

報告

A Report on the Usefulness and Effectiveness of the Reading Marathon Room

リーディングマラソン室の有用性と有効性に関する報告

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Keywords: *English learning support, conversation practice, publicity*
英語学習支援, 会話練習, 広報

1. Introduction

The International Cultural Studies Department (ICSD hereafter) owns a Reading Marathon Room (RMR hereafter) which was implemented in 2006. This was for the development of an English reading skills movement which is supported mainly by faculty lecturers teaching English.

The RMR acts like an English library for the ICSD, holding books which students are instructed to use for English courses. In addition, the RMR also acts like an English learning centre and miscellaneous information centre about foreign culture, where students go to get advice on English assignments and other English learning advice outside of their course contents, such as advice for personal TOEIC endeavours, personal university entrance examination guidance. Students also go there to simply practice English conversation or to exchange information with the RMR assistant, who is a native speaker of English.

In this report, we will give a description of the RMR, reveal results on a questionnaire survey of students regarding the RMR, provide a discussion about the results of the questionnaire survey and give suggestions for further improvement of the RMR.

2. A description of the Reading Marathon Room and the role of the Reading Marathon Room assistant

The RMR currently holds more than 700 English books, magazines and CDs. These include various sets of graded readers catered to EFL (English as a foreign language) students from popular publishers Oxford, Penguin and Macmillan among others, books on movies, biographies, facts and fiction, easy-to-read fairy tales, magazines ‘English Journal’ and ‘CNN English Express’, and books with audio CDs. For recreational educational materials, the RMR also has posters about various countries and thematic decorative ornaments to celebrate special events such as Halloween and Christmas.

The main usage of the RMR is for students to borrow books for English learning. English courses at the ICSD use English books at the RMR as course materials to encourage students to use the readers and books at the RMR. Besides being exposed to classic and popular English literature, students can also get their hands on expensive Japanese magazines ‘English Journal’ and ‘CNN English Express’ which feature a wide range of topics related to the English language such as Asian Englishes and various English programmes on local TV. These magazines are also mainly self-help English study magazines that have translation of interviews with famous people all over the world and suggest tips on studying for tests such as the TOEFL or TOEIC, among other topics.

A secondary but important usage of the RMR is to provide students with English learning support via the guidance of a learning advisor, an English native speaker, outside of class time. The RMR assistant acts like a tutor who can provide advice about English assignments and other academic work. Students come to the RMR assistant to get their writing assignments, presentation scripts or examination practice papers checked. They practise interview tests with the RMR assistant or simply talk about casual topics to practise speaking English. In the process of borrowing and returning books, the RMR assistant tries to get students to listen to and speak English only. She asks about books that the students have read, offers book recommendations and chats about daily life as well as making international posters and materials in the RMR.

With regard to English learning support, a critical role of the RMR assistant is to be responsible for publicity materials and posters of the RMR, including a monthly one-A3-sized page newsletter called ‘The Reading Marathon Times’, display posters and administrative notices. The Reading Marathon Times often has a section that lists a conversational topic for the month and encourages students to go to the RMR to talk to the RMR assistant about it. The RMR assistant also analyses

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books borrowed by students and arranges books and materials in a way that might best entice students to borrow them. It is hoped that these publicity materials and posters also act as English learning materials for the students and to attract future students during the events such as Open Campus and IPU Festa.

From the above, it can be seen that the RMR assistant has two areas of responsibilities, one being the administrative procedures and functioning of the RMR which affect the students and lecturers using the RMR, and the other being the general English learning support resource room that the RMR serves as.

3. Questionnaire survey data on the RMR from April to December 2014

A questionnaire similar to the one given out in December 2013 (see Ogawa, H., Winskowski, C., & Akasaka, K., 2014) was distributed to all the students at the DICS. The students took at least one course related to the English language. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather data on the extent of students' usage of the RMR and to investigate their views on the effectiveness and usefulness of the RMR with respect to their English study. The questionnaire was distributed during class time and collected immediately after completion. A total of 50 responses out of 53 first year students and 59 responses out of 69 second year students were collected. Students whose responses were not collected were not present in class during the distribution of the questionnaire.

