Extensive Reading in Japan

ERJ

ERJ VOLUME 8 NO. 2

In This Issue

ERJ NEWS

Andrew O'Brien will be taking over the Innovations column, which ER SIG founder Daniel Stewart has been writing since the *ERJ* began.

Andrew is a teacher at Kyoritsu Girls' Junior and Senior High School in Hachioji, and is a big fan of coffee, craft beer, world percussion, and extensive reading. His favorite series of graded readers are the Foundations Reading Library and Page Turners. His "home run book" is *The Tickets* by Rob Waring and Maurice Jamall. His students' favorite books are anything with cute pictures.

With a few ideas up his sleeve, over the course of the coming year Andrew plans to write about some practical innovations related to how libraries are organized and tracked. He also hopes to pick up where Daniel left off with some noteworthy developments on the graded readers scene.

Joe Tomei is joining us as a copy editor. Joe has been teaching in Japan for 25 years, first as an ALT. After a brief jaunt in grad school at the University of Oregon, he taught for three years at Hokkaido University and has been at Kumamoto Gakuen University for the past 19 years. He's into martial arts, especially Aikido, and classical music. Because he read Marvel comic books back when they were on racks at the 7-11, but was too stingy to buy them, he has a really high reading speed. He would love to incorporate more manga translations in his university's ER collection, but his colleagues are horrified at the content, despite the fact that the author of *One Piece*, Eichiro Oda, is from Kumamoto.

Cover story

Teachers and researchers are fine artists, working on their craft. Their work is never finished, just as definitions of ER cannot be set in stone.

The object on the cover was created by Simeon A Warren, an architectural stone carver, teacher, dreamer of imagined ideas, writer in stone for forever friends. He is Dean Emeritus at the American College of Building Arts, Director at S. A. Warren & Daughters Ltd and Principle Art Director at The Stone People Project.

You can see his work and projects at simeon-warren.squarespace.com and follow him on Facebook TheStonePeople.

ERJ Staff

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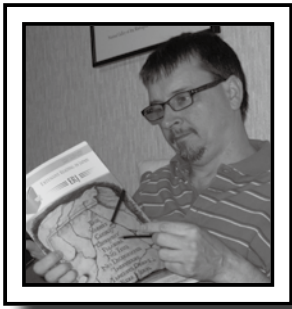Mark Brierley, Kayvon Havaei-Ahary

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Implementing M-Reader: Reflections and reactions

Thomas E. Bieri
Nanzan University

This paper uses data from mid-course learner reflections combined with post-course instructor reflection to address how M-Reader was perceived by the students and instructor-researcher in three reading classes at a Japanese university, and whether implementing its use resulted in more accurate and less time-consuming assessment.

Background

In my own teaching, perhaps one of the most difficult to follow principles of ER put forth by Day and Bamford (1998, 2002) has been the sixth, which suggests that extensive reading normally should not involve comprehension checks. I have struggled to reconcile this principle with the desire to hold learners accountable for doing the reading and the need to give them credit for their efforts, as have other university instructors using ER (Bieri, 2015). Therefore, I decided to switch from self-reporting to the use of M-Reader, an extensive reading quiz and tracking website, in my three reading courses in spring semester 2015.

The decision to begin using M-Reader came about from a combination of factors. First was the need to hold students accountable for doing the reading, and to give credit and grades for it. In addition, M-Reader had been approved for use at our university and some colleagues had begun using it the previous semester. Feedback from my students in fall semester indicated they would have preferred to take quizzes because they felt their classmates who were cheating on the reports would have been held accountable. Another factor was a hope to reduce the time demands from checking written reading log entries and weekly reading reports of approximately 100 students each semester. I also had been exposed to literature and presentations in support of using M-reader. For example, Stoeckel, Reagan, and Hann (2012) found no negative impact on attitudes toward extensive reading from using quizzes with Japanese university students and noted that the quizzes may have contributed to a feeling of greater intellectual benefit. Thomas Robb (2002, 2015)—who was instrumental in developing M-Reader and its predecessor, MoodleReader—argued that within certain contexts it is a useful tool for promoting accountability, motivating students to read high volumes, and keeping students reading at an appropriate level. Also, a study by Campbell and

Weatherford (2013) found that 59% of a group of first-year Japanese university students preferred M-Reader to other assessment options for ER. These findings and arguments, among others, helped overcome my reluctance toward using comprehension quizzes.

Objectives

I wanted to reflect on the impact of implementing M-Reader and consider whether it was a generally positive or negative addition to my courses. In this paper I address the following research questions:

1. What do students like and dislike about M-Reader?
2. Does M-Reader make assessment of actual amounts of reading fairer and more reliable?
3. Does M-Reader make my grading of extensive reading less time-consuming?

Setting and Methods

The research was conducted as a participant-researcher using three convenience samples, from three different English reading courses I taught from April to July, 2015 with a total of 90 enrolled students. The courses were all required courses for first-year students, part of a curriculum taught by instructors from an English education center to a common set of course objectives in which extensive reading is a required element. The students were all first-year students at the university, drawn from seven different majors but not including any English majors. I taught the courses in computer classrooms and students had from 20 to 40 minutes in each class during which they were allowed to take quizzes or engage in silent reading. In addition they were expected to do both as homework.

To address my questions, I collected qualitative data in two forms. First, I collected learning reflections in which the students in these courses were required as part of their coursework to write responses to a series of prompts. The prompts and responses were in English. For this report I use the responses to

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two prompts from the second reflection, which was administered in the tenth week of classes. These two prompts were "What do you like and dislike about M-Reader?" and "How do you feel when you know your classmates cheat on M-Reader?" Three of the 90 students declined to give permission for their data to be used for research, and of the 87 students who did give prior permission, 84 submitted these reflections. Second, the student reflections were supplemented by unstructured reflective observational notes on issues I encountered, which I made after the courses finished. Additionally, I used quantitative word-count data from M-Reader to compare with self-reported data from the same courses taught the previous year.

Description and discussion of results

Regarding student attitudes toward M-Reader, 15 responses only described their feelings about ER rather than M-Reader, while 5 appeared to be discussing ER but also addressed a specific like or dislike about M-Reader. The remaining 64 addressed the reflection prompt directly and most detailed both a specific like and dislike. However, a few learners only detailed one like or dislike, not one of each. There were 64 comments about details they disliked while only 50 about things they liked (see Table 1). However, I don't believe this indicates there was a greater general dislike. A number of students who only specified a dislike also made a general statement of approval for M-Reader. Also, by far the most common negative comment, with 26 instances, was dissatisfaction that they could only take one quiz per day. The responses seem to indicate that M-Reader was a positively motivating factor for most students except when they were unable to pass a quiz.

As to fairness and reliability of M-Reader, I believe it was an improvement over previous methods. Prior to implementing M-Reader I had estimated, based on observations of in-class discussions and written reports in previous terms, that up to a quarter of my students may have been significantly inflating their self-reported word counts, including roughly 5% who were likely doing little or no actual reading. For spring 2015, the number of students who failed to achieve the 150,000-word goal was significantly higher compared to the same courses in the previous year, at 41% failure overall compared to nearly 11% in spring of 2014. However, I don't believe this variation can be completely attributed to increased accuracy due to M-Reader. I observed there to be a small minority of students in the courses the previous year who were unmotivated to read English. In contrast, a majority of students in two of the 2015 classes appeared quite unmotivated. The failure rate is likely at least partially attributable to the higher number of disinterested learners.

