

The 10th Extensive Reading Seminar

JALT Extensive Reading SIG
October 14, 2018 at Hiroshima YMCA

Block Schedule:

| Time | Presenters | Title |
|--|---|---|
| 9:30-10:20 | Opening panel: <i>A decade and then some: ER SIG Coordinators reflect</i> Darren Elliott leads a panel discussion of ER SIG Coordinators past & present: Daniel Stewart, Mark Brierley, Thomas Bieri, Joanne Sato, Barry Keith. | |
| 10:25-10:50 | Paul Goldberg | <i>Using a digital library to evaluate graded readers</i> |
| 10:50-11:15 | Rob Waring | <i>Update on www.er-central.com. What are the data telling us?</i> |
| 11:20-11:50 | Posters: Timothy Gutierrez: <i>The first semester of an extensive listening curriculum: An in-progress report.</i> Cory Koby: <i>One Slice of the ER Pie: Reading Speed</i> Jim Ronald & Katsuya Koresawa: <i>Extensive Reading Marathon: More than a One-Month Dash!</i> Richard J. Walker: <i>MReader & XReading: Views from the lowest level</i> | |
| 11:50--12:30 LUNCH | | |
| 12:30-12:55 | Nicholas Medley | <i>Implementing a vacation extensive reading program</i> |
| 1:00-1:25 | Darren Elliott | <i>"She is beautiful in her wedding dress... Then she faints": Gender representation in Graded Readers.</i> |
| 1:30-1:55 | Atsuko Takase, Kyoko Otsuki, Kiyomi Yoshizawa | <i>How to combat academic dishonesty in extensive reading programs</i> |
| 2:05-2:30 | Gregory Scholdt | <i>Report on a Collaborative Quantitative Research Training Project</i> |
| 2:35-3:00 | Catherine Cheetham, Melody Elliott | <i>Connecting ER Achievements to TOEIC Results</i> |
| 3:05-3:30 | Greg Rouault, Stuart McLean | <i>Researching the effectiveness and efficiency of ER versus grammar translation</i> |
| 3:40-4:30 | Kris Ramonda, Rob Waring, Paul Goldberg | <i>How to write your own graded reader and get it published</i> |
| 3:05-4:35 Hiroshima JALT Graduate Showcase: Hao Jingxin: <i>A Comparative Study of Teaching Native Cultures in Senior High School English Textbooks between China and Japan</i> Stella Anggrainy: <i>A Case Study on the Zone of Proximal Development in Role-Playing as an English Language Activity in a Primary School in Japan</i> Rie Yamaji: <i>An Analysis of Factors Affecting English Teachers' Textbook Use at a Junior High School in Japan</i> | | |

Thank you to the officers of the JALT Extensive Reading SIG and JALT Hiroshima Chapter for volunteering their time and effort towards this event.

ER Seminar Chair, Thomas E. Bieri

ER Site Chair & Local Coordinator, Daniel James

ER Seminar Abstracts

A decade and then some: ER SIG Coordinators reflect

Panelists: Thomas E. Bieri, Nanzan University; Mark Brierley, Shinshu University; Barry Keith, University of the Ryukyus; Joanne Sato, Toyo University; Daniel Stewart, Kaisei Academy/NHK.

Moderator: Darren Elliott, Nanzan University

As the ER Seminar returns for its tenth inception to the city which hosted the very first one, this presentation brings together the current and former coordinators of the JALT Extensive Reading SIG in a moderated panel discussion to reflect on where we have come from and where we may be going. Moderator Darren Elliott will use his interview skills to lead the discussion. The other participants will be: Daniel Stewart, SIG Coordinator from founding to 2010. Mark Brierley, SIG Coordinator from 2010 to 2011. Bjorn Fuisting, SIG Coordinator from 2011 to 2012 (*unable to attend*). Thomas E. Bieri, SIG Coordinator from 2012 to 2016. Joanne Sato, SIG Coordinator from 2016 to 2017. Barry Keith, SIG Coordinator from 2017 to present.

Using a digital library to evaluate graded readers

Paul Goldberg, Xreading

A fundamental benefit of a digital library connected to a learner management system is that it can be used to monitor and assess students' reading progress. It can track how many books, words, and minutes a student has read. However, a digital library can also be used to evaluate graded readers. By flipping the metrics around, instead of analyzing each student by the books he or she has read, it is possible to analyze each book by the number of students who selected it, the completion rate, and the speed at which it was read. If user profiles are included, it is possible to see demographic trends such as which books are preferred by particular age groups or genders. In addition, user ratings can easily be collected. All of this information can have important applications for teachers and administrators running extensive reading programs. For example, it can give guidance on which books to recommend to students, or which books to select as class readers. In this workshop, the presenter, who is the owner and founder of the subscription based online library, Xreading, will demonstrate how the system can now easily provide educators with insightful book usage data.

