NUFS Workshop 2024

Newsletter No. 5

Workshop in September

Date: September 14th, 2024   10:30-14:30

Venue: NUFS Meieki Campus (BIZrium Nagoya)

Title: " Cooperative Learning, and Other Classroom Management Strategies "

Abstract:

This workshop introduces practices to build cohesion and interaction in the language-learning classroom. In the morning session, a "first-day orientation" will be demonstrated, including cooperative learning, a classroom management strategy that allows for maximum communication among learners. In the afternoon session, participants will become familiar with Paul Nation's Four Strands to help plan effective language-learning activities. Finally, Martin Seligman's PERMA model for building well-being will be shared with activities promoting growth mindset (Carol Dweck) and reducing anxiety. By incorporating these research-based activities into their classes, teachers can create an energetic atmosphere and help their students develop their language skills.

Presenter: Mary Nobuoka (Keio University)

Mary has been teaching English and academic skills in Japan since 1994. Her previous experience facilitating customer service seminars in the United States inspired her to create a course based on soft skills and positive psychology (e.g, goal-setting, time management, interpersonal communication and well-being). Aside from her teaching positions at Keio, Waseda and Aoyama Gakuin Universities, she currently serves as the JALT Yokohama Chapter president and formerly as the JALT Bilingualism SIG coordinator.

The number of participants: 35

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

- 'Running dictation' because some students don't like practicing writing, but this activity can help them to enjoy writing, listening and talking with their partners at the same time.

- Active listening – not only for my students but also for myself. I tend to interrupt people's conversations.
- Breathing to help students to relax and learn.
- I want to use 'first-day orientation'. My class in university will start in October. A lot of activities you introduced today were very helpful to improve our classes.

- It's very effective to give students each tole in group works, like note-taker, timekeeper, organizer and reporter.
- Running dictation is a good activity. I'm not good at memorizing, so it was difficult, but I enjoyed the activity today. / This activity was really new to me, and I found it very interactive since it involves students moving themselves. It also incorporates the four basic skills: listening, writing reading and speaking.

2. What you learned from today's workshop

- Cognitive Behavior Therapy is very effective for all learning. I will try to incorporate this into my life.
- I enjoyed today's lecture as there were a lot of activities we joined. I learned meaningful activity is useful to give learners motivations.
- I learned about cooperative learning and other interactive classroom management strategies. Especially PERMA and the five steps to practice active listening.
- There are many practical ways for cooperative learning. I learned group works can give a lot of opportunities to students to speak out and participate in activities.
- I haven't heard of Growth-mindset and Fixed-mindset. I think most of Japanese students have Fixed mindset. I want to change their Fixed mindset into Growth-mindset. Cooperative learning is really effective both high and low proficiency students.
- Cooperative learning is very important and effective. Lecture is the least effective way, so teachers should give enough opportunities for students to use meaningful English.

3. Questions and Answers

Hello, everyone! Thank you again, for attending my workshop on Cooperative Learning. I had a great time with you! Wow! These are all great questions! Thank you for asking them. I'll do my best to answer...

1) **Could you give ideas on PERMA activities or resources that we could use in our lessons?**

In addition to the video link I posted in the workshop handout (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wA2pZHrB8nU), which can be used for students with intermediate to high proficiency (or adapted with the teacher asking students to think of people and activities for each part of PERMA), various exercises can be used to promote positive psychology in class—even without the students knowing what PERMA is. Here are some ideas that teachers can modified for their own courses…

1. Positive Emotions

Have fun! Foster enjoyment and a positive association with language learning. By doing so, students can begin to associate language learning with positive feelings and reduce anxiety about making mistakes. Research shows that having fun increases students' learning.

