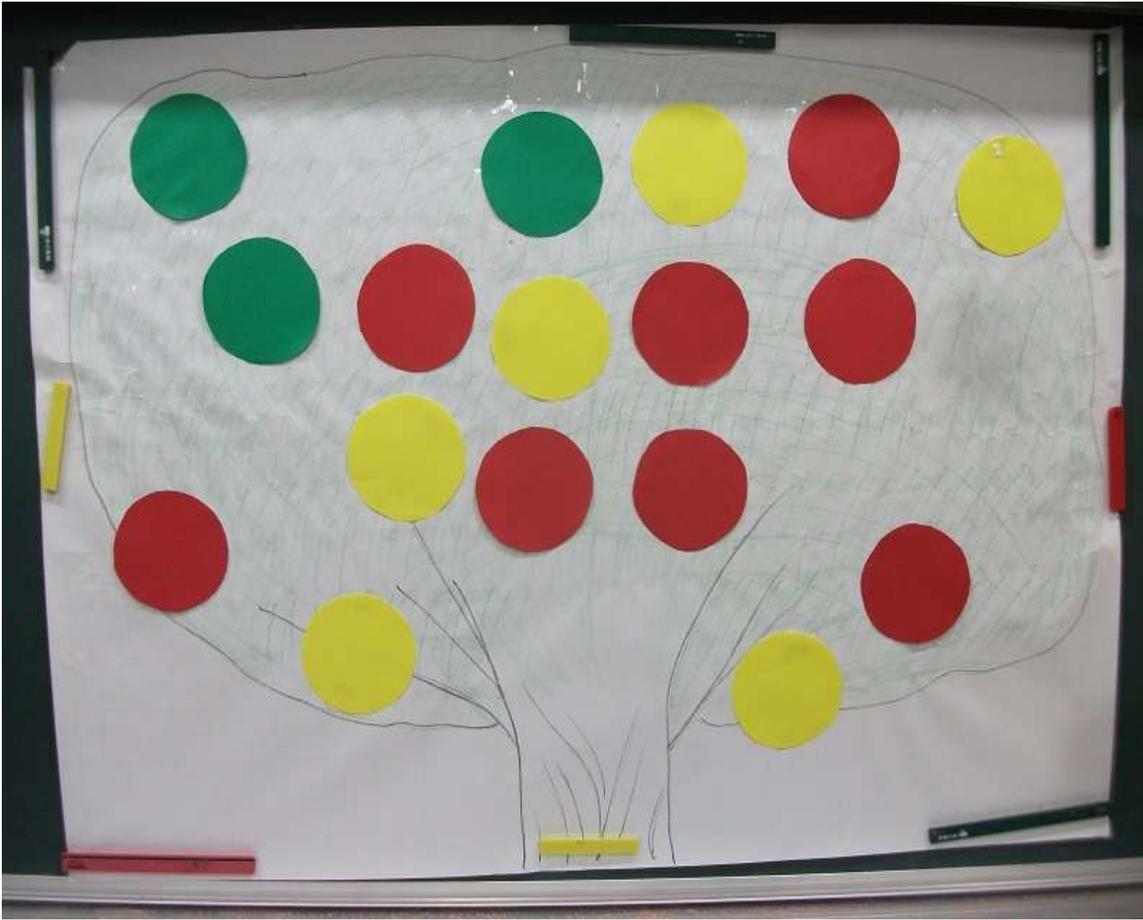


## 5TH AND 6TH GRADE ENGLISH AT MIKAJIRI ELEMENTARY



I think that it's very important for the students to do things outside of the textbook. This picture is for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade lesson of "How many?" In the textbook, there are 20 apples that the students can choose to color as many as they like, but they would only be red. They would then interview classmates and find out how many apples other students have, and how many of those students have the same number that they chose.

I know that this is below the performance level of Kanegasaki's 5<sup>th</sup> graders, so, I "leveled up" the activity.

They can still choose to color up to 20 apples, but now they can have yellow and green apples, too. This also "levels up" the questions that they are now able to ask. Instead of only the simple question of "How many apples do you have? I have 17 apples," they can now ask "How many red apples do you have? I have 8 red apples."

I also made trees for the class. I made one large tree (in the above picture), with apples on magnets, to use as the demonstration. I also made an A3-size tree for each group to use, with removable-sticker apples. This A3 tree was a prototype. An improved tree was introduced at Nagaoka ES (maybe you'll see a picture in the "5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade English at Nagaoka" blog entry in November).

One reason I chose to make the trees, was to get the students to "touch" the activity. It's great that sometimes they can color things and design things, but it's not very often they can actually hold, feel, and move the things they use as learning tools. This is called Tactile Learning, and it is an important portion of learning in many different subjects, such as music or art.



Here is a group starting to choose apples for their tree.



The students in these two groups are taking turns asking “How many OOO apples do you have?” and answering, “I have ## OOO apples.”

I think this activity was very successful and fun, and that it helped the students really understand what the questions and answers mean, and how to properly use them. I look forward to the next activity we can “level up” and enjoy learning.

In 6<sup>th</sup> grade, we just finished a series on “When is your Birthday?”  
“My Birthday is October 12<sup>th</sup>.”

So, on the last lesson of this series, we made Birthday cards after interviewing classmates for a few minutes. The students could add their own decorations and colors to the cards. In my two elementary schools, there are small class sizes, so most of the class already knows everyone's birthdays, so that proved to be a challenge throughout the series of lessons.



Switching from the interview to card-making is not easy in the music room, because we don't have desks. So, everyone has to draw/write/color wherever they can find flat space, which is usually the floor.



Many 6<sup>th</sup> grade lessons have the students using more creativity to express themselves. In the rest of the year, they will say what they can or cannot do, where they would like to go, what their dream job is, and a few others.