


The introduction of the 'Eigo Note'

Harry Carley

Reference data:

Carley, Harry. (2009) The introduction of the 'Eigo Noto'. In: Reinelt, R. (Ed.) (2009) Into the Next Decade with (2nd) FL Teaching Rudolf Reinelt Research Laboratory EU Matsuyama, Japan, p. 41-79.



English in Japan

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Japan

Kameoka Elementary School Classroom

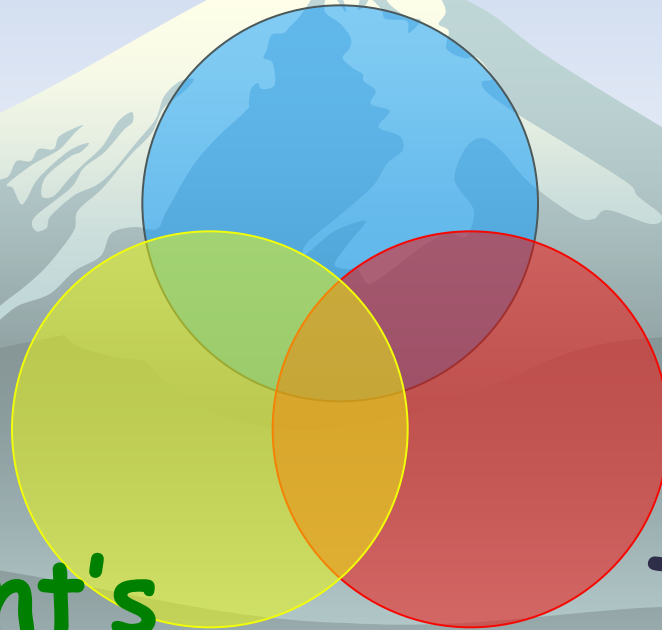


Kikuma Elementary School International Studies Classroom



Entwined in EFL

The ALT



The Student's

The HRT

The Assistant Language Teacher
(ALT)

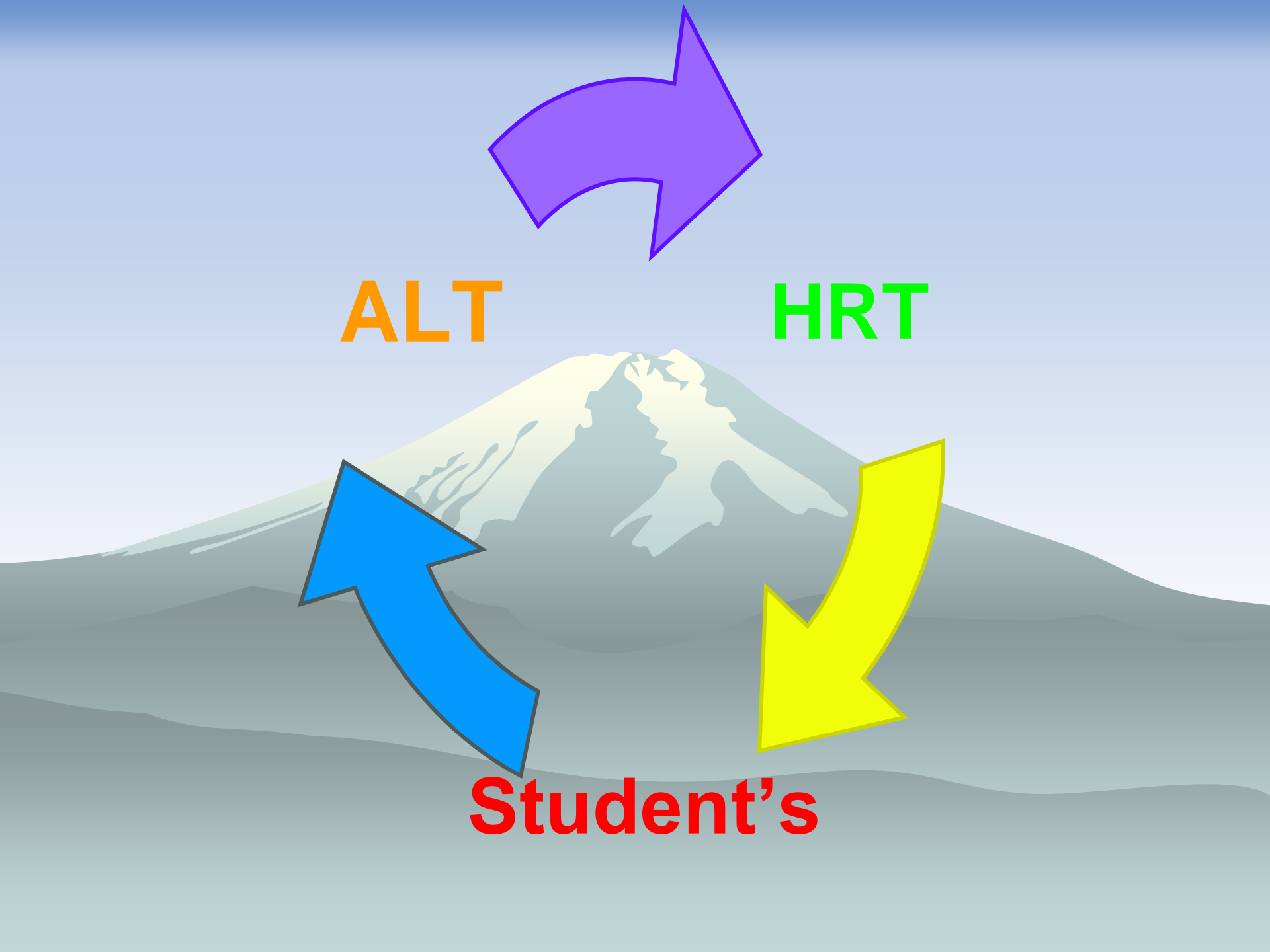
The Homeroom Teacher
(HRT)