My observations did yield two areas of concern related to fairness and reliability. One area was some

Table 1. Student likes and dislikes in M-Reader

Types of likes	N	Types of dislikes	N
Can track own accomplishments	11	Limited to one quiz a day	26
Can check or improve comprehension and skills	10	Failing a quiz	11
Like quizzes/enjoyable	9	Quizzes are too difficult	7
Motivating	8	No opportunity to retake a quiz	6
Feel successful	6	Quizzes in general or quiz elements	6
Ease of use	6	Quiz unavailable for some books	5
		Technical problems	2
		Feel pressure	1
Total number of responses	50		64

of the students being unable to get M-Reader credit for books they had in fact read. This happened in two ways: lack of available quizzes and not passing quizzes. The student survey data also supported this observation, with 16 cases of students complaining about not being able to take, or failing, quizzes on books they had read. I prevented some additional instances of unavailable quizzes by asking students to avoid certain series that I discovered there were no quizzes for. If students reported quiz failure or a lack of a quiz to me in a timely manner, I gave them the opportunity to be awarded the points if they could immediately and adequately summarize the book for me and then answer a number of questions to my satisfaction, though this was somewhat subjective. A number of students didn't bring cases of this to my attention until the last day of the course, by which time I couldn't offer the oral quiz option due to time restraints and the length of time since they had read the books.

The second area for concern was apparent cheating. However, in all cases except one, students when asked said they had actually read the books but were employing strategies to be sure of passing the quiz. I observed several activities that may have been cheating. Some students were taking quizzes on the same books at the same time while some may have been taking quizzes while logged into their friend's account or giving their friend answers. Some students primarily took quizzes only on readers based on well-known stories or movies. Students often skimmed the books while taking the quizzes, and during the very last class of the semester I realized that some students were checking a website with Japanese summaries while taking quizzes.

The learning reflection question "How do you feel when you know your classmates cheat on M-Reader?" yielded varied responses. First of all, 15 students either appeared not to understand the question and made unrelated responses or simply chose to not answer it directly. Of the remaining responses, the most common by far was some direct expression to indicate they felt it was improper to cheat, including words such as bad, rude or wrong (25 instances). Another 16 responses expressed similar sentiments, using words such as angry, sad, upset, or disappointed to characterize their feelings about others cheating. There were 12 instances of indicating it was unfair if someone cheated while four mentioned wanting it stopped. Another interesting theme in responses was feeling that the cheater was the one to suffer (7 instances) and lost an opportunity to improve their skills (3 instances). However, 10 responses indicated they either didn't care or didn't feel bad about cheating. One student mentioned they could understand the feelings of students who cheated, one said it couldn't be helped, and one even admitted, "I also cheat."

As to question three, M-Reader appears to have reduced the time I spent on determining grades for ER completion. First, the downloadable Excel files of word counts made grading easier since I didn't have to input data manually. I used about 15 to 20 minutes to download and import the data into my grading spreadsheets. In 2014, processing the same type of data took about 30 to 40 minutes per class, plus additional time carefully examining many of the handwritten reading logs. Also, in spite of using time to give some students oral quizzes as noted above, I actually spent less class time attempting to verify that students were actually reading reported books than I did in previous semesters. I estimate I used about 30 minutes in class for the whole semester on this during the 2015 courses, whereas it was closer to 30 minutes every week in 2014.

Weaknesses

While reflections rely on imperfect memory, since self-reported data can be intentionally or unintentionally untruthful, and because the reflections were not anonymous, the results may not be entirely accurate descriptions of the true impressions of all participants. Also, the fact that the reflection prompts and responses were in English likely had an effect on the clarity, depth and accuracy of the data collected from

the students. Finally, data collection was limited to students and one teacher-researcher at one university. Therefore, while providing insight into this particular learning environment, the results may not be representative of other contexts.

Conclusions

The implementation of M-Reader resulted in time-savings for this instructor and appears to have been more accurate at tracking reading volume. Student responses seemed to indicate an overall positive attitude. However, some reported feeling negatively towards possible cheating, lack of quizzes for some books, quiz difficulty, and time limitations on quiz-taking. While it may be difficult to generalize these conclusions to other settings, it is hoped this paper will provide useful data that other instructors who are considering adopting M-Reader can use to make informed decisions regarding its likely merits in their own teaching contexts.

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Write for us!

Send anything related to extensive reading or extensive listening, or of interest to members of the JALT ER SIG to erj@jalt.org.

Use APA6 style, no footnotes, MSWord or text format. If you have any layout requests, send separately or consider the position of layout editor!

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

Headings and subheadings sentence-capitalised (only the first letter of the heading and the first letter of proper names capitalised—like this list!)

Photos, graphs and graphics should be separate, clearly named files, ideally in black and white.

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

Add your academic affiliation if you would like that to appear in print.

Back issues can be seen at jalt.org/er.

ER SIG grants

The JALT Extensive Reading SIG invites applications to support extensive reading outreach. Outreach includes giving workshops in support of extensive reading or extensive listening to local teacher groups, helping to create ER libraries, and giving vetted presentations on ER at conferences.

Applicants should be ER SIG members or JALT officers in charge of programs for a local chapter or SIG which is inviting an ER SIG member to present.

Applications should be tied to specific costs related to the outreach, for example, transportation costs or materials costs.

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ER at public libraries in the Tokai region

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More than 10 public libraries in Tokai region have special bookshelves of easy-to-read English books for extensive reading, and the number of such libraries is increasing. Most people who use the books are Japanese adult EFL learners, who have long since graduated from schools. They have not had a professional need to use English, but wish to enjoy reading English novels or using English for various purposes. This trend has the potential to reform EFL education in Japan in the long run. In this article we report on how this trend started and how it is progressing.

The first and second waves

The first wave of easy-to-read English books in the region started at Komaki city library in 2004, followed by Gamagori city library the following year, and then several public libraries in Aichi prefecture (see Nishizawa, 2007). This wave of graded readers was triggered by an introductory guidebook (Sakai, 2002) which had been encouraged by active discussions on the bulletin boards of the *Start with Simple Stories,* webpage (SSS, 2001), and aided by an exhaustive list of easy-to-read books matched with a *yomiyasusa* level (YL), a readability level optimized for Japanese EFL learners (Furukawa, Kanda, Komatsu, Hatanaka, & Nishizawa 2005; Furukawa, Kanda, Mayuzumi, Miyashita, Hatanaka, Satoh, & Nishizawa, 2013). The ER books placed in the libraries were intended for the lifelong learning of Japanese EFL learners. The leaders of some local governments and the heads of some public libraries had decided to introduce several hundred ER books; however, public access to ER books was limited to a small number of regions such as Aichi, Tokyo, and Kyoto. Although the number of school and college ER libraries has increased recently, most public libraries hesitate to add English books, or simply do not recognize the merit of such resources.

The second wave of public access to ER books, starting in 2014, has been bigger. The number of public libraries which have installed or are planning to stock ER bookshelves in Aichi and the surrounding prefectures has exceeded 10 in the last two years, and the number is increasing.

