**2016　SDC Talk Outline**

**Graeme Taylor**

**Subject: Teaching to younger learners (K – ES grade 3)**

Goal: To provide new, as well as returning JETs who have little experience working with younger aged children some insight into what methods are most effective and entertaining for introducing English to their youngest students. Also, to offer examples of lessons that I have found particularly enjoyable and wildly popular with my Kindergarten and early-elementary students.

1. Welcome (1 minute)

-Greet everyone

-Give a quick run-down of topics I will cover

2. Introduction to Me (4 minutes)

-Personal info

-Placement in Nagasaki, description of schools

-Motivation for giving this talk

-Disclaimer about not having official Education training

3. The Case of Elementary and Youchien (5 – 10 minutes)

-Why K-3 is so important – ‘keeping the dream alive until Chugakko’

-Why Youchien is worth getting involved in

**＊**-you are potentially the first/among the first foreigners they have ever met

**＊**-the whole goal of early education isn’t so much in attaining proficiency as it is introducing these children to the outside world

**＊**-you are equal parts cultural ambassador and teacher. You are trying to spark an interest in English and outside cultures that will last them through to adulthood

-What to expect from your schools, what to be wary of (curriculums, support)

**＊**-Whether you should prepare your materials at home/ahead of time

**＊**-Whether or not you should plan meetings and if your school will make time

**＊**-Do they have a curriculum, or is it do whatever (I have had both)

-Emphasis on Listening and Speaking and how it shapes your lessons

4. Methodology and Differences (10 minutes)

-ENTHUSIASM and ENERGY direct the classroom (aka hamming it up)

-……but being careful not to bridge into the realm of non-learning, clowning

-The debate over how much English should be used in the classroom

aka it’s time to be realistic and avoid frustrating the kids.

-Lessons should try and maintain as much English as possible, and non-Japanese speakers are at a huge advantage here because they aren’t tempted

-Having Japanese can be a massive help for corralling the kids as well as communicating with your co-teacher, PARTICULARLY when you haven’t had meetings

-This puts the emphasis on meetings a lot more to those folks who don’t speak Japanese. You do not want to be in a situation halfway through an activity where no one has any idea what you are trying to accomplish. The kids grow frustrated, and the teacher may come away with mixed feelings despite being partially responsible.

-Learning Japanese is also a great way to interact with the kids outside of class and form relationships that will get them more excited about English. I don’t know how many times at Kindergarten I’ve spent time just giving kids the English words for all the random stuff they can think of. But if you don’t know Japanese, you’d never be able to do that!

-In the end, don’t feel like you have to have Japanese or your lessons will bomb. You can still have amazing results, perhaps even more so BECAUSE you don’t speak to the students at all in Japanese, but know that with the young ones it can be much harder to learn about them without it (unless you have a super English speaking homeroom teacher)

-Recognising when activities are bombing and how to change gears

**＊**Always bring extra activities

**＊**READ your class, know if your plans work for large and small groups

**＊**Have a time limit on how long you’re willing to give an activity to succeed

**＊**Create ways to lower the difficulty curve (cheat codes)

**＊**Revamp/Renew activities to use again with different classes and schools

**＊**If things are out of control, don’t be afraid to pull the plug

-Your role in the classroom vs. the homeroom teacher (avoiding pitfalls)

**＊**T1/T2 Find out if your teacher is comfortable with you taking the reigns

**＊**Be sure to ask your teacher about the class’ energy level and how you or they might control it. Consider making a signal to identify when you need help

**＊**Remember that it is not your job to discipline, and can endanger your “fun” view. However, communication with the teacher should help deal with difficult situations. Don’t be afraid to show your feelings, just don’t overstep (show them “The face” renae!!)

**＊**Time is very important, so know your blocks and schedules and try and make rough estimates. I find undershooting is usually better.

-Rehashing the emphasis on speaking and listening, learning to gauge if introducing the alphabet is worth it

**＊**Gauging the level of your students individually and as a whole

**＊**If your teacher has a desired curriculum, discussing their expectations

**＊**Do your kids seem motivated and interested in learning it?

**＊**Offering your advice to the teacher about whether it is a good idea

**＊**This is where meetings are key so you don’t show up to be turned down

-navigating team-teaching and being confident about leading

-Addressing different learning types

**＊**I think that with young children the most important level is finding the balance between visual and verbal(auditory) because that has the most direct role in our subject。

**＊**I will use Verbal/Visual as an example and mention there are more

**＊**The difficulty of finding their types in 45 min. classes

**＊**Suggest trying them out if they have time, for more info check out

[**www.mindtools.com/mnemlsty.html**](http://www.mindtools.com/mnemlsty.html)

**(I will post this in the powerpoint)**

-active and passive activities

**＊**What should my ratio of rote vocabulary practice to activity time be?

**＊**The lack of reading/writing factors in here

**＊**Young kids are the at the best level of development for absorbing pronunciation, tone, and the physical mechanics of the language

**＊**However you risk killing their motivation by stressing it too much

**＊**Every class will be different. Learn to gauge how much information they are able to process before burning out

-Time constraints, materials, class sizes, and planning

**＊**This should have largely been covered in the previous sections

**＊**I’ll give them some online resource suggestions and tell them how to print etc. if their teachers aren’t keen

**＊**Some schools have a wealth of materials, other don’t. Some have lots of wiggle room with time and activities, others don’t. I’ve had both.

