

NUFS Workshop 2017

Newsletter No. 3

Workshop in July

Date: July 8, 2017, 10:30-14:30

Venue: NSC College, Room 31

Presenter: Keiko Takahashi (Motosu-shoyo High School)

Title: "How to Start and Build an Extensive Reading Community in your Classroom"



Abstract: What if students were told to read a lot of books for pleasure? What if extensive reading were implemented in our English regular class? Day & Bamford, (1998) defined extensive reading in a second language as “an approach to the teaching and learning of second language reading in which learners read large quantities of books and other materials that are well within their linguistic competence” (p. xiii). Although extensive reading (ER) has been gaining popularity, little research has been done to document its effect on reading skills and overall language ability for junior and senior high school students. In 2009, ER was implemented in a regular English class at a local public high school. Students made progress in their ER performance through classroom interactions and became autonomous eager readers in an ER community. In this workshop, you will participate in some of the interactive ER activities such as Interactive Book Talk, Creating the Ending and Literature Circles, and examine the students’ comments on their reflections. Then the following questions will be discussed: 1) what did students learn from interactive ER activities? 2) how did students build an ER community? A very small classroom library will be set up, and students’ works and worksheets such as ‘My Favorite Book Posters’ and ‘The Last Page of the Story’ will be shown on the wall. I hope we can share our ideas and problems as well as enjoy talking about books we will read in this workshop.

The number of participants: 27

1. Interesting activities you might want to use in your class. Why?

- Poster making and Find me: title and bulb match game – because they are motivational and I can imagine the students’ excitement in making and playing.
- I want to try literature circles. Today I enjoyed literature circles a lot. The material was easy enough and not long to discuss a lot. I hope my students can do this after reading an easy book.
- Sentence-Treasure Hunt – I can use this in my class. It’s fun and also a good way to get the gist of the story.



- Literature circles or the creating a new ending of the book activity. I think my students would enjoy those activities.
- I really liked the group quiz game, where the order/number was assigned according to the order of birthdays, and, for example, all No.1s stood up and listened to their teachers' question. Giving points to teams sounds like an exciting idea so I would like to try it in my classes, even with non-extensive reading lessons/activities.
- The idea about Literature Circles is interesting, but its usage is difficult for JHS students. If I have students try this activity, first I'll have students write about things with four roles: Word Master, Passage Person, Discussion Leader and Connector. After that I'll have students talk about four things in groups. Discussion Leader takes in turn.



2. What you learned from today's workshop

- I thought that ER and Literature Circles give the students more freedom in their learning, therefore, appropriate scaffoldings are needed at the beginning of this task. It is difficult to implement in my class because there are many weaker students.
- I learned how students can use their reading to do a variety of activities. Different roles, class discussion and different games based on finding sentences are all valuable when getting others to share what they have learned and practice in the target language
- Not reading individually but a lot of speaking and writing activities could be done together in extensive reading class.
- The importance of turning the reading into a social, communicative activity. It allows students to practice four skills and use English in genuine, meaningful ways.

3. Questions and Answers

Q (1): I want to know how to manage the time to have this ER class, and how to evaluate the class.

A: There are several ways to manage the time.

First, we can create an ER class as an elective class and it is incorporated into a three-year English curriculum. Many high schools offer one or two elective English classes, and you can change such elective classes into ER classes. In my experiences, almost all students were hooked into reading and they read more than 200,000 words if they attended two 50-minute ER classes per week all through the year. Various interactive ER activities were introduced all through the year, which help build an ER community.

Second, we can offer a 50-minute ER class as a part of regular classes such as *Communication English I*. That is, ER is incorporated in some compulsory subjects. In my experiences, students read more than 100 books if they attended one 50-minute ER classes per week all through the year.

Third, we can still create some time for extensive reading even if we don't have any ER classes in our curriculum. As a first step, we can



create 10 minutes for Sustained Silent Reading once or twice a week. When you see your students enjoy reading, you can and want to expand 10-minute reading to 15- or 20-minute reading. In such a situation, students cannot read 100 books, but still they read a lot. Then, hopefully, in the following year, you and your colleague teachers will want to create a 50-minute ER classes.

As for evaluation, please read the next section.

Q (2): If possible, I would like to know how students are evaluated by this extensive reading activities.

A: Assessment components for an ER class are

- ① The amount of reading (reading log) 20%
- ② ER products (my favorite book posters, book reviews, last page) 30%
- ③ Performance tests (Interactive book talk, story telling) 20%
- ④ Portfolio (reflections, semester reports) 30 %

The ratio of each component slightly changes according to the ER activities we do. As for ER products and performance tests, students' performances are assessed based on rubrics. For example, assessment criteria for Interactive Book Talk are 1) Fluency, 2) Content, 3) Accuracy, 4) Delivery and 5) Communication Strategies and we write detailed descriptors for each level of performance.



Q (3): Could you tell any book titles you recommend for literature circles in Macmillan starter and Cambridge starter series?

A: *Let Me Out* (Cambridge Readers, Starter Level, 2000 words), *Alissa* (Macmillan English Readers, Starter Level, 900 words) can be selected for Literature Circles for my students. *Arman's Journey* (Cambridge Readers, Starter Level, 2000 words) and stories from the textbook titled "*More True Stories*" (Pearson Education) can be chosen for mini-lessons for Literature Circles.

Stories for Reading Circles (Oxford University Press), which has a collection of books for literature circles and widely used for university students, are difficult and not so appealing to my students. Students once requested some mysteries for Literature Circles, but I haven't found a good one yet. If you find a good book for your students, please let me know.

Q (4): I really want to know the model (useful expressions for each role in literature circles). Could you share it?

