

## *Newsletter No. 10*

### Workshop in February

#### **Title: “Engaging Conversations: Innovative Communicative Tasks for the English language Classroom”**

**Presenter:** Darren Elliot (NanzanUniversity)

**Date:** February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025 10:30-14:30

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



#### **Abstract:**

English oral communication classes in Japan tend to focus on a limited number of ‘speaking genres’, namely; conversation / discussion, and quasi-academic presentation and debate. In this workshop, the presenter will outline ways in which teachers can broaden their range of tasks and activities to better reflect the more diverse range of spoken language in use in communication between English speakers. The workshop is grounded in research theories, but will be accessible to all teachers looking for practical speaking activities to improve their English classes. Activities will include anecdotes and story telling, scripted and unscripted performance, role-play and simulation, and many more.

**The number of participants:** 38

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

- Listening to another student anecdote and illustrate it. That will make students more engaged in other students’ stories and good way to check if they understand the story. Also, it can motivate speakers to talk clearly.
- Definitely anecdotes and the instructional videos. It would be nice to have the students be able to tell their stories but with structure. As for the how-to videos, it’s something that other students can use.
- The activities which introduce Japanese culture or superstition is interesting and I think I can use it easily.
- The anecdotes and teaching the structure and sharing with classmates. It will give them a template that will help them with their speaking.
- I can see the value of the instructional videos and realize how applicable it is at all levels and how it can be personalized to students’ interests.



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

- I learned that analyzing students' 'obstacles' is very important when teachers think of some conversation activities.
- I learned about the various ways of organizing a class using the different approaches to enhance teaching speaking as one of the major communication skills.
- I learned that there are different areas in English teaching that we can focus on; genres, vocabulary, grammar, functions discourse.
- Giving students enough time is very important. I also learned a lot of ways to trigger students to start talking such as picture, video, flash cards, etc.
- I learned how to organize and teach conversations in class.



## 3. Questions and Answers

*Q 1): When students make grammar mistakes while they are talking, what should teachers do? Should they correct the mistakes on the spot?*

This is a good question! I think it depends on the purpose of the task at that moment. For example, if the students are doing some structured practice with new language near the beginning of the lesson, and they make a mistake using a language point you have just taught, it is ok to gently correct as you monitor the class. However, if the students are engaged in a freer, communicative task, making corrections interrupts their flow and can be demotivating. In that case, make a note of important or common errors as you monitor the activity, then give a quick mini-lesson for the whole group after the activity is complete.

*Q 2): When students can't keep talking in English, how can teacher encourage them?*

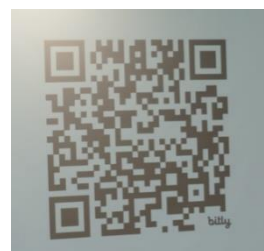
I think prevention is better than cure! As I discussed, there may be many reasons why your student isn't talking - a lack of language, a lack of connection to his or her classmates, a lack of content knowledge about the topic etc. When you are designing a task or planning a lesson, bear this in mind. Incorporate team-building exercises to promote a comfortable and supportive atmosphere, make sure students have time to generate ideas (in Japanese if necessary) and if they don't have content knowledge, teach it. Allow students time to rehearse, brainstorm and script before performance. What I tried to show in the demonstration lessons we ran through in our workshop was that there may be a lot of stages before students are fully comfortable with / capable of output.



***Q 3): When do you allow students to use Japanese in English classes?***

It partly depends on their proficiency... I have advanced students who I am quite strict with, as they are capable of speaking English very well! However, in other classes I allow students to use a lot more Japanese in the planning stages before tasks. It can be challenging for students to think of both WHAT they want to say, and HOW they can say it in English at the same time, so I like to do that step by step.

For example, in some of my writing classes I start with a short warm up discussion. For the first round, I give students a few minutes to chat and take notes in Japanese. Then I change groups and have the students talk about the same questions in English. Then I give them about five minutes to write their answers in English. Finally, the students change groups again and tell their new partners what they wrote. Moving from Japanese to English gradually means that, by the final round, they become quite smooth.



**AR Discussion**

**Date:** February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025, 14:30-17:00 (Room MW01, 02)

**Title:** Action Research Discussion

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

**The number of participants: 9**



***The next workshop will be held in May 2025.***

***New schedule will be uploaded here:***

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

**NUFS Workshop**

Nagoya University of Foreign Studies

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Secretary: Chihaya Sugiura