5. Activities

-What topics should I cover? **＊**Find out about curriculum first

-How much ground should I cover with each lesson?

-Review vs. new lessons (too much or too little)

-How to be instantly attention grabbing (i.e. learn to grow your own afro)

-Pros and cons of things like Drawing activities

**＊**Drawing is very popular with kids, it also allows visual learners to put the information in a form they benefit from

**＊**However it is very time consuming and takes the focus off the lesson and more on the activity. It is best to have instruction oriented drawing activities. (IE---Draw this!)

storytime

**＊**From my experience in Immersion Education, I think storybooks and sing-alongs are very beneficial. Not only does it give early exposure to English writing in a more digestible way, it also shares the visual and auditory ranges of processing information

**＊**It is, however, very time consuming potentially

-too long or too little on the actual word practice?

-Games! \*\*There was never any doubt in my mind I would be showing activities, so I’m not sure where the “if we have time” notion came from….that was more directed at the question period

1. Warmup = The Greetings Walk (No more than 5 minutes)

\*I like this game because it focuses on attaching the actual meaning of the words to their pronunciation and use. I find too often that the youngest kids forget the material as soon as I leave, and only remember it again once I come back and remind them of it. In this game, the use of Good Morning and Good Night in particular are taught in a way that emphasises their context

-Teach/review standard greetings (Hello, Good Morning, whatever you want)

-Attach slight gestures to each greeting i.e. a wave, sun rising, C U

-Students walk around the room intermingling while I stand to the side

-I call out a greeting and students have to say and gesture to their nearest cohort

-For example, if I say “Goodbye” the students have to turn to a classmate and say goodbye while walking away and waving

-However, when I say “Goodnight!” all students must immediately yell it to me and fall to the floor as quickly as possible as though asleep

-Students are NOT allowed to resume until I say “Good Morning!” at which point they can “wake up”, say good morning, and keep walking

-The goal is to try and trick the students into getting up on the wrong command and admonishing them (jokingly) for it (“How can you say Hello while you are asleep mister??)

-Keep playing until all students are correctly sleeping and waking

\*\*A Bonus of this game, is that if you have a fairly rowdy class before the bell even goes, you can end the game on a “sleeping” command which quiets everyone down, and then quietly have them go back to their seats to start the rest of the lesson

1. A standard listen, practice, memorise activity: What time is it Mr. Wolf? (10 mins?)

\*\*I really enjoy this game because it is the absolute proof that the more you commit, the more your kids will remember and want to do your activities (IE sneaky learning) I honestly don’t have a single youchien, grade 1, or grade 2 class who don’t ask me to play this every time I go to their school, within the first 5 minutes

-Practice counting. Youchien 1 – 7 (ish), Gr1 1-10, Gr2 however much

-Make sure everyone is fairly capable, at least apart from the tough numbers like five, seven, or twelve

-Count out loud, consider a song like 7 steps or whatever

-Get the kids up and line them up, explain that a wolf has gotten loose

-Become the wolf, wander around snorting and generally being silly

(Be mindful of shy kids being scared, have your TT protect ya)

-Stand a ways off with your back to the kids, teach them the key phrase

“What time is it Mr. Wolf?” If you have the patience

-Say a practiced number, students take that many steps towards you

-After a few rounds, when students are close, tell them it is LUNCH time

-Vaguely chase them as they run screaming back to their safety line

-Rinse, cycle, and repeat. After one or two goes your students will be screaming the numbers like it’s a daily thing

-Get ready for criers. My advice? If you are making the wolf too real, switch it up and become a lazy panda. Rather than lunch time, make it “Time to get up” and when the kids get really close, they come and tickle/poke you to get you up (Not for the faint of heart, but definitely calms the kids who are a little scared)

-If your kids are getting real good, trade off and get some volunteers to be wolves

3. More difficult lesson 🡪Do you style 7 up (I am not 100% sold on this, but it is one of my most popular activities)

\*This is designed for grade 3 and up. Some strong grade 2s could do it but it gets tough.

-Practice key grammar. This activity works well for a couple of different ones. I particularly like it for “Are you a ?????/I am from ?????/Are you from ?????/Do you like????”

-Make sure to practice answers as well. Try and ask your students individually at least once (depending on class size)

-Now, explain that you know something the students don’t know about their classmates, for instance (since it’s Halloween) that there are some secret witches in the class.

-To find out who they are, the students will have to use the key grammar

-Have students all put their heads down while you and your co-teacher select however many of them (again, depends on class size)

-After choosing, heads up. Explain how many there are, and wish them good luck

-In the example above, students walk around and play RPS. The winner may ask the loser the target sentence “Are you a witch?” If the loser was one of the students you selected, the have to answer “Yes I am.”

-Whoever finds the most of the selected group wins!

-MAKE SURE to prepare them to speak softly, or at least bring music or something. If they answer too loudly, everyone in the class will immediately know if they are the witch

Some examples🡪 “Are you a witch?” (monsters in the class)

“Are you from Hokkaido?” (Travelers in the class)

“Do you like mushrooms?” (Mario and Luigi in the class)

“I am a ghost” (Easier version with no question, loser just says am/am not)

“I am from Canada” (Same as above, no question)

-For those who are really into it, preparing a worksheet to write down the names is a nice touch.

6. Questions & Comments (hopefully with Renae)