Below is the list of all questions in the questionnaire. The numbers in bold next to the answers are the number of students who chose that answer on the questionnaire survey. The numbers in brackets are the results of the questionnaire survey last year. Note that N = 109 for this year and N = 112 for last year. For open-ended part in Questions 5 to 14, only selected student responses are shown here. The comments that had originally been written in Japanese are translated into English. The sentences that contained grammatical English errors are corrected in this report to avoid misunderstanding.

1. How many times a week do you usually visit the Reading Marathon Room (RMR)?
 - a. 2-3 times a week **4** (2)
 - b. Once a week **44** (10)
 - c. 1-3 times a month **53** (87)
 - d. Rarely/Never **8** (13)
2. What do you go to the RMR for? Circle all that apply. (複数回答可)
 - a. Borrowing and returning books **106** (25)
 - b. English assignment advice **28** (45)
3. How do you choose a book to read? Circle all that apply. (複数回答可)
 - a. By choosing something recommended by friends and teachers **26** (25)
 - b. Interesting cover **58** (45)
 - c. Interesting topic **79** (85)
 - d. Something easy **37** (29)
 - e. Something placed in a convenient location **1** (N.A.)
 - f. Other (Please explain →)

1 [no responses]
 (2 [no responses])
4. Have you had any help from Huiling-sensei in the Reading Marathon Room?
 - a. Yes → Go to Q5 **82** (111)
 - b. No → Go to Q6 **26** (1)

(1 response left blank)
5. If 'yes', what kind of help have you had? (複数回答可)
 - a. Conversation practice (for which class?) **4** (5)
 - Prof. Winskowski's classes
 - Ms Ogawa's classes
 - Comprehensive English IV-A
 - b. Writing advice (for which class?) **69** (105)
 - 国際文化理解演習 (Seminar in Understanding Foreign Culture I)
 - 総合英語 (Comprehensive English classes)
 - Prof. Winskowski's classes
 - Dr Carlqvist's classes
 - Ms Ogawa's classes
 - c. Presentation advice (for which class?) **5** (32)
 - Seminar in Understanding Foreign Culture (American Trip)
 - Prof. Winskowski's classes
 - 総合英語 (Comprehensive English classes)
 - d. Choosing a book **15** (34)
 - e. Other (Please explain →) **0** (3)
6. If 'no', why have you not had any help from Huiling-sensei? (複数回答可)
 - a. I am confident about doing the assignments on my own.

