

ERJ

Extensive Reading in Japan
The Journal of the Extensive Reading SIG
of the Japan Association for Language Teaching

IN THIS ISSUE:

What motivates teachers to continue Extensive Reading programs in class

Atsuko Takase and Kyoko Uozumi Page 2

Using literature circles with content:
Adaptation, practice and results

David Williams Page 8

A Communities of Practice perspective on foreign language Extensive Reading

Peter Hourdequin Page 13

How we do it...

... at Nagoya College and Ohka Gakuen University

Thomas Bieri and Leslie Chivers Page 18

Innovations in ER:

Setting the bar high with a new series

Daniel Stewart Page 23

Recent ER research

Compiled by Nozomu Sonda Page 25

New graded readers releases

Bjorn Fuisting Page 29

Volume

4.1

2011

Message from the editor

Welcome to our fourth year of *ERJ*. You will notice some changes for the better that have been brought about by Eleanor Kane, Bjorn Fuisting and Mark Brierley joining the editorial staff. More changes are forthcoming and we would love to hear any suggestions from our readers. If you have an idea for an article, let us know and we will help you as much as needed. One of the goals of the ER SIG is to get more people publishing and presenting on ER and we are happy to give any assistance we can.

This issue starts with Takase and Uozumi providing insight into why we continue doing ER by comparing teachers who are new to ER and those who are more experienced. Next David Williams introduces an interesting idea in using Reading Circles with non-fiction. Finally Peter Hourdequin shows us a new way to look at ER from a perspective of how individuals interact with other people doing ER instead of just looking at them on their own. Of course we also have our regular columns including this issue's How We Do It... by Thomas Bieri and Leslie Chivers.

I hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to seeing you at the ER World Congress in September.

Daniel Stewart
stewart_reading@mac.com

Published by the JALT ER SIG
June, 2011

ERJ Staff

Editor

Daniel Stewart, Kaisei Academy

Copy Editor

Eleanor Kane, Shimane University

Design

Bjorn Fuisting, Ritsumeikan University

Layout

Mark Brierley, Shinshu University

Proofreaders

Peter Hourdequin, Tokoha Gakuen University

Dan James, Suzugamine Women's College

Fiona MacGregor, Shane Global Language Centre,
Hastings, UK



What motivates teachers to continue Extensive Reading programs in class

Atsuko Takase
Kinki University
Kyoko Uozumi

Kobe International University

Extensive Reading (ER) has been gaining popularity as an effective strategy in EFL contexts at various institutions in Japan. For several years, sizable numbers of ER practitioners and potential ER practitioners have turned up at JERA (Japan Extensive Reading Association) annual conferences and seminars, JALT (Japan Association of Language Teachers) ER Colloquiums, ERJ (Extensive Reading Japan) seminars, university FD (Faculty Development) seminars, and events sponsored by publishers across Japan. Many teachers have implemented or are considering implementation of ER in the curriculum. It is often the case, unfortunately, that some start the ER program without enough preparation and fail, concluding that ER is not an effective strategy. As is often emphasized (Furukawa, 2010; Sakai & Kanda, 2005; Takase, 2010), it is essential for practitioners to read as many books as possible before implementation of ER in class to gain knowledge of the books so that they can show each student books of appropriate level and genre.

Takase (2007) conducted a survey questionnaire on teachers in various institutions at the JERA conference and ER seminars in 2006, and found different perceptions of practitioners and non-practitioners on an ER program. In her paper, both concerns of non-practitioners and actual problems that practitioners were facing were reported, as well as the positive effects found through their ER programs. In addition, it also demonstrated that the length of ER instruction which teachers had experienced contributed to its success.

The current study investigated the ER practitioners' attitudes, motivation, and perceptions on ER and English teaching, focusing on similarities and differences between novice practitioners with less than two years' experience and more experienced practitioners with two or more years' ER instruction. This study is based on the results of a survey questionnaire with ER teachers which was conducted

at the JERA Annual Conference in August 2008 and the 34th Annual Conference of JALT in November 2008. The survey was intended to investigate teachers' motivating factors to implement and practice ER in class.

The questionnaire consisted of 28 questions which could be grouped into three broad categories: teachers' reading experiences and habits, classroom practice, and attitudes toward language acquisition (Appendix I). The following research question is posed:

What are the similarities and differences between ER practitioners with two or more years of practice and less experienced practitioners concerning (1) perceptions in classroom practice, including positive effects and problems in ER programs and (2) attitudes toward teaching a foreign language?

Participants

A total of 40 teachers (27 females, 11 males, 2 not-stated), including two native English-speaking teachers, at various educational institutions responded to the questionnaire. It is noticeable that among those 40 respondents, the number of ER practitioners gradually increased from 1999 to 2003, and drastically increased since JERA was established in 2004 (Figure 1).

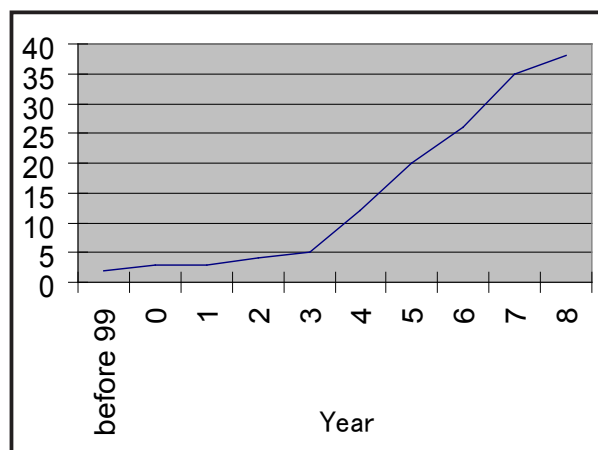


Figure 1. Number of ER practitioners

All the respondents were divided into two groups based on their length of ER practice in class: 25 teachers (F = 15, M = 9, NS = 1) with two-or-more-year experience, and 15 teachers (F = 12, M = 2, NS = 1) with less than two years' of ER practice. The respondents in each group used ER programs in various institutions, as seen in Figure 2.

Participants from the two groups shared some characteristics and show differences as well. Although many of the respondents in each group stopped counting the number of words they had read at a certain time, the majority answered that they had read more than one million words so far, which is a milestone in the Start with Simple Stories (SSS) method. More than 80% of the respondents in each group had also had experiences of reading in English for pleasure, mostly at colleges and universities. In addition, almost half of the respondents in each respective group chose ER as an effective strategy to improve learners' English proficiency at school. As for present reading habits, more than 80% of the respondents in each group answered they liked reading in Japanese and that they read books regularly. Thus, the respondents' favorable experiences of ER as EFL learners and liking for reading in general are likely to be one of common motivating factors in both groups to implement ER in class.

Classroom practice

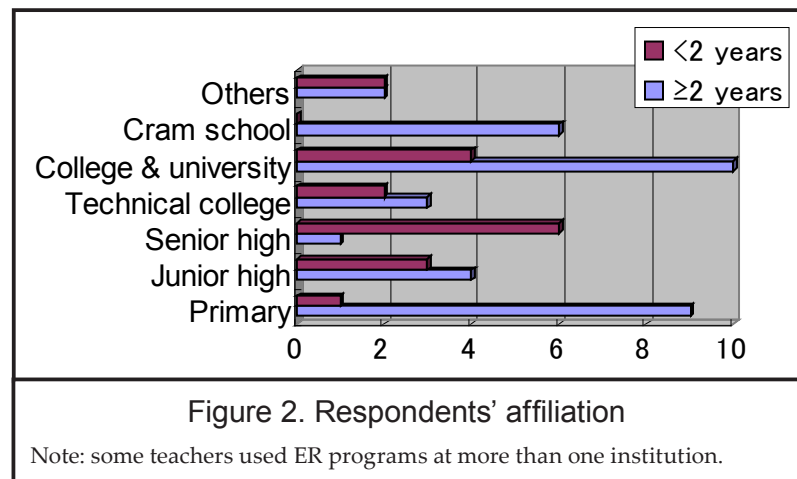
As mentioned above, some similarities could be found concerning the practitioners' experiences and habits. As for teaching practice, however, differences are more remarkable between the two groups.

As illustrated in Table 1, one of the differences was the way they practiced ER. More than 80% of the teachers from the more experienced group practiced ER in class, whereas those in the less experienced

Table 1. Ways to practice ER

	≥2 years	<2 years
in-class	81%	38%
outside class	10%	27%
club activities	3%	31%
tutorial	6%	4%

Note: some of the respondents practiced ER in more than one way.



group practiced ER almost equally in three ways: in-class, outside class and as a club activity. As some researchers often stress (Day & Bamford, 1998; Henry, 1995; Nishizawa et.al., 2010; Pilgreen, 2000; Takase, 2008), Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) or Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) (Krashen, 1993) is one of the critical factors for successful ER programs. Through this, teachers can observe students during the in-class reading time, grasp their progress or slump in reading, and find ways to deal with it on the spot. Yet, the results indicate that using ER programs as in-class activities is not always easy for teachers to realize, in the beginning of the implementation, in particular.

As seen in Table 2, in response to Question 8 (What were the positive effects of an ER program?), the respondents selected the items which they had thought of as positive effects in the ER programs.

It is worth noting that, among the top three items about students' positive changes, almost two-thirds of the teachers in the experienced group chose the sub-items 2 (students' confidence in English) and 3 (improvement in English proficiency), whereas only one-third of those with less experience chose them. Moreover, the former group was more conscious of the influence on the relationship with their students (item 5) as well as on themselves (items 4 and 6). Many teachers in the group possibly recognized that successful ER programs had benefits not only to students but also to teachers. In fact, in response to Question 11 (Can you see any change after starting the ER program?), seven respondents emphasized the changes of their reading in quantity and quality as positive effects of the ER programs and three referred to their progress in English proficiency, while only one teacher in the latter group acknowledged a change in her reading and none mentioned their progress.

VOLUME 4 NO. 1

Table 2. Positive effects of an ER program (plural responses permitted)

	Total (%)	≥2yrs (%)	<2yrs (%)
1. Ss enjoyed reading.	29 (73)	19 (76)	9 (60)
2. Ss became confident in English.	22 (55)	17 (68)	5 (33)
3. Ss' English proficiency has improved.	20 (50)	15 (60)	5 (33)
4. Ts read a lot of books.	20 (50)	15 (60)	5 (33)
5. Communication between Ts and Ss has been promoted.	18 (45)	13 (52)	5 (33)
6. Ts' English proficiency has improved.	14 (35)	10 (40)	4 (27)
7. Library books were checked out in quantity.	8 (20)	5 (20)	3 (20)
8. Ss began reading books in Japanese.	6 (15)	5 (20)	1 (7)
9. Ts got used to reading, which facilitated other English lessons.	5 (13)	3 (12)	2 (13)

Students' satisfaction itself is rewarding enough for teachers as Takase (2006) concludes "their students' eager faces and their reading attitudes while reading" (7) should be a powerful motivation for teachers to practice ER in class. In addition, it appears to be another motivating factor for teachers to know that implementation of ER can bring secondary effects on teachers themselves.

As for problems they faced in the ER programs (Question 9), the results can be seen in Table 3.

The top two problems, time and money, are physical factors that usually trouble ER practitioners. Sufficient funding to buy reading materials is essential for successful programs. Ironically, the more books you get, the more time is required for book management. What is remarkable here is that no teacher from the more experienced group regarded items 7 (Limited class time) and 9 (Unsure of effectiveness of ER) as problems. It indicates that, with more experiences of ER, teachers can be sure of its effectiveness and manage to put it into the current curriculum. Almost half of the teachers with more than two years' experiences actually claimed in response to Question 10 (What motivated you to continue to use an ER program?) that they continued the ER programs because it worked as an effective

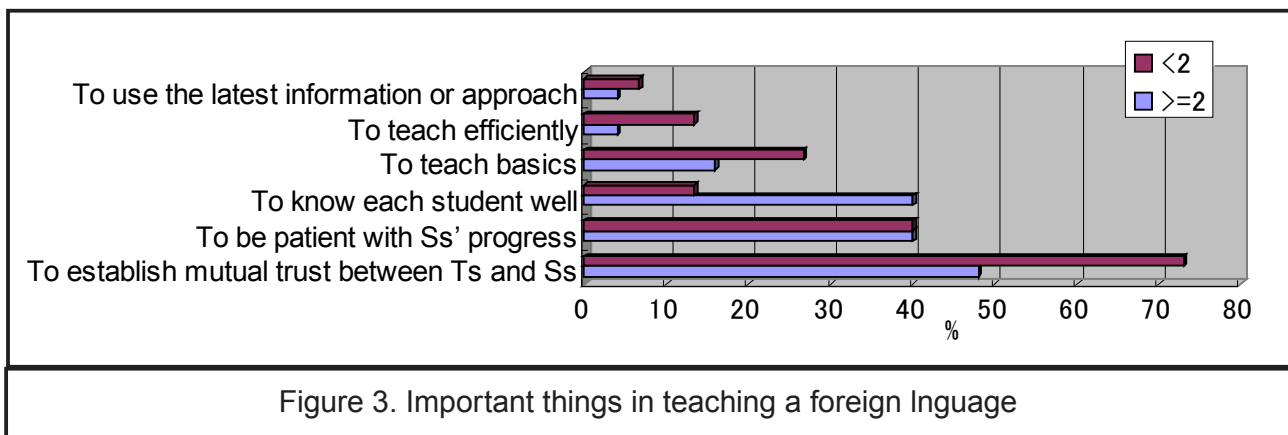
approach, whereas one-third of those with less than two years' practice mentioned the same reason. It suggests that teachers' assurance of its effectiveness is a motivating factor for teachers to continue the programs.

