

## **Teachers Retreat June 2008**

### **Note-making**

(A synthesis of notes by Nishi and Steve)

In the afternoon session Nishi Suresh, Satomi Hatae, Steve Hesse and Susan MacAskill discussed note making.

We started with the question, “What is the best way to teach note making? Susan and Nishi felt that students didn’t seem to grasp the concept of note making very easily. They tend to summarize articles and write full sentences instead of key words and phrases.

Steve suggested that it helps to remind students to use keywords and phrases, and suggested that students be given time in class to compare notes with classmates and to “rework” their notes; for example, rewriting sentences or a summary into key words and phrases. In such situations, the teacher can act as a facilitator and help students individually or in pairs to find key words and phrases that reflect main points.

We also talked about using examples of notes from the website that illustrate “before” and “after.” Students can view these before they begin making notes in earnest, or after they have completed a note making assignment, but before redrafting their notes.

It was agreed that whatever the students use to make notes (e.g., language learning histories, readings, etc.) they should repeatedly share their notes in pairs, so that they can discuss note making and reflect upon their own notes. The most effective way to help students with note making seems to be repetition: in short, begin with making notes, share those notes with a partner, discuss them, then rewrite them and repeat the process.

Nishi felt that it is really important to help students understand the concept of note making by giving some examples, then giving some opportunities to read articles and make notes in the class. After the retreat she encouraged her students do more sharing of their notes with peers and found it really helped the students develop their skills much faster.

(An editor’s note (Steve’s): It is worth noting that, ironically, no one seems to have taken very good notes during this session (!).