

NUFS Workshop 2014

## *Newsletter No. 8*

### Workshop in December

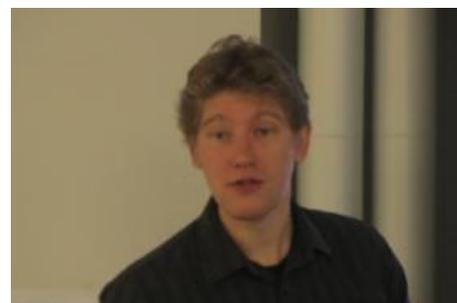
#### <Part 1 >

**Date:** December 6, 2014, 10:30-14:00

**Venue:** NSC College, Building Minami, Room A-31

**Presenter:** Erik Jacobson (British Council)

**Title:** "Using online resources to bring English alive – Teaching tips for Elementary, Junior and Senior High Schools"



**Session 1 (AM):** Using online resources to bring English alive - Teaching tips for Elementary

**Abstract:** This session will demonstrate how to adapt freely available songs and stories from the British Council Learn English Kids web-site to produce engaging, communicative lessons. The session will be practical and hands-on, with concrete teaching tips that can be applied immediately to the Elementary classroom.

**Session 2 (PM):** Using online resources to bring English alive - Teaching tips for Junior and Senior High School

**Abstract:** This session will demonstrate how to adapt free materials from the British Council Learn English Teens web-site to produce engaging, communicative lessons. The session will be practical and hands-on, with concrete teaching tips that can be applied immediately to the Junior and Senior High School classroom.

**The number of participants: 26**

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

- Listening comprehension – the teacher makes mistakes on purpose and let students correct them. It was fun and effective since students have to think more.
- Very interesting websites – I want to use and show those sites to my students. My high school has an English club so it is good for them, too.
- The story of Jack and the Beanstalk and how it was divided in different stages. It fits a particular lesson in the elementary textbook. It's very engaging and it is a nice scaffold.
- Getting some usages of words through the movie and later acting the play out with our originality are fun. Not only in elementary school, but also in high school, we can use this kind of activity as the review work.
- I want to use a video in my class. Especially elementary school kids like animation, and they are interested in the



story. They can learn a lot of words (even they are difficult) from the story.

- I would like to try all the activities we did in the afternoon workshop because it was well organized and all language skills were integrated. The demonstration class was engaging and catered to students different learning styles.

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

- Teachers should give two times to confirm words for especially weak students.
- I learned if a teacher has ideas and creativity, s/he can create any kinds of attractive activities for any level of students. I want to make my class more lively with full of excitement and surprise like today's class.
- There are a lot of useful materials on the website. I'm very surprised to know that we can make use of famous stories. They are free!
- I learned we could use one topic to improve four skills. I learned many ideas from this workshop.
- Although there are so many worksheets online, we should evaluate them if they are suitable to our own students. Our students have different learning styles and level so as a teacher I need to consider them and use my creativity to modify the worksheets. We can also modify not only the worksheets online but our textbooks as well.
- I realized that learning English is fun again! Learning English could be enjoyable by using various activities like story-telling and role play. I'd like to use these activities in my class someday.



## 3. Questions and Answers

**Q (1): Today's workshop was fun because the topic or situation was close to our daily life. But in actual senior high school classes, we can't make students feel so fun, because the topics of the textbook are not familiar with students' everyday lives, such as 'incurable diseases' or 'international cooperation'. How can we make students enjoy studying English using 'boring' textbook?**

**A:** Good question! I agree that it's next to impossible to make a fun, communicative lesson on the topic of 'incurable diseases'. Indeed, some of the topics in textbooks are not ones that lend themselves well to communicative activities, especially for low-level English learners. However, even unpromising materials can become motivating if students are given a reason to think about the topic and the chance to relate to the contents in a personal way. For example, get students to think about what every day activities would be difficult for themselves if they had a particular disease.

Also, don't be controlled by your textbook! If there is a text about an uninteresting topic like 'international relations', you could teach them the vocabulary or grammar they need to learn from that text (in a fun, communicative way) but skip reading the text or assign it as homework. Not every page or activity of the textbook needs to be covered in depth.

**Q (2): Acting-out was fun, but many of junior high or high school students are shy and not willing to do so in front of the class. What should teachers do?**



**A:** The acting-out Jack and the Beanstalk lesson I demonstrated was one designed for elementary students. Generally, elementary students are much less self-conscious than junior high students and more willing to perform in front of the class. It really depends on the students, though. I've had some junior high students who loved acting-out in front of the class and some who would never dream of doing it!

Give shier students the opportunity to be inanimate objects in the dramatization of the story (e.g. cupboards, beanstalks, etc.) by telling them that not everyone has to speak in their performance. To reduce the stress of being in front of the class, you might have students videotape their performances and then show the video to the class, or act it out with paper dolls.

**Q (3): Could you write the steps of the activities you showed us? I was sorry that some teachers who usually attend workshop couldn't come today. I hope they can see the steps in the newsletter.**

**A:** I'm glad teachers are interested in the workshops and I'm sorry they weren't able to attend. The last activity in each workshop was reflection on the stages of the demonstration lesson and, specifically, how the stages helped the students to complete the task (performing Jack and the Beanstalk in the elementary session, role playing ordering food in a restaurant in the junior/senior high session). To the teachers who missed the workshops, I recommend speaking with someone who was there and going through their session notes with them, since they will have already written a detailed list of the stages and each stage's purpose. Explaining the workshop to someone unfamiliar with it would also be great review for those who attended!

**Q (4): Thank you for great ideas! I teach high school grammar and writing. Can you give me some ideas about how to teach grammar and writing lessons with interesting stages - gradual stages - like the ones you presented?**

**A:** With writing, I think it's good to get students to produce a text type which they often write in their daily lives, like a LINE post, blog entry or letter to a friend. Then, give students a model text and do some activities which focus them on its key features. For example, a Line post is usually 1) about 1-3 sentences 2) connected to the topic of the thread.

Then, get students to write their own texts. Weaker students can copy from the model, and stronger students can add more of their own ideas. Either way, they're practicing writing in English, which is the goal.

Keep in mind that most writing has an audience, but this doesn't always have to be the teacher; students can read their classmates' work and write a response to it. Also, keep in mind that the teacher doesn't have to grade and/or collect *every* piece of writing students produce.

With grammar, it's crucial to think about the situation in which English speakers naturally use the target language in real life. Then, plan a series of activities which build up to that situation. Don't try to teach too many new structures in one lesson or use them in a lot of unrelated contexts. For example, don't teach 'Can you play the violin?' ('can' for ability) and 'Can you open the window, please?' ('can' for polite requests) in the same lesson since this will only confuse students.



## <Part 2>

**Date:** December 6, 2014, 14:30-17:00

**Venue:** NSC College

**Advisors:** Kazuyoshi Sato, Nancy Mutoh (NUFS),

**Abstract:** Monthly report on action research

**The number of participants:** 15



## **Workshop in January (Scheduled)**

**Date:** January 10, 2015, 10:30-14:30 (Part 1), 14:30-17:00 (Part 2)

**Venue:** NSC College, Building Minami, Room A31

**Presenter:** Curtis Kelly (Kansai University)

**Title:** “Language Teaching and Personality Development from Preschool to Adulthood”

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