

Effective Classroom Techniques to Catch and Maintain Pupils' Interest in English Lessons

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Handout

1. Overview

Today's topic

Several tips to make studying English more fun for students

- 1) Attention-grabbing ways to present materials
- 2) Useful techniques to shift the speaking focus onto the learners
- 3) Effective ideas to create variety in oral exercises
- 4) Simple self-evaluation sheets for children to rate their experience of the lesson

※Yambe (1964), Iino & Shimizu (1985), Nawa & Seki (1987), Dörnyei (2003)

2. My English lessons at the elementary schools (Matano (2009, 2013a, 2013b, 2014a, 2014b, 2015))

2.1 Example 1: Introduction of the alphabet

Teaching procedure

- Greetings and teacher's self-introduction
 - Using pictures and gestures
 - Check of understanding by playing a rock-paper-scissors-style game
- Review and warm-up (guessing game using pictures, pictograms, props, and a pop-up book)
 - What's this? —a close-up view/a partial view/a side view/a top view
 - What sport is this?
 - Who is this?
 - What size is this? (showing the pupils the letters L, M, and S in pictures of T-shirts)
- The alphabet (capital letters)
 - Auditory observation→Oral imitation (Palmer, 1948)
 - One by one→All 26 letters
 - Full-choral→Half-choral→Group→Line→Individual→Full-choral
 - ※Giving variety to repetition
 - The ABC Song

2.2 Example 2: A story-based lesson using an English picture book with rhymes

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? Bill Martin, Jr. (Author), Eric Carle (Illustrator)
Ellis & Brewster (2002/2008)

Vocabulary

Animals: bear, bird, duck, horse, frog, cat, dog, sheep, goldfish, monkey

Colors: brown, red, yellow, blue, green, purple, white, black, gold

Sentence structure

Word order: [color+noun] (e.g., brown bear)

Question/answer technique: Question: [Yellow][duck], [yellow][duck], what do you see?

Answer: I see a [blue][horse] looking at me.

Phonetics

Stress: Red bird, red bird, what do **you** see?

Falling intonation: Red bird, red bird, what do you see? ↘

Teaching procedure

- Greetings and teacher's self-introduction
 - Using a puppet, pictures, gestures, and 'smilegrams'
 - Check of understanding by playing a rock-paper-scissors-style game

- Pre-storytelling activities
 1. Introduction of colors in English
Kageyama & Fujii (2006) Appendix CD-1 Track 48
 2. Introduction of animals in English
Kageyama & Fujii (2006) Appendix CD-1 Track 56 (Slow)→Track 57 (Faster)
- Intra-storytelling activities
 - A storytime giant book for shared reading (Martin & Carle, 1999)
 - Storytime interaction between the teacher and pupils
 - Story reading (Martin & Carle (1996) Appendix CD Track 3)
- Post-storytelling activities
 - Chants (Martin & Carle (1996) Appendix CD Track 4)
 - Story song (Martin & Carle (1996) Appendix CD Track 2)
 - Making a class book (Ellis & Brewster, 2002/2008)
 - Putting the pupils' original works on the whiteboard one by one
 - Creative activity using formulaic sequences (Takashima, 2009)
 - [Color+animal], [color+animal], what do you see?
 - I see a [color+animal] looking at me.

2.3 Example 3: A story-based lesson using an English picture book in narrative style

Think carefully about the style of the picture book you are planning to use

→ Choose the best lesson style to make effective use of that book

The Very Hungry Caterpillar (Carle, 2002)

Ellis & Brewster (2002/2008)

Vocabulary

Days of the week: Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday

Numbers: one, two, three, four, five

Fruits: apple, pear, plum, strawberry, orange, watermelon

Foods: chocolate cake, ice-cream cone, pickle, Swiss cheese, salami, lollipop, cherry pie, sausage, cupcake

Adjectives: little, tiny, hungry, big, fat, beautiful

Life-cycle of the butterfly: egg, caterpillar, cocoon, butterfly

Language functions

Asking numbers→Giving answers including numbers: How many ... are there?

→There are....

Asking about likes→Expressing likes/dislikes: Do you like ...?→Yes, I do./No, I don't.

