

Integrated Skills Practicum & Classroom Observation (3 cr.)

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10/5 (Sun. 10:00-17:00)	10/19 (Sun. 10:00-17:00)	11/2 (Sun. 10:00-17:00)
1/11 (Sun. 10:00-17:00)	2/22 (Sun. 10:00-17:00)	

Note: Online work equivalent to 4 hours will be provided.

Prerequisite: Principles & Practices of TESOL Classroom

(Short Version of the Course Syllabus)

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Teachers will be expected to

- 1) Be able to use the materials they have to use in a way that does not waste students' time or their own
 - 2) Be able to teach students ways they can develop their listening and speaking skills on their own without a teacher
 - 3) Be able to see changes they make in their teaching by learning ways to record segments of their classes and learn ways to analyze both what they see and hear in the videos and what their students produce in writing, realizing at the same time the impossibility of evaluating the speaking and listening ability of students without looking at their writing and reading production
 - 4) Be able to spend time usually devoted to correcting student work, planning lessons and making handouts in analyzing what they are doing and the consequences
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Though I have at least the 4 objectives above in mind, the course will evolve based on questions teachers ask each week, some elicited from their students and others from fellow teachers. Some questions teachers will generate from reading the teacher's notes for their textbooks and others from readings they might do

COURSE METHODS

The course will consist of a series of conversations, lesson planning sessions, peer teaching, analysis of video and audio tapes and student work that teachers will bring to each class. Hopefully, we can make some class visits live to see student reactions and discuss student beliefs with them.

(Long Version of the Course Syllabus)

Integrated Skills Practicum and Classroom Observation

The words you have just read indicate the official title of the course you are taking with me. This title is standard in many MA Programs around the world. I have added this unofficial title for the course because I think it captures what I will hope will happen to each of you as we teach and learn together:

Discovering your teaching self*

General Description of our course

I used the word *discovering* rather than *discover* as the unofficial title of the practicum because all of us in the MA Program want you to continue to explore what you and your students do as long as you teach. Yes, you will make many discoveries in all of your courses but never enough to stop searching and exploring.

During the practicum we will have a series of conversations about learning, try out activities with each other before we try them with classes, comment on readings, plan lessons, analyze recordings of short segments of lessons, pages from textbooks and student work participants bring to class.

Each Sunday that we meet, I will schedule time for Japanese teachers and non-Japanese teachers who understand Japanese to meet with Takako Nishino and Sakae Onoda two professors from Kanda who will be working with me to discuss in Japanese your concerns about your teaching, your questions about what I am doing, your suggestions for what you want me to do more of and less of during the course.

*I borrowed the unofficial title of the course from a book of the same name by Richard L. Curwin, 1975.

Though you all have strong English proficiency I believe that you can make more sophisticated comments and more candid comments if you use Japanese and speak with those who are co-teaching the course than if you have to speak in English only to me, a person with grey hair who is much older and with whom some of you will feel less comfortable, especially in the first few days of the course.

When Takako and Sakae are meeting with the Japanese speakers, I will meet with the other participants.

I want each of you to bring half a dozen questions to our first class. Your questions will determine the topics we deal with. Though everyone might have a few similar questions that we can focus on as a group, each individual can pursue the questions that are personally most important. Your questions will launch you on your endless journey of discovery about what fosters learning and what blocks learning, not only in our practicum but also in all of your other MA experiences.

Walt Whitman, an American poet from the 19th century would have written his course description like this:

I tramp a perpetual journey, (come listen all!)
I lead no man to a dinner table, library, exchange (class),

But each man and each woman of you I lead upon a know,
 My left hand hooking you round the waist
 My right hand pointing to landscapes of continents and
 The public road.
 Not I, nor any one else can travel that road for you.
 You must travel it for yourself. (*Leaves of Grass*, 1855.)

Dates and Times of regular Classes

We will meet from October to February on these dates and at these times.

10/5 (Sun. 10:00-17:00)	10/19 (Sun. 10:00-17:00)	11/2 (Sun. 10:00-17:00)
1/11 (Sun. 10:00-17:00)	2/22 (Sun. 10:00-17:00)	

However, in addition to our live face-to-face sessions at Kanda during, we will have some conversations using the Internet. We will also post comments to each other via the Internet. And I will be visiting some of you at your schools to better understand the conditions of your teaching situation.

I will suggest readings to each of you related to the questions about your teaching you want to explore.

Both at Kanda and during my visits, we will also share some meals so that we can discuss teaching in a different context from the classroom or the Internet.

I mention these other activities to highlight the fact that the 34 hours in class together is only part of the time you will have to commit. Realistically, you have to plan to spend around 2 hours out of class doing activities related to what we do in class for every hour in class.

