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# EXTENSIVE READING IN JAPAN

## ERJ



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## In This Issue

ERJ interview with Torrin Shimono Brett Milliner	3
Language Learner Literature Awards: 2021 Winners	5, 9, 13, 17, 20
Nominations for JALT ER SIG officer positions	6
Student difficulties when reading-while-listening Meredith Stephens and Yudai Aoki	7
L2 identity cultivation via extensive reading: Eliciting an emotional response Thomas J. Fallon and Matthew Baker	10
New graded readers releases Bjorn Fuisting	13
Extensive listening at Nagoya College Stephen Clarke	14
Bridging the gap through a publisher's reading competition Thomas Entwistle	18
Recent research in extensive reading and listening Compiled by Imogen Custance	21
Presentations at JALT2021 you may like	Back Page

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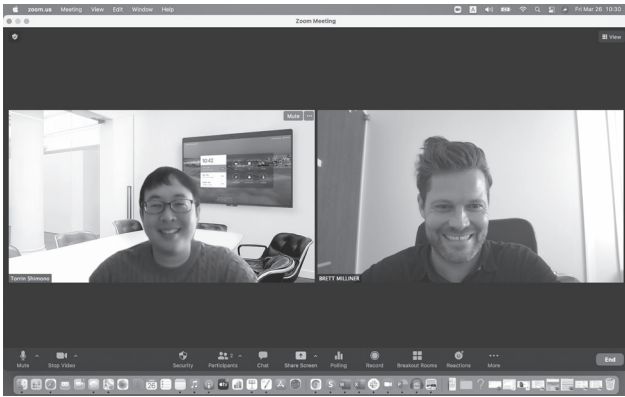
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## ERJ interview with Torrin Shimono

Brett Milliner and Torrin Shimono

Tamagawa University and Kindai University

Most PhD dissertations and theses fail to receive the attention that such a high degree of scholarship deserves. The documents are generally hidden away in a university library's database, and the sheer length and detail limit readership to a committed few. ERJ also has a column dedicated to recent research in ER, but PhD work almost never appears, so I thought it would be valuable to shine a light on another

important area of ER research. In this article, I interviewed a recent PhD graduate, Torrin Shimono, who considered the effects of extensive reading, timed reading, and repeated oral reading upon L2 reading fluency. I conducted the interview over Zoom in late February 2021.

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### What did you study in your PhD dissertation?

For my dissertation, I studied the effects of various treatments that promote reading fluency over one academic year. It basically had four main parts. First, I looked at how extensive reading, timed reading, and repeated oral reading affect the reading rate and comprehension of various texts. Second, I investigated the changes in the reaction times of orthographic, semantic, and phonological sub-processing which are the main cognitive processes used in word recognition, and word recognition is the primary recursive mental activity for reading. A third focus was examining oral reading fluency performance in terms of pronunciation, intonation rhythm, stress, and speed. Finally, I looked into the changes in the learners' L2 reading self-efficacy.

I investigated these effects by creating four quasi-experimental groups: Group 1 did a combination of timed reading, repeated oral reading, and extensive reading. Group 2 did a combination of timed and extensive reading. Group 3 did extensive reading only. Finally, Group 4, which was a comparison group, did speaking and other communication activities.

### What are the three biggest takeaways from your dissertation?

1. Probably the biggest takeaway is that activities which target reading fluency are effective in boosting reading rates but are most effective when they are combined together with other activities. That is, an extensive reading course can easily be enhanced by providing several timed reading passages per week and opportunities to read aloud. Because reading

fluency takes a long time to develop for learners, requiring massive amounts of time-on-task, this process can be aided by showing students how to become more fluent and effective readers. While reading rate and comprehension generally increase with large amounts of extensive reading that students do on their own, it might happen relatively slowly. Thus, by adding timed reading to classroom activities, which entails encouraging them to read faster by outperforming previous benchmarks in reading speed while maintaining sufficient levels of comprehension, students can more quickly develop their reading speeds. I also found that for students to take a risk and read faster than usual, it's critical that teachers select highly comprehensible texts, and provide numerous opportunities to practice. This, in turn, fosters more rapid mental processes and fluent reading can be the result. Furthermore, oral reading can provide the opportunity to teach learners how to chunk a series of words into phrases or thought groups--that is, learning how to read rhythmically with prosody in both the oral and silent modes. I think learning about prosody also promotes comprehension of texts and concentration while reading as well.

2. Another big takeaway is that reading fluency increases go hand-in-hand with decreases in reaction times of orthographic, semantic, and phonological sub-processes that are involved in word recognition. Reading experts have often defined reading as the recognition of a series of words to derive meaning. And, there are three main components for knowing a word--knowing its form/spelling, meaning, and phonology (its pronunciation, intonation, and word

stress). I found that reading activities like extensive reading, timed reading, and repeated oral reading facilitate these bottom-up processes and lead to the automaticity of word recognition, which is the cornerstone of skilled and fluent reading. In particular, speed gains are seen in semantic processing. That being said, Japanese L2 learners really struggle with English phonology, and their phonological processing skills when reading leave much to be desired. That is to say, I have found their processing skills to be quite slow and inaccurate, especially when looking at their orthographic and semantic processing. Because English is a stress-timed language which is different from Japanese (a syllable-timed language), activities that target the improvement of their phonological processing can get them out of the habit of reading English words in terms of mora, or katakana diction. As you know, reading English words using the Japanese phonological system inevitably leads to slower reading since katakana usually adds more syllables to English words, which is a phenomenon called epenthesis. Encouraging learners to read in phrases/chunks or thought groups will be helpful because they can begin to notice how a long series of words can be organized and parsed, not just semantically, but phonologically as well. When reading aloud, they can notice the stress on content words, which are louder, longer, and have more intonation contours, and the deemphasis of function words, which are often read comparatively faster. That is, not all singular words should be read at the same rate, rather some are given more attention (content words) than others (e.g., function words). In that sense, they can become more strategic readers when learning how to prioritize certain words over others. They also will realize that in order to have appropriate rhythm and speed, the number of syllables usually needs to be reduced.

3. Extensive reading, timed reading, and repeated oral reading really help in building learners' L2 reading self-efficacy with various types of English texts. By reading various types of genres and topics, setting goals, and observing their own progress really boosts their confidence in reading and probably many other skills as well.

**After your research, how do you manage an ER component in your EFL courses?**

I think it is a good idea to set high word-target goals of around 200,000 words for the year to see significant and durable gains. This also fosters a sustainable reading

habit. I found that doing around 15 minutes of SSR (Sustained Silent Reading) at either the beginning or end of class is beneficial with the teacher as a model. Also, I try to practice English phonology with the students any way I can with a more explicit, sometimes more visual focus on intonation, stress, connected speech, perhaps using gestures and written markings. Skits, role plays, poems, songs, shadowing, and Reader's Theater are good in-class activities as well because they have to read those texts with expression. Finally, I think playing with the speed element in reading such as with timed reading, speed reading relays, and skimming and scanning activities can be fun. Students get into it because they might enjoy the competitive atmosphere.

**How does repeated oral reading enhance reading fluency?**

Most Japanese students are basically reading English with a phonological deficit simply because there are more English sounds than Japanese. Therefore, repeated oral reading allows them to hear the natural rhythms and phonemes of English in the context of a reading passage and also gives them a chance to practice these aspects over and over. Not only is that practice good neuromuscular training, I think it helps with working memory in the L2 and memory retention because sound input gets stored subvocally in the phonological loop--like a song getting stuck in their head. I think this repetition, which perhaps occurs unconsciously even while they are not reading, helps with fluency.

**How do your students respond to your feedback on their oral reading skills?**

They have responded surprisingly well. Many have said they welcomed the feedback because they often feel it is an area that they want to improve on. I think students feel comfortable doing choral reading at the same time in a group because when everybody is participating, there is less risk of embarrassment. Also, I think a lot about how I would like to learn a second language. I, myself, would really want to hear the language so I can get a feel for the prosody and expression. Of course, I would then like to practice it and get constructive feedback on oral renditions.

**How different are silent and oral reading speeds?**

They should be markedly different. But unfortunately, for many lower proficiency L2 learners, it is a real possibility that their silent and oral reading speeds might be similar. If that is the case, it is not uncommon to see silent reading speeds well under 100 wpm,

making reading arduous and taxing on the working memory. This type of slow reading is known as “reading pain.” I have also seen more advanced L2 learners have very rapid silent reading speeds but when pressed to read the text aloud, the reading becomes slow, monotonic, and generally lacking appropriate expression of the texts they are reading—like “barking at print” as they say. This is why it is important for learners to develop both silent and oral reading skills.

### **Where would you like to see more research done in ER?**

I would like to see more longitudinal studies that track students' extensive reading development perhaps throughout their time in university. I also think it is important to do research not just with school-aged students, but on other types of learners perhaps who are not under the same constraints. I think it would also be interesting to see how ER affects grammatical processing and sentence-level processing.

### **What advice would you give to future researchers of ER or EFL reading in general?**

I think there is still a lot to be discovered in terms of extensive reading and reading research in general so thinking about novel ways to enhance reading fluency and testing different elements would lead to greater insights. I think looking at the effectiveness of various types and levels of graded readers warrants further investigation.