Phonetics and phonics

Rising intonation

Falling intonation

Consonant digraph/Vowel digraph

Stress

Teaching procedure

- Greetings and teacher's self-introduction

Starting with greetings and a self-introduction that foreshadows the content of the lesson

Using a puppet, pictures, gestures, and 'smilegrams'

Check of understanding by playing a rock-paper-scissors-style game

- Pre-storytelling activities

1. Introduction of fruits in English (What fruit is this?)

Kageyama & Fujii (2006) Appendix CD-1 Track 56 (Slow)→Track 57 (Faster)

2. The life-cycle of the butterfly

3. The days of the week

Kageyama & Fujii (2006) Appendix CD-1 Track 8

- Intra-storytelling activities
 - A storytime giant book for shared reading (Carle, 2002)
 - Storytime interaction between the teacher and pupils
 - Involving the listeners in the storytelling
 - Communication between the storyteller and the listeners (Terai, 2009)
 1. Saying the repeated words or phrases together
 2. Using gestures while saying the repeated words or phrases
 3. Asking questions to the listeners
 - Story-reading (Carle (2005) Appendix CD Track 1)
- Post-storytelling activities
 - Review the names of fruits/extend their vocabulary (fruit bongo game)
 - T \leftrightarrow P (T \rightarrow P, P \rightarrow T)/P \leftrightarrow P Game \rightarrow Real communication

2.4 Evaluation

Dörnyei (2003, p.38)

3. The continuous use of effective techniques from elementary school to junior high school

Activities

How to present materials

Learning strategies while listening to the story

Classroom English (Gardner & Gardner, 2005)

Transition from game to real communication

Various interactions in the classroom

A simple self-evaluation sheet

※MERRIER Approach (Watanabe, T., Takanashi, T., Saito, E., & Sakai, H. (2013, pp. 54-66))

※Some video from a junior high English lesson (Matano, 2017a)

※Matano (2017b)

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Oral presentation manuscript

I'd like to remind everyone not to take pictures, videos, or any other recording of today's presentation in order to protect students' privacy and individual copy rights. Thank you.

(In case people join the presentation late.)

Since we have a few people joining us, I'd like to remind you again to please refrain from taking photos or any recordings of today's presentation.←Up to 10 people.

Since we have so many people joining us, I'd like to remind you again to please refrain from taking photos or any recordings of today's presentation.←More than 10 people.

Well, should we get started? Hello, everyone. I'd like to express my appreciation to you for having me here today.

I am Yoko Matano PhD. I'm from Yamaguchi. Has anyone here been to Yamaguchi? There's a steam locomotive in Yamaguchi. Many people come to see and ride it. But today I came here not by steam locomotive, but by Shinkansen. I got here very quickly.

I teach English at Konan Junior High School in Yamaguchi City. Besides teaching at the junior high school level, I am continuing to study and do research into language teaching.

Today I'd like to share several tips to make studying English more fun for students.

The title of my presentation is *Effective Classroom Techniques to Catch and Maintain Pupils' Interest in English Lessons*. I hope this presentation will prove useful to all of you.

From time to time, I'd like to ask you to play the part of the students as I demonstrate the lesson activities. Please understand I'm not trying to teach you English, but I'd like you to get a feel for how the lesson could proceed. Please humor me.

OK. Let's begin with today's topic. I will share with you four ideas to foster a passion for learning English.

Let's dive right in. First up, attention-grabbing ways to present materials. Materials include pictograms, picture cards, props, pop-up books, photographs, and posters. They are useful to attract the pupils' attention and liven up the oral exercises.

You might ask how to use them. Well, guessing games or using gestures always seems to work perfectly.

Next up, useful techniques to shift the speaking focus onto the learners. For example, using a sign for double repetition. If I show the pupils this sign (two fingers), they repeat the word, phrase, or sentence twice.

And classroom tempo is important. For example, I give a model. "I like tennis." Then everyone repeats it. "I like tennis." If I say "Ken", he will repeat it. If I say "Saki", she will repeat it. If I say "Boys", the boys will repeat it. If I say "Girls", the girls will repeat it. If I say "Everyone" again, everyone will repeat it. To maintain pupils' concentration and participation, I use this system. Giving variety to repetition. I referred to Yambe (1964) about this sign for double repetition and his idea for maintaining pupils' concentration and participation. Ino and Shimizu (1985), and Nawa and Seki (1987) also suggest using this sign for double repetition.

Third on the list, effective ideas to create variety in oral exercises. Using rhythm, songs, and games. A sequential practice from imitation to real communication is necessary.

And finally, a simple self-evaluation sheet for children to rate their experience in the lesson. Dörnyei (2003, p.38) says, "the number of the response options is often reduced to three and the options themselves are presented in a pictorial format instead of words. For example, in a three-point 'smilegram'."

I will describe the ideas and techniques, while showing you my English lessons as conducted at elementary schools. The lessons introduce the alphabet and use English picture books for story-based lessons.

Example 1: Introduction of the alphabet

I'll explain the teaching procedure.

First, I greet the pupils and introduce myself.

