

10 keys to successful Tadoku reading program

By Akio Furukawa

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The Start with Simple Stories (SSS) Tadoku (extensive reading, or reading without translation) method is a unique and fun way to learn a language.

We had 179 seventh-graders who started learning English with Tadoku two years ago, and 10 out of 179 reached the reading level of the Harry Potter series after learning English for two years. Eighty-three of 179 reached the reading level of the Magic Tree House series before they become ninth-graders.

The SSS Tadoku method was created by Prof. Kunihide Sakai at Electro-Communication University and the SSS Tadoku Study Group.

What are the keys to a successful Tadoku program? This report will explain our way of teaching English through the SSS Tadoku method and give the 10 keys to our successful program.



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SEG Tadoku Program

SEG (Scientific Education Group) is a juku school for middle and high school students who want to learn English through Tadoku in addition to their regular school education.

We started a Tadoku program for middle and high school students in 2006. The purpose of the SSS Tadoku Program at SEG is to have students receive the maximum benefit of reading without translation.

Our students take a total of 48 three-hour lessons in a year at SEG. The classes meet once a week from 5:15 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. A Japanese teacher conducts Tadoku reading lessons for 80 minutes, and after a 20-minute break, a native English-speaking teacher teaches other English skills including grammar, writing, and conversation for 80 minutes. The students are divided into several classes; the number of students in each class is about 12.

10 keys to a successful program

Every student who takes the Tadoku program can reach the reading level of the Harry Potter series in two or three years if he or she reads about 3 million words in total. The main challenge is how to have students con-



Students reading in class

tinue to read every week for more than two years.

In our experience, there are 10 keys to having the students keep reading: 1) the SSS method; 2) in-class reading; 3) teacher's advice on choosing books to read; 4) preparing a large variety of books; 5) out-of-class reading; 6) preparing a large number of books; 7) teaching basic grammar and vocabulary; 8) opportunities to speak and write; 9) not evaluating comprehension for each reading task; and 10) support from parents. These are the 10 keys to opening the doors to a successful Tadoku Program.

1. Start with simple stories

To read without looking up words in the dictionary, it is necessary to start reading very easy, simple books. In our program, seventh-graders who are starting to learn English begin by reading very easy picture books such as Oxford Reading Tree Stage 1.

Even students who barely know the English alphabet can enjoy reading this kind of book with the help of the accompanying pictures and CDs. For students in the ninth-grade or above, the Foundations Reading Library from Cengage is the best series with which to start extensive reading.



Figure 1 *Six in a Bed* from Oxford Reading Tree Series Stage 1



© Oxford University Press



Figure 2 *Sarah's Surprise* from Foundations Reading Library Level 1

2. In-class reading

Many teachers believe it is unnecessary to spend time reading books in class, because the students can read at home. However, it is very important to read books in class, because quite a few students don't have time to read at home because of club activities and homework. Also, we can check students' reading comprehension and whether they are enjoying themselves by observing their reading attitude in class. We strongly believe that reading in class is the most important key to a successful reading program.

3. Teacher's advice on choosing books

Many teachers believe students should choose which books to read by themselves as part of an extensive reading program. However, it is difficult for many students to choose a suitable book that is easy enough to understand and is interesting for them. The teacher's main role in Tadoku is to observe the students' reading attitude and to select books that are of the right level and have suitable content for each student.

4. Preparing a large variety of books

To choose suitable books for each student, we need a variety of books in our Tadoku library. Some students like love stories, while others like detective stories, science-fiction, fantasies, classics or nonfiction. For Taylor Swift fans, we recommend the biography of Taylor Swift, and for K-ON fans we recommend translations of K-ON comics.

SEG has more than 20,000 titles including graded readers for English learners, books for children and young adults in native English-speaking countries, and English books from all over the world.