The main difference between the first and the second wave is the decision makers. This time, not only the leaders of institutions but individual librarians have seen the benefits for local communities, and have started to promote ER (Sakai & Nishizawa, 2014). We can see an increased interest among librarians from a recent symposium on ER in libraries held in Toyota College in 2015, with participants from 22 public libraries and 20 school or college libraries from a wide area of Japan (NIT, Toyota College, 2015).

The librarians recognized that the needs of adult EFL learners are quite similar to those of Japanese children when reading books in their native language. Adult EFL learners require a lot of easy-to-read English books, just as children need easy-to-read Japanese books. Most libraries already have a special corner for children's books, and some even have a separate building for them. The librarians view English books for adult EFL learners in just the same way as those Japanese books for children. The librarians correctly understand that the books are not for the formal learning of English knowledge but for fluent reading, and thus the books must be easy enough for EFL learners.

Recommending ER to learners

The ER books in those libraries are typically graded readers from major English publishers and leveled readers for English-speaking children, starting with the Oxford Reading Tree (ORT) series, and later followed by the Foundations Reading Library (FRL). Graded Readers at starter and beginner levels have been found to be more important than those of intermediate or advanced levels, and ORT and FRL are indispensable series for most Japanese EFL learners for starting their ER experience. Without reading these easiest-to-read picture books, many EFL learners cannot continue their ER for a long enough time to improve their reading skills.

ORT is the most popular series among adult EFL learners who graduated from school or college a long time ago and did not believe that they could really read English texts without translation (Sakai

& Nishizawa, 2014). With the help of pictures, very few unknown words and 200 books set in the same context, ORT allows EFL learners to transform their reading style gradually from word-for-word translation to direct comprehension of the stories.

With no guidance on how to start ER at first, typical adult learners tend to ignore the pictures, and try to translate the English text word-for-word into Japanese sentences. Then they usually find a few unknown words, start to consult a dictionary, and sometimes stall in the middle of the story, wondering what a certain word or expression really means. It is not easy to enjoy the stories with this traditional "reading" style, so learners need guidance to focus more on the story instead of the expressions.

In an introductory lesson for ER, for example, the lecturers usually ask ER beginners to look at the pictures closely, sometimes even hiding the English text at first, and to try to get a visual image of the story. With this visual image in their mind, they are guided back to the first page, and invited to read the whole book again. After this introduction, many of them understand that the method is quite different from the "reading" they had learned in their old school days. They start to read picture books with interest, and tried to avoid English to Japanese translation.

A large number of picture books is necessary for this transformation of reading style, ideally sharing the same background such as ORT or FRL. We usually recommend adult EFL learners to read about 100,000 words in 200 to 300 picture books when they start ER. Such a large number of picture books is not feasible for most learners to purchase by themselves, but can be shared as common assets in public libraries.

When EFL learners feel it is easy to read ORT stage 8 or FRL level 4, it is usually the right time for them to start the second stage of the reading experience: reading graded readers at the starter level while continuing to read picture books. Each of those books tells an independent story in a short text of 1,000 words, with easy English at YL 0.8. Because of this independence and without the background knowledge supplied by the previous books in the same series, the reader needs to redefine the whole world of the story every time.

For this second stage of ER, short and easy-to-read English texts are indispensable, and beginner and elementary levels of graded readers are suited for the purpose. We usually recommended EFL learners to read an additional 100,000–200,000 words of graded readers, with a YL of 0.8–1.5.

Starting ER from higher readability levels of graded readers by bypassing these two steps often prevents adult EFL learners from unlearning their translating habit. They typically try too hard to tackle stories too difficult to understand, don't enjoy reading, and finally give up reading any English books. Libraries that have fewer easy-to-read books run the unintentional but large risk of inviting such failures.

In the third stage of ER, text length exceeds 6,000 words. This is longer than the texts read in the first two stages, where text length is from several hundred to 4,000 words, with the majority of books between 1,000 and 2,000 words, and easy to read in an ER lesson of 45 minutes. Because longer texts read in the third stage take more than an hour to complete, they are likely to be read not in one sitting but in multiple separate sittings. Reading a book in separate sittings is easily done in the mother tongue, but an EFL learner has to remember the story when they resume reading. This requires deeper understanding of the story, and is thus more difficult to achieve. We usually recommended EFL learners to read a total of a million words of texts at YL 3.0 or easier before graduating from this stage—marking the end of being a "beginner".

The third stage is the most difficult stage to move

Special bookshelf for ER in Gamagori City Library

beyond (Furukawa, Nishizawa, Uruno & Yoshioka, 2007), and even the most earnest EFL learners have a slower average reading pace (40,000 words per month) than either those at the first stage (136,000 words per month) or those who have read a million words (134,000 or more words per month). The main possible cause of difficulty in the third stage is that easy-to-read books become rather boring, but interesting books are still too difficult to read. Finding favorite series, authors, or genres might be a general suggestion to the learners at this stage, but the best advice differs from person to person. The reading history of a veteran learner with similar taste often helps, and thus regular meetings of EFL learners and exchange of experience and information have been found to be valuable.

Managing ER books

Libraries hold ER books of various types, genres, and publishers. At least two groups of books are widely available to EFL learners in Japan. One group is books for English-speaking children, which includes picture books, chapter books, and literature for young adults. There are famous and award-winning books, and even classic stories for children. Although these books are popular and interesting for English-speakers, they can include colloquial expressions familiar to English-speaking children but hard for EFL learners to understand. The other popular books are graded readers, published for ESL/EFL learners. Their readability is controlled with vocabulary and grammar restrictions. These books sometimes include rather artificial or monotonous expressions, but the topics, such as murder mysteries or romance, are selected to attract adult learners.

Because the ER books are so different in readability and genre, users need some guidance to select appropriate books. Arranging the books by the readability is one method but rather difficult to manage because each librarian must have a certain knowledge of ER books in order to catlog and keep them in order. An alternative method is using information stickers, which display readability level and text length, on the front or back page of each book to aid the book-selection of the users. Gathering books of the same publisher and series was easier than arranging them by readability.

Promoting ER and supporting users

Collecting ER books might be the first step for libraries, but they also have to promote ER. ER is rather new, and not a widely-known approach in Japanese schools, where grammar-translation is often still dominant. For most Japanese people, from children to senior citizens, "reading" English texts means word-for-word translation, and even most English teachers do not expect that their students can read English texts without translating them into Japanese sentences.

Introductory lessons are necessary to promote ER books in the library.

Two types of guidance—telling learners how to read and how to select books—are also necessary in the introduction. Monthly circulation figures of Tahara central library clearly show that such annual introductory lessons increase the number of checked-out books for the following three months (NIT, Toyota College, 2015). The lessons invite new users to read ER books and also reactivate ER veterans. Several libraries now hold such lessons several times a year to promote reading in English and general circulation.

Setting up periodical meetings of users is another method of promoting ER. The meetings do not need instructors, but the participants talk about their experience of reading easy-to-read books and exchange information related to ER books with each other. In such meetings, it is common for novice readers to find role models among the veteran users, and follow their reading records as a guide.