For beginners:

Play fun, simple language **games** like Bingo or Pictionary to *review* vocabulary from the lessons. When I used Bingo for early literacy classes, I have students make their own cards by copying from a list of target vocabulary from the whiteboard randomly onto a blank Bingo card with nine squares, thus practicing writing and reading before the game begins. Use a list of 12 to 15 words for students to choose from. Students, rather than the teacher, can also read the words aloud for each round by pulling a piece of paper from a hat (or bag). For a list of games that build literacy, please visit https://www.bsig.org/monographs and download: monograph 17. *Starting your Bilingual Child on the Path to Biliteracy* (starting from page 42).
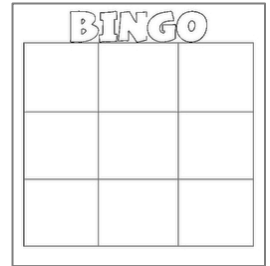
Use **music** with themes and vocabulary related to the lessons, have students sing along, dance or use gestures, boosting enjoyment and reducing stress. Here are some recommendations: A YouTube Channel for kindergarten/ESL songs

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLDuxenf8jCsTX8jcfEwnvdzw0_pg05zHh and https://www.bsceducation.com/blog/best-songs-for-learning-english/ (for slightly higher proficiencies). As I mentioned in the workshop and below, these types of songs can be played before class as background music. It is a way to **prime** students for the day's lesson. For example, if the lesson is about using "has/have", play the song "I have a pet" repeats the structure and review "It's a…" and "I like…".

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0DqkPlen6YM&list=PLDuxenf8jCsTX8jcfEwnvdzw0_pg05zHh&index=10). **Priming** is a way to expose students to vocabulary or grammar patterns implicitly before they study them. It is also used as a sales technique to persuade people to buy something—so watch out!

Intermediate/Advanced:

Use **humor** in language exercises, such as watching short comedy clips or listening to or writing light-hearted stories in English. Another idea is to share simple jokes, riddles or puns in English. I often use these as a warm-up at the beginning of class. I choose jokes that have vocabulary related to the content of the day's lesson. In groups, students can try to identify why the joke is funny or what the play on words is. I'll never forgot the first joke I learned in Japanese! I learned two new words from one of the words in the answer to the joke: 犬と猫とカニと、どちらが一番お金持ちですか？(See the answer at the end of this newsletter!) Students can also discuss whether the joke works in Japanese or not. One online resource is:
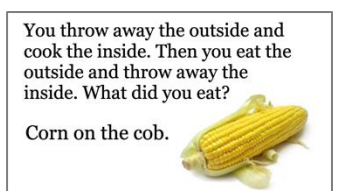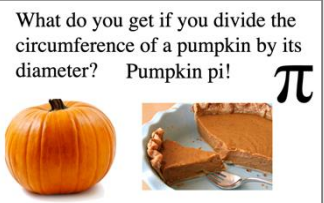
http://iteslj.org/c/jokes-riddles.html (Note, I do not think all of the jokes on this website are appropriate for the classroom, so choose carefully. If you are not sure about the humor, do not use it.

2. Engagement

Help students enter a state of *flow* where they are fully absorbed in learning activities. Learn by doing is the way to go.

Beginners:

Use hands-on activities such as interactive **role-playing** (e.g., acting out shopping, ordering food) with props. For example, have students act out a simple dialogue at a restaurant using menus. The students can also make some of the props, saving the teacher prep time. Role-playing keeps students focused and involved, reducing distractions and making learning meaningful. Be sure that the role play is the appropriate level for the students. Years ago, when I worked at a university where the students had low proficiency and low motivation, I often had paired students create their own **skits** based on the grammar point we were studying. This way, the students worked at their own level. I corrected the short scripts before the end of class, sometimes adding one or two words, and for homework, students had to practice the conversation. At the beginning of the next class, each pair performed their skit (…without reading!! Mistakes and impromptu changes were allowed!). There was often lots of laughter (positive emotions)!

Intermediate/Advanced:

Use project-based learning (**PBL**) to get students engaged (and build relationships!). One example is for students to research a cultural aspect of an English-speaking country and present it in English. Groups of students might create a travel guide for a foreign city, working on specific tasks such as researching food, transportation, prices and tourist attractions. Projects like these require sustained attention and engagement, giving students a sense of purpose in using the language authentically. One of my colleagues had his university students create new products and make brochures on the computer to help advertise them. Students could also create video advertisements for their products. Doing PBL in groups also helps students learn other skills from each other such as desk-top publishing or how to edit a video clip.

