

# Action Research Final Report 2014

Takemi Morioka

1. Title: Improving students' motivation to read English and reading skills

2. Context:

(1) Level: 3rd year students of junior high school

(2) Class size: 38 students

(3) Time: 45 or 50-minute-class, 4 classes per week

(4) Textbook: New Horizon English Course 3

(5) Problems:

a. Levels of students are very different.

b. Students did not have opportunities to use much English. They were taught in the grammar-translation method last year.

c. They need to be able to read long passages in the textbook and entrance examinations.

3. Goal: Students can read English passages consisting of over 200 words fluently.

4. What I did

(1) Reading the textbook

a. Oral interaction

b. Giving meanings of new words and phrases

c. Questions in Japanese (main idea)

d. True or false questions

e. Questions and answers (with some personal questions)

f. Talking in pairs

g. Giving attention to words and phrases

(2) Reading "Easy True Stories"

a. Telling a story with nine pictures (explaining unknown words and checking students' comprehension)

b. Silent reading (timing reading speed)

c. Vocabulary and comprehension quizzes

d. Discussion

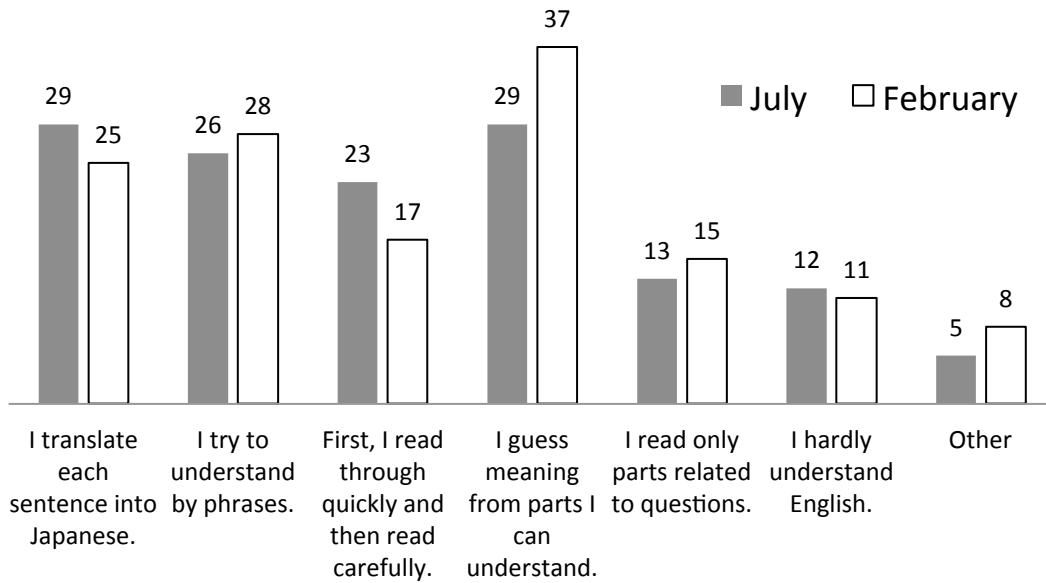
5. Results

I asked 2 classes of students to answer a questionnaire about reading at the end of February.

Q1: How do you read English passages?

About half of students guess meaning from parts they can understand, while around one third of students try to understand by phrases (see Graph 1).

**Graph 1: How do you read English passages?**



Q2: Which stories you read in class were interesting for you?

(The numbers in the parentheses show the number of students who answered.)

The textbook

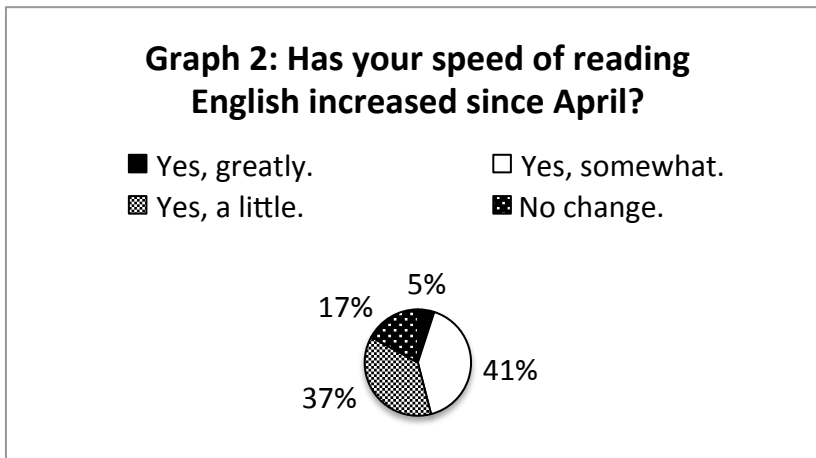
- Unit 6 Break the Barrier (11)
- Let's Read 2 Roy Brown - Boy Detective (11)
- Let's Read 1 A Mother's Lullaby (10)
- Unit 5 Electronic Dictionaries - For or Against (7)
- Let's Read 3 An Artist in the Arctic (5)
- Unit 2 A Fireworks Festival (4)
- Unit 3 Fair Trade Chocolate (4)
- Unit 4 Learn by Losing (2)
- Multi Plus 3 (Challenge) Japanese around the World (1)