In my self-introduction, I use some pictures and gestures so that they can understand. After my self-introduction in English, I check their understanding by playing a rock-paper-scissors-style game with the class. If my Japanese sentence matches what I said in my self-introduction in English, the students make the sign for paper. If my Japanese sentence does not match what I said in English, the students make the sign for scissors. The students win if they make the correct sign.

Then we play a guessing game using pictures, pictograms, props, and a pop-up book. I try to get more interaction between the teacher and the class.

This is where I'm going to ask for your participation. I will use flashcards which show the shape of a fruit and inside the external shape there is a smaller cutaway section showing a photograph of a real example of that fruit. What's this? It's a lemon. If the answer is correct, we practice the pronunciation. First the whole class together, then individually, then by group, then the whole class together again, and finally I'll choose someone at random.

OK! Are you ready?

What's this? It's a melon.

What's this? It's an apple.

What's this? It's an orange.

Something like that. I show the students all these pictures. (Following this, to save time I will demonstrate a question/answer role-play by myself. If the audience joins in, I will say, "Thank you very much.")

Using enlarged photos: What's this? It's a cup. It's a cup seen from above.

What's this? It's a glass. It's a glass seen from the side.

What's this? It's a bike.

What's this? It's a ball.

What's this? It's a notebook.

What's this? It's a pencil.

What's this? It's a pen.

What's this? It's a book. It's a close-up view of the pages of a book.

What's this? It's a recorder. It's a close-up view of one part of a recorder.

Using a toy:

What's this? It's a cat shaped flashlight.

Using pictograms:

What sport is this? It's soccer.

What sport is this? It's tennis.

What sport is this? It's baseball.

What sport is this? It's basketball.
What sport is this? It's table tennis.
What sport is this? It's badminton.
What sport is this? It's volleyball.

Using a pop-up book: Who's this? It's Shokupanman. He's a character from a popular children's animation called Anpanman.

Who's this? It's Anpanman.

Who's this? It's Baikinman.

Using a game: Who's this? It's Mickey Mouse. It's a game where you put the eyes, nose, and mouth on Mickey's face. It's like pin the tail on the donkey.

Using a toy: What's this? It's not a monster. It's a boy wearing a monster suit.

Like this, I show pictures and props successively and the pupils become familiarized with English sounds. I keep the pictures and props together by topic. For example, fruits with fruits, and toys with toys. Sports with sports.

I keep the sizes together. What size is this? I show the pupils the letters L, M, and S in pictures of T-shirts. What do you notice about this picture? The sizes go from right to left S, M, L, but a native speaker of English would arrange them from left to right. In fact, I deliberately chose this order, L, M, S because in this way the three sizes appear in alphabetical order. I like to draw a picture of the tongue position to help the students pronounce the letters correctly. Or I have them look at my mouth as a model. We practice it several times. Thus while enjoying the game (and listening to English sounds), they encounter letters smoothly. In this way the students don't realize it, but they are learning letters. I'm sneaking education into fun and games. (In a stage-whisper,) Don't tell anybody.

I show the students combinations of letters. What's this word? It's CD. It's TV. It's USA. These letters are very familiar to the students. I pay particular attention to the letters C and V and have them practice these carefully.

After I have put all of the letters on the board, I tell the students that this is the alphabet. And then I watch their reaction.

Next, I show them the whole alphabet that I had put on another board while they were at break.

I pronounce each letter while pointing at it, and explain how to make the proper sound. The students repeat after me. First, each letter one by one. Then, all 26 letters one after another. First, the whole class repeats. This half repeats. The other half repeats. Group No. 1 repeats. Group No. 2 repeats. The students in this line repeat. Individuals repeat. Again the whole class repeats. This is what I mean by "giving variety to repetition." After we have practiced all 26 letters, I point to each letter and have the students tell me the names of the letters themselves. Next, I use a CD player. We sing *The ABC Song*.

Example 2: A story-based lesson using an English picture book with rhymes

A picture book is a useful tool for introducing children to foreign language learning. You can do various activities after reading picture books. For example, Ellis and Brewster (2002/2008) use the example of *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*, Bill Martin, Jr. (Author), Eric Carle (Illustrator). This book is a beginners' level storybook. The story is easy to understand and the pictures are simple. It's a story replete with rhymes and rhythm. There are cumulative repetitions of the useful phrases. According to Ellis and Brewster, *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* is useful for the introduction or review of vocabulary because the vocabulary in the book includes several animals and colors. Animals: bear, bird, duck, horse, frog, cat, dog, sheep, goldfish, monkey. Colors: brown, red, yellow, blue, green, purple, white, black, gold. This book also uses basic sentence structures such as word order: [color+noun] (e.g., brown bear) and question and answering techniques: Question: [Yellow][duck], [yellow][duck], what do you see? Answer: I see a [blue][horse] looking at me. The book also introduces phonetics in terms of stress and rhythm. For stress: Red bird, red bird, what do **you** see? And falling intonation: Red bird, red bird, what do you see? ↘

Do you know *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* Open the book, we can see several colors. The first character you meet is Brown Bear.

