

## NUFS Workshop 2015

*Newsletter No. 10*Workshop in February

## &lt;Part 1 &gt;

**Date:** February 13, 2016, 10:30-14:30**Venue:** NSC College, Building Minami, Room A-31**Presenter:** Junko Yamanaka

(Chukyo University/ Aichi Gakuin University)

**Title:** “Helping Students Become Fluent, Joyful and Confident Readers”

**Abstract:** It is often said that reading cannot be “taught”. You learn to read only by reading. This is very true. Teachers need to provide their students with good reading environment and material. However, teachers can play more active roles here. They can in fact “teach” strategies that will help students read with greater understanding and confidence. They can also make students realize how enjoyable it is to read interesting and easy material, which is an extremely important role of EFL teachers. Cover to Cover might provide hints for students becoming joyful, life-long readers who can read fluently and with confidence.

**The number of participants:** 26**1. Interesting activities you might want to use in your class. Why?**

- I'd like to have students make a story about happy memory with pictures I liked the skimming activities because they focus on a different skill than what is typically used in junior high school.
- Scanning activities. They were easy and fun. Weak students can enjoy them, too.
- I am very interested in trying many of the ideas and activities introduced in today's presentation. I teach classes with students of a wide range of abilities in one class, so ER and the use of side readers would be an effective way to motivate all students, irrespective of their level.
- Predicting the topic from the title and the pictures.-- Teachers can interest students in the topic before reading and motivate them to read the context. It's fun for them to see if their guessing was right.
- I would like to use Dr. Yamanaka's evaluation system. If many students say the same book is interesting, teachers should share the comments with other students.

**2. What you learned from today's workshop**

- I would like to know how to incorporate different styles of reading into the class room.
- I was surprised to hear that accuracy is a part of fluency. I tried to encourage students to read quickly, but it's more important to get them to enjoy reading.
- I learned that teachers should enjoy graded reading, too. Teachers can improve their reading skills with their students.
- I learned that in a reading class, the focus should be on



reading, not quizzes or vocabulary and so on. The students should already be able to understand at least 98% of the text. If it's less than 98 %, then change to an easier book.

- I thought having students write book reviews is a good idea for teachers to know whether students are ready and how they feel about the books they read.
- Reading easy books is important to develop English skills.



### 3. Questions and Answers

**Q (1): How much are the initial start up costs of implementing a side reader/ ER program at my school?**

A: It depends on how you design your program, but typically the number of books you need would be about three times the number of your students. If you have 30 students, you will probably need 90, and 100 would be a good number to cover lost and damaged books. Currently, starter or level 1 books (graded readers) cost about ¥700 each (See catalogs or websites) However, if your budget is limited, you might need to start with fewer books, and in such a case one book per student is acceptable. ERF Guide advises it is wise to spend only 80% of your budget initially and spend the rest to adjust your library once you know what materials are most needed. For more information, see *The Extensive Reading Foundation's Guide to Extensive Reading*, pp.5-6.

[http://erfoundation.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/ERF\\_Guide.pdf](http://erfoundation.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/ERF_Guide.pdf) (in English)

[http://erfoundation.org/ERF\\_GuideJ.pdf](http://erfoundation.org/ERF_GuideJ.pdf) (in Japanese)

**Q (2): I am wondering about the balance between extensive reading and intensive reading. Both types of reading are necessary to foster students' reading abilities.**

A: Question (2) and (3) are interrelated. When the students know between 90% and 98% of the words on a page, it is intensive reading, in which the reading is at an 'instructional' level. Students can learn new words and grammar. However, they need to look up many words to understand the text better. In intensive reading, students use a given text, so they cannot control the level or content. It can be very frustrating to low ability students. With only intensive reading, it is generally difficult for students to build fluency or to feel reading enjoyment. Since reading is a skill, it is not something that can be 'instructed' in the strict sense of the term. Students learn to read by reading. It is best for students to be able to choose the right level and content by themselves so they can read quickly and enjoyably. That is why extensive reading is crucial. If ER is successfully done, students will gain fluency, develop a liking for reading, go on reading by themselves and challenge more difficult levels, to the point where intensive reading instruction will not be necessary. Personally, I am hoping there would be more opportunities for free voluntary reading for students in the Japanese EFL environment.

Actually, once extensive reading gets rolling, it can enhance students' intensive reading because of their



increased fluency. Likewise, when intensive reading enhances students' vocabulary and grammar, that should help them enjoy higher level ER books. It would be ideal if ER and IR could support each other like that.

***Q (3): Can readings with more than 2% new words be useful?***

A: As I mentioned in the response to Question (2), when the students know between 90% and 98% of the words on a page it is at an 'instructional' level. At this level students can learn new things—new words and grammar. Below 90% (one unknown word in 10) however, the reading becomes frustrating and slow. It requires a lot of dictionary use, and comprehension suffers badly. It is in the 'reading pain' zone, where students can get de-motivated. I think this level is just too hard and should be avoided. Therefore, yes, reading with more than 2% but less than 10% new words can be useful in the sense that students can learn new words and grammar, but we should avoid using material with more than 10% unknown words because it can be too painful and de-motivating for students.

**<Part 2>**

**Date:** February 13, 2016, 14:30-17:00

**Venue:** NSC College

**Advisors:** Kazuyoshi Sato, Nancy Mutoh, Duane Kindt (NUFS)

**Abstract:** Monthly report on action research

**The number of participants:** 11



**Workshop in March**

This workshop is for Action Research Group members only.

**Date:** March 26-27, 2016

**Venue:** XIV Toba

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

**Title:** Final presentation of action research