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Dear Readers,

It has been my great pleasure to edit this special issue of the TESL Reporter. The issue focuses on extensive reading and includes four articles and three reviews. I have written the opening article in this issue and provide a curricular model for reading that includes a component of extensive reading. This article provides background and support for the remaining three articles and the reviews.

Richard R. Day provides general guidelines to teachers and administrators on how to create a successful ER program. Following the basic steps outlined in his article can result in the effective implementation of a program that will help students improve their reading skills. In Day’s conclusion he emphasizes something that I tell teachers all the time: We must model ER for our students. As teachers, we should be regularly reading in our second language in order to show students that we are not just asking them to engage in this practice but that we do it as well.

Thomas Robb addresses a key issue that is often confronted by university English language programs. Should extensive reading be a requirement of the course and be part of a course grade? There are benefits to integrating ER into a curriculum to the point that completion of the reading is part of the overall grade. Robb outlines two approaches that have been applied at Kyoto Sangyo University in Japan and concludes that requiring the reading results in more students completing the reading.

George Jacobs outlines the benefits of creating learning communities that result in having students and teachers produce ER materials. In a socially situated learning context, learners and teachers are much more aware of their own needs and interests and thus can be challenged to create materials that will be of benefit to each other. Jacobs’ article also emphasizes the idea of giving students a clear audience to write for.

Ethan Lynn provides a review of online resources related to extensive reading. Aubrey Bronson, Ellen Bunker, Courtney Hinton, and Robb McCollum review the Oxford Bookworms Library series for extensive reading. The final review is provided by Laarni Espina of Pathways 3: Listening, speaking, and critical thinking.

My hope is that this special issue of the TESL Reporter will help programs that already have an ER component to evaluate the learning outcomes that are being achieved for your learners and that programs that are considering adding an ER component will have enough information here to get started. The ultimate goal of any reading instruction should be to engage learners with texts in meaningful ways so that learning occurs.

Neil J. Anderson
TESL Reporter Guest Editor
A Curricular Model for Reading: The Inclusion of Extensive Reading

Neil J. Anderson
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Reading is a central part of any curriculum for language learning (Anderson, 1999, 2008, 2012b, 2014; Grabe, 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 2011). Reading serves as linguistic input for learners; input they can return to over and over because the written word remains on the page. The purpose of this article is to provide second language (L2) reading teachers and curriculum developers a model of a balanced reading curriculum that includes an extensive reading (ER) component.

This issue of the *TESL Reporter* focuses on the topic of ER. Each of the articles provide input to teachers and curriculum coordinators to consider when making decisions on how to enhance an existing ER program or create an ER program for the first time.

This introduction provides a model of a balanced reading curriculum (Anderson, 2014) that I propose in order for teachers and curriculum coordinators to see the minimal components that should be part of a balanced reading curriculum. This model will set the stage for this special issue of the *TESL Reporter*.

A Curricular Model

Figure 1 illustrates my proposed model. Notice at the core of the model the three concentric circles. Reading is at the core of the circles. Let me emphasize the reason that reading is at the core of this model is because reading is the focal skill for the discussion that we are engaging in now. However, if I were going to focus on the development of listening skills then the core of the curricular model would be listening. The same applies for writing, speaking, grammar learning and vocabulary learning. As we view reading at the core of the model, it is essential that we recognize that we cannot teach reading in isolation of the other language skills. There
should be explicit curricular ties between reading instruction and vocabulary learning. There should also be explicit curricular ties between reading and grammar learning. Although our primary focus in this curricular model is on the development of depth in reading skills, we also want to be assured that there are meaningful connections to the other three language skills of listening, speaking, and writing. I emphasize this because we should not just assume that as we are focusing on the development of reading skills that there will also be development in these other important aspects of language learning. The more explicit we are in the ways that we plan for the integration of language skills in a curriculum, the more likely we are to assist learners in increasing their overall language proficiency.

![Figure 1. A Model for a Balanced Reading Curriculum](image)

Below the concentric circles, the primary goal of reading is listed. That goal is comprehension. When readers pick up a newspaper, a magazine, a book or log in to email, they expect to understand what they are reading. In all of our efforts to teach second language learners, we should not forget that comprehension is the ultimate goWith these two central aspects of the curricular model in mind, let me address the specific elements
that can be part of a reading curriculum. You will notice that at each end of the model, acting as bookends, are two types of reading instruction: intensive reading and extensive reading. A strong reading curriculum is going to include both of these types of instruction.

Intensive reading instruction is what happens within the classroom. During intensive reading, teachers help learners by using a variety of short texts and exercises that focus on the development of a specific reading purpose. From Figure 1 you see that I list what I consider to be four intensive reading components: phonological instruction, vocabulary instruction, reading strategies, and reading fluency. Explicit instruction in each of these elements is vital to the ultimate success of any reader. Let us consider each of these four elements of a reading curriculum.

**Holding in the Bottom**

The first curricular element that I include in this balanced model that is often ignored during L2 intensive reading instruction is bottom-up reading strategies; phonological instruction being the primary example of bottom-up strategies. Low proficient L2 readers require support through explicit instruction in decoding skills in order to develop rapid and accurate identification of lexical and grammatical forms.

Eskey (1988) pointed out over 25 years ago that L2 reading instruction “exhibit[ed] a strongly top-down bias” (p. 95) and thus as reading teachers, we needed to do a better job of helping readers “hold in the bottom” (p. 95) by including systematic decoding instruction as part of a reading curriculum in addition to instruction on how to effectively use top-down strategies. With respect to bottom-up reading instruction over the past 25 years, the situation in L2 reading instruction has not changed significantly. More recently, Birch (2007) reemphasized the need for a balanced approach to L2 reading instruction; one that provides instruction in both bottom-up and top-down processing strategies. Every L2 reading curriculum should be looking for some type of phonics instructional component that could enhance reading instruction, particularly for lower proficient readers. Birch (2011) emphasizes the rationale for bottom-up reading instruction by stressing that “an early goal for reading instruction
is for learners to achieve efficient automatic decoding abilities, so they have enough mental attention left over for comprehension, internalization of ideas, appreciation, and relaxation” (p. 488).

**Vocabulary Instruction**

The second curricular component of this model of reading is vocabulary instruction. Vocabulary instruction can focus on the acquisition of basic reading vocabulary as well vocabulary learning strategies.

Grabe (2009) points out that most vocabulary researchers argue that effective vocabulary learning is a combination of (a) learning words from context through extensive reading; (b) providing direct instruction of vocabulary words; (c) developing word-learning strategies; (d) building word-recognition fluency; and (e) developing word appreciation (and motivation) on students’ part. (p. 276)

When deciding what words to include in direct instruction, Gardner and Davies (2014) provide the most recent input for language teachers on specific vocabulary that language programs can consider for explicit instruction. Their new Academic Vocabulary List provides a wide frequency range of vocabulary that can be included for explicit instruction to strengthen reading skills. What sets this list apart is that it based on contemporary American English and is generated by Davies (2014) Corpus of Contemporary American English.

A recent publication by Schmitt, Jiang, and Grabe (2011) is also beneficial for reading instructors. Their research highlights that there is more to vocabulary instruction that simply knowing the meaning of a word. From their research we learn that even when learners report knowing 100% of vocabulary needed to read a text, reading comprehension scores only reach 70%. The implications of this research are significant in terms of vocabulary instruction. Just because you know the meaning of a word does not mean that you know how to integrate that word into a larger context. This helps us focus on the contexts in which words are used and the collocates that appear with words as part of vocabulary instruction.
Finally, in terms of vocabulary instruction, vocabulary learning strategies should play a central part of intensive reading instruction. The reason for such strategies is that not everyone needs to learn exactly the same vocabulary words. But if during intensive reading instruction we can provide learners with appropriate strategies, we can facilitate their independent vocabulary learning. Grabe (2009) provides suggestions for vocabulary learning strategies that include dictionary use, L1-L2 synonyms, flash cards, word-part information, mnemonics, analogies, and key-words. As we teach learners these strategies, teachers should first model the strategy so that learners see how to effectively use it. We must then provide authentic opportunities for the readers to actually use the strategy and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.

**Strategy Instruction**

The next component of effective intensive reading instruction is explicit strategy instruction.