Various animals of various colors appear one after another.

Using the inside of the back cover of the book, you can review the key words (colors and animals).

I'll explain the teaching procedure.

First, I greet the pupils and introduce myself. In my self-introduction, I use a puppet, pictures, gestures, and 'smilegrams'.

These are some pictures of me starting a lesson. On this day, the children were going to learn animals, so in my self-introduction, I told them which animals I like, and which animals I dislike using my puppet, animal pictures, and 'smilegrams'.

Pre-storytelling activities. Introduction of colors in English. I had put different colors on the board before class. In class, I told the children the names of the colors. They listened and repeated, sometimes twice. After we practiced the pronunciation, we used the color chant included on the CD supplied with Kageyama and Fujii's book (2006).

Next, introduction of animals in English. To establish a fun atmosphere for the students, I had brought a bag with pictures of animals on it and some animal toys inside it. I used this bag because we were learning animals. And I had lined up the animal toys on the teacher's desk.

After that, I introduced the animals that appear in *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* I had a toy dog in a bag with a question mark on the front. I said, "What's this? What's in my bag? Please put your hand into the bag." Some students felt the toy dog in the bag, and guessed what it was.

After they had guessed it was a dog, I used pictures of different animals, but only showing a little of the picture at a time. The students guessed what animal was in the picture. Let's all try it now.

We practiced describing the colors of the animals, for example, red bird, yellow duck, and so on. To give variety to oral work, I use four steps. 1. They repeat after me. 2. We practice alternately. 3. They say the names of the animals by themselves. 4. We practice with music by using some chants from Kageyama and Fujii's book (2006). We use the slow chant at first, and then we use the faster one. Let's all do it together.

Intra-storytelling activities. I used a giant book that was big enough for everyone to see. These photos show the interaction between myself and the students while they were listening to the story. I used gestures while reading the story and I asked what the next animal might be and what color it is. At first the children just sat there and listened quietly, but before long they were saying the repeated words with me.

The last page of the book shows the key words and pictures from the story. So we used that to review. I had also put the pictures from the guessing game on the board so we could review the order in which the animals appear. I drew arrows on the board to make it easier to understand.

Post-storytelling activities. After the story, I used chants and songs found on a CD sold with a different copy of *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*

Ellis and Brewster (2002/2008) recommend drawing pictures and making a book. I didn't make a book, but I put the pupils' pictures on the whiteboard. The pupils had prepared their own pictures in a previous lesson. I used the pupils' pictures to re-create the story. (The next slide requires no explanation.)

Some students might have a hard time drawing their favorite animal from memory, so I brought some pictures and a picture dictionary they could look at to draw their favorite.

They drew their favorite animal and colored them with their favorite color. Linking arts and crafts to your lessons helps fix the vocabulary in pupils' minds.

Takashima (2009) suggests doing creative activities using formulaic sequences. For example, the formulaic sequence in this story is "[Color + animal], [color + animal], what do you see? I see a [color + animal] looking at me." This formulaic sequence can be used for playing "fill in the blank" games.

Let's try it with gestures. Are you ready? What's this? It's a pig. What color is it? Purple. Purple pig, purple pig, what do you see?

I see a green penguin looking at me. Green penguin, green penguin, what do you see?

I see a blue wolf looking at me. Blue wolf, blue wolf, what do you see?

I see a silver coelacanth looking at me. Silver coelacanth, silver coelacanth, what do you see?

I see a red lion looking at me. Red lion, red lion, what do you see?

I see a pink rabbit looking at me. Pink rabbit, pink rabbit, what do you see?

I see a blue Santa Claus looking at me.

These are the pupils' pictures which I put on the whiteboard.

Example 3: A story-based lesson using an English picture book in narrative style

You should think carefully about the style of the picture book you are planning to use, and then you can choose the best lesson style to make effective use of that book.

The picture book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Carle, 2002) is an internationally popular picture book and representative of juvenile literature.