Lack of support from colleagues (item 5) is another problem that many ER practitioners face in general. In fact, in Question 11 (Can you see any changes after starting the ER program?), more teachers in the experienced group answered that their colleagues stayed the same or became less supportive than those who became more cooperative. It appears not to be an easy job to convince colleagues. Yet six teachers in the group referred to changes in their administrators' attitudes. They mentioned the administrators had come to show more favorable attitudes toward the ER program and became more supportive, especially after admitting great progress in students' proficiency and the effectiveness of ER. Some of them even reported some positive changes from administrations, such as the budget for the ER program being increased, or a section specifically for ER materials being provided at the library.

In order to continue ER programs, it may be occasionally necessary then for ER practitioners to persuade and get support from their administrators.

Table 3. Problems in ER programs (plural responses permitted)

	Total (%)	≥2yrs (%)	<2yrs (%)
1. Little budget for ER materials	19 (48)	12 (48)	7 (47)
2. Time-consuming work including book management	19 (48)	12 (48)	7 (47)
3. Some reluctant students	15 (38)	8 (32)	7 (47)
4. Little time for teachers to read	10 (25)	4 (16)	6 (40)
5. No support from colleagues	8 (20)	5 (20)	3 (20)
6. Difficulty of the different role of the teacher	7 (18)	3 (12)	4 (27)
7. Limited class time; no time to include ER in the present curriculum	4 (10)	0 (0)	4 (27)
8. Ss' low proficiency level for ER	4 (10)	2 (8)	2 (13)
9. Unsure of effectiveness of ER	3 (8)	0 (0)	3 (20)
10. Little progress in Ss' proficiency	3 (8)	2 (8)	1 (7)



Macalister (2010) claims, "Clearly, school managers, administrators, and even possibly principals need to be aware of the reasons for incorporating extensive reading into the teaching programme." (p. 71) As a few respondents commented, teachers can try to persuade them, for instance, by showing its effectiveness with positive data or inviting successful ER practitioners to talk about their experiences.

Attitudes toward teaching

The last finding to be considered in this paper is the respondents' attitudes toward teaching. The results in response to Question 21 (What do you think is the most important in teaching a foreign language?) can be seen in Figure 3.

It is remarkable that 73% of the less experienced practitioners responded that it was important to establish mutual trust between teachers and students. It indicates that the starter ER practitioners put a great emphasis on the relationship between teachers and students. Among the subordinate items, however, only two teachers (13%) in the less experienced group regarded knowing each student well as important, while ten of those with more experience (40%) claimed it was important. As mentioned above, SSR is critical for success in ER programs. By observing students in class, teachers can grasp each student's reading speed, proficiency and liking, and give appropriate advice on what to read. The results suggest that experienced teachers tend to more consciously recognize the importance of knowing each student well in ER programs, in particular.

Conclusion and implications

Through the results of the survey questionnaire, two tendencies in differences became evident between the respondents who had continued ER programs in class

for two or more years and those who had practiced ER for less than two years. One is that, understanding the importance of knowing each student well as well as communicating with students, more practitioners from the experienced group used ER as an in-class activity and observed students' reading behavior and progress during the time for SSR. They were also motivated to continue the programs by the students' eagerness toward reading and their progress in reading proficiency. They continued their ER programs because the students were positive about ER. On the contrary, even though highly valuing the mutual trust between teachers and students, the teachers who had practiced ER for less than two years had not yet fully appreciated the effectiveness of ER that could be brought in by SSR.

The other tendency is that the respondents who had two or more years of ER practice were convinced of the effectiveness of ER through students' progress in proficiency as well as their own experiences of ER as learners and their precedent reading before implementation of ER programs. They prepared for the programs by reading books themselves in advance and also became aware of its effects on their own proficiency. On the other hand, teachers with less experience of ER practice have not yet fully enjoyed its effectiveness. Sixty percent of the less experienced practitioners have noticed that their students enjoyed reading, yet only one-third of them found the improvement in their students' English proficiency and gain of their self-confidence. It is also noticeable that only a small number of teachers from the inexperienced group have enjoyed the benefits which were brought on themselves by ER.

In conclusion, through the findings particularly on the respondents' reading experiences and teaching practice, it was found that teachers' assurance of the

effectiveness of ER is the strongest motivating factor for practitioners to continue ER. For a successful ER program, thorough preparation is needed, which includes not only creating the reading environment by providing plenty of books or securing time for reading in class, but teachers' own practice of reading. Without teachers' knowledge of books and strong belief in the effectiveness of ER, it would be impossible to motivate students to read a lot and enjoy ER. In addition, teachers' experience of ER instruction makes a difference to some extent. Three tips are listed as important keys to successful ER programs: SSS, SSR and SST (Short Subsequent Tasks; Takase, 2010). It may be added as a fourth key that teachers should read a great deal and be convinced themselves of the effectiveness of ER.

References

- Day, R., & Bamford, J. (1998). *Extensive reading in the second language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Furukawa, A. (2010). *Eigo tadoku hou [How to read English extensively]*. Tokyo: Shogakukan.
- Henry, J. (1995). *If not now. Developmental readers in the college classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Heinemann.
- Krashen, S. D. (1993). *The power of reading: Insights from the research*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.
- Macalister, J. (2008). Implementing extensive reading in an EAP programme. *ELT Journal*, 62(3), 248-256.
- Macalister, J. (2010). Investigating teacher attitudes to extensive reading practices in higher education: Why isn't everyone doing it? *RELC Journal*, 41(1), 59-75.
- Nishizawa, H., Yoshioka, T., & Fukada, M. (2010). The impact of a 4-year extensive reading program. *JALT 2009 Conference Proceedings*, 632-640.
- Pilgreen, J. L. (2000). *The SSR handbook*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Heinemann.
- Sakai, K. & Kanda, M. (2005). *Kyoshitsu de yomu 100 mango [Reading one million words in the classroom]*. Tokyo: Taishukan.
- Takase, A. (2006). Teachers motivated by students' Extensive Reading: A case study of teachers' motivation to start reading English books. *JALT 2005 Conference Proceedings*, 1086-1093.
- Takase, A. (2007). Extensive Reading in the Japanese high school setting. *The Language Teacher*, 31(5), 7-10.
- Takase, A. (2008). Two most critical tips for a successful Extensive Reading. *Kinki University English Journal*. 1. 119-136.
- Takase, A. (2010). *Eigo tadoku tacho shido manual [Teaching manual for Extensive Reading and Listening]*. Tokyo: Taishukan.

Appendix I: Survey questionnaire

1. How long have you practiced Extensive Reading (ER)?
2. What motivated you to start ER?
3. How many words/books have you read so far?
4. Had you read English books before starting ER? If yes, when and how did you do that?
5. When did you start an ER program?
6. How and how often do you practice an ER program? (in class or outside?)
7. What motivated you to start an ER program?
8. What were the positive effects of an ER program? (You may choose more than one answer.)
9. What are the problems you are facing with the ER program? (You may choose more than one answer.)
10. What motivated you to continue to use an ER program?
11. Can you see any changes after starting the ER program? (students/teacher/lesson plans/colleagues' attitudes/administrator's attitudes/others)
12. In learning foreign languages, what kind of methods/approaches have you tried?
13. Please list the methods/approaches you think were effective in learning foreign languages.
14. Please list the methods/approaches you think were not very effective in learning foreign languages..
15. Have you tried ER in any foreign language before? Did you think it was effective?
16. Before introducing an ER program in class, what kind of methods/approaches were you using in class?
17. What kind of methods/approaches did you think were effective in class?
18. What were the problems in using methods/approaches other than ER?
19. What do you think is the most important in learning a foreign language? (Choose two answers.)
20. What do you think can be obstacles in learning foreign languages? (Choose two answers.)
21. What do you think is the most important in teaching a foreign language? (Choose two answers.)
22. What do you think teacher should avoid in teaching a foreign language?
23. Do you like reading?
24. How many books do you read a month on an average in your own language?
25. What kinds of books do you like to read?
26. What do you think are advantages of reading?
27. What do you think are disadvantages of reading?
28. Please write any comment on ER.



What books to buy?

The Extensive Reading Foundation's Language Learner Literature Award winners since 2004 are listed below.

Young Learners

WINNERS

The Magic Brocade	Oxford Classic Tales	2010	ISBN 9780194225618
Farley the Red Panda	Cengage Footprint Reading Library	2009	ISBN 9781424011582
Dorothy	Black Cat Earlyreads	2008	ISBN 9788853007094
The Boy Who Burped Too Much	Stone Arch Graphic Sparks	2007	ISBN 9781598891683
Thumbelina	Oxford Classic Tales	2006	ISBN 9780194225373
Is It a Butterfly?	Macmillan Children's Readers	2005	ISBN 9781405057202
The Kindest Family	Thomson: PM Plus Story Books	2004	ISBN 9780170098236

FINALISTS

Aladdin	Macmillan English Explorers	2011	ISBN 9780230719804
Animals In Art	Oxford Read and Discover	2011	ISBN 9780194644433
The Owl's Song	Black Cat Earlyreads	2011	ISBN 9788853010117
Pinocchio	Oxford Classic Tales	2010	ISBN 9780194225625
Para-Life Rescue!	Cengage Footprint Reading Library	2010	ISBN 9781424022328
Amrita and the Trees	Oxford Classic Tales	2009	ISBN 9780194225557
Big Baby Finn	Oxford Classic Tales	2009	ISBN 9780194225564
Escape from the Fire	Macmillan English Explorers	2008	ISBN 9781405060189
The Princess and the Pea	Oxford Classic Tales	2008	ISBN 9780194225526
The Goose Girl	Oxford Classic Tales	2007	ISBN 9780194225458
The Twelve Dancing Princesses	Oxford Classic Tales	2007	ISBN 9780194225465
The Slippery Planet	Cambridge Storybooks	2006	ISBN 9780521674775
The Special Cake	Cambridge Storybooks	2006	ISBN 9780521674720
Who's Stealing the Fish?	Cambridge Storybooks	2005	ISBN 9780521752299
The Little Red Hen	Oxford Classic Tales	2005	ISBN 9780194220866
Mtikazi's Mistake	Macmillan: Reading Worlds	2004	ISBN 9780333953273
Three Billy-Goats	Oxford Classic Tales	2004	ISBN 9780194220033

Adolescent & Adult: Beginners

WINNERS

The Winning Shot	ILTS & Hueber Verlag	2010	ISBN 9783192429767
Why?	Cambridge English Readers	2009	ISBN 9780521732956
Horror Trip on the Pecos River	Egmont Easy Readers	2008	ISBN 9780850484007
Let Me Out	Cambridge English Readers	2007	ISBN 9780521683296
Love among the Haystacks	Oxford Bookworms Library	2005	ISBN 9780194790802
Jojo's Story	Cambridge English Readers	2004	ISBN 9780521797542

FINALISTS

Just So Stories	Black Cat Green Apple	2011	ISBN 9788853010131
The Game	ILTS & Hueber Verlag	2011	ISBN 9783196029765
Under the Bridge	Penguin Active Reading	2011	ISBN 9781408231975
Gone!	Cambridge Discovery Readers	2010	ISBN 9788483235133
Storm Hawks	Scholastic ELT Readers	2010	ISBN 9781905775385
Planespotting	Hueber Lektüren	2009	ISBN 9783192429712
The Story of Coffee	Black Cat Easy Reads	2009	ISBN 9788853004475
Grizzly	Hueber Verlag	2008	ISBN 9783190029716
Tim Burton's The Nightmare before Christmas	Penguin Active Reading	2008	ISBN 9781405852104
Blog Love	Scholastic ELT Readers	2007	ISBN 9781904720539
The Story of Chocolate	Black Cat Easyread	2007	ISBN 9788853004475
Moonfleet	Penguin Readers	2005	ISBN 9780582829930
The Withered Arm	Oxford Bookworms	2005	ISBN 9780194232494
Sally's Phone	Oxford Bookworms	2004	ISBN 9780194234269
The Phantom of the Opera	Oxford Bookworms	2004	ISBN 9780194227070

Continued on pages 12 and 17.





Using literature circles with content: Adaptation, practice and results

David Williams

Josai International University, Faculty of Tourism

To help students make the step from the traditional grammar-focused and teacher centered classroom, to one based more on real world discussion, as ER practitioners we are continually looking for a tool that provides students with leadership, collaboration and critical thinking to complement the fluency and independence promoted by approaches such as ER. These skills can be acquired through approaches such as the leader method (Ward, Wade & Dowling, 2008), language portfolios (O'Dwyer, 2009) or general fluency tasks (Kellem, 2009). However, it is the literature circle that is receiving widespread, and increasing, interest from ER and other language professionals in recent years (Brown, 2009; Furr, 2007; Jolly and Miles, 2009; Shang, 2006). At the same time as literature circles have gained greater attention, there has been a drive to diversify tertiary level education in Japan by offering content studies in English in addition to the more traditional language classes about English (Orr, 1998). For students in a range of courses including tourism (Leslie & Russell, 2006), hospitality (Blue & Harun, 2003) and medicine (Hiu-Uen, Johnson, Hui-Lung & Floyd, 1999) where effective communication is paramount, the literature circle, if adapted to content might thus be the tool teachers of content studies are seeking. How might this adaptation be possible and what do students perceive are its benefits? These two broad themes are considered with reference to a literature circle that uses content materials, and students' reactions to its use in their classes.

What are literature circles?