- 6(1)
- b. I don't think Huiling-sensei can help me much. 2 (N.A.)
- She looks always busy.
- c. I never have time to go to the Reading Marathon Room.
- 9(0)
- d. Other (Please explain →) 6(0)
- 語学実習室で本を借りてる。(I borrow books from the Self-Study Room in the main library.)
 - I only borrow and return books.
 - The other teacher helps me with my writing in the class time.
7. Do you think your reading skills have improved since you started coming to this room?
- a. Yes → What helped you to improve? (→) 87 (93)
- Better grammar knowledge
 - Writing advice
 - I think I gained new vocabulary.
 - 興味のある本が読めるので、分からない単語も自分で調べるようになった。(I can read books that are interesting to me, and I look up the words I don't know.)
 - 読むのに慣れる。(Getting used to reading)
 - 冊数をこなしてくると読むスピードが上がったから (The more I read, the faster I could read.)
 - ちゃんとした文、ストーリーの中だと単語を覚えやすい。長文に抵抗がなくなった。(In proper sentences and stories, I can learn words easily. It does not feel so difficult to read long sentences any more.)
 - 本を2年間でたくさん読んだり、コミュニケーションをとっているから。(I have read many books and communicated in the past two years.)
 - I have to read a lot of English books.
 - I could pass some examinations.
 - I read many kinds of books.
- b. No → Why? (→) 22 (19)
- I have not mastered the basics.
 - I have read easy books only.
 - 丸々読む時間を設けられないから。(I don't have time to read a whole book.)
 - I couldn't borrow many books.
 - I usually couldn't finish reading books.
 - I rarely went to RMR
 - 単語の意味だけで向上したと言えないと思うから。(I don't think having more vocabulary means improvement.)
- I can't use English so much. I only use it in the class and homework. I want to talk more with her but I can't make a chance because when I go to RMR, there are many students.
 - I don't usually study English.
 - I don't read books.
8. Do you think your writing skills have improved since you started coming to this room?
- a. Yes → What helped you to improve? (→) 72 (96)
- Better grammar knowledge
 - I read books and learned how to write e-mails.
 - 添削してもらい、間違いに気づいた。(I had my writing corrected and learned from my mistakes.)
 - エッセイを添削していただき、単語の使い方など知らなかったことを知れたから。(Huiling sensei corrected my essay and I learned something new such as how to use certain words.)
 - I learned new vocabulary.
 - 文章のつなげ方や表現の仕方など、様々なことを教えていただいたこと。(Huiling sensei taught me how to connect sentences and various things.)
 - 先生に細かいところまで指導していただいたから。(Huiling sensei gave detailed explanation.)
 - I read books and wrote summaries.
 - I could pass some examinations.
- b. No → Why? (→) 36 (16)
- It takes time and training.
 - It is difficult for me.
 - 本を読むだけでは writing はそんなに変わらないから。(Reading books does not improve your writing skills.)
 - My writing skills have improved but it's not because of this.
 - 特に何もしていないから。(I don't do anything in particular.)
 - Because I didn't practice to write.
 - ほとんど利用していないから。(I rarely go to the RMR.)
 - まだ文法ミスが多いから (I still make grammatical mistakes.)
 - 高校のときより英語に触れていないから。(I don't use English as much as I did in high school.)
 - I don't know the level of my abilities.
 - 文の構造や話の展開の仕方は気にしなかった。RMの本を writing で参考にしたことはないと思う。(I did not pay attention to sentence structures

and rhetorical forms. I did not refer to the books in the RMR for my writing practice.)

- I can't use English so much. I only use it in the class and homework. I want to talk more with her but I can't make a chance because when I go to RMR, there are many students.
- I just read. I don't write.

9. Do you think your listening skills have improved since you started coming to this room?

- a. Yes → What helped you to improve? (→) 48 (55)
- Talking with Huiling-sensei improves my listening.
 - English classes
 - I listen to the CDs that come with the books many times.
 - I have more vocabulary.
 - 先生が英語しかお話しされないの、重要な部分を聞きとる癖がついた。(Huiling sensei talks only in English, so it has become my habit to listen for important information.)

- b. No → Why? (→) 60 (56)
- I'm just reading. I haven't used CDs that come with the books.
 - I don't know if my listening skills have improved.
 - 特に何もしていないから (I don't do anything special.)
 - I rarely go to the RMR.
 - 英語を聞き取れていないと思うから。(I don't think I understand completely when I hear English.)
 - 本を借りる手続きのときにしか話をしないから。(I only talk when I borrow books.)
 - そんなに英語をさかない。(I don't listen to English so much.)
 - 高校のときより英語に触れていないから。(I have not had a chance to use English as much as I did in high school.)

10. Do you think your speaking skills have improved since you started coming to this room?

- a. Yes → What helped you to improve? (→) 54 (62)
- 言い回しが少し分かったから。(I learned how to say things a little.)
 - Because I talk with Huiling-sensei when I go there.
 - To speak with Huiling-sensei is fun!
 - I learned it is important to try to talk.
 - I can say "I want to return/borrow" smoothly.
 - I have more vocabulary now.

