

NUFS Workshop 2013

*Newsletter No. 6***Workshop in October****<Part 1 >****Date:** October 19, 2013, 10:30-14:00**Venue:** NSC College (Shin-sakae, Nagoya)**Presenter:** Marc Helgesen (Miyagi Gakuin Women's University)**Title:** "Do-It-Yourself NeuroELT: Making your textbook more brain friendly"**Abstract:**

Some people think the brain is like a sponge, soaking up more information than we can really use. No, the brain is really more like a sieve. 99% of the input we receive is discarded nearly instantly. How to we make sure the important information in our classroom doesn't disappear? Brain science is making huge progress in the field of mind/brain/education. But how to connect those ideas to the books we are using in our English classrooms? This session will look at seven ways we can adapt our current textbooks to make them more brain-friendly. The presenter will show ways he has included these ideas in textbooks and ways to add them to books, even where they don't currently exist. During the afternoon session, participants will work on adapting lessons from various monkasho-approved textbooks. More at: www.tinyurl.com/neuroELT. Please bring your main textbook(s) along.

**The number of participants: 37****1. Interesting activities you might want to use in your class. Why?**

- Afternoon workshop was so useful and helpful. I always wonder how I modify the required textbook and create interesting activities. I was able to think about new ideas with my partner and share them with the whole class. I really appreciate afternoon session.
- Actually, all the activities stimulated my imagination. I'm curious about testing our having students plug their ears during 'listen and repeat' activities to see their responses.
- There is a ton of activities that I will try in my own class. (1): Listen, repeat silently – looks very sensible (2): Using your body to tell time. All of these activities, plus so much more are not only fun, but they are definitely a worthy addition to my repertoire.
- 'Add two more items' and 'Using mind map': these won't take much time, but it will surely activate my classes.
- The idea of positive psychology was new to me. I always wonder why I like to study or speak or use English. I got an answer today. That is there has been positive psychology in my process of studying English by chance. I'm just going to use this idea and move students mind. That's I really want to do, even though it is difficult.



- I would like my students to walk around, making conversation. Sitting for 45 minutes is not easy job for students.
- I have learned so many interesting activities from this seminar. I never thought that the ‘brain keys’ can be more beneficial to my teaching style. I would definitely try some of the activities to my students.
- Stand up and move. Answer with body language. – A partner asks “What time did you get up this morning?” His/her partner would answer her/him back with body language as if he/she were a clock



2. What you learned from today’s workshop.

- It’s good to know a lot of ideas from this workshop. It’s essential for us teachers to be very sensitive about students’ emotions. Making fun lessons/activities are great but they also need to be creative, challenging and personalized. And we shouldn’t forget to give our students the freedom to choose on how they want to learn something.
- Emotion, creativity, choice, novelty, senses, challenge, personalization – I thought that those things seemed to be important in teaching vaguely. But today, Marc’s workshop enabled me to clarify these components. Doing seven seems difficult, but as he said, at least one in each class sounds possible. I’m motivated to improve my way of teaching, which will motivate my students to study English more.
- I learned that the brain is very powerful and that there are different ways of tuning my activities to the natural ways on how it works. I want to stimulate my students on these 7 areas to make my lessons more interesting and exciting.
- Visuality is important. In my textbook, there are no pictures. I want to download them and show to students.
- I learned the theory of neuroELT, and the importance of how the textbook can be modified for our brain. We have to use various ideas so that students will be more motivated to learn English. First of all, I will ‘skip the boring part of the textbook’ if possible.
- I reassured myself that I need to praise students’ effort. I’m always doing that, but Marc made me realize that if I praise ability/intelligence and they feel they don’t need to work hard and many avoid challenging tasks for fear of mistakes.



3. Questions and Answers

Q (1): When you have a topic which requires students to share their personal experiences or preferences and some students don’t want to do so, how will you encourage them? Or probably they can’t decide what to share.

A: I like giving the students a choice of several topics. That way, if a topic is too personal or difficult, they can choose to talk about something else.

Also, by making choices about questions (for example, rating them ☺, ☹ or 😐), it makes it easier to decide what they want to talk about.

Q (2): I don't fully understand the part "speed reading aloud". 'Silent reading' or 'reading aloud', which is better to understand meaning?

A: Reading aloud is not really a reading activity. It is more a speaking activity. It is very difficult to think about meaning when you are reading aloud. I ALWAYS have students read a text silently before I ask them to read it aloud. While reading silently, they think about the meaning. When I do have them read aloud, I try to add a task. For example, when we did the speed reading activity, we were working on reading fluency. Other times, // I'll give them a text // with the phrases marked // with slash lines // like this sentence. They practice it, then read to a partner. The partner marks the pauses/slashes on his/her copy. This helps work on phrasing.



Q (3): Why are your textbooks, like 'FirstHand' not Monkasho-approved? I really hope that your textbooks are for my high school English classes.

A: I wish they were but that isn't likely to happen. But I hope the ideas we tried will make it easier for you to modify the textbooks you have.

If you go to the *Firsthand* website (www.efcafe.com), there are extra activities you can use. They are listed under "Teacher Resources". Also, if you go to my positive psychology website (www.ELTandHappiness.com), there is a download called "English Firsthand syllabus tie-in". It lists positive psychology activities from the website that go with the course syllabus. You can find the grammar point or language function you want to teach and an activity or more to teach it. Finally, I have a website for presentation handout with ideas and activities. It is at www.HelgesenHandouts.weebly.com. Two subpages on that you might want to know about: My co-author and I just added a new handout 18 (+32) *speaking activities with principles*. Some are too difficult for J/HS but most will work. You can go there directly at www.tinyurl.com/EFjalt2013 and remember there is a page that goes with the session we did: www.tinyurl.com/neuroELT

Hope these ideas help. Good luck with your teaching.



<Part 2>

Date: October 19, 2013, 14:30-17:00

Venue: NSC College

Advisors: Kazuyoshi Sato, Nancy Mutoh (NUFS)

Abstract: Monthly reports on action research

The number of participants: 25



Workshop in November (Scheduled)

Date: November 16, 2013, 10:30-14:30 (Part 1), 14:30-17:00 (Part 2)

Venue: NSC College, Building Minami, Room A31

Presenter: Miwako Kushiro (Kakamihara High School)

Title: "How to create effective handouts based on the theory of focus on form"

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