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DIPLOMARBEIT

Titel der Diplomarbeit

„Setting up an Extensive Reading Program in Austria: A Practical Guide"

Verfasserin

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Hinweis

Diese Diplomarbeit hat nachgewiesen, dass die betreffende Kandidatin befähigt ist, wissenschaftliche Themen selbständig sowie inhaltlich und methodisch vertretbar zu bearbeiten.

Da die Korrekturen des Beurteilenden nicht eingetragen sind und das Gutachten nicht beiliegt, ist daher nicht erkenntlich, mit welcher Note diese Arbeit abgeschlossen wurde. Das Spektrum reicht von sehr gut bis genügend. Es wird gebeten, diesen Hinweis bei der Lektüre zu beachten.

Erklärung

Hiermit bestätige ich, diese Arbeit nach bestem Wissen und Gewissen selbständig verfasst und die Regeln der wissenschaftlichen Praxis eingehalten zu haben.

(Gudrun Peham)

Acknowledgements

To Luise who accompanied the whole writing process.

I want to thank my partner Hannes and my friend Karina for their encouraging support. Thanks also to my mother Elisabeth and my sister in law Nicole for their secretarial help.

I am also grateful to Eva Hartmann and Eva Müller-Zettelmann who shared their time, expertise and experience with me.

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1 <u>Introduction</u>

"We learn to read by reading" (Nuttall 128)

This paper will focus on extensive reading as a current trend in teaching reading in a foreign language. Moreover, it aims at giving a detailed guideline to the buildup of a class library.

As extensive reading is a popular approach in foreign language teaching especially in Asian countries such as Malaysia or Japan, I try to apply the expertise gained in those countries to compile the basis for a concise and practical handbook for Austrian English teachers. This paper is meant to serve as a compilation of all necessary information for setting up an Extensive Reading Program in Austria.

The reasons for choosing the topic are numerous. As a future teacher of English I found it useful to work on a didactic subject for my diploma thesis. Triggered by teaching courses at university which revolved around the topic of reading in the second language classroom, I developed a special interest in the question of how to teach reading skills in English. I was fascinated by the didactic approach of extensive reading and was, at the same time, convinced of its usefulness for students. Nuttall argues in favor of the method by saying that "[t]he best way to improve your knowledge of a foreign language is to go and live among its speakers. The next best way is to read extensively in it" (128). Krashen supports this view: "Reading exposure is the primary means of developing language skills" (109).

From the literature I gathered that extensive reading[1] is especially popular in Asian countries, but not in Europe. Consequently, I planned to investigate the actual situation of reading in the second language English in Austrian grammar schools. Moreover, I wanted to set up and run an Extensive Reading Program[2] in order to gain experiences in the field which can serve as a helping tool for

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[1] In short ER.
[2] In short ERP.

other teachers interested in the topic. This paper aims at providing practical tips, reports and suggestions, not just quotes from the literature. Of course, much has been said and written about reading, learning to read and teaching to read. However, „if language teaching is to be a genuinely professional enterprise, it requires continual experimentation and evaluation on the part of practitioners, whereby in seeking to be more effective in their pedagogy they provide at the same time […] for their own continuing education" (Candlin and Widdowson qtd. in Wallace xi).

The thesis consists of three main parts. The first is a theoretical foundation on the topic of extensive reading. It treats issues in the field and provides the reader with information on recurring discussions. Moreover, it is meant to serve as a means for the substantiation of the method. Secondly, practical guidelines concerning the buildup of an ERP will be considered. Each step is divided into a general part and a description of how the actual ERP of the field study in an Austrian grammar school was conducted. It provides the reader with short field reports on every step. Additional information can be found in the appendices. It is noteworthy that the field study consists of a too small sample to be statistically significant. Consequently, the findings have to be regarded as what they are, as experiences from an isolated case. Thirdly, a reflective evaluation of the field study will summarize and complete the project. It comprises thoughts of the participating students, the participating English teacher and the author of this thesis.

Through the setting up of an ERP, I aimed at answering the following research questions:
How time-consuming is the buildup of a class library of about 50 books?
Where does a teacher obtain useful information on the topic?
Which guidelines work and which do not?
Does a class library (free, easier accessibility, free choice) affect students´ intrinsic reading motivation?
Which problems can be observed when setting up an ERP for the first time?

2 Preliminary Definition and Literature Review

Around the year 1920, Harold Palmer coined the term extensive reading in his work *The Principles of Language Study* and applied it in foreign language pedagogy. He understood extensive reading as the counterpart to intensive reading, the detailed analysis of texts. Extensive reading, then, meant to read quickly book after book, focusing on the meaning of the text. He considered extensive reading as reading for pleasure. Thus, it was "real-world reading but for a pedagogical purpose" (Day & Bamford 5).

Stephen Krashen´s ´Input Hypothesis´ of the 1980s still serves as a theoretical foundation for extensive reading. The major point of his hypothesis is his distinction between ´acquisition´ on the one hand and ´learning´ on the other hand. Both are ways of increasing one's ability in a foreign language. Krashen defines acquisition as a subconscious process, producing tacit knowledge. Learning, however, needs rules the learner consciously applies to the language, with which people rethink their performance and correct it. Learning is a time-consuming process which needs their whole attention and focus. Consequently, Krashen argues that fluency and even accuracy in second language production derive from successful acquisition and not learning (8).

In his ´Input Hypothesis´, Krashen, then describes how learners acquire best. According to him, acquisition takes place if learners obtain comprehensible input and, thus, are able to understand a message (Language Acquisition 9). Reading is basically regarded as being comprehensible input for the student. However, teachers have to provide their students with texts which are both, interesting and comprehensible at the same time (Krashen 19).

This is necessary in order to bypass a filter hindering acquisition. Krashen called it a ´High Filter´, Dulay and Burt named it an ´Affective Filter´. Researchers agree that this filter can prevent input from reaching the Language Acquisition Device. This means, a message can be understood, but it may not lead to the acquisition of the second language. Reasons for the activation of the filter according to Krashen are low motivation, high student anxiety, and low student self-esteem (10).

"To sum up, we acquire when we obtain comprehensible input in a low-anxiety situation, when we are presented with interesting messages, and when we understand these messages" (Krashen 10).

Reading can provide comprehensible input without activating the affective filter. Texts need to be simple in order to ensure fluent reading, strengthen students´ self-esteem and motivation. Moreover, reading should be its own reward, no testing or questioning is needed afterwards (Krashen 19). Smith argues that readers do not need detailed questions to understand a text. The more successful way is to read for overall meaning. If subsequent passages do not make sense to the reader, they know themselves that they have eventually understood something the wrong way. As a consequence, they reread the text and thus ensure comprehension (qtd. in Krashen 19-20). Accordingly, not intensive, but rather extensive reading may lead to language acquisition.

Returning to extensive reading in particular, current descriptions of the term have to be stated: extensive reading can be recognized as one of four styles of reading, namely extensive and intensive reading, as well as skimming and scanning. However, extensive reading is not only a reading style, but is at the same time regarded as an approach to second language reading instruction (Day & Bamford 6).

EFL Teachers interested in the topic should turn to Christine Nuttall´s book *Teaching Reading Skills in a Foreign Language* which is regarded as a classic on the topic of reading literature in the second language. It is a classroom-oriented work and also contains practical tips on the buildup of an extensive reading program.

David Hill and his *Edinburgh Project on Extensive Reading*, in short EPER, at the University of Edinburgh also present interesting findings on the topic. EPER is meant to promote extensive reading in teaching English as a foreign language. The program has led to the building of a database of English graded readers and also supports teachers willing to build up extensive reading programs at their school (Day & Bamford 169-170).

Among other useful websites which will be presented later in this paper, Extensivereading.net provides a myriad of online - articles on the subject as

well as contact addresses of scholars working on extensive reading. The Extensive Reading Foundation, which can be found at http://erfoundation.org nominates awards to outstanding texts of language learner literature. Moreover, it supports institutions in the setup of extensive reading programs and strives at maintaining a bibliography of research on extensive reading.

Probably the most clearly arranged book on the topic is Richard Day´s and Julian Bamford´s work *Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom* from 1998. It is the perfect source to get an overview about all issues on extensive reading. It considers the effects of this didactic approach, analyses questions concerning the choice of reading materials as well as giving a description of the practical setup of an extensive reading program. Moreover, it provides numerous suggestions for further reading with short summaries of contents.

3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Teaching Reading in a Foreign Language

Greenwood points out that teachers often deny the learning potential of reading books (Introduction 5). However, reading is one of the four language skills students have to build when learning a foreign language. What we know about the reading process and the implications for teaching this receptive skill will be shortly considered on the next pages.

Firstly, teachers need to know why teaching reading is of such importance. Krashen, among others, strongly argues in favor of reading due to its positive effects on the other skills:

> Research appears to support overwhelmingly the hypothesis that reading exposure alone has a strong effect on the development of language abilities necessary for school success, a result that is consistent with both current language acquisition theory and reading theory. I will conclude that reading exposure is, at a minimum, a great help in language development. The evidence strongly suggests more than this, however – reading exposure may be the primary means of developing reading comprehension, writing style, and more sophisticated vocabulary and grammar. If this is so, the implications for language arts programs are serious (Language Acquisition 90).

In order to establish a theoretical foundation for the actual teaching, reading theories which can be applied to language teaching need to be considered.

The so-called grammar translation method was especially popular in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The belief was that reading is a process of applying grammatical rules to texts in order to decode the underlying message. Accordingly, reading was not a taught on its own, but rather was part of language knowledge (Hood, Solomon, and Burns 16).

Another approach still in use is the bottom-up-model from the early twentieth century. It proposed that ´building blocks´ of language, separate parts which language consisted of, could be learned and could then applied to texts in order to understand them (Hood, Solomon, and Burns 16-17). In this way, the reader makes meaning through decoding letters, words and whole sentences (Thaler 47). This description corresponds to a ´bottom-up-approach´ which means that smaller systems are pieced together to form a bigger system.