Though known in the L1 context as a study tool for as long as 300 years (Daniels, 2002), it is only in the last 10 to 15 years that literature circles have appeared in second language instruction. The literature circle for L2 learners as described by Furr (2007) is a group of six students in which each reader in the group carries out a different task on the same story prior to discussion about the story. These tasks are set out on a detailed role sheet that students fill out and use as the basis for discussion. By having students complete different reading tasks through the role sheets, texts

become more manageable and, through discussion, meaning becomes more accessible.

Literature circles' success as an SLA reading/discussion format can be largely seen as the result of a combination of the "framework" (Furr, 2007, p.16) provided by the role sheets with the "empowerment" (Brown, 2008, p.17) felt by students who participate in the student-centered discussion. Working in tandem with these, extensive comprehensible (Krashen, 1983) reading materials serve to raise the opportunities for deeper discussion and critical thinking. Minimal teacher input ensures that discussion pace, direction and complexity remain at the students' level and this frees the teacher to act as a monitor and facilitator (Wienczek & O'Flahaven, 1994). For teachers of content the "meaning based, rather than information driven, approach" (Willis & Willis, 2009, p.4) of literature circles and their ability to encourage students to reflect on knowledge (Shang, 2006) are particularly important as literature circles encourage students to read beyond facts and concepts characteristic of content materials. The literature circle is thus a structured approach to reading that gives rise to purposeful discussion that is relevant to students: a highly desirable outcome for both content and fiction-based studies.

From literature circle to content-based reading circle (CBRC)

As its name suggests, the literature circle is designed for fiction-based materials. In a globalized world however, students need to be equipped with the skills to discuss and analyze content. This is particularly true for students studying vocational subjects where communication is key (Leslie and Russell, 2006). As an instructor of socio-cultural content, I wanted to utilize the fiction-based literature circle format and make content more accessible to learners. The result is the content-based reading circle (CBRC). Although the subject material in literature circles and CBRC may be different, only minor adjustments were made to Furr's fiction-based approach to form the CBRC.

In place of six roles, the CBRC has just four. This is partly because one literature circle role (passage

person) is redundant to content-based materials but also because, from my own experience, I found six roles provided fewer opportunities for fluency practice. The four CBRC roles are: a Group Leader who keeps discussion going, raises questions and delegates time; a Summarizer, to highlight details or key facts; a Word Master, who selects important words or phrases from the text; and a Culture Connector who emphasizes the cultural associations and/or differences between the content described in the text and that of the students or their experience. In addition, I also introduced a group representative, but without role sheet, for the group discussion stage. This role is shared among the members of each group.

The content based reading circle in practice

To ensure the CBRC is effective, teachers will need to guide students through the role sheets and tasks prior to the first discussion circle. In the first class meeting it is therefore advisable to outline in some detail what you – as the facilitator – expect the students to do, as well as having students form the CBRC itself. Students will then be ready to read the first graded non-fiction text and complete the role sheet for homework.

In subsequent weeks, facilitators should spend 10 minutes to introduce or contextualize the topic. After this introduction, students should begin their CBRC led by the Discussion Leader with the instructor designating a specific amount of time. As a guideline, I have found 20 minutes is a suitable time limit at first, but once students become more familiar with the CBRC format this time can be increased.

Once the allotted time is complete, the group representative from each group stands in front of the whole class for two or three minutes and highlights one aspect of their group's discussion. Other groups are then free to ask questions to that representative or members of his/her group. Finally, the class closes with a teacher-centered session which advises students on issues raised during the CBRC and the use of language. At the end of the session students are given a new text and prepare a different role for the following class. This is repeated over four consecutive weeks thus allowing for each member in the group to complete each role over one 4-week cycle.

As a means of evaluating students, role sheets can be collected in the fourth week, and in the fifth week students make a short presentation or poster based on one of the broad themes discussed in the previous

four weeks. This gives students the opportunity to pursue something of personal interest related to the content. This presentation can be delivered in a colloquium style forum, and may also be used for assessment purposes. This four-week CBRC cycle with one additional presentation week can be repeated three times in a typical college semester.

Research methodology

How do students feel about the roles and what did they perceive were the strengths of using a literature circle approach to content materials? Using a 15 item questionnaire, 59 students studying a British culture course at a public university in Japan were surveyed. Students were informed of the purpose of the questionnaire and given 30 minutes during class to complete it. Data was analyzed using EXCEL.

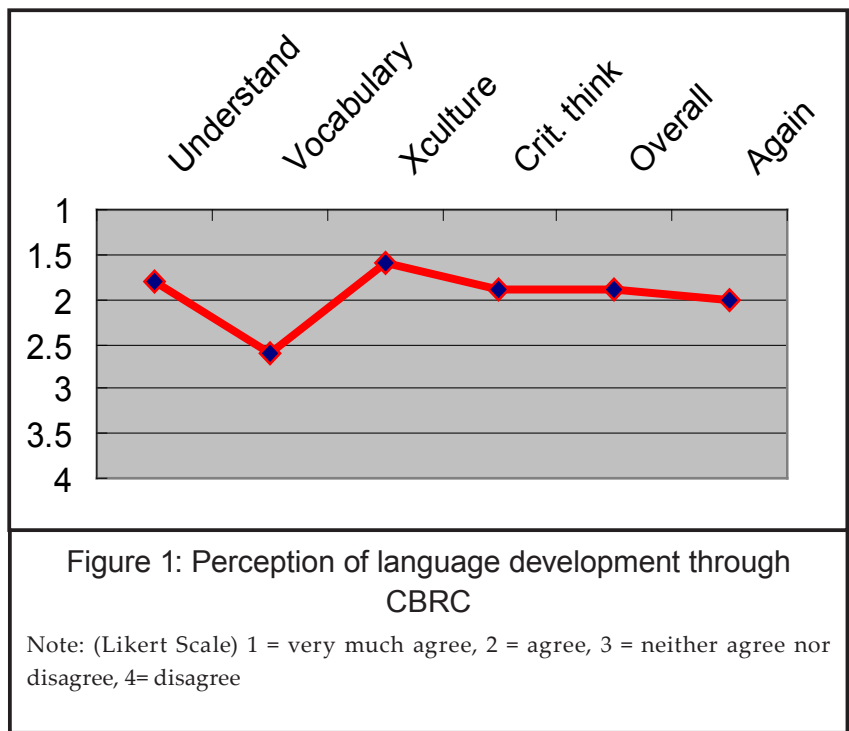
Results: Popularity of roles

Of the four CBRC roles, students reported the most popular as being the Culture Connector and Group Leader. The Culture Connector was ranked top by 40% of students and Group Leader by 32%. By contrast 20% of students showed a preference for the Word Master and just 8% for the Summarizer. Summarizer was also ranked lowest by 57% making it the least popular of the four CBRC roles. As a comparison, Culture Connector was ranked last by just 7% of respondents.

Highlighting the popularity of the Culture Connector one second-year female student stated, 'it was fun to talk and discuss about our own views on cultural differences brought up by the text with other members of the group'. Meanwhile, for Group Leader a first-year student remarked, 'the Group Leader is the most responsible role and I enjoyed raising questions that I wanted to be answered by other students in my group'. The less popular Summarizer role, however, was seen as time consuming and difficult. Typical of students' reactions was a first-year female student who indicated, 'it takes a lot of time to write the summary and depending on the text it was hard to know what to summarize'. It is thus clear that students evaluated the CBRC roles differently but had a preference towards Culture Connector and Group Leader.

Students' perceptions of CBRC

Respondents were asked to evaluate how well they thought CBRC assisted five key language targets. These were (i) understanding a text ('understand'),



(ii) development of vocabulary and collocations ('vocabulary'), (iii) cross cultural awareness ('xculture'), (iv) critical thinking skills ('crit. think'), and (v) overall language development ('overall').

Based on a Likert scale of 1-5 where 1 was 'strong agreement', and 5 'strong disagreement', students perceived CBRC as effective for developing all five targets (Figure 1). Mean scores of better than 2 (i.e. agreement or strong agreement) were returned for 'Xculture', 'understand', 'crit. think' and 'overall'. A weaker but still favourable, score (2.6) was reported for vocabulary development. Respondents also showed a keen interest in using CBRC again for content studies ('Again' =2.0). These results indicate that, with the possible exception of vocabulary development, the majority of respondents believe CBRC are effective for building language skills in content studies.

Overall impressions of CBRC

Students were positive towards CBRC throughout the course. After guidance in week one, students were already enthusiastic at the prospect of learning through a CBRC approach. Typical of this week one standpoint, a male student said, 'It isn't common in Japan to have a role for each person in a language class, so I thought it [CBRC] would be interesting'. Equally the CBRC was seen as a good way to motivate students. One student noted, 'I thought CBRC would be a good idea because we [students] will not be lazy and we can know how important it is to have

responsibilities'. A key reason for students continuing to enjoy the CBRC through the semester appears to have been the structure of the role sheets. As one first-year male student stated, 'because there were roles, I was sure of what to do. Though I can't speak English well, I could be actively involved in the discussion. The roles make you speak with others so I felt it was easy to be interested in the class.'

CBRC were also seen as novel, fun and motivating. In explaining novelty, one female student wrote, 'After using CBRC not only has my resistance to speaking English gone down but I could improve my English in a different way to when I was studying for my entrance exam'. As a

fun, motivating factor a first year male student noted, 'It was fun because you are in groups and that makes you get involved in the lesson because you don't want to let other people down.' CBRC also gave students the impression of being fair. Concerning this, a second-year female student remarked, 'I think they [CBRC] are a great idea because usually students with the best English ability take the leader role so there are fewer opportunities for others to speak. All the roles were different from one another so I could read English from different angles.'

Discussion

Furr (2007) describes fiction-based literature circles as working "magic" (p.18). The current research fully endorses this with respect to CBRC. Moreover it indicates that students perceive such "magic" through a chance to practice leadership skills, collaborate with others, and build overall language skills. Furthermore, and in contrast to the findings of Burrows (2008) and Wollman-Bonilla (1994), it seems Japanese students show little culturally engendered angst or ambivalence towards leadership and independent thinking inherent in the CBRC. Rather, it seems students understand and appreciate taking responsibility for their learning and, via the role sheets, can hold stimulating discussion.

The role sheets distinguish reading circles (including CBRC) from other reading/discussion approaches to L2 studies but the roles do not seem to be equally popular. The 59 subjects of this study

were both motivated and enthusiastic about content studies, and this may have raised the popularity of the Group Leader and Culture Connector roles. Secondly, since the subject matter was cross cultural, it might be expected that students would grade the relevancy of the Culture Connector highly. Had the reading content been of a more specific scientific nature it is unclear whether the Culture Connector would have been as popular as it was in this study.

The lower popularity of the Summarizer and Word Master roles was unexpected. In the case of the Summarizer it seems that students found it both difficult and, in some cases, pointless to summarize ER materials that were already, essentially, summarized. One possible way to alleviate this might be to eliminate the Summarizer role and introduce a Discussion Secretary role to summarize the discussion rather than the reading. By doing so, students would revisit their discussion and this would prepare them better for being the Group Representative. As for the Word Master it seems the pairing of graded materials with students' entrenched habit of wanting to highlight new vocabulary items rather than words in new contexts may have been problematic. This highlights the need for CBRC facilitators to conduct full guidance for each CBRC role and to carefully select extensive reading materials.

Brown (2009) claims that the success of the literature circle approach is the result of the fun and anticipation found in the classroom. As the results described here suggest success is also a function of the students themselves believing the CBRC is effective in raising language proficiency. This belief seems to be very important to the success of CBRC in the class and with further research we may be able to establish if this translates to an actual measureable improvement in proficiency.

Conclusion

With clearly defined tasks at its heart, the content-based reading circle (CBRC) creates a new learning context for L2 learners of content-based materials. This new context is rewarding and allows for greater engagement and involvement in class activities by all students. Not only do students believe the CBRC approach is an effective way to undertake content-based studies that utilize ER materials, but they are enthusiastic to be a part of it. With this literature circle

adaptation, the CBRC represents a new tool to help make studies in English more practical, enjoyable and relevant to students in the classroom and in their lives beyond it.

References

- Blue, G.M., & Harun, M. (2003). Hospitality language as a professional skill. *English for Specific Purposes*, 22, 73-91.
- Brown, H. (2009). Literature circles for critical thinking in global issues classes. *The Language Teacher*, 33(10), 16-17.
- Burrows, C. (2008). Socio-cultural barriers facing TBL in Japan. *The Language Teacher*, 32(8), 15-19.
- Daniels, H. (2002). *Literature Circles: Voice and choice in the student centered classroom*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.
- Furr, M. (2007). Reading Circles: Moving great stories from the periphery of the language classroom to its centre. *The Language Teacher*, 31(5), 15-18.
- Hui-Uen, C., Johnson, R., Hui-Lung, C., & Floyd, O. (1999). English for College Students in Taiwan: A study of perceptions of English needs in a medical context. *English for Specific Purposes*, 18(2), 107-119.
- Jolly, A., & Miles, S. (2009). Extensive Reading: Why isn't everybody doing it yet? *The English Connection*, 13(4), 1-11. Seoul: KOTESOL.
- Kellem, H. (2009). Principles for developing oral fluency in the classroom. *The Language Teacher*, 33(1), 9-11.
- Krashen, S.D. (1983). *The natural Approach: language acquisition in the classroom*. Alemany Press: San Francisco.
- Leslie, D., & Russell, H. (2006). The importance of foreign language skills in the tourism sector. *Tourism Management*, 27, 1397-1407.
- O'Dwyer, F. (2009). Supplementing a task-based curriculum with the European Language Portfolio. *The Language Teacher*, 33(3), 15-20.
- Orr, T. (1998). ESP for Japanese Universities: A guide for intelligent reform. *The Language Teacher* 22, Retrieved from <www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/files/98/nov/orr.html>
- Shang, H. (2006). Content based instruction in the EFL literature curriculum. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 12(11), Retrieved from <itesj.org/Techniques/Shang-CBI.html>.
- Ward, D., Wade, L., & Dowling, A. (2008). Pushing the student centered envelope: a corporate meeting-style approach. *The Language Teacher*, 32(9), 13-15.
- Wienczek, J., & O'Flahaven, J.F. (1994). From teacher-led to peer discussions about literature: Suggestions for making the shift. *Language Arts*, 71, 488-498.
- Willis, D., & Willis, J. (2009). Task-based language teaching: some questions and answers. *The Language Teacher*, 33(3), 3-8.
- Wollman-Bonilla, J. (1994). Why don't they "just speak"? Attempting literature discussion with more and less able readers. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 28, 231-58.