The Students

ALT

HRT

Student's



The Student's

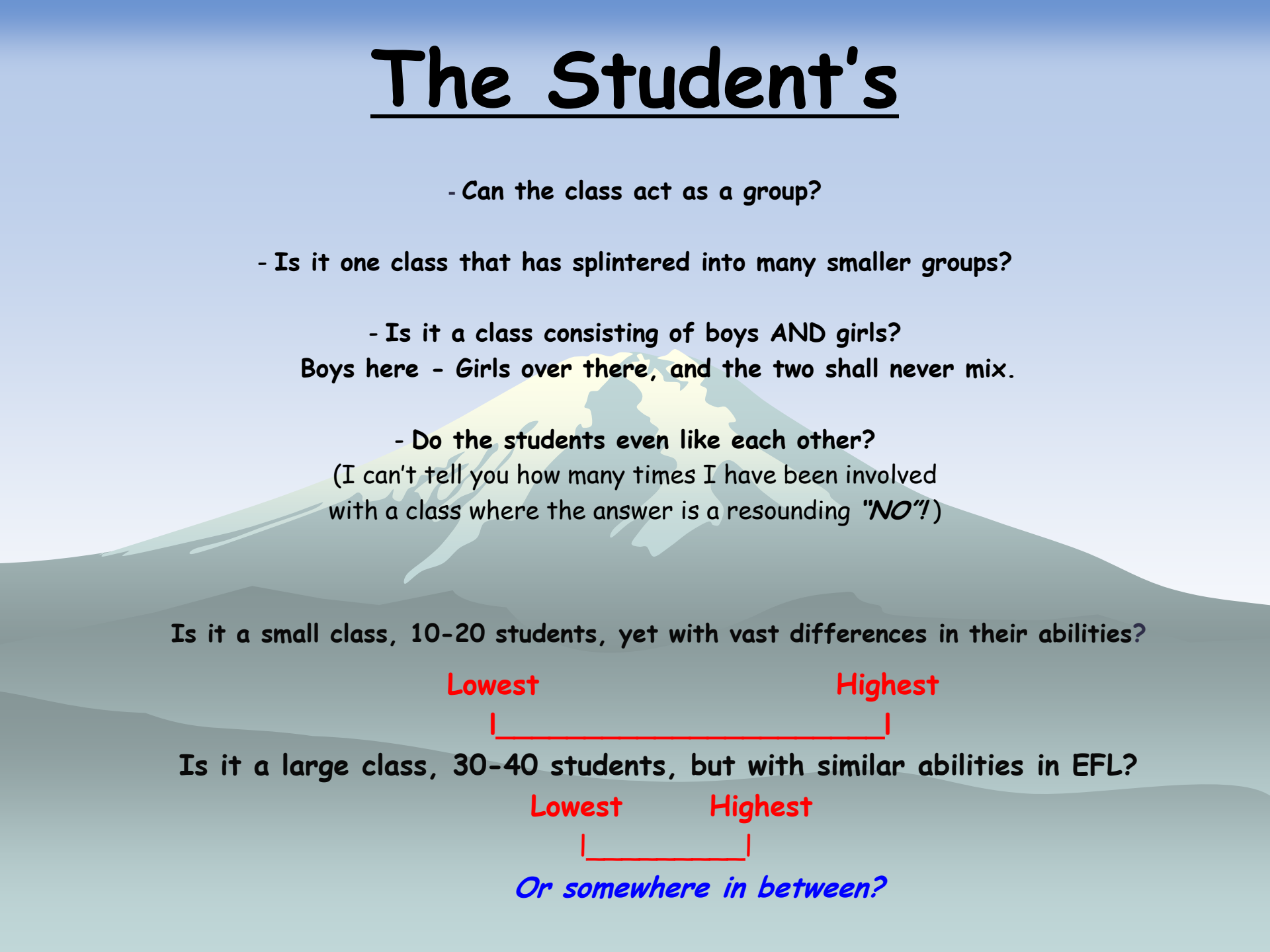
- Can the class act as a group?

