

ERJ

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of the Japan Association for Language Teaching

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Volume

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Message from the Editor

The feedback we have been getting on ERJ is incredible. This is only our fourth issue, yet people keep asking me when the next issue is coming out. Even better, there seems to be a fundamental shift in how we get content. Originally I, as editor, approached ER practitioners about writing articles, but recently authors have been approaching me. This became apparent to me when, out of the blue, David Hill of EPER fame sent us the lead story of this issue. We have also been getting great support from the publishers. So where do we go from here? I am hoping we can get more people involved in the production in the way Nozomu Sonda has taken over collecting the Recent ER Research. I am hoping someone will take over the New Book Releases section and then others will create new regular features our readers will find useful.

As for the JALT ER SIG, things are going well there, too. Our seminar in Osaka with Rob Waring as keynote speaker was a true success. You can read about it in Myles Grogan's article in the Readers' Forum section of the next issue of *The Language Teacher*. Next year the seminar will be held in Hokkaido, so those of you with funding from your schools should keep aside some money to travel to Japan's most beautiful prefecture next summer. More details will be in the next issue of ERJ. Finally we have quite a collection of speakers for the main ER event at JALT - the ER Colloquium. There is more information about that on the back cover of this issue.

If you have a story idea or want to help out, contact me at the email address below or visit me at the ER SIG table at JALT.

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SSR at Tohoku University

Extensive Reading – A Way Forward

David Hill

Director

The Edinburgh Project on Extensive Reading

Every enthusiast for extensive reading must lament the unwillingness of syllabus designers to make it a key component of modern language teaching programmes and of ministries of education to fund it. But we enthusiasts must admit that there is no firm evidence that it is as beneficial as we think it is. What can we do?

In June I had the good fortune to visit the extensive reading centre at Meijo University in Nagoya. I was hugely impressed by what I found there: a large room and office dedicated to extensive reading, a very large number of books, including graded readers all shelved and labelled with information showing the number of words in the text, computer-managed record keeping, enthusiastic teachers who had realistic expectations of their students. I had never seen anything to compare with this level of provision.

I quickly became aware, however, that much of what was being done ran against some of the principles that I have advocated in EPER. L1 and L2 books were shelved together following an unfamiliar grading system, and non-fiction titles were mingled with fiction. Students were offered a very wide range of choice of books, rather than the narrow range that promotes communities of learning (i.e. groups of students who have read the same books), with limited opportunity to give or receive feedback. There were no class readers and no use of proficiency levels to organise classes.

This may not be an entirely accurate description of what I saw on my visit, and I apologise for any misrepresentation, but I have become aware from visiting other institutions that many approaches have been adopted that differ from those derived from the English Language Reading Programme developed in Malaysia in the 1970s and promoted subsequently by EPER.

I fully realise that programmes have to fit the institution where they are implemented and so expect different designs to be adopted that meet local factors such as availability of books, interests of students, pressure of other work, administrative back-up and so on. Indeed one of my pleasures in visiting schools and universities is to see what measures they have devised to promote extensive reading in their institution.

On the other hand, I do not know of any programme that has replicated exactly the Malaysian programme, nor do I know of any programme that has achieved its (alas un-quantified) success. I worry that there is so much energy being used in re-inventing extensive reading wheels and a good deal of disappointment when results do not match expectations.

What all we enthusiasts do desperately need is hard evidence – first that extensive reading benefits at least a proportion of students in improving their general proficiency, or one of a particular range of language skills. Unfortunately, this is very difficult to obtain. Even in the nearly ideal circumstances in Malaysia in the 1970s, the champions of extensive reading failed to produce hard evidence as to how much of the undoubted improvement in levels of proficiency was due to extensive reading and how much was due to other factors, such as setting and differentiated syllabi. One reason for the difficulty in gathering evidence is the near impossibility of eliminating variables that might affect a study. Another is the length of time over which a study needs to be conducted. Another is the amount of extra work involved in keeping records, analysing the data, writing reports and drawing conclusions.

We also need hard evidence that programmes work best that answer the key questions in a particular way. What books are best: graded readers or L1 children's books, fiction or non-fiction? Which is better: as wide a range of choice as possible or a narrow choice that builds up a reading community who have read the same books and can discuss them? What response to reading helps students most: a book report, answering comprehension questions, answering a general question on an aspect of the book, or none at all because that only serves to discourage reading? What form of assessment most fairly gives credit both for the amount a student reads and the level at which she is reading? What form of introduction do new teachers need? And so on.

It occurred to me as I sat in the Shinkansen on my way back from Nagoya to Kyoto that a way forward might be to compare the effects of different approaches within the same class. The table in the appendix lists a range of answers to the ten questions that it seems to me every programme must answer. I am sure there may be other questions and certain that there are other answers. An institution that wanted to promote extensive reading would develop and resource a number of different programmes with different answers to these questions. For instance, programme A might use graded readers only and



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programme B L1 children's books. Programmes A1 and A2 would both use graded readers but A1 would require no feedback and A2 a book report.

Class teachers would then choose two or three and offer them to their class, hoping that broadly equal numbers chose each option. Each class study would investigate the hypothesis, "that students following Programme A made more progress than those following other programmes and that within each programme the students who read most made the most progress." Each study would include the following elements:

1. A class of students whose learning experience was as similar as possible; i.e. the same teacher, the same level of proficiency on entry, the same course, the same amount of exposure to English, the same speed of learning
2. A description of the programmes chosen and the reasons for the choices made
3. Books and supplementary materials chosen to resource the programme, boxed for use in class or shelved in a special room
4. Pre-course assessment of level of English Proficiency (e.g. by the EPER Placement/Progress Test and (optionally) of other language skills, e.g. writing or vocabulary)
5. Meticulous record keeping of the books read and the order in which they were read
6. As thorough and reliable evidence as possible of levels of comprehension and appreciation (book reports, tests and interviews)
7. Post course assessment of general proficiency and (optionally) of other language skills using parallel versions of the pre-course tests
8. Corroborative evidence of ability to read at the exit level claimed through an extensive reading test such as that produced by EPER
9. Analysis of differences between pre- and post-course test scores and comparison with reading records, seeking a correlation between the two
10. Evaluation and conclusion

The outcomes would be discussed by the department and used to modify existing programmes or create new ones. Departments would write up their reports for publication in journals and presentation at regional or national conferences. In time a consensus would arise as to which programme or programmes were most effective.

These small-scale studies would also provide exactly the sort of data that is needed for analysis and study as part of a Masters course such as that in Language Teaching at Edinburgh University, which is directed by Dr Aileen Irvine. She not only wrote the EPER tests of extensive reading, and one of the parallel versions of the EPER Placement/Progress test but, two years ago, completed a very impressive PhD thesis on the effects of extensive reading on writing, drawing on data from the Hong Kong English Reading Scheme with which EPER was associated. She is especially skilled in statistical analysis and well placed to advise on such projects.

This suggested way forward involves a huge amount of extra work, but it seems to me to have two particular advantages. One is that the number of variables is much reduced. Of course, variables such as absence through illness will remain and these must be described in the report. At least, however, the teacher and the syllabus will be the same and, hopefully, more similarities can be engineered. The other is the degree of motivating autonomy given to both teachers and students. The former can choose which programmes they want to offer their class and even develop their own model. The latter can choose which of these programmes they want to follow.

Nothing can reduce the extra work, but against that negative I think one can set the positive of professional development. Teaching foreign languages is often an unrewarding experience. That often dreary experience can be transformed by using it as material for research and analysis and lift the drudgery of teaching class X into an exciting and satisfying academic project. I also hope, of course, that through such studies we enthusiasts might not only accumulate that desperately needed evidence that extensive reading is beneficial but also build a consensus as to how best to design and implement a programme.

Class teachers on the front line where the real work is done – over to you.

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Appendix

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED IN THE DESIGN OF ER PROGRAMMES

Note: This list of questions and the suggested answers to each is not exhaustive and should not preclude other ideas for promoting and enabling a lot of enjoyable reading that will help to fix the language in the students' minds.

1. What is the position of ER in the Syllabus?
 - a. No ER at all
 - b. ER in addition to normal syllabus
 - c. ER replacing part of normal syllabus.
2. What part does ER play in the system of assessment?
 - a. Not tested at all
 - b. Credit given in overall assessment for books/ words read, questions answered
 - c. Credit given for scores in special ER tests
3. How long does the programme last (the longer the better)?
 - a. One term
 - b. One semester
 - c. One year
 - d. More than one year
4. What books does this programme use?
 - a. Graded readers fiction only
 - b. Graded readers non-fiction only
 - c. L1 fiction (picture books, children's books, junior fiction)
 - d. L1 non-fiction
 - e. Narrow selection of titles
 - f. Wide selection of titles
 - g. Selected titles presented in sequence
5. Where and when do students access the books?
 - a. In the main library in their free time
 - b. In their homeroom in their free time
 - c. In the classroom during language lessons
6. What response do students make after reading?
 - a. None
 - b. Standardised book reports
 - c. Title-specific book reports
 - d. Comprehension questions
 - e. Monthly interviews
 - f. Class bulletin board

7. What is the minimum number of books each student reads?
 - a. One per week
 - b. Two per week
 - c. One per two weeks
 - d. Three per week
 8. Are class readers (read over a cycle of 2-4 weeks) used in addition to library reading
 - a. Not at all
 - b. One class reader at the start of programme
 - c. Class readers instead of components of language syllabus
 - d. Class readers in addition to normal syllabus
 9. Are there resources in addition to the books?
 - a. Title-specific question cards
 - b. Audio versions on cassette or CD
 - c. Videos
 - d. Specialist speakers on an author or genre
 10. What training do teachers new to ER get?
 - a. Single talk on the concept
 - b. Demonstration lesson
 - c. Week-long ER experience
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The Extensive Reading in Japan Seminar 2010 will be held in Hokkaido in the summer. Watch for more information in the next edition of ERJ.

Are the blurbs on graded readers graded?

