

NUFS Workshop 2012

*Newsletter No. 6***Workshop in October**

(Part 1)

Date: October 20, 2012, 10:30-14:30**Venue:** NSC College**Instructor:** Marc Helgesen (Miyagi Gakuin Women's College)

Marc Helgesen is author of more than 150 professional articles, books and textbooks including the English Firsthand series (Pearson Education/Longman Asia) and Practical English Language Teaching (PELT) – Listening (David Nunan, ed., McGraw-Hill) and has been an invited/featured speaker at conferences on five continents. He is professor at Miyagi Gakuin Women's University, Sendai and adjunct at Teachers College Columbia University, MA Program, Tokyo. He is particularly interested in connecting Positive Psychology to English Language Teaching. He is also interested in Extensive reading and materials design. march@mgu.ac.jp

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

Abstract: Positive psychology has been called, “The science of happiness”. This workshop will review ideas presented last year including the PERMA model for well-being (Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaningfulness, Accomplishment) and ways we can connect the ideas to English teaching in Japan. We'll introduce some new activities, review others and invite teachers who have been doing positive psychology tasks to share their ideas/experiences. (We'll also review the main ideas so don't worry if you weren't at the session last November. If you were at that session and found it useful, bring a friend). For a preview of some of the things we'll be looking at, visit www.ELTandHappiness.com

The number of participants: 24**1. Interesting activities you might want to use in your class. Why?**

- The communicative dictation exercise was great because the more active nature of the exercise will lead to more retentive than traditional dictation exercise.
- The report activity – even though it seems like a game, it truly reinforce grammar + relevant vocabulary. My classes respond best to these types of activities.
- There are so many great activities that I could use at the beginning of class. I have been using some activities to help enrich our class experience and create a more positive atmosphere in the class.
- “3 good things happened today” – It is good for each student think their daily life positively and thank them. Also, they can share them, good things with peers, which help them expand/spread happiness.



- Savoring – when students have ‘small talk’ at the beginning of the class, they can talk about ‘good experience’. They can practice fluency, how to ask follow-up questions, and most importantly, they can share their good experience.
- The first pair activity: A and B change their information they have. A tells B’s sentence to C. B tells A’s sentence to D... We had to remember sentences and write them later. It was exciting.

2. What you learned from today’s workshop.

- I’m glad that I could know that physical movement is good for learning. I have reasons to have students move in class.
- Happiness should be more of a priority in the classroom for science, for learning, and for life.
- 40% of our happiness comes from intentional activity.
- Smile is so important for English lesson. Students should stand up when they talk with their partners in English. Positive thinking makes people happy.
- I learned that it’s important for me to use or think about PERMA when I make activities and handouts. I’ve thought it’s difficult for me to use the science of happiness for classes of seventh graders, but I got some ideas through today’s workshop.
- ‘Happy and relaxed students will learn more than those who don’t.’ This makes me think more about the relationships between learners’ brain condition and their accomplishment.
- I realized ‘emotion’ is one of essential for communication.



3. Questions and Answers

Q (1): Do you collect any data on your students’ happiness levels? When I made the decision to be happy a few years ago, I had to fake it for a while before it actually happened. Is this a typical pattern?

A: I don’t. I probably should. There are a number of scales available. Martin Seligman has a bunch of resource like that available at <http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/Default.aspx> Barbara Fredrickson has one at <https://www.positivityratio.com/signup.php> But all these are in English and I think they are too long for most of my students. But I do think, yes, these things take time.

You said, “I made the decision to be happy.” That is an important point. We really do make decisions and are responsible for a huge part of our own happiness.

Q (2): You said that you don’t deal directly about faith/spirituality with your students. How do you bring it up indirectly?

A: It is hard and I wish I had better ways. After the earthquake last year there were quite a few chances to talk about people helping others (including strangers) and how we are all connected/responsible for each other. So that’s one part.

You know I was a novice monk. We teach a unit to our 1st year students on “Traditional Asian Healing/Medicine.” The first week they do meditation (both the “blueberry meditation” and a “mantra meditation” where they focus on a nonsense word they repeat in their minds. The next week they read about and try yoga. The 3rd week they do Thai massage. The meditation lesson is a chance to share some ideas.

I also do some lessons about “proverbs and aphorism”

(http://www.eltandhappiness.com/uploads/1/1/2/5/11251138/good_advice_pairwork.pdf). Also, there are posters in my classroom with some aphorisms. (You can download poster pdfs at www.ELTandHappiness.com).