## **REFERENCES**

Torrin's dissertation and publications connected to his Ph.D. include:

Shimono, T. R. (2018). L2 reading fluency progression using timed reading and repeated oral reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language, 30*(1), 152-179. [https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10125/66743/1/30\\_1\\_10125\\_66743\\_shimono.pdf](https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10125/66743/1/30_1_10125_66743_shimono.pdf)

Shimono, T. R. (2019). *The dynamic cognitive processes of second language reading fluency* [Doctoral thesis, Temple University]. Temple University Electronic Theses and Dissertations. <https://digital.library.temple.edu/digital/collection/p245801coll10/id/586007/rec/6>

Shimono, T. R. (2019). The effects of repeated oral reading and timed reading on L2 oral reading fluency. *The Reading Matrix, 19*(1), 139-154. <http://www.readingmatrix.com/files/20-0207e343.pdf>

## **Extensive Reading Foundation Language Learner Literature Awards: 2021 Winners**

The Extensive Reading Foundation is an independent, not-for-profit, educational association dedicated to the promotion of extensive reading to promote language learning. Each year we sponsor a contest where publishers are invited to submit their best books from the previous year. They are juried by a team of international judges—first language and non-native language readers. The finalists are selected in March. Until the end of July, they were listed on the association's website. Students and teachers were encouraged to make comments about the books. The judges then considered the on-line comments when making their final decisions. The following are the 2021 winners.

### **Category: Young Learners**

(ages 6-11 / 2nd-6th Grade)

**Title: Survival**

**Authors: Herbert Puchta and  
Gavin Biggs**

**Retold by: N/A**

**Illustrator: Lorenzo Sabbatini**

**Publisher: Helbling Languages**

ISBN: 987-3-99089-235-0

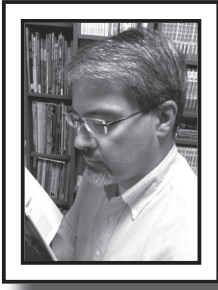


### **Juror comment:**

With colorful artwork that is simple but evocative, this book is written for more experienced readers in terms of length and difficulty of language but is an engaging story that children will likely enjoy. This book particularly shines in how it communicates actual, real-world survival skills in English to language learners in an easy to understand, example-filled narrative. The think and speak boxes within the text are interesting questions that get readers to think.

### **Online voter comment:**

“The strong points was the adventure that Ellie and her parents had by going on a holiday in the jungle. It helped to discuss about important topics such as environmental caring and family matters.”



## Nominations for JALT ER SIG officer positions

The JALT Extensive Reading (ER) SIG invites all members to nominate any ER SIG member in good standing, including self-nomination, to run for one (or more) of the volunteer officer positions for the one-year term beginning after the Annual General Meeting at the online conference in November 2021.

The nomination period will run from 9:00 am Fri. Oct. 1, 2021 until 5:00 pm Fri. Oct. 29, 2021 (JST), with voting to follow in November.

Nominations can be made for each or any officer position up for election using the Google Form below.

For information on the roles, responsibilities, and general time frame of commitments for the various ER SIG officer positions, see below.

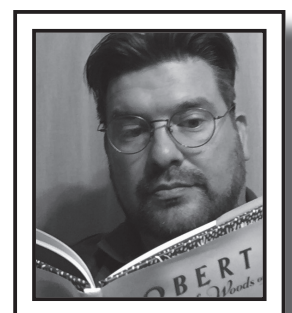
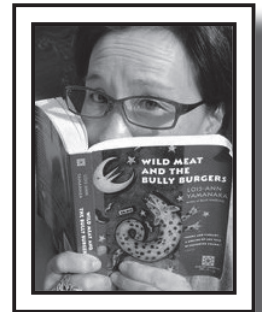
We appreciate your active participation in the JALT ER SIG and look forward to receiving your nominations.

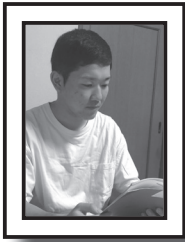
Contact the Extensive Reading SIG (<https://jalt.org/groups/sigs/extensive-reading>) for any questions about the positions.

Election Chair - Greg Rouault

### SIG Officers

1. Coordinator: The Coordinator shall have general responsibility for coordinating the activities of the ER SIG Executive Board and for directing the affairs of the ER SIG. They shall preside at ER SIG AGM and at other ER SIG sponsored events. In the absence of the Coordinator, another officer appointed by the Coordinator shall chair the meeting. The Coordinator will serve as the liaison to other similar organizations. The Coordinator shall submit an annual report to JALT.
2. Treasurer: The Treasurer shall keep all financial records and collect and disburse all funds of the ER SIG. They shall present an account of the financial status of the organization at the ER SIG AGM and submit regular financial reports to the National SIG Treasurer Liaison. The Treasurer shall prepare the financial documents for an internal audit to take place after the books have been closed at the end of each fiscal year.
3. Program Chair: The Program Chair shall supervise the planning and organizing of all regular and special programs and provide the necessary information to officers of the SIG or other JALT agencies as needed. They shall solicit presentation proposals from the ER SIG members and arrange for vetting them where necessary. They shall contact and arrange for speakers to present at the JALT International Conference and the ER SIG Forum and actively offer programs to JALT Chapters, special events of JALT, or other ER-related organizations within and outside of Japan.
4. Membership Chair: The Membership Chair shall be responsible for registering and sending renewal notices to the ER SIG membership, updating membership information provided by members, maintaining a comprehensive and up-to-date list of the membership, and forwarding membership information to the appropriate JALT officers. The Membership Chair shall assist the Publicity Chair and Publications Chair as needed for the distribution of ER SIG publications.
5. Publications Chair: The Publications Chair oversees the ER SIG's publications, which currently include the newsletter Extensive Reading in Japan (ERJ), the Journal of Extensive Reading (JER), and the proceedings of the Extensive Reading World Congress. The chair is permitted to appoint an assistant newsletter editor and newsletter staff as necessary.
6. In addition to the five required positions, supporting positions may be instituted to identify other important responsibilities such as: Publicity Chair, Website Editor, Outreach Chair, Associate Member Liaison, Research Chair, Member-at-Large, etc. Any number of volunteer officers may work together as a team using titles to reflect this sharing of responsibilities such as Co-Publicity, etc.
7. Membership on committees appointed by the Coordinator is open to ER SIG members.





# Student difficulties when reading-while-listening

Meredith Stephens and Yudai Aoki  
Tokushima University



For English language learners, many of the features of spoken text are not evident from the written text alone. Sacks (2010) explained the relationship between the visual, auditory and other aspects of processing the written word:

Reading, of course, does not end with the recognition of visual word forms - it would be more accurate to say that it begins with this. Written language is meant to convey not only the sound of words but their meaning, and the visual word form area has intimate connections to the auditory and speech areas of the brain as well as to the intellectual and executive areas, and to the areas subserving memory and emotion. ( p. 63)

Phonological processing is a prerequisite for L1 literacy development (Sousa, 2005; Wood et al., 2009) but this tends to be overlooked in L2 literacy development. In the past, graded readers for English learners did not always come with audio support. However, L2 learners also benefit as “phonological processing is a sine qua non of successful literacy development” (Goetry et al., 2009, p. 169). Accordingly, in order for extensive reading to be conducted more efficiently, phonological processing deserves attention. Stephens (2016) therefore recommended that beginner Japanese students of English abandon silent reading in favour of reading-while-listening (RWL).

One of the critical features of spoken text that is absent from written text is intonation. Rajan (2015) explained that English language intonation is extreme in its use of pitch contours. Normal English intonation is often considered exaggerated by learners of English (Reed & Michaud, 2015). This may be particularly true for Japanese learners of English who have a more restricted pitch range in their L1. Nevertheless, intonation carries grammatical meaning (Halliday, 1985), and therefore the teaching of grammar, vocabulary and intonation cannot be neatly or usefully separated.

## Benefits of reading while listening

A solution to the weaknesses of silent reading for learners has been to supply simultaneous audio-recordings. Stephens (2019) speculated that by supplementing the features of spoken text that fluent readers superimpose on written text, such as intonation, fluent reading would be facilitated.

The authors decided to explore students' perspectives on the efficacy of RWL. The first survey asked 45 non-English majors in their second year of a required English course at a Japanese university to reflect on their experience of RWL and listening only. The following comments have been selected from the survey to represent why the learners prefer RWL to listening only. They clearly reveal two broad patterns, (a) matching the printed word to the sound and (b) understanding the content. There are also possible affective benefits.

## Matching the Printed Words to the Sound

自分が聞き取ったことが正確か確認できるから

(Because you can check if what you heard is accurate.)

聞き逃したところも確認することができるから。

(You can also check what you missed.)

単語のつながりや速さ、難度の高い単語は文章を見ていないと聞き取るのが難しかったから。

(Word connections, speed, and difficult words were difficult to hear without looking at the text.)

単語の発音のつながりが分からないため、英文を見ながらであれば、何の子音が消えているかを理解できるから。

(Because I don't know the pronunciation of connected words, I can understand what consonants are disappearing by looking at the English sentence.)

確実に単語を聞き取れるから

(I can definitely hear the words.)

## Understanding the Content

何を言っていたのかわからなくても、英文を見ることで単語を拾い理解できるから

(Even if you don't know what was said, you can pick up and understand the words by looking at the English sentences.)

すぐに確認できるから。

(You can check it right away.)