Update on www.er-central.com. What are the data telling us?

Rob Waring, Notre Dame Seishin University

This presentation will first review what the free extensive reading website www.er-central.com is and go over its features which include presenting reading and listening texts with quizzes, speed reading activities and vocabulary learning through spaced-repetition. ER-Central uses an adaptive leveling system to match the students to their predicted level and adjusts the level of each text by L1. The main part of the presentation will be reporting on what the data are telling us about online extensive reading. We started to collect data a few months ago and will be doing so continuously until the day of the conference. We expect more findings to emerge between now and then. These data will be on the types of texts students select to read and listen to, their completion rates, their comprehension rates, the quiz uptake rates and so on. Data will also be presented on the words they claim to know and not know, which words they look up and whether they choose to learn them intentionally later or not. Participants will be invited to discuss these data and make suggestions for what data the website should collect in the future.

The first semester of an extensive listening curriculum: An in-progress report.

Timothy Gutierrez, Nihon University

In April 2018, I introduced an extensive listening component to five sections of a first-year university oral communication course at a Japanese university. This course previously relied upon listening activities designed to raise students awareness of the suprasegmental aspects of the English language. My primary goal for adding the extensive listening component is to provide a volume of comprehensible input to supplement the more discreet listening tasks which the students have been more commonly exposed. My secondary goals for the course include increasing students' enjoyment of listening to English and raising students' awareness of the power of extensive listening to improve their English ability. The curriculum is being developed through an action research style approach where problems are identified through teacher reflective journals and feedback solicited from the students. This session will describe the method for implementing extensive listening, in which students used the virtual library X-Reading to access the audio component of graded readers and the learning management system Moodle to read weekly instructions and write reports on listening. It will also show the settings I chose for X-Reading and Moodle as well as relevant comments illustrating problems encountered and solutions elicited through the journals and feedback.

One Slice of the ER Pie: Reading Speed

Cory Koby, Miyagi Gakuin University

Reading extensively (ER) in a second language is widely believed to build reading rates and fluency (e.g. Day & Bamford, 1998; Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Several studies have established the effectiveness of ER in increasing reading speed (Huffman, 2014; McLean & Rouault, 2017; *inter alia*), and this present study is intended to contribute the field in much the same manner. This study examined the reading speed of one complete cohort of first-year Japanese university students majoring in English (n=77) over the course of their second semester. Participants in this study read a minimum of 120,000 words, and an average in excess of 220,000, with two surpassing the half-million mark! A series of weekly in-class speed reading exercises and associated comprehension quizzes were administered throughout the semester. Reading speeds, quiz scores, semester reading volume, and TOEIC scores were cross-analyzed for statistical significance. This initial investigation will serve as the foundation for a longer-term study that will result from a full 2 years of ER—and a minimum of 540,000 words—being completed by this cohort.

Extensive Reading Marathon: More than a One-Month Dash!

Jim Ronald & Katsuya Koresawa, Hiroshima Shudo University

This poster presentation is a progress report and reflection on the second year of an English extensive reading programme at a medium-sized, middle-ranking Japanese university. In the first year, the focus was largely on getting as many students as possible to join one-month extensive reading campaigns. The vast majority of students were also in class- or course-managed ER programmes, with teachers strongly encouraging or automatically signing up their classes of students. While hundreds of students did sign up (or were signed up) for the campaigns, relatively few reported reading at levels that could be described as extensive, and even fewer kept reading large amounts beyond the campaign months or in the following year. This year, the theme is Extensive Reading Marathon, with the focus on keeping reading, for one to four years. There is no whole class enrolment and numbers of students are rather low. However, for students, teachers, and administrators, this is a long-term project, with the aim of supporting students' autonomous learning. As we report on this project, we will also share reflections on the value of different types of extensive reading campaigns.