Evaluating ER in libraries

Circulation of ER books is generally higher than that of general Japanese books, because, in the first instance, ER books are shorter and can be read more quickly. Their circulation is better than the circulation of children's books. However, many users tend to give up on ER if there is insufficient guidance or support. Circulation may also decline when regular readers improve their reading skills through ER, and start to read more difficult books, which are longer and require more time to complete. A regular influx of starter readers is necessary to keep or increase the circulation of ER books.

ER books in libraries must also be evaluated by social impact, not only by circulation of the books.

If the current users—middle aged or senior people—improve their language skills through ER, they may invite younger people or even school children into the learning community in the future. I believe that ER books in public libraries have helped to change the norm of reading from English-to-Japanese translation to simple reading, and will surely continue to have a positive social impact on English teaching/learning in Japan.

Summary and Future Expectations

Public libraries in Tokai region have successfully installed bookshelves for ER, and have started to support lifelong learning of adult EFL learners. Their experiences tell us that the books must be very easy, and the users need guidance for starting ER, and peer-support in order to continue ER. This can be organized by ER practitioners in the region. The experience could be transferred to the libraries in other regions and even to school and college libraries. If it can be spread throughout the country, ER in libraries has the potential to develop a new frontier of EFL learning.

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Working together on graded reader poster presentations

Joseph C. Wood
Nanzan University

Having students work in pairs to create a poster presentation for a graded reader is a great way to relieve the pressure of doing a standard presentation on their own, and gives students a useful opportunity to learn from their partners as well.

In this activity, the class will divide into two sides and take turns as presenters and audience. Audience members evaluate the presenations, and these peer evaluations are presented directly to the teacher to give a general picture of how students feel they are performing.

These poster presentations were trialed with my first year university students, and were quite successful. With some adaptation, this activity could work for other situations, such as high school.

RECOMMENDED FOR
Any level of students in an ER program.

PRE-REQUISITES
Partners need to decide on a book to read from the library. Students can share texts if necessary.

TIME
Three classes.

PROCEDURE
During the explanation and introduction to poster presentations class:

Give out a handout explaining poster presentations that includes key points necessary for a poster. You may wish to use a template for students, although higher level students may be able to come up with their own ideas. Show examples of posters to the class. You may choose to give a Powerpoint presentation to illustrate goals or elements of the poster.

The final part of the presentation should include details of what students will be looking for when evaluating presentations. Make sure this is simple and within the ability of students to comment upon.

Assign partners
Have partners choose an interesting book that they both want to read and present on. This may involve some library and free reading time, which should be included in the lesson. You will need to organize this so there is time for the next steps, so budget time accordingly.

Give students class time to develop outlines on notepaper, discuss logistics, exchange contact information, etc, following your guidance in step 1. You may allow students to use templates or styles that you presented.

Walk around the class and be available for any questions students may have.

Pairs should finish the posters as homework.

Following the assignment of the project, allow a normal class period. You may give time for students to work in class on the project, such as having a practice run, or simply ask them to check in with each other on progress, depending on the level of the class.

The day of the presentations
Have half the class watch and half the class present. Divide the students into two halves and select a representative for each half. Use a random selection process or game to decide order of presentation (such as Rock, Paper, Scissors). Allow the winner to choose which side goes first in consultation with their side.

Give five minutes for prep for presenters to prepare their stations (hanging up posters, pushing desks to the center of the room to make space, etc.).

While presenters prepare, the teacher should write some useful questions on the board, to help audience members while talking with presenters. For example:
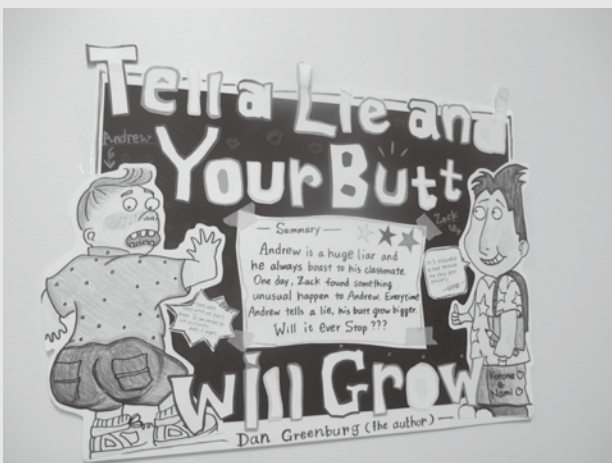
"Why did you choose this book?", "Is there anything you didn't like about it?"

The half of the class that goes first stands next to their posters for 20 minutes while the other half of the class walks around, asking questions to the pairs. This can be done as a free choice or as a kind of carousel activity.

The audience members should be filling out an evaluation sheet for each of their classmates' presentations they attend. The instructor should be ready to give these out, or have a station where students can collect new copies.

After 20 minutes, students have five minutes to change roles, and new posters are put up. Roles are reversed and the process is repeated.

TEACHER FEEDBACK

To ensure that students are sticking to their roles as presenters and using English, it is good to walk around the class as an observer, asking questions to the presenters along with the rest of the class. Taking "teacher notes" as you do this can be useful for general class feedback, as well as helping when you collect the posters and decide grades. The student evaluations of their classmates' presentations can also be used for assessment purposes. I found that students were quite fair with the grades they gave to their classmates in their evaluations and provided good notes/observations. This may be attributed to the fact that it was announced beforehand that students would not see the evaluations written by their peers, giving them room to be perhaps a bit more honest and forthcoming with their opinions.
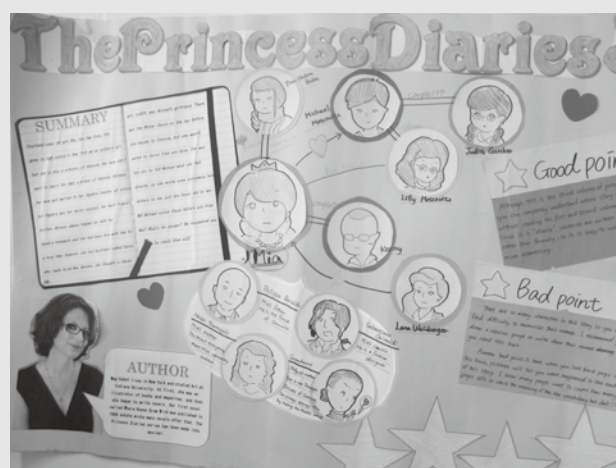
Based on feedback and reflections from my class, students seemed to really enjoy the process of working with a partner and having the opportunity to do something creative in class. Students did a great job and took the task seriously, producing great quality posters and delivering interesting and informative presentations.

New graded readers releases

Bjorn Fuisting

After a hot summer it is nice to get back to school and start reading some new graded readers, at least that is what I tell my students. Unfortunately, there are not that many new titles that have been released in the last 6 months. Only 12 new graded readers from Oxford University Press and Cengage to add to your library so maybe you had better go back and check the spring list which had plenty of new titles.

However, if you are working at an international school and are looking for a comprehensive series to introduce literacy skills to your students, Macmillan Publishing is releasing Springboard Connect. It consists of 150 books in 30 levels with support material for teachers as well. Originally developed for Australian school children ranging from pre-school to grade 6, it is a welcome addition to the Japanese ER scene.