聞き取れなかった部分も文字を目で追うことで理解で

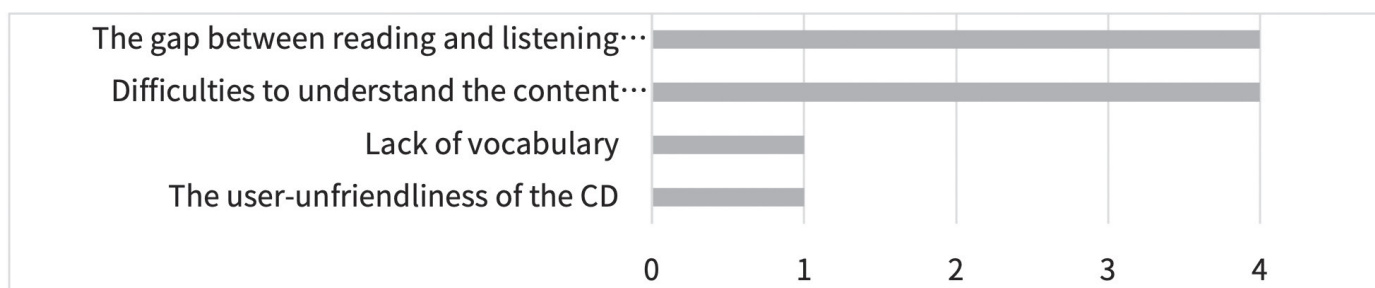


Figure 1: What difficulties did you have when reading while listening?

きるから。

(You can understand the parts that you couldn't hear by following the letters with your eyes.)

文を見ずにリスニングをするのは少し理解が追いつかないから。

(Listening without looking at the sentence is a little difficult to understand.)

聞き逃すことがないし聞くより読む方が理解できるから。

(I won't miss it and I can understand it better than listening.)

耳からだけでなく目からも情報を読み取れるから。

(Information can be read not only from the ears but also from the eyes.)

聞き取りづらいところも文を読めば理解できたから。

(I could understand the hard-to-hear parts by reading the sentences.)

### Affective Benefits

文章を見ながら聞いていたほうが、リラックスして聴けるから。

(It's better to listen while looking at the text because you can relax and listen.)

### Limitations of reading while listening

A separate survey was designed to elicit student difficulties with RWL. It revealed an unanticipated finding: the speed of the recorded text, and the speed at which the students are comfortable reading, is unmatched. One of the authors, Stephens, an L1 English speaker, had wrongly assumed that reading speeds would be faster than the speed of listening to recorded text. However, the authors learnt that for some learners the reverse may be true: the speed of the audio may exceed their reading speed.

Ten English majors in the second semester of their second year at a Japanese university, who were engaged in an extensive RWL program, participated in a written survey. They had been reading graded readers from

the university library, and had been required to read and listen to one book per week. Their responses to the survey in the fourth week of the semester about the difficulties of RWL can be seen in Figure 1.

### Classroom Applications

More investigation is needed to help students successfully implement RWL. Isozaki (2021) coached her students to refine their implementation of RWL. Initially, she planned to help her students adjust their input to solve a mismatch between audio speeds and ease of reading by, for example, choosing to listen first and read later. However, Isozaki observed that what seemed to help the students even more was to adjust the audio speed according to their comprehension.

By choosing slower recordings students can obtain scaffolding in the process of developing listening skills. Some teaching resources, such as Xreading, already provide the option of slowing down the spoken text. Video platforms, such as YouTube and Netflix, also give the option of slowing down (or speeding up) playback. Students need to be encouraged to make use of audio resources that can be slowed down.

Another recommendation is for teachers to provide exaggerated prosody during a live delivery of a story, to enable students to harness prosody as they develop their listening skills. This could be attained by extending the spaces between words in a sentence, and extending the pauses between sentences. In addition, teachers need to explain to students how intonation contributes to meaning in the way it maps onto grammar.

Teachers should explain to students that listening to audio-recordings does not provide complete information about pronunciation. Students need to be made aware of the role of lip movement in pronunciation, and how observing lip movement can aid their listening comprehension. Teachers can deliver live readings to demonstrate lip movement. Classes provided via video conferencing provide opportunities to provide close-up images of lip movement to



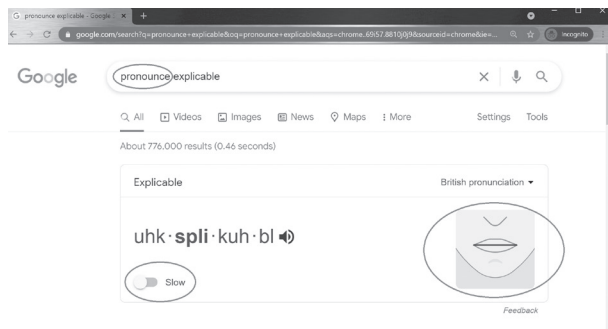


Figure 2: Example of Google's pronounce feature.

demonstrate pronunciation (Stephens, 2021). Google's pronounce feature (<https://google.com/search?q=pronounce+inexplicable>) is also useful for displaying both images of lip movement, and the pronunciation of individual words in British and American English. This feature offers two speeds, as can be seen on the bottom left of the screenshot in Figure 2.

## Conclusions

RWL resources have recently increased in availability and it is recommended that they replace silent reading for language learners because of the importance of phonological processing and intonation in reading comprehension. However, students engaged in RWL have specified difficulties that they experience, such as the mismatch of the speed of the audio and their reading speed. It is recommended that teachers provide scaffolding as an intermediary step towards the goal of achieving listening comprehension. This could be achieved by providing both audio resources which can be slowed down, and live readings with exaggerated intonation and with slightly longer pauses between words and sentences than in fluent speech. More research into closing the gap between the speed of parsing spoken and written text for learners, such as in Isozaki's (2021) study, is warranted.

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## Category: Very Young Learners

(Up to age 5 / 1st grades)

**Title:** The Tortoise and the Hare

**Retold by:** Nicole Irving

**Illustrator:** Irina Golina-Sagatelian

**Publisher:** Ladybird

ISBN: 9780241401736

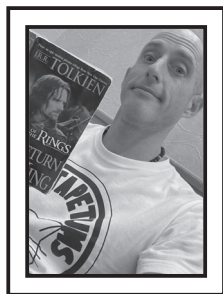
### Juror comment:

A very impressive retelling of a classic story. The story is very well written. The illustrations are classic, yet don't look outdated. Beginner readers could read this on their own as the sentences are short and the language is graded very well with lots of repetition. I can also see this being useful for teachers who wanted to turn it into a drama activity.

### Online voter comment (edited for length and clarity):

The actions were illustrated very effectively and the animals' feelings are also expressed by the illustrations. The teacher can extend students' understanding of what is going on by asking questions about the illustrations. This is a very good book for students who do not speak English as their first language. Good dialogue and nice book to be able to read aloud and model for students before they read (or try to) it on their own.





## L2 identity cultivation via extensive reading: Eliciting an emotional response

Thomas J. Fallon and Matthew Baker

Nagoya Gakuin University and Kyushu Sangyo University

This research aimed to show evidence of an emotional response in L2 learners when they are engaged in extensive reading. This emotional response is considered to be evidence of a psychological connection to the L2 culture via a shared perspective with the L2 media's characters.

The researchers postulate that connection to the L2 culture through an emotional response creates an empathetic bond with the L2 culture and nourishes an L2 identity capable of progressing toward near-native fluency.

Extensive reading, which involves learners reading texts for enjoyment as well as to develop general reading skills, has proven beneficial both in nourishing student progress in L2 proficiency as well as stimulating student engagement (Fallon, 2018; Susser & Robb, 1990). Successful study of a language via extensive reading leads the reader to naturalize their understanding of grammar through repetition and context, as well as discover new vocabulary that are less prevalent in everyday speech (Day & Bamford, 1998). The ability to read at a high level of proficiency gives learners an advantageous capacity for functionality within a particular sociolinguistic framework, allowing the proficient reader a higher chance of successful experience as a participant in that society (Cornali, 2011).

Various researchers have considered how a non-native learner might engage with the media of their L2 culture. L2 learners are exposed to their L2 culture through an array of multimedia expressing the collected narratives of that culture. It is through these various narrative stories, and characters within, that the L2 learner finds archetypal reflections of humanity with which they can identify (Jung, 1969). Once these archetypal reflections of humanity begin to take root in the L2 learner's identity, the learner must take on the perspective of the L2 native. Thus, it is hypothesized in this research that through the aforementioned process, higher levels of L2 culture truly begin to blossom.

It can be said that storytelling and human drama are a common thread linking all cultures. This is evident in Joseph Campbell's research regarding the Hero's Journey, or The Monomyth. The History Through Literature Project at the University of Berkeley, California, summarizes Campbell's work as follows:

In narratology and comparative mythology, The

Monomyth, or the hero's journey, is the common template of a broad category of tales that involve a hero who goes on an adventure, and in a decisive crisis wins a victory, and then comes home changed or transformed. (Orias.berkeley.edu, 2020)

The "Hero" is a psychological archetype recognized by Jung (1968) and Lester (1995). Every hero, or protagonist, in a narrative is a reflection of this greater Hero Archetype (Peterson, 1999). This Hero Archetype and the Hero's Journey are common threads linking all socio-linguistic frameworks through the practice of storytelling. This commonality exists due to our feeling of connection to the protagonist, or hero/heroine, of any given story. The reason reading and storytelling have such a profound effect on the experiencer's self-image is because words trigger representations in the reader or listener's imagination (Van Krieken et al., 2017). The extracted information is the reader or listener's imagistic representation of the words. As the experiencer processes the story, their imagistic representations are actually richer than the words as they are built upon the experiencer's cumulative knowledge (Peterson, 1999). As this profound linguistic experience takes place, identification with the hero of a story occurs as follows. First, we ascertain what the hero wants; we learn what the hero's goal or objective is (Oatley, 1995). For example, rescuing a princess or slaying a dragon. Once the reader has understood the hero's objectives they subconsciously map the hero onto their own body as a physical commonality. This allows the reader to read off the emotional responses of their own body to the hero's experiences. Thus, via this empathetic relationship the reader identifies with the hero. As beings of language and physicality, we use our own bodies as a computational device that can run simulations of other consciousnesses via reading, watching, listening to, or

otherwise experiencing a “hero’s journey” narrative (Oatley, 1995; Peterson, 1999). These findings are further supported by researchers of psychology and neurocognitive physiology (e.g., Van Krieken et al., 2017).

