

Newsletter No. 8

Workshop in December

Date: December 6th, 2025 10:30-14:30

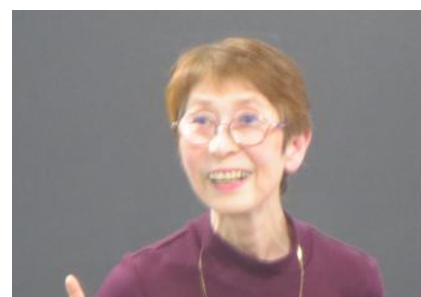
Venue: NUFS Meieki Campus (BIZrium Nagoya)

Title: "What All Teachers Should Know about Extensive Reading"

Presenter: Yamanaka Junko (Aichi Gakuin University)

Abstract:

Extensive Reading (ER) is an amazing path to language acquisition. But why? In ER programs, students are encouraged to read easy and enjoyable books. But why easy? And how easy? What books can be enjoyable? Can teachers start ER in their classrooms easily? What actually happens when students read a lot? In this workshop, the presenter hopes to answer diverse questions teachers might have about ER. Also, a variety of graded readers and leveled readers will be introduced to the audience, as she believes encountering good books is KEY to ER success, which applies to both students and teachers.



The number of participants: 34

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

- I'm going to use some websites to let students read extensively during summer, winter and spring vacation.
- Book club with a book exchange. I have been a part of book clubs in the past and they were enjoyable. I think a book exchange would be fun for the students because these books are recommended by their peers. The speaker, Junko, did not mention a book exchange but she did mention a book club which gave me the idea of a book exchange in addition to a book club.
- I teach English to JHS students. I really want to introduce ER in my class to develop their English skills. As the students' level is low, I had thought it would not be possible to do it. But now, after today's session, I'm sure I can do it.
- At school, we have what they call 'biblio battle' where students introduce their favorite books. They have a mini competition. I would like to try to do that activity in the English version. I believe what I learned about home-run books has encouraged me to try to do it.



2. What you learned from today's workshop

- I learned a lot today. Books do really lead you to new experiences, emotions and adventures. Busyness should not be a reason for us as teachers to not be able to read books. We should try our best to improve ourselves by reading so that we can pass that kind of encouragement to our students especially to those who think that English is not fun. And don't forget to always include fun ways to read books.
- Extensive reading is effective for speaking skills. A lot of input resulted in natural output. I've heard that when we read silently, we speak in our brain.
- The idea of 'I - 1 or 2' (I minus one or two) for ER. Find your 'comfort zone'. Know your WPM. Reading enhances speaking ability.
- What exactly is ER and how it should be enjoyable for the level of the students. If and when I can try and explore ER on some students who want to improve their English ability, it will be useful.
- If learners absorb a lot of comprehensible input, ER enhances their overall language skills. To make input comprehensible, learners need to pick up easy books and enjoy reading.



3. Questions and Answers

Q (1): I would like to know how teachers should evaluate students' reports. Which aspect do you focus on (quality, contents they wrote, or what else)?

How teachers should evaluate students' reports depends on the curriculum, course goals, and how they set up the assessment system.

In my case, I usually give points to each student's submission of book reports, and do not give points to the reports themselves, such as how well the reports are written, or how accurately the contents are explained. However, if the reports are poorly written and I don't understand the contents, I require the students to rewrite the reports or come to me and explain about the contents orally. Also, I put marks on the roll sheet when students give me either very good reports or very poor reports so that I can use such information when I give grades to them at the end of the semester. I have often tried to evaluate book reports and give points to each of them, but it has been very difficult and I have stopped trying.

To me, book reports are not just for evaluation but also for helping and guiding students, and very importantly, for getting and sharing information of books they read. For example, through book reports I can know if students are meeting good books, if they are reading right levels, their favorite genres, popular titles, their pace, motivation, home-run books they met or any other interesting books they read that the class could share the information of, etc.._

In short, book reports contain useful information and can be utilized in many ways—using them for evaluation, helping and guiding students, sharing with them info of interesting books, or even as data for the teacher's academic researches!

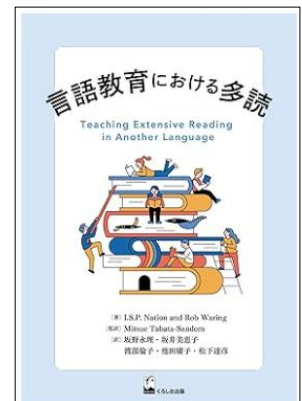


Q (2): I have a student who is way behind at school. Looking at the textbook makes him sleepy. Any advice?

Is this a junior high school or a high school situation? How is his performance in listening or speaking? If he cannot read well, probably he is not decoding well. He needs to learn sound-symbol correspondence. Practicing reading aloud might help. Also, if he is interested in reading very easy graded readers such as Foundation Series or leveled readers such as ORT, that might help him too. He can choose to read from the easiest level and go up as he gets used to it.

Q (3): What are the criticisms of ER?

I do not hear of criticisms of ER, but criticisms of ER research do exist. For details, please see *Teaching Extensive Reading in Another Language*, Nation & Waring 2020, translated version, pp201-226.



Q (4): When do you think students in Japan should start to read? Currently 5th and 6th graders are starting to read basic sentences, but do you think it should be earlier?

I think 5th and 6th graders starting to read is reasonable. At that age, children start to have interest in reading and writing. And by reading and writing, they can have better understanding of the language. In fact, children over 10 years old can remember spellings more smoothly than younger children. Before they are ten years old, they should be trained in oral skills, rather than learning to read or write. On the other hand, introducing alphabets and phonics to younger learners in fun ways is not a bad idea.

1) How to start ER with young learners?

1. Read picture books to them. Find their favorite books. Read those books to them often. Then they might start reading them by themselves.
2. Prepare a class library. Let children borrow books from there. Even if they are not able to read and understand all of the words, it is OK. If the library includes many of the books you read to them in class, that would be nice.
3. In the classroom, introduce alphabets and some phonics so that it will help children read by themselves even a few words.



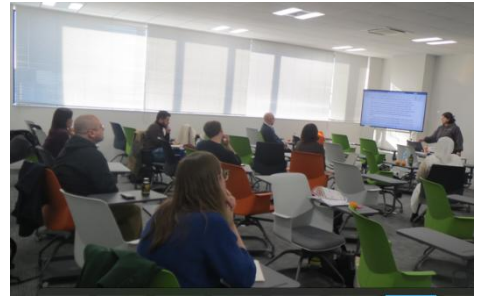
AR Discussion

Date: December 6th, 2025, 14:30-17:00 (Room MW01, 02)

Title: Action Research Discussion

Advisors: Sato Kazuyoshi, Kevin Ottoson (NUFS)

The number of participants: 16



Next workshop will be held on January 17th, 2026.

Detailed information is here:

<https://www.nufs.ac.jp/workshop/news/>

NUFS Workshop

Nagoya University of Foreign Studies

57 Takenoyama, Iwasaki-cho, Nisshin-shi

Secretary: Chihaya Sugiura