



Teacher Talking to Teacher

Volume 2, Number 2, October 1994

Welcome!

Since the previous newsletter in May, 21 new teachers have joined the Teacher Education N-SIG, expanding our membership to 136! A hearty "Welcome!" to the new members, and a reminder to the old ones--Don't forget to Renew your Memberships!

Of course, we are in need of contributions. The quality of what you will find here will be no more than a reflection of what we all venture to contribute. Although the current chair, Barbara Wright, has relocated to the United States, and the founder of the N-SIG, Jan Visscher, is going to be maintaining a somewhat lower profile for the future, there is a hope that other members will be willing to step in with their time, energy, experience and experiences to extend the long, fine project of teacher education, whether it be in training, development or in areas of related interests. Not just a disseminator of information, this newsletter ought to serve us all as an open forum for the free exchange of ideas. Indeed, as John Kennedy observed in a far different context, "A rising tide lifts all boats."

With this goal in mind, I will be attempting to contact all the members in the coming months by telephone. I'll be asking several survey questions related to backgrounds, experience and professional interests. This information will be the property of the N-SIG and serve as a sort of preliminary database. My hope is that by our becoming more aware of who we are and what we're interested in, the newsletter's editorial staff and the N-SIG will be strengthened in their roles of fostering all teachers' growth as educators at all levels.

Finally, I'd like to thank Bobbie McClain for her invaluable help with the ideas, layout, and distribution of this newsletter.

John McClain



Pre-Conference Announcements!

JALT Annual Business Meeting

Time: Sun. Oct. 9

1:00-2:30 P.M.

Place: Room 821

Vote on the inclusion of the N-SIGs on JALT's executive committee with equal representation under the new constitution.

TE N-SIG Business Meeting

Time: Sun. Oct. 9

9:00-9:45 A.M.

Place: Room 432

Executive Board Elections.
Your participation is earnestly requested!!



N-SIG Announcements!

"Wallace's Personal Reviews" teacher's group seeks members. Bi-monthly meetings in Kobe from mid- to late September. Saturdays. Purpose is to discuss the issues raised in personal review sections of *Training Foreign Language Teachers - A reflective approach*, (Wallace, 1991). If interested, contact:

Jan Visscher
c/o Language Resources
Taiyo Bldg., 6th Fl.
1-2 Kitanogasa-dori 5-chome
Chuo-ku, Kobe 650
Fax:(178)371-2681

Fukuoka Peer Mentor group
Teachers living in the northern Kyushu area are invited to participate. New group now forming for October through March sessions. For information please contact:

Bobbie McClain
428-2 Noko
Nishi-ku
Fukuoka 819
Tel/Fax: 092-891-5750



Teacher Education Bulletin Board

<u>Name</u>	<u>Interest</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
Timothy Ahern	Behavioral Ling.	098-857-2928
Patricia Aldano	Language Arts	045-564-3833
Thomas Anderson	Peer Observation	045-825-3221
Kim Bradford-Watts	Learner Independ.	075-752-4596
Charles Browne	TT for Jap. H. S.	045-942-9158
James Chambers	TT for Lang. Schls	028-627-1858
Sarah Colon	Inter-cult Comm.	056-455-3020
Barry Mateer	Reader Response	044-933-8588
Bobbie McClain	Peer Mentoring	092-891-5750
John McClain	Irony	092-891-5750

AN INTERVIEW with YOSHIHIRO NAKAMURA

Dr. Nakamura has his M.A. and a Ph. D. in Curriculum Instruction from the University of Kansas. After two years of teaching Japanese language and culture at the National University of Singapore, he taught at the International Christian University for four years, teaching English and Teaching Methodologies. For the past five years he has been a professor at Chikushi Jogakuen University, teaching Applied Linguistics, Contrastive Linguistics as well as teacher training courses. He is also a part-time instructor of Japanese to foreign students. Our conversation took place in Professor Nakamura's university office on September 27, 1994.

McClain: First, Yoshihiro, could you tell me how you became an SIT supervisor?

Nakamura: SIT started the Japan program about two years ago, I think, and they were looking for supervisors. A friend of mine at Temple recommended me, and SIT thought I was qualified to do the job. But I'm not a full-time faculty member for SIT.

McClain: Who do you supervise?

Nakamura: I have two supervisees. They are both Americans who teach in Japan. One is teaching at a private high school and the other is teaching at a public junior high school.

McClain: Would you describe the mechanics of supervising?

Nakamura: OK. It depends on the supervisor, but what every supervisee has to do is, over a period of one and a half years, they have to write six papers on various aspects of teaching such as, let's say, error correction, teaching culture...whatever topics they are interested in. Supervisors don't give topics. We don't say "This is what you have to write about." It's a discovery learning process. So almost everything comes from the supervisee.

The other major thing is that...we visit them three times, two days each time, during the course. We observe their teaching, and we discuss the teaching after the observation. I require my supervisees to keep journals, and they choose three or four classes and write about those classes. I require them to send their journals to me once every two weeks, and I make comments as I see fit. If they have any questions, they usually call me or I call them. So, we talk quite a lot by telephone. I visit them only three times, so the journals and the telephone conversations are major components of the communication between the supervisee and the supervisor.