Following this line of thought, it can be posited that an emotional response to reading L2 literature is evidence of a personal connection with the L2 media on the part of the reader. This “emotional response”, regardless of qualitative characteristics such as happy, sad, good, or bad, indicates a realization on the part of the reader that the stories hold reflective truths already existing in their current L1 identity. The stronger the personal connection, the higher the probability that the L2 reader will have further extensive reading engagement, naturally assimilating L2 vocabulary and grammar patterns into their L2 identity (Day & Bamford, 1998; Worthy et al., 1999). Conversely, when lacking any personal connection to the reading material, the L2 readers then find themselves in an unsure and stagnant feedback loop, lacking reflective verbal summarization on a regular basis and losing the motivation to develop healthy reading habits (Johnson & Blair, 2003). Based on insights gained through this literary research, it was decided that a survey would be conducted to explore whether an emotional connection exists in L2 learners as a direct influence of the L2 media they consume.

## Methodology and implementation

This study was conducted over 15 weeks at two Japanese universities. The sample (N=82) consisted of 33 English majors and 49 non-English majors. This sample included both 1st and 2nd-year students who varied greatly in L2 ability. This variation in skill level was present at each university irrespective of the students’ major of study. The English majors had the freedom to choose their own books while the non-English majors were assigned specific reading material.

The English majors used a modified “Goldilocks Strategy” for book selection (Fallon, 2018; Ohlhausen & Jepson, 1992). The Goldilocks strategy takes its name from the 19th-century British fairytale about a young girl who chooses items that are not extreme, but rather “just right” according to her needs and preferences. Johnson and Blair (2003) support the use of this strategy, explaining that it encourages students to move towards an awareness of their own needs as a learner. The key here is to find a book that is of sufficient

interest to the reader so as to hold their attention, but not so challenging that they are constantly referring to their dictionary and thus missing out on the joy of linguistic play and imaginative abstraction that reading triggers in the experiencer’s mind (Fallon, 2018). Moreover, they were required to read independently five times per week for five minutes or more as homework. In-class conversations were then structured around the literary content that learners read for homework. Both among the English majors and the non-English majors, stories which incorporated a hero/heroine character were emphasized. Books such as textbooks or history books were not permitted for this activity. The books for the non-English majors were chosen for them from the Cambridge English Readers “starter” level to level 1. They read in class six times, each time 90 minutes, over a 15 week semester. Unlike the English majors, reading for homework was not a requirement. At the end of the 15-week semester, the students were given a printed survey to see if they had an emotional response to the extensive reading curriculum. The survey relied on yes or no responses and included questions to determine if the students liked or hated any of the characters, understood the goal of the characters, felt emotions while reading, desired to become one of the characters, and if they felt that their reading speed and/or knowledge of vocabulary had increased.

## Results and discussion

The survey questions and the responses of the 82 participants are shown in the table.

Emotional response is considered to be the mapping of the hero onto the reader, stimulating empathetic identification via the L2. The results from questions 1, 4, and 5 show that reading in their L2 elicited an emotional response in a portion of the participants. Questions 2, 6, and 7 indicate the successful psycho-physiological mapping of the hero onto a portion of the research participants. The researchers were especially encouraged by the English majors’ responses to questions 2 and 7. The psycho-physiological mapping of the protagonist onto the L2 reader is exemplified by the fact that 85% of English majors understood the goal of the protagonist, and 79% felt themselves wishing to be one of the characters they were reading about. These are the two

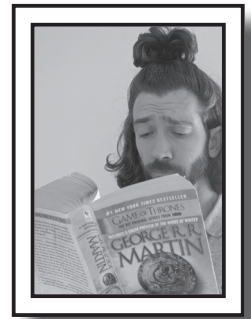


Table. Survey questions and responses of the 82 participants

Extensive Reading Survey Questions	English Majors		Non-English Majors	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. Did you find any characters you liked in the reading you've done?	85%	15%	47%	53%
2. Did you understand the goal this character was aiming to accomplish?	85%	15%	51%	49%
3. Did any of the characters you encountered use English that you came to use in your English speaking?	36%	64%	27%	73%
4. Did you feel emotions caused by the story you were reading?	55%	45%	24%	76%
5. Did you hate any of the characters?	27%	73%	41%	59%
6. Were there any characters with whom you wanted to become friends with?	88%	6%	29%	71%
7. I felt myself wishing I was one of the characters in the story I was reading.	79%	21%	12%	88%
8. My reading speed increased because of my reading practice.	100%	0%	84%	16%
9. My vocabulary increased due to my reading practice.	94%	6%	67%	23%

main requirements set out by previous researchers indicating an empathetic mapping of the hero onto the physicality of the reader. The results from questions 3, 8, and 9 indicate strong benefits to L2 acquisition as an effect of extensive reading in the target L2, nourishing both vocabulary understanding and reading speed. The positive results of question 3 indicate that some students began to cultivate an L2 identity via extensive reading. This is exemplified in that around a third of English and Non-English majors both encountered language used by literary characters that they came to incorporate into their own English-speaking identity. The researchers believe that the higher level of engagement and emotional response found among the English majors was due to their ability to choose their own reading materials.

**Conclusion**

Providing concrete neurological evidence of L2 reader identification with a L2 cultural protagonist and its relationship to L2 identity cultivation is unfortunately impossible given current resources. A majority of English majors indicated that extensive reading in their L2 elicited an emotional response to the L2 culture. This is encouraging as evidence of L2 learners finding archetypal reflections of humanity with which they can identify in the L2 culture. To determine whether this method is beneficial in the acquisition of near-native L2 fluency requires further research. Future research will focus on gathering qualitative data on emotional responses to extensive L2 reading.

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## Category: Adolescents and Adults: Intermediate

(801-1500 headwords; CEF B1)

**Title:** Hidden Figures

**Author:** Margot Lee Shetterly

**Retold by:** Jane Rollason

**Illustrator:** Dawn Wilson  
(Designer)

**Publisher:** Scholastic

ISBN: 978-1-407-17011-4



### Juror comment:

This book shares the lived experiences of three Black women engineers working to put people on the moon at the beginning of the space race. Simple but detailed dossiers help to make technical topics related to space flight and events in US society more accessible to learners. Their clearly captioned photos and diagrams are especially helpful. The clearly indicated difficulty level and word count, as well as the title being shown on the spine is convenient for those who are managing a graded reader library, as well as students making their book choices.

### Online voter comment:

It was impressive how the world has been changing for women... The book inspired me to never settle and to prove that women can be as capable of success as men. My favorite part was when John Glenn said, "If Katherine said the numbers were good, then he was ready to go" because he realized Katherine's ability and, without caring about where she came from, trusted her.

Join the conference

Join JALT

Join the ER SIG

here: [jalt.org](http://jalt.org)

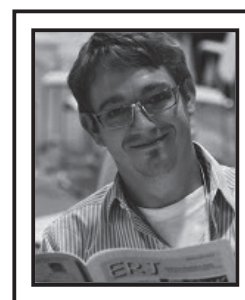


## New graded readers releases

Bjorn Fuisting

Ritsumeikan University

Teachers and students are facing another challenging semester with

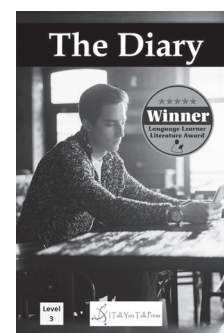


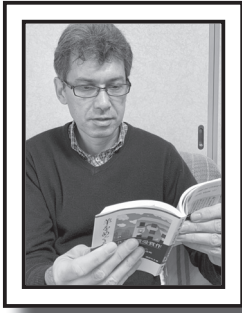
many institutions still having some classes online and/or offering hybrid classes. During these times it might be better to opt for a subscription to readers than buying physical books. To help our members with this the column is featuring an award-winning graded readers series offered by Xreading (and via Amazon); I Talk You Talk.