ERF Award Winners



Adolescents & Adults: Elementary

WINNERS

Titanic	Oxford University Press	2010	ISBN 9780194236195
White Fang	Macmillan Readers	2009	ISBN 9780230026735
The Amazon Rain Forest	Penguin Readers	2006*	ISBN 9780582894822

FINALISTS

The Black Night	ILTS & Hueber Verlag	2011	ISBN 9783196429763
A Little Trouble in Dublin	Cambridge Discovery Readers	2011	ISBN 9788483235522
The Time Capsule	Helbling Readers Red Series	2011	ISBN 9783852722832
The Secret Garden	Black Cat Green Apple	2010	ISBN 9788853008435
Number the Stars	Egmont Easy Readers	2010	ISBN 9788723907134
Cries from the Heart: Stories from Around the World	Oxford World Stories	2009	ISBN 9780194790840
One Day	Cambridge English Readers	2009	ISBN 9780521714228
Ned Kelly: a True Story	Oxford Bookworms Library	2006*	ISBN 9780194788809
Within High Fences	Cambridge English Readers	2006*	ISBN 9780521605601

* In 2006, only one award was given in the Adolescent and Adult category.

Adolescent & Adult: Intermediate

WINNERS

Michael Jackson: The Man, The Music, The Mystery	Scholastic ELT Readers	2010	ISBN 9781905775828
Land of My Childhood: Stories from South Asia	Oxford World Stories	2009	ISBN 9780194792356
Billy Elliot	Penguin Readers	2008	ISBN 9781405850001
Rabbit-Proof Fence	Oxford Bookworms Library	2007	ISBN 9780194233101
Dead Cold	Cambridge English Readers	2005	ISBN 9780521693929
A Kiss Before Dying	Macmillan Guided Readers	2004	ISBN 9781405076746

FINALISTS

The Everest Story	Oxford Factfiles	2011	ISBN 9780194236430
Leaving No Footprint	Oxford World Stories	2011	ISBN 9780194791410
Not Above the Law	Cambridge English Readers	2011	ISBN 9780521140966
The Mind Map	Cambridge English Readers	2010	ISBN 9788483235409
Playing with Fire: Stories from the Pacific Rim	Oxford World Stories	2010	ISBN 9780194792844
Dancing with Strangers: Stories from Africa	Oxford World Stories	2009	ISBN 9780194791977
Road to Nowhere	Hueber Lektüren	2010	ISBN 9783193629715
Bookworms Club Gold: Stories for Reading Circles	Oxford University Press	2008	ISBN 9780194720021
River of Dreams	Hueber Lektüren	2008	ISBN 9783191229719
Crossroads to Love	Aschoug/Alinea Teen Readers	2007	ISBN 9788723905130
The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency	Penguin Readers	2007	ISBN 9781405833967
Strong Medicine	Cambridge English Readers	2007	ISBN 9780521693936
Tales of the Supernatural	Cambridge English Readers	2005	ISBN 9780521542760
Bamboo Girl	Macmillan Writer's Prize for Africa	2005	ISBN 9781405060417
Opal Crazy	AMES Victoria	2004	ISBN 9780730656036
Staying Together	Cambridge English Readers	2004	ISBN 9780521798488

The 2011 ERF Language Learner Literature awards will be held at the ER World Congress in Kyoto, September.



Continued on page 17.

A Communities of Practice perspective on foreign language Extensive Reading

Peter Hourdequin

Tokoha Gakuen University



This paper represents a preliminary investigation into the applicability of a communities of practice theoretical perspective to the analysis of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Extensive Reading (ER). Whereas much of the existing research on ER has focused on the individual learner, communities of practice concepts offer an avenue towards considerations of ER practitioners within their larger social contexts.

After discussing the origins and key components of communities of practice theory, I briefly discuss how these concepts have generally been applied within the field of second language acquisition (SLA) studies. Finally, I employ some of the original communities of practice concepts as tools for interpreting my observations of a Japanese university's English ER circle.

It is my hope that by clarifying and demonstrating the usefulness of a communities of practice framework for the analysis of ER language learning communities, I will be able to foreground the theory's valuable key attributes and provide a vehicle for further research.

Communities of Practice concepts

The concepts of communities of practice first began joining the academic lexicon of various fields, including Second Language Acquisition, in the 1990s. Naturally enough, the ideas which came to form this theoretical framework themselves grew out of what might itself be aptly described as a community of practice: a group of theoreticians at the Institute for Research on Learning, which was an off-shoot of the Palo Alto Research Center. Here, with sponsorship from the Xerox corporation, various academics gathered to develop theories about cognition and learning. They influenced each other considerably, and in 1991 two of these researchers—Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger—published a book entitled *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*.

Lave and Wenger's book drew upon case studies and observations about learning as it takes place in

both formal and informal contexts of apprenticeship. Research centered on the process by which knowledge is formed, maintained, and transmitted in communities; and out of this focus came the concept of "communities of practice." In the early formulation, much attention was paid to the process whereby an individual integrates into a community of practitioners—a process which Lave and Wenger labeled "legitimate peripheral participation." Later work by Wenger, however, expanded upon the broader conception of communities of practice, and it is probably Wenger's ideas which have had the most impact in business and various academic disciplines.

Wenger's ideas about communities of practice have undergone considerable evolution over time, but a few key features remain as defining characteristics of the larger concept. These are: 1) mutual engagement, 2) a joint enterprise, and 3) a shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998, p. 73). These three components describe a group of individuals who work or study together on a common activity in an established way, which has evolved and continues to evolve throughout the group's history. And though it is tempting to try to bifurcate the concept of community from that of practice, Wenger makes it clear that the terms are inseparable in his use. The terms come to define one another in that "practice is the source of coherence of a community" (Wenger, 1998, p. 72). In other words, the community is the practice, and the practice is the community. Each is defined by the other in terms of the three elements listed above.

Meaning and language

Though not explicitly formulated as a theoretical framework related to language or language-learning, communities of practice theory does in fact recognize a significant role for a process called reification, which applies as much to the learning of linguistic forms and terminology as it does to learning the performance of non-linguistic tasks. Wenger defines reification as "the process of giving form to our experience by producing objects that congeal this experience into 'thingness'"

(Wenger, 1998, p. 58). Here, objects can mean physical objects such as tools; but it can also refer to cognitive-linguistic concepts, forms, structures, and the like. A communities of practice perspective thus sees all such “objects” as co-constructed by participating practitioners. This process of co-construction is referred to as negotiation of meaning, a concept which has had traction in the study of language-learning ever since the formulation of the interaction hypothesis (Long, 1996), which privileged authentic interaction as a primary means of linguistic form acquisition.

Learning individuals, communities and institutions

As a social theory of learning, the communities of practice framework which Wenger offers makes it clear that learning is not an activity that can occur in isolation. Rather, learning is seen as an inevitable process which takes place in a context—in the semantic interactions which occur among individuals in a community. The community of practice can occur within the context of a formal learning institution, such as a school or university, but such a location is not an essential element, since learning occurs irrespective of such institutional structures. Institutional structures can have facilitating effects on communities of practice. Indeed, it has been workplace communities of practice which have been studied most extensively with the communities of practice framework, as workplaces are environments which depend upon the production, maintenance, and transmission of knowledge for their very survival. In formal learning institutions as well, Lave and Wenger see communities of practice as occurring naturally, given the right conditions. But such learning communities are as likely to form among peer groups—around an activity such as skateboarding—as they are in the classroom.

Communities of Practice theory and SLA

In second language acquisition (SLA) studies, despite the existence of a similar research tradition emanating from the work of Vygotsky (1978), a rather limited group of researchers have explicitly applied a communities of practice perspective to language-learning. Some have used the perspective to explore socialization into discourse communities (see, e.g., Casanave, 1995, Toohey, 1996, Leki, 2001), but most of these studies have been in the realm of English as a

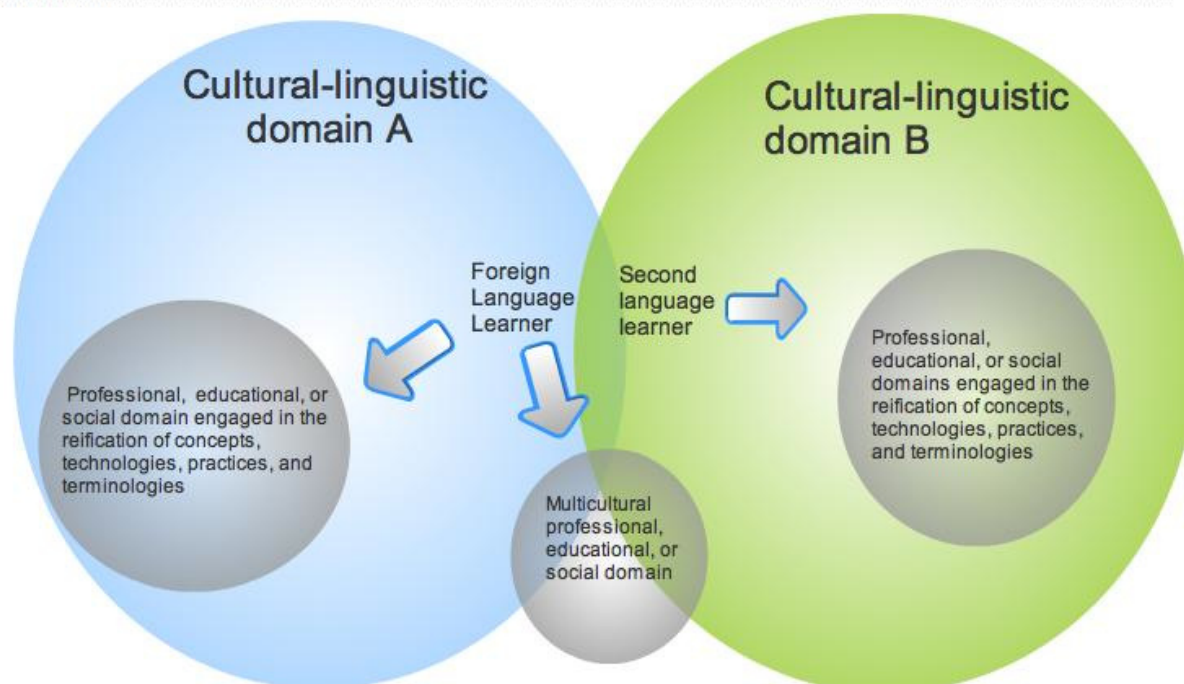
second language rather than EFL, as will be discussed below. The consequence of this is that the discourse communities under consideration can only exhibit the communities of practice socialization process within a context in which cultural-linguistic socialization is already occurring within the target language environment.

Recent research points to the key role that communities of practice play in shaping individual members’ goal orientation, motivation, level of ‘investment,’ feeling of agency, and conception of self (identity)—all factors that have been shown to affect foreign language learning outcomes over time. A communities of practice perspective may serve as a useful framework for encapsulating many of these factors. As Haneda (1997) explains:

Looking at the learning process from the community-of-practice perspective thus brings about two shifts in perspective: a shift away from the notion of learning as the simple acquisition of knowledge in isolation to the idea of learning as a mode of participation in the social world; and a shift away from the traditional focus on individual learners to an emphasis on their shared membership in the community. (p. 3)

Despite its unambiguous use as a theoretical foundation for case study research, the term communities of practice is now more commonly employed as a vague descriptor in a wide range of literature across many fields of study. When communities of practice theory is employed in the study of language acquisition though, it is usually used to look at the socialization of non-native speakers into native-speaker communities—namely ESL environments (see, e.g., Morita, 2004, and Toohey, 1996). Genre-based research too, for example, looks at the acquisition of genre-appropriate discourse by newcomers (see, e.g., Swales, 1990). And whereas ESL students can be seen as unique newcomers (because of their lack of proficiency in the broader linguistic discourse), EFL students are in a different category when they approach their foreign language. Though they are newcomers, they are—in a sense—part-time newcomers. Their forays into their foreign language realm is limited by their environments, and their interaction is necessarily, and by definition inauthentic in the sense that it must be constructed to simulate the foreign. As can be seen in the chart below, foreign language learners are faced with the challenge of legitimate peripheral participation on a part-time basis, without the second language learner’s

The Challenge of Foreign Language Learning Communities of Practice



advantage of extensive exposure to, and interaction with cultural-linguistic forms on a regular basis. But given these obstacles, is there a realm from which foreign language learners might create their own authentic communities of practice?