The ´top-down-model´ which is also known as the cognitive model sets the reader in the centre of the whole reading process. The reader has to work with his/her background knowledge, apply schemata, guess and confirm his hypotheses (Thaler 47). Top-down implies that the reader starts with an overall understanding of the text, and then starts a more detailed analysis of its parts. Nowadays, the two latter models are often combined into the ´interactive model´ of reading, a combination of bottom-up and top-down processes. Consequently, neither the linguistic nor the schematic side of the reading process is ignored (Thaler 47-48). The description of the second language reading process as being ´interactive´ includes two aspects of interactiveness: firstly, the reader is actively involved in his aspiration for meaning. Text information and also background knowledge are both used in order to interpret the author's intention. The creation of meaning involves at least six types of knowledge the reader applies: syntactic knowledge, morphological knowledge, general world knowledge, socio-cultural knowledge, topic knowledge and genre knowledge. While syntactic and morphological knowledge refer to language itself and are also subsumed under the heading of "systemic" knowledge, the other kinds of knowledge are labeled "schematic" knowledge (Hedge *Teaching* 188-189). The second possible interpretation of the term "interactive reading process", then, implies an interactive relationship between those different types of knowledge listed above (Hedge *Teaching* 189).

Reading can be done in various ways. The main four reading styles are skimming, scanning, intensive reading and extensive reading. Skimming means reading shorter texts more quickly for a general understanding of the text, while scanning is used to find specific pieces of information. Intensive reading is a form of detailed reading which includes looking up unknown vocabulary, analyzing grammatical structures or reading the text more than once (Thaler 49). Extensive reading, on the other hand, implies rapid reading for general understanding and reading a great number of texts. It is said to be "a way to teach a foreign language (in general) and a way to teach reading (in particular)" (Handout from the Extensive Reading Forum). It offers students the possibility

of reading independently by providing suitable and easy accessible reading material to the students (Hedge *Teaching* 200). It is often considered as a counterpart to class readers, meaning all students of one class read the same book at the same time.

This paper will focus on extensive reading as a current trend in teaching reading in a foreign language.

Reading in the foreign language classroom is not only useful when immersing oneself in the literary classics. The main issue of extensive reading is that every kind of reading material, from picture books for beginners, to young adult novels or graded readers, has its value for the learning process. The most important point is that pupils are interested in what they read, that they easily understand the material in order to read fast and fluently and consequently have fun while reading.

As extensive reading is closely linked to the materials read in the classroom, the next chapter will focus on controversial issues fundamental to ER such as the question what literature is and why it should be taught at all.

3.2 Literature in the EFL Classroom

3.2.1 What Is Literature?

Thaler suggests addressing Roman Jakobson´s model of literary communication to converge to an answer to this question. The Russian linguist Jakobson proposed six communicative language functions, such as expressive, conative, poetic, referential, phatic and metalingual function (14). Based on this model, Nünning/Nünning then devised a literary communication model. The author and producer of a literary text, sends the text to the recipient, the reader. Understanding the written message depends on context, background knowledge and mediators such as the media or critics. The model explains how literature works, but does not provide a definition of the term (Thaler 15).

Taking a closer look at the various descriptive definitions, however, shows that definitions of literature may be broad or narrow, depending on the criteria

applied. Those restrictive criteria are liable to different cultures and historic periods and change over time. In other words, the term literature can include "everything written" which would be a very broad definition or it could also mean "literary works listed in the canon", a narrow definition of the term literature (Thaler 16).

To my mind, these differences in definition are the main reason for all problems occurring in connection with the question of what people perceive as „L/literature" because one tends to remain with one definition for all times. Consequently, I believe that it is better to accept varying definitions as they have always changed and always will change over time. Generally speaking, the most important point is to clearly state which definition of the term ´literature´ underlies certain considerations in order to avoid misunderstandings.

3.2.2 Literature with a Capital L and a Small l

The basis for McRae´s considerations is widely known as „Literature with a capital L and a small l" (Thaler 16). While *L*iterature [emphasis added] includes the so-called classics by Shakespeare or the Bronte´s, *l*iterature [emphasis added] consists of articles, advertisements and other short forms of written work (Thaler 16).

The choice of reading material is a crucial question and many different views are held, be it among researchers, parents or even children. The teacher should be aware of the potential for conflict around this question when introducing extensive reading in the classroom. The topic will be discussed at various points of this paper.

Especially adults often have a two-sided view of what their children and teenagers should read to profit from literature. Like McRae, they differentiate between Literature and literature, adding positive connotations to the big L and negative ones to the small l. They are rarely aware of the factors they apply to and according to which they group books into literature of high and low quality.

Cultural critics like Matthew Arnold and F.R.Leavis serve as examples of how certain criteria exclude children's books from the ranks of serious literature. Arnold claimed that high truth and seriousness were the parameters for good

poetry (Matthew Arnold wikipedia). Automatically, humorous texts could not reach those standards. Hunt mentions that F.R. Leavis automatically excluded children and children's books from ´true literature´, as the latter could only be accessed by people with "trained intuition" which children did not have (49). McCormick also points out that many students feel that the status of Literature "automatically makes it inaccessible to [them, because they are forced] to become dependant on a teacher as a conduit for discovering its ´true meaning´." (197).

The following example, showing varying views about what should be read in school, is taken from the autobiography *Teacher Man* by Frank McCourt (208).

> I stood on a park bench to announce *my new idea* [emphasis added]. I had to compete with student chatter, the mumbling and complaining of the homeless, the remarks of the curious public, the hoot and honk of Second Avenue traffic.
> Listen. Are you listening? Tommorow I´d like you to bring to class *a cookbook* [emphasis added]. Yes, a cookbook. What? You don´t have a cookbook? Well, then, I´d like to plan a visit to the family that doesn´t own a cookbook. We´ll take up a collection for you. Don´t forget, tomorrow the cookbook.
> Mr. McCourt, why do we have to bring cookbooks?
> I don´t know yet. Maybe I´ll know tomorrow. There´s something in my head that might become an idea.
> Mr. McCourt, don´t get mad, *but sometimes you´re like weird* [emphasis added].
> They brought the cookbooks. They said, *What does this have to do with learning how to write?* [emphasis added].
> You´ll see. Open your book to any page. If you´ve already been through the book and have a favourite recipe open to that. David, read yours.
> What?
> Read your recipe.
> Out loud? Right here in class?
> Yes. Come on, David. It´s not pornography. We don´t have all day. We have to get through dozens of recipes.
> But, Mr. McCourt, *I never read a recipe in my life* [emphasis added]. I never read a cookbook in my life. I never even cooked an egg.
> Good, David. Today your palate comes to life. *Today your vocabulary expands* [emphasis added]. Today you become a gourmet.
> A hand. What is a gourmet?
> Another hand. A gourmet is a person who appreciates good food and wine and the finer things in life.

> A chorus of O-o-o-hs travels around the room and there are smiles and *admiring glances for James* [emphasis added], who is the last one you´d ever expect to know anything beyond hot dogs and french fries.
> David, I want you and the class to note the time and date and the fact that in room 205 of Stuyvesant High School you recited to your peers the first recipe of your life. Only God knows where this will lead you. I want all of you to remember that this is *probably the first time in history a class in creative writing or English sat together and read cookbook recipes* [emphasis added]. […] Anyone else?
> There is a forest of hands. I call on Brian. I know it´s a mistake and I know the *negative comment is coming* [emphasis added]. […] I don´t know, Mr. aw McCourt, how could I go home and aw *tell my parents* [emphasis added] we´re sitting around in a junior class at Stuyvesant High School reading aw recipes from cookbooks? Other classes are reading aw *American literature* [emphasis added] but we have to sit here reading recipes like we were aw retards.
> I feel irritated. I´d like to demolish Brian with a cutting remark, but James of the gourmet definition takes charge. Could I say something? He looks at Brian. All you ever do is criticizing. Tell me this: Are you glued to your seat?
> Of course I´m not glued to my seat.
> Do you know where the program office is?
> Yeah.
> So, if you don´t like what we do here, why don´t you get your ass off that chair and go to the program office and change your class? Nobody´s keeping you here. Right, Mr. McCourt? Transfer, says James. Get outta here. Go read *Moby-Dick*, if you´re strong enough.

Obviously, definitions of literature on the one hand and which reading material is perceived as being suitable for the classroom on the other hand, vary considerably and in order to keep discussions short, Showalter, for example, simply proposes that literature is „what gets taught"(22). This implies that every piece of written work, ranging from novels, and poetry to drama or articles used for teaching is literature and part of her considerations (Showalter 22).

In this thesis, I will consider everything that can be read in the English classroom as being literature in order to examine my topic in its full spectrum.

In the following, various literary genres useful for teaching reading in a foreign language will be presented.

3.2.3 Reading Materials for the Classroom

"Clearly, pupils do not develop their reading ability simply by becoming older. [..R]esearch [..] implies that most readers, however skilled, seem to find some problem in understanding different types of writing." (Littlefair x)

This is the main reason why students should be presented with reading all kinds of genres in the English lesson. Moreover, they should be trained to utilize certain strategies in order to recognize distinct literary genres (Littlefair 64).

The teacher is meant to strive at building a library containing all different kinds of books rather than only buying class readers. "The difference lies in the fact that if he orders forty different books, his pupils have the chance to read *forty* books, whereas if he orders forty copies of one book his pupils have the chance to read only *one* book." (Carroll 36)

3.2.3.1 Children's Books

Often literature for children and teenagers is labeled under one heading, namely "children´s books". No difference is made between picture books on the one hand and young adult novels on the other.

