

NUFS Workshop 2009

*Newsletter No. 12***Workshop in February****<Part 1>****Date:** February 20, 2010**Venue:** NSC College, Room 31**Time:** 10:30-14:30**Instructor:** Junko Yamanaka (Trident College)**Title:** “Extending Extensive Reading: *You Are the Key*”

Abstract: Extensive Reading has been implemented in more schools in Japan because it has been recognized as an excellent way to enhance students’ reading skills, overall language proficiency, attitude and motivation. However, it seems that we still have a long way ahead of us before ER is truly understood and widely adopted by Japanese schools. The questions now are: How can we extend Extensive Reading further? How might we be able to dramatically change the English education in Japan? The presenter believes *teachers* are the key. More information, suggestions and guidance will be provided in the hope that teachers would be *empowered* to extend ER in Japan.

**The number of participants:** 25**1. Interesting activities you might want to use in your class. Why?**

- Book report - recommendation to other students will be helpful. Reports from students will encourage other students more than teachers’.
- Matching the titles of the books with their summaries activity should be fun.
- The activity that students only get the information of summary (outline) and choose the correct one by watching the cover of books. It is like a game and I’m sure students will enjoy it. We could persuade them to read books.
- Ms Yamanaka is great about convincing students how enjoyable reading is. I got interested in reading every single book she introduced today. Unfortunately I’m not in the situation of trying ER at my workplace now, but some day I hope to be able to introduce ER to my students.
- At junior high schools, it’s impossible for us to have students try ER in hours of teaching. So making use of RAKUDOKU room sounded nice for me and I wanted to try using or opening RAKUDOKU room.
- The book ‘Did Hamster Go Into the Space’ was interesting. I think JHS students will get interested in it. It has many pictures and tells us unknown facts.
- Reading competition among the students, because it must boost their attitude in a natural way.
- I thought ER was closely related to the material in intensive reading (e.g. textbook) to reinforce the understanding. So today’s workshop has changed my thought.



2. What you learned from today's workshop.

- How to motivate students to read more I would like my students/colleagues to realize 'fun' is important.
- It was really great experience that any level student can start ER and there are so many kinds of books. Also I feel that I want to keep reading as many as possible in order to improve my English skills.
- I didn't know that ER can improve listening and speaking not only reading ability. The strategies of the two students in the case study are very helpful. They give me good hints to do ER.
- If we are not good readers, we cannot introduce good books to our students.
- I like the idea that we don't have to assess students' comprehension. It's not necessary to assess things like students' 'enjoyment' and 'appreciation'.
- If we can introduce ER successfully, students will like reading in Japanese as well. 'A home-run book' experience is very important.
- We should recommend easy books for students first. Before I took this lecture, I thought we should recommend proper level or a bit higher level books for them. But it was wrong. Gradually they get confident and curiosity for reading after reading easy and fun books. That will connect for learning English.
- ER could improve the learners ability of listening, speaking and writing as well as reading. What matters is having the learners find out their mistakes by themselves through re-reading etc. Enjoyment under less pressure situation could be the key.



3. Questions and Answers

Q (1): Does extensive reading really help students when it comes to communicating? I'm still wondering.

A: Yes, it does. My senmongakko students feel it and express it. In senmongakko, students *do* have many conversation classes where they learn to communicate in English. However, many of my students who really participated in ER say they owe their improvement in oral skills to ER. They say that by reading easy books that are full of dialogs, expressions sink into their brain before they know it. Students often realize it, they say, when they go abroad, for example on a summer program or home-stay program. In those situations they find themselves using expressions they have read in ER books when they communicate!

Q (2): How far do you think communicative task is necessary for ER?

A: Communicative tasks are not absolute necessity, but try giving some if your students enjoy them and as far as they help students want to read more. I hope activities and tasks for ER, if you do any, would be geared toward motivating them to read. I have introduced one activity to answer Question No. 4.

Q (3): Are there Japanese graded reader? What are they called?

A: I found the following information online.

レベル別日本語多読ライブラリー にほんごよむよむ文庫
NPO 法人日本語多読研究会 HP



<http://www.nihongo-yomu.jp/>
www.ask-digital.co.jp/images/event/080607_report.pdf

It seems that they are doing quite similar to what we are doing in English. They use picture books, novels and Manga. In fact, this information would help promote ER in Japan, because it is introduced in Japanese and therefore easy for Japanese people to understand what ER is. Nihongo Yomuyomu Bunko is on Amazon or <http://www.ask-shop.net/shopdetail/042004000004/order/>

Q (4): Have you got any idea or technique as an introduction of ER in order for my students who dislike studying English or even dislike participating in an English lesson to be involved in ER? As a lot of students like better talking with their friends than studying unless I give them something impactive.

A: I suggest pair work activities. Here is one example. The teacher prepares a piece of paper for each student. On the paper there is a report or dialog with blanks. Students first fill out the blanks or choose words individually and then do a pair work to communicate. For example:



Recently I read _____. It was a(n) _____ (love story / detective story /adventure story / suspense / non-fiction /[_____]). I _____(liked it a little / I liked it very much/ I did not like it)because it was _____(fun/ easy/ exciting/ sad/ boring/ too difficult/ [_____])

You could make this into a dialog form too. If your students have not started ER, they can report on or talk about books they recently read in Japanese. I hope to introduce these kinds of activities next time I have a chance to present.

Q (5): Now I'm conducting in-class ER at the beginning 5 minutes at every class. Students find it worth reading and a good way to improve their ability. However I feel sorry for them that the text isn't story-based nor gripping. I'd like to know how I can start a real ER with no-budget support.

A: Collect short stories that are easy and gripping. Collect as many different kinds as possible. Photo-copy them and put each in a clear plastic pouch so that they can be shared by students and also that students cannot write on them. A student will choose one story in the beginning 5 minutes in every class and read it, write a very short comment on a record sheet, like "Fun! I liked it", return the story to the teacher and get another one if there is time. In the meanwhile, I suggest a group of teachers try to collect samples and chip in money to buy some ER readers that they can share to take into classrooms for students to read in class. Also, please look at my answer to Question 6.

Q (6): I wonder how many books are needed at least. We have 280 students (40 students x 7 classes). We don't have budget, so I'm thinking to raise 1000 yen from each student and return one book to them at the end of the year.



A: Collecting money from students and giving them one book each at the end of the year is an excellent

idea. I know a university that does a similar thing as part of their ER program. This is what they do:

Each student buys one or two graded readers (depending on their levels) as part of the textbook pack in April. (Students do not have choice here for the purpose of randomizing the book titles in each class) Students exchange their books in class to read different titles. In the second semester, students start using the Foreign Language Study Center (mini library).

This kind of system, or at least a modification of it, might be applicable to high school situations.

<Part 2>

Date: February 20, 2010, 14:30-17:00

Venue: NSC College, Room 31

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

The number of participants: 16

Abstract: group discussion on action research



Workshop in March (Planned)

Date: March 27 & 28, 2010

Venue: Irigo Garden Hotel

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

Final presentation on action research

This workshop is for AR group members only.