Easy True Stories

- Unit 4 Yawning Is Contagious (23)
- Unit 3 There's Something in the Mattress (8)
- Unit 1 The Color TVs (6)

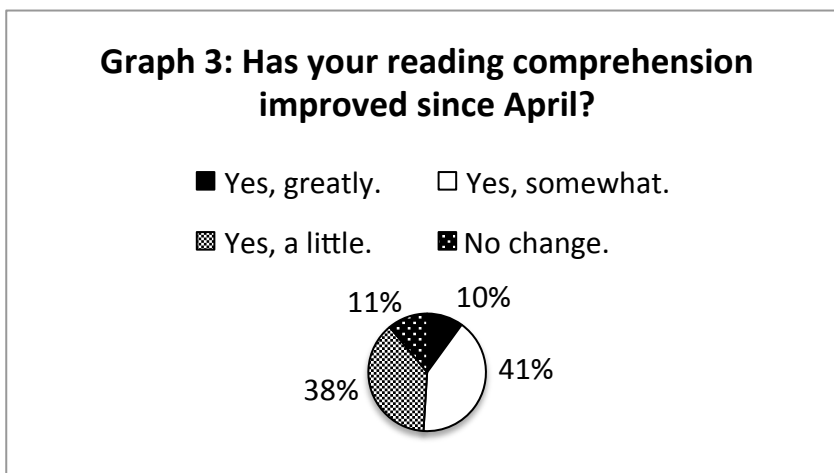
Q3: Has your speed of reading English increased since April?

Over 80% of students answered their speed had increased. 5% of them have improved greatly and about 40% of them increased somewhat and a little respectively.



Q4: Has your reading comprehension improved since April?

About 90% of students improved their reading comprehension skills. Like reading speed, around 40% of them became somewhat or a little better respectively. 10% of them could improve greatly.



Q5: How do you think your reading comprehension can be improved?

(The numbers in the parentheses show the number of students who answered.)

Reading

Practice many times. (10)

Read repeatedly. (5)

Read English books. (3)

Read English every day. (1)

Read the textbook. (1)

Read a lot of English sentences with timing. (1)

Work on reading comprehension quizzes. (1)

### Integration

Read and write English. (3)

Read, write and speak a lot of English. (1)

Read, write and listen to English. (1)

Listen to English CDs every day. (1)

### Motivation

Get interested. (3)

Be willing to read English. (1)

Enjoy studying. (1)

### Exposure to English

Continue to study. (5)

Be exposed to English. (2)

Be familiar with English. (2)

Go abroad. (3)

### Vocabulary and grammar

Learn vocabulary. (16)

Learn grammar and vocabulary. (4)

Read checking vocabulary. (2)

Read understanding grammar. (1)

Learn vocabulary and read slowly. And then read many times. (1)

### Translation

Practice translating English into Japanese. (5)

### Strategy

Read Japanese translation and English sentences alternately and learn the meanings of the words. (3)

Review what we learn and take notes. (1)

Practice speaking and talk with foreigners. (1)

Understand the subject in a sentence. (1)