In the last few years more and more attention has been given to children's literature, mainly due to the high success of series as *Harry Potter* or Pullmann´s *His Dark Materials*. Even in the academic field, children's literature has experienced growing interest from different disciplines such as cultural studies, visual design or literacy theory, only to name a few (Butler 1).

However, the interdisciplinarity of this young field also poses problems and questions. Susan Gannon for example asks

> Is "Children´s Literature" a discipline? Does it have a distinctive methodology? An accepted theoretical framework? A body of systematically classified knowledge? A recognized course of study? Is its relationship to other disciplines clear to everyone? Do its exponents agree on an approach to "their" subject? (26).

Butler argues that most of Gannon´s question have to be answered negatively, especially because related terms such as "child" or "childhood" are also difficult to define (2). Pinset also claims that "Children´s Literature" could only emerge when children were seen as a particular group of human beings (8).

> Before there could be children´s books, there had to be children – children, that is, who were accepted as beings with their own particular needs and interests, not merely as miniature men and women. (Townsend 17 qtd. in Pinsent 8).

Even earlier than Townsend in 1976, Darton proposed in 1932 that

> Children´s books did not stand out by themselves as a clear but subordinate branch of English literature until the middle of the eighteenth century […] commencement took place in 1744, when John Newbery […] published his first children´s book (1 qtd. in Pinsent 9).

At the moment that children´s literature as a particular genre is existent, Hunt stresses that three reading situations have to be distinguished when dealing with children´s literature: "the adult reading a book intended for adults, the adult reading a book intended for children, and the child reading a book intended for children" (45). The main factors concerning those ways of reading are background and purpose. Children and adults do not share the same reading and life background and at the same time rarely have the same reading purpose in mind (Hunt 46). It is known that children generally handle texts more competently than expected. However, their way of reading a text can never be reliably replicated by grown up readers and their experiences (Hunt 48).

However, once again the question of what is L/literature has to be asked here, because this underlying definition influences scholars´ differing claims of the beginning of children´s literature. Depending on scholars´ views of literature, dates as the seventh century appear next to the eighteenth century as a beginning for this genre. (Pinsent 10).

Which writings are nowadays perceived as "Children´s Literature"?
Amazon.de lists "Children's Books" among other categories such as bestsellers, fiction, nonfiction or business and technology. "Children's Books" are then redivided into four other main categories which are "Baby's & Toddlers", "Ages 4-8", "Ages 9-12" and "Teens".

Carolhurst.com categorizes children's books according to the reading level into Pre-Kindergarten-, Kindergarten- and 1st to 9th grade-books, ranging from picture books to young adult novels (Hurst and Otis).

Further websites reveal similar results, namely the fact that the term ´children's literature´ is used as a broad notion for all kinds of writing which is not intended for adults. It is important to note that the terms "children's books" and "children's literature" also includes picture books and not only novels.

Hunt also stresses the fact that children´s literature is subdivided into various genres, such as religious texts, school texts, fairy-tales, myths and picture books (18). Moreover, he stresses the fact that children's literature is varied and heterogeneous (21).

For this thesis, I will not only include the classics, but also current popular children's literature like picture books or highly successful "low-brow" young adult novels in my considerations.

3.2.3.2 Picture Books and Books for Beginners

> Picture Books—A book in which the picture is as important as the text. This is a genre based on a physical format, so it can contain titles from many of the other genres. It includes picture books, illustrated storybooks, wordless storybooks, concept books, and informational books. In picture books, both text and illustration are fused together, to provide more than either can do alone (the whole is greater than the sum of the parts). Illustrated story books are different from picture books in that the text can stand alone and the illustrations are secondary to the text, yet complements the text. These books are generally up to 48 pages in length.
> In OPAC type the following as some of the subject headings: picture books, stories without words, wordless stories, concept books, nursery rhymes, stories in rhyme, alphabet, counting, etc. (Carter Genre definitions)

Krashen points out the importance of picture books especially to students of English who have just started to make contact with the new language. Pictures provide context which supports the understanding of a message. Consequently, comprehensible input is provided and language acquisition can take place (9).

3.2.3.3 Graded Readers

Graded readers, simplified texts, are a means of developing fluency in foreign language reading, because their simplicity can enhance students´ reading motivation. Therefore, graded readers are closely linked to extensive reading and extensive reading programs (Hedge *Readers* vii).

However, if graded readers are meant to trigger such positive experiences, several factors have to be considered. The subject matter as well as the level of language difficulty contribute to the success of graded readers. Of course, a teacher's choice of methodology also influences the reading process (Hedge *Readers* v).

> Few things are more encouraging to a child who knows some 1,500 words (say) of English than to pick up a book written within that vocabulary and find that he is actually able to read it and enjoy a story which is (at least) an enthralling approximation of the original. (West qtd. in Hedge *Readers* v)

Hedge gives a detail account, firstly, of the types of control in graded readers, secondly the positive effects which can result from graded readers and thirdly of how teachers can select the right material.

Turning to the first main issue ´control´, it is useful for teachers to know the following:

Graded Readers are lexically controlled. Various levels of difficulty differ from one another in the number of vocabulary used. However, different publishing houses apply different grading systems to their books which complicate the correspondence between publishers´ systems (Hedge *Readers* 2-4).

Structural control is achieved by changing factors like word frequency, sentence length and sentence complexity. An example for "[t]he permitted sentence length at the beginner level of ´Heinemann Guided Readers´ is ´two clauses forming a compound sentence with the conjunctions *and, but and or*´" (Hedge *Readers* 9).

Information control is attained through "limiting the number of characters or the depth of their definition, controlling the range of […] cultural background […] of

a story, avoiding the technique of flashback […] and writing an introduction to a story which clarifies context and characters" (Hedge *Readers* 15).

The devices above may lead to the successful use of graded Readers in the EFL classroom. It can develop knowledge of the language, the reading skills and attitudes towards reading. Reading expands students´ vocabulary; it consolidates language structures and connectives (Hedge *Readers* 22-31). Moreover, graded Readers can contribute to the buildup of reading fluency. Fluent readers "predict from syntactic and semantic clues […], [t]hey read in phrases, not in single words […], […] guess the meaning of new words from contextual clues […], […and] distinguish fact from opinion" (Hedge *Readers* 32). Additionally, graded Readers often contribute to the realization that reading for pleasure is also possible in a foreign language. (Hedge *Readers* 35)

A more detailed description of the effects of extensive reading can be found in chapter 3.3.2. ´Effects of extensive reading´.

No matter if a teacher has to choose a class reader or books for individualized reading, the following factors have to be considered:

The teacher is meant to consider motivational factors by identifying students´ interests and providing a variety of Readers. Moreover, the students´ background knowledge and language level have to be taken into account. Lastly, the technical presentation of the book also contributes to a reading program´s success (Hedge *Readers* 38-59). General guidelines of the selection of books for students of English are presented in the second main chapter of this paper, ´Practical guidelines´.

3.2.3.4 Young Adult Literature

"Just don't take any class where you have to read BEOWULF." (Woody Allen thinkexist)

Gallo reports that a study in the U.S.A revealed that firstly, traditional *classics* [emphasis added] dominate English classes and that secondly, almost no distinction is made between reading material for *academic and non-academic* [emphasis added] students (18).

Young adult novels are a perfect way of addressing the two findings above. They may meet adolescent readers´ preferences better and they offer variety in the reading classroom.

Moreover, Gallo reports that students find the classics dull or not related to their lives. They want to enjoy literature and read something exciting (20). This may be true for students all around the world. Interest is one of the most important key words in the development of literary appreciation. It may lead to reading motivation and, subsequently, enough self-confidence also to interpret the more difficult pieces. Age-based reading material may be, in this sense, the path to a life-long love for reading (Gallo 24). Samuels puts it even simpler and claims that "[t]he adolescent novel provides a perfect vehicle to help the adolescent cross the bridge between literature for children and adult classics" (29).

Successful young adult literature treats its themes in an equal depth as traditional literature does. "[G]ood novels written for adolescents possess themes that merit and reward examination and commentary" (Hipple 4). Hipple names common themes like alienation, friendship, family, death, mental illness, sex and drugs and alcohol.

Texts focusing on alienation address the loneliness of adolescents and their struggle against peer pressure and control (Hipple 4-5). The theme of friendship is obviously important to teenagers as they detach themselves from their families and gain support from their friend/s. Hipple claims that friendship is a universal theme, also to be found in adult novels due to the fact that also grown ups need support from a confidant (5-7). The theme of ´family´ either is to be found in form of an unhappy family, an unsupportive family or a family which falls apart and leaves the adolescent behind (Hipple 7).

It is important to state very clearly that young adult literature per se is no ´second rank literature´. Literary quality can be found amongst all genres and the same is true for poor literary quality.

> One problem […] is that by equating longevity with quality, we deny quality in contemporary works, especially in literary selections that lack sophisticated vocabulary, convoluted sentence structures, and complex plots. Complexity does not necessarily equal greatness, nor does simplicity equal simple mindedness (Gallo 24).

Hipple argues that another evidence for quality in YAN is revealed in the fact that YAN writers are regularly reviewed in ´Booklist´ or the ´New York Times Book Review´. Moreover, journals have come to life which focus especially on YAL, like ´The ALAN Review´ or the ´VOYA´, the ´Voice of Youth Advocates´ (12-13).

> Thus, the broad appeal of adolescent literature lies in part in its treatment of universal themes and in part in its high quality. Its writers write well. They tell good stories, inhabit them with memorable characters, place them in well-described settings, and do it all with prose that causes readers to linger now and again for a second reading, a moment of appreciation for the well-turned phrase or the artistic metaphor (Hipple 13-14).