- Is it one class that has splintered into many smaller groups?

- Is it a class consisting of boys AND girls?

Boys here - Girls over there, and the two shall never mix.

- Do the students even like each other?

(I can't tell you how many times I have been involved with a class where the answer is a resounding "NO"!) 

Is it a small class, 10-20 students, yet with vast differences in their abilities?

Lowest

Highest



Is it a large class, 30-40 students, but with similar abilities in EFL?

Lowest

Highest



Or somewhere in between?

History of Eigo (According to MEXT*)

*Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology - Japan

<http://www.go.jp/English/index.htm>

2002

*Developing a strategic plan to
cultivate*

Japanese With English Abilities

2003

*The course of Study
for Foreign Languages*

Internationalization

2004

*English Forum: Regarding the
Establishment of an Action
Plan to Cultivate*

Japanese with English Abilities

—Upgrading English Education in Japan

2011

*Establishment of
a Uniform Set of
English Classes for
5th and 6th graders .*

Eigo Note

Eigo Note: Establishment And Direction

A

5th and 6th
Utilizing the
Eigo Note
(as is)

1st - 4th
No English
Classes



B

5th and 6th
Utilizing the
Eigo Note
(as is)

1st - 4th
Infrequent
English Classes



C

5th and 6th
Utilizing the
Eigo Note
(free basis,
any order,
add/cut
lessons)

1st - 4th
Frequent
English Classes

Elementary Schools By Grade and Students

Imabari = 101(102)

1st grade = 12

5 boys/ 7 girls

2nd grade = 22

10 boys/ 12 girls

3rd grade = 18

8 boys/ 10 girls

4th grade = 6(7)

1(2) boys/ 5 girls

5th grade = 26

14 boys/ 12 girls

6th grade = 17

9 boys/ 8 girls

Kikuma = 217

1st grade = 30

15 boys/15 girls

2nd grade = 40

23 boys/17 girls

3rd grade = 39

20 boys/19 girls

4th grade = 35

20 boys/ 15 girls

5th grade = 38

25 boys/ 13 girls

6th grade = 35

17 boys/ 18 girls

Hiyoshi = 118

1st grade = 14

8 boys/6 girls

2nd grade = 13

5 boys/8 girls

3rd grade = 22

10 boys/11 girls

4th grade = 17

6 boys/ 11 girls

5th grade = 26

13 boys/ 13 girls

6th grade = 24

12 boys/ 12 girls

Kameoka = 95

1st grade = 11

6 boys/5 girls

2nd grade = 14

8 boys/6 girls

3rd grade = 16

9 boys/7 girls

4th grade = 18

9 boys/9 girls

5th grade = 20

12 boys/ 8 girls

6th grade = 16

8 boys/8 girls

Elementary Schools By Grade and Students

Imabari = 101(102)

We discuss the next weeks lesson plan a week beforehand

Everything is pretty much left up to me. The JTE teaches the 'Eigo Note' in Japanese for about 10/15 minutes. We use the book and CD.

