

Miyagi Prefecture and Sendai City Mid-Year
Conference

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Effective use of the
Textbook;
Teaching Speaking and
Listening

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Index

1. Introduction
..... Pg 3
2. The Textbook
..... Pg 4
3. Speaking in the Classroom
..... Pg 7
4. Learning to Listen
..... Pg 9
5. For your Reading Pleasure
..... Pg 12
6. R & R
..... Pg 14

*If the English language made any sense, a catastrophe would be an
apostrophe with fur.*

Doug Larson

1. Introduction

Description:

Teaching speaking and listening is arguably the most important part of our jobs as English teachers. Today we would like to discuss how to effectively use our provided textbooks so we can all give our students productive and meaningful lessons.

Objectives:

1. Identify advantages (and disadvantages) of textbooks;
2. Demonstrate how team-teachers can teach speaking and listening together effectively using the textbook;
3. Discuss how the textbook material can be improved or stretched;
4. Provide new lesson plan ideas and resources on teaching speaking and listening through the textbook.



*Note: This workshop focuses on the New Horizon English Textbook for Junior High School level. However, concepts and exercises may be adapted for other texts. Our apologies for our lack of knowledge on other textbooks.

2. The Textbook (the facts)

- Since 1948 every textbook used in Japan must be authorized by the Ministry of Education

Two aims of textbook authorization;

- "The first is to encourage the production of varied and original textbooks by leaving the task of writing and editing textbooks to private-sector firms."
- "The second is to ensure that textbooks are objective, fair, and based on appropriate educational considerations, by requiring official authorization from the minister of education (minister of education, culture sports, science and technology since January 2001)."
- Textbooks are then distributed to local boards of education where they select which text to use.

Selection Process

- The authorization process is done once every four years and takes one year to complete.
- Texts are examined by 50 ministry officials with expertise on the subject along with hundreds of university, high school, junior high school, and elementary school teachers.
- Texts are then sent to the Textbook Authorization and Research Council before being sent back to the Ministry of Education with its recommendations
- Finally, the Ministry of Education decides what is and isn't authorized.

Japan's Textbook Authorization System. Tokutake, Yasushi
(<http://www.fpcj.jp/e/shiryo/jb/0109.html>)

When ideas fail, words come in very handy.
Johann Wolfgang van Goethe

Brainstorm

(Advantages of using our textbooks)

In your group, briefly discuss 5 advantages of using textbooks as a tool to help students learn.

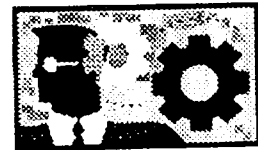
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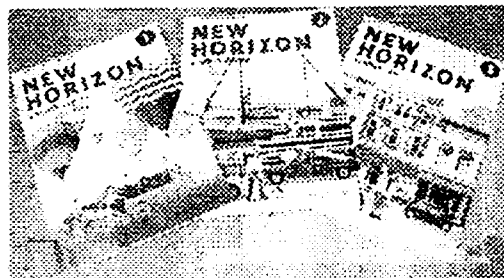


Language exerts hidden power, like a moon on the tides.

Rita Mae Brown

The Textbook (advantages)

- Provides a format/ structure for the course
- Builds on previous knowledge
- Provides a lead-in for successive English courses
- Gives a concrete example of progress for students
- Similar structure of lessons provides a framework and creates Stability
- Fall back or back-up plan
- Starting point
- Help provoke our own ideas
- Allows students to review/study on their own



Love your textbook!

3. Speaking in the Classroom

Challenges:

- Confidence
For many Japanese students, speaking is often the skill area in which they feel the least confident
- Expressing ideas and opinions
A communicative student-centered classroom should always have a high degree of student input, however, students *have* to have something to communicate about.

Solutions:

- Small and creative changes or additions to traditional class activities can greatly improve their communicative potential.
- Pre-class banter between the JTE and ALT can also provide the basis for a communicative activity and set a more comfortable and laid back atmosphere.
- most importantly, be GENKI!! If you yourself are not afraid to put yourself on the line, and have no shame in looking like a fool, your student's own barriers will begin to fall, too!