A: I give the following handout to students. (The actual handout includes step-by-step instruction in both Japanese and English. I extracted the model expressions from each role and conversation strategies all students use during the discussion.) Before students have a group discussion, they are engaged in pair-discussion based on one role such as Word Master or Passage Person. They can and should get used to using some expressions when they are engaged in pair discussion.



Handout #1

Discussion Leader

1. Let's start our discussion.

My name is I'm Today's Discussion Leader.

Please introduce your names and your roles.

2. First, Summarizer, would you summarize the story, please?

Next, Word/ Picture Master, would you explain the picture and the word, please?

Next, Passage Person, would you explain the passage you chose, please?

Lastly, Connector, would you explain your connection, please?

3. I have some discussion questions.?

Word / Picture Master

1. Please look at page line.....

I chose because

Please look at page

In this picture,

Passage Person

1. Please look at page line.....

(read out the passage) I chose these sentences because

<Conversation Strategies>

Shadowing I see. Pardon? Could you say it again?

Do you know what I mean? What do you mean? What does that mean?

I think so, too. I don't think so.

<Other Useful Expressions>

What do you think about it? Why's that? How 'bout you?

If I were, I would It reminds me

Q (5): I don't understand what ending creation is. All the books have endings. Do you mean by adding one more chapter to give the following incident?

A: Yes. In this activity, students create the last page of the story. This activity is suitable for open-ended stories.

Some books invite readers to imagine what will happen to the characters after the endings of the story. Some books even have much fewer pages in the last chapter so that readers can imagine what will happen next.

L. A. Detective (Macmillan Readers, Starter Level, 900 words) and *What a Lottery* (Cambridge English Readers, Starter Level, 2000 words) can be chosen for this activity.

Students read the story again by paying attention to the events and the characters in the story. Then they write the first draft of the last page they create. Then, students are asked to read the first drafts of their peers and to make comments on them in a group of four. Finally students rewrite the last page, which are displayed on the wall. Students learn how to connect the events with the ending, how to interpret the characters and how to enjoy reading the stories in a different way.



Q (6): Is a horror story a good idea for mandatory reading for the whole class?

A: I've never thought about it, but, as you pointed out, some students might be really bothered and disturbed. I should be careful to use a horror story as a class reader. In the same way, when I have students whose situations are similar to the book characters, I would be very careful whether or not I should use those books as class readers.

In case of *Let Me Out*, it is often chosen as students' favorite book. Thus, it is true that many students think this is a good book to read. For Japanese students, or at least for my students, this book has many topics to talk about, and they tend not to regard it as a horror story. Why? It might come from their language barrier. It might come from the connections they make between book characters and their emotions. Students did not talk about horror aspects but explored more about human emotions and human life. This book also won the Learner Literature Awards in 2007 by the Extensive Reading Foundation (ERF), an unaffiliated, not-for-profit organization that supports and promotes extensive reading in language education.

Q (7): Do you do extensive reading with your regular English class? If yes, how often, how long for?

How do you integrate it within the yearly schedule/curriculum?

A: Yes. Students attend one 50-minute ER class per week incorporated in compulsory subjects. In addition, third-year students attend two 50-minute ER classes per week as an elective subject. At the previous school, ER was incorporated into a three-year English curriculum (Case 1). At the school that I work at now, ER is implemented for first- and third- year students (Case 2).

① Case 1

English I, *English II* and *Reading* were conducted as compulsory subjects, and extensive reading was incorporated into these subjects once a week. In addition, third-year students had two 50-minute ER classes per week as an elective subject. This is a three-year English curriculum we developed at a previous school.

The School's English Curriculum (2008-2009)

Year (grade level)	Subject	Credits* (humanity)	Credits (science)
1 st year	English I (Textbook + ER)	4 (3+1)	4 (3+1)
	Oral Communication I	2	2
2 nd year	English II (Textbook + ER)	4 (3+1)	3 (2+1)
	Writing	2	2
3 rd year	Reading (Textbook + ER)	3 (2+1)	3 (2+1)
	Writing	2	2
	English II (elective)	2	
	Extensive Reading (elective)	2	

*the number of credits also refers to the number of classes per week

② Case 2

Extensive reading is incorporated into *English Expression I* once a week. In addition, third-year students have two 50-minute ER classes per week as an elective subject. As for second-year students, only I conduct one 30-minute ER class per week incorporated in compulsory subjects.

The School's English Curriculum (2016 to 2017)

Year (grade level)	Subject	Credits (humanity)	Credits (science)
1 st year	Communication English I	3	3
	English Expression I (Textbook + <u>ER</u>)	3 (2+1)	3 (2+1)
2 nd year	Communication English II	4	4
	English Expression II	2	2
	English II (elective)	2	
3 rd year	Communication English III	4	4
	English Expression II	2	2
	English II (elective)	2	
	English Conversation (elective)	2	
	Pleasure Reading (ER)(elective)	2	

Q (8): Do your students borrow books? If so, what kind of book borrowing system do you have?

There are several ways to do this, but I chose a very open system. Students can borrow from bookshelves in class, and return them in class after they finish reading. If we offer two ER classes per week, students start to read books out-of class and return them in class. If we offer one ER class per week, I don't ask them to borrow books. In that case, only students who want to borrow books can take out books. Only during the vacation, students write down the titles of books on a piece of paper and I check out when they return the books. It works well so far.

Action Research Session

Date: July 8, 2017, 14:30-17:00

Venue: NSC College, Room 32, Room 41, Room 51

Advisers: Kazuyoshi Sato, Duane Kindt, Juanita Heigham (NUFS)

The number of participants: 19



Next Workshop (scheduled)

Date: September 9, 2017, 10:30-14:30, 14:30-17:00

Venue: NSC College, Room 31

Presenter: Joseph Falout (Nihon University)

Title: "Switching the Script: Turn around Ten Teaching Preconceptions"