The remaining time I use to teach English using games/activities that may or may not be connected to that days Eigo Note lesson. Both 5th and 6th grade teachers speak Very little English.

Kikuma = 217

With no prior planning we utilize the Eigo Note for a unspecific time.

Usually 10-15 minutes, doing 2 or 3 pages from the Eigo Note.

Afterwards I teach what I would usually teach if we were not using the Note. The fifth grade teacher speaks some English, 6th speaks none.

Hiyoshi = 118

Similar to Imabari Sho. The JTE's utilizes the Note for about 10 minutes during the class period. The remaining time I teach something related to that lesson's Note or not.

Both 5th and 6th grade Homeroom teachers speak no English.

In addition, this seems to be the first time for the 5th grade JTE to be teaching a higher grade class.

Kameoka = 95

The 6th grade teacher here has chosen not to utilize the Note for any lessons. He has made up his own plan. I teach the 5th and 6th graders here every other week. So thusly, I teach them one week, while the Homeroom teacher instructs them the next.

The 6th grade JTE here was transferred from a school that had been a pilot school for the Note for the previous two years.

The classes seem to be going well and students seem to be learning quite a bit through this

every other week ALT/JTE system.

The 5th grade teacher seems to be following suit. Both teachers speak little English.

Chapter 4 : Foreign Language Activities

I. OVERALL OBJECTIVE

“To form the foundation of pupils’ communication through foreign languages while developing the understanding of languages and cultures through various experiences, fostering a positive attitude toward communication, and familiarizing pupils with the sounds and basic expressions of foreign languages.”

Chapter 4 : Foreign Language Activities

II. CONTENTS (Grade 5 and Grade 6)

“1. Instruction should be given on the following items in order to help pupils actively engage in communication in a foreign language.

- (1) To experience the joy of communication in the foreign language..
- (2) To actively listen to and speak in the foreign language.
- (3) To learn the importance of verbal communication.”

“2. Instruction should be given on the following items in order to deepen the experiential understanding of the languages and cultures of Japan and foreign countries:

- (1) To become familiar with the sounds and rhythms of the foreign language, to learn its differences from the Japanese language, and to be aware of the interesting aspects of language and its richness.
- (2) To learn the differences in ways of living, customs and events between Japan and foreign countries and to be aware of various points of view and ways of thinking.
- (3) To experience communication with people of different cultures and to deepen the understanding of culture.”

Chapter 4 : Foreign Language Activities

III. LESSON PLAN DESIGN AND TREATMENT OF THE CONTENTS

“Consideration should be given to the following points when giving instructions to each grade, taking the learning level of pupils into account:”

Activities in Grade 5

“Considering that pupils learn the foreign language for the first time, teachers should introduce basic expressions about familiar things and events and engage pupils in communication activities where they experience interactions with one another. Teachers should engage pupils mainly in the activities where the pupils may become familiar with the foreign language or in the activities which are related to their daily lives or school lives.”

Activities in Grade 6

“Based on the learning in Grade 5, teachers should engage pupils in communication activities, focused on interaction with one another, including intercultural exchange activities, in addition to activities related to pupils’ daily lives or school lives.”

Eigo Note, Lessons and Activities : Grade 5L1-L3

5:L1 – Greetings of the World

Target - What's your name? My name is Ken. Nice to meet you.

- H1 - Learn that there different greetings in the world.
- H2 – Learn manners of greetings do the greetings with a positive attitude and are able to say your own name.
- H3 – Greet each other and exchange their name card.

5:L2 – Gestures

Target – How are you?

I'm happy.

- H1 - Learn about feelings and gestures
- H2 – Learn that gestures are important.
Communicate using gestures.
- H3 – Using gestures communicate with partners.
- H4 – Using gestures communicate with many friends.

5:L3 - Playing with Numbers

Target – How many? Five.

- H1 – Learn that there are several ways of counting in the world. Numbers from 0 to 10.
- H2 – Understand different ways of counting from around the world. Say numbers 0 to 20.
- H3 – Asking “how many?”
- H4 – Game using numbers

Additional Ideas, Tasks and Activities

Activities – Puppets : Each student has a puppet, they can say their own name or a special name for their puppet.

The aim of puppets; is take the stress off student, direct their attention else where. **Anpaman cards** : Using characters that all Japanese are familiar with. Students can introduce each other.