Dale Brown
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Introduction

The blurbs on the back covers of graded readers are a useful resource for learners and teachers alike. Teachers may use the blurbs in a variety of ways to introduce and generate interest in particular books or in graded readers as a whole (see for example activities in Bamford & Day, 2004). Many teachers advise students to read the blurbs when selecting books, and Romanko (2008) found that students do indeed make use of them. Almost all of his students reported reading the back covers of books when selecting titles, and this was the second most commonly used selection-strategy behind looking at the title and cover picture.

Yet, when observing students as they select books, it has sometimes seemed to this author that the blurbs may be difficult to understand. Students sometimes pick up a book, read the blurb with a somewhat puzzled expression on their face, and then put it back on the shelf slightly uncertainly before picking up another. This led to the question that this paper seeks to address: Are the blurbs written following the same grading standards as the graded readers themselves?

Methodology

Method of analysis

This paper focuses on the vocabulary used in the blurbs, but it is unfortunately difficult to answer the question posed directly, since the major publishers of graded readers do not make their vocabulary lists publicly available. This study thus proposes to measure the blurbs against the first thousand word families of West's (1953) General Service List of English Words (GSL) as a means of estimating to what extent they are graded. Wan-a-rom (2008), who was able to gain access to the Oxford Bookworms's (OBW) and Cambridge English Readers's (CER) wordlists and compared them to the GSL, provides data which allows the viability of this proposal to be judged.

Wan-a-rom found that 360 (72.5 percent) of the 496 word families in the OBW level one wordlist and 324 (67.9 percent) out of the 477 word families in the CER level one list are in the first thousand word families of the GSL. Thus there is a considerable degree of overlap between these level one wordlists and the GSL 1-1000. The second thousand word families of the GSL include a further 77 (15.5 percent) of the OBW level one word families and 94 (19 percent) of the CER families.

Wan-a-rom's data also show that there are 630 word families in the first thousand words of the GSL that do not appear in the OBW level one wordlist, and likewise 666 word families not in the CER level one list.

Thus if we use the first thousand words of the GSL as a rough equivalent of the level one wordlists, we will wrongly classify some words as being outside the list when in fact they are on the publisher's list and we will wrongly classify some words as being on the list when in fact they are not. The latter, however, is between seven and eight times more likely for the two series we have data for. This approach then is quite cautious, and much more likely to overestimate the number of words deemed acceptable than to underestimate it.

The blurbs were thus analysed using VocabProfile (Cobb, 2008), an online version of Heatley and Nation's (1994) Range program. This computer program divides the words in a text into four categories: (a) words from the the first thousand word families of the GSL; (b) words from the second thousand word families of the GSL; (c) words from Coxhead's (2000) Academic Word List (AWL); and (d) off-list words, meaning words in none of the previous three categories. It should be noted, however, that the program classifies words only according to form; that is, it does not distinguish for example between *flat* (adj.) and *flat* (noun), a word used in one of the blurbs analysed.

The basic results from VocabProfile were then adjusted to take proper names into account. Words that were part of proper names were taken out of the other categories to create a fifth category. Most often this meant reclassifying words that the program had placed in the off-list category, but occasionally involved words in other categories. For example, the program had placed *Max*, a character name, in the AWL category.

Materials analysed

Eight graded readers each from the CER, OBW and Penguin Readers (PR) series were selected, making a total of twenty-four books. The books were all selected from level/stage one of each series, which have claimed headword counts of 400, 400 and 300 words respectively. Books from a variety of genres within each series were chosen, including both fiction and non-fiction.

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The blurb about the story of each reader was taken from the back cover of each book; other information appearing on the back covers, such as series introductions and information about the levels, was not included. The twenty-four blurbs contain a total of 1,492 words, an average of 62.2 words per blurb. There are, however, considerable differences between the series, with the eight CER averaging 56 words per blurb, the OBW 85.9 words and the PR 44.6 words.

The procedure explained above was followed for each of the three sets of eight graded readers, and then for the twenty-four books as a whole.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the number of tokens (running words) in each of the five categories, for the three series and overall. Naturally the vast majority of the words come from the first thousand words of the GSL. There is also a fairly high proportion of proper names in the blurbs, which again is unsurprising when the nature of the material is considered; blurbs typically introduce the characters and the setting of the story so a high proportion of proper names is to be expected.

Table 1: Number of tokens and percentage of total tokens in each category.

	CER		OBW		PR		Overall	
	Tokens	%	Tokens	%	Tokens	%	Tokens	%
GSL 1-1000	397	88.62	581	84.57	283	79.27	1,261	84.52
GSL 1001-2000	11	2.46	27	3.93	11	3.08	49	3.28
AWL	4	0.89	2	0.29	3	0.84	9	0.60
Off-list words	2	0.44	12	1.75	11	3.08	25	1.68
Proper names	34	7.59	65	9.46	49	13.73	148	9.92

In analyses of this type (see for example Nation & Wang, 1999), it is usual to judge the comprehensibility of a text by adding the number of proper names to the base level being considered, since it is assumed that proper names do not cause problems for readers. Table 2 shows the results thus. Overall, just over 5 percent of the tokens are in the other three categories, equivalent to one word in twenty, a level at which a basic level of comprehension is usually possible (Nation, 2001).

Table 2: Tokens from the GSL 1-1000 plus proper names versus tokens from the other three categories.

	CER		OBW		PR		Overall	
	Tokens	%	Tokens	%	Tokens	%	Tokens	%
GSL 1-1000 + Proper names	431	96.21	646	94.03	332	93	1,409	94.44
GSL 1001-2000 + AWL + Off-list words	17	3.79	41	5.97	25	7	83	5.56

There must be some doubt, however, as to whether proper names can so easily be discounted, particularly with lower proficiency learners. One issue is whether proper names are recognised as such; as the blurbs are on average just 62 words long, there may not be enough context to make this clear. A second issue is that some proper names carry significant meanings. While it might be enough for a reader to simply understand that *Denver*, for example, (in the blurb for *Bad Love*, Cambridge University Press) is a place name, the *South Pole* (in the blurb for *The Coldest Place on Earth*, Oxford University Press) is much more than just a place name and carries a great deal more meaning.

Another issue to bear in mind is the proportion of on- and off-list words in the text of graded readers themselves. Wan-a-rom (2008) compared the words used in four level one graded readers (two each from CER and OBW) with the respective publishers' lists and found that the wordlists accounted for an average of 86 percent of the tokens. The GSL 1-1000 coverage figure of 84.52 for the blurbs, likely anyway to be an overestimate of the true number of acceptable words, is thus slightly lower. We would perhaps hope for the opposite to be the case.

Turning to the more obviously problematic words, Table 3 shows word types other than those in the GSL 1-1000 and proper names that were found in the blurbs. As was noted above, there is a chance that some of these words are in fact in the

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publishers' wordlists. In particular, this may be the case for perhaps 10 percent of the words in the GSL 1001-2000. Also, from the perspective of English language learning in Japan, there are words such as *computer*, *email* and *boyfriend* that can be assumed to be familiar to almost any learner.

Table 3: Word types from the GSL 1001-2000, the AWL and off-list words.

	CER	OBW	PR
GSL 1001-2000	gun (2) hospital (3) hotel (2) murder police (2) warm	aeroplane bag bags birthday (3) film hair hits ice journey (2) kiss lot nice penny police sad steals swimming terrible ticket (2) tickets (2) worse (2)	angry chair curse flat football frightening knife lots lucky shirt shop
AWL	computer (2) inspector job	files (2)	assistant detective job
Off-list words	boyfriend email	cafe canadian ghost ghosts (2) graveyard horrible lottery (3) snatches tragic	boxing (2) champion cinema leagues professor (2) submarine (2) van wizard

Note. Figures in brackets indicate the number of occurrences, if more than one.

Nevertheless there are some words that experience as a teacher suggests may be problematic for learners. The key issue is whether these words are spread out among the blurbs or concentrated in just a few blurbs. While each of the twenty-four blurbs accounts for at least one of the words in Table 3, the four most potentially problematic blurbs are shown in Table 4. It may be noted that none of these books is from the CER series, and that Tables 2 and 3 above also show considerably fewer

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potentially problematic items in the CER blurbs. One reason for this is that the CER series frequently makes use of quotations from the text itself in the blurbs. In fact, four of the eight CER in the sample use this strategy, with quotations accounting for 36 percent of the 448 words in the CER blurbs. None of the OBW or PR blurbs analysed make use of this strategy.

Table 4: Four blurbs that may be problematic.

<p>Everybody wants to win the <u>lottery</u>. A million pounds, perhaps five million, even ten million. How wonderful!</p> <p>Emma Carter buys a <i>ticket</i> for the <u>lottery</u> every week, and puts the <i>ticket</i> carefully in her <i>bag</i>. She is seventy-three years old and does not have much money. She would like to visit her son in Australia, but <i>aeroplane tickets</i> are very expensive.</p> <p>Jason Williams buys <u>lottery tickets</u> every week too. But he is not a very <i>nice</i> young man. He <i>steals</i> things. He <i>hits</i> old ladies in the street, <u>snatches</u> their <i>bags</i> and runs away . . .</p> <p><i>(The Lottery Winner, Rosemary Border, Oxford University Press, 1997)</i></p>
<p>Tom Sawyer does not like school. He does not like work, and he never wants to get out of bed in the morning. But he likes <i>swimming</i> and fishing, and having adventures with his friends. And he has a <i>lot</i> of adventures. One night, he and his friend Huck Finn go to the <u>graveyard</u> to look for <u>ghosts</u>.</p> <p>They don't see any <u>ghosts</u> that night. They see something <i>worse</i> than a <u>ghost</u> – much, much <i>worse</i> . . .</p> <p><i>(The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Mark Twain, retold by Nick Bullard, Oxford University Press, 1998)</i></p>
<p>Mike is an <u>assistant van</u> driver. He meets Jennifer in her father's <i>shop</i> – and he likes her very much. Jennifer is going to go to the <u>cinema</u> with him. But he is very late, and Jennifer is very <i>angry</i>. Is it really Mike's <i>lucky</i> day?</p> <p><i>(Mike's Lucky Day, Leslie Dunking, Penguin, 2000)</i></p>
<p>This is the story of Captain Nemo and his famous <u>submarine</u>, the Nautilus. One day Nemo finds three men in the cold sea. For 20,000 <u>leagues</u> the men live together on the Nautilus. They find a town on the sea floor, beautiful coasts and <i>lots</i> of gold. But they are not happy. Can they escape from Nemo's <u>submarine</u> and live?</p> <p><i>(Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea, Jules Verne, retold by Fiona Beddall, Penguin, 2005)</i></p>

Note. GSL 1-1000 = unmarked; proper names = unmarked; GSL 1001-2000 = italics; AWL = italics and underlined; off-list words = italics and double underlined.