- 本を読んだ感想を英語で求められるから。(Huiling sensei asks me what I thought of the book.)

b. No → Why? (→) 54 (48)

- It takes some time and training.
- 特に何もしていないから (I do nothing special.)
- I rarely go to the RMR.
- すぐに話すことができないから。(I can't speak on the spot.)
- 本を借りる手続きのときにしか話をしないから。(I talk to her only when I borrow books.)
- 高校のときより英語に触れていないから。(I have not had a chance to use English as much as I did in high school.)
- I can't express my opinion.
- I only read a book and do assignment.
- I say only 'yes' or 'no' in the RMR.

11. Do you think your English grades have improved since you started coming to this room?

- a. Yes → What helped you to improve? (→) 71 (N.A.)
- 英文を読むことに対して抵抗が減った (I feel less resistant towards reading in English.)
 - Huiling-sensei helped me
 - I learned new English expressions.
 - エッセイを書くスキルが少しずつ身についていると思う。(I think my essay writing skills are improving a little by little.)
 - 英作文のアドバイスをもらうことで、テストなどにしっかり臨めたから。(By getting advice on composition, I was able to prepare myself for tests.)
 - 英語の本を少しの時間でも読めるため。毎日英語に触れているから。(You don't need a lot of time to read English books. I use English every day.)
 - クリスティン先生の英語が聞き取れるようになった。(I can understand what Prof. Winkowski is saying.)
 - 長文や難しい本を読んだこと。(Reading long sentences and difficult books.)
 - アンデス先生の総合英語の授業で一冊ずつちゃんと読み込んだから。(I made sure to finish reading a book before borrowing another one for Anders sensei's class.)
 - 授業外で英語にふれる良い機会になった。(It was a good opportunity to use English outside the classes.)
 - My TOEIC score is improving.
 - 読む本のレベルが上がったり、会話して感じる

から。(The level of the books I read is higher and I can feel I am improving when I talk in English.)

- 英語で「読む・話す・聞く」ことを求められるから。(They require us to read, speak and listen in English.)
- I form sentences by connecting many English words!
- I could read without dictionary.

b. No → Why? (→)36 (N.A.)

- I have not been there many times.
- 特に何もしていないから (I do nothing special.)
- I don't feel I have improved, but I want to keep going there.
- Because I cannot talk in English.
- I have not read much yet.
- 日常生活に生かされていない。(I cannot use it in my daily life.)
- 高校のときより英語に触れていないから。(I have not had a chance to use English as much as I did in high school.)
- I don't have a confidence to talk in English.
- I don't know my English grades
- I am not an enthusiastic student.

12. What do you like about the Reading Marathon Room?
(日本語での回答可)

- 英語で書かれた本がたくさんあり、どんどん読みたくなる。(There are many English books and that makes me want to read more.)
- There are a lot of books and we can talk in English with Huiling sensei.
- RMR is colorful and cute.
- 音源付きの本がいっぱいあるところ。(There are a lot of books with sound data.)
- English Journal が好きなので読みたいときに読めるから。(I love 'English Journal' and I can read them when I want.)
- 添削してくれるところ。(I can get my writing checked.)
- 様々な種類の本を読むことが出来て便利だと思う。(There are many kinds of books and it is useful.)
- 雑誌やポスターが貼っていて、見ていてあきない。(It is never boring because there are magazines and posters.)
- 部屋が落ち着いているところ。先生の雰囲気優しいところ。(The room is quiet and the

teacher is kind.)

- 洋書を普段あまり読む機会がないので、私たちでも知っているような話から読書をスタートさせられるのはとてもありがたいです。(There are not many opportunities to read English books, so it is great to be able to start with familiar stories.)
- おすすめの本がわかる点。(Recommended books)
- 英語を楽しく勉強できるところ。(I can learn English in a fun way.)
- 本の並びや部屋の雰囲気は好きです。(I like how the books are displayed and the atmosphere of the room.)
- It's so fun because there are many books. I want to learn about America or other countries.
- 自分のレベルにあった本を見つけられるところ。(We can find books that match our English level.)