“I am Anpaman”. “I am Bikinman” “Nice to meet you

“Nice to meet you too” **Country cards-** Learning country names

World greetings- Various world greetings as they compare to Japanese greetings

Activities : How are you?

Cards Learn the different replies to “how are you?”

Utilizing UNO type cards. **Sheet** Bingo sheet. Each student asks each other. First student to circle all their replies is the winner.

Activities that involve all the students.

(These activities can be used as warm-up in future lessons.)

Activities

Expressions of time

Time bingo, each student asks each other what time is it?

What time is it?

Junken cards and UNO type game

What time is the bus?/train?/ferry?

Sheet, ask each other what time is the __?

What time is it in Japan?

What time is it in __?

(world time zones)

Make a world time wheel.

Eigo Note, Lessons and Activities : Grade 5L4-L6

Additional Ideas, Tasks and Activities

5:L4 – Self Introductions

Target – Do you like apples? Yes, I do./No, I don't.
I like bananas. Thank you.

- H1 – Listen to what people like or dislike.
- H2 – Tell a partner what you like and dislike.
- H3 – Check what things your friends like and dislike.
- H4 – Introduce yourself including things you like and dislike.

5:L5 – Clothes from Different Countries

Target – I don't like blue.

- H1 – Learn that there are different clothes around the world.
- Learn how to say them in English.
- H2 – Notice that is important to express your opinion.
- Learn expressions for buying clothes.
- H3 – Clearly express what you like. Help people to shop.
- H4 – Correctly express what you have bought.

5:L6 – Loan Words

Target – What do you want? Melon, please.

- H1 – Understand the difference between 'gairigo' (loan words) and English pronunciation.
- H2 – When asked, express what you would like.
- H3 – Order what you would like and make your own fruit parfait.
- H4 – Present your fruit parfait to the class.

Activities

Cards :Fruit and vegetable cards, practicing the names in various card games.

Dominoes. Learning ' __ and __ '.

Working in pairs they can help each other while the JTE / ALT help the slower ones.

Sheet :Do you like --? Students ask each other and practice the phrase.

Introduction: Students can stand up and say 'their name' 'what they like'

Activities

Learn the colors.

Learn the names of clothes. Sizes. Money.

Set up little stores for students to sell and buy things.

Phases : "Can I help you?" "I want a/an ---?"

"How about red?" "I don't like red."

How about ---? Okay how much? ¥__

Okay, I'll take it.

Describe what clothes you have. Classroom things

Activities

Using a menu.

Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

"What would you like?"

"I'd like __, __, and __.

(What would you like to) "drink?"

(What would you like for) "dessert?"

"How much is it?"

Using money and math skills students have to add the price of the food.

Students take turns being the waiter or waitress for 1 or 2 other students.

Eigo Note, Lessons and Activities : Grade 5L7-L9

Additional Ideas, Tasks and Activities

5:L7 – Big Quiz

Target – What's this? It's a pencil.

- H1 – Notice how interesting it is that the same thing has a different name in English and Japanese (written in Kanji). What's this?
- H2 – Understand “What's this”? And answer.
- H3 – Learn names of animals in English.
- H4 – Enjoy a “big quiz” with your friends

Activities

Classroom things . Cards, dominoes, and worksheet.
“Do you have..?” sheet. Students ask each other.
New Years animals . Animals of the world.
Forest-Sea-Jungle Endangered animals.
Using computers gather information on endangered animals of Japan/World.
Tie this lesson in to global warming /our environment near and far.

5:L8 – Make a Timetable

Target – I study Japanese.

- H1 – Learn what kids in foreign countries learn in school.
Learn names of subjects in English.
- H2 – With a positive attitude play a game using the days of the week and subject names.
- H3 – Tell your friends about your original timetable that you have made.
- H4 – Review quiz. Present your thinking to the class.

Activities

Days/Months. Day and month cards
Card games in pairs learning the days of the week and the months
Make a timetable of your day. Make calendars of the New Year.
Learn the names of school subjects.
Practice vocabulary of time;
‘in the morning’ in the afternoon’ ‘in the evening’ ‘at night’
“on the weekends’ ‘on Monday, Tuesday, etc.
Using the internet research the homepages of other schools in other parts of Japan and the World. Compare schedules of other schools.

