

Newsletter No. 7

Workshop in November

<Part 1 >

Date: November 8, 2014, 10:30-14:00

Venue: NSC College, Building Minami, Room A-31

Presenter: Mathew White (NUFS)

Sophie Muller (Chukyo University)

Title: "Creating your Own Extensive Reading Success Stories"

Abstract: As Graham Greene once wrote, "A story has no beginning or end: arbitrarily one chooses that moment of experience from which to look back or from which to look ahead." So, what is your Extensive Reading story? Perhaps you have more than one?

In part one of this workshop, we will explore some successful Extensive Reading stories, experience some of the adventures firsthand and gain greater insights into the elements leading to success in Extensive Reading and enthusiastic readers. How can we help students more in finding great stories at the levels that are appropriate for them? What transforms a reluctant reader into an avid reader? When do students stop seeing reading as an assignment for class and start seeing it as a habit and lifelong hobby?

In part two, we will consider how the successful Extensive Reading stories of others might help us write the next few pages in our own Extensive Reading success stories. Discover ways you can empower more of your students with positive Extensive Reading experiences. After all, "The purpose of a storyteller is not to tell you how to think, but to give you questions to think upon" Brandon Sanderson



The number of participants: 28

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

- Reading Aloud Festival and Readers' Theater are interesting to me. I can use these activities not only for daily lessons but also for performance tests.
- I'd like to make a bulletin-board for students to share their reading experiences, because it seems very hard to find time to have actual book circles in school now.
- 7-word summary: I'd like to use it in my class. We can use it in many situations. Students find it hard to summarize the passage in full sentences. But pointing seven key words may be easier.
- Even if I don't have the chance to teach a reading class in



the future, I'd love to have students talk about what they read and how they connect to the characters. The read-aloud theater sounds great for all levels of students, and the 7-word summary sounds super effective, too.

- Book report – because students can share the information of many books and make use of them for book choice. Moreover, it must motivate students for reading.
- I'm teaching writing this year but would like to have an experience teaching reading as well. I think Buddy Reading is very interesting. It was a very simple activity yet I realized so many benefits out of it. Students can read aloud to each other and focus on the content of the story. It enhances both listening and reading skills. I also enjoyed writing my own ER success story. I would like to share it to my students and hope that they'll be inspired and motivated to read, too.

2. What you learned from today's workshop.

- Extensive reading is a challenging activity for senior high school students. Time and budget are the problems. But it's a useful method. I want to use it sometime in the near future.
- I learned 'sharing' is very important for ER. I also learned that to come up with good discussion questions is important for sharing.
- Choosing the appropriate level is very important. How to motivate students to become life-long readers is the goal of ER program.
- We tend to focus on communicative activities more than reading. However, I learned extensive reading is also important. I also want to make reading a life-long habit.
- I haven't started introducing ER yet. I don't have enough budget to buy books. My colleagues might not be interested in it. My students might not be interested in it. I was thinking about why I couldn't do it. But I joined today's workshop and talked to other teachers. I feel I could do ER. I'll stop thinking about why I can't do. I would like to what I can do to introducing ER to my class.
- I learned various ways to motivate students to read. First of all, teachers themselves learn to love reading so that it would be more convincing for the students.
- Making ER story is really interesting. Everyone has different experiences. Sharing them made me so positive to continue to study English.



3. Questions and Answers

**Q (1): If in the test, is it possible to do a performance test?
Which points should teachers care about?**

A: We're not sure exactly what you mean by "performance test". Ideally, teachers take some time during sustained silent reading time to observe the students. In this way, teachers can note those students who have very little reading stamina (falling asleep, pretending to read, but just staring at the same page, etc.) and counsel them on an individual basis.

If a test is administered to see if students are able to read a minimum level of text, the teacher would focus on the main elements of the story, but not specific details. The aim is to determine whether students actually read and understood the story. The questions shouldn't be answerable without having read the story: a common a problem is that questions are so basic that students can answer them even before reading the story; other times, the illustrations provide enough information for the questions to be answered.