Iran Cinema Readers and Denmark's Sarin Stories are two of the most popular series that are published outside of English-speaking countries

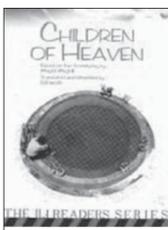
4 popular titles in SEG Tadoku Program



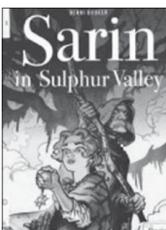
Taylor Swift



K-ON



Iran Cinema Readers



Sarin Stories

5. Out-of-class reading

Although in-class reading is important, out-of-class reading also is essential to a successful reading program. Students can read an average of 336,000 words per year in class, because they read an average of 7,000 words in each 80-minute reading class every week. Some

students can read more than 200 words per minute, so they can read more than 700,000 words in class. However, if they want to read more than 1 million words per year, they have to read out of class. One-third of our students read English books on the train. In the 2010 academic year, quite a few students read more than 1 million words.

Table 1: Best Readers in Each Grade (Excluding Returnees)

	Initials	Reading Amount in a Year	Total Amount of Reading	The Book in Reading Now
7 th grader	M. S. (M)	1,869,618	1,869,618	Geronimo Stilton Series
8 th grader	M. T. (F)	2,467,491	3,502,889	Percy Jackson Series
9 th grader	K. N. (M)	2,271,570	4,374,785	Harry Potter Series
10 th grader	M. F. (M)	7,445,593	7,445,593	The Pelican Brief

6. Preparing a large number of books

We have more than 1,000 students in our Tadoku program. To allow for reading out of class, we need a large number of books for the students to borrow. On average, one student borrows 20 books from our library, so there are 20,000 books at students' homes at any given time. We have more than 200,000 books in our library, including more than 100 copies of titles that are very popular with our students.

7. Teaching basic grammar and vocabulary

Some teachers believe that teaching grammar and vocabulary is unnecessary. However, we think that teaching grammar and vocabulary, together with extensive reading, are two wheels of one cart. Both are necessary for acquiring a foreign language. For example, knowing the basic word order in English is important, because Japanese has a very different word order.

To read easy children's books and graded readers for English beginners, students should know at least 300 basic words in English. Therefore, at the beginning of extensive reading, teachers should teach these 300 words to the students. The knowledge of these 300 words helps students to start extensive reading smoothly.

8. Opportunities to speak and write in English

Language is a tool for communication, so it is important to allow opportunities for the students to speak and write in English. Students try to speak using the expressions they read, and they find the correct expression for their meaning in the books they read. For this purpose, there is an 80-minute grammar, oral communication and writing lesson every week in our SEG class.

9. Not evaluating comprehension for each reading task

Many teachers want to test students' reading comprehension after a book is read. *The Moodle Reader Module* is very popular among teachers, since a computer checks the comprehension for each student. However, we do not think this is a good idea, because if the students have to take a test every time they finish a reading task, they cannot enjoy the reading. We do not check the reading by testing students. We use the ACE (Assessment of Communicative English by ELPA) to check our program and assess each student's proficiency in grammar, vocabulary, reading and listening.

The ACE test is an examination for Japanese high school students administered by the Association for English Language Assessment. Our students take the ACE tests in August and January. The average ACE test scores of high school students nationwide in Japan are shown in table 2. In the table, V stands for vocabulary, G for grammar, R for reading, and L for listening.

The following table shows the data for the top 27 percent of SEG Tadoku students who took the ACE test in January 2011 and for the top 27 percent of students who took the same ACE test in 2010.

These data suggest that the Tadoku program helps English learners reach a higher level in a much shorter time compared with the grammar and translation program generally used in high schools in Japan.

Table 2: Comparison of ACE Data between SEG-Tadoku Students and Students Nationwide

Test Code: ACE 0380	V	G	R	L	Total
Full Score	150.0	150.0	300.0	300.0	900.0
SEG: 8th Graders	97.1	95.5	241.6	253.4	687.6
SEG: 9th Graders	108.9	108.6	288.8	289.9	786.3
SEG: 10th Graders	117.1	119.0	279.8	273.3	789.2
Nation-Wide: 10th Graders	81.6	82.0	174.1	183.8	501.5
Nation-Wide: 11th Graders	95.8	97.8	199.8	196.1	589.5
Nation-Wide: 12th Graders	110.6	107.2	213.3	210.5	628.9

10. Support from parents

About one-sixth of the parents whose children take our Tadoku program work for foreign-affiliated companies or in the international section of Japanese firms. They know the importance of English as a communication tool and the limitations of the grammar and translation method. In the real world, thinking in English is a necessary skill for international communication. Some parents volunteer to speak about our program at parent-teacher meetings or on open days. Parental support encourages our students to keep up with extensive reading for long periods.

