss repeat after T ) And Konan is 5 years younger than XX. (again let them repeat the same phrase ) Also Konan is 3 years younger than XXX." (let them repeat again) In this way, input several model phrases in English. Mostly students know how to use it. I sometimes use many visual aids, or just writing on the board, saying the numbers only. After practicing like this, I ask Ss to open the textbook and point where the grammatical points are explained.

(Part 2)

**Date:** September 15, 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: 14**



**Workshop in October (Scheduled)**

**Date:** October 20, 2012, 10:30-14:30 (Part 1), 14:30-17:00 (Part 2)

**Venue:** Nagoya NSC College

**Instructor:** Marc Helgesen (Miyagi Gakuin Women's College)

**Title:** "Positive Psychology in the ELT Classroom: Well-being 101, 2.0 and Happiness Recycled"

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