

## *Newsletter No. 8*

### **Workshop in December**

#### **Title: "Enhancing Educators' and Young Learners' Wellbeing for a Thriving Future in Education"**

**Presenter: Chiyuki Yanase** (Keio University)

**Date:** December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024 10:30-14:30

**Venue:** NUFS Meieki Campus (BIZrium Nagoya)



#### **Abstract:**

According to Mercer and Gregersen (2020), being a devoted or passionate educator can indeed be a self-sacrificing profession. However, it is essential to emphasize that dedication to teaching should not come at the cost of one's own wellbeing. The ongoing pandemic and the challenges arising from AI development have significantly compounded the stressors faced by educators and learners alike. Hence, it is imperative that we invest time in reassessing how we can better support and improve the physical and mental wellbeing of both teachers and students, ensuring our ability to thrive collectively in the future of education.

In this workshop, I will share and discuss mastery-goal-oriented activities suitable for learners of various ages, as well as sensory and mindful practices for teachers. The first part of the workshop will focus on learner wellbeing, with participants experiencing activities including mindful practices based on yoga for young learners and research-based mindful practices for secondary, as well as university students. The second part of the workshop will introduce emotion-focused coping strategies and activities designed to support teachers in enhancing their resilience to cope with potential drawbacks.

#### **The number of participants: 31**

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

- Yoga – because I sometimes feel that my students have no energy especially after lunch. I want to do Yoga before class.
- I'm interested in visualization by using Canva because I can try it not only in classes but also for my private time.
- Visualization – it's easy to remind students of targets and keep motivation.

- If it's possible, I want to bring my students to outside to refresh and feel more comfortable to learn: Nature Walk.
- I'll try to do massage instead of saying 'Be quiet.' Also, I'll try to treat myself, do some good things for myself. Because, if teachers are happy, their students are happy and enjoy the lessons.
- I want to adapt physical games or exercise in class as students hardly use their bodies. They only use their brains.



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

- I always encourage my JHS students to empathy when they talk in pairs. To do that, we teachers first need their own wellbeing. Otherwise, we can't notice if they are empathetic or not.
- An important message within this presentation is that our own wellbeing strongly affects our students' outlook on our classes and their performance.
- I learned that different methods for students to promote engagement with each other and the world around them.
- Students are experiencing greater challenges than expected when engaging in classroom activities. To alleviate this burden, even slightly, and to transform these experiences into strengths for the future, it is essential to plan activities based on the PARMA model so that they constitute to students' wellbeing.
- Mental health and physical health have strong connection. Also, teacher's wellbeing affects students' wellbeing, and vice-versa.

## 3. Questions and Answers

### *Q 1): How can you convince teachers who do not advocate some activities such as yoga in class?*

To convince teachers to incorporate yoga in class, focus on these three points:

**Proven Benefits for Students:** Yoga improves focus, reduces stress, and promotes emotional regulation, helping students concentrate better and manage anxiety. Research shows it enhances both physical and mental well-being.

**Supports Learning and Engagement:** Yoga supports Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and can increase student engagement. Short, simple sessions can help students stay energized and calm, improving their overall classroom performance.

**Practical and Manageable:** Start small with brief sessions (5-10 minutes) to fit into the schedule. Yoga doesn't have to take much time, and many schools report positive outcomes like improved behavior and reduced stress in both students and teachers.

Then, share your own classroom results, gathering student feedback through surveys or interviews.



**Q 2): What is neuroplasticity?**

**Neuroplasticity** (also known as brain plasticity or neural plasticity) refers to the brain's ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections throughout life. This process allows the brain to adapt to experiences, learning, and recovery from injury.

There are two main types of neuroplasticity:

**Functional plasticity:** The brain's ability to shift functions from damaged areas to healthy areas.

**Structural plasticity:** The brain's ability to physically change its structure by forming new connections between neurons in response to learning or environmental changes.

Neuroplasticity means that the brain is not fixed, and it can change and adapt in response to new experiences, skills, or challenges, making it possible for individuals to learn new things, recover from brain injuries, or even improve cognitive functions. In other words, this ability can foster neurodiversity, regardless of how your brain works, and support lifelong learning, no matter your age.

**Q 3): What is the balance between future goal-setting and present reflection priorities?**

The balance between setting goals for the future and reflecting on the present involves ensuring that both are given importance. Setting goals helps learners stay focused and motivated, while reflecting on the present helps them understand where they are, what's working, and what needs to change. The key is to plan for the future while also paying attention to the lessons and experiences learners are having right now, so they can adjust and grow along the way.

I hope these answers prove helpful to you.



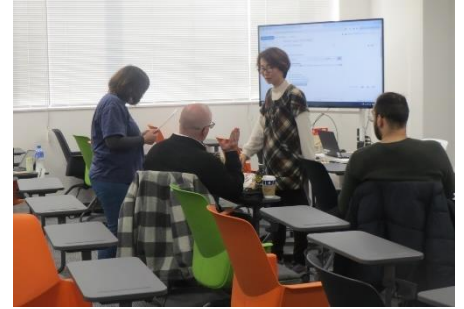
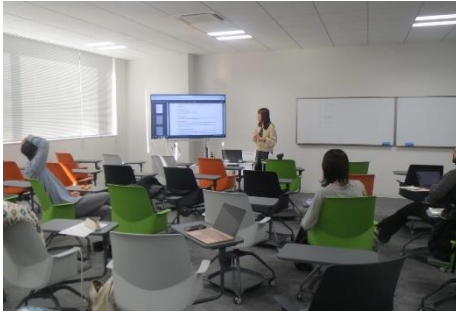
## **AR Discussion**

**Date:** December 7<sup>th</sup>, 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:**



*Next Workshop will be held on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025.*

*Detailed information is here:*

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

### **NUFS Workshop**

Nagoya University of Foreign Studies

57 Takenoyama, Iwasaki-cho, Nisshin-shi

Secretary: Chihaya Sugiura