Ellis and Brewster (2002/2008) list the following as the characteristics of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. It introduces the life-cycle of the butterfly. Counting the food pictures shows the progression through one week. The book features the repetition of the same pattern in the past tense. The pages have holes punched through the food pictures as if the caterpillar had really eaten through them. As for vocabulary, this picture book introduces the days of the week, numbers, fruits, and other foods, adjectives, and words related to the life-cycle of the butterfly. Ellis and Brewster propose using the pictures from this story to ask questions like “How many pears are there?” or “Do you like plums?” and explain the proper ways to answer these questions. They also say that *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* can be used for introducing basic phonetics and phonics to children because it exposes them to rising and falling intonation, two-letter combinations which create new sounds, and emphasis on the appropriate syllables.

You don’t want the children to put “the emphasis on the wrong syllable.” (With deliberately misplaced emphasis!)

I’m sure you all know this story, but just in case there is anyone here who is unfamiliar with it, I’ll introduce it briefly for you. (I tell the story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.)

I’ll explain the teaching procedure. I go to many different classes, so it’s often the first time for me to meet the students. I like to start with greetings and a self-introduction that foreshadows the content of the lesson. And then I check their understanding by playing a rock-paper-scissors-style game, using statements referencing my self-introduction.

To warm-up for the lesson, I introduce the vocabulary that will appear in the lesson. For this example, we are talking about fruit, so I introduce the necessary English. I show them the flashcards of fruits which I showed you earlier. However, in *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* the caterpillar also eats through Western pears and plums. Your students may not be familiar with these fruits, so I prepared a Western pear and a plum flashcard to complete the flashcard set. I ask the students:

What fruit is this? It’s an apple.

What fruit is this? It’s a pear.

These are pears. This is a Western pear. This is an Asian pear. What is the difference? An Asian pear is round, but a Western pear is not round; it has a fat bottom and it gets smaller on top.

What fruit is this? It’s a plum.

What fruit is this? It’s a strawberry.

What fruit is this? It’s an orange.

If the pupils answer the name correctly, I put the picture of the fruit on the board, and we practice the pronunciation like I mentioned earlier.

Then we work on counting. I ask, “How many apples?” The answer is, “One apple.” Then I put more pictures of fruit on the board. “How many pears?” “Two pears.” “How many plums?” “Three plums.” “How many strawberries?” “Four strawberries.” “How many oranges?” “Five oranges.” This is the same number as the fruit that appears in the story. The students listen and repeat the vocabulary twice. After we practice the pronunciation, we practice to music. We use the slow and the faster chants from Kageyama and Fujii’s book (2006).

I introduce vocabulary related to the life-cycle of the butterfly, the days of the week, and adjectives. This exercise helps the students see a link between their English study and their experience of the natural world. For example, in third grade they study the life-cycle of a butterfly in science class.

T: Well, today I have brought something with me. (I show the students a toy egg.) What’s this? It’s an egg. What creatures come out of eggs?

P: Ants! Birds! Chickens! Snakes! Tortoises! Turtles! Crocodiles! Dinosaurs! Caterpillars!

T: What do you think is in this egg? I’ll show you a hint. What’s this? (One by one, I stick four small

boxes on the blackboard using double-sided tape, starting from the caterpillar's last segment. I join the boxes together to make a caterpillar.)

P: It's a caterpillar!

T: Yes. (I break open the toy egg and show a small toy caterpillar inside.) What does a caterpillar become?

P: A butterfly.

T: Today we'll learn the life-cycle of the butterfly in English. Where does a caterpillar come from?

P: An egg. (I stick a picture of an egg on the blackboard.)

T: How big is the egg?

P: Tiny./Small.

T: The caterpillar comes from an egg. At first it is a tiny caterpillar. (I stick a picture of a tiny caterpillar on the blackboard.) It grows bigger and bigger (using gestures). This is a big, fat caterpillar. (I stick a picture of a big caterpillar on the blackboard. I also show two toy caterpillars, one big and one small.) What does a caterpillar build to become a butterfly?

P: A cocoon. (I stick a picture of a cocoon on the blackboard.)

T: What comes out of the cocoon?

P: A butterfly. (I stick a picture of a butterfly on the blackboard.)

T: This is the life-cycle of the butterfly. (I draw arrows on the board to join the pictures.) What does a caterpillar eat? On Monday it eats a leaf. On Tuesday it eats a leaf. On Wednesday it eats a leaf. On Thursday it eats a leaf. On Friday it eats a leaf. On Saturday it eats a leaf. On Sunday it eats a leaf. Every day it eats one leaf.

I put the days of the week on the board and I place one green leaf symbol under the days of the week, one by one. By doing this, I introduce the word "leaf" and the days of the week to the pupils. After we practice the pronunciation, we use the days of the week chant included on the CD supplied with Kageyama and Fujii's book (2006).