Clearly it would be extremely difficult for the writers of blurbs to avoid some of these words given the content of the books. For example, *lottery* and *submarine* may both be considered unavoidable. Other words, however, do seem to appear simply because of a lack of careful grading.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to discover whether graded reader blurbs are graded in terms of vocabulary. In defence of the blurbs it was noted that they include a high proportion of high frequency words, and that a good number of the other words used are either unavoidable or unlikely to cause problems. On the negative side it was found that the proportion of words from the GSL 1-1000 (a likely overestimate of the proportion from the actual wordlists) was lower than that in graded readers themselves. This, combined with the question of whether proper nouns can be discounted, may mean that the 95 percent level at which basic comprehension is usually possible is not reached. Furthermore, some blurbs in particular were found to contain a number of potentially problematic words.

Writing blurbs for graded readers is no doubt an extremely challenging task, especially for lower level books. Blurbs have to introduce the story and generate interest in it, with the best blurbs also conveying the atmosphere of the story. The

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strategy used in some of the CER blurbs of using a quotation from the text followed by a brief introductory comment seems to this author to offer a means of achieving these goals while keeping the blurb succinct and appropriately graded. Other series of graded readers may do well to adopt this strategy.

Graded Readers Analysed

Bad Love, Sue Leather, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Help, Philip Prowse, Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Hotel Casanova, Sue Leather, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Inspector Logan, Richard MacAndrew, Cambridge University Press, 2002.

John Doe, Antoinette Moses, Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Next Door to Love, Margaret Johnson, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Parallel, Colin Campbell, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Three Tomorrows, Frank Brennan, Cambridge University Press, 2006.

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Mark Twain, retold by Nick Bullard, Oxford University Press, 1998.

The Coldest Place on Earth, Tim Vicary, Oxford University Press, 1992.

The Elephant Man, Tim Vicary, Oxford University Press, 1989.

Goodbye, Mr Hollywood, John Escott, Oxford University Press, 1997.

A Little Princess, Frances Hodgson Burnett, retold by Jennifer Bassett, Oxford University Press, 1998.

The Lottery Winner, Rosemary Border, Oxford University Press, 1997.

Love or Money? Rowena Akinyemi, Oxford University Press, 1989.

The Omega Files, Jennifer Bassett, Oxford University Press, 2002.

David Beckham, Bernard Smith, Penguin Readers, 2003.

The House of the Seven Gables, Nathaniel Hawthorne, retold by Michael Mendenhall, Penguin Readers, 2000.

Karen and the Artist, Elizabeth Laird, Penguin Readers, 2000.

Marcel and the Shakespeare Letters, Stephen Rabley, Penguin Readers, 2000.

Mike's Lucky Day, Leslie Dunking, Penguin Readers, 2000.

Muhammed Ali, Bernard Smith, Penguin Readers, 2007.

Run for your life, Stephen Walker, Penguin Readers, 1996.

Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea, Jules Verne, retold by Fiona Beddall, Penguin Readers, 2005.

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Did You Know?

One of the publishers of graded readers has already released a biography of the late Michael Jackson.

MICHAEL JACKSON BIOGRAPHY



SCHOLASTIC ELT READERS ARE DELIGHTED TO ANNOUNCE THE PUBLICATION OF A MICHAEL JACKSON BIOGRAPHY, THE FIRST TITLE IN THEIR FORTHCOMING BIOGRAPHY STRAND OF GRADED ELT TITLES.

THE TITLE WILL BE PUBLISHED IN OCTOBER 2009 AND IS AVAILABLE WITH OR WITHOUT AN AUDIO CD, AT LEVEL 3.

On the 25th June, 2009, Michael Jackson died of a heart attack at the age of fifty. He was one of the biggest stars in the world and he had sold more records than any other singer. But he was also famous for his unusual private life and his strange appearance. Who was Michael Jackson?

Read about his journey from child star to 'King of Pop' and the difficulties that he faced in this amazing story of his life.

Incorporating Pre-Reading Activities into a Content-Based Reading Course

Patrick Rates
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Introduction

Students can experience difficulty in English text comprehension when reading content-based material. Not only does this material usually contain unfamiliar concepts, but it also may contain unfamiliar vocabulary that can make comprehension of the material difficult for the student. Traditionally, attempts to improve the comprehension of texts for EFL students have focused on familiarizing the student with the vocabulary needed to comprehend the passage (Bernhardt, 1984). Studies of pre-reading activities for native speakers have shown that facilitative effects of activating readers' prior knowledge relevant to understanding the new text (Mayer, 1984). Not only do pre-reading activities prepare native speakers for the reading, but they make the reading task easier and connect the new content more meaningfully to prior knowledge. Pre-reading activities make reading a more enjoyable task (Hansen, 1981).

Reading Course Description

The pre-reading activities that I employed were with first and second year Science and Engineering students at Ritsumeikan University. The two courses were Reading 1 for first year students and Reading 2 for second year students. All of the materials for the English courses are science based, including the reading courses. The aims of these courses are to build on their basic core of reading skills (skimming, scanning, recognizing patterns) and apply these skills to longer articles in an extensive reading environment. Students examine areas such as education, social problems, and customs. Each of these areas is examined from multiple perspectives to gain a better understanding of different viewpoints.

The main goal of the reading exercises are to have students prepare their exercise at home and then to discuss their interpretation of the text in small groups in class. There are a variety of ways this goal is achieved, such as:

- doing reading exercises
- discussing cloze section in small groups
- bringing the class together and eliciting responses
- discussing discussion section in small groups
- the teacher circulates and give hints where needed
- reviewing the content of the article as a class

The content-based reading material is reinforced in the curriculum both vertically and horizontally. For example, the same topic material is being studied in English 1 Reading is being studied in English 2 Listening in the same semester. The following semester the topic will be reinforced again in other courses.

The S&E Curriculum			
1st Sem	English 1 Reading I	English 2 Listening I	English 3 Communication I
2nd Sem	English 4 Listening II	English 5 CALL	English 6 Communication II
3rd Sem	English 7 Reading II	English 8 Communication III	
4th Sem	English 9 Reading III	English 10 Presentation	

Incorporating Pre-Reading Activities into a Contest-Based Reading Course - Rates

Horizontal Links			
1st Sem	English 1 Reading I	English 2 Listening I	English 3 Communication I
2nd Sem	English 4 Listening II	English 5 CALL	English 6 Communication II
3rd Sem	English 7 Reading II	English 8 Communication III	
4th Sem	English 9 Reading III	English 10 Presentation	

Pre-reading activities

ESL students must possess a range of functional, academic, critical, and technological skills in a content-based course. Sustained content study has been found to be effective in improving ESL students' reading skills in the content area. However, unless students receive special attention to vocabulary and reading comprehension they will likely have difficulty understanding the material.

In a content-based course, pre-reading activities include such activities as, Schema, Semantic Mapping, Pre-Viewing, Questioning, Vocabulary and Electronic Media. These activities are intended to associate knowledge or provide knowledge that the reader does not have on the subject being read.

Schema

Schema is a plan for representing broad concepts stored in memory, made through occurrences we have with people, objects, and events. Ringler and Weber (1984) call schema activities enabling activities, because they provide a reader with necessary background to organize activity and to comprehend the material. These experiences involve understanding the purpose(s) for reading and building a knowledge base necessary for dealing with the content and the structure of the material. If readers are faced with unfamiliar material, comprehension will be difficult for the student, because the readers lack appropriate background knowledge. According to Chia (2001), some students report that they have no problem with understanding both words and sentence structures of the paragraph, but they cannot reach a satisfactory interpretation of the text. Schemata can be seen as the organized background knowledge.

Semantic mapping

Many teaching techniques have been developed to activate student's prior knowledge to facilitate reading comprehension. One very popular kind of pre-reading task is "brain storming" or semantic mapping. In this technique, students take a particular key word or key concept and then are encouraged to call out words and concepts they associate with the keyword or words that deal with the particular keyword or concept. This has many advantages in the classroom. First, it requires little preparation by the teacher and students; second, it allows learners freedom to voice their own prior knowledge and opinions on an issue; and third, it can involve the whole class.

Previewing

According to Chia (2001), The aim of previewing is to help readers predict or make some educated guesses about what is in the text and thus activate effective top-down processing for reading comprehension. In a text there are several stimuli, such as the title, photographs, illustrations, or subtitles, which are closely connected to the author's ideas and content. So, based on this information, students can make predictions or formulate hypotheses about the content of the text.

Questioning

Questioning is a pre-reading activity that directs questions to which the reader is required to find an answer from the text. In this activity, questions are made before the reading; a question is taken about the text and is a preview of the student comprehension of the material. Questions can also be used to precede the material and function as scanning task for the students.

Pre-teaching Vocabulary

Vocabulary plays an essential role in reading comprehension. Pre-teaching vocabulary has been effective when the reading material has a high incidence of difficult or rare words and has little contextual information or when they have pre-taught relevant vocabulary over extended periods of time (Kameenui, Carnine, & Freschi, 1982). It is also argued that most vocabulary is learned through context, but that the learning- from-context method is at its best for teaching learning-to-learn skills not for teaching vocabulary (Oxford and Scarcella, 1994).