13. What do you think we can improve on at the Reading Marathon Room? (日本語での回答可)

- 日本語から英語に訳された本があるといい。そういう本を読みたい。(I want to read books translated from Japanese to English.)
- 個別の時間を作る (Having individual tutorial time)
- I hope that there are many CDs in the RMR. I want to improve my listening as well as my reading.
- There should be more books of stories which we know well, and I would go there more often.
- RMR を開ける日と時間を増やしてほしい。(I would like the room to be open for longer hours, and more often than now.)
- 有名なお話の本を増やしてほしい (I want more books with famous stories.)
- 平日は毎日開放すること (I hope it is open every weekday.)
- 映画の本や音楽雑誌などがあると通う。(I would go there more often if there were books on movies and music.)
- 英語が上手に話せないで、いつも先生とおしゃべりできずに Yes, No だけで終わってしまいます…。なので、もっとお話しする機会と言いますか、おしゃべりすることがメインの時間があったらいいなあと思います。(I cannot speak English well, so I just say 'yes' and 'no'... I wish there was a special kind of time focussing on talking.

- 英会話できるスペースがあれば良いと思う。(I wish there was special space for talking.)

14. Any other comments? Please put them here. (日本語での回答可)

- 有名な映画の本が読みたい。ディズニーやアニメ。(I want to read stories from famous movies, like Disney and anime.)
- 難易度分けしたコーナーがあってもいいと思う。(The books can be displayed according to the levels.)
- I want to talk with Huiling-sensei in English. I want to know about her country's culture.
- I use RMR every week. I like RMR because I have a chance to talk in English and learn about Singapore. I would like to go to the RMR many times.
- Thank you for giving us writing advice!
- I think RMR is a very nice place.
- I'm enjoying choosing books! I remember talking with Huiling sensei about Singapore. I enjoy it because she gave me a lot of information about big hotels!
- Thank you for helping me. I want to try to speak in English more. So I will go RMR many times!

4. Discussion on the results of the questionnaire survey

The results of the questionnaire survey provides interesting insight on the usefulness and effectiveness of the RMR. In this section, we shall discuss questions in the survey in order.

For Question 1, 49% of students, the highest proportion, say they visit the RMR 1-3 times a month. The next highest proportion of students, 40%, visit the RMR once a week. These are pleasing numbers which show that the RMR is utilised by students well. Visiting the RMR once a week is akin to having an English course once a week. This shows that the RMR is well-integrated into the average student's academic curriculum. We note that last year, though, 78% of students, the highest proportion in this question, visit the RMR 1-3 times a month. The main reason for this big number might be that last year, there was an English course which used a difficult English history textbook as the course book. It probably required students to visit the RMR often to ask for advice on reading the course book and completing the weekly assignments. Thus, we see that the usage of the RMR also largely depends on the contents of courses offered every year at the College. More evidence of this will be shown in later parts of this section.

For Question 2, a staggering 97% of students visit the RMR to borrow and return books, and rightfully so as is the main function of the RMR. Twenty-six percent of students also go to

the RMR for English assignment advice. More can be done so that a higher percentage of students will also use the RMR for more than borrowing and returning books, and we will discuss this in the next section of this report.

Question 3 shows that the majority of students go for an interesting cover and/or topic of the book when they choose a book. Only one student likes to choose books placed in a convenient location. This is an interesting discovery because we have observed that books that were less popular were actually borrowed more frequently when they were placed in more convenient and eye-catching locations.

Question 4 shows reassuringly that 75% of students had help from the RMR assistant. Although this number is much lesser than that last year, where almost all (99%) the students sought help from the assistant, the reason for this change is again mostly due to the English course mentioned in Question 1. Because the course textbook is a difficult history textbook meant for native English readers, almost all the students had to seek help from the assistant.