See the full-list on the ER SIG website: *jalt.org/er/graded-readers* and make sure you get a copy of the books at the Educational Material Exhibition at JALT2015 in Shizuoka in November.

Discussion circles for student-selected materials

Myles Grogan

Kansai University

One of the attractions of Extensive Reading for me has been the sharing and community-based aspects of reading, such as those discussed in Day and Bamford (1998). The idea of this activity is that students find non-fiction readings, based around a common theme related to their learning community at university, and discuss them in small groups. With students persuading each other to read materials, then discussing them, the essence of reading for learning—for oneself—becomes the main feature of the class.

The approach is closely modelled on the literature circles developed for EFL learners by Mark Furr (2004), which later were used in the Oxford Bookworms Club. Once established, this system can be extended and used for a course of study, and particular academic skills can be added as part of a more task-based approach to instruction. Some of the academic skills, like summarizing, require practice. More technical skills may also need introducing. In particular, two websites need to be introduced—Read-able read-able.com and LexTutor lextutor.ca—so be prepared to spend some time practicing some technical skills too.

It may help if the teacher prepares and models the first "discussion". You can present each step yourself, or ask students to try some of the roles together (such as choosing key vocabulary from articles) in small groups. This discussion will help you find how this activity can be best tailored to your class's needs.

RESOURCES

Students can find readings at several internet sites, including BreakingNewsEnglish.com, the learner sites from BBC or CNN, or any similar site (see the list of resources after the main article). They will also need access to a word-processor and printing facilities. Please check your institution's policy on printing, as some places may charge.

Students will also need to use Read-able.com. This website gives a variety of indicators as to how "difficult" a reading is, such as grade-level and Gunning Fog score. Each index is explained at the bottom of the feedback, making this a good resource for teachers and students. Having this index visible to all participants helps to stimulate discussion about what makes things easy or difficult to read in general terms, for example word and sentence length, or grammatical features.

Vocabulary from readings is checked on Lextutor (www.lextutor.ca). This site lets you paste an article into the website, and get a "profile" of the words used. If you are not familiar with this site, some simple tutorials are available on youtube.com. Put simply, students can use this to see which words in the article are frequently used, and which are rarer. When students see infrequent words, they can check to see if they know them, or can guess them from the context. Having this information is another way for students to see the difficulty of the text.

It should be noted that neither of these websites use the meaning of the text to present data, so difficulties in chunks of language such as phrasal verbs may still cause problems. Periodically, these issues will be raised in class, and make useful points for student learning.

TIME REQUIRED

A lesson cycle usually takes two weeks with a once-a-week group.

THE CYCLES

To begin with, assign a topic students can research. Topics I have used include sponsorship in sports, ideas of success, food, and health. Have a general discussion or raise some issues related to the topic, and try to elicit the kind of article students may be interested in. Following the introduction, assign the search for articles as homework.

PREPARING ARTICLES

Each student should locate an online article that interests them. I ask for articles between 250 and 500 words. Once students have found an article on the theme that they like, they copy and paste it into a word-processor, copying the URL into the document header. They should also put the length of the article (in words) at the end. Following this, the students copy the statistics from read-able.com, and the list of vocabulary from lextutor.ca. I usually ask students to make all text black (Lextutor uses colour-coding), and to make the text the same size and font. The latter keeps the text

easy to read, and can save paper!

You may ask students to post these documents in an online forum before class. This helps you a) make sure everyone is ready, and b) see any possible issues, good or bad, before class.

CLASS 1
INTRODUCING AND SELECTING

Students arrive in class and make groups of four. They bring a copy of the article for each group member, plus one copy for the teacher, so you have a copy if a group needs any particular help. This means that a member of a group of four will bring five copies.

Students take turns to introduce the article they have prepared. Before passing out their articles, students spend about two minutes introducing them and saying why they chose them. Encourage listening skills in the audience such as echoing or asking clarification questions at this stage, to ensure the process is interactive, rather than a speech. The purpose of the introduction is to activate schema for the readers, so the more active the listeners are, the better.

Following a brief introduction, the presenting reader hands out the prepared articles. Students should take a quick preview of the vocabulary and readability, before skimming and scanning for two minutes. Generally, most students won't finish reading in this time, and that is the intention. They should be trying to get an idea of the text. After skimming and scanning, students react as a group, with comments on the topic or style of writing, questions for the presenter, and so on for another two minutes. This completes one student's presentation, and the next student can begin introducing their article.

After all the articles have been presented, the groups then begin their next task—deciding which article to discuss in the next class. My students usually decide in about 5 minutes. To do this, they may a) review each of the articles, b) shout out which they liked best, or c) discuss rankings, perhaps by placing the articles in order of preference on the desk (or the floor!). Students should also consider their weekly schedule and workload, in order to enhance the chances of success in their goal setting.

Prior to leaving, students will choose their own roles for the discussion in the next class. They will prepare to fulfill these roles as homework.

Finally, they now have copies of all the articles presented. Remind them they can read any of the articles they want to. It's up to them! They don't have to be limited to members of their own team, particularly if the articles were posted on a forum.

CLASS 2
DISCUSSION

At the beginning of class, students get into their groups again. If any members are absent, they can re-arrange the roles to make up for this.

The roles used are similar to those of a regular literature circle, with a couple of twists. The roles can, of course, be adapted to classes and levels. The main roles I have used are summarized here:

- The Manager makes sure everyone speaks, decides the order people talk in, and periodically sums up progress in the discussion, for example once a task has been completed. The order of the roles can be negotiated ("Should we do the vocabulary before the summary?") or simply decided. A general guideline for timekeeping should be decided, such as five minutes per role, and the manager should keep an eye on this while helping everyone to talk.

- The Dictionary Maker (DM) collects 5 to 10 words that are important or useful for the group's learning. In the discussion, the dictionary maker invites readers to come up with the meaning of words in English. The main rule is that the DM should guide and hint, but never actually tell the group the meaning. Group members may react to how useful a word is for their learning, for example by saying they haven't seen a word used as it is used in the article before.

- The Summarizer should present the article's main ideas and themes. However, they are asked to make one or two mistakes! Other team members should react to and clarify the ideas of the summarizer in order to find this mistake. Lower level students may break the article down into 5 to 7 main ideas, while more advanced students may want to give more detail.

📖 The Analyzer asks questions on how the article relates to the lives of the students in the discussion. This may be a reaction, or a "What would you do if . . . ?" style question. The analyzer's chief job is to make the article relevant to those in the discussion. They will usually prepare a list of about 4 or 5 questions before the discussion.

The main thing for teachers to monitor is the level of interactivity in the discussion. Many students initially seem to adopt a passive approach when others are speaking. After a session or two, however, this begins to change! Discussions should continue for between 15 and 30 minutes depending on the level and ability of the class. (In my classes, 20 minutes is sufficient to bring most discussions to an end without having conversations drag on needlessly.)

EXTENSION & FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Sharing ideas

The simplest follow up is to ask students to make new groups, so that a member of each group can share the high points of the discussion with those who read a different article. This can be more or less structured, depending on the class.

Follow-up forum

Students can write an introduction or a reaction to their readings. When shared with others who have not read the article, this can invite questions or comments. A dialogue can begin, and the teacher is left with a useful record of language points to take further, according to the level or goals of the class. I have used online forums for this, but pen-and-paper forums should be equally effective.