Incorporating Pre-Reading Activities into a Contest-Based Reading Course - Rates

Pre-teaching vocabulary may also be of importance because limited vocabulary knowledge occasionally results in readers stopping to identify unfamiliar words and disrupts comprehension. Readers may forget the earlier part of the sentence disrupting comprehension, when the meaning of a sentence or paragraph turns on knowledge of certain words (Yorio, 1972). Pre-teaching vocabulary may help address these problems. EFL learners, due to interference from unfamiliar words and grammatical patterns, may find it difficult to simultaneously remember earlier textual information, predict what is coming, and connect phrase and sentence meanings.

Electronic Media

I find the use of Electronic media such as PowerPoint, YouTube, and online photos from sources such as Yahoo or Goggle are a useful tool that are now being used in many classrooms. More and more classrooms and teachers have computers and the equipment to use electronic media to help students make a connection to the reading material being used. These examples of electronic media offer a dynamic vehicle for preparing students to read, preparation that involves "activating and building background knowledge" (Aebersold & Field, 1997, p. 67).

Conclusion

In a content-based course, the importance of having pre-reading activities has been shown to help prepare students for the content area being studied. They help to connect students to the topic area, increasing comprehension of distinct vocabulary and subject matter of the reading. There are many pre-reading activities available for teachers to use in class that can meet the needs of each class. This paper introduced activities used in two reading courses that I taught at Ritsumeikan University, incorporating such pre-reading activities in the course as: pre-teaching vocabulary, prediction, guessing content, skimming, scanning and using electronic media. They all have been shown to help provide a needed connection for students. I feel that using such pre-reading activities helped students to become familiar with unfamiliar concepts and vocabulary that can make comprehension of the material difficult for the student.

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Introducing...

The Extensive Reading List!

Ken Schmidt
Tohoku Fukushi University

The Extensive Reading List <<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ExtensiveReading/>> is a Yahoo group for teachers, researchers, writers and teachers-in-training interested in exchanging information and views on ER. Moderated by Rob Waring since 2002, the list has proved to be an invaluable resource and now has 328 members around the world.

Interested individuals can apply to join by accessing the group homepage and following the instructions there.* Members can post messages anytime, and receive messages individually or by daily digest. Anyone can visit the group page to browse and search the complete archives for discussion on specific issues.

To help introduce ERJ readers to the list, I recently asked list members to share how the ER List has been helpful or meaningful to them. Seven members kindly responded, and below I've sorted and combined their comments to highlight some of the ways the list can be of value:

Getting started

I was able to get help in setting up and running an ER program by posting questions to the group and following similar discussions by others. Lists of popular books were particularly helpful in ordering initial sets of readers.

Keeping up

The list has been very useful in staying up-to-date on colleagues' research, getting information on books and articles, and tracking down useful web resources (e.g., Extensive Reading Pages, ER Foundation, Tom Robb's Moodle-based program).

Research, presentation and publication

The list is a good place to pick up research topics, and list members function as a helpful sounding board and source of feedback on ideas for research, presentation and publication.

Worldwide perspective

When preparing for a conference, I can send out a questionnaire and quickly get useful replies worldwide. It expands my perspective in real-time. The chance to interact with and learn from list members in other regions has been a real plus.

Inspiration and community

Reading others' experiences and passions keeps me interested and fired up, and I feel part of a larger community who care about ER. The list gives you access to experienced teachers, researchers and authors of graded readers, which would be difficult to arrange another way. Mentoring relationships have even developed between members.

Archives

The archives are great for doing targeted searches and following informative discussions on...

- a) "nuts and bolts" program issues,
- b) appropriate and effective ER activities, and
- c) larger issues of what ER is and how it's effective.

Browsing the archives and following current threads also gets you in on lots of "behind the scenes" thinking and discussion that never gets published.

Benefit for writers

As a writer and editor of graded readers I enjoy reading about student needs, what teachers are looking for and what has proved effective. It's invaluable to my work.



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Publicity

The list has been a convenient, efficient way to inform colleagues about new books, calls for papers, conferences, websites, etc.

Indispensable tool

"I belong to several lists like this, and I've come to regard the better ones much the same way I regard photocopy machines, computers and the Internet in general: although I was alive and working back when they didn't exist, it's hard now to imagine how I ever got along without them." (Gordon Luster)

For readers who aren't yet members of the Extensive Reading List, I hope these comments have whet your appetite, and that you'll join us soon. For current members, some of these comments may stir you to more active participation, as they have for me.

Subject: Nikkei BP ER special

...Nikkei BP Publishing company uploaded the webpage to recommend ER to Japanese adults...

Furukawa, Akio (SEG & SSS)

Subject: ER Acronyms

...Ken asks about SURF. I am guilty for coining that phrase...

Richard Day

Subject: The end of P-Books?

...Eric Baber in his blog today has a rather different take on e-books from... - worth looking at I think...

Subject: ER history

...I once was chatting with some historical linguists who told me graded readers were quite common several hundred years ago...

Rob Waring

Subject: TOEIC and reading materials

...Every year I have several students who score over 600 [on the TOEIC], but they are not necessarily fluent readers. On the contrary, almost all the devoted ER students have raised their TOEIC scores...

Atsuko Takase

Subject: Attitudes toward ER

... Where are students getting the comprehensible input that [new teachers] said was so obviously necessary? In my opinion, if graduate students did not study the Input Hypothesis, they have not...

Beniko Mason

Subject: Best Graded Readers

...In addition to the great advice you've already gotten, you could start out buying just one of each book. If you collect feedback on...

Julian Bamford

Advice for new members

When first joining, go to the group site and spend some time browsing at least the recent posts to get an idea what has been under discussion. Also check the links area. If you post a question and get little response, don't give up. Members may assume that someone else will reply. Politely resubmitting your question, possibly reworded to make it more clear and concrete, will often yield numerous responses. Don't worry too much about asking "beginner" questions. Most members are happy to see new people getting involved and will be supportive in offering or directing you to the information you need.

Acknowledgements

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*Note: You can receive list mail at any address you prefer, but you must have a free Yahoo account to join the group.

Promoting Student Autonomy in ER: The English Resource Notebook

Alison Kitzman
Kinki University

*Give a person a fish and they eat for a day.
Teach a person to fish and they eat for a lifetime.
- Chinese proverb*

Creating programs to help language *learners* become language *users* can be problematic if teachers are isolated from curriculum design or if the gaps between teacher, administrator, and student expectations are not addressed. Gatehouse (2001) states that a student-centered curriculum “is not static and it is impossible to expect a curriculum designer to be in a position to identify the perfect balance of abilities for any particular group of students (p. 6).” Both she and Vella (1994) argue that teachers should have a role in guiding curriculum design, as they are best positioned to understand individual student requirements. However, with an overreliance on part-time teachers in Japanese universities, as suggested by Hadley (1999), there is little opportunity for direct dialogue between those teachers and the curricula setting administrators, as Venema (2008) points out. Cowie (2003) argues that language programs at universities in Japan have failed to implement clear objectives, leaving teachers to create their own curricula. Burden (2005) points out that any expectations should be explicit, yet flexible enough to allow for learner beliefs. Furthermore, Kitzman (2008) argues that during the especially egocentric young-adult stage of life, personal needs and interests should be taken into account to a greater degree than during other stages.

With so many things to consider, how can administrators get all interested parties involved in negotiating and achieving mutual goals? By providing flexible and workable information to both students and teachers in the form of an *English Resource Notebook* (ERN), teachers retain autonomy, content consistency improves, and students become more involved in decisions regarding their own learning.

Breaking down the ERN

Physically, the ERN would be an A4-size 30-ring plastic binder with pages easily added or removed (i.e. submitted as homework). Students would purchase the binder and a core resource packet in their first year for use throughout their school tenure, acquiring class packets as needed. Core material would be available for all teachers to resource and recycle with a clear explanation of what material students are expected to learn. Uniform institutional expectations, guidelines, and information would be disseminated from a single source for clarity and consistency. Optimally, the ERN would be used in conjunction with other course material to provide support for individual students’ needs or learning deficiencies.

Conceptually, any coordinated material for the ERN must be easy to use, flexible, and student-centered. Consider these five goals.

1. Material should personalize learning to maximize student involvement. As curriculum designers can neither presume to know learning gaps nor gauge the objective versus subjective needs of an individual, ongoing needs analysis is a necessary component.
2. Material should raise metacognitive awareness of students’ own needs in order to increase the often-illusory intrinsic motivation. Metacognition of needs is crucial for creating motivation and success, but it should not stop at the personal level. Burden (2005) finds that trust in the benefits of a learning task is vital to competition. He argues that learners must *perceive* activities as enjoyable, as well as useful, in order for students to buy into the learning.
3. Materials should also raise students’ awareness of new learning approaches by explaining specifically why they work.
4. Materials should foster student autonomy, by teaching how learning happens outside class.
5. Materials must support *all* levels of students, accounting for proficiencies or deficiencies in individual students, not just what is currently taught.

By trusting teachers and students to negotiate learning within clear and flexible guidelines, a balance between teacher autonomy, student autonomy, and content consistency can be obtained.



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Breaking Down the ERN Extensive Reading Section

In 2008 the faculty of Foreign Language Education at Kinki University created an Extensive Reading (ER) Grant Project Team to investigate methods of incorporating ER in its university-wide English curriculum. After an initial pilot period, uniform materials and guidelines were created based on the ERN concept. The resulting material contains nine pages on ER and 20 pages of vocabulary. All have been professionally printed and are currently being used for the grant project. The 10 main sections related to ER are discussed below.

What Is Extensive Reading?

One of the most important things an educator can do to increase motivation is to get students to buy into a learning activity. ER is a non-traditional learning technique in Japan. Many educators themselves are unaware of its effectiveness in vocabulary acquisition, reading fluency, grammatical competence, bottom-up processing, and development of world knowledge. It is likely that students are encountering ER for the first time and may need to be convinced of its efficacy. It looks suspiciously like fun. Therefore, a clear and explicit explanation of what ER is, how to practice it, and why it works gets students involved in their learning. Students are enticed to read more when they learn that they can choose topics that interest them, reading at levels that require no dictionary and little time. During the in-class explanation, teachers can add stories of their own student successes. This page should be first and in Japanese, regardless of student level, for optimal comprehension.