Provide opportunities for students to give feedback to the teacher on how their group members performed/cooperated on projects by using short checklist and a space for comments, especially when most of the work has to be done outside of class where the teacher cannot observe the interactions in the group. This can be done privately. Also, use such feedback as a "check in" in the middle of the project rather than waiting until the end of the term.

3. Relationships

In addition to using cooperative learning, promoting collaboration and positive peer interactions will help create a supportive learning community. PBL mentioned above can help foster relationships among students. Here are some more ideas:

Beginners:

Of course, any pair work or small group discussions will help with relationship building. Ask students to practice **greetings** or other conversational basics in English to improve communication among them. One example I gave in the workshop is to teach small phrases that are often said in Japanese, such as "Ready, go!" or "Three, two, one, go!" instead of *se—no*.

Help students get to know each other by asking and answering questions about each other's **favorite things** (e.g., food, hobbies) using simple sentence structures. **Getting to know each other** helps shy students feel more comfortable practicing.

Intermediate/Advanced:

Organize a "language buddy" system where more advanced students help beginners with vocabulary or grammar. Have more proficient students mentor beginners or less confident students, reviewing their writing or conversation skills in short weekly meetings. This builds **positive relationships** between students and gives them an authentic reason to practice the language.

Again, as with cooperative learning, pair up more proficient students with less proficient ones. It benefits both students. But sometimes it helps to let students self-organize with their friends.

4. Meaning

Help students connect their language learning to something greater than themselves to foster a sense of **purpose**. This could be about *helping* tourists by giving directions or possible careers or **volunteer** work overseas where students might use English. Helping students see the practical, **meaningful applications** of learning the language, increasing motivation. I often remind my university students that just getting an education will enable them to help other people in the future in whatever career they choose.

Beginners:

Discuss or read stories about how learning the language can **help** students travel or connect with other cultures. Students can create a simple poster or presentation about a place they would like to visit in an English-speaking country, focusing on the words and phrases they would need to know.

Intermediate/Advanced:

Engage students in discussions about global issues or meaningful cultural topics in the target language (e.g., sustainability, immigration,

education). Have a discussion on a topic such as environmental conservation and what actions students can take beyond using an eco-bag! In my Economic Trends course, my students prepare Oxford-style debates in groups of four. After showing some examples of past debate topics, I allow them to choose the topic they are interested in. This helps students feel that they are learning the language for a meaningful purpose beyond the classroom, boosting intrinsic motivation.

5. Accomplishment

Help students set and **achieve** realistic **goals** for their English skills, building their sense of progress and competence. Use charts, such as for speed reading or speed writing, to track progress visually and feel a sense of accomplishment with each step. In one of my courses, I teach SMARTER goals. Here is a one example of how to use SMARTER goals: https://www.uqhealthyliving.org.au/how-to-set-smarter-goals/#:~:text=SMARTER%20stands%20for%20specific%2C%20measurable,way%20that%20must%20be%20met.

Beginners:

Use language learning apps or worksheets to set small, **measurable goals** (e.g., learning five new words a day/week). Create a vocabulary "passport" where students stamp each word they master and receive certificates for completing small milestones (e.g., learning 50 words in one term).

Intermediate/Advanced:

Have students complete a portfolio of work, such as essays, presentations, or videos, demonstrating their language proficiency over time. Another idea is to have students keep a language journal where they reflect on their learning journey, setting weekly goals and **tracking progress**. When students look back to the beginning of the year, they can see their progress. Recognizing their own improvement over time builds students' confidence and motivates them to continue learning.

To create intrinsic motivation: Students create their own goals rather than a goal from a teacher or parent. **Rewards** do not have to be prizes or material rewards. Simply checking off a box or exclaiming, "I did it!" can be effective rewards.

2) **I'm not really sure which method is better in a cooperative-learning classroom, translanguaging or code-switching?**

I recommend using **translanguaging** in a cooperative language-learning classroom. In translanguaging, students (or teachers) are using both languages as tools for learning. A common way that students use translanguaging is to translate from one language to another or doing one activity in L2 and a follow-up

activity in L1. For example, students might read or listen to a passage in English, then discuss the meaning or even analyze or answer questions about it in Japanese. Another way to use translanguaging is for the teacher to give directions in both L1 and L2 or use bilingual posters on the classroom walls. The difference between translanguaging and codeswitching is that translanguaging is additive, giving students more possibilities to use the language tools they have, but codeswitching is often, but not always, due to a lack of vocabulary or language skills.