Applying Communities of Practice concepts to foreign language Extensive Reading

Extensive Reading, as a situated practice, has the potential to serve as an ideal venue for socialization to occur on multiple levels. Whereas Intensive Reading refers to the close examination and dissection of language text for grammatical and semantic understanding, ER refers to the practice of freely reading large expanses of text for pleasure. The aim is to internalize language naturalistically and through repetition to build vocabulary knowledge and increase reading fluency. But another aim is the motivation that comes from enjoyment. When students become absorbed in narratives, they are naturally motivated to continue their explorations in their foreign language, and because authentic literature such as children's books offers cultural as well as linguistic information students gain affinity for the foreign culture as well. Through this process, the target language may thus literally become less foreign, allowing learners to feel some degree of membership and affinity for the

language being studied. Because these goals place a high value on fluency and comprehensibility, the general rule of thumb is for student practitioners of extensive reading to select texts which contain between 2 and 5 % new words.

A Japanese university case study

How then can an ER circle engage key elements of the communities of practice framework? To answer this question, I engaged in two preliminary sessions of participant-observation research of a Japanese university's ER circle. My observations revealed several ways in which the circle's practice fit with the three characteristics which define the communities of practice model discussed above. Here, after outlining the procedure of my case study, I will discuss the ways in which this practice fit into each of these categories.

The present case study is based upon two sessions of participant-observation of a voluntarily formed student ER circle at a medium-sized mid-level Japanese university. Students in this circle meet once or twice a week in a conference room in the university's library. A faculty advisor was present for all sessions, but this person only acted as a facilitator and expert co-participant. The sessions had none of the characteristics of formal Japanese university

English lessons such as taking attendance and lecturing. Students began to gather at the conference room location before the start of the predetermined ninety minute meeting time, and continued to trickle in throughout the first fifteen minutes of the period. During my observations, between seven to ten students took part in the circle's activity while sitting around a conference table. One student—a non-member—sat outside of the circle's conference room doing her own ER, quite literally on the periphery of the circle's activity. The area of the library where students met contained several large shelves full of both leveled and graded readers. Students thus freely chose books from the shelves, and appeared to engage deeply with the books' contents. When a student was not interested in their book, they stopped and chose different books.

My research method revolved around silent participant observation during the 90-minute sessions, and individual interviews with the members in the latter half of one of the sessions. In terms of Wenger's three characteristics of communities of practice, I found the following

- 1) Mutual Engagement- Students engaged in random, intermittent discussions, on a range of topics, including but not limited to ER technique, book contents and recommendations, level difficulty, individual progress, etc.
- 2) A Joint Enterprise- In the ER circle which I observed, the faculty advisor played a minimal role as an expert member. Students themselves engaged in discussion and joint learning by drawing upon each others' tacit knowledge related to book contents and difficulty, ER terminology and technique, and broader language-learning strategies and techniques.
- 3) A Shared Repertoire- In their interactions with each other, and their interactions with me during interviews, students exhibited knowledge of a shared history of the circle. They also displayed a competent understanding of ER terminology such as headwords, words-per-minute, graded vs leveled readers, etc.

Legitimate peripheral participation in the Japanese realm

My study did not investigate which students learned ER techniques through their participation in the ER as opposed to through formal instruction, but it was nonetheless clear that more advanced students were actively engaged in mentoring newcomers. Here it would seem that the Japanese *sempai-kohai*, or mentor-protégé, relationships which developed through participation in the circle had a strong influence

on learning in the ER circle. In a sense which perhaps deserves further investigation, the Japanese Sempai-Kohai system seems to fit nicely with the enculturation process referred to in the conception of legitimate peripheral participation proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991).

Conclusion

This investigation explored the utility of applying a communities of practice theoretical model to the study of a foreign language Extensive Reading circle in a Japanese university context. Communities of practice concepts proved extremely useful in explaining the types of interactions which the participants engaged in. Though more in-depth study is necessary to discover how communities of practice like the one studied emerge within their contexts, the current study might be seen as a starting point in determining the key components of foreign language-learning communities of practice. With this understanding, teachers can strive to apply communities of practice principles to other domains, such as oral communication. Indeed, motivation is a factor which enlivened the participation of the extensive reading community of practice studied here. But this motivation was also seen to have a distributed nature. That is, the students co-motivated each other, enlivening the overall practice of the group members. How to cultivate such an environment in the classroom remains a challenging question, but it is my hope that a preliminary investigation such as this one, using a communities of practice framework, will help open up a useful theoretical perspective for cultivating such learning environments in foreign language-learning settings.

References

- Brown, J. S., Collins, A., & Duguid, P. (1989). Situated cognition and the culture of learning. *Educational Researcher*, 18(1), 32-42. doi:10.3102/0013189X018001032
- Casanave, C.P. (1995). Local interactions: Constructing contexts for composing in a graduate sociology program. In D. Belcher & G. Braine (Eds.), *Academicwriting in a second language: Essays on research and pedagogy* (pp. 83-110). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Casanave, C.P. (1998). Transitions: The balancing act of bilingual academics. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 7, 175-203.
- Haneda, M. (1997). Second language learning in a 'Community of Practice': A case study of adult Japanese learners. *Canadian Modern Language Review/ La Revue*

canadienne des langues vivantes, 54(1), 11-27. doi:10.3138/cmlr.54.1.11

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Long, M. (1996). The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition. In W. Ritchie & T. Bhatia (Eds.), *Handbook of second language acquisition* (pp.413-468). San Diego: Academic Press.

Morita, N. (2004). Negotiating Participation and Identity in Second Language Academic Communities. *TESOL Quarterly*, 38, 573-603.

Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2001). Changing Perspectives on Good Language Learners. *TESOL Quarterly*, 35(2), 307-

322.

Rubin, J. (1975). What the "Good Language Learner" Can Teach Us. *TESOL Quarterly*, 9(1), 41-51.

Swales, J.M.(1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Toohey, K. (1996). Learning English as a second language in kindergarten: A community of practice perspective. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 52(4), 549-576.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



ERF Award Winners



Adolescent & Adult: Advanced

WINNERS

The Best of Times?	Cambridge English Readers	2010	ISBN 9780521735469
Nelson's Dream	Cambridge English Readers	2009	ISBN 9780521716048
Body on the Rocks	Hueber Verlag	2008	ISBN 9783192029714
The Age of Innocence	Oxford Bookworms Library	2007	ISBN 9780194230766
Cold Mountain	Penguin Readers	2005	ISBN 9781405882415
Captain Corelli's Mandolin	Penguin Readers	2004	ISBN 9780582461352

FINALISTS

Dragons' Eggs	Cambridge English Readers	2011	ISBN 9780521179041
A Lion Called Christian	Scholastic ELT Readers	2011	ISBN 9781905775934
Two Worlds	Cambridge Discovery Readers	2011	ISBN 9788483235638
The Kalahari Typing School for Men	Penguin Readers	2010	ISBN 9781408208915
Safe House	Easy Readers	2010	ISBN 9788723906311
The Art Show	Hueber Lektüren	2009	ISBN 9783194429710
How's the Weather?	Cengage Footprint Reading Library	2008	ISBN 9781424011216
Ripley's Game	Penguin Readers	2008	ISBN 9781405850025
Barchester Towers	Oxford Bookworms Library	2007	ISBN 9780194230858
The Accidental Tourist	Oxford Bookworms Library	2005	ISBN 9780194792158
A Tangled Web	Cambridge English Readers	2005	ISBN 9780521536646
Cry Freedom	Oxford Bookworms Library	2004	ISBN 9780194792561
Rebecca	Macmillan Readers	2004	ISBN 9781405077132

See <http://www.erfoundation.org/erf/awards> for more information.

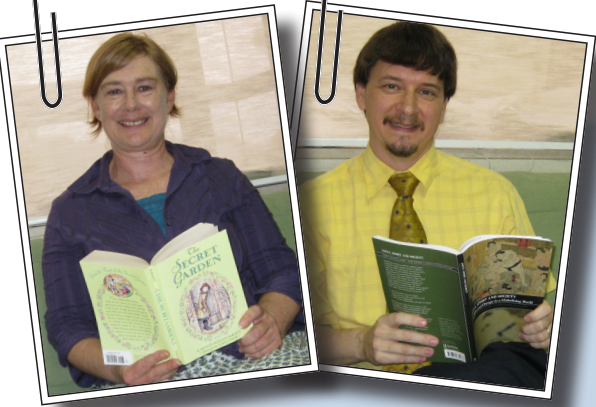


The ER Colloquium at JALT2011

Tokyo, Saturday, 19th November, around tea-time

Featuring: John Bankier, Mark Brierley, Emilia Fujigaki, Sandra Healy, Peter Hourdequin, Richard Lemmer, Scott Miles, Greg Rouault, Rob Waring, Mathew White... and the Great Book Giveaway.

Dealing with mixed abilities, mixed motivations and mixed goals; Listening to students' voices: Making ER effective in EFL learning; The reading preferences and habits of Japanese university students; Does reading in volume correlate to increased reading speed? Moodle Reader Quizzes: How do the students respond? Teasing publications out of reading circle research and teaching; Making graded readers: Issues for authors and users; Nurturing academic integrity in extensive listening and reading.



How We Do It...

...at Nagoya College and Ohka Gakuen University

Thomas Bieri

Leslie Chivers

Our campus runs two distinct Extensive Reading (ER) programs. We would like to introduce both of them to you to show how even on one campus, ER can be organized differently to suit diverse situations and how, even with different approaches, departments can cooperate in conducting ER.

Setting:

Our campus is home to Nagoya College and Ohka Gakuen University. The former consists of three departments: Early Childhood Education, Liberal Arts, and English and Communication (DE&C). The latter consists of a School of Early Childhood Education and a School of Liberal Arts, Department of English (SLADE). Both institutions are for women only. In this article we examine how DE&C and SLADE do ER.

DE and C:

The Nagoya College Department of English and Communication offers a two-year degree and our department also oversees an additional English program (two years of study which can lead to a Bachelor of Art's degree). Most core skills courses have about 10 to 15 students per class. We also offer additional classes and supervision leading to English teaching licenses. Our incoming students have a wide range of abilities, reasons for studying in our department, and motivation levels. Given that for the majority of them their main exposure to English study has been in Japanese schools with a great deal of Japanese used during instruction, we do not prohibit the use of their L1 as a learning resource by either teachers or students. We do however offer several native-taught classes per week and encourage students to use English as much as they can in classes.

SLADE:

The School of Liberal Arts, Department of English at Ohka Gakuen University is a new department, opened in 2009 as a result of a major university restructure. SLADE offers a four-year Bachelor of Arts degree. The three policy struts of the program are English Immersion, Critical Thinking, and Information

Technology. Approximately 80% of core classes are English immersion. It is departmental policy that faculty, staff and students communicate in English at all times (both in and out of class). On entry to the program students receive a MacBook and an iPod to assist their studies and develop ICT competency. SLADE runs a Moodle site for all English Department courses to facilitate blended learning opportunities. Since we are a new, relatively unknown and untested department our student numbers are small, with between four and seven students per core class, depending on the yearly intake.

Materials:

Library:

Our shared campus library currently stocks most or all titles from several graded readers series for foreign or second language learners and also stocks some collections, such as PM Library, Fast Forward, Reading Tree and TreeTops, which are designed for native-speaker children. In addition there is a significant collection of authentic children's and adult literature. There is a variety of both fiction and non-fiction in the collection. These books may be borrowed by any student on campus for up to two weeks.

English Study Center (ESC)

The ESC is a new campus facility opened in conjunction with SLADE. The ESC is stocked with 18 iMacs, some printers, most of the language learner readers available and their accompanying CDs, a wide range of authentic children's, young reader and young adult fiction, non-fiction such as English language magazines, newspapers and National Geographic readers as well as authentic and topical adult material. Additionally, a large, personal library of DVDs was donated to the ESC. The ESC even has a few beanbags to burrow in with an absorbing book. The ESC has a strict "English Only" policy. It is not a lending facility and classes may not be held in the ESC because it was envisioned as an English only self-access space. Students are encouraged to spend time

in the ESC engaged in authentic English use including personal study and use of the reading, listening, and IT resources for their classes, including ER. The ESC is staffed by SLADE faculty and a Japanese part-time worker/librarian for resource-cataloging purposes, who provide assistance to students in their studies and facilitate the English only environment. Management of the ESC is an on-going process, with the committee striving to find ways of encouraging students to read more of the resources collected there.

Thomas at DE and C:

The Department of English and Communication has a small collection of the same types of readers noted above for class use. It includes a combination of fiction and non-fiction titles, multiple copies of some titles, and quite a few titles at very low word count levels. The teachers bring a set of around 20 of these books to class just for the first three weeks or so of the year to help familiarize the students with the types and levels of books available before they check them out from the library.

Leslie at SLADE:

The SLADE ER program was originally designed to progress guide students from authentic children's literature and readers for young adult learners to readers for more advanced learners and eventually suitable, authentic reading materials for adults by the end of the second year. Reading materials (10 -15 books per class) are kept in bags (bought at 3 Coins store) and teachers pick them up from and return them to the ER coordinator's room after lessons. As the quantity of resources expands, a more systematic and automated system of check out and return will need to be developed.

Adopting, expanding, adjusting:

Thomas at DE and C:

After reading about Extensive Reading and its benefits for language learners, I decided to try implementing it in some of my first-year courses. At that point, I checked our library and found a reasonable number of graded readers on the shelves, though most were at least a few years old. Then I decided to ask my students in a low-level writing course to choose and read one reader per week and to write a short summary, as well as to bring the book to class each week. I was also teaching a twice-a-week "homeroom" type course and asked those students to read a book

a week and bring the book to one of the classes each week. In both courses I would put students in pairs or threes, and ask them to briefly tell their partners about what they had read. It was fairly well received by most students. There seemed to be a fairly high completion rate, and I happened to notice several students who continued reading on their own the following year. However, the volume of their reading was not as much as I hoped. I continued for a second year in much the same manner while also ordering additional graded readers, particularly non-fiction titles, for our library and our department. I also added ER to an advanced reading class in our additional program. This class was a group of fairly well-motivated students. For example, one student continued reading a reader every week during the summer vacation on her own and a few students indicated that they had come to enjoy reading through this class.