3.2.3.5 Short Forms of Literature

Littlefair argues that it is the teacher's responsibility to teach their students´ different types of writing in order to improve their ability to understand and appreciate different genres (x). McRae lists comics, cartoons, songs, advertisements and proverbs under the heading of materials and, thus, considers even those short and modern genres as being suitable for the classroom (29-40).

But not only the claim for diversity in the English classroom is an argument for the inclusion of short forms of literature. Thaler argues that the obvious advantage of short narratives is simply that they are short. Brief forms of literature appear in various forms: as traditional fairy tales or everyday media forms like sitcoms (78).The popular form of the short story is widely used in the classroom already. It often (not always) describes a single incident with a limited number of characters and creates suspense at the end of the story (Thaler 91). "[Short stories] are flexible in use, and can often be dealt with in a single 45-minute lesson" (Thaler 78). Moreover, poetry is another popular short form for teaching purposes. Children get used to rhymes, chants and repetitive stories in kindergarten or at home. Again, poetry is flexible in use and can also be used with beginners (Thaler 115). However, some basic issues on the topic of short forms have to be considered: McRae for example points out how carefully material has to be selected, especially comics and cartoons, in order to use it successfully in teaching. Comics are quickly outdated, can include cultural

references students do not understand and they are obtained by copyright holders (35).

It can be concluded that open-mindedness concerning the choice of reading material in the second language classroom is beneficial. All genres have their benefits and entitlement in the teaching and learning process. In other words, "The importance of a broad diet of texts cannot be overstated." (Wallace 68)

3.2.4 Literature in the Classroom – Why?

It is "a source of both learning and pleasure" (Elkin 152).

According to Carter and Long three main models have been consistently proposed when answering the question why to teach literature: the cultural model, the language model and the personal growth model (2).

Firstly, the cultural model stresses the main ideas and values within a certain period. It focuses on varying sentiments of different times or cultures. Students can thus learn to distinguish differing cultures from what they read in the classroom. In the cultural model, this knowledge is judged to be the main reason for reading in the classroom.

Secondly, the language model regards literature as a means of explaining grammatical structures or certain vocabulary items to students. Of course, this view may spoil the experience of reading a fascinating novel or poem. However, the language model can also be applied in a more open way, giving students a helping hand with understanding and appreciating creative uses of language in literature (Carter & Long 2). In this sense, literature is taught because of its ability to teach language and grammar.

Thirdly, the personal growth model revolves around the keyword of engagement. The goal of teachers following this model lies in the passing on of love for literature. Students may find great fulfillment in reading, in understanding more and more, in responding to texts and learning from what they have read (Carter & Long 3). I believe that the personal growth model is at

the center of extensive reading as a teaching method. The development of a love for literature and reading is closely linked to the principles of ER.

The authors also promote teaching knowledge of literature which involves an emotional relationship with the characters of a novel. This can only be achieved if students are actively involved in literature and respond to what they have read (Carter & Long 4).

"Few English teachers would deny, I venture, that it is in literature, […] where language is seen to carry the amplest and most vivid feeling and meaning; we turn to novelists, poets, playwrights for the richest and most deeply enjoyable interpretations of life through language." (Harrison 89)

So why should literature be taught in the EFL classroom?

Thaler claims the main goals of teaching literature are to gain knowledge, to build up language skills and to create attitudes (34-63).

Literature provides the reader with a myriad of positive effects when reading. Firstly, I claim that it is like cinema in the head and among the best hobbies a child or teenager could have. It spurs on a child's imagination as they for example join Harry Potter at Hogwarts.

Reading is neither dangerous nor harmful but serves a pleasant leisure time activity. Of course, one should be aware of how easily certain stereotypes and prejudiced judgements are transported to children's minds through literature. However, this could be averted by a good teacher who chooses books with care or who stimulates critical thinking in the students. The latter would be even more important for their future.

> [Especially] In the past, most educators agreed that teaching literature was a way of making people better human beings and better citizens. […I]ts purpose was to moralize, civilize, and humanize. In the United Stated, after the Civil War, literature was viewed as a "repository of moral and spiritual values", bestowing a sense too of a national culture and heritage.(Showalter 22)

All in all, I think that teaching literature/Literature in ELT is not really a question of capitalized Ls or not. I generally find literature as useful as Literature, each for different purposes. Reading is able to encourage critical thinking and at the same time actively engages the students in the foreign language. Teaching literature is a way of showing the pupils how they can use their second-

language knowledge. It enables them to read, interpret and make meaning out of a text that is written in English. At the best, this should make them feel proud.

To sum up, teaching L/literature is an essential part of ELT and contributes to pupils´ linguistic knowledge as well as knowledge of the world. "At best, then, reading and responding to literature are movements towards intimacy. A reader becomes more aware of his own personal, private self and feelings" (Harrison 93).

After considering the key issues in connection with extensive reading, we can now turn to the principles of extensive reading, which will be considered in the next part of the thesis.

3.3 Extensive Reading

3.3.1 Definition, Characteristics

At the beginning of the last century Harold Palmer coined the term "extensive reading" which meant reading rapidly. As he believed in a manifold approach to language teaching, he proposed that intensive reading was not enough. Both ways of reading had their own value. Extensive reading meant a focus on content and consequently for the purpose of pleasure. For Palmer extensive reading was "real world reading but for a pedagogical purpose" (Day & Bamford 5). This matches with Eskey´s statement that people read for pleasure and information, if they can freely choose what to read. (3) Extensive reading has also acquired other names like "pleasure reading", "sustained silent reading" (SSR or USSR uninterrupted sustained silent reading) or "free reading" (Powell ch. 2)[3].

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[3] Sometimes there is made a small difference between ER and USSR. USSR then is regarded „as an initial reading strategy that is meant to prepare readers […] for a much more extensive reading programme […] . During USSR, pupils are encouraged to begin modest by reading something manageable and

> Extensive reading is an approach to language teaching in which learners read a lot of easy material in the new language. They choose their own reading material and read it independently of the teacher. They read for general, overall meaning, and they read for information and enjoyment. They are encouraged to stop reading if the material is not interesting or if it is too difficult. They are also encouraged to expand their reading comfort zone – the range of material that can be read easily and with confidence. Extensive reading belongs in the language classroom (Bamford & Day (eds.) Introduction 1).

The quote above very clearly summarizes how the term ´extensive reading´ can be understood:

- It is a teaching method that fosters reading skills in the foreign language.
- It is a counterpart to intensive reading on the one hand and class readers on the other hand.
- It is a didactic approach to develop skills for reading for pleasure and transfer this pleasure from students´ homes to school. Moreover, reading for pleasure is transferred from the learners´ first language to the second one.
- It is a student-centred method with great scope for decision-making.

According to the ´Handout from the Extensive Reading Forum in 1998´, "Extensive Reading usually means reading a lot of self-selected easy, interesting texts, and doing few or no exercises afterwards. Extensive Reading is a way to teach a foreign language (in general) and a way to teach reading (in particular)."

The key principles of extensive reading are:

- "The reading material is easy" (Bamford & Day Introduction 2).

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enjoyable. Thus, USSR is not itself ERP; it is, however, the starting point of the ERP" (Seow 2). USSR has, in this sense, only a defined durability and only takes place at school and not at learners´ homes. It is a basic skills training which demands silent reading periods in class. Those are meant to help pupils form good reading habits (Seow 2-3).

- "A variety of reading material on a wide range of topics is available" (Bamford & Day Introduction 2).
- "Learners choose what they want to read" (Bamford & Day Introduction 2).
- "Learners read as much as possible" (Bamford & Day Introduction 2).
- "Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower" (Bamford & Day Introduction 2).
- "The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information, and general understanding" (Bamford & Day Introduction 2).
- "Reading is individual and silent" (Bamford & Day Introduction 3).
- "Reading is its own reward" (Bamford & Day Introduction 3).
- "The teacher orients and guides the students" (Bamford & Day Introduction 3).
- "The teacher is a role model of a reader" (Bamford & Day Introduction 3).

The key principles of Extensive Reading propose that the reading material should be rather easy in terms of vocabulary and grammar. This leads to fluent reading as dictionaries are rarely used. In Extensive Reading it is even desirable to rarely use a dictionary.

A variety of reading materials on various topics may guide students to read for differing purposes. Students are allowed to choose whatever they want to read. This implies that if a book is too difficult for them or does not interest them at all, they are free to stop reading it and just choose another book. It should never be forgotten that the purposes of Extensive Reading are related to reading for pleasure and information. As a consequence, follow-up activities are not as detailed and elaborate as with intensive reading. They can even be left out if the teacher wishes to do so (Day & Bamford 8). The goal of Extensive Reading is to make students fluent readers. Consequently, learners read as much as possible. The main amount of reading is done outside the classroom (at home, in the bus, in the park etc.) but reading could (should) also be an integral part of the English lessons (Day & Bamford 7). Nevertheless, Extensive Reading is individual and silent. Every student reads the book they choose and reads at their own pace. As a further consequence, fluent reading leads to rapid reading.

Students increase their reading speed due to easy material which is provided by the teacher. Although extensive reading is a student-centred teaching method, guidance through the teacher is important for the success of any Extensive Reading Program. The teacher has to explain what is expected of the students, what the goals of the program are and also has to control learners´ work. Additionally, the teacher is expected to be an active reader who serves as a role model for their students. This could be a teacher reading at class just like their students, a teacher giving reading tips to their learners, a teacher giving credit to the reading done by their students (Day & Bamford 8).

Powell also quotes from an interview in which Day and Bamford said that "students who read large quantities of easy, interesting material will become better readers and will enjoy the experience" (ch. 2b). It is important to know what extensive reading can provoke and which benefits it can have, because those are the reasons for integrating extensive reading in teaching English as a foreign language. At the same time, those effects help to justify our own didactic choice as a teacher and to persuade other teachers of this approach to reading.