Strategies are the conscious actions that learners take to improve their language learning. Strategies may be observable, such as observing someone take notes during an academic lecture to recall information better, or they may be mental, such as thinking about what one already knows on a topic before reading a passage in a textbook. Because strategies are conscious, there is active involvement of the L2 learner in their selection and use. Strategies are not an isolated action, but rather a process of orchestrating more than one action to accomplish a L2 task. (Anderson, 2005, p. 757)

In work that I have previously published related to strategy instruction (Anderson, 1999) I have illustrated how teachers can effectively model the use of strategies while thinking out loud while reading an appropriate text. As we model how effective readers use strategies and make strategy instruction more explicit, we engage learners’ metacognitive awareness. Metacognitive awareness training should be at the core of strategy instruction. I have identified five key elements of metacognitive awareness training: (1) preparing and planning for effective learning, (2) deciding when to use particular strategies, (3) knowing hot to monitor strategy use, (4)
learning to combine various strategies, and (5) evaluating the effectiveness of strategy use. (Anderson, 2012a). By blending these five aspects into explicit instruction, we will be able to help learners to be much more independent in their learning.

**Fluency**

The final component that I suggest be part of intensive reading instruction is reading fluency. I define reading fluency as “reading at an appropriate rate with adequate comprehension” (Anderson, 2009, p. 130). Appropriate rates will depend on the age of the reader (younger readers have slower reading rates than older readers), whether the reader is reading orally or silently (we read faster when we read silently), and what our reading purpose is. Adequate comprehension also is dependent on a variety of factors. For example, if our reading purpose is to scan a text to locate a specific piece of information then the only adequate comprehension level we would accept is if we are able to name the information that we are looking for (i.e., a specific date, name, or place). The key to this definition of reading fluency is the combination of both reading rate and reading comprehension. Fluency is not one of these elements alone, but the combination of both.

I have outlined in other publications (Anderson, 1999, 2008, 2009) five different in-class instructional activities that can be applied to the classroom: (1) shadow reading, (2) rate build-up reading, (3) repeated reading, (4) class-paced reading, and (5) self-paced reading. The point that I want to emphasize here is that we cannot expect readers to improve their reading fluency by simply telling them to read faster. We must provide guided classroom practice so that learners know what to do to increase their reading fluency.

**Maintaining a Balance**

While intensive reading instruction is the specific in-class activities that we engage in to teach students how to be stronger readers, extensive reading (ER) is the out-of-class reading opportunities where students can read longer texts and read for longer periods of time. All curricula designed...
to teach L2 readers must include an extensive reading component. It is within the context of the ER component of a curriculum where learners have practice opportunities.

One key element of the practice that we must provide to learners during ER is exposure to both narrative and expository texts. Gardner (2004) provides compelling data to illustrate that the vocabulary contained in both narrative and expository texts on the same theme is different. If we want students to develop in their academic reading vocabulary, we must provide exposure to expository texts. I think that reading programs should take a balanced approach to the selection of these two text types depending on the level of language proficiency of the reader. For example, for beginning level readers, the ER program should opportunities to read 80% narrative texts and 20% expository texts. As language proficiency increases that ratio can change so that by the higher levels of proficiency readers are exposed to 80% expository materials and 20% narrative. I would advocate that there always be both types of texts included in an ER program in order for readers to be exposed to both types of reading materials.

One final element about this balanced curriculum that I would like to point out is my hope that reading programs can somehow make stronger curricular ties between the intensive reading component of the program and the extensive reading component. Students would benefit significantly if the elements of intensive reading were explicitly tied to extensive reading. One way that this could be facilitated is if all students and the teacher were reading the same texts outside of class. I recognize that this is a controversial point within the context of ER. Some advocate that the student should select the ER materials. I advocate that there should be a curricular balance with some texts selected by the teacher that all students will read together while still providing some flexibility for student selected texts.

Also, there should be explicit opportunities to practice outside of class the specific skills being taught in class. For example, if the reading strategies of making predictions and confirming/rejecting the predictions are the instructional focus during intensive reading, there should be opportunities for the readers to practice that strategy immediate outside of class during extensive reading practice. Then during the next intensive
reading instructional session there are natural opportunities to evaluate how well the strategy is working for the readers. If the instructional goal during intensive reading is the explicit teaching of specific high frequency vocabulary, it would be ideal if the teacher had already identified that vocabulary in the materials that students will read during extensive reading. Then the learners get exposure to the vocabulary within a specific context.

This model of a balanced reading curriculum outlines what I see as the essential elements that programs should be discussing to establish learning outcomes at the program level as well as at the individual class level. With this big picture in mind, we can see that ER is not just an added component to a curriculum, but rather an essential component that provides opportunities for development of the learning outcomes that programs establish.

With this big picture view in mind, this special issue of the TESL Reporter provides three articles that will focus on ways that programs can more specifically implement ER.

References


About the Author

Neil J. Anderson is a Professor of Linguistics and English Language at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, USA. His research interests include second language reading, language learner strategies, learner self-assessment, motivation in language teaching and learning, and ELT leadership development. Professor Anderson is the 2014 recipient of the prestigious James Alatis Service Award to TESOL. Professor Anderson’s hobbies include running, photography, and, of course, reading.
Creating a Successful Extensive Reading Program

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Abstract
Extensive reading (ER) has been demonstrated to help students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in many aspects of English. However, EFL teachers interested in using ER in their classrooms may not understand how to do this since it differs in many critical respects from other ways of teaching and learning English. In this article, I discuss how teachers can set up and conduct successful ER programs.

Introduction
Research has shown that extensive reading (ER) has the potential of helping students of English as a foreign language (EFL) learn to read (e.g., Belgar, Hunt, & Kite, 2012; Iwahori, 2008; Judge, 2011; Nishino, 2007; Ro, 2013; Robb & Kano, 2013) and make improvements in other aspects of their English skills. However, EFL teachers may not know how to establish and conduct an ER program. In particular, they may not understand how to work with students who have not experienced the autonomy accorded by ER or do not understand the language learning value of reading easy, interesting material in a target language. The goal of this article is to discuss what teachers need to do to set up and conduct a successful ER program.

An Overview of Extensive Reading
The basis of ER is the well-established principle that we learn to read by reading. This is true for learning to read our first language as well as learning to read foreign languages. In teaching foreign language reading, an ER approach encourages students to read, read, and read. In ER, students read large quantities of easy material in the foreign language. They read for information and enjoyment, with the primary goal of
achieving a general, overall meaning of the reading material. Students select their own reading material and are encouraged to stop reading if it is not interesting or too difficult; over time, they are also encouraged to expand their reading comfort zone—the range of materials that can be read easily and with confidence. To capture these aspects of ER, Day and Bamford suggest that the motto of ER be “reading gain without reading pain” (1998, p. 121).

There are several reasons why it is beneficial to encourage language learners to read extensively. Studies show that students not only improve their reading fluency but they also build new vocabulary knowledge and expand their understanding of words they knew before (e.g., Kweon & Kim, 2008; Yamashita, 2013). Additionally, ER can help students improve their writing, as well as improve their listening and speaking abilities (e.g., Nishizawa, Yoshioka, & Fukada, 2010; Yamashita, 2008). And perhaps the best result of an ER program is that students develop positive attitudes toward reading in a foreign language and increased motivation to study that language (e.g., Nishino, 2005; Takase, 2007; Yamashita, 2004).

**Setting Up an Extensive Reading Program**

Starting an ER program requires a great deal of planning. In my experience, it takes at least six months. If an ER program is to be successful, among the decisions that need to be made are these:

1. **What should students read?**

   Any text in the target language that is easy enough for students to read with overall comprehension can be used as ER materials. Depending on the foreign language abilities of the students and the resources available, such materials may include materials written for first-language readers (e.g., adolescent literature), comic books, or online texts. Indeed, the Internet has become a valuable source of reading material.

   Additionally, a useful source of language learner literature—reading material written for an audience of foreign language learners, is graded readers. Graded readers are simply books, fiction and nonfic-
tion, specifically written for language learners; the content is controlled to match the language ability of learners. All the major publishers of English teaching materials have graded readers in English. Unfortunately, for learners of languages other than English, graded readers are scarce at best, so teachers have to be flexible and creative in finding books appropriate for their students. If this language learner literature is not available, carefully chosen children’s literature may be suitable for beginners. (See, for example, Hitosugi & Day, 2004, who used books written for children in a second-semester Japanese foreign language course.)

When graded materials are not available, a side-by-side translation in the students’ first language can help make more-difficult texts accessible. Teachers might also consider using prescaffolded material, such as stories that the students are already familiar with, like fairy tales or even books or movies they are likely to have already experienced in their first language.