My next step was to incorporate ER into a curriculum revision I was advocating within our department. I proposed adding a native-taught reading course, an element of which would be ER. I also envisioned that some activities in their oral and writing skills classes would be tied to the reading students did outside class. Surprisingly, implementing ER came to be a contentious point, with one influential faculty member saying ER was too much of an additional burden to add to the already busy two years our students have. After some further explanation and persuasion, I was eventually allowed to include ER in the curriculum.

The 2010 academic year was the first year of implementation of the new classes. Besides the change that all students are now doing ER outside class, one significant change is that students bring at least one reader from the library to reading class on Fridays, and are given about 15 minutes for sustained silent reading in class. They finish reading, and perhaps re-read the same reader, over the weekend. On Mondays, in their Oral class, they are expected to spend a short time telling others about their books in pairs or groups. Then on Wednesdays they either do some writing in class based on the reader or submit a written summary of their book.

Leslie at SLADE:

From the start, ER has been an integral and core component of the curriculum. It is strongly supported by the Dean of the School and the Director of English

Studies, both in underlying educational theory, practical approach and support with purchasing materials. Students take required ER in their first and second years, required combined Extensive Reading and Listening in their third year. In the fourth year Extensive Reading and Listening is an elective. One of the main philosophical underpinnings of the SLADE program is to encourage students to read widely. Extensive Reading is considered crucial in developing not only language abilities but also the background and world knowledge which feed into critical thinking abilities. Students do Timed Repeated Reading, Sustained Silent Reading and a variety of language building activities in class on a regular basis. In theory, students have the freedom to choose reading material of interest at their individual level of reading ability, in class and out. In practice, choice has been more limited for in-class materials as the program grappled with adjusting to students reading interests, needs and levels.

Changes in the program have focused on expanding the variety of in-class reading materials. In the first semester of the program authentic children's picture books written by Mem Fox, Dr. Seuss, and Eric Carle along with Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes were purchased for reading in class. While the children's books were reasonably popular with more competent readers, they didn't provide a range of stories that appealed to all students and all levels. Some of the children's picture books were inaccessible to beginning readers. These students wanted to understand a story line, but nonsensical vocabulary (Dr. Seuss) and the archaic, low frequency language of verse (Mother Goose) frustrated lower level readers and left them dissatisfied with reading. In 2010, these materials were supplemented with the Oxford Story Tree series for beginning readers, which if limited in level, proved more popular with struggling readers for their comprehensibility and contemporaneity. In the second semester we focused on Penguin readers because these were the easiest readers for our students, graphic novels (biographies) of famous American women in history, the Cam Jansen (young readers) series and a selection of the easier non-fiction Footprint Reading Library Series. In general, this variety of reading material proved satisfactory in regards to student interests and level. The four collections also had the advantage of a unifying "theme", around which we could more easily design

classroom language activities.

The second-year ER class materials focused on genres—Romance, 18th and 19th Century Age of Sail (e.g. Treasure Island, and 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea) and Horror/Mystery. In consultation with class teachers, I pre-selected readers, some of which (e.g. Romance) proved more popular than others. For the second semester, multiple copies of one reader for each class were added. This was because some teachers indicated that by having individual students always doing SSR with different titles, we were neglecting effective strategies for sharing common reading experiences and building a strong, reading community. Additionally, students were given the option of doing up to 50% of their out-of-class reading during the summer vacation.

Student assessment:

Thomas at DE and C:

When I was doing ER individually, there was no formal grading system for it. I simply folded ER into the general preparation and participation elements and I assessed students based on their explanations and journals. To some extent this was a decision based on my philosophy regarding ER, seeing it as something students should be encouraged to do and rewarded for, and trying to avoid making it seem an onerous task they might fail at. Assessment in the new curriculum is across three courses. During the reading class students fill in a reading log, which the teacher checks and keeps each week, and they are given points for each reader completed, basically on a trust system. In the Oral class, students discuss their readers with each other for a small part of the general participation element. In the writing class they are given points for completing their summaries. However, one issue I found myself concerned with late in this year is that some students may have developed a system of trading and copying summaries.

Leslie at SLADE:

Typical of most practical skills classes in Japan, SLADE students were required to do 1.5 hours of homework per week per class. On this basis students were told to spend 1.5 hours per week (22 hours per semester) in out-of-class reading for ER. However, in feedback it became apparent that all but a very few students struggled to reach this goal. A number of factors, such as lack of available time, weak autonomous

study planning abilities, and the time-consuming activity of recording everything in their Extensive Reading Log (ERL), contributed to this. Additionally, a perception that reading on campus in the ESC was their only option exacerbated this problem. SLADE students, due to being based in the building housing the ESC, may have perceived they could only do their out-of-class reading in the ESC. They didn't make appropriate use of the campus library. I adjusted to this by orienting SLADE students to the limited ER resources in the library, which in turn unfortunately reduced availability of those resources for the DE&C students. A second solution involved finding web reading resources such as digitized children's books, but students were reluctant to use them perhaps due to the inconvenience and time it takes to start their Macs, navigate there and find a book they like. They reported they preferred 'real' books.

Students are required to keep a record of both in and out-of-class reading in their ERL—a Numbers spreadsheet (similar to MS Excel) on their MacBooks. Students submit their logs to their teachers and the ER coordinator via email attachment three times per semester. This is an important tool of assessment in the program, with out-of-class reading valued at 30% and the details of the ERL (correctly filled out) valued at 20% of the overall grade. From the second year of the program the reading target was reduced from 22 to 10 hours per semester. The decision to reduce the out-of-class reading target was made in part because students simply didn't have the time, especially in the first semester. It became apparent that the digital ERL required more direct and persistent instruction than was originally envisaged and was time-intensive for students to fill out and send, compared with traditional paper formats. This problem was compounded by the fact that some part-time teachers are unfamiliar with Mac technology and needed to receive the ERL in MS Excel format on their home computers. Additionally, the ER classrooms do not have an ideal IT set-up to demonstrate and instruct how the ERL is to be managed. The rooms don't have display screens and digital forms have to be drawn on the boards. The convergence of these issues resulted in some students simply neglecting the ERL almost entirely for several weeks. Another problem, perhaps mirroring DE&C's problem with students trading summaries, was encountered in the ERLs. One student simply inserted a whole page of a friend's log into her

own.

We also encountered a lack of linguistic range in individual students' personal reactions to books. This may have been, to some degree, an artifact of the Numbers software, which automatically suggests sentence completion in pop-ups (including the attendant spelling errors), based on earlier entries. We quickly realized we needed to emphasize to students that comment entries for each book had to be original and different, in order to ensure there was some genuine reading and responding happening. We introduced activities in class such as writing one-sentence summaries and helping students identify and write about the Complication and Resolution stages of narratives.

Funding and inter-departmental cooperation:

Our school offers several ways to purchase books. Individually, we have research funds which we can choose to use partially on books. Also, each faculty member has a library budget. We can also request library purchases at the department level, though each department has to decide what to request and then propose it to the library committee.

In addition, each department can make their own purchases of various materials within their annual budgets. Books for use in class are generally funded through this budget or instructors' individual research funds. Over the last three years the DE&C has used the bulk of its small materials budget for ER materials to use in classes. SLADE has directed approximately 30,000 yen per year for the same purpose. However, since departmental budget submissions for materials need to be made well in advance of knowledge of students' actual reading levels and interests, continual supplements and adjustments have been necessary. Both departments have tried to fill the gaps by buying new titles and multiple copies of titles from teachers' personal research allowances.

When our respective departments simultaneously implemented ER, each department requested rather large purchases with somewhat different foci. Luckily, the other departments on campus were very cooperative and we were able to use the majority of the campus library budget on ER materials that year. Our two departments negotiated a final list of materials within the budget we were allowed. Also, many faculty members from each department contributed portions of their directed budget to a list

of materials we hadn't been able to purchase through the general budget.

This year the two of us cooperated in advance of departmental meetings to arrive at complementary requests, which saw a reduction in the strain on the campus library ER resources mentioned above. This cooperation has led to a wider variety in types and levels of reading and better balance of fiction and non-fiction materials. We feel that it stands as an example that even with different philosophies and goals, with advance planning and communication, departments can help each other.

Besides individually cooperating on finding and funding materials, we make time to talk to each other about what we are doing in our respective programs and share ideas, give each other encouragement, and we intend to cooperate in some action research in the future. We have learned that having another committed colleague is a great help in starting, improving and maintaining enthusiasm for an ER program.

Future directions:

Thomas at DE and C:

In the 2011 academic year, DE&C will be making some adjustments as well as expanding ER to second year courses. One major change, partially inspired by a presentation by Professor Nagasaki Masahiro at the 2010 JALT National Conference, is to try to run the reading courses as a hybrid of the Reading Workshop method. We will spend about half of the 90-minute class on self-selected reading by the students, with teachers offering support. Another issue is to encourage reading of more titles each semester. This will require having more materials in class as students will be expected to read a few books in one class. Our plan to accomplish this is two-fold. One, we will increase our stock of very low-level readers for use in the first few weeks. Two, we will require students to bring three readers every week after that and share them with each other in class. Ideally, I would like to have separate courses for Intensive and Extensive Reading in the DE&C curriculum, but several factors, most significantly the number of classes our students need to complete in a short time span of study, make this impractical.

Leslie at SLADE:

Similar to DE&C, in 2011 SLADE plans to expand the choice of in-class reading materials through the Department budget and personal directed budget. If SLADE numbers increase in the future, the library resources may again come under pressure, so one concern is for SLADE and DE&C to maintain cooperation on the use of those resources. Ways also need to be explored which encourage the students to stay on campus and read, using the reading resources in the ESC, which remains underutilized, especially now that SLADE students go the campus library so they can take books home.

Another major goal is to find the balance between reading time and helping students more quickly master the use the ERL in the first semester of first year. Making the ERL task more manageable for part-time teachers to teach is also a priority. Additionally, since a major portion of the assessment in the ER program is devoted to an IT goal (the ERL spreadsheet) it would be ideal to explore ways in which ER could be more integrated with other courses in the program, and so support it. One way of doing this is to examine how vocabulary and content learned in Extensive Reading might be recycled in Intensive Reading or other courses. Another idea is to look at ways writing, of e.g. book reviews, might be integrated with Academic Writing, beyond writing synopses or summaries, as we do now.

Conclusion:

Cooperating on ER across departments with differing settings, approaches and philosophies is both achievable and rewarding. The varying difficulties and challenges we have encountered in starting, maintaining, and adjusting our programs have proven a fertile field for brainstorming solutions and improvements, particularly in the area of expanding material resources. Equally important, coming from different perspectives and experiences within our respective departments, we have been able to exchange knowledge about what works and what isn't working yet, come up with ideas for new ways of doing things, and sustain our enthusiasm to make our programs more effective.

Innovations in ER

Setting the bar high with a new series



Daniel Stewart

The way it has been

There are a lot of different series of graded readers created by different publishers, but they probably have more similarities than differences. If someone who knew nothing about teaching English asked you what a graded reading series is, your explanation would probably include these basic points:

- 📖 a collection of books divided into five or six levels
- 📖 first level books are short and easy while subsequent levels have longer, more difficult books
- 📖 a series is either all fiction or all non-fiction
- 📖 books can be bought with or without accompanying CDs

What's new?

The Page Turners series was created by Rob Waring, and he seems to have used all his experience to deal with some gaps in existing series. I see three main innovations:

Number of levels

The series consists of 12 levels instead of the usual five or six levels. The easiest books have 200 headwords while the most difficult have 2,600.

Length

The stories are quite long. Page Turner level one books only have 200 headwords yet are at least 3,000 words long. Compare that to Penguin Starters, which also have only 200 headwords yet are only about 900 words long.

Audio

Usually audio versions of graded readers come on CD and are an optional purchase. They are expensive, so teachers have to decide whether to buy ten books or five books with CDs. For this series the audio can be downloaded for free from the publisher's website.

What is good about it?

The first thing you notice when reading these books is the high quality of the writing. Writing an interesting

story with only 200 headwords is a difficult art yet the writers of the level one books have succeeded admirably. Compare a level one book from this series to any of the 200- or 250-headword level books from other series and you will be suitably impressed. I have only read the level one and two books in this series so far because that is what my students are reading at this time of year. It is interesting to note some of the best graded reader authors have written books for this series. People who have read a lot of graded readers will recognize the names Sue Leather, Richard MacAndrew and Margaret Johnson.

The next thing you will notice is that the low-level stories are long. The word count is conveniently located on the back cover. Level one books are 3,000 – 4,000 words long so three to four times the length of a 200-headword Penguin Easystart or twice as long as a 250-headword Oxford Starter. The extra length of the stories allows the author to add more depth to the story and is more efficient for the reader. They get to read a lot about the characters they have come to know. It seems a shame to me that in some series the author works so hard to create an interesting character and then the story just ends. I believe students would like to know more about the characters and some evidence of this is the way students want to read all the stories about Penguin's mouse detective Marcel, or Macmillan's detective in LA—Lenny Samuel. Interestingly the higher level stories are similar in length to books of the same difficulty level in other series.

Having twelve levels is a great innovation as it means the steps between levels are much smaller. Table 1 shows the number of word families at each level. The smaller steps between levels make it easier for students to move up a level. In my experience it is the students who move up levels often who improve more than students who read an equal amount of words, but stay at the same level.