3.3.2 Effects of Extensive Reading

Why should Extensive Reading be promoted and become an integral part of Austrian English lessons? "[T]o help students become *fluent, independent, and confident* [emphasis added] readers (Day & Bamford qtd. in Iwahori Abstract).
In order to substantiate the claim for ER and provide support for the use of ER, the effects of successful Extensive Reading Programs will be considered underneath:

Firstly, Bell gives a good introduction to the variety of implications which are listed underneath:
- "[Extensive reading] can provide "comprehensible input"" (Bell).
- "It can enhance learners´ general language competence" (Bell).
- "It increases the students´ exposure to the language" (Bell).

- "It can increase knowledge of vocabulary" (Bell).
- "It can lead to improvement in writing" (Bell).
- "It can motivate learners to read" (Bell).
- "It helps to build confidence with extended texts" (Bell).
- "It encourages the exploitation of textual redundancy" (Bell).
- "It facilitates the development of prediction skills" (Bell).

Bell quotes Krashen[4] when arguing that extensive reading may lead to language acquisition if students meet interesting books and have the possibility to work in a learning environment free of pressure (Bell). Extensive reading may also develop students´ general language competence in form of better and faster word recognition ability. Via large quantities of reading material students of English as a foreign language have the chance to gain on students whose mother tongue is English. Moreover, and this is a major point, extensive reading can improve students´ writing immensely. Another crucial area revolves around learners´ motivation. A carefully planned Extensive Reading Program can increase learners´ reading motivation, as they are free to choose what they want to read. On this note, Extensive Reading is a way of bringing more children and teenagers close to reading (Bell). Closely linked is the fact that extensive reading may enhance learners´ confidence with longer texts. As a consequence, confidence again leads to more motivation (Bell).

Secondly, Clarity stresses that extensive reading is especially useful for students of English whose mother tongue is not English. For her, extensive

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[4] Krashen´s Input Hypothesis: „For Krashen the dominant mode of language learning is acquisition, the largely subconscious ´picking up´of the language which characterizes language in informal settings and which is ´similar, if not identical, to the way children develop ability in their first language´[…].Krashen contrasts acquisition with learning, the conscious process whereby rules of structure and conventions of usage are explicitly studied and learned. For acquisition to occur, however, a number of conditions have to be satisfied: learners need to be exposed to large amounts of L2 input which is meaningful, interesting or relevant, not grammatically sequenced, and this in a tension-free environment“ (Hafiz& Tudor 4)

reading is appealing, because it is a long-term method of improving one´s English. Instead of practicing one problematic language area after the other, extensive reading consolidates vocabulary and reading strategies in an ongoing manner.

Extensive reading is a tool for learners to study a language without the help of a teacher. Moreover, extensive reading respects students´ different levels of ability. The freedom of choice and individual reading contribute to each learners´ own speed (ch. The context).

Thirdly, Nuttall clearly illustrates what extensive reading can do in the EFL classroom. She argues that many students are trapped in a vicious circle of frustration (127).
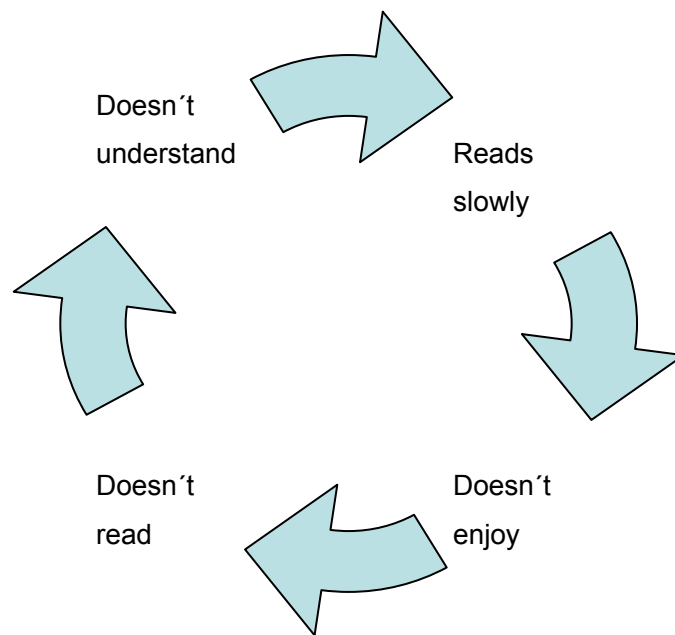

Figure 1: The vicious circle of the weak reader

> It doesn´t matter where you enter the circle, because any of the factors will produce any of the others. Slow readers seldom develop much interest in what they read, let alone pleasure. Since they do not enjoy it, they read as little as possible. Deprived of practice, they continue to find it hard to understand what they read, so their reading rate does not increase. They remain slow readers (Nuttall 127).

Nuttall argues that extensive reading is a way of entering a circle of growth by becoming a good reader (127).
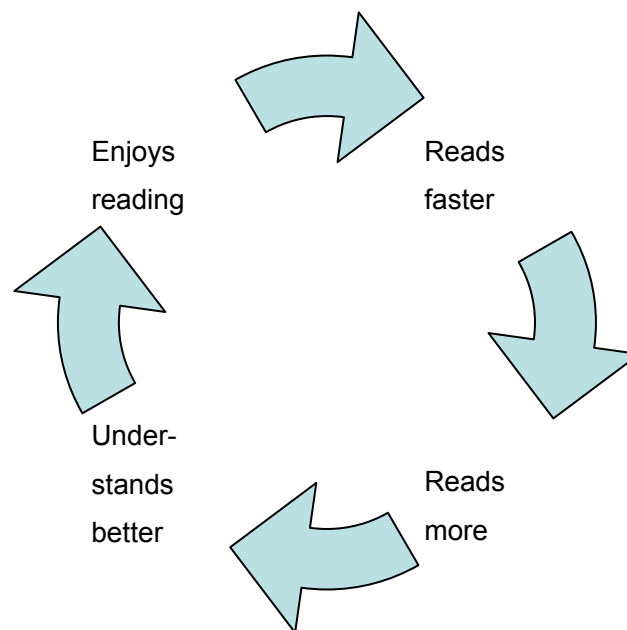
Figure 2: The virtuous circle of the good reader

Subsequently, effects proved by research will be considered in detail. Powell stresses that

> [w]hat makes it far more compelling is the sheer weight of evidence indicating that extensive reading not only develops reading skills but that it also benefits a whole range of other language skills, boosts confidence and motivation and improves overall attitude. Reading in this sense has to be seen holistically, as a crucial part of students´ total development, not as some separate skill (ch. 2c).

Clearly presented tables of ER studies and their results can be found amongst others in Iwahori´s article and Day´s and Bamford´s book *Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom*.

3.3.2.1 Second Language Reading Ability

All studies on reading ability showed that reading improves by reading a lot. There was no difference between children with English as their mother tongue or English as their second language. Moreover, the studies reported gains with students of all ages and also if ERP lasted no longer than a month (Day & Bamford 35).

3.3.2.2 Affect

Two affective variables have to be distinguished: attitude and motivation.

Firstly, attitude is a disposition to evaluate an entity with favour or not. However, an attitude is not a stable concept, but can be changed by numerous variables (Day & Bamford 22). Second language reading attitudes depend on the following factors (Day & Bamford 23):

- first language reading attitudes,
- previous experiences with learning to read other second languages,
- attitudes toward the second language, culture, and people,
- second language classroom environment.

ER can influence the third and fourth source above. Through ER students can learn about another culture, they can choose whatever they want to read and may enjoy this experience. Additionally, a "non-judgemental community of readers" may positively influence learners´ attitude (Day, and Bamford 26).

Motivation, on the other hand, is the engine that makes people do something or not (Day & Bamford 27). "Students are reading books they choose at a level they can enjoy. This pleasure orientation seems to impact their overall feeling about learning English" (Helgesen Introduction 2) Day and Bamford cite studies which show how ERP make learners eager voracious readers. Their attitude towards reading in English improved, they discovered that reading can be pleasurable and enjoyable (35-36).

In chapter 5 of this thesis I will try to answer the question whether extensive reading really enhances students´ reading motivation. This will be done by evaluating an ERP in Austrian grammar schools by questionnaires.

3.3.2.3 Vocabulary

How best to acquire new vocabulary is not quite clear. Research has shown that vocabulary is often acquired in a natural manner through context. However, research is not conclusive and also argues in favour of direct teaching and learning (Coady 5).

A very important distinction in the context of ER is pointed out by Powell: the difference between gain in new vocabulary and the development of ´sight vocabulary´. The latter means an automatic recognition of words due to constant contact with those words (ch. 2c). Day and Bamford define this phenomenon as follows: "The development of a large sight vocabulary can be seen as over-learning words to the point that they are automatically recognized in their printed form. The best and easiest way to accomplish this is to read a great deal" (16).

It has been shown that especially students with a lower level of proficiency benefit from ERP in terms of gains in vocabulary. Learners with extensive contact to the target language show no statistically significant improvement (Day & Bamford 36).

Coady especially points out graded readers as a means of teaching learners to read successfully and, as a consequence, to acquire new words more easily. The vocabulary control movement assumes that simplified text versions are the chance for weaker students to break out of the vicious circle of weak reading skills and little vocabulary knowledge (7).

Generally, it can be concluded that poor readers need to look up words very often, while more advanced students learn to make meaning from context. Very good readers even do not use context very much, but rather recognize words automatically (Urquhart & Weir 190).

3.3.2.4 Linguistic Competence

All studies investigating overall language ability reported that learners improved their target language competence. This includes listening and speaking skills and better acquisition of the target language English (Day & Bamford 37).

Moreover, ER provides students with linguistic, world and topical knowledge. Via ER learners have the chance to acquire those schemata and become better readers (Grabe qtd. in Day & Bamford 19).

