

Action Research Final Report 2015

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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: 37 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 had been taught in the grammar-translation method.

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

3. Goal: Students come to like reading English better.

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

4. What I did

(1) Reading books

Students read books in 10 classes. The books which were read by them were Oxford Reading Tree (Stage 2–4), Story Street (Step 1-6), Building Blocks Library (Level 1–3), Foundations Reading Library (Level 1-6), Info Trail (Beginner Stage), and Springboard Connect (Level 4–6). In addition to them, some students read Very Easy True Stories and Easy True Stories.

(2) Reading Record

Students took notes on their reading record sheet each time when they finished reading a book. They submitted it at the end of the class and I gave it back with short comments written in the next extensive reading lesson.

(3) Book Report and Book Talk

Students wrote three book reports in a year and had a book talk in the second term.

5. Survey Results

(1) Questionnaire

I asked 3 classes (about 110 students) to answer a questionnaire about reading at the end of July and February.

Question 1: How did you choose books to read?

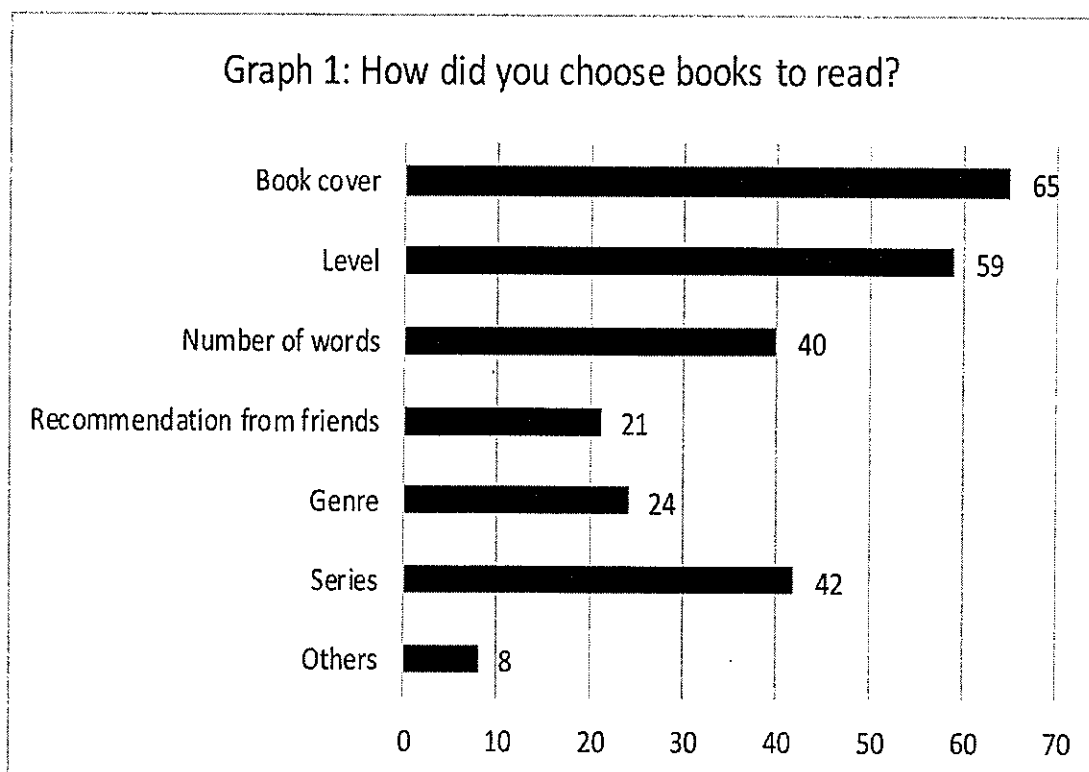
In class, I observed students choosing books and wanted to know what was important for them to decide which books to read. The numbers in Graph 1 shows the numbers of students who answered so (They were allowed to choose multiple answers).

The book cover is the most important factor. 25 students answered that they chose books with an interesting book cover. Some students selected books with a cover which looks cute or funny.

The second most important factor is the level of books. 24 students selected challenging level, 13 students chose easy books. 11 students chose the level which seemed suitable for them. 5 students answered that they raised the level gradually.

The number of words and the series are also important for students to select books. Most students who chose this factor read books with many words. The most popular series is Foundation Reading Library. 35 students chose this series. The second popular is Oxford Reading Tree (9 students), and the third are Story Street and Building Blocks Library (5 students).

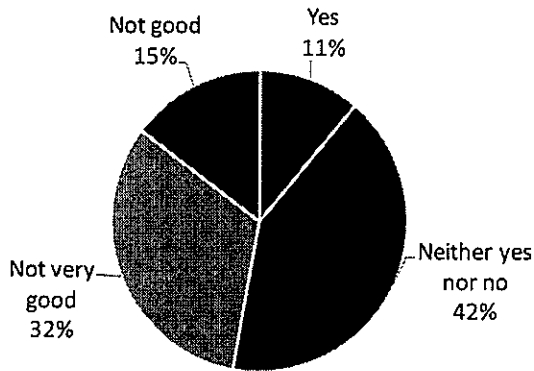
As for others, some students answered that they chose books the titles of which seemed interesting.