Vocabulary quizzes

Each group selects vocabulary from their readings that they believe their classmates would benefit from knowing. They create a definition using the original sentence, and try to create a new sentence. These can be shared with the class, and the teacher can help edit them. If the class then chooses 10 or 15 items, these can be learned and given as a gapfill test the next week. Students are encouraged to help each other, for example, by posting them on a wiki, or testing each other on LINE. Because the words and examples have all been chosen by students, the scores should be high!

NOTES ON GRADING

Grading is an issue for many teachers. I have used rubrics, although some literature suggests that some students will do the minimum for a grade in the face of rubrics or scoring systems (e.g. Moss, 2003).

It is also possible to create a grading system for this system based on a "work-completed" notion. Students can receive points for bringing the article, being ready to present, attempting to complete their role, and speaking (for example) 5 times in the discussion. Given that many classes have students at different levels, however, alternatives schemes (including no specific grade) may also be options.

Bibliography

Day, R., & Bamford, J. (1998). *Extensive reading in the second language classroom*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

Furr, M. (2004). Literature circles for the EFL classroom. In *Proceedings of the 2003 TESOL Arabia Conference*. eflliteraturecircles.com/litcirclesforEFL.pdf

Moss, P. A. (2003). Reconceptualizing validity for classroom assessment. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice, 22*(4), 13–25.

Resources

www.breakingnewsenglish.com gives readings at different levels. You can read the same thing at an easier or more challenging level.

mainichi.jp/english has lots of local interest stories

www.newsinlevels.com has more leveled English reading reports

learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en lets you work on every skill, and there are a lot of readings here.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish has lots of news and information, as well as lots on entertainment.

http://st.japantimes.co.jp is a learners' page from Japan's English-language daily.

http://blogs.wsj.com/numbers has a Numbers Guy blog that is often short - and numbers often come up on tests!

http://learningenglish.voanews.com is the Voice of America site with simplified articles that also have a glossary of words at the end of each one.

Winners of the 2015 LLL Awards

The Extensive Reading Foundation (ERF), an unaffiliated, not-for profit organization that supports and promotes extensive reading in language education, takes pleasure in announcing the winners of the 11th Annual Language Learner Literature Award for books published in 2014. An international jury chose the winning book in six categories, taking into account the internet votes and comments of students and teachers around the world.

Adolescent & Adult: Beginner

Merlin

Author: Janet Hardy-Gould
Illustrator: Ollie Cuthbertson
Publisher: Oxford University Press
ISBN: 9780194249744

Judge's comment: Merlin would be a good beginner book for a student moving up to this level for the first time…. Not so overwhelming. Some of the new words are quite difficult for this level, but their meanings are provided on the same page. This is a story of magic and students seem to be very interested in this type of genre. The whole story is written in present simple, making it simpler to follow for new beginner level students. The story characters are introduced at the beginning, and the drawings are eye-catching, which are quite helpful in understanding the story.

On-line voter's comment: This book combines advice for dealing with bullies, a topic of high interest in schools today, with the attraction of magic. Many people are already familiar with Merlin stories from television and movies, so they are likely to have background for making connections. Some of the character names will pose some difficulty, but pronunciation is given in the sidebars.

Young Learners

Backstage Pass

Author: Lesley Ito
Illustrator: Alice Carroll
Publisher: Atama-ii Books
ISBN: 9781941140345

Judges' comment: This book brings the popular choose-your-own-adventure style to graded readers. The story focuses on a young music fan and an adventure that takes place when their favorite band comes to town. The reader makes choices on which page to turn to next on every second or third page. With 8 different possible endings there are numerous opportunities for re-reading, leading to even more natural meetings with key vocabulary at the reader's level. The book is easy to read, with a theme that many 11-15 year olds will identify with, and has comic style full-page color illustrations throughout.

On-line voter's comment: This book was perfect for my low-level reluctant reader students. The beautiful images on every page help students understand the story and the vocabulary was right at their level. A great read and the multiple ending style is highly conducive to group discussion.

Very Young Learners

The Leopard and the Monkey

Author: Retold by Richard Northcott
Illustrator: Cristiano Lissoni
Publisher: Helbling Languages
ISBN: 9783852727813

Judges' comment: The book presents an African folktale with a simple yet compelling narrative without over-selling humor or morals. It has a simple cast of characters which will be easy for young children to follow. The vocabulary is controlled and appropriately limited, but there is enough variation in sentence type to make the reading, especially reading aloud, entertaining and dramatic. The illustrations and layout are attractive and distinctive.

On-line voter's comment: This book is really funny and entertaining. The story might seem a little nonsensical to those not familiar with folktales but the wonderful images make it accessible to all. Visually astounding!

Adolescent & Adult: Elementary

The Bookshop

Author: Denise Kirby
Illustrator: Paul Fisher Johnson
Publisher: ILTS / Heuber
ISBN: 9783191029944

Judge's comment: The writing is simply wonderful: one of the judges actually had to read it twice because the first time she was just taken by the story, and couldn't be a judge, just a reader. One of the reasons this book is remarkable is that the vocabulary is simple but thanks to the detailed description of characters, places and emotions it feels deep. In addition, the themes are powerful. It's just wonderful how the young and the old meet around books, and find ways to be better people through their interactions. Last but not least, we found it easy to connect with both characters, and the ending actually made us laugh.

On-line voter's comment: As a class we liked the element of mystery in this story. Lucy had her own adventure through Will's story. The pictures also helped us understand the story. We could visualize the dark and dusty bookshop. We read this book as a read aloud and put the pictures underneath a document camera. The pictures helped our class make inferences about the story. Many of the students didn't like the portrayal of Miss Rumble. However it was a great opportunity for us to unpack an antagonist character.

Adolescent & Adult: Intermediate

Kilimanjaro

Author: Margaret Johnson
Illustrator: Redbean Design Pte Ltd
Publisher: National Geographic/CENGAGE Learning
ISBN: 9781424048753

Judge's comment: Good storyline and characterization. People are set against each other, the elements, and their own personal challenges as they struggle to reach the top. The simple, descriptive language and illustrations supporting the text will keep the reader turning the pages to find out what happens next.

On-line voter's comment: What I liked most was the spiritual part, Alison's thoughts and feelings, were so well integrated into all the action and dynamism of the story. At the beginning, the character spoke about her problems and her family, the plot reached the climax and at the end all her problems were solved as she started to see life in a new way. People mostly think the climax is the greatest moment, but I felt so great when she got at peace with herself and the others through this journey to save a life.

Adolescent & Adult: Upper Intermediate & Advanced

Checkmate

Author: Malorie Blackman
Retold by: Karen Holms
Illustrator: Jonathan@kja-artists.com
Publisher: Pearson Education
ISBN: 9781447930600

Judge's comment: Karen Holmes retells Marlorie Blackman's novel with realistic dialogue that reveals the complexity of these modern characters, caught in a tension-filled conflict between their own histories and the political realities of living in a society where people are often judged unfairly. Although the intertwining of the narrative voices of the characters may be disconcerting for some readers at first, the interplay of characters respects the intelligence of the reader and stimulates reflection on significant current issues. You'll want to read it all in one sitting!