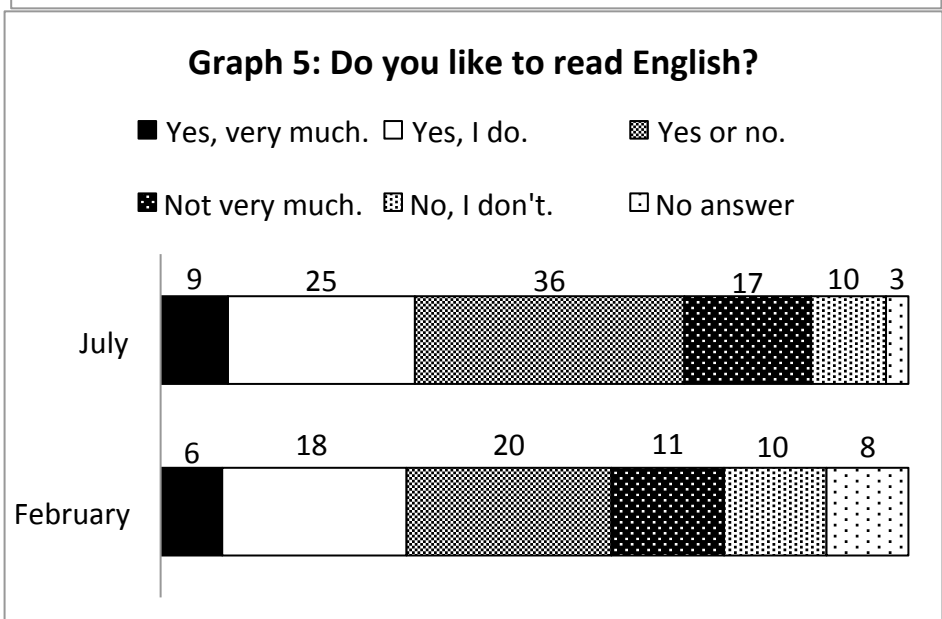
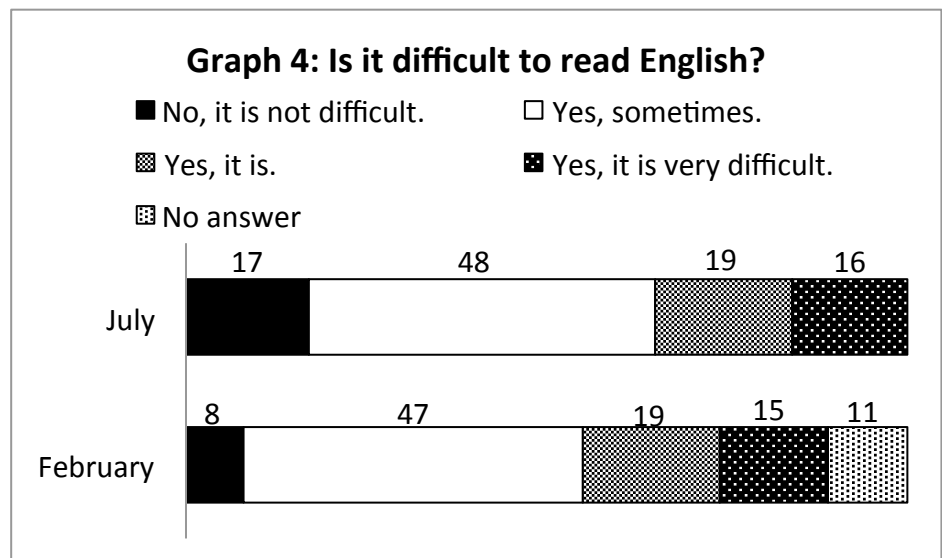
Image the story. (1)

Read an English sentence from the beginning to the end. (1)

Check unknown words after guessing the meanings. (1)

Q6: Is it difficult to read English?

Q7: Do you like to read English?



As these questions were on the back of the questionnaire sheet, some students did not notice them and failed to answer. Therefore it is difficult to compare the results in July and February, but there seems to be no big difference.

## 6. What I learned

As the students did not show much interest with attitude and facial expressions while reading in class, the results of Question 2 were interesting for me. Especially the story "Yawning Is Contagious" was the most popular. I asked one of the AET to tell the story in class. She attracted students' attention with gestures and interested them. I think it influenced the results.

Other interesting results were from Question 5 "How do you think your reading comprehension can be improved?" Students wrote more variety of answers than I expected. Giving students Japanese translation is a good way to save classtime and some students make use of it by themselves.

## 7. Future issues

Although it depends on students' ability to read English, some stories in the textbook are too long and difficult for some students and they include many unknown words. If time permits, I will let students read more interesting stories, integrating other activities, such as listening, speaking and writing.

Lesson Plan: Unit 4, Easy True Stories

Takemi Morioka

Takinomizu Junior High School

1. Level: 3rd graders of junior high school

2. Class size: 38 students

3. Textbook: New Horizon English Course 3 (Tokyo Shoseki)

Easy True Stories, Longman

4. Goal: To improve students' reading comprehension ability and fluency

5. Objectives:

(1) Students learn some vocabulary and can understand the story.

(2) Students enjoy reading a story in English.

6. Procedure

Day one: (1) Listening to the story and answering questions

The AET tells students the story and asks some questions about it.

(2) Silent reading 1

Students read the story silently and record their time.

(3) Vocabulary

Students fill in the blanks in the handout.

(4) Comprehension

Students answer the questions in the handout.

(5) Writing

Students brainstorm and share their ideas in the whole class.

(6) Silent reading 2

Students read the story silently and record their time. They calculate their reading speed.