Thanks to the Internet, a wealth of material is easily available. In English, for example, there are “easy English” news sites, such as those available through the BBC, Voice of America, and the *New York Times*; there is also a “simple English” version of Wikipedia with close to 100,000 entries.

Regardless of the source, teachers need to make sure their students have a wide variety of interesting books and materials. In addition to selecting high-interest materials, teachers must try to have available a wide variety of different genres, because students’ tastes in reading also vary greatly. For example, some students might want to read mystery or suspense stories while others might enjoy reading romance or science fiction. Others might be attracted to nonfiction, such as biographies.

The reading material in an ER library should be subdivided into difficulty levels so that learners of various ability levels can find material that they can easily understand.
2. How much reading should students do (either encouraged or required)? If that reading is required, should students be given credit?

Generally, when students are required to do something and are given credit for it, they are more likely to do it. (See Thomas Robb’s article in this issue of the *TESL Reporter* for additional ideas.) Hitosugi and Day (2004) set a reading target of four books per week for ten weeks, and awarded credit toward the students’ final grades depending on how many books they read. This worked well, but they learned that the target of four books a week was too high for their students. The average number of books the students read was 3.2 per week, or 32 books during the ten weeks. An ER target can be expressed in books, pages, chapters, or even time—two hours a week, for example. ER targets are flexible and can be adjusted to fit the reading abilities and schedules of the students.

Setting personal goals can often be a strong motivational factor. This is especially true for reading! Teachers should advise their students to consider their schedules and to set aside time to read (at lunch, before going to bed, etc.). Teachers can help their students set a reasonable target number of books to read per week or month, according to the time that the students’ schedules allow; teachers should then encourage their students to meet those goals. Having students complete a weekly ER journal helps them stay on track and helps teachers monitor their reading. Two samples of simple ER logs are provided in the Appendix. These can be easily adjusted according to the needs of the students and the extent to which their teachers integrate ER activities into the class curriculum. Some teachers have found it useful to monitor ER according to the weeks of a school semester (Appendix, Form 1); others require students to provide a very brief summary of each log entry so they can monitor general comprehension as well (Appendix, Form 2).

3. Where should reading be done—in class, out of class, or both?

Since an ER approach involves students reading a significant amount students will have to do most of their reading outside of class. Some
teachers also have their students read in class. Using valuable class
time to read shows students how important reading is.

4. How should students’ reading be graded?

As described above, some teachers use reading targets. Another possi-
bility for grading students’ reading is an Internet program, Mreader.
This program has comprehension questions on a large number of books
(in English), and is freely available for use by schools. See mreader.org
for details.

5. How should the program be introduced and advertised to the students?

Teachers have an important role to play in helping their students get
the most out of ER. As Day and Bamford point out, teachers need to
introduce their students to ER and provide essential guidance as they
read extensively (2002, p. 139). Students are unlikely to have any prior
experience with reading easy and interesting foreign language material
that they select themselves. It is very important to the success of an
ER program for teachers to introduce their students to ER and then
offer guidance during the program.

In introducing ER, teachers might begin by telling their students
what happens when they read and read and read. Teachers could point out
that research shows that ER

- helps students read faster and understand more;
- helps them to read in meaningful phrases, rather than word by
  word;
- increases their confidence in their reading abilities;
- increases their vocabulary knowledge;
- consolidates their grammatical knowledge; and
- helps improve their writing proficiency and oral fluency.

Another point teachers must stress while introducing ER to their stu-
dents is that the material has to be easy. Unfortunately, many students (and
perhaps some teachers) are conditioned to believe that they must read books that are difficult, that the only way to learn to read in a foreign language is by reading material that is beyond their capabilities. Day and Bamford label this the “macho maxim of second language reading instruction: no reading pain, no reading gain” (1998, p. 92). This is the wrong approach. Reading several easy books, allows learners to become more fluent, effective readers. In addition, students are able to learn new words and phrases over time, while enjoying what they are reading. To help free students from the macho maxim, teachers should ask their students to reflect on their experiences of learning to read in their first language—what types of materials did they read at first?

Students should be encouraged to read material that they like. Because students need to read many books, it is important that they are interested in and enjoy what they are reading. If the learners are excited about their books, they won’t want to put them down. Additionally, they will be more likely to attend to the content (meaning) of the text, rather than merely focusing on grammatical aspects. If their students do not find their books interesting or exciting, teachers should advise them to stop and find other books they may enjoy.

Teachers may want to consider having their students read the books they really enjoy a second time. This is useful for several reasons. Having already read a book once, students will be able to read it more fluently the second time. This helps build vocabulary knowledge as well as confidence, and this, in turn, leads to increases in reading rate.

Also, students should be told that it is not necessary to read for 100% comprehension. Teachers should instruct their students to read for general, overall understanding. This means that they should be able to follow the general storyline and grasp the main ideas of the text. In ER the aim is to read a great many books, so it is in the learners’ best interest not to struggle over every detail or to worry about the exact meaning of every word or phrase.

To reinforce this idea, teachers could ask their students to think about reading in their first language (or, if they do not read much in their first languages, ask the students to think about watching television or movies).
Most likely, they do not worry about every detail in their first language, so they should do the same for ER in the foreign language.

Another way to encourage reading for general understanding is to remind students that they are reading for pleasure and for benefits such as increased fluency and vocabulary knowledge. Teachers might want to stress to their students that there is no penalty for not understanding every detail, as they will not be tested.

It is also important for teachers to tell their students to ignore unknown or difficult words, to skip those words and continue reading. Although ER material should be easy for students, they will inevitably encounter unknown or difficult words or phrases. Students do not need to understand every word. Often, they can ignore words they do not know and still maintain a general understanding of the passage. Sometimes they can guess the meaning of words depending on the context.

The teacher can be of particular importance here in helping learners get used to living with some ambiguity when they read. One way teachers can do this is to have students skim a page or two of their books, circling any words they do not understand. Next, the students should read those same pages, being encouraged to focus on the general meaning and ignore any circled words. After they have finished, the teacher should find out how successful the students were by asking general questions about their texts (e.g., Who are the characters? Where are they? What are they doing?). Most likely the students can grasp the overall meaning, despite encountering a few unfamiliar words. If a student is unsuccessful in understanding the overall meaning of the text, then it is likely the book is too difficult. If the book has more than three to four unknown words on a page, then it is probably too difficult for beginning- and even intermediate-level readers.

In guiding their students, teachers need to check what they read to make sure that they are reading at the right level. That is, as students read more and more, their reading fluency will increase, so they will be able to read books that were initially too difficult. Sometimes students continue to read at the same level, and fail to move to a higher level. Teachers can easily determine this by looking at their students’ ER journals (if they are required). If a student has read a number of books at the same level for
three weeks or more, then he or she should be encouraged to move to the next level.

In addition to monitoring their students’ reading levels, teachers can monitor their students’ overall comprehension of their reading by incorporating ER activities in the classroom. One idea, suggested by Iwano (2003), is that teachers briefly interview their students individually about their reading while the rest of the class is reading independently. For other useful activities for monitoring students’ ER, see Bamford and Day (2003).

Additionally, it is a good idea for the teacher to be familiar with the range of ER materials available to their students. Being familiar with ER materials and having an awareness of each student’s reading level and interests will allow teachers to better help students as they expand their reading comfort zones; teachers will also be able to offer useful recommendations when students choose new books.

I should add a note of caution, however. Students can easily be confused about the balance between reading easy, enjoyable books and challenging themselves with books at a slightly higher level to expand their reading comfort zones. Because everyone has a desire to improve as quickly as possible, some learners might want to try to challenge themselves too much, too soon. Thus, it is important for teachers to pay attention to what their students are reading and to make sure that they are not struggling with texts that are too difficult. It makes more sense to help build learners’ confidence and fluency with easier books, bearing in mind that books that were at one time too difficult become easier to read later.

The goal of teachers is to spark their students’ interest in reading and find encouraging ways to make sure they keep on reading. If some students begin to lose enthusiasm, it might help if their teacher reads aloud to them from a book that is easy but captivating. A teacher’s enthusiasm when he or she reads aloud can help the students to get back into a frame of mind where they want to pick up a book at every opportunity.

Conclusion

Teachers, above all else, must help their students do well in their courses and pass the required examinations. However, at the same time,
teachers can increase their students’ competency in English and help them become fluent readers in English by engaging them in ER. It is important to realize that the increases in fluency, confidence, and motivation that so often result from reading extensively will help students in their academic endeavors, such as improving language exam performances.