Once more, I use a giant book that is big enough for everyone to see. These photos display the interaction between myself and the students while they listen to the story.

Terai (author and editor) (2009) says that involving the listeners in the storytelling process facilitates communication between the storyteller and the listener. How can you involve the listeners? Terai suggests that, among other methods, you can say the repeated words or phrases together, or use gestures, or even ask questions to the listeners while they listen to the story.

I use these three methods while teaching *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.

First, saying the repeated words or phrases together.

T: He was still ... Say it with me.

P: Hungry!

Second, using gestures while saying the repeated words or phrases.

T: He was still ... Say it with me.

P: Hungry! (The pupils make a gesture of rubbing their stomachs.)

Third, asking questions to the listeners. Ellis and Brewster (2002/2008) propose nine categories of questions which can be used in story-based lessons. In my lessons, I use six of them: Questions that make the pupils guess what will happen next. Questions that elicit words, expressions, or information from the pupils. Questions that check the pupils' understanding. Questions that attract the pupils' attention. Questions that link the story to the pupils' real lives or experience, and questions that have the pupils present their opinion about the story.

The pupils listen to the story while answering the questions and repeating the key words. I read the story while checking the pupils' understanding. You can read their facial expressions and other non-verbal cues. Then we listen to the CD supplied with *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (2005) and review the useful

phrases that are repeated throughout the story. Things like, “but he was still hungry.”

As follow-up activities, first, we do a fruit bongo game. Through this activity, the children can review the names of fruits and extend their vocabulary. A bongo game is like a reverse version of bingo. The students circle five fruits at random. The fruits don't have to be in a line. Then the students ask me, “Which fruit do you like?” If I say a fruit that they have circled, they mark it off. When they get all five of their fruits, they shout “Bongo!” and bring their paper to me for a sticker. This is an example of students asking the teacher for information. Then we switch. Communication changes from a game into the students telling the teacher about their preferences. I ask individual students, “What fruit do you like?” Then I get the students asking each other. I ask the students in the first row, “Please stand up. Answer the question and then ask the person on your left the same question. Please sit down when you receive an answer.” This is interaction between pupils. Lastly, I say, “Everyone, ask me my favorite fruit.”

P: What fruit do you like, Ms. Matano?

T: (While pointing, one by one, at the fruit pictures placed on the board earlier.) I like watermelon, but I also like pears and plums, too.

At the end of the class I give my self-introduction again. I end the lesson the same way I started it. This is interaction between pupils and the teacher. In this way you can encourage various interactions in the classroom.

Dörnyei (2003, p.38) says “Likert scales have been used successfully with younger children as well; in such cases the number of the response options is often reduced to three and the options themselves are presented in a pictorial format instead of words. For example, in a three-point ‘smilegram’ children are asked to check the box under the face that best expresses how they feel toward a target: 😊 😐 😞 .”

This is the evaluation sheet for the class which introduces the alphabet. I asked questions like “Did you have a good time?” “Did you do your best?” “Were you able to familiarize English sounds and letters?” There is a space for comments so students can share any other thoughts.

This is basically the same evaluation sheet, but the last few questions have been changed to be relevant to the *Brown Bear* lesson.

This is the evaluation sheet for *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* lesson. This one has six questions.

Pupils colored the ‘smilegrams’ according to what they thought about the class. I compiled the results from each lesson.

These are the results from the alphabet introduction lesson. This was their first proper English lesson and everybody enjoyed it. However, one little boy thought it was difficult to remember all the letters and sounds. His difficulty can be overcome by telling students that they do not need to learn the alphabet all at once, and that they will learn it, little by little, over time.

These are the results from *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*

These are the results from *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Even though the students have never really studied English, a few students had already decided they weren't good at English. I think from looking at this that we, as English teachers, need to really take care with teaching our lessons, so we don't lose the students so early.

Overall these are some pretty good evaluations.

This is the feedback from *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* evaluation sheet Question 3 “Did you understand the story?” These are the reasons and the number of students who gave them. And this is the feedback from Question 4 on the same evaluation sheet.

I have selected a few comments, translated by myself into English from the students' evaluation of my lessons. After the alphabet introduction lesson, one child said, “I was surprised when you started our English lesson because you were very energetic and active. I had a fun time. I gained confidence in my English. When I enter junior high school, I'm sure I will never have difficulties in English.”

This is the feedback from *Brown Bear*. One child said, “The blue horse impressed me. It was very interesting. I'd like to experience this type of English lesson again.”