Question 5 shows, as expected, that writing advice was the type of help most sought after by students (63%). This number is again a drop from last year, where 94% of students sought help for writing advice. Again, the explanation for this is the English course mentioned in Question 1 and 4. From the courses listed by the students, this is evidence that says once more that the contents of English courses offered affects the usage of the RMR. We should state here that the course lecturers keep the RMR assistant up-to-date on the type of assignments they give students so that the assistant knows what questions to expect and what assignments the students have. Constant communication between the course lecturers and the assistant ensure the smooth running of the RMR.

Question 6 indicates that not having time to go to the RMR is the most common reason that students did not have help from the RMR assistant. Eight percent of students say this. The next most common reason is that students feel confident about doing assignments on their own. However, in marked assignments, we have found that students who did not get their assignments checked by the RMR assistant often have the poorest assignments and are often told to rewrite their assignments after getting it checked by the RMR assistant.

Question 7 confirms that 80% of students felt that their reading skills have improved since they started going to the RMR, and they acknowledged that reading a lot, or being made to read a lot for their English courses helped them. Again, this is evidence that the contents of English courses affect the amount of reading that students do. Some English courses this year use the books in the RMR as main material or require

students to get the RMR assistant to confirm that they have borrowed and read a certain number of books. Many students recognised that their vocabulary and reading speed have improved and that their resistance to English books have been reduced. Students who say that their reading skills have not improved admit that it was because they rarely went to the RMR. They also think that they could not understand the books they borrowed or were trying to read. This brings us to a suggestion for improvement that we will discuss in the next section of this report.

For Question 8, 66% of students believe that their writing skills have improved. This, according to them, is mostly because of the writing advice given by the RMR assistant for their assignments. Some students also listed reading as being helpful to improving their writing skills, but we see that more so than reading, personal consultations on the individual's writing assignments contribute more to improvement of one's writing skills. One student who felt that his or her writing skills did not improve because 'reading books alone did not change (his or her) writing'. Other students wrote that they only had their writing corrected once, thus that was not enough to help them improve on their writing skills. This suggested the need for students to take the initiative to get their work checked as often as they liked at the RMR.

For Question 9, unfortunately, only 44% of students thought that their listening skills have improved since they started going to the RMR. Those who thought so said that conversations with the RMR assistant and CDs that they borrowed and listened to helped them. It is assuring to know that not only books, but CDs available in the RMR are also utilised by students. Conversely, many students who did not think that their listening skills improved acknowledged that it was because they did not borrow books with CDs or listen to the CDs. Some also recognised that it was because they did not try to talk to the RMR assistant.

For Question 10, surprisingly, a higher percentage of students (50%) felt that their speaking skills improved, compared to Question 9 where a lower percentage of students (44%) felt that their listening skills improved. We say it is surprising because listening usually comes easier than speaking. Most students gave conversation with the RMR assistant in the RMR as the reason for an improvement in their speaking skills, and the opposite (not talking to the RMR assistant) as the reason for no improvement felt in their own speaking skills. We see that opinions differ in that one student thinks his or her speaking skills have improved because he or she can say 'I want to return/ borrow' smoothly, but another student thought that his or her speaking skills did not improve because he or

she has only a few words to say every time in the RMR ('I say only 'yes' or 'no' in the RMR').

Question 11 shows that 65% of students have improved on their English grades mainly due to reading more and a general improvement in the four skills. Some acknowledged that English practice outside of class time also helped them. Many who said that their English grades did not improve realised that it was because they rarely went to the RMR.

For Question 12, most students say that they like the RMR because of the abundance of English books, including magazines. Many students like that the room has a pleasant atmosphere with the colourful posters and signs. It is also reassuring to know that many students also like that the RMR assistant's presence, and that it helps create a relaxing environment and can provide help or casual English conversation when needed.

5. Suggestions for further improvement of the RMR

Responses to Questions 13 and 14 will be used in this section. Here are some suggestions that can be considered for further improvement of the RMR based on both the responses to these two questions in the questionnaire survey and our analysis of possible improvements to the RMR that can be made in the near future.