5:L9 – Make a Lunch Menu

Target – What would you like? I'd like fruits.

- H1 – Learn that foreign countries breakfasts are different to Japan.
- H2 – Learn food and cooking phrases.
- H3 – Using polite language ask for things you'd like.
- H4 – Ask your friends what they like and make a ‘special lunch’.

Activities

Using Menu's . Ordering food and budgeting your money
Students learn about food and food nutrition.
Research on the internet the breakfasts of other countries.
Count calories. Learn about good eating habits and having balanced meals.
Learn the question words and how they are used.
‘Who’ ‘What’ “Where’ ‘When’ ‘Why’ and “How’

Eigo Note, Lessons and Activities : Grade 6L1-L3

Additional Ideas, Tasks and Activities

6:L1 - Let's Play with the Alphabet

Target – That's right. Good job! A-Z.

- H1 – Learn the “reading of the alphabet letters.
- H2 – Listen to the reading of a character and choose the right capital letter.
- H3 – Read the capital letters.

6:L2 – Learn That There are lots of Characters

Target – What's this?

- H1 – Have an interest in the different characters of the world.
- Learn that the alphabet also has lower case letters.
- Learn numbers above 20.
- H2 – Be interested in lower case letters. Learn how to read them.
- H3 – Read the lower case letters.
- H4 – Be interested in Roman letters you see around.
- Copy lower case and upper case letters.

6:L3 – Make a Calendar

Target – When is your birthday? My birthday is March third.

- H1 – Review Japanese monthly events and characteristics.
Learn the month that each event is in.
- H2 – Say your own birthday.
- H3 – Ask and reply about dates and months.
- Make your own birthday calendar.
- H4 – Using your calendar, introduce the month you were born.

Activities

ABC cards

Put the letters in their correct order

Dot to dot sheets

Practicing the order of the alphabet

ABC activity book

Fun with the ABC's

Activities

Cards and flags

Match the countries to their Script ex. Saudi Arabia-Arabic

Alphabet Cards -Lower Case

Match the letters, Dot to dot sheets

Printable sheets

Practice writing their own names using upper and lower case letters.

Practice signing their names.

Print words that they have already learned-fruit, vegetables, country names

Numbers above 20 Games using numbers

Activities

Months Cards Matching game and race

Ordinal numbers 1-31

When is your birthday? Birthday bingo

Learn holidays of other countries Make a calendar

Eigo Note, Lessons and Activities : Grade 6L4-L6

Additional Ideas, Tasks and Activities

6:L4 – Introduce Things that you can do

Target – **Can you swim? Yes, I can./ No, I can't. I can swim. I can't swim.**

- H1 – With a positive attitude ask and understand what your friends can and can't do.
- H2 – answer the question with what you can and can't do with friends.
- H3 – Ask and answer what you can and can't do with friends.
- H4 – Present what you can and can't do.
Understand what your friends present.

6:L5 – Street Directions

Target – **Where is the flower shop? Go straight. Turn right/left. Stop.**

- H1 – Learn and understand names of buildings in town.
- H2 – Listen and understand directions.
- H3 – Using direction phrases tell people how to get to a destination.
- H4 – Do real life practice of giving and receiving street directions.

6:L6 – Introduce which country you wish to go to

Target – **I want to go to Italy. Let's go!**

- H1 – Learn that English is spoken differently in different places.
- H2 – Listen to which country (someone) wants to go to and roughly understand the reason.
- H3 – Ask and answer which country you would like to go to.
- H4 - Say what country you want to go to and why.
Understand when a partner does the same.

Activities

Can you ..? 20 question game.
Students ask each other 20 questions.
See who can get the most 'yes' answers.

Sports Names

Sport cards. Dominoes. Sports games
Practice directions, left, right, forward, backward

Activities

Places and directions

Place cards, Directions,
Make shops and make your own map
Students ask each other "Where is ---?"
Students listen and find the places on the map.

Activities

Country names and places. "Where is ...?"

Find the different countries on a world map.

Country Game I want to go...

Our Japan: Places to visit and things to do in Japan

"I want to go to Tokyo."

"I want to visit Tokyo Disneyland."

"I want to go to Shizuoka ken." "I want to see Mt. Fuji."

"I want to go to Kochi ken" "I want to see whales".

