

**Title of Session:** Benkyoukai-Structuring Fun Classroom Activities

**Moderator:** Keiko Schneider

**Guest Speaker:** Roberta Young

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**KeikoS:** Welcome to benkayoukai!

**KeikoS:** Today's presentation is done by Roberta Young sensei

**KeikoS** bows

**KeikoS:** Everybody is familiar with her paper, I assume?

**KeikoS:** <http://home.att.net/~robertayoung/jessi/jpnactivities.html>

**KeikoS:** Now I would like to ask Roberta sensei to introduce herself...

**KeikoS:** then everybody intros and...

**KeikoS:** then presentation will officially start!

**KeikoS:** So, Roberta sensei?

**RYoungGst2:** Hi everyone. I'm Roberta Young.

**RYoungGst2:** I teach Japanese to high school students in the Bronx section of New York City.

**RYoungGst2:** I have also taught Japanese at the middle school, elementary, and preschool (!) levels.

**RYoungGst2:** I consider myself to be just a regular teacher so I'm a little uncertain about whether I have much to offer.

**RYoungGst2:** But I think the reason Schneider sensei invited me to be a guest speaker is because I'm kind of "creative" in using a variety of activities in the classroom.

**RYoungGst2:** There are two related topics we can focus on today.

**KeikoS:** let's do everybody's intro

**KeikoS** . o O ( suimasen )

**KeikoS:** I am Keiko Schneider, the organizer of benkyoukai

**BJ** waves hi. I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania, US

**JkfaheyGst7:** I am John Fahey from UT El Paso, computer lab person.

**YukikoGst9:** I am Yukiko, graduate student. Nice to meet you all.

**SergeiG** joined the room.

**PamelaT:** Hi, I am a high school math teacher gone back to school to work on my doctorate and am interested in how its done elsewhere

**KeikoS:** Hi, Sergei, perfect timing

**KeikoS:** We are doing intro

**JanineT:** Ohayou gozaimasu!. I'm Janine Tate . I teach Japanese K-4 at a private Anglican school in Perth, Western Australia.

**SergeiG:** Thanks

**YoshikoGst6:** I'm Yoshiko, 6th grade math teacher in Lakewood, CA. I'll be teaching a new elective class in Japanese starting in Sept.

**KarenCh:** teaching Japanese in a public high school in Creston, BC, Canada

**SergeiG:** I teach EFL for university sts in Minsk

**SergeiG:** I don't speak Japanese. Is it Ok?

**RYoungGst2:** continuing from before... One is about the types of activities we can use in the classroom to meet the needs and appeal to the interests and strengths of our students.

**KeikoS:** Is that everybody?

**KeikoS:** Session will be in English.

**PamelaT:** we are a very diverse group

**SergeiG:** Great!

**KeikoS:** But let me show the URL for the paper that is a base for today's presentation.

**KeikoS:** <http://home.att.net/~robertayoung/jessi/jpnactivities.html>

**KeikoS:** OK, I guess we are ready for Roberta sensei

**KeikoS** claps loudly

**RYoungGst2:** thanks. continuing again... The second is about structuring those activities in a logical manner so that in the course of a lesson students progress from learning vocabulary and sentence patterns to applying it in a communicative activity.

**RYoungGst2:** Do you have any questions?

**KeikoS** looks around

**PamelaT:** do you think this structure works for other subjects?

**RYoungGst2:** I think it always makes sense to find out what kids already know first.

**RYoungGst2:** Teach them what they need to small in a small quantity next.

**RYoungGst2:** And give lots of opportunity to apply it in a "real" way

**RYoungGst2:** Does that help?

**PamelaT:** yes it is the same in math

**RYoungGst2:** Shall I talk about teaching vocabulary?

**JkfaheyGst7:** Please

**RYoungGst2:** Are there other specific questions?

**RYoungGst2:** I often use songs, puppet shows, kamishibai, etc...

**RYoungGst2:** My basic approach to introducing a new vocabulary word if I do not have any special song or book has a few steps:

**KeikoS** is all ears

**RYoungGst2:** First, I introduce words through listening and speaking only..

**RYoungGst2:** 1) I say the word at normal speed, with body language if applicable, and have students echo - 3x

**RYoungGst2:** 2) I say the word, one syllable at a time, counting each syllable on my fingers and have the students echo each syllable.

**RYoungGst2:** 3) I say the word again at slowish speed while pointing to each sound on my fingers and have the students echo.

**RYoungGst2:** 4) Repeat Step 1 - generally 1x only

**RYoungGst2:** It's very fast-paced.

**RYoungGst2:** Steps 1-4 takes about 15 or 20 seconds.

**RYoungGst2:** I probably introduce about 3-6 words. The whole thing takes about one or two minutes.

**KeikoS:** So....

**KeikoS:** you start with pronunciation and meaning?

**RYoungGst2:** Yes, the meaning may be clear through body language

**JanineT:** Or Picture?

**SergeiG:** do you use pictures?

**RYoungGst2:** an example is teaching delicious, not good, bad - before starting a food tasting

**RYoungGst2:** Yes. I use a lot of visuals

**RYoungGst2:** Second, I show the words in writing.

**PamelaT:** do you ever translate or use associated words?

**RYoungGst2:** Yes. But if possible, I like to create a context so students can understand the meaning without direct translation.