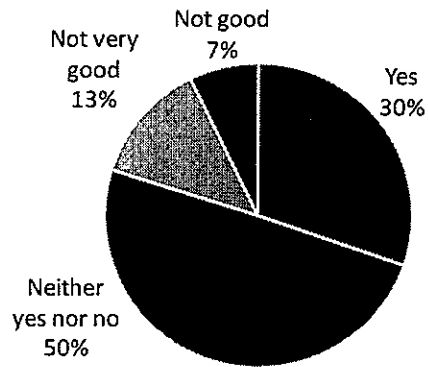
Question 2: Did you become better at reading English?

Although I asked slightly different questions in July and February, I got very positive results in February. The number of students who answered 'Yes' tripled in the end. Negative answers ('Not very good' and 'Not good') decreased to less than half.

Graph 2: Are you good at reading English or not? (July)



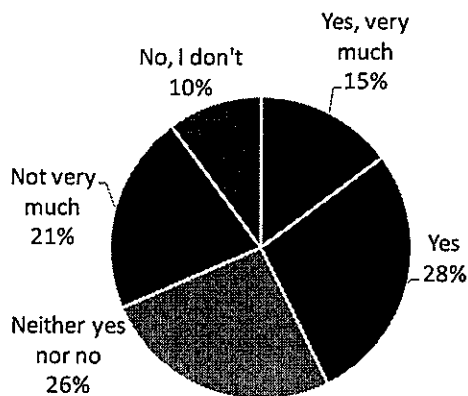
Graph 3: Did you become better at reading English? (February)



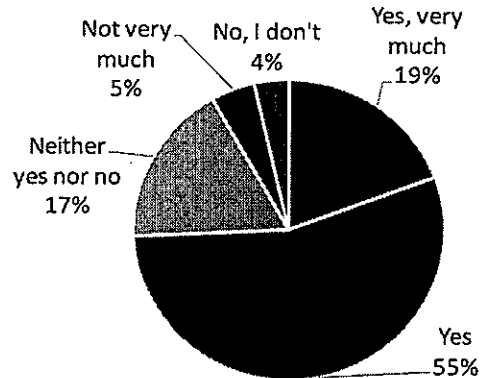
Question 3: Do you like reading English books?

As for this question, the ones that I asked in July and in February are not exactly the same. However, students liked reading English books very much. About three fourths of students answered 'Yes, very much' or 'Yes.' Only 9% of students answered negatively.

Graph 4: Do you like reading English? (July)



Graph 5: Do you like reading English books? (February)



Question 4: What did you think of extensive reading lessons?

Students wrote comments as follows. (They wrote in Japanese and I translated their comments into English.)

- o It was fun because I could understand the story, even if I didn't know the meanings of some English. I was also happy to learn how to use grammar.

- It was good because it was a good training to read long passages.
- I only read easy books at first, but later I got able to understand more difficult ones and enjoy reading.
- While I was reading, I found some unknown words. But I could understand the story from the context and the pictures. Though extensive reading was new to me, it was good to be able to choose my own level.
- It was fun! I could enjoy studying English through reading English books.
- The speed of understanding English sentences has increased compared to the time when I started extensive reading.
- Reading comprehension became easier. It was a very good time.
- It was a lot of fun. I want to read more.
- I enjoyed reading many books. Talking about books with friends was also fun.
- Through extensive reading, I came to like English and got able to read English.
- Reading English books was a little difficult at first, but I wanted to read more and more each time I read books. As my eyes got used to reading, I didn't feel it so difficult to read long passages. Extensive reading is very good to learn English. I want to continue it in high school if I have opportunities.
- I could feel very familiar with English. It was a lot of fun to read English with cute pictures, not long English passages as exercises.
- I got to taking notes of unknown words I encountered while reading books and looking them up. I am happy because I got able to read English fluently and interpret it quickly.
- I feel less difficulty reading long English passage because I read many books. As I became able to read books with many words, I think I have improved my reading skills.
- Many books have interesting endings. I felt a sense of achievement after I read each English book.

(2) Reading Speed

I got students to record how long it took them to read Easy True Stories in the first and third term. The average speed in the first term was 124 wpm (Unit 12: 221 words) and that in the third term was 131 wpm (Unit 17: 242 words).

6. What I learned

I tried extensive reading lessons in regular English classes (not in elective classes) through a year for

the first time. Students liked reading books very much. Some students got excited when I brought books to the class.

The comments from students in the survey also tell that extensive reading was helpful. It encouraged students to read English and improved their reading skills.