3.3.2.5 Writing

One of the most widely known research projects on extensive reading in combination with writing was conducted by F.M. Hafiz and Ian Tudor in the

1980ies. They set up a three-month extensive reading program which showed that students especially improved in the area of writing (Hafiz & Tudor 4).

> These results would appear to indicate that the extensive reading programme undertaken had effected a substantial improvement in subjects´ linguistic proficiency, and would thus appear to lend support to the hypothesis that an input-based and acquisition-oriented mode of learning can lead to an improvement in learners´ linguistic skills in a second language, as regards reading and writing at least (Hafiz & Tudor 8).

Two possible reasons for the improvement especially in writing skills are mentioned by Hafiz and Tudor: firstly, the encounter of a range of various textual features in reading provided the students with a resource from which they could take expressions and stylistic forms for their own writing. Secondly, they assume that the reading material fostered higher motivation and a more positive attitude towards the English language. This could have led to a greater readiness to actively use the language (8).

Gains in writing abilities could even be reported if the ERP did not focus on writing instruction at all. Via extensive reading, students make contact with written English structures they can apply in their own writing (Day & Bamford 37).

The figure below visualizes the interdependence of the four language skills and how one affects the other. The drawing also symbolizes the steps in language acquisition, from listening to speaking and reading to writing (englishclub). Although not all learners necessarily follow this sequence, it nonetheless fortifies the claim that extensive reading enhances students´ writing skills.
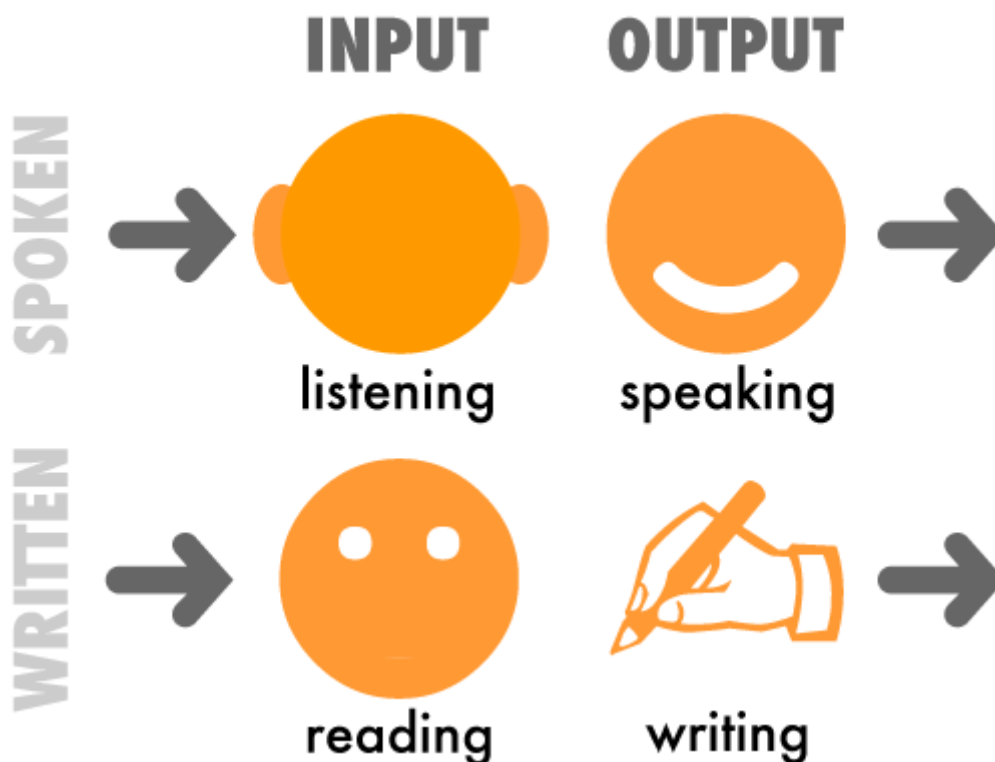
Figure 3: The interdependence of the four language skills[5]

3.3.2.6 Spelling

The evidence for a correlation between extensive reading and spelling is small as only two studies have investigated this variable. However, both showed positive results (Day & Bamford 37-38).

Despite all the research done on extensive reading,

> [m]inistries of education do not promote extensive reading, partly because it is expensive and time-consuming to set up and run, and partly because no one has been able to prove conclusively that it helps. Research is very sparse partly because the time-scale required to see improvement is 2-3 years and it is difficult to keep all relevant factors consistent over such a long period (Hill e-mail).

Susser and Robb, despite pointing at problematic conclusions from various studies, close their article by stating that "we believe on the grounds of

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[5] http://www.englishclub.com/reading/language-skills.htm 29 January 2009

experience that there are good reasons for using the extensive reading procedure much more than it is being used today." (Conclusion)

3.4 The Extensive Reading Program

3.4.1 General Advice for Running an Extensive Reading Program

Building up and running an ERP is costly in terms of labor and money. Nevertheless, it is worth the effort. Before explaining all steps in the build-up of an extensive reading program/ ERP in the next main chapter of this paper, some general advice is given at this point in order to initiate some thought on the topic. These general pieces of advice also hint at problematic issues concerning the successful pursuit of such a project.

"Maximize [l]earner [i]nvolvement" (Bell 3).

In order to keep the organizational effort of an ongoing project lower, it is advisable to integrate students actively in the administration of the program. Learners could work as librarians and coordinate the borrowing of their peers. Thereby, they gain a sense of responsibility for and involvement in the program.

"The [r]eader [i]nterview" (Bell 3).

Bell suggests teachers to regularly interview their students on their reading. On the one hand, the learning and reading process can be monitored, on the other hand, the learner feels interest for his/her reading and experiences. Thus, a positive attitude towards the program can be enhanced.

"Read [a]loud to the [c]lass" (Bell 3).

Especially weaker students are said to benefit from the teacher reading aloud to the class at times. The teacher serves as a pronunciation model from which the learners can learn how to pronounce certain words. Consequently, students´ own confidence in reading aloud or speaking enlarges.

"Student [p]resentations" (Bell 3).

Short student presentations serve as a useful means for the recommendation of good books for fellow students. Again, this method gives weight to students´ opinions and fosters a student-centered way of education.

"Written [w]ork [b]ased on [r]eading" (Bell 4).

Readers can be given the opportunity to respond to their reading in written form. The form of writing can vary according to the learners´ level of proficiency. Moreover, it is a tool for the teacher to evaluate students´ work.

"Avoid the [u]se of [t]ests" (Bell 4).

As ERP strive for introducing reading as a pleasurable experience, a learner-friendly environment without pressure should be aspired.

"Discourage the [o]ver-[u]se of [d]ictionaries" (Bell 4).

Students should be encouraged to use a dictionary only if absolutely necessary, because it discourages fluent reading due to the constant interruption of the reading process. Instead, learners are meant to read easy material and improve their guessing skills in order to maintain the pleasure of reading fast and fluently. Carroll also informs that if students "did not make a conscious effort to learn new words, they could not feel that they were working hard. It was helpful to explain how the meanings of words could be learned from the context […]." (36).

"Monitor the [s]tudents´ [r]eading" (Bell 4).

Through monitoring the learners´ reading process, the teacher has the chance to detect student habits and interests. This provides information about the learning progress as well as preferences. The teacher can use this information to alter and adapt his/her program accordingly, e.g. by selecting different reading material.

3.4.2 Preparation Phase for the Field Study

"Experience is the father of wisdom".

The actual build-up of a class library/ Extensive Reading Program in form of a class library in an Austrian grammar school was carried out in order to gain insight into this time-consuming process. This paper aims at gaining experience which can provide Austrian English teachers with practical advice for running a successful ERP. Literature on the organization of an ERP served as a foundation for the conduction of the field study.

An analysis of the actual state of English school libraries was the starting point for further planning.

3.4.2.1 Situation in Austrian English School Libraries

From my own school experience, I assumed that English school libraries are not used at all in English lessons in Austria. However, first informal interviews with other students of my age revealed a varied picture of the situation in Austrian grammar schools. Consequently, a questionnaire for English teachers was designed.

In the design of the teacher questionnaire I assumed that teachers and students can not make use of an English library as it does not exist or they do not use it due to the poor organization of the library. This assumption arose, as already mentioned, from my own school experiences. I was a student at a grammar school from 1992 to the year 2000 and did not borrow a single English book from the school library. The same was true for my classmates.

The teachers´ questionnaire asked how often the teachers used the English section of the school library with their students. Moreover, it asked for the usefulness of class readers versus individual reading. Additionally, I wanted to know if teachers of English would be interested in a practical guide concerning the buildup of a class library.

The first question targeted at the question whether the school library was used at all or whether class readers were the only way in which reading longer texts takes place in the classroom. Due to my initial assumption that a majority of grammar schools do not have a functioning school library, I thought of the buildup of a class library as a means of implementing individual and extensive reading in the second language classroom. Via a class library, teachers can circumvent a chaotic school library and at the same time implement individual reading in their classes. Moreover, if there was no school library at all, teachers could promote individual silent reading (in contrast to class readers) in form of a class library. This consideration resulted in the last question which asked if

teachers would use a practical guide giving tips in the setting up of a class library in order to minimize costs and time.

Hill also mentions that a main library may not be used by the students as it is too big or the learners do not know the classification system (Email; How To Organize It). Additionally, Benton and Fox list things that can be done to promote independent reading, among them they suggest to provide a book box for each class "so that children have immediate access to a supply of books" (100).

English teachers´ questionnaire

School:………………………………………………….

Does your school have a library with English books in it?

If yes, how many books are there for each level/class (approx.)?

If yes, do you and your students of English use the library?

If yes, how often do you borrow books for your classes?

If you know it or if you can estimate it:

How often do your students borrow books for English classes (voluntarily or if you tell them to do so)?