I close with a tip for teachers: Be a role model as a reader. Day and Bamford claim that “effective extensive reading teachers are themselves readers, teaching by example the attitudes and behaviors of a reader” (2002, p. 140). Teachers who are first-language readers of English should consider reading extensively in their students’ first language. If English is a foreign language, then teachers should read with their students. As Nuttall observed, “Reading is caught, not taught” (1996, p. 229).

References


Retrieved from http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl/


**About the Author**

Richard R. Day is a professor in the Department of Second Language Studies at the University of Hawai‘i. His areas of specialization include second language reading, second language teacher education, curriculum design, and materials development. Dr. Day is a co-editor of *Reading in a Foreign Language* and is Chairman and co-founder of the Extensive Reading Foundation.
## APPENDIX: EXTENSIVE READING LOGS

### Form 1: Weekly Extensive Reading Log: Books (or pages) per Week

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Target:</td>
<td>books / pages (circle one)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name of Book</th>
<th>Number of pages read</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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</table>

TOTAL READING TIME THIS WEEK ________________

### Form 2: Weekly Extensive Reading Log: Hours per Week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target:</td>
<td>hours per week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name of Book</th>
<th>Time Spent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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TOTAL READING TIME THIS WEEK ________________
The Effect of Grade Weighting on Student Extensive Reading Performance

Thomas N. Robb
Kyoto Sangyo University, Japan

This paper describes three approaches for grading the extensive reading requirements implemented at Kyoto Sangyo University in. In order to encourage less motivated reader who likely would not complete the reading assignments, a grading requirement was imposed. The results suggest that when the course grading criteria includes a requirement to complete extensive reading, students are more likely to complete the reading.

An ideal extensive reading (ER) program, as outlined in Day and Bamford (2002), would place no grade requirements on students’ reading because “reading is its own reward” (p. 132). This paper, however, discusses a more common case—a curriculum in which ER is imposed on students as an outside assignment. For required classes consisting of mainly unmotivated students, reading goals must be set and students’ achievements must be reflected in the class’s final evaluation if students are to meet expectations.

In Kyoto Sangyo University’s general education program, two approaches to ER have been attempted, one with a much heavier weighting on the final grade than the other. The result was predictable: More students attempted to do the reading when it was weighted more heavily on the final grade; thus, more of those students achieved the target goal for their specific reading level.

Description of the ER Program at Kyoto Sangyo University

This paper reports on the curriculum-wide ER program that was in place from 2008 to 2012 at Kyoto Sangyo University. (In 2013, sadly, a new curriculum with no ER and emphasis on the TOEIC was put in place.) All students had access to the MoodleReader module on the school’s Moodle system, which has now been supplanted by the browser-based M-
Reader system. A typical student screen is displayed in Figure 1. Students took short quizzes on the books they read and accumulated a reading word count for each quiz they passed. See Robb and Kano (2013) for a discussion of the effectiveness of the program and http://mreader.org for further information about the software.

![Student screen in mreader.org.](image)

**Figure 1.** Student screen in mreader.org.

The General Education English Program at Kyoto Sangyo serves all first-year students in the university with the exception of the English and international relations majors in the Faculty of Foreign Languages and the students in the Faculty of International Culture (“Bunka Gakubu”). Until 2013 students were required to take eight credits of a foreign language, of which at least four credits were usually English. Each 90-minute class met twice a week for 15 weeks per term.
The program also offered a wide range of topical elective courses for students who wished to continue studying English or who failed to gain all eight credits during their first year.

Starting with the 2008 academic year, ER became a required component of the Oral Communication (OC) and Reading Skills (RS) courses. Students who elected to take both courses thus had a doubled reading requirement. Following is an extract from the introductory information about ER that was distributed to approximately 70 teachers who would be teaching the OC or RS courses with the ER requirement:

We realize that Sandai first-year students can be very busy with other school work, but we are convinced that extensive reading is important for them. While you are not required to do so, you might from time to time give them slightly less homework and instead encourage them to read their books. How much you compensate for this with the amount of homework you assign is completely up to you and will vary depending on the total amount of outside work expected of your students in their other subjects. This may vary considerably from faculty to faculty.

We foresaw that there would be reluctance on the part of many students to fulfill this requirement. Since we were implementing ER for the first time in this program, we opted to make the requirement, and its impact on the students’ final grade, relatively light.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year:</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral Communication (OC) and Reading Skills (RS)</td>
<td></td>
<td>872</td>
<td>659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Communication and another foreign language</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,131</td>
<td>1,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Skills and another foreign language</td>
<td></td>
<td>596</td>
<td>558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight credits of another foreign language, no English</td>
<td></td>
<td>198</td>
<td>637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,797</td>
<td>3,046</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Distribution of Language Study Choices, 2008 and 2009
Three Approaches to Weighting

Approach 1 (2009–2010)—Book count, final course grade +/- 5 points.

The following is extracted from the information provided to the teachers:

If the students have read five books and successfully passed their quizzes, their grade will not change. They will lose one point from their final grade for each book not read. Similarly, they will gain one point for each book that they read above the required amount.

Example:

1. A student’s final grade is 72. He or she has read only two books. His or her grade will be reduced by 3 points, to 69.

2. A student’s final grade is 72. He or she has read 11 books. His or her grade will be increased by 6 points, to 78.

Approach 2 (2010–2012)—Word count, final course grade +/- 5 points.

While the same point value was retained, the program switched from a “book” requirement to a “word” requirement (see Table 2). This change was prompted by a questionnaire administered to all of the students, which garnered over 1,000 responses. When questioned about the average time it took to read a book, 70% of the students at Level 1 (the lowest level) reported “30 minutes or less,” while 30% of the students at Level 5 reported “three hours or less.”

We realized that we were placing a much higher burden on the higher-level students while allowing the lower-level students to invest less time than we expected in their reading. An approach using word counts thus helped level the playing field, although we still required a higher word goal from the higher-level students, with the assumption that they were faster readers. (This assumption, however, seems to be misleading, but a discussion of this point will have to await another paper.)

This is the English translation of the information given to the students in Japanese:

If you read the number of words for your level shown in this chart [see Table 2], your final grade will not change. If you read fewer words,
your grade will go down a maximum of five points. If you read more than the required amount, your grade can go up a maximum of five points. If you read even more, your teacher might give you extra credit.

Table 2. Word-Based Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Words for 1 point</th>
<th>Required minimum words</th>
<th>Words required for full 5 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>15000</td>
<td>30000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>20000</td>
<td>40000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5000</td>
<td>25000</td>
<td>50000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6000</td>
<td>30000</td>
<td>60000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>7000</td>
<td>35000</td>
<td>70000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approach 3 (2012–2013)—Reading counts as 20% of final grade.

In the 2012 school year the English Curriculum Coordinating Committee decided to increase the weight of ER by (a) making it a percentage of the total grade so that students could more clearly grasp the consequences of not doing the work, (b) increasing the weight to a span of 20 points rather than the previous 10 points, and (c) awarding no credit to students who completed less than the minimum requirement. Thus, points that mathematically yielded a grade of 1–9 for the ER component were treated as if nothing at all had been read. The actual number of words required for each level remained the same.

Table 3. Word Requirements in 2012 and 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Words required to obtain 10 points*</th>
<th>Words required to obtain 20 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15000</td>
<td>30000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20000</td>
<td>40000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>25000</td>
<td>50000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>30000</td>
<td>60000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>35000</td>
<td>70000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Word counts under the minimum receive '0' points
Results year by year

Table 4 displays student performance over four years. Only the results for spring term are reported. Fall-term results are consistently less, perhaps because some students discovered that they could receive a passing grade for the course without expending too much effort on their extensive reading.

Table 4. Student Performance by Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term/Year</th>
<th>Total Students†</th>
<th>Passed No Quizzes</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Achieved Min. Requirement</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2009*</td>
<td>2,899</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>1,588</td>
<td>54.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
<td>3,351</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>2,091</td>
<td>62.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2011</td>
<td>2,847</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>1,386</td>
<td>48.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2012</td>
<td>3,066</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>2,626</td>
<td>85.65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 2009 was assessed in “books,” not “words.”
† Students taking both the OC and RS courses are counted twice.

From these data we can observe that the policy followed in 2012 had a significant effect on student conformance. Since two factors were changed, we cannot determine whether the threat of receiving zero points for failure to reach the minimum requirement or the fact that ER comprised 20% of their final grade was the greater motivator. We can, however, clearly state that in a Japanese university context, students are less likely to complete assigned outside work if nonconformance is not a threat to passing the course.