MReader & XReading: Views from the lowest level

Richard J. Walker, Reitaku University

This poster presentation presents the opinions of 21 students majoring in English and Communication Studies at a university in Chiba. Placed in the lowest-level group on account of their TOEIC scores, they experienced using MReader and XReading for one semester each. They used MReader as part of a first-year Communication course for one semester (between September 2017 and January 2018), and XReading as part of a second-year Communication course for another semester (between April and July, 2018.) At the end of July, all answered a questionnaire on their use of both resources. It included questions on their preference of medium and why it worked for them. Results provide much food-for-thought. They reveal their attitudes towards ER at the university, a consideration of where it fits into their learning aims, their performances with different media, their choices of reading, and the roles that both MReader and Xreading could play in improving future ELT programs.

Implementing a vacation extensive reading program

Nicholas Medley, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University

Studies have shown that over the summer vacation, primary school students lose much of the learning gains made during the school year (Cooper et al., 1996). Similar to summer reading programs for native English speakers, a vacation reading program for language learners may be one way to mitigate language losses due to lack of contact with English. In this presentation, the speaker will describe the process of setting up vacation reading assignments using an online extensive reading library (Xreading) and report on the lessons learned after implementing these assignments for English language learners at a private university in Japan. Participants will then discuss options for creating their own vacation reading programs that encourage students to continue reading over the breaks.

"She is beautiful in her wedding dress... Then she faints": Gender representation in Graded Readers.

Darren Elliott, Nanzan University

In order to see improvement, extensive reading (ER) requires the reader to read hundreds of thousands of words (Nation (2014, Nishizawa et al, 2010). Most research into ER looks either at the practical management of programmes, or the effect of ER on aspects of learners' language proficiency. However, alongside the target language, the extensive reader will absorb cultural values. This, the presenter suggests, is something that teachers, schools, and publishers need to be more aware of. Based on established research methodologies used to examine textbooks, this presentation looks at a number of graded readers

and analyses them for gender representation in order to better understand the values we are promoting to our learners. For the study, 100 graded readers in the 200 - 600 headword range (replicating the level and volume many Japanese university students would be expected to read) were analysed by text and image. The researcher considered the gender of the protagonists, the gender of named characters, interactions between characters of the same and different genders, and the ways in which men and women were depicted in work, in and out of the home. The presenter will discuss the implications of his findings, and outline future research directions.

How to combat academic dishonesty in extensive reading programs

Atsuko Takase, Kwansei Gakuin University; Kyoko Otsuki, Nara Prefectural University; Kiyomi Yoshizawa, Kansai University

Learners' dishonesty in extensive reading (ER) has recently been discussed as a big problem that prevents ER programs from succeeding. Following Day and Bamford's ten principles (2002), especially (1) Reading materials are easy, and (6) Reading is its own reward, will help avoid it. In this study, 147 university students participated in ER for one year. They were provided with an abundance of easy materials and encouraged to read 50 - 100 easy books at the beginning depending on their English proficiency measured by Edinburgh Project on Extensive Reading Placement/Progress Test (EPER PPT), and given half of the classroom period for sustained silent reading. Also, instead of answering follow-up comprehension questions, learners were required to keep a reading log with short comments after reading, and evaluated by the improvement of their English proficiency, fluency and grammar knowledge administered at the onset, in the middle, and at the end of the program. The results showed their improvement in all the tests, which indicates that these principles motivated learners to read with joy leaving little or no room to cheating. Reference Day, R., & Bamford, J. (2002). Top ten principles for teaching extensive reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 14(2), 135-141.

Report on a Collaborative Quantitative Research Training Project

Gregory Sholdt, Kobe University

Conducting and publishing classroom-based research is one way for language teachers to contribute to their field; however, a strong understanding of research methods can be critical when designing and executing a study. The goal of this presentation is to describe a unique professional development project that helps language teachers gain skills and knowledge related to conducting quantitative research. Thirty-one language teachers from around Japan joined the 2018 Quantitative Research Training Project in March 2018 and independently followed the same procedures for a small-scale study on methods of choosing graded readers in Xreading in their own classrooms in the 2018 spring semester. While conducting the study, the teachers connected through an online discussion forum and resource center created with Google Classroom. Participating teachers discussed issues, raised questions, and shared ideas about the research process while making use of online resources and receiving guidance through each step of the study. The goals for the teachers included developing knowledge in quantitative methods, gaining practical experience, and connecting with a community of EFL teacher researchers. The presenter will provide an overview of the project, an explanation of project's approach to professional development, and report on the teachers' collaborative learning efforts and research activities.