If you are instead looking to expand your library of physical readers, Penguin Readers have brought out another 20 titles. Penguin Readers features heavily among the finalists for the LLL awards this year which indicates that it is worth exploring this series. Publishers represented by englishbooks.jp also continue to expand their offerings with three new titles by Scholastics, eight new titles for the Awesome Adventure series and 55 titles of Foxton ELT Readers series. The full list of new titles with levels, headwords and word counts can be found on the ER SIG website [jalt.org/er/graded-readers](http://jalt.org/er/graded-readers)

## English graded readers by I Talk You Talk Press

I Talk You Talk Press is a small independent publisher based in Japan that has an award-winning series of English graded readers. The series consists of 4 levels ranging from CEFR A1/A2 in level 1 to B1/B2 headwords in level 4. The stories range in styles from human dramas, thrillers to collections of ghost stories from around the world with a total of 83 titles. New titles come out monthly from a dedicated team of writers who are also educators. The stories are engaging and well written in a way that makes them suitable for EFL students. Four of their titles have been shortlisted for the LLL award with two taking home the prize in 2019 and 2020. The whole series can be read via an Xreading subscription or bought on Amazon for 989 yen for the paperbacks or 299 yen for the Kindle Editions. All the titles have Mreader quizzes.





## Extensive listening at Nagoya College

Stephen Clarke  
Nagoya College

This paper reports on the creation of a Listening Library of teacher-generated listening materials that English major students are required to listen to almost every week. Recordings are made available on the college Moodle platform and students can choose from hundreds of files on a wide variety of topics. Most recordings are monologues and last between 90 seconds and two minutes. Students listen to them and fill in a table by listing three main points, writing comments, and rating the levels of interest and difficulty, among other things. A fairly high level of student satisfaction is reported for this homework EL activity.

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Since all mainstream second language learning theories posit an essential and fundamental role for input in second language acquisition (VanPatten, 2019), course designers need to find ways to maximize the amount of interesting, comprehensible input that their learners are exposed to. Extensive reading (ER) and extensive listening (EL) are two ways to accomplish this and both are, arguably, equally important parts of the curriculum. While there are thousands of high-quality graded readers available to help teachers implement an ER program, there are fewer easily available listening materials that can be used in an EL program, particularly at lower levels. The author surveyed EL materials that were available on the internet and concluded that most were too difficult for many of the learners in his context. This posed a significant problem because a requirement for successful EL is that material is at the 'right' level, which is to say not too difficult (Waring, 2011). In order to overcome this problem, the author decided to compile a Listening Library of a large amount of relatively easy teacher-generated content that would be made available on the college Moodle site.

### The Setting

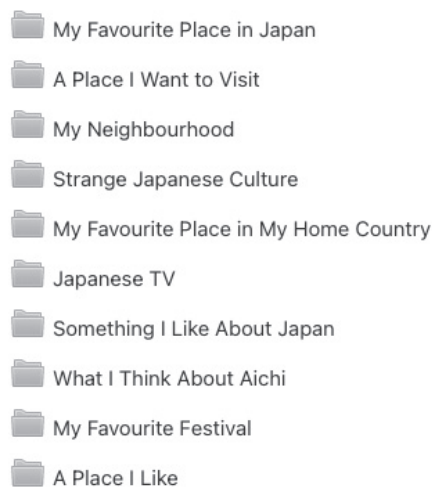
The Department of English and Communication at Nagoya College offers a two-year English major program to around 150 students. Upon entering the college, students' TOEIC scores range from around 250 to 700 points, with more than half of students scoring below 350. There are at least six 90-minute English classes per week and there is a weekly ER requirement of at least two hours reading, which is done as homework. The extensive listening component of the course is the homework activity attached to the weekly speaking class and the quality and quantity of students' listening accounts for 40% of the overall

grade.

### The Nagoya College Listening Library

Due to the perceived lack of EL materials at the appropriate level, the author decided to enlist the help of 12 part-time teachers to create a large number of self-made recordings. Teachers were asked to make recordings at a difficulty level they intuitively considered suitable for the students at our college. The first recordings were made before the start of the 2017 academic year and were selected by teachers to use as in-class listening activities. The Library has steadily grown, with the part-time teachers contributing on average three or four new recordings each semester. By April 2019, sufficient files had been created to change the Library into a self-access format whereby students could choose the files they wanted to listen to outside of class. Currently, there are over 400 files, split into two collections: one for first-year students and the other for second-years. Students are free to listen to any file in the relevant collection. Recordings are arranged into broad categories, and placed into folders that are named after the content area that the teachers talk about in their recordings (see Figure 1). The file names consist of the teacher's name, and sometimes, when applicable, there may be an extra level indicator such as 'Easy' or 'Hard' (see Figure 2 and the explanation below). Students can choose recordings according to level to only a very limited extent, however. In most cases students tend to choose files according to the content matter and whether they know the speaker or not. In fact, from anecdotal evidence it appears that the desire to get to know their teachers better acts as an impetus to engage with the listening materials.

## Places and Culture



## My Favourites

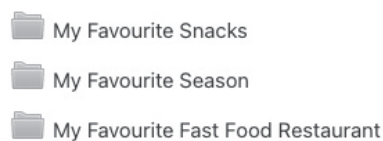


Figure 1. The arrangement of folders in the Listening Library

## My Favourite Movie (anonymized)

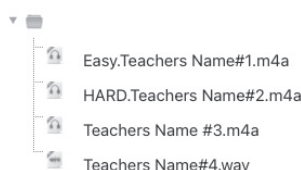


Figure 2. The arrangement of files inside a Listening Library folder (anonymized example)

## Creating the Recordings

The author provided a list of possible topics to the part-time teachers and asked them to record themselves speaking in simple English on a particular topic for between approximately 90 seconds and two minutes. Most recordings are this length, but some may stretch to three or four minutes. All recordings were made on the teachers' smartphones and sent to the author by email or through LINE. The author then listened to the recordings to check that they were sufficiently interesting, at a suitable level and that the sound quality was good enough. If the files contained a lot of language that the author judged to be higher than pre-intermediate level, then the level

indicator 'HARD' was inserted into the file name. If the language was perceived to be particularly easy, the word 'EASY' was inserted at the start of the file name. All these judgments were done intuitively and the vast majority of files do not have a level indicator in the file name. If the sound quality was poor, teachers were asked to re-record themselves. If the stream of speech was judged to be too fast, sometimes the tempo was slowed down by using the free Audacity software ([sourceforge.net/projects/audacity/](https://sourceforge.net/projects/audacity/)), which enables a recording's speed to be changed without any alteration in the pitch of the speaker's voice. Over 99% of all the recordings that were sent to the author by the part-time teachers were eventually added to the Listening Library.

The content of most of the recordings in the Listening Library revolves around the personal preferences and life experiences of the teachers. For example, some folders contained recordings of teachers describing their personal favourites, such as food, restaurants, movies, apps, season, and shops among other things. Other topics revolved around the teachers' home countries, such as "Something you should know about my home country", "My favourite place in my home country", and their experiences in Japan, such as "A mistake I made when speaking Japanese", "Strange Japanese culture", and "What I like about living in Japan". Other topics concerned travel, such as "A place I want to visit", as well as the past, with topics like "My college life" and "What I wanted to be when I was a child". Recordings were also made about recent news events. Almost all the recordings were monologues, but in some cases, two teachers got together and recorded a dialogue.

The creation of the Listening Library was based on the belief that listening to the teachers talking about the kind of topics described above would be sufficiently interesting to enable the learners to enjoy the experience, at least to a moderate extent. It would be foolish to claim that from the students' perspective, information about the personal lives of their teachers is truly the most compelling content imaginable. However, it is hoped that the teacher-generated recordings exceed a minimum threshold of interest. Data on the students' subjective rating of the interest level of the recordings, in general, will be revealed later in this paper.

Date:	Speaker:	Topic:	
Three interesting points:			
● →			
● →			
● →			
英語のスペルが分からない単語 (カタカナで書いてください)			
←			
←			
←			
Comments			
←			
Was it interesting?	Was it easy to understand?	How many times did you stop and go back?	Listening time
😊 . . . 😊 . . . 😊	😊 . . . 😊 . . . 😊	... times	... minutes

Figure 3. Listening Library Worksheet

### Student Requirements and Grading

Listening to the Library files is a homework activity and to provide evidence of having done the listening, students are required to submit 12 Listening Library worksheets per semester. The completion of each worksheet requires students to listen to at least five files, but to be eligible for an AA grade they needed to listen to six. For each file, students must fill in a table, which can be seen in figure 3.

As stated above, the main purpose of the worksheet is to obtain a degree of accountability so that we can be reasonably sure that the students are actually doing the listening, so students have to write three main points that the speaker(s) in the recording made. Another aim is to get feedback on the difficulty level and level of interest of the recordings. There are no quizzes, comprehension questions or other such skill-building activities because the aim of the EL homework is to maximize the time that students spend listening to comprehensible input. For this reason, transcripts of the recordings are deemed unnecessary and are not used.

The section in the table that is written in Japanese directs learners to write down, in katakana, words or phrases that they can catch but do not understand or know how to spell. Students submit the worksheets to their speaking class teacher during class time, at which point students are encouraged to ask for the spelling and meaning of the words or phrases that they could not understand.

The teachers grade the worksheets using a simple 2-1-0 rubric for each table. If all the necessary information is included in the table, students receive 2 points, if one piece of information is missing, one point

is awarded, and if more than one piece of information is missing, a zero is awarded. Submissions must be made regularly, and students are informed that if they neglect to hand in a worksheet for four consecutive weeks or more, they will fail the class. This rule was created in order to prevent students from doing all their listening at the end of the semester.

The time spent on listening to each recording varies from topic to topic and from student to student. Some students regularly spend ten minutes or more listening to one recording, which means they relisten to parts they found difficult. It is unusual for students to report that they did not pause and relisten to a certain section or listen to a file for less than five minutes. Students need time to fill in each section of the table and this explains why the listening time that they note in the table is always longer than the length of the recording.