Discussion

There are many ways to confirm whether students have completed the desired amount of ER. With instructors invested in the ER approach, direct discussion—or oral or written reports—might suffice. For large classes, or when an ER requirement is applied in a top-down manner over
an entire curriculum, electronic assessment is more effective overall de-
spite its lack of a personal touch.

Regardless of the manner for performing the actual assessment, how-
ever, the importance placed on the ER component in overall class evalua-
tion will determine how much the average student will comply with the
requirement.

If the students read a lot, preferably over 100,000 words per term, 
teachers may find that the ER component of the class has contributed sig-
nificantly to the students’ overall improvement in language ability as well
as in reading itself. The requirements displayed in this paper are admittedly
low, but in light of the fact that the students were, on average, taking 15
other 90-minute courses concurrently, this was all that we could reasonably
expect from them. There were some students, however, who read signifi-
cantly more than their assigned target amount.

References

Reading in a Foreign Language, 14(2), 136–141.

Robb, T., & Kano, M. (2013). Effective extensive reading outside the classroom: A large-

About the Author

Thomas Robb, PhD, is an English professor and Chair of the 
Department of English in the Faculty of Foreign Languages at Kyoto 
Sangyo University. He has been an advocate of extensive reading for over 
25 years and is the developer of the MoodleReader plug-in and the 
mreader.org website.
Extensive Reading Materials Produced by Learning Communities

George Jacobs
James Cook University, Singapore

Abstract

This article advocates that students and teachers create some of their own extensive reading (ER) materials. Learning communities act as a means of motivating and sustaining student and teacher production of ER materials. The article begins by explaining learning communities. The bulk of the article has two parts. The first part focuses on student-created ER materials, discussing benefits and ways to produce such materials. The second part does the same for teacher-created ER materials. It is suggested that involving students and teachers in creating ER materials facilitates more egalitarian, more caring education practices.

Introduction

Previously, learning was viewed as a solitary activity that individuals engage in by interacting with their surroundings and constructing their own representations of the world (Piaget, 1980). However, while individuals’ input and knowledge construction are indeed important, most current views of learning see it as situated in social contexts (Vygotsky, 1978), with people in communities learning from and with each other. This spirit of community resonates in the African proverb “It takes a village to raise a child.”

Emphasis on the social nature of learning has led to the term “learning community” (Kellogg, 1999; Lave, 1988; Roth & Lee, 2006) and efforts to establish such communities (Blady, 2011; Saville, Lawrence, & Jakobsen, 2012; Shapiro & Levine, 1999). A learning community can be defined as diverse people working towards enabling the learning of all, especially students.
Learning communities are not confined to those directly involved in teaching and learning. Anyone who seeks to create an environment in which learning and learners are valued and supported can be considered a member of a learning community. Thus, members of learning communities can include students, teachers, administrators, others working in and for educational institutions, family members of these people, and people in relevant organizations, such as government bodies, nonprofit organizations, and private companies.

Specific characteristics of learning communities include those listed below (Francis, Morse, Lieblein, & Breland, 2011).

1. Easy and regular communication takes place among community members.

2. Trust among community members facilitates and is facilitated by this communication.

3. Every community member, regardless of status, feels valued and has his or her contributions honored.

4. Without neglecting the needs of the community as a whole, learning community members have space to pursue their own interests and needs, rather than following a one-size-fits-all curriculum.

The current article presents one way of implementing the concept of learning community. This involves teachers and students in creating materials that students use in extensive reading (ER) (Day & Bamford, 1998; Extensive Reading Foundation, 2011; Jacobs & Farrell, 2012). Extensive reading can be defined as students reading large quantities of comprehensible reading materials. This article explains the whys and hows of students and teachers creating ER materials, beginning with student-created materials.

**Student-Created ER Materials**

**Why Use Student-Created ER Materials?**

Deller (1990) proposed several benefits of student-created ER materials.
1. When students create ER materials, they are taking initiative and have more control over what they read. No longer are they confined to materials that already exist in libraries, bookshops, or on the web. As a result, students may feel a greater sense of ownership of their own learning.

2. Materials can better suit students’ backgrounds and interests.

3. Students may feel less threatened by reading materials and activities based on those materials, as students created the materials.

4. Students gain insight into language and, specifically, writing. They see that books do not grow on trees; books are written by authors, and students can become authors, too.

5. Teachers and peers learn more about other students by reading the ER materials they create.

6. Teachers enjoy greater variety because instead of using the same reading materials year after year, they have new, student-created materials every year.

7. Student-created ER materials help overcome financial constraints faced by educational institutions.

Deller’s (1990) list of benefits matches well with the characteristics of learning communities mentioned earlier in this article. First, students’ writing allows them opportunities to communicate about their lives, ideas, and interests with other community members. Second, when students’ writing becomes part of the materials used for learning, students feel that others trust them to be doers, rather than only receivers. Third, those usually at the bottom of the education hierarchy (i.e., students) are accorded status as book authors. Fourth, student-made materials give students scope to pursue and develop their unique interests, while at the same time contributing to the goals of the overall learning community.

**How to Facilitate Student-Created ER Materials**

Some learning community members may fear that students, especially younger and lower-achieving students, will not be able to create use-
ful ER materials. The ideas below attempt to address this legitimate concern.

1. Students can create ER materials for younger, less proficient students. This makes the task of writing more doable.

2. Students can use previously read books as models. The changes to these models can be as small as changing the visuals in a picture book or changing the setting of a story to the place where the writers live.

3. Students can use writing that they have done for other purposes and convert it into ER materials. An example would be compiling student projects to create a book. A table of contents and an introduction could be added.

4. Similarly, a group of students or an entire class can choose to write on one theme. Before writing, the group or class can do reading, viewing, and observation to build their knowledge on the theme. Cross-curricular themes can be used. The following paragraph is an example, adapted from Jacobs and Farrell (2012), of students writing on a mathematics theme.

As part of a measurement unit, students worked in pairs to create measurement books. These books were to be used as study tools and resources. The guidelines for writing the books included that they needed to contain at least six pages: one page each on a different unit of measurement of length, weight, and so on, with a visual to represent items that could be measured in that particular unit. When finished, each pair rotated around the room to read, examine, and experience other groups’ products and give them written feedback based on criteria developed by the class. This feedback emphasized the positive in the other groups’ books.

5. Students will often need teacher guidance, before and while writing, and teacher editing, while and after writing. Thus, teachers become editors of students’ writing. However, care must be exercised to ensure that students still feel ownership of their work.
6. Students can act as peer editors. This may reduce but does not eliminate the need for teachers’ supervision. Other learning community members can also be involved before, while, and after students write. For instance, an animal welfare organization could provide resources to boost student knowledge on the lives of hens raised for their eggs. The same organization might be able to fact-check student writing and publish some of what students wrote on the organization’s website.

7. The writing that students produce should have the features of professionally produced publications. These features might include a foreword, acknowledgements, a table of contents, an introduction, and visuals. Student writing can also be published on a website, on a blog, or through other media.

8. Hard copies of students’ work should be able to physically stand up to repeated readings. Perhaps with help from learning community members, such as the students’ family members, materials could have covers, binding, lamination, and other features to enable the materials to be enjoyed for many years. Two versions of the same work can be produced.
   a. Heavy-duty versions to stay with the teachers and to be available for reading by classmates and future students of the same course.
   b. Less rugged versions to go home with the students to take an honored place on the family bookshelf.

Celebrating Students’ Writing

To further show that student-created writing is valued, celebrations of various sorts can be held. Here are examples.

1. Author parties can be held, in which students give brief presentations about or reading from their works and then take questions. Refreshments and decorations can add to the celebratory atmosphere.

2. Students’ writing can be loaned to the school library, and the authors can receive thank-you notes or certificates from the library.
3. When student-created materials go in a class library, the library’s cataloging system can include those books with indexing by author so that students present and future can find each author’s works—for example, a student might search for the works of an older sibling, friend, or neighbor.

**Teacher-Created ER Materials**

Read the following excerpts from the reaction of one teacher—Daryl Lenos, who was taking a distance education course on Extensive Reading at the time—to the idea of teachers as writers of ER materials.

When I first began reading about teachers as ER materials writers and I realized I, a teacher, was being asked to be the composer of ER material, I was shocked. Why should teachers reinvent the wheel, or in this case, the literature, for the purpose of reaching particular students who are reluctant readers or readers who have difficulties, such as English as a second language students? It seemed absurd: too much time and too much energy, as if we have nothing else to do. Nonetheless, I decided to be the good student and finish with the article and somehow, somewhere between benefit number one and the end of the document, I began to see something of value in the theory of using the teacher as a writer.