McClain: Do you use a particular style or way of giving feedback?

Nakamura: Well, what I try to do is to force them to think about their teaching, to provide...an opportunity for them to reflect on their own teaching. What I'm trying to do is to give clues, but not to impose my own opinions on them, which is very difficult to do, because it's very easy to tell your students what to do, what to write about or how to think, but that's the thing I try to avoid. I try to ask questions instead of giving my own opinions. I keep asking "Why?" questions, like, "Why did you choose one technique over another?" I'm interested in *their* decisions and the reasons for their choices.

McClain: Do you use any specific observation tools while you are observing?

Nakamura: No, not really. They have to write lesson plans, and I read them, and we go over them, and I ask questions if anything is not clear. So, as they teach, I have a copy of the lesson plan, and I observe and make notes.

Mainly, I focus on what they say they will be teaching, because in their lesson plan, they have to specifically state the goals of the lesson--the goals for the students, what the students are supposed to be doing or supposed to be achieving by the end of the class--and the teacher's objectives, goals--whatever his or her, as a teacher, goals are in this one particular lesson. We then go over and discuss whether the objectives for both student's and teacher's were achieved. If not, what's wrong with them?

We don't focus on negative points, either. If something went really well, was effectively taught, then we try to analyze why that was the case. So, that will be the major portion of our discussion.

McClain: In general, what are the things that the supervisees need to learn or to develop in their teaching?

Nakamura: I think the first thing is the willingness to reflect. It's very painful, you know, to reflect about your own teaching. It's like looking through your exam scores. If you perform poorly, say, out of a 100, you get less than 30 points in a Math test or an English test, it's very difficult to go over it and say, "What's wrong with my performance?" That's what I'm trying to encourage them to do. Once they start doing that, their observation skills become more effective, and they can focus on their teaching, and they can start self-analyzing what is good about their teaching or what could be improved for the next lesson.

McClain: Are there any comments or recommendations you would like to make to other supervisors, teacher trainers, trainees, or student teachers?

Nakamura: For supervisors, this job with SIT is very good for me, because it gives me an opportunity to reflect about my own teaching and compare it with the supervisee's teaching. It's a kind of professional development. I've learned that it's very difficult to do, but I think I'm beginning to learn how not to tell supervisees what to do. It's very easy to say, "No, this is how you should be teaching," but we cannot say that, because their students are not my students and every class is different.

I find it difficult to talk about my own teaching with my colleagues. There are various reasons for it, including that we just don't have time to get together and talk about it. Plus, no one likes to be criticized, if you can call it that. But it is necessary to observe your own teaching rather objectively. I think that the SIT supervisor/ supervisee system is very effective. It provides an opportunity to reflect. The supervisees are teachers, they have full time jobs, but as I said, they don't have a chance to talk with their own colleagues. Sometimes, for many supervisees we are the only ones who will ask them the questions and force them to think about their own teaching. That applies to me as a supervisor as well, because I have to think about my own teaching by observing their teaching and comparing their teaching with mine. I learn a lot from them, too. Certain techniques or teaching skills that I never thought of, even the use of little games that I never thought of. If they are effectively done, then I can use the same technique in my own classes. So I really enjoy this work.

Supervisees need to learn what they need to do in their own classes. That means they have to learn basic techniques, but they can't use them without changing or adapting them. They need to develop their own teaching style.

Positive Anchoring for Reflective Development

by Andrew Barfield, Tsukuba University

This is an article about a technique that can be used in teacher training/development and in the language classroom. It is based on the principle of recalling past successful learning experiences as a means of anchoring new experiences in the present. It is simple and effective, and I'd like to share it with you.

This summer I ran a four-hour drama workshop for about forty Junior High and High School teachers of English at the Foreign Language Centre at my university. This was part of a busy one-week in-service training and development course. As I planned the workshop, I asked myself how I could create some personal space and time for quiet reflection during the session.

I recalled some similar reflective pauses from my own experience. First, I remembered how a former colleague, Martin Doolan, had often asked teachers on training seminars in Yugoslavia in the 1980's to think back to their most successful learning experiences as a way of encouraging them to re-examine their own teaching and learning priorities. Secondly, I remembered reading a few years before about the neuro-linguistic planning technique of anchoring particular behavioural responses in order to assist the adoption of new patterns of behaviour [1]. Thirdly, I was pointed in the direction of using reflection to good effect by a colleague of mine at Tsukuba University, Bill Plain, who has written elsewhere [2] on the need for people to be able to understand in a personal way new knowledge before this new knowledge or experience can be successfully integrated into their own lives.

From these quiet reflections, I decided to devote more time and space at the beginning of the workshop (about 25 minutes) for recall of past experiences, silent reflection, relaxation and visualization. Then, after the initial 25-minute section of the workshop, the participants were asked four more times during the next three hours to stop, step back, reflect and make notes about what they noticed as they engaged in the drama tasks. These cycles of reflection then provided the base for discussion, analysis and evaluation in the final 30 minutes of the workshop. So, this initial planning approach helped me assign a third of the time available towards reflection, something that I had never 'dared' envisage before in previous in-service training work.