Codeswitching is a practice that occurs naturally among language learners and is not really taught, nor should it be. However, if it occurs naturally in conversation, there is no need to criticize it. Without pointing fingers at who was codeswitching, a teacher could write the phrase or sentence on the board and let all the students give suggestions on how to say it in complete English. Code-switching is actually a sophisticated way to use two languages. Bilingual children in particular will insert words—or entire sentences—from one language into sentences in a different language. For example, my son, at age 4, would say, "Sit *chanto-ly*", meaning, "Sit properly" or "*Chanto suwatte*". Because he added the suffix "-ly" to the Japanese word that is acting as an adverb, it showed that he had an innate knowledge of how to use both languages. Children soon grow out of such practices as their vocabulary grows. But you will often see adults codeswitching with such statements as "She's so *genki,*" or "You have to *ganbarou*!" Again, codeswitching is a natural part of using two languages, but in the classroom, translanguaging can be used to greater effect.

3) **I'm wondering how to deal with students who are reluctant to be cooperative. They prefer to studying alone rather than talking with classmates. Should teachers force them to do pair activities or leave them alone?**

I am not a fan of forcing anyone to do activities that they are not comfortable doing, but I would never leave a student alone or feeling left out. One of the advantages of cooperative learning is that working in groups reduces pressure on individual students to "perform" and provides more "peer pressure" and peer role models to support students who are less confident in their language skills. As Paul Nation writes, group work makes student participation easier and with less stressful, so starting with group work will help students build confidence to do pair work. The class activities can be a mix of group work, pair work and individual work so that all students have opportunities to work in a different style.

I have found that the two main reasons for a child's reluctance to use L2 are that the task is too difficult or that the task is not interesting. As teacher's we need to adjust the exercises and activities to match our students' abilities and interests. See more about flow states above. Activities that put students in a state of flow help them forget their fears and anxiety. Breathing for relaxation might also help. Asking a more confident student to support a shy student can help, too. In classes with mixed levels, have the higher proficiency students working with lower proficiency students.

Being flexible and helping our students perform the tasks needed to acquire the skills required to pass the course are key. I have had students who were just getting over colds or the flu and let me know before class began that their voice was not working (note, as I mentioned about flexibility on deadlines in the workshop, one of the messages I convey to my students is to let me know when there is a problem, so students seem more willing to approach me about these issues), so I asked them communicate with their group members through writing for that day. During that class, they could not "report", but I took into consideration their participation on other days when they were able to speak.

Additionally, recently an increasing number of students are asking for *reasonable* **accommodations** for various reasons. When a student has gone through the proper channels to be considered for such accommodations, teachers need to be creative about how to include these students as much as possible in the activities in their course. The most extreme case I had in a university writing course was a quadriplegic student who came to class in a wheel chair with an assistant to take notes. He spoke with difficulty, but could communicate with the other students in class, and the other students were wonderful about including him in their discussions. He could use the keyboard with an instrument in his mouth to type the writing assignments given as homework.

In a different course, a speaking class with term-end presentations, I allow all the students chose from various **options** on how to deliver their presentations. Some students were fine speaking alone in front of the class, others felt more comfortable working in pairs or groups, and some recorded their presentations on video to play for the class (videos can be uploaded to YouTube privately so that only people with a link can view it). In this way, all of the students "performed" in English in front of the class. By giving students various options, I found that they can be very **creative** and **entertaining**.

Above all, talking with a student who needs reasonable accommodations to come up with a plan together can be very helpful and gives the student some **agency**. In one situation, a student with no legs arrived to my class in a wheelchair. The desks were fixed so there was no space for his wheelchair to sit in a group of four. I talked with him about this on the first day, and he suggested that he "sit" on the desk! It was perfect! He could easily pop himself up onto the desk because he had great arm strength, and he was at eye level with the other students in his group! So, ask your students what alternatives are possible and come up with a plan that satisfies the requirements of the course.