The audio files are excellent quality and

Level	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Headwords	200	300	400	550	700	900	1,100	1,300	1,600	1,900	2,200	2,600

Table 1. Headwords at each Page Turner level.

organized on the website by chapters. So it is easy for a student to just listen to the chapter they want. Having the recordings online means you do not have to worry about students losing an audio CD. I hope that this will become the norm in the industry. It can only help sell readers, as students will want to follow along with the words in the text.

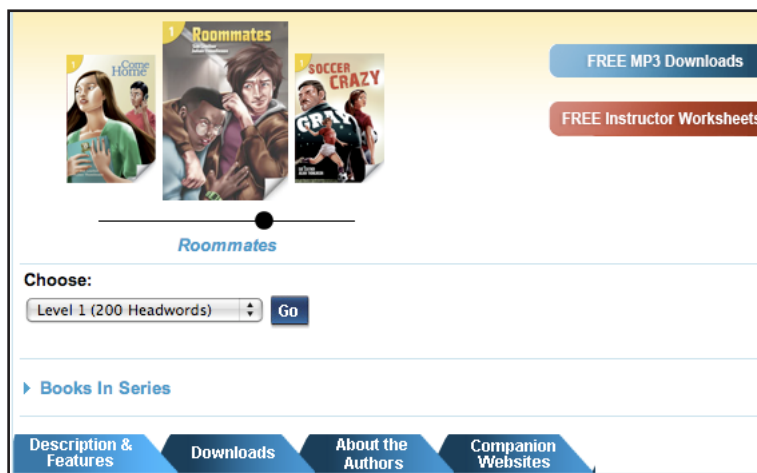
Finally, there is a non-fiction section in the back of each of these fiction stories. The non-fiction element is based on the same themes as the story. For example in the detective story *Bad Blood* about a Chinese-American detective in San Francisco there is a background reading section on private investigators, another reading on San Francisco and finally a section on Chinese families including Bruce Lee's family. A few fiction series such as the Scholastic ELT Readers have contained a non-fiction section in the past, so putting a non-fiction section in Page Turners does not count as an innovation, but it is good to see this series recognizes the importance of both fiction and non-fiction.

Weaknesses

The length of the low-level books could be quite daunting for someone who is picking up their first graded reader ever. This would not be an issue in a school that lends books from several publishers. Students could start with easy short books such as the 200-headword Penguin Easystarts and then move on to the longer 200-headword level one Page Turners before moving on to another series such as the 250-headword Oxford Starters.

Adding books with 12 levels to my current system was a challenge. As is often the case, the programme I set up at my school is based on the eight-level EPER system. I bought the list of graded readers from them and used the list to arrange books on the scale. Ideally EPER will add this series to their lists if they have not done so by the time you read this. The only real problem I found with this series is the website for audio downloads. The website is confusing at first, but easy enough once you get used to it. Here is how to access the audio files:

- ☐ Go to the website printed on the back of each reader: elt.heinle.com/pageturners
- ☐ Note you do not click on the Downloads tab at the bottom. Instead use the drop down menu under the word "Choose" and the "Go" button to pick the level you



are interested in.

- ☐ All the books for that level will be displayed in a carousel.
- ☐ Slide the black ball to the left or right to pick the book you want at that level.
- ☐ Click on the title
- ☐ The Free Mp3 Downloads button will appear on the right.

Student reaction

Whenever I add new books to the ER programme at my school, I always show them to the students before putting them on the book carts. I divide the new books among all classes so later classes have the chance to borrow new books, too. I introduced the Page Turners books to seven classes of third-year junior high school boys. In the first class I introduced them as easy books that are longer, so perfect for students who are about ready to make the jump from level one to level two. No one in that class borrowed any of the Page Turners. In the next class and the subsequent ones I just said I had some new level one and level two books and read out the titles. In those classes all of the Page Turners available were signed out. So the students were definitely interested in them, provided I did not mention they were long.

Conclusion

This series is a welcome addition to the books available in Japan. The quality of the writing sets the bar high for any series introduced in the future. It is to be hoped that other publishers will take chances with new innovations such as having long stories at the lower levels. Finally, it would be wonderful if other publishers put their audio online for free as well. It is difficult to find the audio on the website, but with the directions above that should be easy enough. All in all, this series is worth checking out.

Recent ER research

Compiled by Nozomu Sonda

Byun, Ji-Hyun. (2010). *Korean EFL teachers' perspectives about their participation in an Extensive Reading program*. (Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin).

<http://gradworks.umi.com/34/29/3429010.html>

The purpose of this research was to explore the overall perceptions of EFL teachers toward the extensive reading approach as they experienced the approach first hand. More particularly, EFL teachers' perspectives on the applicability issues of extensive reading for secondary level curriculum in Korea were captured. Also, their personal experience with the approach, including the effect of extensive reading on their foreign language anxiety, was investigated.

A total of fourteen teachers in a professional development program participated in the study. They were situated in a print-affluent classroom replete with approximately 1000 books including graded readers, young adult books, some magazines, best sellers and steady seller books. In the reading program, the teachers experienced sustained silent reading, and participated in classroom discussion and activities related to extensive reading. Also, these teachers were strongly encouraged to do outside reading.

Data were collected from multiple sources to enhance the credibility of the study, that is, classroom observation including field notes and audio recordings, learner diaries, and interviews. Three surveys were also administered--the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale, The Teacher Foreign Language Anxiety Scale, and the Affective Questionnaire to Extensive Reading.

The findings from the study showed that although the teachers were somewhat resistant to the idea of reading English-language books extensively prior to their participation, they became proponents of the approach once they had the experience of pleasure reading. They also expressed a fondness for graded readers and literature for young adults because of the simplified language and appealing themes that characterize such reading materials, and were willing to introduce them to students in secondary schools. Teachers also recognized the linguistic

benefits of extensive reading including vocabulary expansion, positive reading attitude, and a sense of accomplishment from reading extensively. In terms of the applicability issue, however, the participating teachers recommended introducing the approach gradually rather than implementing it immediately, mainly because of the test-emphasized classroom culture of the secondary level curriculum in Korea. In a similar vein, teachers also addressed problematic factors that would be considered an obstacle to bringing the approach to the secondary curriculum. Those obstacles were problems related to curriculum and evaluation, motivating reluctant and struggling students, and teachers' conflicted role in the extensive reading class. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, they proposed a gradual approach and the use of extra-curricular activities was mentioned as a possible first step to take. Regarding the effect of extensive reading on foreign language anxiety, the data from the scale and from interviews indicated that participating teachers were not highly anxious even prior to the program.

Cher, Sylvia, (2011). *Beginner students and extensive reading. Research Notes 44(7), 34–39*
http://www.cambridgeesol.org/rs_notes/offprints/pdfs/RN44p34-39.pdf

de Burgh-Hirabe, Ryoko. (2011). *Extensive Reading and L2 reading motivation in Japanese as a foreign language: A case study of New Zealand high school students*. (PhD dissertation, University of Otago).
<http://hdl.handle.net/10523/1711>

Numerous studies on extensive reading have demonstrated its positive effects on language development. However, qualitative studies that reveal L2 learners' perceptions of extensive reading are limited. Learners' motivation to read extensively, and motivational change in particular, is under-researched. Moreover, previous extensive reading research examines a narrow range of contexts, subjects, target languages and proficiency levels (e.g., predominantly

VOLUME 4 NO. 1

studies with ESL/EFL learners) (Waring, 2001). This study investigates how learners of Japanese as a Foreign Language (JFL) perceive extensive reading and explores change in their motivation to read extensively, as well as the influences behind any motivational change. It also looks at what separates participants who sustain motivation from those who do not. Nine JFL learners in two New Zealand high schools participated in the extensive reading project in which they read as many graded readers or children's books as they could outside class over five to seven months. The data from interviews and journal entries were analysed inductively to build up a theory and discover important issues among the participants. Think-alouds, a motivational questionnaire, and classroom observations corroborated the data. Case studies were also presented to show the individual's perception and motivational change in depth. Overall, the findings reveal that the participants perceived extensive reading positively. They reported a range of benefits (beliefs in a possible effect) and improvements (perception of an actual effect). They viewed graded readers as more suitable than children's books, and perceived that extensive reading was conducive to the end-of-year national examinations. However, individual differences were observed. Some participants perceived graded readers less positively than others did. Views on whether extensive reading should be voluntary or compulsory were divided. The findings indicate that participants' motivation to read extensively was dynamic and complex. They experienced ups and downs in their motivation during the project. Numerous influences including contextual influences contributed to their motivational changes. The interplay of these influences led to change in motivation within an individual over time and individual differences. Also, negative influences were more powerful than positive influences. Several implications are drawn from the findings. I maintain that voluntary extensive reading is desirable, but that reading should also be done in class in contexts and settings similar to this study. Graded readers with a wide range of topics and levels and glossaries need to be available to learners. Importantly, the findings indicate that context, such as the New Zealand testing system, had a great influence on the participants' perceptions and their motivation to read extensively. Therefore, it is argued that extensive reading needs to be considered from the sociocognitive perspective.

Existing models of L2 motivation and L2 reading motivation, and a widely accepted motivation construct, were unable to fully capture the extensive reading motivation displayed in this study. Therefore, a dynamic model of motivation to read extensively in L2 was proposed.

Fenton-Smith, Ben. (2011).

A debate on the desired effects of output activities for Extensive Reading. In B. Tomlinson & H. Masuhara (Eds.), *Research for Materials Development for Language Teaching*. (pp. 50-61). London: Continuum.



Greenberg, Daphne; Wise, Justin C.; Morris, Robin; Fredrick, Laura D.; Rodrigo, Victoria; Nanda, Alice O.; Pae, Hye K. (2011).

A randomized control study of instructional approaches for struggling adult readers. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 4(2), 101-117

This study measured the effectiveness of various instructional approaches on the reading outcomes of 198 adults who read single words at the 3.0 through 5.9 grade equivalency levels. The students were randomly assigned to one of the following interventions: Decoding and Fluency; Decoding, Comprehension, and Fluency; Decoding, Comprehension, Fluency, and Extensive Reading; Extensive Reading; and a Control/Comparison approach. The Control/Comparison approach employed a curriculum common to community-based adult literacy programs, and the Extensive Reading approach focused on wide exposure to literature. The Fluency component was a guided repeated oral reading approach, and the Decoding/Comprehension components were SRA/

McGraw-Hill Direct Instruction Corrective Reading Programs. Results indicated continued weaknesses in and poor integration of participants' skills. Although students made significant gains independent of reading instruction group, all improvements were associated with small effect sizes. When reading instruction group was considered, only one significant finding was detected, with the Comparison/Control group, the Decoding and Fluency group, and the Decoding, Comprehension, Extensive Reading, and Fluency group showing stronger word attack outcomes than the Extensive Reading group.

He, Wei-xuan. (2011).

Implications of language input and output in English Extensive Reading. *Journal of Huaihai Institute of Technology (Social Science Edition)*, 2011(3)

http://en.cnki.com.cn/Article_en/CJFDTOTAL-HHGX201103028.htm

Based on Krashen's "input hypothesis" and Swain's "output hypothesis", this paper holds that language input and output are closely related. Thereby, "comprehensible input" and "comprehensible output" should be combined in the teaching of Extensive Reading in order to help English learners to achieve all-round development of English listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating skills.

Karlin, Omar; Romanko, Rick. (2010).

Examining multiple variables within a single ER setting. *Reading Matrix: An International Online Journal*, 10(2), 181-204

This study examined the gains in student affect, vocabulary, and reading fluency for 110 university students in an extensive reading program in Japan. It was important to measure all of these dimensions within a single study and teaching methodology, so gains could be appropriately compared against each other. The adopted teaching methodology was a communicative one which stressed a number of in-class activities with out-of-class reading, with reading speed, vocabulary, and comprehension measured over the course of a semester, and paired sample t-tests were conducted using pre- and post-test scores on six variables. Students were also clustered in higher-level and lower-level groups to determine if they differed in their learning rates. Results indicated that affect increased substantially, while fluency increased

minimally, and vocabulary did not increase at all. Paired sample t-tests indicated that the lower-level students gained more in terms of fluency than the higher level students. (Contains 4 figures and 8 tables.)

Lin, Li-Duan. (2011).

The implementation of task-based language teaching in Extensive Reading course. *Journal of Hubei Radio & Television University*, 2011(1)

http://en.cnki.com.cn/Article_en/CJFDTOTAL-HGDB201101071.htm

A case study was set in Wuyi University to explore the necessity and feasibility in applying Task-based Language Teaching in Extensive Reading course through the questionnaire survey, testing, interviews, statistics and other methods. A few suggestions were put forward for implementation of Task-based teaching method.

Lin, Chih-Cheng. (2010).

"E-book flood" for changing EFL learners' reading attitudes. *US-China Education Review*, 7(11), 36-43

This paper was intended to investigate the effects of using e-books (or texts with multimedia support) in an ERP (extensive reading program) on EFL (English as a foreign language) learners' attitudes toward reading in English. In a junior high school in northern Taiwan, 109 students from 3 intact classes were recruited in the 10-week ERP of e-books. Each class was introduced to a list of 140 selected e-books for the reading program; each student was then encouraged to read e-books after school, with the target of reading 4 e-books every week. The degree of changes in reading attitudes was assessed by using the reading attitudes scale (Stokmans, 1999) before and after the e-book ERP. In addition, the teacher's class notes of the students' reading behaviors and reactions as well as their spontaneous oral or written feedback were analyzed to be triangulated with the quantitative data. The results showed that the e-books had positive effects on the students' attitudinal changes in all dimensions of reading attitudes, namely, utility, development, enjoyment and escape, as well as in all the cognitive, affective and conative components. The results also showed that the features of the e-books, especially oral reading, highlighting, animations and music/sound effects,

were considered important to change their attitudes. The implementation of interaction and learner control in the e-books guaranteed positive attitudinal changes as well. (Contains 1 table.) [This paper was presented in the 17th International Conference on Computers in Education (ICCE), December 2, 2009, in Hong Kong and included in the proceedings (pp. 769-776).]