Connecting ER Achievements to TOEIC Results

Catherine Cheetham & Melody Elliott, Tokai University

For Extensive Reading (ER) to gain greater support within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) curricula and communities, there is an obligation to show that ER provides measurable gains in student language proficiency regardless of the time constraints placed on university ER programs (O'Neill, 2012). Since TOEIC results speak volumes to both students and administrators, effectively connecting those achievements to incremental gains attained from ER and ultimately greater reading fluency is key. This study examined the relationship between ER, timed-reading activities, and the results of a mock TOEIC. The 112 participants were subdivided into 4 groups based on the number of words they read over the course of 15 weeks. The results suggest that there is plausibility to the notion that ER and timed reading are beneficial to improve TOEIC scores under certain conditions. Namely, a student needs to read at least 150,000 words or more with an average of 160 wpm or an average incremental increase of 27.8 wpm over a 15-week period. Although questions remain as to the true impact that ER and timed-reading activities have on TOEIC achievements, this research concurs with previous studies that a large amount of ER is necessary for reading fluency to improve.

Researching the effectiveness and efficiency of ER versus grammar translation

Greg Rouault, Tezukayama Gakuin University; Stuart McLean, Osaka Jogakuin University

Previous studies examining the development of reading rates through extensive reading (ER) have faced methodological limitations based on their design or analyses. Such limitations have included unequal time on task (Iwahori, 2008; Robb & Susser, 1989), no evidence of reading comprehension (Bell, 2001; Mason & Krashen, 1997), limited reading to qualify as ER (Taguchi, Takayasu-Maas, & Gorsuch, 2004), different pre- and posttests (Huffman, 2014), and quasi-experimental design in Beglar, Hunt, and Kite (2012). This study addressed these limitations and investigated the impact of two treatments (ER and grammar translation) on reading rate development. In this experimental design, 1st-year students (N = 50) studying in compulsory English language courses at a Japanese university were randomly assigned to one of the two treatment groups. Results showed a statistically significant improvement in post-treatment reading rates for the ER group over the grammar translation group, while controlling for time on task. Results which provide evidence of both the effectiveness and efficiency of developing reading rates through ER support its broader inclusion in school programs versus traditional grammar translation exercises. The implication for further research is that classroom-based, experimental reading studies which control for similar time spent conducting treatment tasks can be designed and conducted.

How to write your own graded reader and get it published

Kris Ramonda, Kansai University; Rob Waring, Notre Dame Seishin University; Paul Goldberg, Xreading

In the age of Amazon Kindle and Barnes & Noble's Nook, the practice of self-publishing books has become increasingly widespread. This provides an excellent opportunity for creative teachers interested in writing graded readers for an audience beyond their own students. This presentation will focus on the process of writing a graded reader from the perspectives of an author, editor, and online publisher. The first part of the presentation will focus on story formation, plot development, key elements, and potential pitfalls. We will discuss character creation, plot development, and other aspects of effective story telling. The presenters will then overview the practical process of producing a graded reader from initial conception to published product. This will include the introduction of a free online graded text editor that can be used for appropriately leveling graded readers, and suggestions for obtaining artwork inexpensively. Finally, the participants will be encouraged to experiment with their writing by submitting texts for potential publication on an extensive reading website.

Hiroshima JALT Graduate Showcase Abstracts

A Comparative Study of Teaching Native Cultures in Senior High School English Textbooks between China and Japan

Hao Jingxin, Hiroshima University

National guidelines of Japan and China both emphasize developing learners' intercultural competence (IC). Learners' native cultures play a crucial role in stabilizing their identity and alleviating intercultural misinterpretation for their IC development. Therefore, this research intends to conduct textbook analysis, the main aim of which is to provide suggestions for teachers to conduct in-depth culture teaching.

A Case Study on the Zone of Proximal Development in Role-Playing as an English Language Activity in a Primary School in Japan

Stella Anggrainy, Hiroshima University

As the Japanese government plans to conduct English lessons that emphasize communication abilities, role-playing activities can be one of the good ways to support English learning. Therefore, an analysis will be conducted of role-playing as one of English learning activities in a primary school in Japan. Through the concept of ZPD, this research may provide insights on proper scaffolding that helps students enhance their English communication skills through a more advanced conversation.

An Analysis of Factors Affecting English Teachers' Textbook Use at a Junior High School in Japan

Rie Yamaji, Hiroshima University

The aim of the present study is to unveil factors that affect English teachers' textbook use at a junior high school in Japan. Four experienced teachers participated in the study. Classroom observations and semi-structured interviews were conducted and analyzed qualitatively. The results show that teachers' ability to adapt is one of the possible factors.