Briefly, the time allotted for reflection was managed in the following way. After 5 minutes of group-mixing and ice-breaking exercises, the teachers were asked to sit down with their actor/speaker partner, and were given a sheet of paper each. They folded it into eight squares. As they did this, I explained that I'd be later asking them to make some quick notes about different experiences in the squares. We relaxed, and the teachers were asked to recall silently any successful moments where they as learners or teachers of English had acted, enjoyed the experience of acting and felt satisfied with what had happened in the classroom (with strong emphasis on the three leitmotifs of success, satisfaction and enjoyment). They were asked to focus on one or two moments in particular.

After some minutes of silent reflection, the teachers were asked to label the top four squares on their sheet of paper, like this:

SELF	OTHERS
ACTIVITIES	ENGLISH

They were then instructed to write down in each square a few key words that described and summarized the positive experiences that they had recalled. After some further minutes of reflection and making notes, the teachers then explained and discussed their notes in pairs, thus finding both shared and different positive ways of looking at, and experiencing, English through Drama.

At this point, I explained to the whole group that I had asked them to do this so that they could make deeper, more meaningful connections between what they had experienced as individuals in the past and what they were going to do in the workshop that day.

I then led the group through a longer relaxation and visualization exercise which moved us towards the other workshop goal of creating, in pairs, a five-minute four-scene play about a homestay packing and saying goodbye in a foreign country; arriving at the airport in Japan; travelling home with their Japanese host; and then being shown round the Japanese home. During this process - after the first two scenes, again after the third, and after each pair performing their play to another pair - the participants were asked to make some notes in the other four squares about:

- (i) how they felt;
- (ii) what they noticed about the others in the workshop;
- (iii) what they noticed about the activities;
- (iv) what they noticed about the English of the 5-10 minute plays that they had created in pairs and performed to another pair.

The four bottom squares of the present thus mirrored the top four squares of the past. As they made the notes, I again put the stress on the positive.

Finally, in the last thirty minutes of the workshop, the teachers rotated partners beyond the groups of four mentioned above, and used the notes in their bottom four squares to discuss these two points:

- * possible concerns about using English through drama in my teaching situation
- * possible adaptations of English through drama for the learners in my classes,

as well as spend ten minutes writing an evaluation of the whole workshop.

The two discussion points aimed to help the participants identify their own future ways of using English through drama, if they so wanted to, and to consider adjustments that they would find important for their own particular classes, all the while respecting each individual's integrity as a teacher in their own right. They also attempted to let the teachers identify and then deal with potential 'problems' on the basis of previous positive thinking and reflection.

While not wanting to suggest that there is anything magical about the above procedures, there is something quite satisfying in their flow and in the deep chords that they may touch. The notes that different teachers made seem to bear witness to this, one example of which follows:

My key words (past)

- * junior high school
- * sing a song
- * T-T

The others (past)

- * cheerful
- * interested
in English
- * try to learn other
language

The activities (past)

- * loud
- * fun
- * humor

The language (past)

- * rhythmic

*How do you feel?
(present)*

- * fun
- * excited
- * real

*What I notice about
the others (present)*

- * they make a lot
of situations
- * they try to play
very hard
- * they are interested in
this
- * creative
- * smiling

*Three good points about
the activities (present)*

- * imagine (expand)
- * notice difference
between Japan and US
- * loud

*What I notice about the
English in other pair's play (present)*

- * creative
- * smooth
- * natural

On the other hand, some of the evaluative comments included:

- * *I can enjoy today's drama with pleasure. I want to teach my students joy of playing drama.*
- * *Most of the participants are doing enjoyably like small children. That's magic of drama. By taking this way, we can easily and happily use English, real lively English.*
- * *When I called back my memory of doing drama I could find many things that I already forgot ...That feeling came back to me again after 15 years and I got very excited again ! Although, it's kind of difficult to let our students do as it is. So I hope I take some of your idea and make my own way teacher's.*
- * *I can apply today's practice ...and I can also do something about short drama in my class. Thank you for giving me a chance to develop my English class. At first I'm very ashamed, but at last I feel my pleasure to express myself.*

To my mind, there is a reflective depth in these comments and a positive sense of 'empowerment / expansion' / 'sense of self and potential self' . Part of this may come from English through Drama itself, but my intuition is that the greater part springs from the cycles of reflection and positive anchoring of the new with the old - or, in other words, the sometimes forgotten or barely conscious knowledge and positive experiences that we all carry with us, and can recall and build on if we have a chance to make some inner journeys of our own.

Notes

1. See Frogs into Princes (1979) by Bandler and Grinder (Moab Utah: Real People Press), for example.
2. Plain, W. (1990) 'A Glimpse inside the Teacher Development Classroom', *Niigata University Liberal Arts Lower Division Research Papers*, Volume 21: 61 - 84.

Andrew Barfield
Foreign Language Centre
1-1-1 Tennodai
Tsukuba-shi
Ibaraki-ken 305