

**NUFS Workshop 2008*****Newsletter No. 7*****Workshop in September****<Part 1>**

**Date:** September 20, 2008, 10:30-14:30

**Venue:** NSC College, Bldg-IIIS, Room 51

**Instructor:** Junko Yamanaka (Trident College)

**Title:** 'How to make Your Students Joyful, Life-long Readers: Is Extensive Reading the Key?'

**The number of participants:** 28

**Abstract:** With Extensive Reading, students do not read books to "study". They will "enjoy" books written in English just like they enjoy books written in their own language. The presenter will demonstrate the power of ER, showing how it can enhance students' reading skills and motivation, which will lead them to be joyful, life-long readers. Various attractive graded readers will be introduced to actually look at, and suggestions on how to implement ER in junior and senior high school programs will be given. The presenter believes ER is the key to enhancing Japanese students' English skills "extensively."

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

- The book reports were a good idea instead of a test or quiz. I want to help my students build their vocabularies, so I want to encourage them to read outside of class.
- I'd like to introduce listening to CD when they read books. I'm sure it can motivate students to read books.
- Ms. Yamanaka introduced us ways to incorporate ER into our teaching. That's definitely something I'd like to use in my class. She also taught me scanning activities such as students locate words in a text as the teacher pronounces them. I'd like to use them in my teaching.
- Talk in groups. We talked about books we read recently. We could get information about the books and why other members liked them. I want use this activity in my class.
- I have not known much about extensive reading till now, and it was really interesting to learn about this. I would like to use the format of the book report we got today. I liked the idea that students can write pictures instead of writing summaries.
- Though I've tried to practice ER system in our school, I've not prepared about the plan. After learning about the merits of ER, I thought I should carry out my plan immediately. While listening to Ms. Yamanaka, a good idea occurred to me: I prepare 40 Easy starts level books, 20 Level 1 books and 10 Level 2 books. Putting them in a basket, I carry it and go to the class one after another. I take time for students to read the books.
- I would like to put stickers on the student' book report as Ms. Yamanaka showed us today.

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

- I had a great impact on the efficiency of ER.

Looking back on my own experience as a learner, I remembered that I had surely mastered some useful words, idioms and expressions from ER. I realized that now is my turn to let the students have the experiences like mine.

- I was surprised to know that extensive reading can influence learners greatly on reading ability and vocabulary enhancement but also on speaking, listening and psychological aspects. “Extensive reading is NOT studying”, this statement gives us teachers a very important lesson. I realized that extensive reading can provide students with an environment where students can have a lot of experience with English with less anxiety.



- We shouldn't be ambitious. We should entertain students in ER. They will be motivated when they have time they can act autonomously. ER is more motivating than on-way lecture.
- I have been wondering what level students should choose. But today I noticed that any level is OK if students are interested in the book. Usually teachers want students to learn something in class. But Ms Yamanaka told us that ER is for enjoyment. Then students can be relaxed. I'll tell my students to be relaxed.
- ER is a quite interesting activity. Even though we have a financial problem to purchase the series of graded readers, I would like to tell my colleagues the importance of ER.
- Whenever I teach reading, comprehension questions were always followed after reading. It would give lots of anxiety to students. ‘Reading just for fun’ is something I would like to be able to prove by introducing many varieties of graded books.
- ER is something like training of baseball. A nice batter practices swing more than 100 times every day. It is not difficult but it's very important. Reading English books every day is very important to get ‘Home-run’ feeling.

## 3. Questions and Answers

**Q (1): How could I start ER activities as an initial step under such hard condition as absolute lack of consensus, budget and time allotment? I would be glad if you could tell me some of your suggestions.**

Answer: Talk to one colleague first. Then increase the number of “believers” one by one. Prepare attractive readers and show them to your colleagues and your students. Enjoy reading in a small circle first. Show them how easy and enjoyable those readers are. Start from there. I suggest having your own “box library” by purchasing readers that you think are attractive for your students and by collecting free samples.