On-line voter's comment: This is a powerful story which can go a long way in helping students understand about the cycle of pain and suffering caused by racism.

All LLL finalists can be ordered through etjbookservice.com/extensive-reading-foundation. Details of all winners and finalists can be found on erfoundation.org.

Extensive Reading Third World Congress
An Oasis for Learning
Dubai, 18th to 20th September, 2015

Although smaller in number than previous conferences, the enthusiastic and devoted crowd of participants who came to Dubai for the Third World Congress on Extensive Reading hailed from 23 countries, including Australia, Bahrain, Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, the Philippines, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Taiwan, United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Vietnam. There were 101 sessions, including colloquia, workshops, short and long papers, and poster presentations. The conference was highlighted by three plenaries: Willy Renandya's The Power of Extensive Listening, Fredricka Stoller's Shaking the Sand Out of Our Boots: Building a Better Extensive Reading Oasis, and Rob Waring's What Exactly is Extensive Reading?

A wide range of topics in the field of ER were covered, including motivation, automaticity, reading rate, tracking with M-Reader, vocabulary acquisition, institutional ER and extensive listening. The program is available at the ER Foundation website erfoundation.org/erwc3 and videos of the plenaries will be uploaded to YouTube.

Apart from the many presentations on ER praxis, three themes ran throughout the conference. First, several presenters argued for increased attention to Extensive Listening, often the "poor cousin" to ER, according to Rob Waring. In his plenary, Willy Renandya advocated more emphasis on EL. He challenged the notion that strategy-based learning is effective, especially at lower levels of proficiency. Anna Chang presented a study in which she looked at three groups of students. One group did only ER, the second only EL and the third group a combination of ER and EL. The group doing both outperformed the ER and EL groups on post-tests.

A second theme was brought out in Waring's plenary, namely, what is meant by ER? Waring threw a cat amongst the pigeons, in a sense. He stressed that Bamford and Day's Ten Principles were never intended to be prescriptive, and argued that ER needs 'a bigger tent' but that researchers should carefully define ER when reporting their findings. Fredricka Stoller laid out a clear path of steps to conduct Action Research, providing a number of useful websites and a bibliography.

Finally, several presenters shared their struggles to implement ER under difficult circumstances. The cost of building a library can be prohibitive for institutions in underdeveloped countries. Apart from lacking graded readers, ER practitioners often face bureaucratic hurdles or indifference from administrators or colleagues. Even faced with such difficulties, the dedicated teachers' effort and determination inspired the other participants at the three-day event.

<div align="right">Barry Keith</div>

Even as I was leaving for Dubai I was still asking myself if what I am doing with ER in my small language school teaching context really warranted a trip to Dubai. By lunchtime on Friday I knew that it did. I saw some very interesting presentations that gave me new ideas to do more with what I have. I was inspired by some of the presenters doing such creative work with very few resources. Rob Waring's plenary, more clearly defining ER, assured me that there is room in 'the tent' for me too.

One of the highlights for me was a colloquium on writing graded readers. The assembled panel of seasoned writers discussed, in an informal and accessible way, getting graded readers from an initial idea for a story to publication, and all the problems that lay along that bumpy road. Throughout the conference there were break times where it was very easy to join conversations with groups of people I would not otherwise have had the opportunity to meet. I was also able to speak with some of the publishers and it was educational to hear about how different the demands of the market are in different regions.

<div align="right">Catriona Takeuchi</div>

I must admit that I was hesitant to attend the ERWC this year only because Dubai was not on my bucket list but, as usual, I am really glad that I did. The session, "Implementing ER under difficult circumstances" was of particular interest to me because of my involvement with ER in schools in Nepal. The countries represented in this session were Romania, Mexico, Malaysia, Brazil and Vietnam. While each context had a different set of challenges, the one common thread was a lack of resources, or more specifically, a sufficient number of books to keep the programs going. What struck me was the inventive ways that the schools were going about remedying this situation. From using novels and student-created books, printing e-books, to copying online materials, the need to keep the learners supplied with reading materials attests to the commitment to their programs but also has longer-term implications on the issue of sustainability. Having connected to the participants, I left wondering how we could somehow support each other in getting materials to places in need of them. Is there not some easier way to redistribute books from places of abundance to places in need?

<div style="text-align:right">Ann Mayeda</div>

World Congress Photo Quiz

Which pages do photos of the following people appear on? Catriona Takeuchi, Tom Robb, Paul Goldberg of X Reading, Hugh Graham-Marr of Abax, Rob Waring and sun, Lesley Ito, and Melanie Gobert. How many photos does Marc Helgesen's appear in? Who received an upside-down certificate? Send answers to erj@jalt.org. The winner will be announced in the next ERJ.

The conference opened with an announcement by Marc Helgesen that Sheik Mohammed of the UAE had just unveiled an ambitious plan to get elementary age students on the path to reading. This set the tone and reminded us that ER is a global movement that has so many possibilities for students, especially in an area of the world that has a stronger tradition in oral storytelling than book reading.

As well as the presentations, being able to interact with the attendees socially was also a benefit. I met a lot of teachers from the Gulf region while eating the delicious food provided for us during lunch and the coffee break, and learned a lot about English education in that part of the world. In fact, one of the teachers promised to keep me updated about the UAE's extensive reading plan! There were so many teachers from Japan at the conference that I joked it was a mini-JALT. It was enjoyable to hang out, sightsee, and casually talk about ER and our teaching situations. I learned almost as much by talking with others as I did from attending presentations.

Rob Waring's plenary on revisiting the definition of Extensive Reading was a great way to start the last day. As someone who has been involved with ER in a non-university setting for a very long time and has had occasional concerns over whether or not I was implementing ER correctly, it was comforting and inspiring to hear his argument for "Big Tent" ER.

<div style="text-align:right">Lesley Ito</div>

The Whodunit Ellie Koo Mystery Reader Plot Competition

Open to both students and teachers.

What?

Do you have good ideas for stories? Here's your chance to put it to the test.

Abax is having a competition for the best plot idea for a Whodunit Ellie Koo Mystery reader. The winner with the best plot idea will:

- see their plot idea used as the basis for a Whodunit Ellie Koo Mystery reader to be written by award-winning writer and author of the series, Adam Gray.
- have their name in the book.
- win an award certificate for the equivalent of U.S. $500.00 for the buying and shipping of books from one of a selection of booksellers (to be announced later).

Who is Ellie Koo?

Getting Ellie Koo and the other characters right is key. So check out the two Ellie Koo stories in Fiction in Action: Whodunit and the story in the soon-to-be-published Whodunit Ellie Koo Mystery, The Body in the Elevator.

How?

Send a 300-500 word description of your plot idea by no later than May 31st, 2016. Be sure to include your full name and your address and educational institution. Send the description to hugh@abax.co.jp. The title of your email should be "Ellie Koo Plot Competition."

A panel of judges will decide the winner, to be announced on the Abax website and Facebook page, on July 16th, 2016.

Recent research in ER

Please visit erfoundation.org/bib to find the ER Foundation's ER Bibliography, originally compiled by Rob Waring, and now maintainted by George M. Jacobs, Willy A. Renandya, Thomas N. Robb, Meng Huat Chau, Rob Waring, Jason Kok Khiang Loh, Peter Viney, Fauziah Hassan, and Scott Miles. It includes over 400 books and articles, going back to 1919.

