

# How to team – teach successfully

足利市立協和中学校 室 岡 芳 彦

## 1. Opinions about team – teaching

### 1.1 How often can an AET visit your class? once a week or once a term?

The approach of team – teaching depends on number of visiting times.

### 1.2 AETs are not visitors, but the same teachers as we Japanese teachers

AETs are foreign people who teach the language with a JET as their profession.

### 1.3 How to build the relationship between an AET and an JET?

We are teammates who will win the prize.

### 1.4 Team – teaching must give the students not only pleasures and motivations but real improvement of their English.

Students believe only the teachers who do their best and improve their ability.

## 2. Activities of AETs and JETs

### 2.1 AETs' activities in the classroom

- 1) Answer the students' questions, when visiting each practicing group.
- 2) Check the pronunciations of new words
- 3) Talk about themselves around a minute.
- 4) Give students true or false tests about their speech.
- 5) Perform a skit with the JET.
- 6) Become a practicing partner of the students.
- 7) Ask advanced students some questions, when visiting groups.
- 8) Model – read

### 2.2 JETs' activities in the classroom.

- 1) Preparation of games.
- 2) Judge the games.
- 3) Perform a skit with the AET.
- 4) Explanations about how to practice new expressions in Japanese.
- 5) Explanations about grammatical points about the textbook.

## 3. Consolidations

### 1.1

I work at Kyowa Junior High, Ashikaga city, Tochigi ken. I met the first city AET ten years ago. In those days they were called MEFs. Then only one AET visited all the junior high schools in Ashikaga. She could visit the same class once a term at most. The visiting might be called 'one shot' visit. Ten years have passed. We have 3 city AETs and 1 Ansoku area AET. Two of them visit our school this year. One visit lasts about a week. In one visiting they can attend almost all the classes in our school. Last year one class took 10 team-teaching lessons. My presentation is based on such a visiting schedule not one shot visits.

### 1.2

Ten years ago an AET is like a VIP to the students, also to the teachers. When an AET visited a class, it was very silent in the classroom. Of course the students were not bored. Every minute all the students watched her behaviors. The eyes of many students were shining brightly. An AET was like a TV star. But now students can see an AET once a month in their own classroom and 4 or 5 times a month in their own school. The AET's magic that they are the people from other countries and native speakers has gone away. On the other hand the students, especially 3rd year students, have come to judge the AET by comparing him/her to other AETs they have known. 3rd year students have known at least 4 AETs. How do they judge an AET? It is the same as all of the Japanese teachers. Most of the Japanese young teachers who have just started to teach are very worried about a lot of things, eg. their ways of teaching, their relationship with their students, problem-causing students, and so on. I think young AETs also have such feelings. They have just started to teach before 40 students. It's very natural for AETs to be worried about various things about their teaching. To work through these worries, the AET and JET need to communicate with each other about their thoughts and feelings.

### 1.3

When AETs were called MEFs, there were the words "supervisors' assistant of English visit" written on the blackboard of the teachers room. It was very difficult to build up the relationship between AETs and JETs. Now they are called assistant English teachers, but I hear the conditions still remain. Frankly speaking, teachers don't want their lessons to be watched by other peoples, much less

by supervisors. Even now, some of JETs seem to think AETs are assistants to supervisors who assist in reporting about the teachers' lessons. They are afraid some bad reports will be handed to the supervisor. If we think so, we won't be able to come to be friends with any AETs. I think AETs and JETs are teammates who want to get the same prize. We want to give our students good lessons where students have the pleasure to study the language and get more ability to use it. In order to get the prize, we must make a teaching plan together, team - teach friendly, and discuss the results of our lessons after teaching. I think we must be friends. Good friends do a lot of things together. It is better for us to do a lot of things besides team - teaching. In our city there is an English teachers' group which has seminars to study English and parties just for making friendships. Some teachers invite an AET for dinner at their own house. As for me, I was very lucky to be in charge of driving the AET from their house to the school. In the car we had a good opportunity to speak about ourselves. Recently city AETs come to our school by taxi. I need not take AETs by my own car. It is very helpful on busy days, for I must sometimes finish work before the beginning of school. But also I have lost the good opportunity to practice speaking English.

#### 1.4

At the end of the third term every year, I require my students to write about the English lessons they had with me. A student wrote, "Your English lessons were very helpful to me. But your team - teaching with AETs were not necessary for me to improve my ability of English." I was very shocked to read that. It was not the AET's fault. It was my fault. I could not produce effective lessons for the students. I thought team - teaching must give the students not only pleasures and motivations to study English, but also real improvement of their English ability. I believe that team - teaching lessons should lead to real improvement of English ability.

#### 2.

I listed the activities in my team - teaching class. All of them are not new or special ways of teaching. I have mentioned before, the team - teaching I have tried to do has almost the same pattern of teaching flow as a usual class. As you see the handouts of the outline and teaching plan, many of the activities are possible to do without an AET. I will explain about some of the activities

just a little bit.

At the beginning of every lesson, students practice all the new words of the lesson from the textbook. After practicing, we play some easy word – games with the new words. I time the speed to read all the words on the blackboard with a stop watch. In team – teaching, the AET visits each group during the practicing time to answer the questions the students have prepared. In this activity students are more relaxed than usual. Because it is a little noisy in the classroom, they are not worried about other classmates. During the game, the AET checks the pronunciation of students. After the game the AET makes the students practice the words they have difficulty pronouncing. After the game it is quite easy to practice pronunciations.

I want new AETs to introduce themselves for a short time, at most 10 minutes even for the third year students. I think it is too difficult for them to pay attention to AETs' speech more than half a lesson period. And I require new AETs to prepare 3 kinds of self – introduction, of course for 1st year, 2nd year and 3rd year students. When AETs make a draft, they should look at the word lists of each grade, and the list of the sentences students have learned in each grade. Somebody says there is no need to think so much about a self – introduction. But I think it is important to use the words and expressions students have already learned as much as possible. For example it is good to say, "What do you like?" to the 1st year student. If they say "What do you like to do." to the 1st year students, over half of the class can't answer the question.

When I teach with the textbook, I make students check the meaning of the page in groups after practicing the new expressions. As you know, many of the students study at Juku. And many of them are also advanced students. They studied the content of the textbook before the lessons at school. So I want such students to lead their groups in checking the meaning. During this activity, they wait until other students finish writing the meaning in their notebook. They also have time to answer some questions about the context in English. In team – teaching, the AET visits each group and asks students some questions in English.

## 2.2

As you see the handout of the outline, We share the class, we each take turns leading the class, eg. I need to explain the grammar points, the AET will work with correcting pronunciation, and both of us help the students during games and skits.

3.

As you know, we Japanese teachers who have their own homeroom class must teach Morals as one subject. The period for this subject might be also used as the period for just a recreation and for the practicing of school sports day and school chorus contest. But changing a Moral lesson to other activities is wrong. The principle doesn't permit this changing. Many times my boss says to young teachers, "Just try Moral lesson. The result is not concerned. Please try." I want to say the same thing about team-teaching even to myself. I like speaking English with native speakers. It is just fun. I want my students to experience the same feeling. I want to take AETs to my English class as often as possible. I want to give my students a lot of chances to talk with the native speakers. In order to realize this, I want much more time to make plans and discuss the result of the team-teaching within the legal working time, not after 5.