

Extensive Reading Plus

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In the liberal art programs of colleges and universities, English courses are normally offered for only one to two years. Extensive Reading must be designed to be highly effective for the students, in order for them to make considerable development in their English abilities. With this observation, “Extensive Reading Plus” communicative activities can be shown to be effective with the data presented in this research.

Adding Communicative Activities to Extensive Reading

Reading as Intra-personal Communication

In silent reading activities, the readers communicate with the authors of the books, even authors who lived many years ago, like Shakespeare in the 16th century. It is wonderful but it is also in most situations, a direct and one-way communication, meaning it tends to be a “solo” activity. But we can change reading from being “Intra-Personal” communication to being “Inter-Personal” communication, by adding communicative activities.

Reading as Inter-Personal Communication

1. There is excitement in sharing our reading experiences with others (i.e. classmates).

2. Some examples of communicative activities:

- 📖 Reading to partners
- 📖 Listening and jotting down points or memos of stories while a partner is reading
- 📖 Writing summaries after listening to stories
- 📖 Giving oral book reports in small groups
- 📖 Playing questioning games
- 📖 Holding group oral interpretation sessions

Expanding of the activities and having FUN with them

- 📖 Holding Group Presentations picking up individual themes based on the books the groups have read
- 📖 Creating Posters to introduce the books
- 📖 Producing *kamishibai* (Paper Story Shows) creating both visual and oral activities
- 📖 Creating Picture Books based on the books
- 📖 Putting on Puppet Shows based on the books
- 📖 Holding Debate Sessions (intelligent and logical games)

More exciting events to enhance the Extensive Reading experience

- 📖 The oral interpretation as an English Literature Contest; (recreating the experience and excitement about the book orally through oral interpretations)
- 📖 Picture book / Poster Contest; (recreating the experience and excitement about the book visually through pictures and drawings)
- 📖 The Book Review Contest; (recreating the experience and excitement about the book literally in one’s own words)

Extra-curricular Program: Rakudoku Club

In 2008, an Extensive Reading Room was set up with several thousand graded readers, leveled readers and picture books for children. It currently has 20,000 books. And at the same time the Rakudoku (pleasure reading) Club was founded. About 20 students came together and started Extensive Reading Plus activities. The club has 60 registered members, of whom 20 to 30 are active, showing continued attendance and participation in the activities. The members are asked to read books on their own and write book reports. The members come to the club meetings usually once a week with their written book reports. Groups including about 5 to 10 people are created everyday in the Extensive Reading Room, and those who have prepared book reports give individual oral presentations from their reports. This allows sharing of the books’ content as well as opportunities to ask questions about the books.

Examining the Effectiveness of the Reading Plus Communicative Activities

Activities in the Rakudoku (Pleasure Reading) Club

The members registered took the TOEIC IP, and the data from the scores were examined to see if there was

any improvement or development in the scores.

The correlation was measured between the improvement in the TOEIC SCORES and the 3 items: (1) the number of the words they have read, (2) the number of the book reports they have written and (3) the number of the activities they have participated in.

The first year from June 2008 to June 2009

Below are the correlations of improvement of the TOEIC scores in one year from June 2008 to June 2009, and the 3 items:

1. The correlation with the number of the words read was negligible ($r^2 = 0.22$)

2. The correlation with the number of reports written was almost zero ($r^2 = 0.08$)

3. The correlation with the number of activities participated in was stronger than the other two items, and indicated the most improvement among the three factors ($r^2 = 0.38$)

Senior members from June 2009 to 2010

In one year from June 2009 to June 2010, no correlation was found between the improved TOEIC score and (1) the total number of words read ($r^2 = 0.26$), nor was there any significant influence from (2), the total number of book reports written ($r^2 = 0.18$). But the highest correlation was found between the improved TOEIC score and (3), the total number of participated activities ($r^2 = 0.41$). The average of the improved TOEIC score was 30 points.

One of the members demonstrated great improvement of increasing 125 points with the TOEIC score within one year. This student did not have any experience living abroad. Another member went to study at a language school in London for three weeks. But three weeks was not long enough to influence improvement in the TOEIC scores, but this individual continued to read and his total word count came up to as many as 855,201 words. This member's average of improved scores was about 30 points.

New members

The correlation between improvement of the TOEIC Scores within half a year from June 2010 to December 2010 and the three factors:

1. There was correlation with the number of words read ($r^2 = 0.47$)

2. There was no correlation with the number of book reports written ($r^2 = 0.192$)

3. The correlation with the number of activities participated in was very strong ($r^2 = 0.75$)

Note, however, that the average improvement of score was only 11.7 points

Senior members who belonged to the club for several years

The correlation between the improved TOEIC score from the 1st test to the latest test taken; December 2010, along with the same 3 factors indicated that (1) correlation with the words read ($r^2 = 0.70$) was the strongest out of the 3. The members had been reading for more than 2 years and the strong correlation became evident. But again, correlation with the written reports ($r^2 = 0.23$) was not clear. Correlation with the participated activities (3) was strong ($r^2 = 0.62$).

Reviewing all the data

In looking the at correlation of the improvement of the TOEIC scores with (1) the total number of the words read, (2) the number of the written reports and (3) the number of participated activities, it is clear that the strongest correlation was found with the number of activities participated in. The effect of the activities is evident.

Some preceding research indicated that in order to obtain evidential improvement in the TOEIC scores of students, the students would need to read 700,000 words or more. However, members of the Rakudoku Club have shown that they could make 160 point improvements on their TOEIC scores by reading 300,000 words on average.

Conclusion

With this research we can conclude that Extensive Reading can become more effective and enjoyable if we are able to change the Extensive Reading into interpersonal communication by adding communicative activities.