Example: *Sarah's Surprise*, Foundations Reading Library, Level 1, 526 words total.

Good questions for *Sarah's Surprise*:

1. Why didn't Sarah ask the owner for help?

This is a good question because the main problem in the story arose due to the fact that the owner wasn't there.

2. Why did they call the police?

This is a good question because students need to have read the story to answer it.

3. Why didn't the police take the man Sarah told them about to jail?

This is a good question because it doesn't answer the previous question.

Bad Questions for *Sarah's Surprise*:

1. What color was the man's shirt?

This is a bad question because it's too specific, it could be answered by looking at the pictures, and it isn't relevant to the development of the story.

2. What did the customers, before the man who took the sandwiches, order?

This is a bad question because it's too specific, it could be answered by looking at the pictures, and it isn't relevant to the development of the story.

3. How did Sarah feel?

This is a bad question because it's too vague, the answer is provided in the title, and there are too many other possible answers depending on what part of the story you are referring to: nervous because it was a new job, angry because the man didn't pay for the sandwiches, surprised because the man was the owner's husband.



Q (2): What fiction of books from 2014/2015 would or could be good for 16-17 year olds?

A: This question is impossible to answer as such as we believe that students' reading preferences and reading levels are the key factor in recommending books. If you could look at the handout entitled "Books Mat's Students Gave 5 Stars (out of 5)!", you would notice a wide variety of genres and levels, even though the students are all the same age (1st year university). In the SSS Student Reading Notebook (<http://www.amazon.co.jp/exec/obidos/ASIN/4902091267/mitcht-22/ref=nosim/>), there is a global rating for each book listed that could be useful.

Q (3): Tell me website list of extensive readers classed by level, please.

A: Here is the website that started the Yomiyasusa Level (YL) system:

<http://www.seg.co.jp/sss/review/osusume.html>

Here is another one that might be helpful as well:

<http://orchard.ee.toyota-ct.ac.jp/tadokunavi/index.php>

SSS Student Reading Notebook has all the graded readers organized by YL, as well as many non-graded readers:

<http://www.amazon.co.jp/exec/obidos/ASIN/4902091267/mitcht-22/ref=nosim/>

Q (4): How much do I need if I get graded reader series?

A: The Extensive Reading Foundation's *Guide to Extensive Reading* has an equation to help with this:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \text{number of} & & \text{number of} & & \text{number of} & & \text{the number of} \\ \text{ER classes} & \times & \text{students per class} & \times & \text{books per student} & = & \text{books needed} \end{array}$$

For example, if you have 4 ER classes each with 30 students, who each need 3 books to select from, you need 360 books: $4 \times 30 \times 3 = 360$.

You can find the guide at:

http://erfoundation.org/ERF_Guide.pdf

Q (5): Tell me about grading the students and more about the class dynamics.

A: For us to be able to answer this question we need to know more about your teaching context and your goals. A good resource to find answers for yourself is *The Book Whisperer* by

Donalyn Miller. In terms of class dynamics, what we introduced as successful elements of an ER program are the key elements to our class dynamics: lots of time to discover and read books, a community of readers talking and recommending books to one another, and students making time to read outside of class.

D. Miller's second book, *Reading in the Wild*, will give other perspectives on the topic.



<Part 2>

Date: October 11, 2014, 14:30-17:00

Venue: NSC College

Advisors: Kazuyoshi Sato, Nancy Mutoh (NUFS),
Robert Croker (Nanzan University)

Abstract: Monthly report on action research

The number of participants: 19



Workshop in December (Scheduled)

Date: December 6, 2014, 10:30-14:30 (Part 1), 14:30-17:00 (Part 2)

Venue: NSC College, Building Minami, Room A31

Presenter: Erik Jacobson (British Council)

Title: “Using online resources to bring English alive – Teaching tips for Elementary, Junior and Senior High Schools”

Please send an email to Chihaya (chiha143@nufs.ac.jp) to attend this workshop.