Readings

I will ask you to read parts of my books and articles related to the questions you each want to explore. Here is a list of some of the articles:

“Albabka fur!” Making use of the positive feelings some students have for the common classroom activity “oral reading” and overcoming the dread other students have of engaging in the same activity*

“How’s that again? Easy keys??” Doing dictations and active listening activities

“Huh? Twose key words other understand” *Looking at the act of transcribing in the 16th and 21st centuries and considering how and why to use it in our teaching and learning**

“I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before . . .” *Altering or tinkering with the speed, volume, and emotional qualities of our speaking and of the speaking requested to be done by our students**

Is a germ positive or negative? *Limitations of understanding isolated words*

“It’s a bird? It’s a plane? It’s Superman!” *Realizing how yes/no and either or questions can reveal meanings*

“Just answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’”. *Exploring the effects of questions that begin with “How, What, Where, etc., Do, Does, Is, etc.,” and ones that require facts, thinking, or personal information*

“Nveer epxailn gaammr relus or aks yuor sdutens to.” *Discovering the richness of using sketches, images, and icons to direct and embolden students to speak accurately and correctly**

“OK or NOT OK?” *Assisting students in the development of their abilities to evaluate the accuracy of what they write, read, say, and hear*

The sound of silence/thesoundofsilence/t _ _ s _ _ n d_ . . . *Taking a look at how novel formats and deletions and different amounts of time provided for responses to questions or other solicits affect, i.e. hinder and/or help, language production, practice, and, by implication, learning*

The two books I wrote that you will read parts of are *Breaking Rules* (1987) Longman and *Try the Opposite* (1992) SIMUL Press, available in both English and Japanese.

I will also ask you to re-read chapters from Tricia Hedge’s *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom* and *Doing Task-based Teaching* by Willis and Willis related to the topics you want to understand more deeply and apply to your teaching.

Evaluation

Each of you who attend class and do the activities and readings related to your questions will pass the course, receiving a P rather than a letter grade.

1,600 Words

Flesch Reading Ease 67%

Grade Level 7.8

Where I’m coming from

My perspective on teaching and learning is based on these assumptions:

- Much of teaching is controlled by unconscious rules.
- What teachers do, want to do and think they do are very often different.

- The only way we can understand what we are doing is to record, transcript and analyze what we do in one class and compare this with what we do with the same class after making some deliberate changes, introducing alternatives.

Here are some of the types of alternatives that you will be able to choose from. I want you to select those that are related to the questions you bring to our first class or questions you create as the class continues.

The point is that I want you to focus on what you consider your main need and each person might very well be focusing on totally different skills, types of activities and different content.

XXI Rules for Understanding our Teaching

I think that the best way to understand our teaching is to do the opposite of what we usually do. If you usually stand in front of the class, try standing in the back of the class. If you always stand, try sitting. But when you try the opposite, I think it is important to spend just a few minutes with the alternative. If you say something such as “We have finished today’s lesson but we have a few minutes left in the class. Let me use these few minutes to try something very different from what we usually do. Tomorrow, I will ask you how you felt about this small change.” you and your students will be less upset. If you introduce any of the XXI rules I list here in this way you and your students will feel more comfortable and less upset than if you try the alternatives during an entire lesson.

Never* correct students’ speaking by repeating what they say with rising intonation, saying the correct form, or “again” and never correct students’ writing by using symbols such as it for incorrect tense or u for unclear, *instead** be explicit: you said apple, say “an apple”, you said I am go., say 4 syllables (writes I, a g i _____. on the board. XXI*

Never explain vocabulary or ask students to define words, *instead** have your students use bilingual or monolingual dictionaries and/or imagination and/or grouping skills to discover or confirm lexical and grammatical meanings. XX*

*I initially used the word *Avoid* rather than *Never* as I started to develop and collect activities to enable us to break rules. But I began to create and borrow activities that were less learner-centered than I wanted. Raising the bar by using an extreme word like *Never* has the potential to liberate us from the practices we are used to and which some textbooks and commercial tests force upon us. So to push myself to create more learner-centered activities, I substituted *Never* for *Avoid*, outrageous as the word *Never* is.

I hope teachers will select a word that they feel comfortable with to start re-thinking the roles of teachers and students in language classes and to generate their

own rules for generating activities that are more student-centered and lead not only to richer language development but also to more powerful ways of learning.

Obviously, my rules are extreme. In my day-to-day teaching, I think of the *Never* at one end of a continuum and the options under *Instead* on the other end of the continuum or someplace in between, like this:

10 Never

1 Instead

They are based on my belief that our role as teachers is to remind people what they know, not show them what they do not know.