**RYoungGst2:** continuing... I do this activity from Day One - even before students have learned anything at all about the Japanese writing system.

**RYoungGst2:** (writing - that is)

**KeikoS . o O ( interesting point )**

**RYoungGst2:** 1) I write the first kana and say it. Students echo.

**RYoungGst2:** 2) I write the second kana and say it. Students echo.

**RYoungGst2:** Then, I point as I say the first and second kana. Students echo.

**RYoungGst2:** 3) I write the third kana/Say it./Students echo.

**RYoungGst2:** Then I point and say the second and third kana./Students echo.

**RYoungGst2:** Then I point and say the first, second, and third./Students echo. etc.

**RYoungGst2:** When the students do not know their kana yet, they are very attentively watching me write these squiggles. I think they learn the words better though this activity - even though they can not read. I also know that many of them start to make inferences about how the Japanese written language works.

**RYoungGst2:** This is also very fast-paced.

**RYoungGst2:** This activity takes about 30 seconds per word.

**RYoungGst2:** This is NOT how I teach reading Japanese.

**JanineT:** Did you do this activity with elementary school students?

**RYoungGst2:** It's how I teach vocabulary.

**RYoungGst2:** Yes.

**RYoungGst2:** I used this with little ones too

**PamelaT:** how many words do you cover in a class with this fast pace?

**RYoungGst2:** I aim for no more than eight.

**PamelaT:** are they grouped or chunked for association?

**RYoungGst2:** Research indicates that that is about the maximum amount learners can handle at one time.

**RYoungGst2:** Definitely!

**RYoungGst2:** Because my aim is for them to use these words for communication.

**RYoungGst2:** So, they are contextually related.

**RYoungGst2:** Towards the end of the period, after we have already applied the words in other activities, we will turn to the appropriate unit pages and underline or highlight the vocabulary (and other things) that we covered in the day's lesson.

**RYoungGst2:** It's the application in the middle that's most exciting for me.

**RYoungGst2:** Should we talk about lesson aims?

**KarenCh:** yes, please

**KeikoS:** I thought it was quite interesting

**RYoungGst2:** One of the best things I learned is to have one aim - not cover too much in one lesson.

**SergeiG:** Good point

**PamelaT:** I want my math students to communicate in the language of math and am trying to see how learning a new language might be similar and am looking at new ways to develop it. So far things are very similar