Can-Do Reading List

A further tool for raising metacognitive awareness is a uniform institutional 'can-do' list that explicitly informs students what teachers expect from them by level. A good starting point for this is the Common European Framework (CEF), which breaks down language learning into four language skills and six different levels. The CEF was designed for Europeans by Europeans so caution is advised when considering this framework for Japanese students. Optimally, a curriculum committee comprised of trained language educators familiar with their students should create requirements suiting their institution.

In the example below, K-4 is the lowest of five levels created by the Foreign Language Education Department English Curriculum Committee at Kinki University. It corresponds approximately to the CEF level A2. K-Global (K-G) is the highest, representing the small portion of the institution's population that is at the CEF B1 or higher level. Each language skill has 'can-do' requirements in both Japanese and English for each of the five Kinki University-appropriate levels. On the first day of class students are given time to read through each of the requirements and circle 'x' if they are unable to do it, 'Δ' if they are somewhat able to do it, or 'o' if they feel confident doing it. Students are then asked to judge their own level, which may differ across skills. Any teacher of any class may repeat the task at the beginning or end of each semester throughout the students' tenure and use of the ERN. In this way students can easily visually comprehend their progress in different aspects of language. The 'can-do' list also serves as a continuum for students to understand how much farther they have to go so they can adjust their own expectations and become active participants in their own learning.

Level	私は...できる	I can...			
K-4	紙の辞書または電子辞書で意味や例文を確認できる。	...use a paper or electronic dictionary (ex. look up words or use sample sentences)	X	Δ	O
K-3	紙の辞書または電子辞書で品詞 や用法の確認ができる。	...make good use of paper or electronic dictionaries.	X	Δ	O
K-2	K2の多読素材を、辞書をほとんど使わずに理解することができる。	...understand K-2 ER materials without hardly using a dictionary.	X	Δ	O
K-1	K1の多読素材を、辞書をほとんど使わずに理解することができる。	...understand K-1 ER materials without using a dictionary much.	X	Δ	O
K-G	レベルKG以上の多読素材を、辞書をほとんど使わずに理解することができる。	...understand K-G level ER materials without using a dictionary much.	X	Δ	O

Tips For Reading Graded Readers

These tips explain the rationale behind ER without implying that IR is an inadequate method. The differences between the two are made transparent to expand students' concept of learning. Because ER is a fairly new learning method in Japan, an additional column highlights the benefits of ER in easy English.

Intensive reading	Extensive reading	→ So you can read...
for accuracy	for fluency	a LOT of books!
difficult passages	passages made easy or abridged	without a dictionary!
for study purposes	for pleasure	anything that interests you!
often in class with a teacher	out of class	anytime! anywhere!
slow and tedious	fast and repetitive	only 10-20 minutes!

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How To Choose A Graded Reader

In order to build student autonomy and raise motivation, it is important to teach students how to choose level-appropriate books. By encouraging students to choose what interests them, they can discover that learning can be fun and independent of a teacher. This can be done in four steps:

- Step 1** Choose a reader at **your level**.
Choose one that is **interesting!**
Consider the **content**.
- Step 2** Read page one. If there are more than **3 unknown words**, choose an easier book.
- Step 3** If it's not interesting; select another book at that same level.
If it's too easy, keep reading. It's still good practice!
If it's too hard, stop reading and select an easier book.
- Step 4** Read as much as you can. Your English will improve!

Graded reader publisher level equivalency chart

Before students are sent to the library to choose books they find interesting, they need to be given some guidelines on what 'your level' means. An institutional equivalency chart based on the graded readers available to students in conjunction with the institutional can-do list further encourages self-reliance.

The Kinki University ER Grant Project Team created the chart below to relate to its five-level institutional 'Kinki Can-do' list.

Can do level	Oxford	Cambridge	Penguin	MacMillan	Cengage Thomson	CEF	Other
K6			Young Readers 1	Starter			PM Library: blue 9-11, green 12-14,
K5			Young Readers 2	Beginner	Foundations 1-3		PM library: orange 15-16, turquoise 17-18
K4*	S - Starter	S - Starter	Easystarts	Elementary	Foundations 4-7		PM library purple: 19-20, gold 21-22, silver New Edition 1
K3	1	1	1	Pre-intermediate	Footprint A1 National Geo. A1	A1	PM library: silver 23-24, emerald 25-26, ruby 27-28 New Edition 2
K2	2	2	2	Intermediate	Footprint A2 National Geo. A2	A2	PM library: sapphire 29-30
K1	3	3 4	3 4		Footprint B1 National Geo. B1	B1	Asahi Weekly, Weekly ST
K Global	4	5	5		Footprint B2 National Geo. B2	B2	USA Today People
Other	5 6	6	6			C1 C2	Herald Tribune, Japan Times, Newsweek, Time

*K4 level books are good to use as 10-minute fluency reading practice for any level student.

Additional K5, K6, and 'other' levels were created to correspond to the graded readers found on campus. Far from superfluous, this helps students understand where in the range of progress they fit. These levels are lower/higher than the 'can-do' requirements and are grayed out, not to stop students from reading these books, but to indicate they are not necessarily appropriate. Students at the higher end of the scale, may be motivated to read more just by knowing 'other' level material is available, however it is grayed out so that most students understand we as educators do not expect them to get to this level.

Graded Reader Sampler

K4

The Golden Monkey
by Rob Waring and Maurice Jamall
Thomson Foundations Reading Library Level 7

"What's this, Grandfather?" asked Faye. She was pointing at an old box on a table.
"It's an old box from China," replied Mr. Wang, her grandfather.
Faye was with her friends, David and Tyler, at Bayview Museum.
They were helping her grandfather, who worked at the museum. They were putting things in boxes.
"Some men from a temple in China are coming to take these things away tomorrow," said Mr. Wang.
"Why?" Faye asked.
"Because they belong to them. We have to give them back," said Mr. Wang.

Unknown Words: _____

Level: easy 1 2 3 4 5 difficult

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Used in conjunction with an institutional equivalency chart, a set of five level-samples from real graded readers can teach students how to find level appropriate readers independent of their teacher. The institutional levels must be clearly marked, as must publisher and publisher level. Samples of readers considered beneath or above the institutional levels may be included to both adjust students' expectations of their reading level and to allow for the possibility of students at those levels. This page is a one-time in-class guided activity to train students in the 'three unknown words rule' and how to choose the proper reader level. Once the appropriate institutional level has been decided and marked on their equivalency chart, this page can be discarded to lighten the load of the ERN as a whole.

How To Talk Or Write About A Story/Book

On this page students are given direct support on how to communicate about the books that they have read. Specific guided support builds both the confidence of lower level students, who typically lack the ability to express themselves, and the linguistic base of higher-level students. This page also helps students bridge an often-isolated single-skill competence to a more fully integrated fluency.

A short vocabulary list introduces words necessary for talking about a story. It is broken into two groups. Words for the lower K4 and K3 levels include 'title,' 'paragraph,' 'chapter,' 'storyline,' and 'plot.' For the K2 through KGlobal levels, the list includes, 'blurb,' 'heading,' 'epilogue,' 'cover illustration', and 'climax.' Seeing a list broken into levels helps individual students adjust their understanding of how much English they know versus how much they have left to learn. This can also guide those teachers who are used to intensive reading (IR) methods to consider frequency-based vocabulary selections to activate passive vocabulary and thus develop students' fluency. It was deemed unnecessary to break down a list of 15 genres by level, as students will quickly learn the vocabulary words that are most interesting and useful to them.

- **summarize** the story
- describe the **characters**
- describe the **setting/situation**
- give your **opinion** and **explain**
- talk about any **cultural, social, or historic** implications of the story

The second section on this page explains ways the student can discuss a story's content. Leaving it open as to what students feel comfortable and interested in talking about, as well as what the story leads students to talk about. Five suggestions are given.

Questions	Answers
What happened first ?	In the beginning/First , Ben was very unhappy.
What was the main character like?	The main character was a stubborn old man.
What did you think about the story?	I liked the part when Susan and Brad kissed.

The last section gives the most structured support in the form of sample questions and answers.

Metacognitive awareness is raised in a few colorful bubbles throughout the page that focus the eye and are not easily avoided. Reminders include, for fluency, "Use your own words;" for social awareness, "Do not copy words from the book. That is *plagiarism* (盗用);" and for grammar, "Use past tense to explain what happened." The kanji for 'plagiarism' is given not only because it is a difficult vocabulary word, but also because students may not be familiar with the concept, even in Japanese. This is a good opportunity for teachers to directly discuss the social implications of copying material in Japan as compared to other countries.

Sample Book Report Assignment

Concrete and transparent directions to write a short summary and reaction paper, including length, a reminder not to plagiarize, and a real level-appropriate student sample fill the page. Low-level students in particular may find having a sample a useful crutch on which they can base their own assignment until they gain their own confidence.

My Record Of Graded Readers and My Reading Speed

These two pages are printed back-to-back so they can be easily photocopied and replaced for each of the classes the students take over the years that they use the ERN. Both pages visually chart the progress of the student in order to create a sense of success, which in turn can raise motivation. Use of the first-person adjective 'my' in the titles is simple example of personalizing learning.

The *My Record Of Graded Readers* is a simple chart on which students log information about each book read. It includes the date, title, level, publisher, number of words, difficulty level, rating, and 'other.' The number of words is useful in discouraging students from reading books that are too easy, however, the word count needs to be provided by the teacher, either by going to the publisher's website or using a book such as 英語多読完全ブックガイド (*The All Graded Reader Word Count Guide*, Furukawa, et. al., 2007). The difficulty column is titled 'ease' in order to subtly suggest this type of reading task is

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not difficult. Students are given three choices to circle, 'too easy,' 'perfect,' and 'too hard,' guiding them to consider what is an appropriate level so they become able to take control of their own learning. The rating column also gives three choices for the students to circle in the form of cute smiley-face emoticons that psychologically lighten up the assignment. The 'other' column can be used to mark homework, put gold stars, or mark quiz scores.