Do you have a class library for any of your English classes?

If yes, is it your private property or part of the school library?

If yes, how many books does such a class library contain?

If yes, how often do you use it?

If no, why is there no class library?

        O Costs   O good school library

        O Time   O any other:

………………………………………………………………

What do you personally consider more useful?

O every student in class reads the same book at the same time – class reader

O every student reads a book of their own choice – (class) library

O a combination of both

Comment:……………………………………………………………….

If there was a practical guide concerning the build-up of a class library (or the enlargement of the English section of the school library), would you use it?

O yes, because……………………………………………………

O no, because……………………………………………………

O not sure, because……………………………………………………

Anything else you want to say on the topic:

The case study was restricted to the four south-western districts in the province of Lower Austria, namely Amstetten, Waidhofen/Ybbs, Scheibbs and Melk.

Figure 4: the western districts of Lower Austria: Amstetten, Waidhofen/Ybbs, Scheibbs and Melk (AM, SB, WY and ME)[6]

There are six grammar schools in the specified area. An adequate number of questionnaires for English teachers was sent to each school, accompanied by a letter to the headmaster. The schools were asked to participate in the survey and were guaranteed anonymity in order to reduce mistrust, heighten acceptance of the survey and increase the number of participating schools. They were also provided with a stamped envelope for sending back the questionnaires and to avoid any costs for the schools.

Four of six schools sent back teachers´ questionnaires, one did not react at all to the letter of inquiry and the teachers of another school did not want to participate in any written form, but answered informal oral interviews.

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[6] http://www.tourmycountry.com/austria/communities-loweraustria.htm
20 November 2008

All in all, 24 questionnaires were filled in by English teachers and serve as the basis for a sketch of the situation in Austrian school libraries in the western area of Lower Austria.

It is clear that such a small sample of answers can only give a sketch of the situation investigated. It is impossible to draw reliable conclusions from the teachers´ answers as the number of participants is not statistically significant. The field study targets on providing a firsthand report of setting up and running an ERP.

The findings will be presented in anonymized form.

School 1:

Six English teachers participated in the survey. Alls of them use the school library, ranging from once a month to twice a year. None of the teachers reports running a class library, mainly due to the fact that they are content with the school library. All of the teachers consider a combination of class readers and individual reading the most useful method. Two of them would be interested in a guide to the organization of a class library, two are not sure and two would not use it.

School 2:

Five teacher questionnaires were sent back. A summary of the findings reveals the following facts:

The school houses a school library with about 50 to 80 English books for each level of proficiency. All teachers report that they use the English section with their students. Concerning the number of borrowed books the answers varied from no answer at all, or twice a month to 15 books per school year.

No teacher owns or runs a class library. Again, the reason is the existing school library.

All teachers consider a combination of class readers and individual reading (students´ own choice) as the most useful technique.

Four out of five interviewees said they would not use a practical guide concerning the buildup of a class library due to the lack of financial resources (4

responses), lack of space (4 responses) and time (2 times). One teacher was not sure if he would use such a guide as he saw no positive aspects of a class library.

To sum up school number 2 has a useful school library which results in no need for class libraries or a practical guide on the buildup of one. The greatest fears concerning such a project are related to the financial aspect and a space problem in classes.

School 3:

The six participating English teachers reported that all of them use the English section of the school library. Frequency ranges from once a term to once a month. In this grammar school, two out of six teachers run class libraries for some of their English classes. Those who do not use class libraries justify this with the existent school library. All teachers feel that a combination of individual and shared reading experiences is the most suitable technique for students. Only one teacher is not interested in a guide to the buildup of a class library.

School 4:

Seven questionnaires were sent back from this grammar school. Again, all teachers use the school library, answers ranging from "seldom" use to once a month. Two out of seven teachers use a class library. If no class library is used, the main reasons are to be found in the school library and the financial factor of running such a program. Three of the seven teachers consider class readers the most useful method of teaching reading, because the teacher can check more easily on students´ work and progress. Two of the teachers would not use a guide to the buildup of a class library.

School 5:

No questionnaires were filled in by those school teachers.

Personal interviews with English teachers of this school revealed that they are not at all content with their school library. The main reason lies in the chaotic organization of the books which are not clearly arranged or well presented. At the moment they try to enlarge the collection of books in order to diminish this second weak point of their school library. Nevertheless, the teachers were not

sure if they should participate in the poll, because they feared that their negative answers could pose problems for the librarian which they wanted to avoid.

In Austria, teachers who wish to become school librarians have to undergo further training. Unfortunately, this continuing education is not yet standardized. However, there is a tendency towards the unification of the training (Bibliothekenservice ch.4 – my translation). Libraries in Austrian grammar schools, then, are ministered by one or two teacher/s whose working time is split between actual teaching and the organization of the library. Depending on the size of the library and the opening hours the teacher is paid accordingly. E.g.: A school library for up too 600 students, an inventory of about 5.000 books and nine opening hours per week is rated as the equivalent of teaching six lessons (Bibliothekenservice ch.3 – my translation)

A summary of all the answers from the questionnaires (not the informal interviews) reveals the following situation:

Question	Answers and Comments	Percentage
Is there an English school library?	Yes: 24	100 percent
Do you use it?	Yes: 24	100 percent
How often do you use it?	Varying answers:	
	From once a year to 20 books per year.	
	´Never. I buy them.´	
	´Only for class readers´	
	´We always read in the holidays´	
	´Class readers are often bought´	
Do you have a class library?	No: 20	83 percent
	Yes: 4	17 percent
Why is there no class library?	Costs: 3	
	Time:3	
	School library: 16	

Other: ´space, never had the idea´

What do you consider more useful?

Class reader: 3		12.5 percent

´same book for analysis and discussion´

´class readers can be checked more easily´

Individual reading: 0		0 percent
A combination: 21		87.5 percent

´private reading logs´

´own choice for presentations´

Would you use a practical guide for the buildup of a class library?

Yes: 7		29 percent

`all positive impulses are welcome`

`I would not know how to tackle it`

No: 9		37.5 percent

`students should learn to use the school library`

`not necessary`

Not sure: 8		33.5 percent

`we have a fine library and are test readers already`

Anything else you want to say on the topic:

`there should always be a task to each book`

`motivation to read among adolescents is low`

`reading books takes a long time`

`it´s difficult to find good books`

Table 1: An excerpt of the teachers´ answers

According to my investigations, the majority of grammar schools seems to have well-equipped school libraries. Certainly, it is also possible that the schools which did not want to participate in the poll have worse libraries and did not want to participate for that reason. No matter what the reason might be, we have to keep in mind that this is pure conjecture.

Despite well-equipped school libraries, the frequency of use varies enormously from teacher to teacher. Some prefer to buy the books they use in class; others prefer to make use of the school library.

However, other English school libraries differ in size and in organization compared to the good examples reported in the questionnaires. Consequently students never use them due to their small choice of books or chaotic order system. If interviewed teachers reported that their students do not use the English library section at all, the main reason is to found in a lack of organization, presentation and guidance for users. It is obvious that a library without reading level shelf marks will not develop great interest on side of the students.

Another point is that although teachers consider a combination of class readers and individual reading a useful method, they often admit that individual reading is too work-intensive for the teacher. Consequently, I am of the opinion that a well-organized ERP could be the solution to the dilemma of "I know individual reading would be good, but I do not know how to do it effectively".

The majority of reading in Austrian English classes is done via class readers, meaning all students read the same book at the same time. All in all, the number of books read per year is relatively low if compared to standards set up by ER experts. Day and Bamford quote several sources, which claim that reading extensively means to read thirty pages an hour, fifty pages per week or 60 books a year. Your expectations as a teacher depend on your students, their reading level, the level of books they choose from etc. (85-86). Personally, I consider suggestions including page numbers more easily comparable than speaking of number of books which have to be read. A class library can include graded readers which are 100 pages long and young adult novels which are 400 pages long.

This paper does not aim at introducing ER as fast as possible and in form of a stand-alone reading course. This would be too large a step for the Austrian situation, considering that class readers are mostly more popular than individual reading and extensive reading would be integrated in the regular English

lessons. However, it would be desirable to strive at increasing students´ general amount of reading. I am convinced that this could be most easily achieved by implementing the method of extensive reading in the Austrian curriculum for English as a foreign language. ER should become a matter of course and a regular part of English education.

Hill also claims that "[i]t is astonishing that modern language syllabi that focus on communication do not give time to reading and telling stories, which are such a basic and enjoyable use of language" (Survey 303)

The present curriculum for English as a foreign language in grammar schools states that English education should strive at teaching Austrian students the autonomous comprehension of written foreign-language texts with the aid of adequate reading strategies. It is noteworthy that the communicative skills of speaking and listening are given more emphasis at the moment. However, the curriculum states that all four language skills should be trained regularly and *at the same degree* [emphasis added]. Moreover, according to different abilities and interests on side of the students, the teacher is asked to promote individualized learning strategies, such as portfolios, open learning and short presentations. By the creation of such a positive learning climate, students´ individual talents should be fostered. The more detailed original German version is to be found in Appendix I (Education Highway – my translation). In other words, the Austrian curriculum for teaching English provides, even at present, broad support for the implementation of Extensive Reading: the *autonomous comprehension* of written texts, *adequate* reading *strategies*, *individualized* learning strategies and a *positive* learning *climate* [emphasis added]. Those keywords resemble the key principles of ER very closely.

Additionally, the Austrian Ministry of Education, Art and Culture promotes on its website that reading should be fostered in Austrian schools, because reading is regarded as one of the most important competences in life. Therefore, the consolidation of students´ reading competence is said to be one of the most fundamental goals in education. Moreover, every school is asked to contribute to the realization of the concept. School libraries are seen as an essential part of this whole process. Teachers and headmasters are asked to find ways of

fostering reading motivation among their students and develop a positive reading culture in their schools. Projects of exemplary quality will be made public and will receive financial support (Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur Initiative Lesen - my translation). Again, this information is the perfect encouragement and justification for every English teacher who wishes to introduce ER in their classes or school.