The suggestion most written about by the students is that they would like longer opening hours for the RMR, preferably every weekday or even the whole day every weekday. The opening hours of the RMR are unfortunately decided by the College based on budget and available time of the RMR assistant. However, the suggestion we have here is to create a dropbox for returning of books, so that students would be able to return books and other materials outside of the opening hours of the RMR. The challenges of this are creating a secure dropbox and the increased administrative workload of the RMR assistant, but these challenges can be overcome.

The second suggestion is to purchase more books for the RMR in the near future. Books procurement exercises are not regular but it might be a good time to consider this for the next academic year. Many students wrote about wishing for more books and their wish lists specifically include books on famous literature, books on movies, especially Disney and anime movies, non-fiction books on topics such as current affairs and society, music and fashion magazines, foreign English magazines in general, and all types of CDs. These are exciting ideas and we will take these requests into consideration when doing the next book procurement exercise.

The third most popular suggestion by students for the improvement of the RMR is to have special timings for various activities like English conversation practice. Some students also wrote about wanting to learn more about the country that the RMR assistant comes from. Following up with these ideas, we will work on creating special sessions during

the opening hours of the RMR for the next academic year. These proposed sessions will be namely:

- i) Introduction to Singapore
- ii) English conversation time
- iii) Writing practice time

The first proposed session, (i), will be about anything regarding Singapore, the country of birth of the RMR assistant, including showing video clips, giving short presentations on posters and pictures or simply playing music or songs from the country. The second proposed session, (ii), would focus mainly on the topic featured in the Reading Marathon Times, a short monthly newsletter written by the RMR assistant since 2014. This session (ii) can also have any topic that students want to talk about. Session (iii) would be writing practice time, especially if students have written assignments for the week that they would like advice on. Each session can last 30 minutes which takes up a reasonable amount of time during the opening hours of the RMR. The constraint would be that during these special sessions, students will not have administration guidance in borrowing and returning books.

A fourth suggestion we found from the questionnaire survey was that students should give the RMR assistant a book review on the books they have borrowed, so that they can speak and listen to English more. This is currently being done as a requirement in an English course the students are attending. However, it is only for students who are taking that particular course. The difficulty of this suggestion is that this would create a long queue for borrowing and returning books if this was implemented for every student. The alternative method is to have book reviews as either a special session under the third suggestion or to include book reviews as a topic under special session (ii) as conversation practice.

Yet a fifth suggestion written in the questionnaire survey is that grading corners be made possible. This seems to imply that the student hopes for all books in the RMR to be categorised according to the level of difficulty. Administratively, this will be difficult and not ideal for a library if there is just one method of categorization. From April 2014, the books in the RMR were rearranged according to genres and publishers. Readers within the same series from the same publisher are already categorised according to levels of difficulty. We propose to work around this suggestion by giving more verbal advice to students on the level of difficulty of books to expect from different publishers and genres.

6. Reflections and conclusion

It can be seen that the questionnaire survey is an excellent exercise to do every year as it provides statistics on the usage of the RMR and the effectiveness of the services that the RMR can provide to students. The functions of the RMR are

constantly proven useful and beneficial to students and there is evidence to show the students' appreciation of the presence of the RMR. At the same time, there is always room for improvement and it is heartening to hear the students' wants and needs out of the RMR.

We devised a number of improvement plans out of the questionnaire survey, and will work toward the implementation of these improvement plans to encourage an even higher rate of student participation and increase the usefulness of the RMR.

In conclusion, we are pleased to see that the RMR is a critical part of the College for its English education and specifically, academic support for its English courses, and that there are viable goals that we can work toward creating an even better RMR.

7. References

- Ogawa, H., Winkowski, C., & Akasaka, K. (2014). Reading Marathon Room: Historical Origins, Current Usage, and Students' Experience. *Bulletin of Morioka Junior College Iwate Prefectural University*, No. 16, ISSN 1348-9720, 61-66.