Eigo Note, Lessons and Activities : Grade 6L7-L9

Additional Ideas, Tasks and Activities

6:L7 - Introduce Your Day

Target – **What time do you get up? At 7:00. I go to bed at 9:00.**

- H1 – Learn that there are time differences in the world.
Learn phrases about time.
- H2 – Understand as the teacher talks about their day.
- H3 – Make a ‘table’ of the things you do each day.
- H4 – Using the list, introduce your day (to the class).

6:L8 – Make an Original Drama

Target – **Please help me. What’s the matter?**

- H1 – Learn that there are different folktales around the world.
Try to listen with interest.
- H2 – Learn how interesting the story of the “Big Turnip” is.
Change the characters who appear in the story and make your own
“Big Turnip” story.
- H3 – In groups make a play out of your original story.
- H4 – Present your story, understand other groups stories.

6:L9 – Introduce your Future Dreams

Target - **What do you want to be? I want to be a cook.**

- H1 – Learn different job names.
- H2 – Understand when people talk about what they want to be.
- H3 – Ask and reply to what you want to be when you grow up.
- H4 – Using a “speech memo” introduce what you want to be and why.

Time

Card game

World time sheet What time is it in --?

Make a schedule of yourself (and you family))

Learn expression of time

Early, Earlier, Earliest Late, Later, Latest

Students ask each other their schedules

Activities

Read some short stories

Easy reader books

Make your own short story

Draw/ color/ write

Act it out in small groups

Share the stories at the local nursery school or on Parent’s Day

Activities

Occupation cards

Matching cards

Dominoes

Sheet bingo

“What do you want to be?”

“I want to be a/an __?”

Students ask each other.

Eigo Note 5th Grade Summary :Basic Phrases

5:L1 What's your name?
My name is Ken.
Nice to meet you.

5:L2 How are you?
I'm happy.

5:L3 How many?
Five.

5:L4 Do you like apples?
Yes, I do. /No, I don't.
I like bananas.
Thank you.

5:L5 I don't like blue.

5:L6 What do you want?
Melon, please.

5:L7 What's this?
It's a pencil.

5:L8 I study Japanese.

5:L9 What would you like?
I'd like fruits.

Eigo Note 6th Grade Summary : Basic Phrases

6:L1 That's right.
Good job! A-Z.

6:L2 What's this?

6:L3 When is your birthday?
My birthday is March third.

6:L4 Can you swim?
Yes, I can./ No, I can't.
I can swim. I can't swim.

6:L5 Where is the flower shop?
Go straight. Turn right/left. Stop.

6:L6 I want to go to Italy.
Let's go!

6:L7 What time do you get up?
At 7:00. I go to bed at 9:00.

6:L8 Please help me.
What's the matter?

6:L9 What do you want to be?
I want to be a cook.

Personal Criticisms of the Eigo Note

- It seems to be a whole lot of nothing. The lessons do not seem to have any links from one to the next.
- The lesson topics are extremely weak and without additional material cannot be sustained for 45 minutes.
- Many of the topics, along with the games and activities seem better suited for the lower grades.
- Who ever planned the Eigo Note seemed to be forcing the lessons to be connected to junior high school texts.

Positive Attributes of the Eigo Note

- *It has empowered a broader awareness of English Language instruction to a larger group of people (ALT's, JTE's, parents).
- *The need (lack thereof) for qualified English language instructors be they JTE or ALT has also become apparent to more people.
- *It has brought about the realization that the 'Eigo Note' is not the final product.
- *It finally happened. There has been talk of implementation of English classes as part of the regular curriculum for as long as I can remember.

Comments: gathered from the internet and local ALT's

"A set of English notes or activities would better describe it. For a teacher with very little or no experience teaching English to children it will be very difficult to use effectively."

"Unlike English taught in junior high schools elementary schools are free to use what-ever material they deem appropriate. It will be interesting to see how the local Boards of Education around the country develop a strategy for teaching English in their area. If you have a child in elementary Schools I strongly suggest you ask these questions."

"This is retarded".

"Last year at elementary school, I would come once a week, see all the grades, do whatever I felt like and then leave. The students actually learned stuff. The new JHS students can actually read now thanks to me and my predecessor actually teaching them phonics."