**RYoungGst2:** If my aim is to taste food and comment on it...

**RYoungGst2:** three words (mentioned before) are enough.

**RYoungGst2:** The students need a chance to "interview" each other,

**RYoungGst2:** ask and share opinions,

**RYoungGst2:** write down a partner's answer

**RYoungGst2:** This is sufficiently challenging and also fun for one 45-minute period.

**PamelaT:** I like that string of ideas

**RYoungGst2:** Then, we report our results...

**RYoungGst2:** For example:

**RYoungGst2:** After students can ask "How are the beans?"

**RYoungGst2:** and answer "They're OK"

**RYoungGst2:** We can look at our collected data

**RYoungGst2:** and make a report:

**RYoungGst2:** "John said "The beans are OK""

**RYoungGst2:** Jason said "The beans are OK" too.

**RYoungGst2:** Jenny said "The beans are delicious."

**RYoungGst2:** This activity takes advantage of full sentence reporting

**RYoungGst2:** after using shorter utterances for asking and answering

**RYoungGst2:** The students enjoy the interaction.

**SergeiG:** looks like you stick to the following pattern: introduction-training-development?

**RYoungGst2:** The visual layout - collecting data on a chart - is helpful for them

**RYoungGst2:** Sergei, right!

**RYoungGst2:** That's actually a format that is expected of us in New York City...

**RYoungGst2:** After the development, application.

**KeikoS:** Roberta sensei...

**RYoungGst2:** Yes...?

**KeikoS:** How can you develop old not so good aim to a new good one?

**KeikoS:** tricks, tips, focus?

**RYoungGst2:** Think of a real way to use the language or grammar that you want the kids to know.

**RYoungGst2:** Does anyone have an example of vocabulary or grammar that they need to teach soon?

**RYoungGst2:** ...perhaps it's required in the textbook...

**KeikoS** digests Roberta's comment

**KarenCh:** making a past tense verb?

**RYoungGst2:** Great example!

**RYoungGst2:** So... what thoughts come to mind?

**JanineT:** What I did on the weekend?

**RYoungGst2:** Right! or yesterday... or on vacation...

**RYoungGst2:** Prepare them with some drill or chant, etc.

**SergeiG:** When we teach grammar context-based approach works better i think

**RYoungGst2:** In other words, make sure they can turn "tabemasu" to "tabemashita"

**RYoungGst2:** Yes, they remember it better too.

**PamelaT:** do you lose student interest during drill or chart?

**RYoungGst2:** continuing... but then put most of the class time into using the language.

**RYoungGst2:** I keep drill very short and fast

**RYoungGst2:** If I see they're losing it I express sympathy and ask them to hang in a little longer

**RYoungGst2:** or, more likely, I move to a different activity

**SergeiG:** Right...Change you activities , bring variety in class

**RYoungGst2:** I use rhythmic chants for drills to keep the pace fast

**RYoungGst2:** The change can be slight.

**RYoungGst2:** After one minute of drill...

**PamelaT:** Are some rhythms better?

**RYoungGst2:** have them stand up and do it again - maybe with movement if it makes sense

**RYoungGst2:** Songs, chants, repetitive books are great...

**RYoungGst2:** because repetition is built-in

**RYoungGst2:** This is a very busy time of year but there is more detail in my paper regarding these activities...

**SergeiG:** So your sts move around the classroom...I like that!

**KeikoS** smiles

**RYoungGst2:** They like it too

**RYoungGst2:** I move around and participate in the activities with them

**RYoungGst2:** It can also be an informal assessment of how they're doing.

**KeikoS** . o O ( good point )

**SergeiG:** How do you correct their mistakes? When do you do that?

**JanineT:** I try to do that too, even with my young students - simple surveys etc....

**RYoungGst2:** To get back to Schneider sensei's question

**JanineT:** But what do you do with the students who insist on using English when they're out of ear-shot?

**RYoungGst2:** So, my not so good "Aim Question" would be "How do you make past-tense verbs?"

**RYoungGst2:** A better aim is "How can you talk about what you did yesterday?"

**RYoungGst2:** OK (to Janice)...

**PamelaT:** The question of mistake corrections intrigues me

**RYoungGst2:** I think it's really important to make sure you don't ask them to use Japanese without preparing them first.

**JanineT:** Yes, very true!

**RYoungGst2:** So... you might focus on what they ate this morning (after learning words for foods) or what classes they took in middle school (after learning words for subjects)

**RYoungGst2:** Mistake correction....

**RYoungGst2:** There are many ways to do it...

**RYoungGst2:** or not do it...

**PamelaT:** what makes a correctable mistake?

**RYoungGst2:** I tend to either correct with a smile while nodding positively for their effort and for the correct parts.

**RYoungGst2:** OR - I reply with a better model

**KeikoS** looks around

**JanineT**: Exactly as you would with a toddler learning a first language

**RYoungGst2**: e.g. if they say "omoshiroi da!"

**RYoungGst2**: I'll answer "Omoshiroi?"

**KeikoS**: well, the discussion is just getting hotter, but I am worried about Roberta sensei's fingers.

**RYoungGst2**: Or - I let it go until tomorrow.

**KeikoS**: Maybe I will ask last comment or question?

**RYoungGst2**: People can feel free to e-mail me...

**KeikoS**: We can definitely continue our discussion onto senseiOnline listserv

**JanineT**: When your students copy down the aim for the lesson, is it always in English?

**RYoungGst2**: No, as they get better in Japanese, I can sometimes write the aim in Japanese.

**PamelaT**: thank-you, your language model ties in closely to new content models for any subject

**KeikoS**: Any last comment, Roberta sensei?

**RYoungGst2**: Please feel free to stay in touch.

**KeikoS**: Thank you very much.

**KeikoS** bows and claps loudly

**RYoungGst2**: May I share my e-mail address?

**JanineT**: Thank you! That was great!

**KeikoS**: And I thank you all for participation.

**SergeiG**: It was nice meeting you. Thank you!

**KeikoS** . o O ( please, if you don't mind )

**JkfaheyGst7**: Thank you.

**RYoungGst2**: [rlhly@optonline.net](mailto:rlhly@optonline.net)

**KeikoS**: As Roberta sensei said, the paper has lot more ideas

**KarenCh**: thank you, Roberta sensei

**KeikoS** bows for a comprehensive paper

**RYoungGst2**: Dou itashimashite...

**YukikoGst9**: Deep bow to Young sensei.

**JanineT**: Roberta Sensei, is your JESSI book and CD still available?

**KeikoS**: Roberta sensei, you survived the presentation!

**RYoungGst2**: Janine, yes it is.

**KeikoS**: Thank you so much for doing this.

**RYoungGst2**: Schneider sensei, yes okagesama de

**KeikoS**: between the busy school year and visiting Japan, right?

**KeikoS** bows deeply

**RYoungGst2**: I leave on Friday!

**KeikoS**: WOW

**KeikoS**: douka ki o tsukete

**KeikoS** turns green with envy

**RYoungGst2**: Thank you

**KeikoS** bows so deep her head touches the toes

**JanineT**: Thank you again! Back to bed (it's 5.00 am here!!!) See you on Sensei Online!