**The options after the ‘instead’ in each rule are just a few of the hundreds possible.

Never ask students to read orally as their eyes are glued to the printed lines, *instead have your students read silently, cover what they read, pause to think and then say what they had read silently, chunks of words, never individual words, to another person.* XIX

Never suggest that students read or listen to any text only once, *instead urge them to experience the lexical and grammatical* forms and meanings in the same text multiple times, at least three to five times, and in different ways—timing each engagement so students can see how as the language becomes more and more familiar and they acquire more they can listen to and read a text faster and faster.* XVIII

Never forbid the use of students’ first languages, *instead provide class time for students to clarify what is going on in their first language with each other, invite them to write and share reactions to methods and give their understanding of the rationale for what they are being asked to do in their first language, and use bilingual dictionaries to find meanings.* XVII

Never assume your students or you have some deficiency if they cannot perform in the way you had anticipated, *instead assume that what you and they are being asked to do and/or the material is deficient. (To develop language abilities, students need to read or listen to language which they understand at least 95% of—*

98% would be better--and they need to have some interest in the topic and feel challenged, not overwhelmed nor bored, by the activities. XVI

Never use jargon, instead provide examples of activities you are talking about and with your students generate names for the activities, if you think you need them. Any labels we use are arbitrary, but by using jargon, we imply that others know better than we how to label what we do and experience. XV

**I use the word ‘grammatical’ to refer to ways English works in all dimensions: the ways we use stress, rhythm and pronunciation to speak, the ways we use word order, function words and suffixes to create sentences, the ways we arrange sentences in paragraphs and longer passages, the ways we take turns in conversations, etc.*

Never ask students to use words in a sentence to illustrate their meaning, instead have your students manipulate and embellish example sentences that contain the words from dictionaries, textbooks, songs, stories, etc. XIV

Never explain grammar or ask students to explain grammar, instead have your students become aware of word order, function or structural words and different forms of words—go, goes, going--by tapping the grammatical information in dictionaries. XIII

Never focus on lexical and grammatical meanings separately, instead integrate the learning of lexical and grammatical meanings. On the millions of flash cards and pages in texts that teach the names of fruits, for example, the word apple is printed under a picture of an apple rather than an apple and under a bunch of grapes, the word grape is printed rather than a bunch of grapes. Apple and grape without articles are used in phrases such as apple and grape juice. The words alone without articles before them or juice, flavor, etc. after them provide only lexical meaning rather than lexical plus grammatical meaning. These are examples of what I mean by the integration of lexis and grammar. XII

Never answer students’ question-word questions, such as “What does horse mean?” or “Why can’t we say ‘jargons’ and ‘vocabularies’?” instead have your students ask yes-no and either-or questions such as “Is a horse bigger than me? Is a

horse an animal or a bird? Is I have a large vocabulary? Or Do I have large vocabularies?" correct. These require them to predict or hypothesize about lexical and grammatical meanings. XI

Never ask students to repeat or copy words or sentences, instead have your students listen to or read the words or sentences, wait for a short period of time, and then, while not hearing or looking at the words or sentences, say or write what they remember and have them compare the time it takes them to do this activity with the same material on different days. X

Never give standardized tests produced by companies, instead with your students note their language development, noting the decline in the frequency of errors, the increase in number of words they can say, write and understand per five to ten minute segments of class week by week. IX

Never say words such as 'very good, excellent, wonderful' after students respond, instead observe how your students show that learning is its own reward and provide information about what they do that ensures they are accurate and have high expectations for themselves and indicate progress and growth to each individual student in a more personalized way such as shaking hands, bowing, write a note, tapping a student's shoulder, etc. VIII

Never learn or teach computing skills alone, instead include touch-typing skills development, as well. VII

Never have students use erasers or the delete key, instead have your students edit by crossing out or tracking changes and then re-writing or re-typing the lines to produce a final copy so they can see the movement from their drafts. VI

Never provide complete information, instead provide incomplete information, such as mouthed words, cloze passages, initial or final letters of words, or pointing, so your students can tap their previous knowledge and use prediction skills to produce lexically and grammatically correct language. V

Never prepare detailed lesson plans, that require you to explain content and complex directions, *instead have a list of a range of activities that you can have your students do as they take in and produce language that they want to master and that engages them.* IV

Never tell students what they are going to learn before a lesson, *instead keep your goals to yourself and ask students what they think they are learning during the lesson, what they learned after the lesson and why you are using the activities you are using.* III

Never depend on information, experiences, feelings or ideas from outside sources alone, *instead integrate student information, experiences, feelings, or ideas with those from outside sources.* II

Never discuss teaching only with peers and by recalling events, judging them and using jargon, such as ‘icebreaker, key words, communicative activities, zone of proximal development, cognitive approach,’ etc., to explain them, *instead use transcriptions of excerpts from lessons and analyze and interpret the data from multiple perspectives using your own terms or those of peers and students in order to deepen understanding, not to improve teaching.* I

1,500 Words 49% Flesch Reading Ease 12th Grade Reading Level

If you are interested in further information about where I’m coming from, go to my Blog: You call yourself a teacher.