**SDC Homework Assignment – Junior High School**

Main activity

The following is a typical lesson at one of my junior high schools. My JTEs tend to ask me to prepare for half lessons, as such this lesson plan would not likely be enough for a full hour, but it would serve well as a full lesson’s main activity.

This activity plan can be used for any grade at JHS, though for karuta the individual clues would be best tailored to abilities and grammar points. The activity sheet included here was originally for third grade class, practicing relative pronouns, but simpler sentences could have been used for lower grades.

The phonics exercise I find useful for all grades. I frequently use modified versions of this as a warm up for all JHS classes.

One thing to note about this activity plan is that the JTE’s role is reduced and there is not much interactive team teaching. This could work better for some teachers and worse for others depending on teaching styles. The JTE’s main role here could be helping with translating some of your instructions if the pupils – particularly younger ones – do not understand. One advantage of this could be if you ever have to do a lesson where the usual JTE is absent, and you’re working with another teacher for the first time, or one who does not speak English very well.

**Phonics exercise – 5 / 10 minutes**

I originally found these sheets online and tried them at the end of a lesson. They worked well so I often use them and modified versions for different phonemes as warm up exercises.

I hand out sheets to pupils and explain the exercise to them if it is the first time:

* I will read out some similarly sounding words in order, and you are to fill in the blank spaces with what you hear me say
* Mostly you will only have to fill in the missing vowel of the words, but at the end you will have to listen and write the words in full

Before starting I write the phonemes being practiced in the lesson on the board and ask the class to repeat the sounds after me. I have a pre-prepared answer sheet of my own to minimise the chance of giving divergent information to the pupils.

I read out the words in turn, with a short pause in between each word, and then repeat all the words again a little faster.

I ask for volunteers to offer up answers, and I write the correct ones on the blackboard as they are offered to me. As the words come in groups of three, I read them out and have the pupils repeat me, paying attention to the different vowel sounds i.e. In the first example exercise on the enclosed worksheet, after pupils have given me the correct answer to the first pair of words, I will read them both out and ask them to repeat. If the pronunciation of the two words is indistinct, I will ask them to repeat, saying the words more clearly.

After all the answers have been revealed, I will find out which pupil or pupils did best, and often for younger grades will give stickers to the winners. If there is enough time, I will go through the words one by one still written on the board and ask the pupils whether they know them. It can be a useful vocabulary builder as well as a phonetic exercise.

**Karuta – profession / who and which – 20 / 25 minutes**

Karuta is a very common Japanese classroom game and can be used for many grammar or vocabulary points at ES and JHS, and the pupils tend to enjoy the competitive and active aspects of it. In short, it can be a versatile game and can make a boring topic more enjoyable for the pupils.

For each game I will write a list of clues per picture. In the enclosed example I wrote 24 sentences – twelve for each of the relative pronouns ‘who’ and ‘which’. This list of words is for my use. For the pupils, I made separate worksheets comprising of corresponding pictures for each clue. The pictures I find on Google images, usually searching the relevant picture plus ‘black and white word art’.

I hand out worksheets to pupils, enough for one between two, and then ask them to turn their desks around so that pupils are facing each other across two desks. I then ask them if they know the rules of karuta (the answer is very rarely no), but if they need explaining I say:

* cut out each picture and arrange them across the middle of your desks face up
* I will read out a clue, and the first pupil to pick up the picture representing the correct answer wins that point. It is also best to tell them to keep their hands behind the desks whilst the clues are being read to make the game fairer

The pupils then cut up the pictures and arrange them randomly on their desks. Usually the pupils themselves have scissors with them, but I recommend bringing a few spare sets from the teachers’ room in case.

Once all pairs are ready, I read out the clues in turn, and the pupils pick up the cards in turn. Once all clues have been given, I will ask them to count their cards and the winners to collect a sticker each from the front of the class.

The time karuta takes can be managed if you are running out of time or find you have too much time. Sometimes I have had to announce halfway through that the next clue will be the last one when pushed for time.