"I agree that it's not useless. Some of the activities are ok, a lot would actually be good for the lower grades. But my problem is that the teachers are all alike. "Well, this is what we're doing now, lets go through this book page by page." The book itself actually intentionally teaches nothing basically".

"Whatever you want to call it, but these are completely inadequate "brochures" for teaching 5th and 6th grade elementary school students. Most teachers (Japanese) use as they like (or don't). In order to teach students that age appropriate English conversation the top guys who are responsible for what they produced here should stay more in touch with what is really going on and needed. In my personal opinion it is not enough to teach the children some games and songs. More emphasis should be put on proper (correct) intonation and pronunciation. Mistakes that are not corrected during these 2 years at elementary school level (in a funny way of course - don't want to put too much burden on those kids) cannot (and will not) be corrected later. "

“Now, I come into elementary and 1-4 are now one class (instead of two, 1&2, 3&4) and I only see them once every other week. The 5/6th grade teacher takes 英語 ノート points at it and says “This....we have to use...Today. do..これ。” Pointing at the international greetings (fine, internationalism) and the counting pages... “They already know how to count...maybe we should do something different...” “へええ？ わからない。” Well then maybe you should leave teaching to me. This is the stupidest thing. Take a bunch of teachers who don’t know English and have them teach an English class with a book, half of which are things they should already know”.

“Sorry, i have not had the chance to actually see a copy of the eigo note yet. At the one school where we use it for my lessons, i am just given a photocopy of the days page. But so far, its seems pretty much like the same kind of things i would have been doing anyway. The variety of different cultures is better than what i can prepare, and also a better variety of songs than i can prepare or find. But the suggested activities and games seem pretty lame to me”.

“I have only used the Eigo Note a couple of times in my lessons so far since it has been implemented so I don't know if my comments would be a proper critique of the textbook. I enjoy certain aspects of the book and find it engaging for the students like introducing other languages and cultures through counting or greetings. It gives us ALTs a chance to show students not just one other culture but a chance to introduce an array of other cultures and countries that students should be aware of as well. The accompanying teacher's textbook is in Japanese so the homeroom teacher can do certain activity with students if they'd like even when the ALT is not around. I like seeing the HR teachers take the initiatives to complete certain materials without me there so that when I'm there it feels like a review class which gives students the confidence to show what they know”.

My thoughts on Eigo noto

1. Audio. As I've encountered with some audio before Eigo noto, some of the voices that the actors make are completely ridiculous. I can barely understand what the people are saying, why would I want to introduce a foreign student to the language this way? I'm sure voices can be cute and likeable without making it difficult to understand.

Clarity should be first, sounding like an anime character should be out.

2. The introduction to reading is not sufficient and the lack of a real introduction to writing is depressing. Why have children figure out the spelling of famous people's names as an activity? Is anything spelt more irregularly than names? Why not look at how children who are learning to read and write English in English countries do it? For example: teaching children how to visually recognize easy short high-frequency words. Reading a variety of very easy books. Simply teaching them how to read some of the vocabulary they know anyway (like colours or animals) will give them a basic feel for some English phonetics.

Many children that enter junior high have no clue what's going on with reading and writing. Any understanding of phonetics and how it relates to spelling is basically 0. The learning curve is very steep. You're okay if you learnt it all in juku already. Writing should be introduced in elementary too I feel.

Children in elementary, especially those even younger than 5th and 6th grade, are still much more naturally curious. They would take to reading and then writing in English much faster and with more enthusiasm. A focus on 5th and 6th graders is counter to absolutely everything we know about language acquisition in children.

If Japan really wants to get serious about English they should give more hours to lower grade learners. We need to be speaking, listening and singing with first and second graders far more often. Reading and writing can then be introduced more towards third or fourth grade. We don't necessarily need to start covering much more complex grammar in elementary, but we could for instance be inputting a lot more useful vocabulary, because the vocabulary input in junior high is so low.

Perhaps if children learn more reading and writing earlier they will be more motivated to read by themselves later.

Reaching the Final Target Level

How are you?

1st grade
How are you?
Happy/Sad
Angry/Sleepy

2nd grade
How are you?

3rd grade
How are you?

4th grade
How are you?
Fine, thank you.
So-so.

4th grade
Not so good.
(1)

4th grade
Not so good.
(2)

5:L2
How are you?
I'm happy.
gestures

6:L8
Please help me?
What's the matter?
drama