Teachers already spend time searching for the right work; so, time may not be as big of an issue as I thought. We also spend too much time trying to explain writing that may not connect to the students, another waste of time. I realized that I understand my students and the curriculum better than anyone else. I even began to think about how many times I have created pieces of writing to act as samples anyway, and the idea of the teacher as the writer began to cement itself into my head.

As I read the “how-to” section, I continued to make mental connections. I never really thought of taking existing documents and altering them; it seemed wrong. I never liked borrowing ideas; it seemed wrong. And I rarely looked to colleagues for assistance; shouldn’t I stand on my own two feet? But perhaps it is okay. I think I . . . let me rephrase that, I know I already do these things! Maybe, with a little work and a little common sense, the teacher can become a writer of ER materials. (Jacobs & Farrell, 2012, pp. 39–40)
Why Use Teacher-Created ER Materials

Many teachers are similar to Mr. Lenos in their negative initial reaction to the idea of creating ER materials for their students. Below are some benefits that students, teachers, and other learning community members can reap from teacher-created ER materials.

1. All students can be good readers when they have the right materials to read. Unfortunately, even with the aid of the Internet, helping reluctant readers to find the right reading materials can be a long and frustrating task. Students reading in a second language often have particular difficulty finding materials that are both comprehensible and interesting. Teacher-created materials can help fill this void, and, once created, these materials can help many students, term after term.

2. Following from the first benefit, teachers know their students and their curriculum better than do the authors of books typically found in libraries and bookstores, authors who have never met the students.

3. Similarly, teacher-created materials can be as fresh as recent events, thereby providing just-in-time and just-in-the-right-place reading material that is linked to the lives of students and other learning community members.

4. In learning communities, everyone learns, not just those officially designated as students. Teachers can improve their own language skills, particularly their writing skills. Too often, teacher writing is confined to short emails, notes to students, and official reports. As a result of this limited use, teachers’ writing skills can atrophy. Fortunately, writing skills expand with use.

5. Teachers who write may become more understanding of students’ writing difficulties.

6. New electronic tools for writing, editing, and publishing materials become available all the time. Creating ER materials encourages teachers to use and learn about these tools, information which can later be introduced to students.
7. In learning communities everyone’s contribution is honored. By creating their own materials, teachers further enhance their image in their own eyes and the eyes of others, especially when they see students enjoying and learning from the materials which they, the teachers, produced.

8. Further increasing teachers’ esteem is the fact that, as with student-created materials, teacher-created materials provide an inexpensive source of reading materials. This cost saving is much appreciated, especially in times of tight budgets.

9. Perhaps the most important benefit of teacher-created ER materials arises from teachers serving as models of writing for their students. As a result of students reading their teachers’ writing, when teachers ask students to write, teachers are saying, “Do as I say and as I do.” They are also saying to students, “Writing is fun and rewarding; please join the fun.”

**How to Facilitate Teacher-Created ER Materials**

Before some suggestions for facilitating the production of teacher-created ER materials are provided, it should be pointed out that other learning community members can also produce ER materials. Now, here are the suggestions.

1. Materials need not be started from scratch.
   a. Teachers can adapt existing materials to their students’ needs—for example, simplifying certain words, adding background knowledge that students may need to comprehend the materials, or deleting or rewriting less interesting or less relevant sections of existing works.
   b. Teachers can borrow ideas from works they have read or seen—for example, creating new versions of fables by modernizing and localizing them.
   c. Teachers need to read and respond to students’ writing. While doing this, teachers can polish students’ writing to create good
models and attractive reading. Of course, the student who wrote the original would still be the author or coauthor, even if teachers do major reshaping and rewriting. If several students write on a related topic—for example, their career goals—or in a related genre—for example, horror stories—these short teacher-rewritten pieces can be combined into something of an anthology.

d. Teachers can recycle works they themselves wrote when they were students—for example, secondary school teachers can share some of their secondary school writing with their students.

e. Teachers can share what they write for nonschool purposes—for example, an email to a government official on a contemporary issue.

f. Remember that teacher- and student-created materials can be nonfiction, not just fiction, or can blend fiction and nonfiction. Indeed, in most careers, at higher levels of education, and in life generally, most writing is nonfiction.

2. Teachers can collaborate with colleagues.

a. Professional writers have editors. Fellow teachers can act as each others’ editors.

b. Teachers can combine their different strengths, such as using vivid phrasing, drawing, layout, or doing research on a particular topic.

c. Multidisciplinary ER materials can be created by teachers who teach different subjects.

3. Materials need not be long, even for older, more advanced students.

a. Short works—as short as one page—can go into files of materials on similar topics.

b. Collections of stories can make up a larger book. Similarly, teachers of the same subject or the same type of students can combine their works into a single anthology. Student works can also be included.
c. It is best for teachers to start small and build their skills and confidence. Thus, the first pieces teachers write may be short pieces used for intensive instruction rather than for ER.

d. Teachers’ writing, as well as students’ writing, can include a paragraph or a page entitled “About the Author(s).” Here, authors provide information on their backgrounds, including their interests and other works they have written or plan to write. Similarly, student and teacher writing can include an acknowledgments page, thanking those who have helped them in their lives or with this particular piece of writing. Indeed, many authors dedicate their books to special people, such as their parents.

e. Who knows? For a few teachers, writing for students and others may become a career or at least a supplementary career. For instance, Suchen Christine Lim (2007) was a Singapore teacher who now writes full-time. Jack C Richards (2013) was an ESL teacher who went on to become a best-selling author of textbooks for ESL students.

Conclusion

This article began with a description of learning communities, a diverse group of people who come together to promote the learning of students and others. The article’s main focus was on how learning communities can combine to produce ER materials. First, some benefits of student-created ER materials were explained, followed by suggestions for facilitating such writing. Second, the same was done for teacher-created ER materials, benefits followed by suggestions for facilitation.

Learning communities and ER both flow from a paradigm shift in society that has affected education. This paradigm shift moves society toward more egalitarian, more caring practices. Dewey was a philosopher of education who helped inspire this shift. He believed that “there is no greater egoism than that of learning when it is treated simply as a mark of personal distinction to be held and cherished for its own sake. . . . [K]nowl-
edge is a possession held in trust for the furthering of the well-being of all” (1934, cited in Archambault, 1964, p. 12).

Happy writing to you and your students!

References


About the Author

George Jacobs teaches at James Cook University’s Singapore campus. He holds a doctorate in Education from the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa and is on the board of the Extensive Reading Foundation. You can read more from Jacobs on extensive reading, cooperative learning, humane education, and environmental education at https://independent.academia.edu/GeorgeJacobs.

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

ACTA International TESOL Conference. October 30-November 3, 2014. Australia. “TESOL: Meeting the Challenge.” E-mail: Kristi.sheldon@ncsonline.com.au

MEXTESOL. October 16-19, 2014. Puebla, Mexico. “Mindful Teaching: Transforming Lives and Achieving Goals. E-mail: mariatrapero@hotmail.com

41st Puerto Rico TESOL Annual Convention. November 14-15, 2014. Puerto Rico, USA. “No One Left Behind: Integrating Multicultural Perspectives in the English Classroom.” E-mail: prtesol2014@gmail.com

TESOL Italy’s 30th National Convention, Learning Communities. November 14-15, 2014. Rome, Italy. “Learning Communities, Content and Language: Perspectives and Practice, Fostering Inclusive Education, Competences for New Generations.” E-mail: tesolitaly@gmail.com

TESOL France Annual Colloquium. November 14-16, 2014. Paris, France. “Professional Development, Language Acquisition, and Learners of English.” E-mail: tesolfrance@gmail.com

SILC 1st International Conference. November 15, 2014. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. “Motivation in ELT.” E-mail: conference@interlink.edu

20th International Conference of IAWE. December 18-20, 2014. Uttar Pradesh, India. “Asian/African Contexts and World Englishes.” E-mail: ravindergargesh@gmail.com
Online Resources for Extensive Reading

Review by Ethan M. Lynn
Brigham Young University, Utah, USA

The following five resources provide input for teachers on ways to implement many of the ideas suggested by the authors of the four articles in this special issue. As you review the information about each resource, think about ways that you can use it to develop or strengthen the Extensive Reading program in your English program.