Papadimitriou Aidnlis, Dimitra. (2011). The impact of an extensive reading programme on vocabulary development and motivation. *Research Notes*, 44, 39-47
http://www.cambridgeesol.org/rs_notes/offprints/pdfs/RN44p39-47.pdf

Renandya, Willy A.; Farrell, Thomas S. C. (Jan 2011).

"Teacher, the tape is too fast!" Extensive Listening in ELT. *ELT Journal*, 65(1), 52-59

For many years, research effort has been devoted to understanding the nature of listening strategies and how listening strategies used by good listeners can be taught to so-called ineffective listeners. As a result of this line of research, strategy training activities have now become a standard feature of most modern listening coursebooks. However, in this article, we maintain that given the lack of evidence of success with this approach to teaching lower proficiency EFL learners and the fact that strategy training places a heavy burden on teachers, an extensive listening approach in the same vein as an extensive reading approach should be adopted.

Takase, Atsuko. (2011). Gender Differences in Extensive Reading. *Kinki University English Journal* 7, 55-72

The purpose of this study is to investigate gender differences in student performance in extensive reading (ER). A total of 40 students, 20 males and 20 females, participated in ER over an academic year. They were not provided with time for in-class Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) due to the tight class schedule, but were required to read English books extensively outside of class. The Edinburgh Project on Extensive Reading (EPER) test was administered at the beginning of the course as a pretest, and after approximately 10 months of ER as a posttest. Students' self-report of reading records were also examined and compared between different gender groups in terms

of their reading amount and materials. The data show that female students read an abundance of easy books during the first semester, whereas male students chose more advanced books from the beginning, resulting in the female students' significant gains and male students' insignificant gains on the post test.

Tsai, Pei-Chun. (2011). *An empirical investigation into the Extensive Reading experience of EFL junior high school students*. (Master's thesis, National Yunlin University of Science and Technology).

http://ethesys.yuntech.edu.tw/ETD-db/ETD-search/view_etd?URN=etd-0126111-115019

The purpose of the research was to explore EFL junior high school students' extensive reading experience, to investigate their problems and reading difficulties which they encountered, to probe into their benefits in English in the extensive reading program. The participants were thirty-four ninth graders in a junior high school. The research was conducted from August to November for about four months. Mostly, the students read the English books out of the class in their leisure time. The research kept track of and monitored the students' reading with Book Report. The reading contest, book sharing and advertisement activities were utilized to encourage and cultivated the students' reading habits. The findings manifest the relatively serious problems the students encountered are the insufficient time for reading, the incapability of summarizing the complicated story structure and the discrepancy between a book's introduction and the content itself. The students have made the considerable improvement in vocabulary, sentence patterns, reading comprehension and reading fluency. Based on these findings, some pedagogical implications are proposed to facilitate the further implementation of the extensive reading program in the EFL context.

New graded readers releases

Bjorn Fuisting

Congratulations! As a member of the JALT ER SIG you are one of the first in Japan to get a book from the new Popcorn series. The series, brought to Japan by R.I.C. Publications, is another welcome step to provide lower level books with lesser jumps in levels. Level 1 is at 200 words, level 2 at 250 and level 3 at 300 headwords. The 15 available titles are all based on movies or TV series and being in full colour should make them interesting to read for our less motivated students. Enjoy!

And there are plenty more new releases, Usborne English's First Reading and Young Reading (new to Japan), more Page Turners (see *Innovations* in this issue for more details), 10 new interesting titles in Oxford's Read & Discovery series, more packs from Building Blocks (see *ERJ* 3.3) as well as additions to almost all graded reader series. I found several new favourites among them and hope you do too.

R.I.C. Publications

POPCORN ELT READERS (CD PACKS AVAILABLE)

Book Name	ISBN	Level	Words	Headwords
Shrek 1	9781906861230	Level 1	546	200
Madagascar 1	9781906861315	Level 1	560	200
Ice Age 1	9781906861391	Level 1	531	200
Mr.Bean: Royal Bean	9781906861452	Level 1	486	200
Shrek 2	9781906861254	Level 2	889	250
Madagascar 2: Escape to Africa	9781906861339	Level 2	866	250
Kung Fu Panda	9781906861353	Level 2	842	250
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	9781906861414	Level 2	829	250
Mr.Bean: Toothache	9781906861476	Level 2	590	250
Shrek 3	9781906861278	Level 3	1,116	300
Shrek Forever After	9781906861292	Level 3	1,068	300
Ice Age 3: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	9781906861438	Level 3	1,111	300
Nanny McPhee&the Big Bang	9781906861513	Level 3	1,149	300
Mr.Bean: The Palace of Bean	9781906861490	Level 3	889	300
Kung Fu Panda: The Kaboom of Doom	9781906861377	Level 3	tba	300

SCHOLASTIC ELT READERS

Little Women	9781905775941	Level 1	7,242	600
Pele	9781905775989	Level 1	3,845	600
Bandslam	9781905775965	Level 2	7,259	1000
An Education	9781906861001	Level 4	14,553	2000
Nowhere Boy	9781906861025	Level 4	13,933	2000

Macmillan Lanugage House

MACMILLAN READERS

The Call of the Wild	9780230408401	Pre-Int.	15867	1400
Gandhi	9780230408388	Pre-Int.	16881	1400
Persuasion	9780230735125	Pre-Int.	17173	1400
Down Second Avenue	9780230408678	Intermediate	21124	1600
Much Ado About Nothing	9780230408593	Intermediate	18051	1600
The Importance of Being Earnest	9780230408449	Upper-Int.	18047	2200

Pearson Longman

PENGUIN READERS

Book Name	ISBN	Level	Words	Headwords
San Francisco Story	9781408231746	ES	842	200
William Tell	9781408231555	1	3730	300
Barack Obama	9781408231654	2	6875	600
Fox (Volpone)	9781408231579	2	8443	600
Leaving Microsoft to Change the World	9781408231715	3	14017	1200
Noughts and Crosses	9781408231623	3	14101	1200
Stories of Survival	9781408221068	3	9778	1200
Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side	9781408231685	4	20135	1,700
Bourne Supremacy	9781408231708	5	27914	2300
Murder is Announced	9781408221129	5	27262	2300
King of Torts	9781408221143	6	29872	3000
Northanger Abbey	9781408221105	6	32059	3000

PENGUIN ACTIVE READING

The Slave Boy of Pompeii	9781408261248	ES	1,311	200
The Olympic Promise	9781408261330	L1	2,750	300
The Golden Seal	9781408261187	L1	4,691	300
The Last Juror	9781408261194	L2	9,098	600
The Scarlet Pimpernel	9781408261347	L2	9,451	600
And Then There Were None	9781408261200	L3	18,683	1200
Carmilla	9781408261224	L3	16,603	1200
The Curious Case of Benjamin Button and Other Stories	9781408261217	L3	17,733	1200
How Green Was My Valley	9781408261231	L4	28,342	1700

MPI

BUILDING BLOCKS LIBRARY (PACKS OF 6 WITH CD)

Trouble for Tom	9784896433340	7	816	400
Double Take		7	949	400
Stranger Danger		7	1096	400
The Visit		7	1369	400
Chores Are Stupid!		7	1350	400
Storm Warning!		7	1393	400

Extreme Fire Danger	9784896433357	8	2332	500
Nobody Understands Me!		8	2508	500
Rich Girls		8	2211	500
Mysterious Alex		8	2218	500
Good Sports		8	2162	500
Outback Adventure		8	2227	500

That's Life!	9784896433364	9	3315	700
Out of Control		9	3161	700
Easy Come, Easy Go		9	3028	700
Kat's Decision		9	3223	700
White Water		9	2711	700
School's Out		9	3208	700

The ER SIG is happy to announce that

The 5th Annual ER Seminar

will be held at Sugiyama Jogakuen University, Hoshigaoka Campus, Nagoya
on Sunday July 1st, 2012.

Cambridge University Press

CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH READERS

Book Name	ISBN	Level	Words	Headwords
Arman's Journey	9780521184939	Starter	2454	250
Bad Company	9780521179195	Level 2	9493	800
No Place to Hide	9780521169752	Level 3	15212	1300
Forget to Remember	9780521184915	Level 5	24999	2800
Solo Saxophone	9780521182959	Level 6	29629	3800

CAMBRIDGE DISCOVERY READERS

Quick Change!	9780521181617	Starter	2345	250
A Little Trouble in Dublin	9780521181570	Level 1	4312	400
Summer Sounds	9780521181587	Level 1	4270	400
Parties and Presents	9780521181594	Level 2	8102	800

Oxford University Press

OXFORD BOOKWORMS LIBRARY: FACTFILES

World Wonders	9780194237765	2	6,738	700
---------------	---------------	---	-------	-----

OXFORD BOOKWORMS LIBRARY

Dead Man's Money	9780194793650	Starters		250
Songs from the Soul	9780194793612	2	6,500	700

OXFORD READ AND DISCOVER (ACTIVITY BOOK & CD AVAILABLE)

Life in Rainforest	9780194644204	3	1,395	600
Animals in the Air	9780194643856	3	1,323	600
Festivals around the World	9780194643825	3	1,323	600
Animals in Art	9780194644839	4	1,754	750
Animals at Night	9780194644464	4	1,746	750
How to Stay Healthy	9780194644457	4	1,634	750
Why Do We Recycle?	9780194644440	4	1,701	750
Animal Life Cycles	9780194645423	5	3,437	750
All About Islands	9780194645034	5	3,437	750
Materials to Products	9780194645058	5	3,437	750

Cengage

CLASSICAL COMICS - CLASSICAL GRAPHIC NOVEL COLLECTION

The Canterville Ghost (AME)	9781424042999		5,356	1500-2400
-----------------------------	---------------	--	-------	-----------

DELTA ADVENTURES IN ENGLISH (WITH AUDIO CD)

Where's TOTO?, with Audio CD	9781905085507	1	938	150
The Chariot Race, with Audio CD	9781905085453	1	852	150
Danny's Blog, with Audio CD	9781905085477	2	1,072	200
Red Rock, with Audio CD	9781905085484	2	1,194	200
The Time Twins, with Audio CD	9781905085460	3	1,099	250
Stranger in the Snow, with Audio CD	9781905085491	3	987	250

PAGE TURNERS

Roommates	9781424048977	1	4,217	200
Hacker	9781424046492	2	4,009	300
You Just Don't Know Her	9781424046485	2	3,862	300
Kitchen Love Story	9781424046393	3	4,261	400
Trust	9781424046447	4	5,607	550
Dead Before Midnight	9781424018413	7	8,575	1,100
Light	9781424046645	8	12,906	1,300
The Long Road to Lucca	9781424048762	9	15,855	1,600
Deadly Truth	9781424048915	12	23,960	2,600

Nellie's

HOW TO READERS

Book Name	ISBN	Level	Words	Headwords
The Ugly Duckling	9788994214009	Pink		
The North Wind and the Sun	9788994214016	Pink		
The Enormous Turnip	9788994214023	Pink		
The Turtle and the Hare	9788994214030	Pink		
The Country Mouse and the City Mouse	9788994214047	Pink		
The Three Little Pigs	9788994214054	Pink		
Little Red Riding Hood	9788994214061	Pink		
The Ant and the Grasshopper	9788994214078	Pink		
The Little Red Hen	9788994214085	Pink		
The Boy Who Cried Wolf	9788994214092	Green		
The Pied Piper of Hamelin	9788994214399	Green		
The King's New Clothes	9788994214405	Green		

BLACK CAT EARLYREADS

Miss Grace Green and the Clown Brothers	9788853010902	2		
Peter and the Wolf	9788853010896	3		

BLACK CAT GREEN APPLE

I Want To Be You	9788853010926	Step 1		
The Last Unicorn	9788853010933	Step 1		
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer	9788853010919	Step 2		

BLACK CAT READING & TRAINING

Around the World in Eighty Days	9788853010995	Step 2		
Journey to the Centre of the Earth	9788853010940	Step 2		
Love in Shakespeare: Five Stories	9788853010971	Step 3		
The Pickwick Papers	9788853010957	Step 3		
Three Men on the Bummel	9788853010964	Step 4		
A Room with a View	9788853000729	Step 5		
The British Isles	9788853010988	Discovery		

Usborne English (Scholastic)

FIRST READING

Old Mother Hubbard	9781409533115	2	197	
Clever Rabbit and the Lion	9781409533146	2	226	
King Donkey Ears	9781409533177	2	264	
The Daydreamer	9781409533207	2	125	
Bears	9781409533238	2	267	
Chicken Licken	9781409533351	3	632	
Little Red Hen	9781409533382	3	479	
Gingerbread Man	9781409533412	3	533	
The Enormous Turnip	9781409533443	3	410	
Dinosaurs	9781409533474	3	519	
The Emperor and the Nightingale	9781409533597	4	831	
The Reluctant Dragon	9781409533627	4	671	
The Hare and the Tortoise	9781409533658	4	667	
Androcles and the Lion	9781409533689	4	794	
Elephants	9781409533719	4	570	

YOUNG READING

Sinbad	9781409533832	Series 1	2182	
Snow White	9781409533863	Series 1	1730	
Hansel and Gretel	9781409533894	Series 1	1636	
Pirate Adventures	9781409533924	Series 1	1826	
The Story of Chocolate	9781409533955	Series 1	1764	