There are some cases where the student and teacher might disagree on what is a reasonable accommodation. One example a colleague shared with me was a Chinese student who told her that because he was a member of the CCP, he could not discuss political issues in class. The teacher informed him that such discussions were part of the participation grade, so he should expect a lower grade in that area— though he would still be able to pass the course if he performed well in other areas. In my opinion, the teacher did the correct thing. The student could still pass the course, even though he was penalized for not participating. If we have a speaking class and the student will not make an effort speak, their grade will suffer. Above all, in any situation, I recommend approaching with kindness.

4) A key can be the shift from fixed mindset to growth mindset. We shouldn't be in haste to make things happen. Rather, it is important to encourage students to assess themselves. Am I right?

Yes! All learners develop at different speeds. Students should track their own progress over time rather than comparing themselves to other students. Shifting our mindset and learning new skills take both time and effort. I often encourage my students to be kind to themselves when they backtrack or when they make mistakes—both are a natural part of leaning. I also have to remind myself of this, too!

5) I think it is important to teach 'Active Listening'. Students need to know how to listen to others in group work. And group name activity is very effective especially during the first semester when I do not remember all students' names. Any other suggestions?

For active listening, practice, practice and more practice. Practice with friends and family—of course not in every exchange, but in longer, more serious conversations, try to remember active listening. Another **active listening** exercise that can be done at the beginning of every class is to have students ask and answer questions (perhaps review from the previous lesson) and report what their classmate answered. In this way, the student has to listen carefully to what his partner (or group members) said. In writing classes, students can listen and take notes about what their partner said, then have the partner check the notes to see how accurate the notetaking partner was.

On learning students' names, of course making name cards can help, but I find the more I **interact** with the students, the easier it is to remember their names. Another idea is a beginning-of-the-term homework to write a self-introduction. I give my students some ideas about what to write such as their family, pets, travel, goals, etc., and I ask them to tell me something **unique** about them. I also give them my self-intro in writing with photos as an example of my expectations. Getting this information helps me connect some information to them so I can remember them better and ask them about their specialness.

6) There was a request for more information/literature about flow. Here are some resources:

As I mentioned in the workshop, the study of **flow** started with psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in the 1980's. Thirty years ago, I read his ground-breaking book *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (1990). Here is a concise summary from Csikszentmihalyi about his research:
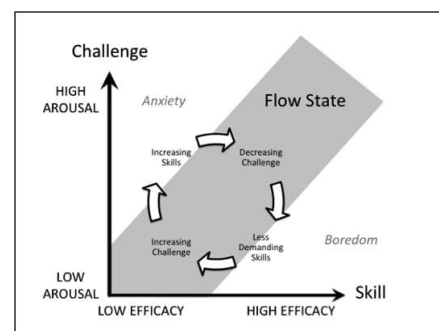
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/224927532_Flow_The_Psychology_of_Optimal_Experience. This paper also gives ideas about how to get into flow. Conversation and writing are two ways! Perfect for language-learning!

This is a summary video I play before class starts in my Leadership and Soft Skills course: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8h6IMYRoCZw. This channel has summaries of many amazing books, so I often play one of them before the bell rings, not only to introduce the books, but also to prime my students for the topic of the day because the same vocabulary will be repeated.

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I am happy to answer more questions or provide additional resources or information if needed.

Enjoy!

Mary

The answer to the first Japanese joke Mary learned:

カニ！チョキン！チョキン！

At the time, I had heard チョキン！チョキン！used for scissors, but I did not know it was the sound (in Japanese) that crabs make when they clicked their claws. I also did not know that it means "saving money"! So, I learned two new expressions form this joke!

AR Discussion

Date: September 14th, 2024, 14:30-17:00 (Room MW01, 02, 03)

Title: Action Research Discussion

Advisors: Kazuyoshi Sato, Duane Kindt, Kevin Ottoson (NUFS)

The number of participants: 13

Next Workshop will be held on October 12th , 2024.

Detailed information is here:

https://www.nufs.ac.jp/workshop/news/

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