PanSIG 2016
Innovations in Education
Meio University Okinawa
May 20th to 22nd

ER Colloquium at JALT2015

Join us at the Extensive Reading Colloquium to see Lesley Ito, Heather Doiron, Clint Denison, Imogen Custance, Stuart McLean, and JALT2015 featured speaker Jane Spiro offer their answers to our 2015 SIG theme, "What is Extensive Reading?" Stick around after the discussion for our annual Great Reader Giveaway with plenty of books to go around and a special announcement from Paul Goldberg about available grants to push ER research forward.

ER with young learners and returnees
Lesley Ito
BIG BOW English Lab

Most ER programs in Japan take place in a university setting, where students are required to read in order to pass the class. The presenter will describe a successful ER program that is entering its tenth year at a private language school for young learners. Students develop a reading habit and a love of literature, despite the fact that there is no real extrinsic motivation, such as course grades. The use of narrow reading encourages students to find a series or genre they enjoy in order to enable them to read a lot. Many returnees who are part of this program find that the use of ER helps them maintain and build on their English skills.

Extensions of extensive reading: Graded readers and language focused learning
Heather Doiron
Nanzan University

Providing meaningful language focused learning activities for oral communication students who only meet once a week presents several challenges in the EFL classroom. This session will be useful for teachers who wish to use extensive reading for the purpose of incorporating language-focused learning in oral-communication classes. The presenter will show how extensive reading can support the scaffolding of language focused learning opportunities. Upon the completion of this presentation the audience should have a better understanding of how extensive reading can be used to draw deliberate attention to language items and enrich student discourse.

Comparing two secondary school ER programs
G. Clint Denison & Imogen Custance
Temple University Japan

A commonly cited principle of extensive reading (ER) is that reading should be its own reward (Day & Bamford, 1998), and that minimum word requirements and follow up tests are not only unnecessary, but discouraged. But is this really practical in Japanese secondary schools? In this presentation we discuss two ER programs; one that pushes learners with word requirements, and one that allows learners to read at their own pace. A comparison suggests that although many motivated learners will read extensively without word requirements, having such requirements will normally result in more words having been read by the end of high school. In addition, word requirements can set learners down the path to reading extensively, and discovering a joy in reading that they might otherwise never have discovered. Lessons learned and implications will be discussed.

Students' views of the top ten
Stuart McLean
Kansai University

A survey was completed by 212 Japanese university students on how Day and Bamford's Top Ten principles for ER and other methods of conducting ER influenced the amount they read, and the development of a reading habit. Rasch analysis concluded that the data collected is reliable, and that teachers weekly monitoring reading amount through MReader and target setting motivated students to read more, and develop a reading habit more successful than any of the top ten principles.

ER research sponsorship opportunities
Paul Goldberg
Xreading.com

While it is good that the practice of extensive reading is becoming more widespread, the reality is there are few well-done studies showing empirically the benefits gained, and the best practices for implementation. To address this deficiency, Xreading will be providing grants for research in extensive reading. The speaker will explain the scope of the grants as well as the guidelines and criteria for teachers interested in applying for a grant.

Sunday November 22 9:50 AM

Room 1001-2 Shizuoka Granship

Other ER-related presentations at JALT2015

Saturday November 21

11:00 AM - 11:25 AM — Hikae 2 (2F)

Michael Ellis - International Christian University High School

Reading for speed and breadth: TR and ER

1:55 PM - 2:20 PM — Practice Room 3 (B1F)

Keiko Takahashi - Motosushouyou High School

Developing reading skills in an ER community

3:45 PM - 4:30 PM — 901

Reading SIG annual general meeting

4:40 PM - 5:40 PM — 901

Andy Boon, Lesley Ito - Atama-ii Books

Atama-ii Books: Multi-choice graded readers

4:40 PM - 5:40 PM — 904

Paul Goldberg - Xreading

Advantages of doing extensive reading online

5:15 PM - 5:40 PM — 908

Douglas Forster - Japan Women's University; Joseph Poulshock - Tokyo Christian University

Promote big reading through the "As If Principle"

5:15 PM - 6:15 PM — Practice Room 2 (B1F)

Laura Macfarlane - EFL Club; Alastair Lamond - englishbooks.jp

Designing & developing a young learner ER program

5:15 PM - 6:45 PM — Tenji Gallery (6F)

Stephen Alan Shucart - Akita Prefectural University; Mamoru Takahashi - Akita Prefectural University

Plot-driven versus character-driven stories

Sunday November 22

9:50 AM - 11:20 AM — 1001-2

JALT ER colloquium: Defining extensive reading (see opposite for details)

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM — Room: 908

Catriona Takeuchi, Ann Mayeda - Atama-ii Books

Atama-Ii Plus: Graded Literature in the Real World

11:35 AM - 12:35 PM — Wind Hall (11F)

Paul Nation - Seed Learning

Vocabulary learning from extensive reading

12:10 PM - 12:35 PM — 908

Trevor Holster - Fukuoka University; William Pellowe - Kinki University Fukuoka; J. Lake - Fukuoka Jogakuin University

Measuring and predicting graded reader difficulty

2:55 PM - 3:55 PM — Hikae 2 (2F)

Paul Goldberg - Kwansei Gakuin University

Options for online extensive listening

4:05 PM - 4:30 PM — Practice Room 2 (B1F)

Naoko Kawakita - Miyazaki Prefectural Nursing University

Extensive reading with high school textbooks

6:25 PM - 6:50 PM — 1002

Bieri, Thomas E. - Nanzan University

University Student Reactions to Extensive Reading

7:00 PM - 7:25 PM — 1002

Alastair Graham-Marr - Tokyo University of Science

Flipping the class through literature circles

Monday November 23

9:15 AM - 10:15 AM — 1001-2

Joseph Poulshock - BeeOasis.com; Douglas Forster - Japan Women's University

The benefits of extensive reading

10:25 AM - 11:25 AM — 1003

Hitoshi Nishizawa, Takayoshi Yoshioka - National Institute of Technology, Toyota College

A million words: A milestone to EFL learners' ER

11:00 AM - 11:25 AM — 906

Marie Kjeldgaard - Aichi University

Combining skills instruction and extensive reading

JALT2015 is at Shizuoka Granship

Full schedule, and more details on jalt.org

2015 Extensive Reading Colloquium
"What is ER?"

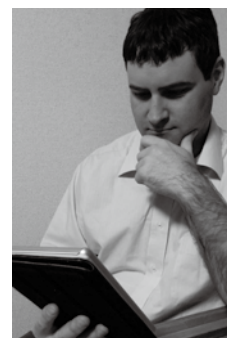Lesley Ito

ER with Young Learners and Returnees

Heather Doiron

Extensions of ER: Graded Readers and Language Focused Learning

Imogen Custance & Clint Denison

Comparing Two Secondary School ER Programs

Stuart McLean

Students' Views of the Top Ten

Paul Goldberg

ER Research Sponsorship Opportunities

and JALT2015 featured speaker

Jane Spiro

Sunday November 22 9:50 AM Room 1001-2 Shizuoka Granship