Resource #1: The Extensive Reading Foundation: Promoting Extensive Reading in English as a Foreign Language

URL:  http://erfoundation.org/wordpress/

This site provides valuable resources for those who are well-versed in the realm of Extensive Reading as well as for those without any background information at all. For those with experience, an extensive archive is organized, featuring works that back to 1919. The myriad of information can be easily navigated through a chronological display or a subject index. Instructors at any level can remain connected with the latest research and practice related to extensive reading. For those who are new or discovering Extensive Reading, a toolkit is provided. Within the vast store of ideas and assistance, the toolkit features a guidebook, video tutorials, PowerPoint slides from experts in the field, and simple explanations of the basic aspects of Extensive Reading. Yearly, the Extensive Reading Foundation highlights the best new books published that year through the Language Learner Literature Award. Instructors and administrators have access to the latest publications in hopes to provide schools and students with the best reading texts available.

This site is geared toward teachers and administrators. Much of the content informs instructors through research and highlighting the most recent publications for students to read. Administrators can connect with
the foundation in hopes of receiving grants and receiving support in implementing an Extensive Reading programming.

This site is a great instrument to educate teachers and administrators. It can help those with experience as well as novices in the realm of extensive reading. The information is extensive and extremely relevant. Most importantly, it provides access to a network of other professionals and scholars.

**Resource #2: Top Ten Principles for Teaching Extensive Reading**

*URL: http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl/october2002/day/day.html*

The top ten principles for teaching extensive reading is an article published online by *Reading in a Foreign Language*, which is sponsored by the National Foreign Language Resource Center and the University of Hawaii. The two authors of this article are Richard Day of the University of Hawaii at Manoa and Julian Bamford of Bunkyo University. Very simply, this article shows ten strategies which could make extensive reading instruction more fruitful, according to the authors. Accompanying the list is a brief and clear description of each point with a more in-depth explanation. This article is based off work done by various renowned and respected scholars.

The article is very easy to understand and the principles contained it are easily applied by all instructors, regardless of experience or accreditation. Individual classes and entire programs can benefit from the implementation of the 10 points. It serves to keep teachers on the right path, and to avoid falling into ineffective habits. It could be employed in teacher training and basic instruction.

If you are looking for basic points to either get you started in an Extensive Reading program or if you would like tips to refine your teaching, this article is for you. You will have access to a compilation of the most relevant sources. Your teaching will be more effective, and you will have the confidence that you are running your class correctly.
Resource #3: Extensive Reading: The Fun Way to Read

URL: http://mreader.org/

Mreader.org is a website designed to help students and teachers ascertain appropriate texts. Within the site a database with varying levels of difficulty and a corresponding 10-question quiz that students can take to check for completion and reading comprehension. As a result of the difficulty rating assigned to texts, students can make informed reading selections. Furthermore, it can help teachers guide students to appropriate texts. Upon successful completion of a text, students receive an image of the book’s cover to keep in an online album. Teachers are given access to student progress in order to guide and counsel them. The only requirement to access this site is a username and password.

Students and teachers can benefit greatly from this site. Students have the opportunity to take quizzes and record their progress. As a result of their recorded progress, students become more motivated to read. Additionally, it gives students autonomy in book selection and quiz completion, which fosters independent and motivated learning. Teachers can monitor and permit re-taking of the quizzes as a way for students to improve.

This website is great for allowing students to have freedom and allowing teachers to facilitate the extensive reading process. Students are given an array of books to choose from according to their level. The quizzes serve as a means to check comprehension and to hold students accountable for their reading.

Resource #4: Extensive Reading Central

URL: http://www.er-central.com/

Extensive Reading Central is one of the most user-friendly and tech-savvy sites on the web. The site is divided into four main sections—reading, listening, vocabulary, and help. In the reading section students are given access to a library of online texts which are rated on a 1-20 scale, according to level of difficulty. Along with providing texts, a timer records the amount of time a student take to read the story. This is used to help
students develop awareness of reading pace and it is employed in speed-reading exercises on the site. The listening section is very similar to the reading section in that there is a library with rated books. The only difference is students can both read and listen simultaneously to receive a more comprehensive experience. The vocabulary section employs a variety of games to foster lexicon growth. Moreover, there are tutorials and instructional videos that help teachers implement an extensive reading program in the class.

Both teachers and students benefit from this site because it is students-centered. Depending on the students’ motivation and desire, this website can be an effective tool in Extensive Reading instruction. For instance, students are exposed to a wide array of texts with varying difficulty and given a way to chart their progress. The vocabulary section also allows flexibility in creating customized vocabulary lists based on learner needs. Teachers can monitor progress and utilize the vocabulary feature in classroom instruction.

If your class has access to computers, then this site will assist you greatly with Extensive Reading. Students are given freedom and they are exposed to many texts and differing levels. It has so many reading materials that students are bound to find something that interests them. Furthermore, the quizzes are a great way of tracking progress. This site can fosters autonomy and empowers learners to efficiently read on their own.

Resource #5: British Council
URL: http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/extensive-reading

This webpage provides a basic outline and explanation of Extensive Reading. The page is divided into six parts, each focusing on a different aspect of extensive reading. The categories contained include (1) Extensive reading—an alternative approach, (2) Aims of extensive reading, (3) The characteristics of an extensive reading approach, (4) Motivation, (5) The teacher’s role, and (6) Conclusion. The most in-depth part is the section focuses on the characteristics of an effective program, which features nine sub-points—an explanation of the material, student choice, reading for pleasure and information, reading out of class, silent in-class reading,
level, dictionary use, record keeping, and the teacher’s role in the whole process. The article concludes with links to other readings on the subject.

Although it is simple, this site is clear and direct. It is catered for teachers who have little to no experience with Extensive Reading. The principles taught are short enough for any teacher to understand and implement them. If a teacher wanted more insight on extensive reading, they would have to consult other resources for more in-depth guidance and instruction.

This site is a great resource to get basic understanding and ideas to establish an Extensive Reading program. The BBC is a very trusted source and the information given is accurate and relevant. This site is great for newer teachers or those willing to experiment with the idea of Extensive Reading. If adhered to, the principles taught on this website can improve or help to establish a solid program.

**About the Reviewer**

*Ethan Lynn is a graduate student in the TESOL MA program at Brigham Young University. His research focuses on the role of motivation in second language reading. Ethan currently teaches level 1 adult ESOL classes at Centro Hispano in Provo, Utah. Also, he serves as the co-chair of the Adult Education Interest Section of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.*
Oxford Bookworms Library Series

Review by Aubrey Bronson, Ellen Bunker, Courtney Hinton, and Robb McCollum
Brigham Young University–Hawaii, USA

When our program decided to strengthen the extensive reading materials available to English as an International Language (EIL) students here at Brigham Young University–Hawaii, we researched multiple graded-reader series. One of the series that we chose to include in our collection is the third edition of the Oxford Bookworms Library.

This series is designed for adults (including young adults) and includes both fiction and nonfiction titles, the latter going by the label Factfiles. Fiction titles are categorized into themes such as Thriller & Suspense, Crime & Mystery, Fantasy & Horror, Human Interest, and Classics. The primary audience is second-language learners of British English; the series uses British punctuation, spelling, and vocabulary. For example, “tea” is used to describe a meal, and “cookies” are defined as “the American word for biscuits.” This may be a minor concern for some English as a Second Language (ESL) programs outside of the United Kingdom; however, our program encourages exposure to a variety of world Englishes since the majority of our students are more likely to use English with non-native English speakers than with native English speakers after graduation. Including a series with these subtle features of British English helps our students increase their exposure to global forms of English.

The British origin of the series is also seen through its inclusion of numerous classic titles that are adaptations of historical British literature, including Wuthering Heights, A Tale of Two Cities, and Vanity Fair. There are a few historical American novels as well, such as Huckleberry Finn and The Scarlet Letter, but the majority of the Classics titles are by British authors. Because of this we are especially pleased with the recent addition to the Bookworms Library—World Stories. These titles are short-story collections from various global regions including Asia, Oceania, and Africa.
Because our students will be using English primarily with other nonnative English speakers, we see value in assigning literature from countries beyond the United States and the United Kingdom. This broadened experience will help students better understand the cultures and values of other countries.

Another notable feature is the recent additions to the Bookworms Library Factfiles titles. These nonfiction books are about a variety of international topics including rainforests, chocolate, and information technology. These additions increase the appeal of the Bookworms offerings to teachers and students in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) programs outside of the United Kingdom and the United States.