The *My Reading Speed* page explains how to calculate words read per minute (WPM) and has a graph on which students plot their WPM and the date. Dates can be preprinted to reflect the class calendar or left open to encourage students to try speed-reading outside of class.

Conclusion

The ER section of the ERN has been used in a variety of classes in conjunction with the Kinki University Grant Project Team's uniform guidelines to incorporate ER. After using the material for an entire semester, several benefits are evident. Team members have found giving make-up assignments easier. Preparation time has been shortened. Once students are trained in the ER activities and ERN resources, repeated use of the material takes little class time. Students are noticeably curious after becoming aware of the benefits of ER, which in turn has increased motivation, autonomy, and responsibility to complete assignments. The transparency of expectations and the freedom that comes from having been taught self-reliance has indeed built confidence and empowered students to take their learning beyond the classroom. Therefore, the team is moving forward to fully automate its ER program and corresponding ERN materials so that any teacher can add an ER component to any class.

A few issues remain. Methods of training teachers and students to use the ERN, as a whole, need to be developed. Uniform core materials that are concise and minimize the weight of the ERN need to be expanded. Determining responsibility for printing costs, material development, and ERN distribution remains a practical consideration that institutions must address.

Having uniform guidelines and materials clearly outlined in the *English Resource Notebook* develops metacognitive awareness and teaches students that learning can happen outside the classroom and without a teacher. By personalizing learning, students are encouraged to take responsibility for it and are motivated to study more by having the freedom to choose what interests them within the guideline constructs. Teachers and institutions also benefit, as the ERN gives concrete support and creates a consistency of educational content without encroaching on the autonomy of the teacher.

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How We Do It at Tohoku University.

Ben Shearon

Lecturer in the Centre for the Advancement of Higher Education

Editor's note: This issue we have Ben Shearon showing how he teaches motivated, capable university students.



Introduction

This year two significant things happened: I secured full-time employment and was finally given the opportunity to run an extensive reading class at the university level, both of which have been goals of mine for some time now.

I had used graded readers with university students before, but only in class for short silent sustained reading (SSR) activities, so I was very interested in seeing what could be achieved with an entire class devoted to extensive reading (ER). Within my class load in the first semester were two reading classes, one of engineering students and the other of science students. Apart from the different majors, the classes were similar and shared the following characteristics: duration one semester (15 times), length 90 minutes, and approximately 40 students per class. I had free rein in terms of content, evaluation, and materials.

Syllabus and Materials

The class ended up being an ER and SSR class, with an orientation during the first class only. During the remaining fourteen sessions students read in class and for homework. I also conducted short interviews with the students about their reading during class, in English and occasionally Japanese. I asked the students to buy three graded readers instead of a textbook. I was also able to purchase about 100 readers myself, using my research funds. This gave us a class pool of around 300 books for 80 students. The readers were from the following series:

- Cambridge Readers (level 3-6)
- Oxford Bookworms (level 3-6)
- Macmillan Readers (level 3-6)
- Ladder Readers (level 3-6)

Students were free to choose within the range above, according to their tastes and perceived reading ability.

Orientation Class

During the first class, students took a placement test (available online at <http://www.penguinreaders.com/pr/resources/teachers.html>), read sample passages from readers, were given an explanation of graded reading in Japanese (an abridged version of Beniko Mason's introduction to free voluntary reading), and did some reading speed tests. Based on the results of these, I recommended that most students start with level three readers from the series above, although in practice students were free to choose any books, and a couple of them ended up choosing books that were too difficult for them.



Level 4 Readers

How We Do It - Shearon

Subsequent Class Contents

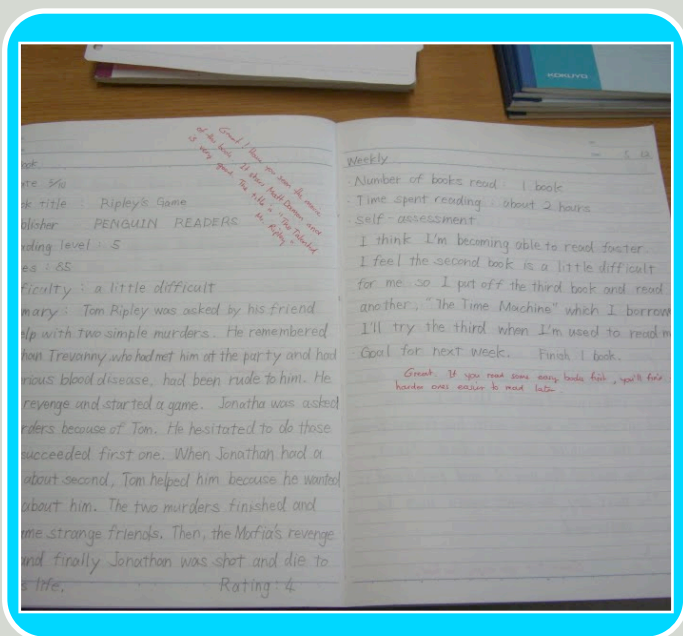
Every class was run the same way. At the beginning of the class, the students' reading diaries were collected, any announcements were made, students were encouraged to get new books if they needed them, and finally students were asked to start reading.

Checking of the students' reading diaries was done during class time, and generally took about an hour. Any questions that came up regarding the diaries could also be dealt with immediately, which made things easier for the instructor in terms of reduced record-keeping.

Finally, during the last twenty to thirty minutes of class, students were called out of class individually and asked about their reading. These brief interviews lasted two to five minutes, and provided a chance for students and the instructor to interact a little more.

Logistics

The biggest challenges resulting from this class were checking 40 reading diaries every week, and moving hundreds of books to and from the classroom.



Diary with comments.



Cart

The former of these was solved by checking in class (also reducing the need to carry around 40 diaries, and simplifying returning them to students), and the latter was solved by purchasing a simple cart (see photo).

Students were not required to sign books in and out, as this would have complicated things significantly, as well as taking up much more class time on bookkeeping. Unfortunately this meant that 11 books were lost, five that I had bought, and 6 that belonged to students.

Grading / Assessment

Students were graded on their reading diaries, and on the number of book reports they submitted. Specifically, they were awarded up to three points for their weekly reports, depending on how thoroughly they were written, and two points for each book they read. In order to verify whether they had actually read the book, students wrote short book reports.

Results

Only one student out of 80 failed the course due to not submitting enough reports/reading enough books. The others read between 10 and 41 books during the fifteen week semester.

From a few weeks into the course, most students would start reading before class started and before the instructor arrived.

How We Do It - Shearon

Student Feedback

Student feedback was almost entirely positive, with many students commenting on the novelty of ER for them, their progress in terms of reading ease and speed, and the interesting nature of reading self-selected books. Negative comments were fewer, but included dislike of writing book reports, a desire for more interaction with the instructor, and complaints about the work load involved in reading at least a book a week. Overall, however, the class seemed to have been a positive experience for almost all the students, even the ones who proposed changes.



Picking books.

Things to do Differently Next Time

I will have the chance to run three more ER classes in the second semester, so I am looking forward to implementing some changes. Several problems became apparent throughout the course, and I hope mentioning them here will help other teachers avoid them.

Some students needed level 2 readers, so they will be an option for the next semester. Some students started off at too high a level, so in the future all students will be forced to start at level 3 and adjust from there.

One student proposed using an online forum for book reports, as this would allow others to read and benefit from them. Accordingly, students will be able to post their reports to a Mixi community (mixi was chosen as it is optimised for access from both computers and mobile phones, thus ensuring that all students can access it). Weekly reports will still be written in a notebook and students that cannot or choose not to use the online site can still write book reports there as well.

Everything was explained in English, which may have meant that some students did not get vital aspects of the theory behind ER or class procedures. Japanese will be used to explain method, aims, and procedure next time.

The importance of returning books to their rightful owners at the end of the course will be emphasised in future classes. Whether this addresses the problem of lost books remains to be seen.

Students concentrated on reading in class, but some interaction is desirable in order to create a community, so some time will be set aside in order for students to talk to each other about the books they are reading. Some students did this spontaneously before and after class, but I believe it is worth encouraging officially. Also, a speed reading textbook will be used (Reading for Speed and Fluency, by Casey Malarcher and Paul Nation) to drill students on their reading skills.

Finally, there were some instances of cheating, where students claimed to have read books when they hadn't. In future classes I intend to have a clear zero tolerance policy on cheating, to be explained at the beginning of the class: anyone caught making false claims about their reading will fail the course immediately. It is fairly easy to flag suspect book reports and then interview students to see if they actually read the book.

BIO

Ben Shearon was born in Germany, but claims to be British. After arriving in Japan in July 2000, he has worked at the elementary, junior high, high school, and university levels, and after a stint as an advisor at the Miyagi Board of Education, is now a lecturer at Tohoku University. Current interests include extensive reading, vocabulary acquisition, testing, and the Japanese educational system.

I would be very happy to receive questions or comments about this article or other teaching matters, at sendaiben@gmail.com

Also see my blog sendaiben.blogspot.com for more thoughts about teaching and learning languages.

Innovations in Extensive Reading Non-Fiction for Low-Level Learners

Daniel Stewart
Kaisei Academy

The Way it Has Been

In the past few years, the amount of fiction available for low-level learners has greatly increased, but there has not been a corresponding increase in the amount of non-fiction at the easiest levels of extensive reading.

What's new?

Oxford has published a new series for native English speaking children called Project X. The Project X series consists of 140 books divided into 13 levels based on the Oxford Reading Tree (ORT) levels. Two additional levels with 30 more books should be released by the time this article is published. Books come in sets of five all based on the same theme such as Pirates or Bugs. There are at least two sets at each level. The series is specifically aimed at getting boys to read. As with the ORT there is a recurring story throughout all the levels. In ORT the characters find a magic key that takes them on different adventures, while in Project X the characters find four watches which they can use to shrink themselves. (www.oup.com/oxed/primary/projectx/)

What is Good About it?