Good communication is as stimulating as black coffee and just as hard to sleep after. Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Points to Consider

- *Students can easily get de-motivated*
Many students equate being able to speak a language as knowing the language and therefore view learning the language as learning how to speak the language.
- *I AM genki, but the students still won't talk or say anything*
Find the root of the problem and start from there. Break through the cultural barrier by creating and establishing your own classroom culture where speaking out loud in English **IS** the norm.
 - ~ Distinguish **YOUR** classroom time from other classes the students have.
 - ~ Give positive feedback.
 - ~ Arrange the classroom desks differently, in groups instead of lines etc.
 - ~ Decorate the walls in English language and culture posters.
 - ~ Give positive feedback!
 - ~ From day one teach your students classroom language and **keep on teaching it!**
 - ~ Encourage your students to ask for things and to ask questions in English.
 - ~ If you can, allocate a percentage of their final grade to speaking skills
 - ~ Give positive feedback!!!!

4. Learning to Listen

Of all the skill areas that the ALTs help to improve, listening is probably the most benefited skill. Obviously, having a native speaker present greatly increases opportunities for listening practice.

Two approaches:

"Bottom-up" approach.

This is where the students will try to understand every word that they are hearing.

A List of Bottom Up Skills

- discriminating between intonation contours in sentences
- discriminating between phonemes
- listening for word endings
- recognizing syllable patterns
- being aware of sentence fillers in informal speech
- recognizing words, discriminate between word boundaries
- picking out details
- differentiating between content and function words by stress pattern
- finding the stressed syllable
- recognizing words with weak or central vowels
- recognizing when syllables or words are dropped
- recognizing words when they are linked together in streams of speech
- using features of stress, intonation and prominence to help identify important information

To listen closely and reply well is the highest perfection we are able to attain in the art of conversation. Francois de La Rochefoucauld

"Top -down" approach

Where students try to grasp the basic meaning of what they are listening to, and not every word.

A List of Top Down Skills

- discriminating between emotions
- getting the gist
- recognizing the topic
- using discourse structure to enhance listening strategies
- identifying the speaker
- evaluating themes
- finding the main idea
- finding supporting details
- making inferences
- understanding organizing principals of extended speech

Which approach is best for team teaching?

Generally speaking, the "top-down" approach is most beneficial for the students, especially during team teaching lessons.



Three segments to teaching listening:

- Pre-Listening

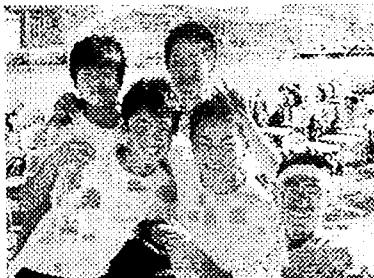
This consists of providing tools which students can use to help them decipher what they are going to listen to. This includes necessary vocabulary and grammar points. (Giving contextualized examples of vocabulary and grammar in *English* may prove to be a better learning technique, rather than directly giving the Japanese translation)

- While-Listening

Because one of the biggest problems with listening comprehension is not knowing what to listen for, make sure that the listening goal is clear. This can be done by asking questions which are related to the basic meaning of the text. You can do this orally, or ask the students to fill in tables, charts, graphs etc. with information gleaned from the listening exercise. Make sure to tell the students to listen only for the information they are being asked for.

- Post-Listening

This section of a listening lesson is basically an opportunity to build upon what has been learned in the exercise itself. Be sure to review with the students and check the accuracy of their listening. If you would like, more grammar or vocabulary practice can be added at this point.