The Bookworms Library consists of seven graded levels: an introductory starter level followed by levels 1–6. The vocabulary in each level ranges from 250 headwords at the starter level to 2500 at level 6. By way of reference, Oxford lists the starter level as corresponding to the Common European Framework (CEF) levels A1–A2 and level 6 as corresponding to the CEF levels B2–C1. Not only is vocabulary range controlled at each level, but so is grammatical complexity. For example, one text at the starter level tells the story of a dangerous sailing trip using only the simple present verb tense (with the exception of two instances in which present continuous is used). As the levels increase, a greater range of verb tenses and clauses are added. This careful attention to both vocabulary and grammatical complexity ensures that the library offers books that fit the needs of beginning- to advanced-level learners.

The books themselves have been updated with clean, glossy covers featuring either a full-color photograph or an illustration. Some books, including the Factfiles, are also filled with high-quality photographs on semigloss pages. The majority of fiction titles, however, are printed on standard matte paper with black and white illustrations. The starter fiction titles are also printed on semigloss pages with full-color illustrations, but it should be noted that some of these illustrations are cartoonish in nature and may be off-putting to an adult audience. All titles are pocket size; the fiction titles are 22 cm by 15 cm, and the Factfiles are slightly taller at 24 cm by
15 cm. A glossary of content-specific vocabulary can be found at the end of each text.

Each title also comes with before-, during-, and after-reading activities, which are located at the end of each book. Examples of before-reading activities include questions about the topic or cover photo to encourage readers to make predictions about the content or plot of the text. Many of the during-reading activities involve comprehension questions about plot elements or content details. After-reading activities include crossword puzzles (that use vocabulary from the book), sequence of events exercises, character-matching quizzes (that use quotes or personal descriptions), gap-filling exercises, group discussion questions, and much more. These activities can be enjoyable for independent readers and can also be used in a classroom setting where all of the students read the same title. However, we would have preferred that the before-reading questions be located at the beginning of the text instead of the end.

Further resources can be found on the Oxford Bookworms Library website (https://elt.oup.com/teachers/bookworms) and include reading comprehension tests (available in PDF as well as editable DOC file formats) with answer keys and additional reading comprehension practice exercises. These online resources can be photocopied and used in classroom activities. Access to these resources requires site registration, which is free. Also of particular interest to teachers and learners is the Oxford Bookworms level tests (offered in both web-based and iOS app versions); this collection of tests (two at each Bookworms level) includes gap-filling activities that help learners determine which Bookworms level is most appropriate for their current reading level. A learner selects a test corresponding to his or her expected level, and upon submission, the learner can determine whether his or her current level is appropriate, too easy (in which case the learner should take the next level test), or too difficult (in which case the learner should take a lower-level test). Since each test only takes a few minutes, this is a quick method that teachers and learners can use to locate the appropriate materials.

Users can also elect to purchase audio versions of many of the texts, a feature that makes the library useful for extensive listening or as a tool
for increasing reading rate. The rate of speech in the audio files is appropriate for the level, with starter audio files being read at a slow, comfortable speed. Additionally, some titles are available in app and e-book format. Our institution has not explored these options, but we are curious to learn more about how they might support our online extensive reading and listening programs.

In all, the Oxford Bookworms Library offers a remarkable range in titles for young adult and adult learners. The expanding number of books and topic areas makes the collection appealing to both ESL and EFL audiences, and the inclusion of both fiction and nonfiction titles enables programs to use the texts for both extensive reading practice and strategic reading purposes. Institutions can build a collection that meets their needs from a library of over 200 titles. Here at BYU–Hawaii, the Oxford titles join our growing collection of ESL readers, much to the delight of our students and teachers.

About the Reviewers

Aubrey Bronson, Ellen Bunker, Courtney Hinton, and Robb McCol- lum are instructors in the English as an International Language program at Brigham Young University–Hawaii (BYUH). They recently evaluated a variety of reading materials for use in the program’s extensive reading curriculum. They worked together with Kierah Thurgood, a TESOL BA student, who works as a teaching assistant in the English Language Teaching and Learning Department at BYUH.
From the title alone, readers see that *Pathways 3: Listening, Speaking, and Critical Thinking* is clearly a textbook designed for a listening and speaking English as a Second Language class. The textbook is appropriate for high school and college classrooms in non-native-English-speaking countries, such as the Philippines and Japan. The inclusion of the critical thinking skill is an advantage to English-language learners because this component helps them learn to process information and develop analytical thinking.

The themes of the book are based on photographs and topics from National Geographic publications. As a result, students who are interested in global issues or who are preparing for a major related to a particular field (such as one of the natural sciences, geography, history, or archaeology) are incentivized to participate in the learning process. The authors present issues in a manner in which, obviously, listening and speaking skills are forefront: Chase and Johannsen provide conversational skills, pronunciation tips, lecture or video note-taking strategies, and grammar structures relevant to oral language. Indeed, the *Pathways* series takes an integrated oral skills approach to teaching academic English.

One particular chapter focuses on the theme of traditional and modern medicine. On the first page, the authors present learners with a large photo spread and text inserts, inviting the learners to think about and discuss the photo. Within the chapters, learners are encouraged to more deeply explore themes by answering questions and completing linguistically focused lessons. This particular chapter on traditional and modern medicine has two lessons (Lesson A and Lesson B), which help learners develop academic listening and speaking skills while engaging with the chapter’s theme. All lessons include vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation mini-
lessons related to the listening and speaking tasks. Additionally, each chapter has an academic video file (available on DVD) related to the topics and tasks of that chapter.

In Lesson A, learners are taught the strategy of determining meaning from context. This learning happens as the students read a short report (the audio transcript is available on CD) and identify the meaning of highlighted words from the passage; the learners are then encouraged to complete blanks in a dialogue by using those same words. In the Listening Skills section of Lesson B in the chapter on traditional and modern medicine, the students are instructed to listen for details, make inferences, and link vowels with /j/ and /w/ sounds. In the Grammar section of that chapter, learners understand the real conditionals and quantifiers using specific and general nouns. After viewing the academic video, learners are expected to write sentences based on the video while employing the real conditional if statements—the particular grammar topic of that lesson. Here is one example: “If scientists observe animal behavior, ______________________.”

Lessons also include critical thinking components that encourage learners to apply the material to contexts beyond situations presented in the textbook. This particular chapter invites learners, while in small groups, to evaluate the quality of argumentative statements about public wellness or to predict the value that wildlife observations can have on improving human health. Each chapter closes with a summative speaking task, such as a group presentation or a formal critique, which requires learners to integrate the content they have discussed throughout the chapter.

Overall, Pathways is an effective resource for academic English learners. The series draws from a variety of issues and topics (such as fashion, entrepreneurship, and psychology), so there is something to interest a wide range of learners. The series includes four proficiency levels, so one program can use a similar curriculum for multiple courses. The companion reading and writing books could effectively provide a four-skills approach in an English language program.

The Pathways series would be best complemented by a variety of language tasks related to the topic of each lesson. As an English as a Foreign Language instructor, I recognize the importance of motivation in Eng-
lish language learning, so I make it a habit to regularly include activities in my teaching. Some of my favorite activities, including letter tile spelling and collaborative writing, could easily be incorporated into the Pathways curriculum and would better increase excitement and interest for students. I would also recommend that more phrasal verb instruction be included, given that phrasal verbs are used frequently in spoken English, even in academic contexts. Even so, the textbook’s shortcomings are minor and can be easily addressed through additional activities to accommodate the style of the teacher and the needs of the students.

About the Reviewer

Laarni has a bachelor’s degree in TESOL and has taught ESL in the Philippines, the United States, and Japan to all ages – from pre-schoolers to Adult professionals. She’s currently finishing her Masters degree in English Language Studies at the Western Mindanao State University, Philippines.
Notes to Contributors

The *TESL Reporter* is a refereed semiannual publication of the Department of English Language Teaching and Learning of Brigham Young University–Hawaii and is dedicated to the dissemination of ideas and issues of interest to teachers of English to speakers of other languages worldwide.

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**Reviews** of recent textbooks, resource materials, tests, and non-print materials (films, tapes, or computer software) are also invited. Potential reviewers who indicate a particular area of interest to the review editor will be contacted concerning recent titles in that area. Requests for review guidelines should be addressed to the review editor. Authors of published reviews will receive two complimentary copies of the issue in which the review is published. Reviews can be sent to Review Editor, Robb McCollum, BYUH #1940, 55-220 Kulanui Street, Laie, HI 96762 or by email to robb.mccollum@byuh.edu

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