**Q (2): Some students don't like reading books even in Japanese. How should teachers encourage them to read English books?**

Answer: Some of my students who didn't like reading in Japanese found they could enjoy reading English books, which was a pleasant surprise to them. They said now they were tempted to read in Japanese too. This can really happen. Prepare thin, easy and attractive graded readers for those students. Require them to read some of them. At first they might start reading reluctantly, but when they find it not difficult, somewhat enjoyable and realize they have finished reading the whole book, something will change inside them.

**Q (3): How can extensive reading be introduced to unmotivated students without it becoming 'study' rather than for enjoyment? (Students would not read books unless they were forced to and therefore would not feel like it was fun.)**

Answer: Just require them to choose a book they like to try. The teacher needs to prepare a wide range of books for them to be able to choose. If they don't like the book, they can always switch books. When it is their choice and when they don't have anxiety—no tests, questions or assignment—they will be able to enjoy the book. Require them, not force them. Just say something like this: "Reading two books you like is required this term. If you do, you will get 5 extra points for your finals. If you don't, you just don't get the 5 points."



**Q (4): I teach a conversation English class with very little focus on reading. How can I motivate students to read on their own?**

Answer: The topic of your next class conversation is going to be "The Book (graded reader) I Recently Read."

**Q (5): How can we plan a curriculum of extensive reading? I have been doing ER once every two weeks, and can only give a one-spot type of in-class activities. How should in-class activities for ER done regularly?**

Answer: I'm not sure what you mean by "I have been doing ER once every two weeks." Do you mean SSR (Sustained Silent Reading)? Also, when you say "in-class activities for ER", do you mean students do ER outside their class but you hope to do some activities in class? If you are doing ER only in class, make sure you bring varieties of books to class for the students to choose from, and that enough time is given to them to read silently.

**Q (6): 'Just give students chances to read books' is very difficult, isn't it? You told us not to give 'a kind of study' to them. I have no image how far I can do, such as writing a comment (in Japanese) is OK. Are there any other things that are good for students after reading?**

Answer: Have them become "reviewers" of the graded readers. Have them rate the books they have read

with comments ( in Japanese.) As a class, make a “graded reader guidebook” by compiling their reviews. This way they have a real reason to read the books. It is also a meaningful activity because that information is going to be useful for other class students, their “Kohai” and the teachers!

**Q (7): Some students try to read too difficult books. I always advise them to pick up less difficult ones. But some of them don't listen to me. What should I do for them?**

Answer: When Japan Times (the famous newspaper company) gives new Japanese reporters a job training, they have them read graded readers. The freshmen newspaper reporters have to start with Penguin Starter level (250 headwords) books. Tell your students that even professional reporters who write newspaper articles start with that level, because it is the most effective way to improve their reading and writing skills.



**Q (8): Is it important to do step by step? I mean there are several levels, but can students choose their levels? Do teachers have to tell them “You read 10 books of level 1, and then, you can go to level 2,” like that?**

Answer: Students themselves should decide the levels. Also, they can change levels any time and as many times as they want. It is totally their choice. However, teachers can advise them that they should start with very low level. Then if they feel they want to read higher level books, they should move up. It is also OK to go back to lower level books.

**Q (9): There are many publishers and each has different grades. How do you decide ‘grade’?**

Answer: I suggest reading *Extensive Reading Activities for Teaching Language*, Cambridge 2004, pp 28- 31. In Chapter 2, Introducing Reading Material, there are two activities introduced that will answer your question perfectly. One is 2.5, Color-coordinated Materials contributed by Junko Yamanaka and 2.6, Find Your Level by Ken Schmidt.

## <Part 2>

**Date:** September 20, 2008, 14:30-17:00

**Venue:** NSC College, Bldg-IIIS, Room 51, 52, 41

**Advisors:** Kazuyoshi Sato, Nancy Mutoh, Paul Crane  
(Nagoya University of Foreign Studies)

**The number of participants:** 26

**Abstract:** Group discussion



## **Workshop in October (Schedule)**

Date: October 11, 2008, 10:30-14:30 (Part 1),  
14:30-17:00 (Part 2)

Venue: Nagoya NSC College, Room 51

Instructor: Paul Crane (Nagoya University of Foreign Studies)

Title: 'Learner Training: How Teachers Can Support Students in Their Learning'



**Please email Chihaya at <chihaya143(at-mark)nufs.ac.jp> if you can attend this workshop.**