### What do the students think about the Listening Library?

During the final speaking class of the academic year in January 2021, all first- and second-year students were asked to fill in a questionnaire through Google Forms. The original was written in Japanese but English translations, together with the results of two questions, are shown in Table 1.

It was pleasing to note that more than half of the students in both years found listening to the recordings at least slightly enjoyable. The fact that some students disliked it is not surprising in this context, since some students are not motivated to make much effort towards their studies. The lower enjoyment scores for the second-year students may be due to fatigue and suggest that a different kind of



Table 1. Level of interest

		Completely agree	Slightly agree	Not sure	Slightly Disagree	Completely disagree
1. Generally, it was interesting to listen to the Listening Library.	1st Year	8.8%	56.1%	14.0%	17.5%	5.3%
	2nd Year	10.6%	43.9%	18.2%	13.6%	13.6%

Table 2. Difficulty level

		Far too difficult	Slightly too difficult	Just the right level	Slightly too easy	Far too easy
2. How difficult were the LL files?	1st Year	1.8%	36.8%	54.4%	5.3%	1.8%
	2nd Year	3.0%	27.3%	60.6%	9.1%	0%

worksheet or different types of topics may increase enjoyment in the second year.

As has been explained above, the aim of creating the Listening Library was to provide large quantities of level-appropriate listening material, so it is pleasing to note that over half the students in both years found the recordings to be at just the right level. However, a significant minority found the recordings too difficult, which means that efforts need to be made to increase the number of easier recordings and to make them easy to find in the Library, otherwise these students will not be gaining as much as they should from their EL.

## Conclusion

This paper has described a method for creating a large library of level-appropriate extensive listening materials. This method is replicable in other contexts, provided that several faculty members are willing to support the project by providing recordings. The advantage of this method is that the materials are created by the people who know the students' ability level and interests best – their teachers. Materials which aim for a broader market cannot compete for suitability and compatibility. Data show that, in general, the materials are sufficiently interesting for most students to enjoy EL. The author would like to take this opportunity to once again thank all part-time teachers, past and present, who have contributed to the Listening Library.

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## Category: Adolescents and Adults: Upper Intermediate and Advanced

(1501+ headwords; CEF B2, C1, C2)

**Title: Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and other stories**

**Retold by: Jennifer Gascoigne and Robert Hill**

**Illustrator: Jesus Aguado**

**Publisher: V & V Books**

**ISBN: 978-84-682-6664-0**



### Juror comment:

This interesting collection includes five different stories from five different parts of the world. Each one is thought-provoking and extremely well written. They are simply told, yet at the same time quite lyrical and moving. Reading such a book would contribute to learners' general world knowledge and their language skills, as well as intrinsically motivating them. When you look at the table of contents, you might think the selection seems quite odd and random, but in the end, you will be very impressed. Each story would be sure to spark a lot of classroom discussion, too.

### Online voter comment:

This was my favorite book that I received. I love that it has a variety of short stories from different cultures. I also love the artwork and feel of the cover. I like that new words are at the bottom of the page where the new words occur. I also love the map at the beginning, showing where each story takes place.





## Bridging the gap through a publisher's reading competition

Thomas Entwistle  
The British Council, Japan

Since its launch in 2013, Oxford University Press (OUP) has offered tens of thousands of students across Japan the opportunity to take part in its annual Big Read competition. The aim of the competition, as stated on Big Read homepage, is to “get students excited about reading and writing in English” (About Oxford Big Read, n.d.). Coincidentally, the ‘Bridging of the Gaps’ between reading and writing was the theme of the ER SIG Forum at JALT 2020 in November last year. Furthermore, the competition provides learners with an artistic inclination the chance to express themselves and hopefully motivate creative, but reluctant readers through competition (Dörnyei, 2001). This paper will explain how the Big Read competition works, how it was conducted at Nagoya University of Foreign Studies, and the competition’s benefits and limitations.

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Editor's Note: As of 2021 the Oxford Big Read is only available for secondary schools; university students are not eligible.

### How the Oxford Big Read Competition works

For the Big Read competition, learners are tasked with reading an OUP graded reader, writing a summary and recommendation of their chosen reader, and creating a unique and original poster. There are two age groups to the competition – one for Junior High School students, and one for High School and University students (this also includes Colleges). The contest runs from May to November 30th each year and all competition submissions are anonymously judged by a panel of OUP staff and teachers, with results being announced the following January.

There are two categories of prizes for each group: fiction and non-fiction, with two winners and one runner-up for each category (i.e., six Junior High School winners and six in the High School and University group). Also, other well-illustrated and well-written pieces are recognised with an honorable mention. All the winning entries, runners-up, and honorable mentions are published on the OUP website.

Prizes are awarded to the two winners and one runner-up in each category and all twelve winners and runners-up receive a certificate. Furthermore, the teacher running the contest receives a prize, as does the teacher’s institution.

#### Winners:

📖 Student: An access code that provided a year’s access to the Oxford Reading Club digital library, an OUP dictionary, and a printed poster of their work.

📖 Teacher: A set of twenty OUP graded readers.

📖 Institution: A trophy.

#### Runners-up:

📖 Student: An access code that provided six-month access to the Oxford Reading Club digital library, and a printed poster of their work.

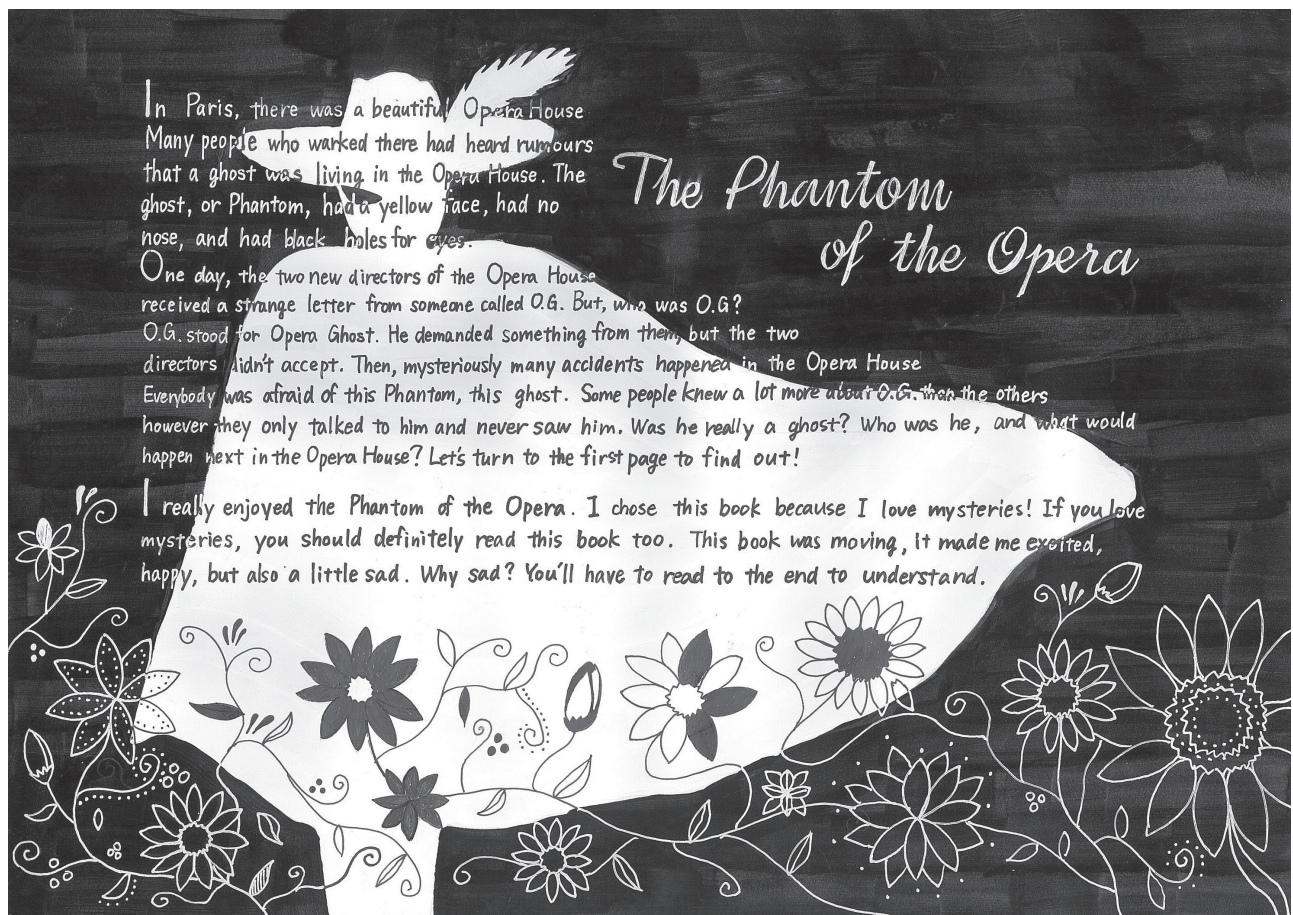
📖 Teacher: A set of 10 OUP graded readers.

### How we ran the competition

Members of the University department’s English team and I announced the competition to the students after Golden Week once they, especially freshmen, had had a chance to settle into the first semester. Students were encouraged to email me or the department office to show their interest in the contest and once we had our list of entrants, a short lunchtime meeting was arranged to explain how the contest works. In the meeting we went over the rules and set a rough schedule for the students to follow:

1. Choose an appropriate OUP reader from the approved list.
2. Submit the first draft of your written summary and recommendation.
3. Submit the second draft of your written summary and recommendation.
4. Make the final edits necessary to be included on your poster.
5. Work on your poster.
6. Submit your poster to me or the department office.