英語多読のすすめ

SEG英語多読教室主宰 古川昭夫

英語教育の目的は、英語で考える力を育てることです。これは、今までも多くの方が力説していますが、入門段階からどのように訓練をすれば、英文を日本語を介さずに理解できるようにするのかについては定説がありませんでした。

Start with Simple Stories (SSS)方式の多読は、英語を学ぶ初期段階から、やさしい英語の絵本を読み、1) 辞書を引かない、2) 分からないところは飛ばす、3) つまらなかつたらやめる の多読3原則に従って、段階的に読む本のレベルを上げてゆく方法です。この方法で、子供から大人まで、多くの人が、英語で考える力を伸ばしています。

SSS方式の段階的多読では、CD付きの1ページに1行程程度のやさしい絵本(英文記事の画像参照)から始めます。これなら、英語を学ぶ最初の日からでも、日本語での解説無しに英文を直読直解できるのです。やさしい絵本から徐々にレベルを上げて、250万語程度(時間にして、240時間程度)英文に触れれば、中1から英語を始めた中学生でも、Harry Potterなどの児童書を辞書無しで楽しめるようになります。

私は、経験から、英語力の伸び=読み聴きした英文の量×(理解度)という仮説を立てています。辞書を引いたり、日本語の説明を聞いたり、繰り返し音読をすれば、読む英文の理解度は、100%近くなり、読んだ量に対する伸びの率は高くなりますが、読める英文の量は少なくなります。一方、英文の理解度を70%に落とすと、読んだ量に対する伸びの率は、100%理解に比べて24%に減りますが、理解度を落とすことで、従来の10倍の英文を読むことが可能になり、従来に比べて約2.4倍の効率で英語力が伸びる、つまり、中1・2の2年間で、中1~高2の5年分相当の英語力にすることが可能という仮説です。

実際、多読を軸に英語の学習を始めた中1生の多くが、2年間で、高校3年生の上回る英語力をつけています。(ACEテストの結果による。英文記事中、Table 2を参照) また、2年半で、250万語以上読み、Harry Potterシリーズを読み始めた生徒は、TOEICも800点を超えました。このように、効果の高い多読を、あなたのクラスにもとり入れてみませんか? また、大人の皆さんは、自分でも始められます。下記の図書を参考に、ぜひ、あなたも多読をはじめませんか?

[多読・多読指導のための参考書]

- (1)「英語多読完全ブックガイド(第3版)」 古川昭夫・神田みなみ編著 コスモピア ISBN 9784902091762
- (2)「イギリスの小学校教科書で楽しく英語を学ぶ」 古川昭夫・宮下いづみ著 小学館 ISBN 9784093105279
- (3)「英語多読・多読指導マニュアル」 高瀬敦子著 大修館 ISBN 9784469245530
- (4)「英語多読法」 古川昭夫著 小学館 ISBN 9784098250837

洋書 500冊を無料贈呈！ 英語 100万語多読キャンペーン

主催：SSS 英語多読研究会

後援：日本多読学会、SEG、コスモピア ほか

2011年4月1日から、2012年2月28日までに、キャンペーン推薦図書(4/1発表予定)から3冊以上の洋書を読み、その中から、「私の推薦する1冊」と題した洋書の推薦文をSSS英語学習法研究会宛に送ってください。

応募者の中から、抽選で50名の方に洋書3冊を贈呈する他、読書推薦文の審査で入賞した方に30名に、洋書7冊を、合計で、500冊の洋書を無料プレゼントします。あなたも、やさしい英語の本をたくさん読んで、英語力を伸ばしてみませんか? 詳しくは、下記のウェブページを参照ください。

<http://www.seg.co.jp/sss/information/100man-go-fair.html>