The books come in sets of five called clusters. Each cluster has two fictional stories about the characters and their shrinking watches. There is also one non-fiction book on the cluster theme which includes one of the characters as a narrator. Then there is one other fiction book and one other non-fiction book on the theme which have nothing to do with the characters. The main advantage for teachers doing ER in Japan is that every cluster has two non-fiction books. In general, non-fiction tends to be more difficult than fiction in any graded reader series due to a heavier vocabulary load. By having both fiction and non-fiction books on one topic, Oxford has eased the vocabulary burden in their non-fiction texts. First the student can learn about a topic by seeing the familiar characters in two stories related to the topic. Then they can read a non-fiction book with a character leading them. Next they have a second non-fiction book without the character, but still based on the same theme. Finally there is one more fiction book on the same topic which does not have the characters in it.

Readers get hooked on the characters they know, get pulled into a non-fiction book by one of the characters and then are let loose on one other non-fiction and one other fiction book on the same theme. It is a brilliant strategy to get students reading non-fiction.

Potential Weaknesses

I see three issues that might keep teachers in Japan from buying this series:

- It is written for native speakers.
- The main characters are young.
- It is written for boys.

Do not be dissuaded by the fact that the series is meant for native English speakers. Many teachers in Japan have had great success with another Oxford series meant for native English speaking children - the Oxford Reading Tree (ORT) series. I would expect Project X to be very popular at any school where ORT is used.

As for the age of the characters, again I would point to the age of the ORT characters. A lot of Japanese university students enjoy reading about the adventures of the ORT characters and the Project X characters are slightly older. Compared to ORT, the plots and topics are aimed at an older audience with all the gadgets and suspense.



Innovations in Extensive Reading - Stewart

Finally while the series is written to get boys reading, that does not mean it is unappealing to females. One of the four starring characters is a girl and there are various good and bad secondary characters who are female as well. I teach at a junior and senior high school for boys, so the only female I have shown these books to is my six-year-old daughter. She loves the series, but I did not tell her the series is meant for boys. Teachers of female students will have to judge for themselves whether their students would be interested in this series, but I think it is likely.

Student Reaction

I initially tried out the books with my own children - an 8-year-old boy and a 6-year-old girl. As neither of them could read in English, I read one cluster of 5 books to them each evening. Every evening the same thing happened, they wanted to read an additional cluster. The plot of the four main characters is quite addictive and they wanted to see more of what happens to them. At one point, I did not read to them for two nights as I was away at a conference and when I came back I found my son had read four clusters by himself. From then on I took my daughter to another room to read to her and he finished the series by himself. Keep in mind this is a boy who had never read an English book by himself before. When he finished the series he immediately went on to other English books and is now an avid, or should I say rabid, reader. The goal of the series is to get boys to become readers and it certainly did work for him. He now reads both fiction and non-fiction in English.

Buoyed by this success I tried out the books on second and third year junior high school boys. I saw the same pattern again. Students got hooked on the plotline with the shrinking watches, tried a non-fiction book because it contained one of the main characters and the finished off the last two books of the cluster because they had become interested in the theme.

I will try out the series with first year high school students in January, 2010 as my school always does SSR in the third term for those students.

I have not tried this series out with university students as I do not teach them these days. If anyone has used Project X with university students, please let me know how it went as readers tend to ask me questions about this column.

Conclusion

As there is so little non-fiction available for low-level students, I would have been happy to have any new well-written non-fiction titles. Project X goes far beyond that. Oxford has created a system that gets readers hooked with fiction and then pulls them into the world of non-fiction. Our students are going to have to deal with English non-fiction in the future both in their university and professional careers. Oxford has done them a great service by giving them the opportunity to get accustomed to non-fiction right from the start.

Year Group	Book Band	ORT Stage	Cluster Packs – five books linked by a theme, plus guided/group reading notes	
Reception /P1	1	1+	My Family	My Home
	2	2	Big and Small	Pets
	3	3	Food	Weather
Year 1/P2	4	4	Bugs	Toys and Games
	5	5	Making a Noise	Flight
	6	6	What a Waste	Invasion
Year 2/P3	7	7	Discovery	Hide and Seek
	8	8	Buildings	Water
	9	9	Pirates	Communication
	10	10	Journeys/Going Places	Working as a Team
	11	11	Underground	
Year 3/P4	11	11	Masks and Disguises	
	12	10 11	Fast and Furious	Heroes and Villains
			Strong Defences	
Year 4/P5		12 13	Dilemmas and Decisions	Great Escapes
			In the News	

New Book Releases

Compiled by Daniel Stewart

Editor's comments-

This is a regular report in each issue of ERJ. This list covers books released between May 7th, 2009 and November 8th, 2009. If you would like to have books from additional publishers included in future issues, please contact- stewart_reading@mac.com

Title	ISBN	Level	Word count
Cambridge			
Book Boy	978-0-52115-677-6	Starter	
The New Zealand File	978-0-52113-624-2	Level 2	
Dragons' Eggs	978-0-52113-264-0	Level 5	
Oxford			
Deserts	978-0-19423-615-7	Factfiles Stage 1	5519
Climate Change	978-0-19423-631-7	Factfiles Stage 2	7151
Price of Peace, The: Stories from Africa	978-0-19479-198-4	World Stories Stage 4	16068
Pinocchio	978-0-19422-560-0	Classic Tales Elementary 3	
Penguin			
Audrey Hepburn	978-1-40587-698-8	Level 2	3,888
RIC			
Animal world	978-1-74126-799-0	Factscope Series	
Earth	978-1-74126-800-3	Factscope Series	
Human body	978-1-74126-801-0	Factscope Series	
Machines and inventions	978-1-74126-802-7	Factscope Series	
Plants	978-1-74126-803-4	Factscope Series	
Universe	978-1-74126-804-1	Factscope Series	
Beatles, The	978-1-74126-790-7	Graphic Biographies	
Alexander Graham Bell	978-1-74126-762-1	Graphic Biographies	
Houdini	978-1-74126-794-5	Graphic Biographies	
Marie Curie	978-1-74126-791-4	Graphic Biographies	
Thomas Edison	978-1-74126-793-8	Graphic Biographies	

Recent ER Research

Compiled by Nozomu Sonda

Editor's comments-

This section of *ERJ* lists recently published papers concerning extensive reading. Abstracts will be given whenever possible. This is an opportunity for readers to keep up on what has been published. It has been compiled from several sources. If you know of a study, which has not been mentioned, please contact stewart_reading@mac.com and it will be included in the next issue.

ER Research published between May 7th, 2008 and and November 8th, 2009.

The importance and use of extensive reading by means of language learner literature in Unterstufe: A field study in Hauptschule and Gymnasium in the districts of Wels-Stadt and Wels-Land Christine Alt

Extensive reading, which is also known as pleasure reading, is an important component in the development of second or foreign language learning. Reading a large amount does not only affect reading ability itself but also other areas of language competence, such as vocabulary and writing. In order to practise extensive reading at an elementary and intermediate language level, it is necessary to introduce learners to adapted or simplified texts, which are known as language learner literature and may serve as steps towards reading original works. A variety of publishing houses offers a wide range of high quality texts, which are graded regarding vocabulary, grammar and syntax. The problem, however, is that in Austrian School curricula extensive reading is not included as a compulsory activity. Thus, its actual use is – to a large part – dependent on the teacher and the school. This thesis intends to demonstrate the importance of extensive reading by means of language learner literature. A field study which was carried out amongst EFL teachers by means of a questionnaire in two Upper Austrian districts examined whether and how language learner literature is actually used at lower secondary level. In Gymnasium and Hauptschule, extensive reading as well as intensive reading is practised. Teachers in Gymnasium, however, use language learner literature more frequently than teachers in Hauptschule. Generally, the use of language learner literature increases with increasing language level of the pupils, in terms of years at school as well as in terms of Leistungsgruppen in Hauptschulen. Interestingly, the most frequently stated reason for not using language learner literature is insufficient language competence. As language learner literature is designed to solve the problem of lack of language competence, it will be interesting to look at other reasons which may contribute to the decision of not using simple texts in Unterstufe. Furthermore, the differences in classroom practice between Gymnasium and Hauptschule will be discussed in the empirical part.

It is necessary to remind teachers about the importance of introducing extensive reading to the pupils, as they do not seem to be fully aware of its benefits. There are definitely materials available for beginning language learners and thus extensive reading could be introduced at a very elementary language level. As extensive reading should be fostered as an out-of-class learning strategy, as a follow-up of the study, a booklet with the results and suggestions for a better implementation of extensive reading will be compiled and sent to the teachers.

Alt, C. (2009). The importance and use of extensive reading by means of language learner literature in Unterstufe: A field study in Hauptschule and Gymnasium in the districts of Wels-Stadt and Wels-Land. MA Thesis, University of Vienna.

Recent ER Research - Sonda

Online Extensive Reading for Advanced Foreign Language Learners: An Evaluation Study

Nike Arnold

The following article reports the findings of a qualitative evaluation of an online extensive reading program in German as a foreign language. Designed for advanced learners, it differs from traditional extensive reading programs in two important aspects: students read online instead of printed materials, and there was no teacher preselection to ensure that learners were reading at the i minus 1 level. Data from reflections and questionnaires indicate that learners experienced a variety of affective and linguistic benefits. Interestingly, some learners purposely sought out more difficult texts to challenge themselves. While this violates a key principle of extensive reading, it is indicative of learners' growing motivation and self-confidence. There is also evidence that they developed into skilled second language readers, making conscious decisions about reading strategy and dictionary use.

Arnold, N. (2009). Online Extensive Reading for Advanced Foreign Language Learners: An Evaluation Study. *Foreign Language Annals*, 42 (2) 340 - 366.