(7) Evaluation

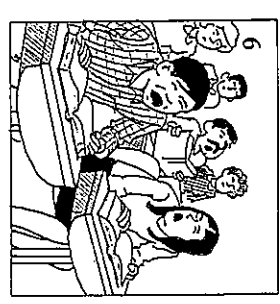
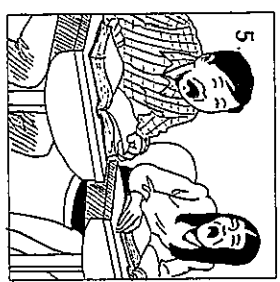
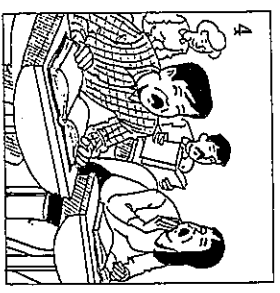
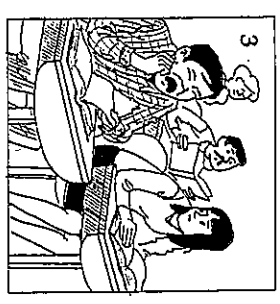
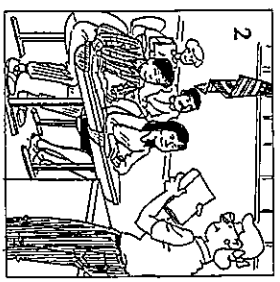
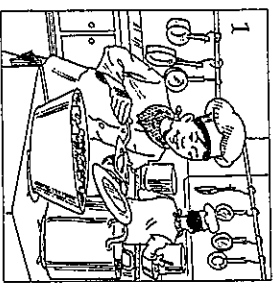
Students answer the two questions.

From "Easy True Stories"

# UNIT 4

## 1. PRE-READING

Look at the pictures. Listen to your teacher tell the story.



## Yawning Is Contagious



**C**HEN works at a restaurant in the daytime. In the evening he goes to an adult school. He is learning English at the adult school.

This evening Chen's class is reading a story. The story is interesting, and Chen wants to read it. But Chen is tired; he can't read. He yawns loudly.

Sofia is sitting next to Chen. She sees Chen yawn. She yawns, too.  
All is sitting behind Chen. All hears Chen yawn. All yawns, too.  
Chen is yawning because he is tired. But

Sofia and All aren't tired. Why are they yawning?

Sofia and All are yawning because yawning is contagious. When one person yawns, other people yawn, too.

On this page there is a photo of a woman. The woman is yawning. Look at the photo for 30 seconds. **DO NOT YAWN!** Ready? Go!

Can you look at the picture and not yawn? Most people can't. When most people look at the photo, they yawn. Yawning is very contagious!

Reading Time

1st time ( ) minutes ( ) seconds

Last time ( ) minutes ( ) seconds

## 2. VOCABULARY

Write the opposites. You can find the words in the story.

1. play W \_\_\_\_\_
2. night time Y \_\_\_\_\_
3. child I \_\_\_\_\_
4. teaching I \_\_\_\_\_
5. standing f \_\_\_\_\_
6. in front of d \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. COMPREHENSION

### UNDERSTANDING THE MAIN IDEA

Circle the letter of the best answer.

1. Chen yawns because he is  
a. hungry.  
b. angry.  
c. tired.
2. Sofia and Ali yawn because  
a. the story is not interesting.  
b. Chen yawned.  
c. they are tired.
3. Yawning is contagious. When one person yawns, other people  
a. don't like it.  
b. are afraid.  
c. yawn, too.

### REMEMBERING DETAILS

Which sentence is correct? Circle *a* or *b*.

1. a. Chen works at a factory in the daytime.  
b. Chen works at a restaurant in the daytime.
2. a. In the evening he goes to an adult school.  
b. In the afternoon he goes to an adult school.
3. a. He is learning Spanish at the adult school.  
b. He is learning English at the adult school.
4. a. This evening Chen's class is writing a story.  
b. This evening Chen's class is reading a story.
5. a. Chen is tired; he yawns loudly.  
b. Chen is tired; he talks loudly.
6. a. Sofia and Ali yawn because yawning is interesting.  
b. Sofia and Ali yawn because yawning is contagious.

## WRITING

In Chen's class at the adult school, the students are reading a story. What do you do in your English class? Do you read stories? Do you write? Do you practice speaking? Together with your classmates make a list. Your teacher will write the list on the blackboard. Then copy the list here.

In our English class, we

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

Look over the list. What do you like to do very much? Put a star ( \* ) next to those things.

Now count your classmates. How many people put a star next to 1? \_\_\_\_\_  
How many people put a star next to 2? \_\_\_\_\_ 3? \_\_\_\_\_ 4? \_\_\_\_\_ 5? \_\_\_\_\_  
6? \_\_\_\_\_ What do your classmates like to do best in English class?

### ☆Evaluation

1. Is this story interesting for you?

Very interesting    Interesting    So so    Not very interesting    Boring

2. Is this story easy or difficult for you to read?

Very easy    Easy    So so    A little difficult    Difficult