This is the feedback from *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. One child said, "It was easy to catch what Ms. Matano said to us in English. We had a good time because everyone could participate in the class. I understood the story of the picture book because she introduced the key words. I feel excited about English lessons in junior high school." Another child said, "I learned that adjectives such as 'small', 'big', and 'fat' are put in front of words like 'caterpillar'."

From these comments we can see that these lessons generally produced positive outcomes for the pupils. They participated in the lessons with interest and their confidence and motivation increased.

Now I'd like to talk about the implications from the results of the evaluation sheets. We need to provide students with frequently repeated opportunities to be exposed to English, not just teach one or two lessons and stop. Fun lessons keep students motivated. The students became more interested in picture books from foreign countries. They liked doing chants, singing songs, and re-creating the story. They were able to play and have fun. Also, they noticed several things about English, for example, the student I mentioned just now who realized that adjectives come before nouns. These enjoyable activities which helped the students to familiarize themselves with English also resulted in the students acquiring some new knowledge about English.

To summarize, this is what we have looked at today.

- 1) Attention-grabbing ways to present materials.
- 2) Useful techniques to shift the speaking focus onto the learners.
- 3) Effective ideas to create variety in oral exercises.
- 4) Simple self-evaluation sheets for children to rate their experience of the lesson.

The lessons I showed you today were for elementary school students, but the same techniques can also be used through junior high school as long as the material is appropriate for your students' age level.

I have seven ideas that I use in elementary school English lessons and junior high English lessons.

The first idea is activities. Fun activities such as songs, chants, quizzes, games, and so on. For elementary school students you could make an original picture book, but this idea is not so applicable in junior high lessons. This is due to time constraints or maybe because junior high school students feel they're too grown up for picture books. Instead, you could have them interview their friends using the target language.

Second, how to present the material. We can use the same principles from the story-based lesson in elementary school to introduce new material in junior high school by asking questions about pictures that appear in the textbook or practicing new vocabulary or grammar. This follows the MERRIER Approach that recommends giving students a model of new material such as an example of grammar, examples of how to use it, and examples of different ways to convey the same meaning. Then repeat it, practice it, and build upon it. And of course reward the students by encouraging them and praising them for their successes.

Third, learning strategies while listening to the story. Listening for the gist. Making a prediction. Guessing the meaning. Hypothesizing.

Fourth, classroom English. Using English in the classroom gives students more opportunity to listen to real English. In order to help your students understand your classroom English, the MERRIER Approach is also useful for giving multiple examples and different ways to say things.

Fifth, transition from games to real communication. Some teachers use a game to finish the lesson, but I think games are a good way to increase students' confidence in using English. You want to encourage them to use the actual language they practiced during the game. Therefore it's a good idea to have one more activity after the game that encourages the students to use the English in a way that is useful in their daily lives.

Sixth, various interactions in the classroom. Various interactions in the classroom are important. Not only teachers asking students questions, but also students asking teachers questions and students interacting with each other. Teachers can help students when necessary. Getting feedback from the teacher and from other students is an important part of learning.

Seventh, evaluation. The self-evaluation sheets used in my elementary school English lessons can just as easily be used in junior high lessons.

This is a picture of what the blackboard might look like after using the MERRIER Approach in a junior

high English lesson. You can see how lessons at junior high school can be similar to what may be taught at elementary school.

This is a picture of the second lesson where we were reviewing the previous lesson and I was introducing the next step.

These pictures show the students reading silently with a reading guide and checking their answers.

(The next slide requires no description.)

This is a hangman-style game, but it uses a big fish and a little fish. I use it to review the lesson. The children guess letters to complete the word and each time a guessed letter is not part of the word I move the little fish closer to the big fish's mouth. A magnet on the back of the little fish enables the teacher to fix the little fish on the board each time.

I think these are some things we need to do to become better teachers. Using effective techniques continuously from elementary school to junior high school. ⇒ Analyzing pupils' learning outcomes. ⇒ Continuous improvement of lessons. ⇒ Accumulating effective teaching techniques.

(If time permits) We still have some time left, so I'd like to show you some video files from a junior high English lesson. This is a video file showing a review game.

(If there is time for one more) This is another video file showing _____.

(If there is no time left) I had intended to show you a short video file of a junior high lesson, but unfortunately there is no time left, so maybe I can show it to you another time.