We also do some “thanking” activities which I think helps. See

http://www.eltandhappiness.com/uploads/1/1/2/5/11251138/an_award_for_you_youre_special.pdf

So those are things I try but I’d like to do more.

Q (3): How can you concretely teach an abstract idea like happiness in an ELT class?

A: You’ll notice the 8 ideas I stressed (those in the dictation) are all in the imperative. That helps make it concrete. I look more at the behaviors of happy people. In the dictation, “forgive” is really the only word most of my students don’t already know (I translate that).



I also try to do concrete things. And metaphor is very useful for explaining abstracts. Just today I pointed out to a class that the Japanese proverb “Even monkeys fall from trees” is not really about monkeys or trees. Nagoya teacher Brian Cullen has an area on his website for metaphors. That address is <http://nlp.briancullen.net/metaphors/>

Q (4): I’d like to know books for reference for today’s lecture.

A: On my website, there is a list of about 12 books I recommend. I’d suggest starting with the ones on the first page

(<http://www.eltandhappiness.com/library.html>)

Flourish by Martin Seligman

Positivity by Barbara Fredrickson

The How of Happiness by Sonja Lyubomirsky

Another good one is Happier by Tal Ben-shahar

All of these are available in English from Amazon.co.jp.

The Seligman book is new (just over a year old) and isn’t translated yet. The others are. Search Amazon.co.jp by author’s name (the books often have different titles in Japanese).

Positivity : ポジティブな人だけがうまくいく 3:1 の法則

How of Happiness: 幸せがずっと続く 12 の行動習慣

Q (5): How would you help students who have such low (English learning-wise) self-esteem and can’t even accept the idea of being positive?

A: Important question. I think a key is building in success. We have so much pressure (test and other) in Japanese education. We need to help students experience success. Activities like 4-3-2 which I described when we were talking about flow are one way. On the



“Flow” page of my website, you can find an article called “One more time with feeling”. It explains that activity (also called “Fluency workshop” in more detail. Of course, of younger learners you might have to shorten the speaking time (example: 120 seconds/ 90 seconds/ 75 seconds).

I have a colleague who teaches quite low students. He has started using the “10 minutes for happiness” tasks and is having good results.

Q (6): Why did you become interested in the concept of Positive Psychology and how did you learn so much about it?

A: I first heard of Positive Psychology when TIME magazine did a cover story on it (there is a link to that story on the first page of my webpage. Paragraph. Click on “...something TIME magazine calls, “**the Science of happiness.**”

In it, she outlined the 8 ideas I mentioned in or workshop. Like I said then, many connect with what we do as English teachers anyway (“remembering good things” and “noticed good things when they happen” are grammar, “friend/family and health” are common topics in English class, “Thanking” and “forgiving” are language functions”), so I thought, “Wow. This is a chance to deal with ideas that are much deeper (and therefore more interesting” than a lot of the stuff in textbooks. So I just started to experiment in my own classes.



Q (7): You mentioned ‘Yoga breathing’ which can relieve stress. How does it work and how can we do it? Can we learn it on your site?

A: I should add it to my site but haven’t yet. Here’s the most basic style. (this is from a handout we use in reading class.

Deep breathing

1. Sit comfortably.
2. Inhale (breath in) through your nose. As you do, silently count to five: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4- 5. Inhaling should take five seconds.
3. Hold your breath for five seconds. Count Silently.
4. Exhale through your mouth.
5. Count to five. Keep exhaling for five seconds, even if it feels like you don’t have any more air to exhale.
6. Wait five seconds before inhaling again.
7. Start again with step 2. Repeat four times.

Note- This exercise helps you get rid of the “old” air in your lungs. Try to build up the length you inhale and exhale to 8 or even 10 seconds.

You can add this to walking to make a ‘walking meditation.’ This is also a good exercise to do before a test to relax yourself. Once they know this, I introduce a more powerful variation.

They exhale through the mouth for the count of 6: 1 – 2 -3 – 4 -5 -6

Then hold their breath for 5: 1 – 2 -3 – 4 -5

Then inhale through the nose for 4: 1 – 2 -3 – 4

Then hold their breath for 5: 1 – 2 -3 – 4 -5

The mouth is bigger than the nose so they get rid of the old air. It takes practice to make this easy. The first few times, some people feel dizzy so they should take it slowly.

(Part 2)

Date: October 20, 2012, 14:30-17:00

Venue: Nagoya NSC College

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

Abstract: Monthly report on action research

The number of participants: 17



Workshop in November (Scheduled)

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

Venue: Nagoya NSC College

Instructor: Keiko Takahashi (Motosu Shoyo High School)

Title: “Developing a communicative writing class through students' collaboration”

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