Using Comprehensive Memory Cycle Updating in Extensive Reading

T.K. Chiu, T.I. Wang, J.H. Fu, T.C. Hsieh, C.Y. Su & K.H. Tsai

English is a global language and thus learning it is important in many contexts. One way to approach this learning task is to undertake extensive reading of English texts. However, if students have an inadequate vocabulary, it is difficult for them to select appropriate articles to read. To address this problem, a number of studies have applied the theory of the memory cycle to help learners memorize words more efficiently. However, the method is inefficient when it just uses to update the memory cycle of the target words directly. In this work we propose a new framework, comprehensive memory cycle updating, which can not only update the memory cycle of the word directly, but also can update the memory cycle indirectly via learner response. This framework can reduce the number of times a learner needs to review a word in order to memorize it. In addition, by adopting the concept of the memory cycle, this framework can find articles, which contain words that the learners have already learned, as well as those they have almost forgotten.

Chiu, T.K., Wang, T.I., Fu, J.H., Hsieh, T.C., Su, C.Y. & Tsai, K.H. (2009). Using Comprehensive Memory Cycle Updating in Extensive Reading. Proceedings of the 2009 Ninth IEEE International Conference on Advanced Learning Technologies, Volume 00, pp. 666-668.

Extensive Reading: Students' Performance and Perception

Nelly Fernandez de Morgado

Reading is thought to be a crucial skill in the EFL learning process, and Extensive Reading a very useful strategy. However, very few teachers implement it on a regular basis. The process of introducing Extensive Reading (ER) is considered far too expensive, complicated, and time-consuming. One way to encourage its use would be to more deeply understand the multiple factors influencing its successful implementation. This paper considers two of these factors, one related to effectiveness and the other to attitude. On the one hand, it examines Extensive Reading's influence on the student's reading comprehension performance. On the other, it explores the student's perception of this particular strategy. The study uses quantitative as well as qualitative data from students in the first year of a scientific reading course in a Venezuelan university. Findings suggest that reading comprehension performance was essentially the same with or without an Extensive Reading Program. Nonetheless, the program did seem to positively impact participating students. The ER Group did significantly better in the post-test than in the pre-test. Furthermore, the students' perception of Extensive Reading was very positive. Besides being enjoyable, they felt it helped them build vocabulary, reading comprehension, reading skills and confidence.

Fernandez de Morgado, N. (2009). Extensive Reading: Students' Performance and Perception. *The Reading Matrix*, 9(1).

Recent ER Research - Sonda

Using Extensive Reading as a Remedial Program for Elementary English: Underachievers-Implementation, Problems, and Solutions

Lin Juan & Chin-Kuei Cheng

The purpose of this paper is to report the implementation process of an extensive reading (ER) program used as a remedial program for elementary English underachievers, problems and difficulties encountered during the process, and solutions. Three fourth-grade English remedial students participated in 30 half-hour ER sessions carried out over one full semester. The researchers collected data through participant observation, interviews, review of documents, running records of oral readings, weekly evaluation sheets, researcher's journal, a letter identification test, and two high-frequency word recognition tests. The results showed that after participating in the ER program, all three underachievers made progress in English performance. In addition, the data also revealed that the extensive reading program has affected the three participants' motivation and attitude positively. However, some problems were found: the remedial students' lack of confidence to read independently, reluctance to tape record their oral readings, limited vocabulary size, difficulty in selecting appropriate books to read, and some unwanted interference to the environment. Using an emergent research design, the researchers made real-time judgments, developed and applied solutions tackling these problems, and thus made the program a better-fit remedial program for elementary school English underachievers. These solutions included employing reading partnership, adding sight word readers to the book selection, adjusting the layout of the physical environment, and seeking for administrative support. Based on the findings, the researchers provide suggestions on how to implement an ER program effectively with elementary school English underachievers.

Juan, L. & Cheng, C-K. (2009). Using Extensive Reading as a Remedial Program for Elementary English: Underachievers-Implementation, Problems, and Solutions. *Hwa Kang Journal of English Language & Literature*, 15, 185-201.

Teacher Modeling: Its Impact on an Extensive Reading Program

Jason Kok Khiang Loh

This case study investigates whether teachers model reading in 1 Singapore primary school during an exercise called "uninterrupted sustained silent reading" (USSR) carried out in the classroom. Even though reading is an important determinant of a student's growth in language skills and ability, and modeling the act of reading is essential in influencing students, we hypothesize that teachers do not model the act of reading. This study seeks to find out if teachers practice what they preach about reading by making the effort to model the act of reading. This study uses an observation log, questionnaire surveys, and semi-structured interviews. Fifty teachers were observed during USSR daily for 10 weeks and surveyed. Purposeful and systematic samplings were used to identify the teachers for the interviews. The study confirms our hypothesis that even though the teachers believe in the importance of reading and modeling, they do not model reading.

Loh, J.K.K. (2009). Teacher Modeling: Its Impact on an Extensive Reading Program. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 21(2) 93-118.

Developing Students' Reading Ability through Extensive Reading

Fanshao Meng

A good reading competence is a necessity for those studying English for academic and occupational purposes. Based on the results of previous research, theory and practice on L2 Extensive Reading, this paper analyses current situation for teaching and learning reading in our Chinese universities and proposes practical applications of extensive reading to a Chinese university, which is sure to improve students' reading competence as well as their linguistic capabilities. It attempts to provide some pedagogical implications to the foreign language teaching and learning.

Meng, F. (2009). Developing Students' Reading Ability through Extensive Reading. *English Language Teaching*. 2(2).

Design and Exploration of a Digital Learning Activity for Writing: Idea Generation through Extensive Reading and Freewriting in Elementary School

Shiuan-Hung Wu

The main purpose of this study was to explore the effects on idea-generation through a combination of extensive reading and freewriting which also meant “Elbow-He learning model”, also meant “amount of reading-writing learning model”. This was done firstly through the design and implementation of an “Elbow-He learning system” that could be used by learners to study through the activities of extensive reading and freewriting. Furthermore, this study was conducted in a classroom of fifth-grade students to additionally investigate the practicality of the system, the influence of the language system on fifth-graders’ writing ideas, writing skill, writing attitude, and reading comprehension, and the effectiveness of the curriculum. Changes in the performance of students learning the language arts by this system were analyzed through classroom observations and one-on-one interviews.

A one-group pretest-posttest design was implemented in this study. Participants were 32 students at an elementary school in Taoyuan County, Taiwan. This study was conducted over twelve different learning sessions, two per week. The experimental design consisted of students participating in extensive reading and freewriting activities on the computer. Each student had their own Aspire One notebook computer, also known as a netbook, to study previously written passages and to share their articles, which were primarily written through the freewriting process.

The main results of two-weeks of pre-training and ten-weeks of language activities, derived from both quantitative and qualitative research data, indicated that:

- (1) In the aspect of the writing idea generation, the students’ writing ideas progressively increased over time. The Elbow-He learning model can effectively stimulate the generation of more writing ideas among the students.
- (2) In the aspect of the writing skills, the students’ writing skills were not observed to make significant progress.
- (3) In the aspect of the writing attitude, after the experiment, students overall held more positive attitudes towards writing through language learning model.
- (4) In the aspect of the reading comprehension, the students’ reading comprehension improved significantly.
- (5) The questionnaire results indicate that in the aspect of feedback on the curriculum, the students felt that it was very easy to use the “Elbow-He learning system”. They enjoyed using the computer to study many language activities, including extensive reading, freewriting and the sharing of articles.

Wu, S-H. (2009). Design and Exploration of a Digital Learning Activity for Writing: Idea Generation through Extensive Reading and Freewriting in Elementary School. thesis.lib.ncu.edu.tw

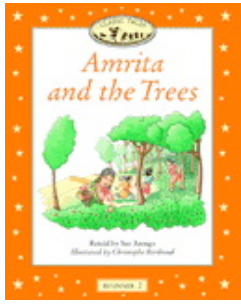
**ERJ is the publication of the Extensive Reading
Special Interest Group of the Japan Association for
Language Teaching.**

Editor - Daniel Stewart

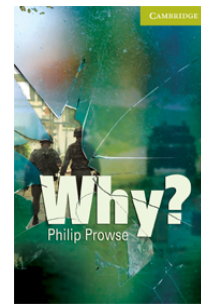
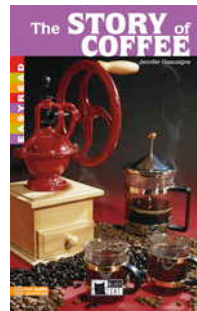
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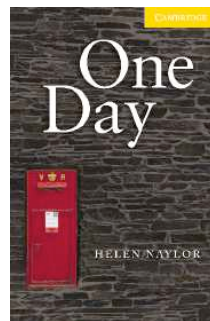
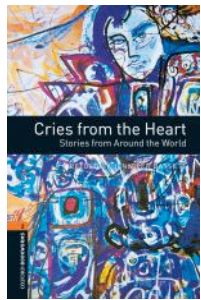
Extensive Reading Foundation's Language Learner Literature Award Finalists for 2009! Young Learners



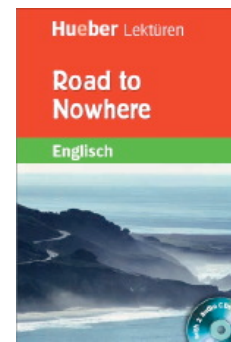
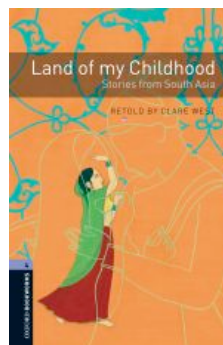
Adolescent & Adult: Beginner



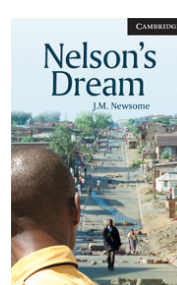
Adolescent & Adult: Elementary



Adolescent & Adult: Intermediate



Adolescent & Adult: Upper Intermediate & Advanced



The Extensive Reading Colloquium at JALT 2009

Saturday November 21st

4:00- 5:40

Room 1001-1

- 8 Presentations on ER
- The ERF Language Learner Literature Award winners will be announced.
- Free book giveaway!

Daniel Stewart
Kaisei Academy

Speed in Extensive Listening: What students want, what they need and what we give them.

Mark Brierley
Shinshu University

The Measurement Problem in Extensive Reading

Paul Collett
Shimonoseki City University

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