It is very important to provide students with attractive books. Many students liked Foundation Reading Library series. For the third-year student, the series is suitable.

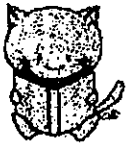
7. Future issues

As I taught the third-year students this year, I provided them with books of various levels, but for the first or second students, I will need more easy books. I attended some extensive reading seminars and learned about easy books. I would like to get those books.

It was not easy to know how well students understand the content of the books they read. I want to assess their comprehension and the improvement of reading skills.

3年英語 読書の記録 絵を見て楽しみながら読みましょう!

No.	Date	タイトル Title	シリーズ Series	レベル Level	総語数 Number of words			おもしろさ Interesting?	コメント(できるだけ英語で書いてみよう) Comments
					この本 累計	この本 累計	この本 累計		
1	12月 17日	Get the Ball?	FRL	1	5	21	3064	☆☆☆☆☆	Anthony is very kind.
2	12月 17日	Bananas	SS	1	3	22	3086	☆☆☆☆☆	I don't like bananas.
3	12月 17日	Rain, Rain, Rain?	FRL	1	5	4	3590	☆☆☆☆☆	Exciting story. You liked the story.
4	12月 21日	Mystery on the Island	FRL	4	14	22	5012	☆☆☆☆☆	Long story. You read hard.
5	1月 12日	Who's Best?	FRL	5	16	5	617	☆☆☆☆☆	Kate is very hard.
6	1月 12日	Does He Love Me?	FRL	6	26	33	9250	☆☆☆☆☆	Exciting story. Good...
7	2月 17日	Boys vs. Girls	FRL	5	17	10	10960	☆☆☆☆☆	Bears are very dangerous.
8	2月 17日	The Big Test	FRL	5	11	27	2087	☆☆☆☆☆	Mr. Harris is smart.
9	2月 17日	Goodbye, Hello?	FRL	1	5	8	2655	☆☆☆☆☆	Good story. What was said?
0	2月 17日	Where's Lorena?	FRL	5	14	36	4291	☆☆☆☆☆	Lorena is cute.



Book Report

Date: Friday, November 13th

Story	<p>Q1 What book did you read? 題</p> <p>Stuck in the Mud (どろの中で動けないう)</p>
	<p>Q2 Who are the main characters? 人物</p> <p>Biff, Chip and Wilma</p>
	<p>Q3 Where did it happen? どこ</p> <p>In the mud</p>
	<p>Q4 Please write your favorite sentence. 気に入った文</p> <p>Dad had lost a boot.</p>
	<p>Q5 Which is your favorite page? Please explain what happened. (説明する)</p> <p>Page 16.</p> <p>Because Wilma stuck in the mud is interesting.</p>
	<p>Q6 Do you like the story? Why or why not?</p> <p>Yes, I do. Because interesting.</p>
	<p>Q7 Do you recommend this book to your classmates? (すすめる)</p> <p>Please color ☆ mark. [★★★★★]</p> <p>This story is interesting. [fun, interesting, exciting, thrilling, easy, difficult, cute]</p>
Your comment	<p>読んでみた中では、一番おもしろいお話でした。 でも、絵で理解していた部分が多かったのでレポートを書くのが難しかったです。</p>



Book Talk

A: Hello. How are you doing?

B: _____ *And you?*

A: _____ So, let's start book talk.

B: *OK.*

A: What book did you read?

B: *I read _____.*

A: (I see. / OK. / All right.) Who are the main characters?

B: *The main characters are _____.*

A: (I see. / OK. / All right.) Where did it happen?

B: *It happened _____.*

A: (Really? / Sounds interesting. / I see.) Please read your favorite sentence.

B: _____.

A: (Sounds interesting. / Nice.) Which is your favorite page? Please explain what happened.

B: *All right. My favorite page is page _____.*

A: (I like it, too. / Sounds interesting. / Nice.) Do you like the story?

B: *(Yes, very much. / Yes, I do. / No, I don't like it very much.)*

A: (Why? / Why not?)

B: *Because _____.*

A: (I see. / Really? / I agree with you.)

☆ B: *How about you? What book did you read?*

A: I read _____.

B: *(I see. / OK. / All right.) Who are the main characters?*

A: The main characters are _____.

B: *(I see. / OK. / All right.) Where did it happen?*

A: It happened _____.

B: *(Really? / Sounds interesting. / I see.) Please read your favorite sentence.*

A: _____.

B: *(Sounds interesting. / Nice.) Which is your favorite page? Please explain what happened.*

A: All right. My favorite page is page _____.

B: *(I like it, too. / Sounds interesting. / Nice.) Do you like the story?*

A: (Yes, very much. / Yes, I do. / No, I don't like it very much.)

B: *(Why? / Why not?)*

A: Because _____.

B: *(I see. / Really? / I agree with you.) Nice talking with you.*

A: You, too.