The contest was not part of any grade or officially credited in any way. It was a purely extensive exercise for the students to enter or not. We have run the competition for three years now and we have attracted



National Winner: The Phantom of the Opera by Yukina Iwata

between ten and fifteen entrants each year.

The drafting system may sound like a lot of extra work for the teacher, but the written summaries and recommendations usually only add up to a couple of hundred words and some need very minimal input or correction. The aim is to have students end semester one with their written work done, or at least at the final draft stage, so that they can start working on their artwork over the summer break.

The final submission deadline is November 30th, however we set our own deadline of October 31st to provide time to submit the works to OUP, and to accommodate stragglers who fell behind during the academic year.

It is worth mentioning that this is the way I ran the competition in our department and how it is by no means prescriptive. ERJ readers may want to run the competition in a different manner to the way in which I did.

### Limitations

One obvious limitation is the somewhat limited appeal in an art competition to most students. However, I do not believe that this should be the basis for not running the contest and providing those interested in

reading and art the chance to enter. Another perceived limitation may be the extra workload for teachers, but as outlined above, the actual workload is not as demanding as it may appear. Furthermore, teachers are not required to have any artistic talents of their own. Lastly, the first year we ran the Big Read competition I did find myself chasing up students, possibly as we were all on campus. Yet this year, with all classes being online, bumping into students has been impossible and after the initial meeting, the whole project was run through email. This was much less time-consuming and I suspect less pressure on the students.

### Benefits

The Big Read contest can help provide those interested with valuable extra reading and writing practice and offer learners a supportive space to express themselves creatively, something that can often be lacking in tertiary education. One participant told me that they did not usually like reading but taking part in the competition has encouraged them to read more and has helped demystify the perception that reading English books is too difficult. Furthermore, we made copies of all previous entrants' posters and created a gallery on the wall of our graded reader library. This has intrigued



Yukina Iwata & Towa Ito with Thomas Entwistle in front of the student gallery.

other students to read the posters and encouraged them to take out the books to read for themselves. For example, the title *Chocolate* was loaned out from our ER library almost twice as many times the year after the poster was displayed. It has been encouraging to see our small ER library turn into a vibrant common area where students congregate, relax, study, and pick up books to read there and then or take home.

Additionally, if students are lucky enough to receive an honorable mention, or even win, it can be used as promotional material for our institutions, and it is an incredible achievement for students. Last year, for example, over five hundred students across fifty High Schools, Universities, and Colleges took part in the competition.

## Conclusion

The ERJ readership are obviously well aware of the benefits of Extensive Reading (ER) and may also be aware of the OUP Big Read competition. There are some limitations to the contest, mainly its limited appeal and its perceived workload. However, it is my experience that the benefits outweigh the limitations. I would encourage all proponents of ER, and proponents of artistic expression, to consider running the Big Read contest. Even if this means greater competition for my own students to win in the future.

## Acknowledgments

A big thank you to Fujinuma San, our department office assistant, who helps organise the contest every year.

## References

- About Oxford Big Read. (n.d.). Oxford University Press Japan. <https://www.oupjapan.co.jp/en/campaigns/bigread2020/about.shtml?language=en>
- Dornyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge University Press.



## Category: Adolescents and Adults: Beginners

Title: *The Cat's Paw*

Author: Gavin Biggs

Illustrator: Elisa Bellotti

Publisher: Helbling Languages

ISBN: 978-3-99089-212-1



### Juror comment:

Readers at this level may need some orientation on the maze (make your own adventure) story format and some background as to how this story fits into the overall story arc of the series. With these in mind, younger readers should have an enjoyable experience making their way through the adventure, supported by beautiful illustrations, "Guess what happens next" questions and a page-by-page glossary.

### Online voter comments:

It is a really adventurous book and I was always on the edge of my seat as (to) what was going to happen.

## Category: Adolescents and Adults: Elementary

(301-800 headwords; CEF A1 & A2 levels)

Title: *The Extraordinary Life of*

Malala Yousafzai

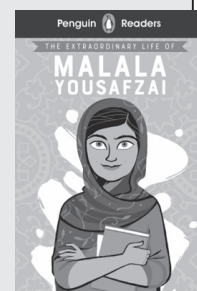
Author: Hiba Noor Kha

Retold by: Hannah Fish

Illustrator: Rita Petruccioli

Publisher: Penguin Readers

ISBN: 978-0-241-44737-6



### Juror comment:

The story of Malala is told in a way that English learners should find easy to understand because the vocabulary is properly graded, and the grammar is quite easy. The true story of Malala is in itself interesting and inspiring, and this graded reader will help readers understand why. The pictures are simple, but effective. Let's read about the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize!

### Online voter comment:

This book raises the issue of girls' education. Not all countries in the world allow girls to go to school. The story of this girl tells us that you can change the world by standing up for your rights. A true story about a girl who was almost killed because she wanted to go to school. The illustrations greatly enhance the quality of the book.





## Recent research in extensive reading and listening

Compiled by Imogen Custance

Aka, N. (2020). Incidental learning of a grammatical feature from reading by Japanese learners of English as a foreign language. *System*, 91, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102250>

This study investigated the effects of incidental learning of one specific grammatical feature through reading. A total of 157 Japanese high school learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) participated in this study. During the intervention, the experimental group (n = 74) read five passages consisting of a total of 40 sentences that include to-infinitives used as nouns, whereas the participants in the control group (n = 83) also read the same number of reading passages, but with only 10 sentences consisting of to-infinitives used as nouns. The participants took pre- and post-intervention grammar tests to measure the effectiveness of the treatment. The results showed that the experimental group incidentally noticed and learned about the use of to-infinitives as nouns through reading. The findings indicated that learners pay attention to language forms even though their focus is on reading comprehension. The study shows that frequent exposure to target grammar items repeatedly helps learners notice a grammatical rule, which, in turn, contributes positively to incidental grammar acquisition.

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Buendgens-Kosten, J. (2020). Incidental vocabulary learning from bilingual books: An analysis of bilingual German-English books for EFL contexts. *The Reading Matrix*, 20(2), 98-112. <http://www.readingmatrix.com/files/23-5p621981.pdf>

This paper looks at bilingual books for German-speaking learners of English and discusses their potential for vocabulary acquisition. Specifically, it focuses on bilingual books following a sociolinguistic structural principle, (i.e. books in which the arrangement of languages reflects multilingual practices of non-monolingual language users). The paper combines corpus analysis and analysis of didactic potential. It reports total words (types and tokens), type-token ratio and distribution across frequency-band classes for three representative bilingual books, and two typical graded readers. It argues that in an assessment of bilingual books'

potential for vocabulary acquisition, the relatively low number of target language words has to be balanced against their rich context (especially rich in right-sided context & equivalence cues).

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Dincer, A. (2020). "The more I read, the more I want to read": Extending reading with reading logs. *The Reading Matrix*, 20(2), 140-156. <http://www.readingmatrix.com/files/23-m1m16401.pdf>

This action research aims to extend English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' reading practices through the use of reading logs beyond the classroom. Accordingly, EFL students in an English reading course are encouraged by their teacher, the researcher, to keep weekly reading logs for three semesters. Later, 38 students' viewpoints are collected through a survey. The results show that students favor reading online materials using their smartphones and laptops and use language learning and news websites extensively to source reading materials. Additionally, it is found that updated reading log activity carries the characteristics of successful extensive reading practices. Students agree that they could read a large volume of texts. The practice is regarded as easy and mainly for pleasure. Students have a choice of selection in content and individualized learning. Despite some complaints, such as boredom or perceiving the task as regular schoolwork, the majority of students believe the reading log improved not only their reading comprehension skills, but other language skills. The task kept them consistently busy with English and encouraged them to explore different websites and various reading texts. The research findings offer implications for language teachers who aim to extend language learning beyond the class.

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Elturki, E., & Harmon, E. (2020). Systematic integration of extensive reading in the curriculum: Strategies and resources. *TESOL Journal*, 11(3). <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.517>

Intensive reading and extensive reading (ER) are two activities that have distinct purposes and require different instructional setups. Whereas intensive reading focuses on reading skills that enable students to deconstruct text in order to find the main idea, supporting details, and discrete information, ER allows students to read for pleasure with minimal mental effort. The ultimate goal of ER is for students

to read for enjoyment as many texts as possible in the second/foreign language. To achieve this goal, the readings must be enjoyable and easy to read. As a consequence of ER, students build reading speed and fluency and get exposed to contextualized vocabulary and grammar. Nonetheless, achieving a balanced reading experience by incorporating opportunities for both intensive reading and ER in the curriculum can be a challenge. Because more attention is typically given to intensive reading in reading instruction, ER is often compromised. Given the great gains and rewards of ER, how can this type of reading be systematically incorporated in reading instruction? In this article, the authors present practical strategies and resources for a more systematic integration of ER based on the principles of extensive reading (Day & Bamford, 2002).