Plan for using video files

Frame number	Approximate time	Content
164	3 min	Greetings and Warm-up
165	3 min	Oral Interaction (Part 1)
166	4 min	Oral Interaction (From Review of Part 1 Through Part 2)
167	1 min	New Words Check
168	3 min	Silent Reading (Task Reading) with a Reading Guide [Fact Finding] and Answer Sharing (S-S)
169	2 min	Answer Check (T-S)
170	1 min	Integration of Understanding Main Ideas [Generalization] Alternative Titles [Generalization]
171	2 min	Integration of Understanding My Favorite Sentence [Personal Involvement] Opinion of the Whole Story [Personal Involvement]
172	3 min	New Words (Flashcards) and Oral Reading
173	2 min	Story Retelling (Presentation) Following the Teacher
174	2 min	Story Retelling (Presentation) Practicing in Pairs Practicing in Groups (→Presentation in front of the Class)
175	2 min	Story Retelling (Presentation) Practicing in Groups→Presentation in front of the Class
176	5 min	Story Retelling (Presentation of the Whole Story to the Class)
177	2 min	Discussion (My Favorite Sentence)
178	2 min	Discussion (Opinion of the Whole Story)
179	2 min	Writing (+ Drawing)
180	4 min	Review (Game)
181	1 min	Overall Evaluation by Students, Closing Remarks, and Goodbye.
	(44 min in total)	

[Frame number 165] [Frame number 166]

- There are many different angles from which you can tackle this topic, but here's an example of an oral interaction that works for me.
- This is a video file showing an oral interaction for Part 1.
- This is a video file showing an oral interaction for the review of Part 1 and continuing on to Part 2.

[Frame number 167]

- This is a video file showing the new words check.

[Frame number 169]

- Here's an approach you can take to check answers.
- This is a video file showing interaction between the teacher and students checking for answers. What I mean is _____.

[Frame number 172]

- I've seen some teachers use their flashcards like this — starting from the back, or showing each card and then putting it down. However, I have always found this method best. I use my thumb to push the cards and take the cards from the front to the back. (Demonstration of card flashing at speed.) There are benefits to using flashcards and having the students say the words out loud. Flashcards help with visual learning, while saying the words helps with auditory learning. (To put it another way, flashcards are effective with visual learning, while saying the words helps students match what they are hearing with what they are seeing.) Using flashcards at speed develops instantaneous recognition of the relationship between a word and its sound. Please watch this. (Start the video file.)
- This is a video file showing new words using flashcards and oral reading.

[Frame number 180]

- This is a video file showing a review game.

[Frame number 181]

- This is a video file showing overall evaluation, closing remarks, and goodbye.

These are the references for this presentation. (These slides require no description.)

Thank you so much for coming. I hope you have found something I said today helpful or that it has given you a different perspective on how to teach English lessons.

Does anyone have any questions?

Thank you very much.

I will now give you all a comment sheet. Please use this comment sheet to tell me your thoughts.

(Comment sheet)



If you have any comments about today's presentation, I'd love to hear your thoughts.

Thank you very much.

Profile of speaker and abstract

Yoko Matano, PhD

Yoko Matano received her PhD from Hiroshima University. Besides teaching at the junior high school level, she continues to study and do research into language teaching. She belongs to the following academic societies: the Japan Society of English Language Education (JASELE), the Japan Curriculum Research and Development Association (JCRDA), the Institute for Research in Language Teaching (IRLT), the Practical English Phonetic Society of Japan (PEPSJ), ICTATLL Japan, the Chugoku-Shikoku Society for the Study of Education (CSSSE), the Chugoku Academic Society of English Language Education (CASELE), the Hiroshima University Academic Society for English Language Education, the Yamaguchi Association for English Language Education, and the Yamaguchi Prefecture Let's Read and Talk initiative (LRT).

She is the author of many publications including "Analysis of junior high school students' performance in function-chain recognition using factor analysis and Hayashi's quantification model III" (*ARELE*, Vol. 11, 2000), *A Study on the Acquisition of English Function-chains: A Focus on Japanese EFL Learners* (Keisuisha, 2007), *My First All-English Class* (Meijitoshō, 2017), among others. Her book, *My First All-English Class*, received an award from the Institute for Research in Language Teaching in 2018.

The title of her presentation at the Hiroshima JALT conference on September 15, 2019 is *Effective Classroom Techniques to Catch and Maintain Pupils' Interest in English Lessons*. She will share several tips to make studying English more fun for students, such as attention-grabbing ways to present materials, useful techniques to shift the speaking focus onto the learners, and effective ideas to create variety in oral exercises, as well as a simple self-evaluation sheet for children to rate their experience in the lesson. She will describe the ideas and techniques, while showing the audience her English lessons as conducted at elementary schools. These lessons introduce the alphabet and use English picture books for story-based lessons. They could also serve as a foundation for creating successful junior high school English lessons.

【Explanatory note】

This is a written record (including related documents) of the presentation given by Yoko Matano PhD to the Hiroshima JALT conference on September 15, 2019, held at Hiroshima YMCA.