A good listener is not only popular everywhere, but after a while he gets to know something.
~Wilson Mizner

5. For Your Reading Pleasure: Article written by *Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology*

Action Plan to Cultivate “Japanese with English Abilities”

I. Goals to Cultivate “Japanese with English Abilities”

English language abilities required for all Japanese people

【Goals】

English language abilities required for all Japanese nationals

“On graduating from junior high school and senior high school, graduates can communicate in English”

- On graduation from a junior high school, students can conduct basic communication with regard to areas such as greetings, responses, or topics relating to daily life. (English-language abilities for graduates should be the third level of the Society for Testing English Proficiency (STEP) on average.)
- On graduation from a senior high school, students can conduct normal communication with regard to topics, for example, relating to daily life. (English-language abilities for graduates should be the second level or the pre-second level of the Society for Testing English Proficiency (STEP) on average.)

English language skills required for specialized fields or for those active in international society

“On graduating from university, graduates can use English in their work”

- Each university should establish attainment targets from the viewpoint of fostering personnel who can use English in their work.

With the progress of globalization, it is important, while focusing on speaking and listening communication abilities in the initial learning stages, to acquire comprehensive communication abilities in “listening,” “speaking,” “reading,” and “writing,” from the perspective of “English as a means for communication,” in order to foster “Japanese with English Abilities.” Through instruction, basic and practical communication abilities will be acquired so that the entire public can conduct daily conversation and exchange information in English. At the same time, personnel who need English for their work, such as for professional or research reasons, will acquire the English necessary for their fields by building on their basic English abilities. It is important for all Japanese people to aim at achieving a level of English commensurate with average world standards based on objective indicators such as STEP, TOEFL, and TOEIC.

In order to foster such abilities in school education, it is necessary to give a system of unified instruction through each school level. Thus, attainment targets for the English abilities required at each school level, based on the new Courses of Study, will be

established. The improvement of English classes, the upgrading of the teaching abilities of English teachers, the enhancement of systems for instruction, and strengthening the motivation for English learning will be addressed. Through cooperation between the schools at different levels, instruction to allow students to acquire steadily the English required at each stage will be promoted.

II . Action to Improve English education

1 . Improvement of English classes

【Goals】

“Cultivating communication abilities through the repetition of activities making use of English”

- The majority of an English class will be conducted in English and many activities where students can communicate in English will be introduced.
- Small-group teaching and the streaming of students according to proficiency in the English classes of junior and senior high schools will be positively adopted.
- Progressive schools in terms of English education will be formed within local communities.

In order to be able to “make use of English”, it is necessary not only to have a knowledge of grammar and vocabulary but also the ability to use English for the purpose of actual communication. Thus, in English classes, instruction mainly based on grammar and translation or teacher-centered classes are not recommended. Through the repetition of activities making use of English as a means of communication, the learning of vocabulary and grammar should be enhanced, and communication abilities in “listening,” “speaking,” “reading,” and “writing” should be fostered. Such techniques for instruction are necessary.

To carry out such instruction effectively, it is important for teachers to establish many situations where students can communicate with each other in English and routinely to conduct classes principally in English. Through such opportunities, learners can experience the fulfillment of expressing themselves and understanding others, and feel the joy of learning English. Furthermore, it is also important to devise creative teaching methods so that learners can become interested in the importance and necessity of acquiring English, which can broaden the student’s world and possibilities.

Additionally, making use of assistant language teachers (ALTs) and the system of special part-time instructors, small-group teaching and the streaming of students according to proficiency will be positively adopted. Measures such as the promotion of innovative English education and the dissemination of excellent classroom practices are required.

Through the following measures, the implementation of the English classes mentioned above will be consistently promoted through each school level.