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Laufer, B., & Cobb, T. (2020). How much knowledge of derived words is necessary for reading? *Applied Linguistics*, 41(6), 971-998. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amz051>

The study explores the usefulness of the word family as the unit of counting in studies of lexical coverage and comprehension. It determines the proportion of texts covered by the various members of a word family, that is, base words, inflected words, and derived words, and analyzes the contribution of the affixed words to lexical thresholds. This exploration was performed by a text analysis computer program called Morpholex that analyzes the entire lexis of an entered text, pulling out all words bearing prefixes and suffixes and counting the unaffixed words as base words. We analyzed a variety of texts, academic and narrative, authentic and simplified, and calculated the number and percentage of base words and affixes in each text. We also located the most frequent affixes in our text corpus and demonstrated which affixes and how many contributed to 95 percent and 98 percent text coverages. Our results show that reaching the lexical thresholds for reading does not require the knowledge of most of the derived words in a word family since a small number of frequent affixes will provide the necessary coverage together with the base words and inflections.

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Lim, J., Whitehead, G. E. K., & Choi, Y. (2021). Interactive e-book reading vs. paper-based reading: Comparing the effects of different mediums on middle school

students' reading comprehension. *System*, 97. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102434>

This exploratory study compared the effects of two different mediums of reading—interactive e-book reading and paper-based reading—on learners' reading comprehension. A specific focus was placed on literal vs. inferential comprehension. Thirty Korean middle school English language learners were randomly assigned to an interactive e-book reading (treatment) group or a paper-based reading (control) group. A pre-test and five comprehension tests were administered to both groups over a total of six reading sessions. A survey was also conducted to investigate students' perceptions of how helpful interactive e-book features were in aiding their reading comprehension. Results from the reading comprehension test scores showed no statistical differences between the groups across the five tests. Analysis of literal and inferential questions also showed no significant difference overall. Findings from the survey data along with researcher observation notes suggest that interactive features that are not designed to aid students' understanding can distract students from the task of reading which may hinder their comprehension. The overall results of this study suggest that it may not be the medium of reading, but how students engage with each medium that can affect their comprehension of text.

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Thomas, N. (2020). Incidental L2 vocabulary learning: Recent developments and implications for future research. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 32(1), 49-50. <https://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl/item/439>

The incidental or implicit learning of vocabulary has long been a topic of interest in various disciplines. In studies on foreign language acquisition, reading is often the activity that researchers use to generate their findings. Reading in a Foreign Language has maintained its position at the forefront of this research, consistently publishing manuscripts that support or refute previous findings, improve upon past research designs, or offer new perspectives on existing issues. The current article adds to this ongoing collection of texts by first discussing, in brief, the extent to which incidental vocabulary learning has been shown to be possible in past research. It then discusses recent innovations in research, homing in on two studies in particular that have been selected due to their unique implications for research and practice:

the use of code-switched texts and a new construct, dynamic exposure. The discussion section expands on the ideas these studies introduce, suggesting future directions for research and further implications for practitioners.

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Webb, S., & Chang, A. (2020). How does mode of input affect the incidental learning of collocations? *Studies in Second Language Acquisition (First View)*, 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263120000297>

There has been little research investigating how mode of input affects incidental vocabulary learning, and no study examining how it affects the learning of multiword items. The aim of this study was to investigate incidental learning of L2 collocations in three different modes: reading, listening, and reading while listening. One hundred thirty-eight second-year college students learning EFL in Taiwan were randomly assigned to three experimental groups (reading, listening, reading while listening) and a no treatment control group. The experimental groups encountered 17 target collocations in the same graded reader. Learning was measured using two tests that involved matching the component words and recalling their meanings. The results indicated that the reading while listening condition was most effective while the reading and listening conditions contributed to similarly sized gains. The findings suggest that listening may play a more important role in learning collocations than single-word items.

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Zhou, J., & Day, R. R. (2020). The incidental learning of L2 Chinese vocabulary through reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 32(2), 169-193. <https://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl/item/447>

The study investigated the effect of marginal glossing and frequency of occurrence on the incidental learning of six aspects of vocabulary knowledge through reading in the second language (L2) Chinese. Participants were 30 intermediate L2 Chinese learners in an American public university. The MACOVA tests indicated that the treatment group who read with marginal glossing significantly outperformed ( $F = 6.686, p < 0.01$ ) the control group who did not read with marginal glossing on six aspects of vocabulary knowledge after reading two stories. Significant differences were found on receptive word form, productive word form, receptive word meaning, and productive word grammatical function. The two-way ANOVA test suggested that the treatment group

performed consistently better on learning words repeated three times and one time, and there was no interaction between the groups and the frequency of occurrence of the words. The findings indicated that reading interesting and comprehensible Chinese stories can be beneficial for the learning of Chinese words.

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Milliner, B. (2021). Stories of avid extensive readers in a university-level EFL course. *Journal of Extensive Reading*, 8(1) 1-16. <https://jalt-publications.org/content/index.php/jer/issue/view/10>

This study follows the cases of six students identified as extensive reading outliers—learners who read significantly more than their peers at a Japanese university. Following an inquiry into good or successful language learners, the researcher was interested in what insights avid extensive readers could teach, and whether these insights could help develop classroom approaches. The process by which ER was implemented in the EFL course for Japanese university students precedes a narrative detailing each student's story. The analysis revealed some similarities between each of the learners—(1) many were avid readers in their L1, (2) most established personal goals to help reach the class reading targets, and (3) passing the post-reading quizzes appeared to elevate the self-efficacy of the learners. There were, however, more differences than similarities, which led the researcher to advocate a range of strategies for encouraging more reluctant or less motivated EFL readers to read extensively.

## Write for ERJ!

Send anything related to extensive reading or extensive listening, or of interest to members of the JALT ER SIG to [erj@jalt.org](mailto:erj@jalt.org). Back issues can be seen at [jalt.org/er](http://jalt.org/er).

Use APA7 style, no footnotes, MSWord or text format. If you have any layout requests, send separately or consider the position of layout editor!

Maximum length: 4 sides of A4, around 2,500 words.

Photos, graphs and graphics should be separate, clearly named files.

Tables should be sent as data, not images.

Authors should prepare a photo, relatively close up, with high resolution, good contrast and ideally reading something.

# JALT2021 Online: Some presentations you make find interesting

Check the conference website and full schedule here: [jalt2021.edzil.la](https://jalt2021.edzil.la)

## Saturday, November 13th

**12:45-13:45**

Willy A Renandya  
Can Reading Lead to Better Writing?

**12:45-13:10**

Mitsue Allen-Tamai  
Developing an Effective Literacy Program for Elementary School Children

**14:05-14:30**

Sara Terre Blanche  
Reflecting on the Authenticity of Online Extensive Reading at University

**14:45-16:15**

ER SIG Forum and AGM  
Extensive Reading Research: A Chat With Paul Nation and Rob Waring

**15:25-15:50**

Mintra Puripunyanich  
Unfolding Online Extensive Reading Attitudes and Experiences of Freshmen

**15:25-16:25**

Daniel Dusza & Marina Goto  
Communicative Language Teaching Activity to Improve Fluency and Confidence

**16:05-16:30**

Greg Rouault  
The Fundamentals of Reading: New Perspectives for the Future of ER

**16:05-16:30**

Emily MacFarlane  
Using Technology for Interactive Read Alouds

## Sunday, November 14th

**10:45-11:10**

Marcel Van Amelsvoort  
Developing an Online EFL Reading Proficiency Test

**10:45-12:15**

Naheen Madarbakus-Ring, Stuart Benson, Todd Beuckens, David Coulson, Marc Jones, & Joshua Matthews  
Listening SIG Forum

**11:25-11:50**

Henry Foster  
Fostering Language Learner Autonomy in the New Normal

**12:05-13:05**

Paul Goldberg & Paul Leeming & Justin Harris  
Creating a Textbook for Extensive Reading: An Impossible Dream?

**12:45-13:45**

Graham Robson  
Evaluating an Extensive Reading Program at a Mid-Level Japanese University

**12:45-13:45**

Jon Edwards, Compass Publishing  
Getting Young Learners Excited About Reading With STEAM Projects

**14:45-15:10**

Katherine Shreves & Kimiko Tateishi  
Developing an Extensive Reading Program for Young Learners of English

**15:25-15:50**

Noriko Kurishita  
How to Promote Book Discussion in the Cyber Classroom for Extensive Reading

**15:25-16:25**

Darin Harrell & Paul Goldberg  
Creative Writing – A Novel Process for EFL Success

**15:25-15:50**

Justin Pool  
A Mixed-Methods Comparison of Text-Based and Graphic Novels

## Monday, November 15th

**10:45-11:10**

Gregory King & David Laurence  
Traditional Versus Online Extensive Reading at the University Level

**12:05-12:30**

Barry Grossman  
Measuring Engagement in Extensive Reading: Individual vs. Group Activities

**12:05-12:30**

Andrew Blaker & Timothy Ellsworth  
Student Attitudes Towards Using Authentic Materials for Extensive Reading

**12:05-12:30**

Mamoru "Bobby" Takahashi  
ER and English Proficiency: How Many Words Should Students Read?

**12:05-12:30**

Greta Gorsuch  
Literature is a Moveable Feast for Language Teachers and Learners

**12:45-13:10**

George Higginbotham  
Measuring Vocabulary Gains in Extensive Reading

**On Demand**

Robert Kerrigan & Eric Shepherd-Martin  
An Evaluation of an Extensive Listening Pilot Program

# PanSIG2022

July 8th-10th at the University of Nagano. Send your presentation idea here: <https://pansig2022.edzil.la/>