*obtained from: <http://www.mext.go.jp/english/>

6. R & R

Resources

www.eltnews.com *A useful website for teachers of English, specifically in Japan.*

www.genkienglish.net *A good site with many complete lesson plans for JHS and elementary school.*

www.eslcafe.com *English as a Second Language website*

<http://bogglesworld.com> *This site has many complete lesson plans along with some prepared worksheets, games and some really great class activities.*

www.proteacher.com/080010.shtml *A great "pro-teacher" archive that provides ideas on how to bring drama into class room setting*

www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/icebreak.html *Icebreakers and warm-up activities*

www.eslkidstuff.com *Many game and activity ideas for teaching English*

<http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Benoit-TeamTeaching.html> ---->Article on team teaching tips for foreign teachers

References

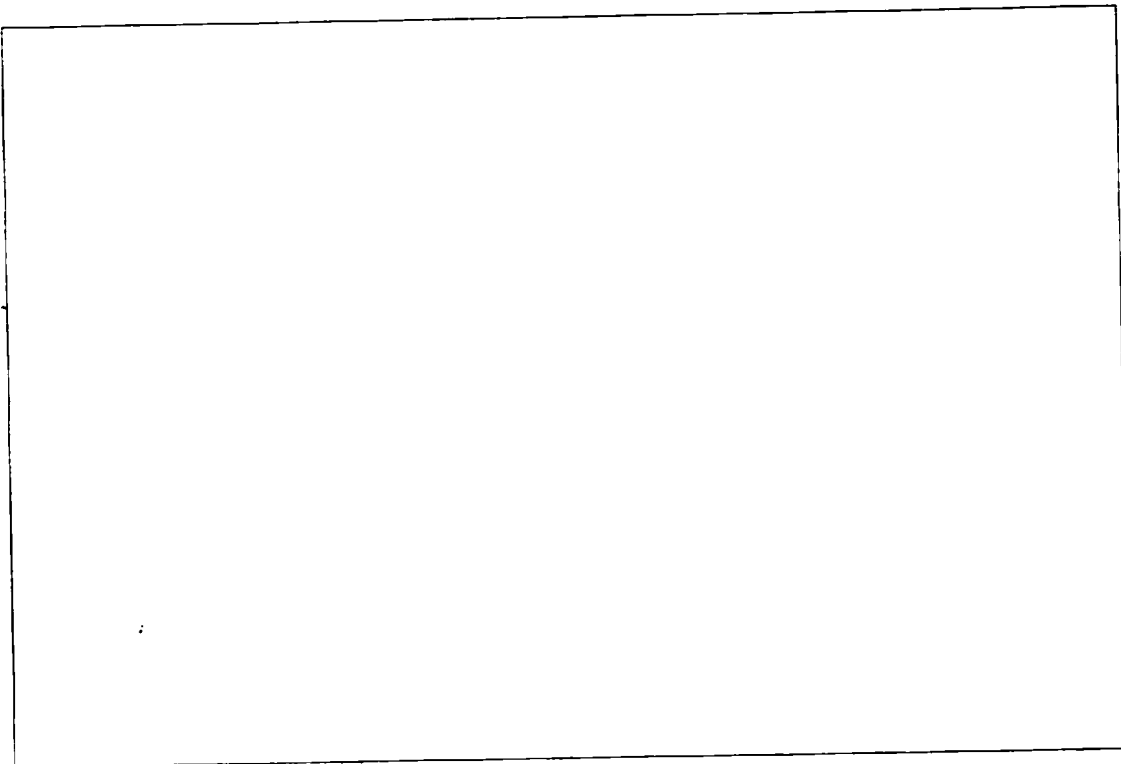
The Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (2002), Resource Materials & Teaching Handbook. Shin Kasumigaseki, Tokyo.

Abax ELT Publishers. Shinkawaya, Kuji
(www.abax.co.jp/en/index.html)

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
(<http://www.mext.go.jp/english/>)

Was ist dies?

Mahlen Sie eines Bild. Irgend was ist OK!!!



Fragen Sie Ihren mit Studenten!!!

Q: Was ist dies?

***Ja, es ist.**

***Nein, es ist nicht.**

A:* Es ist ein ~ .

*** Ist es ein ~ ?**

*** Ich weisse nicht.**

**Die Ersten 5 Leute mit 4 "Name" bekommen
SCHOKOLADE!!!**

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____