3.4.2.2 Students´ Opinion on their Reading Habits in English

Before the actual organization of the ERP, the students participating in the case study were also given a questionnaire on their reading habits and preferences. Davies lists interviews, questionnaires, and also reading diaries as ways of studying individual reading behavior. Those informal studies intend to find out how reading is seen by individual readers and also initiate reflective thoughts on the way they read (1).

A sixth form of an Austrian grammar school participated in the research project. The students were fifteen or sixteen years old and it was their sixth year of learning English as a foreign language. Of course, it would have been also possible to do the project with younger learners. The questionnaire was intended to examine students´ reading habits, be it in German and English, respectively their mother tongue and the foreign language they have been studying (L1 and L2).

Students were also asked for the reasons underlying their like or dislike of reading in English. Subsequently, the interviewees were asked to describe their English reading habits at school. This included if they also read at home, if they read class readers and if their motivation would increase if they could choose their reading material themselves. The last question asked for their reading preferences. This was meant as a preliminary to the actual organization of the ERP of the field study.

Questionnaire for students of English

School:……………………………………………….

Class:………..

Do you like to read in German?

If yes, what do you like to read?

If no, why not?

Do you like to read in English?

Why/ Why not?

Describe your English reading habits:

O I only read English at school

O I read English books/magazines at school and if it is homework for school at home

O I read in English at school and also for pleasure at home

O Any other:……………………………………………………..

How many English books do you read per year (at school and at home)?

If your whole class has to read the same book in English, (honestly) do you read it or not?

If not, would you read an English book, if you could choose it yourself?

Would that change your reading motivation? Comment:

Do you think that reading improves your language abilities (e.g. writing)?

If your English teacher built a class library for you, which books would you like him/her to buy for you? Which topics would you like to read about? What are you interested in? Tick (not only one suggestion) and give examples or specify your choices.

O sports   specify or give example:…………..........

O crime   ex.:

O romances, love stories ex.:

O fiction   ex.:

O science fiction, fantasy ex.:

O history and fiction ex.:

O biographies   ex.:

O tales   ex.:

O horror, thrillers   ex.:

O books on films   ex.:

O poetry   ex.:

O short stories   ex.:

O women's literature ex.:

O comics, manga   ex.:

O classics   ex.:

O drama   ex.:

O religion and spirituality ex.:

O school and teenagers ex.:

O series   ex.:

O health, mind and body ex.:

O professional, technical ex.:

O countries, travels ex.:

O outdoor and nature ex.:

O internet, computer ex.:

O any other:…………………………………………………………………….

The students´ questionnaires basically aimed at the class participating in the project. Nineteen questionnaires were filled in. Another grammar school, however, was also willing to hand out some of the questionnaires to the same age group in order to enlarge the sample. Eight questionnaires were sent back from the second school. All in all, 27 students answered the given questions.

25 of them like to read in their mother tongue German. Two do not like it, because they simply find it boring.

The situation changes considerably when asked about their reading habits in the foreign language: 17 of the interviewees like to read in English, 10 do not like it at all or only like it sometimes. The main reasons for disliking reading English books lie in the fact that the books are too difficult and are, thus, not understood well and become boring. Some of the students find some books too long or just read parts of the books. Others find the English books they have to read ´awful´ and not interesting.

While 11 students read English texts at school and at home if it is homework, 16 report of also reading in English for pleasure at home.

14 students (more than 50 percent) declare to read one to four books per school year, which is not much. 10 of the learners read up to 9 books per year, only three of them read more than ten books a year.

20 students report that they read the class readers they have to read, 7 learners only read them partly. Only eight students answered the question if they assume that the self-selection of books would change their reading motivation. Five students said yes, their motivation would increase, 3 said no, this would not change anything for them.

All interviewees claimed that they believe in reading as a means of improving their language abilities.

The students´ reading preferences will be evaluated in the next section of the paper "practical guidelines".

4 Practical Guidelines

4.1 Organization of an ERP

"In one sentence: think big and start small." (Hill Practical Tips).

Hill proposes three initial stages of preparing an extensive reading program which are not dependant on any approval or permission from official quarters. Teachers can run a reading program privately in their classes and gain experience in the field (Practical Tips).

Firstly, teachers have to inform themselves about extensive reading. Hill suggests the books from Hedge, Nuttall and Day and Bamford (see bibliography). There are also the Extensive Reading Pages on the Internet – www.extensivereading.net (Robb) – where an extensive bibliography on the topic archived by George Jacobs et al. can be found. The same is true for Waring´s old and new website www.robwaring.org/er/.

Secondly, with the help of publishers´ catalogues a list of titles should be set up which serves as a basis for the first purchase of materials.

Thirdly, an outline of the project has to be set up. This design can be presented to the headmaster at any time (Practical Tips).

However, if the teacher plans on running the program on a more official basis or wants to introduce it in a bigger form, more steps are necessary.

"[B]ut ultimately the programme must be determined by the teacher, to ensure the full commitment it will require." (Davis 333)

4.1.1 Curricular Decisions

Firstly, it has to be decided in which form the extensive reading program is planned to be included into students´ education of English as a foreign language.

4.1.1.1 General Guidelines

According to Day and Bamford there are *at least* [emphasis added] four ways of including extensive reading in the second language curriculum:

- "as a separate, stand-alone course

- as part of an existing reading course

- as a noncredit addition to an existing course

- as an extracurricular activity" (41).

Due to major differences between the American and Austrian school system in terms of the amount of compulsory lessons and optional courses, the suggestions above could be interpreted as follows:

In Austrian schools the ERP is introduced in form of a stand-alone course which would mean it was an optional subject. For lower grades this would imply at the same time that the ERP would be a non-credit course. For higher grades it could be possible to make ER a ´Wahlpflichtfach´[7] in the future, meaning that students would get credit for their efforts.

The second possibility is to include ER in the regular English lessons. Every student can then profit from the ERP.

Green argues that "extensive reading should be incorporated fully in the language curriculum as a vital component of a task-based approach to second language learning" (306), rather than simply forcing it upon teachers and students in a top-down fashion. This has proved to cause resistance and indifference (308).

4.1.1.2 The Field Study

The extensive reading program of the field study was included as part of the existing English lessons of a sixth form of a grammar school in Lower Austria[8]. The sixth form has three English lessons per week. The class teacher decided to focus especially on reading for a time period of two to three months. The regular English education continued at the same time. Especially in the first

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[7] Alternative compulsory subjects /elective compulsory subjects:
In the upper classes of AHS/grammar school/academic secondary school, students may choose different courses according to their interests through alternative compulsory subjects and elective compulsory subjects. They have the possibility to deepen their knowledge on compulsory subjects or learn another foreign language. (Federal Ministry)
[8] Bundesgymnasium / Bundesrealgymnasium 3250 Wieselburg.

three weeks of the program, all English lessons were solely used for reading or activities around reading in the foreign language. The following three weeks about half of the teaching time was used for the ERP. The last three weeks were reserved for reading at home and doing a book-report.

4.1.2 Goals, Interests

Another vital point for the teacher is to state what they want to achieve by introducing ER into the curriculum. By explicitly stating the goals of an ERP, teachers may find it easier to reach these goals as they implement actions accordingly. Moreover, a list of goals and interests provides the teacher with a basis for future assessment.

4.1.2.1 General Guidelines

Day and Bamford list the following as possible goals of an extensive reading program:

- Students will develop "a positive attitude toward reading in the second language" (45).
- Learners will "[h]ave confidence in their reading" (45).
- Moreover, they will be motivated "to read in the second language" (45).
- Students will start to read "without constantly stopping to look up unknown or difficult words in the dictionary" (45).
- They will have better "word recognition ability [and k]now for what purpose they are reading" (45).

Certainly, those goals may vary from teacher to teacher. Teachers may follow studies on the effects of ER for further ideas.

4.1.2.2 The Field Study

The main goals of the extensive reading program carried out in a secondary school were:

- The development of a positive attitude towards reading in English.
- An increase in confidence in reading in the foreign language.
- The development of a higher motivation to read in English.

- A rise in reading quantity per year.

For me, the most interesting aspect of ER has, from the beginning, been the positive change in reading motivation, attitude and confidence reported in various studies and articles. Therefore, I wanted to find out for myself if self-selection of books can trigger those attitudinal effects. An qualitative study after two months of running an ERP is meant to provide insight into students´ feelings towards ER. Moreover, I wanted to increase the amount of English material they read per school year.

4.1.3 Deciding the Size of the Program

In order to realize an ERP, it is necessary to decide on the size of the program. This step, of course, influences the following measures like the budget or the purchase of reading material.
The size of an ERP may range from a small class library for the implementation of ER to a single class, to a large school library providing the whole school and all reading levels with material for ER.

4.1.3.1 General Guidelines

It is definitely wise to start a program small. It all depends on the number of students in the program, the money available and the time the teacher can spend on the project. However, the buildup of a library should not be a one-time project, but is an ongoing process in which new books are bought after some time in order to enlarge the library (Day & Bamford 107-108).
As extensive reading believes it is better to read a lot of easy books than one difficult one, a class library should aim at containing four times as many books as there are students. For a beginning, it is enough to provide twice as many books as the number of students (Nuttall 130).

4.1.3.2 The Field Study

For the field study, a class library was set up which contained four times as many books as students.

The reading material was composed of existing material from the school library, new and up-to-date books purchased especially for this class and loans from an individual person. By following this procedure it was possible to build a rather big class library right from the beginning without having problems with raising money.

From my field study experience, I find it important to mention that even four times as many books as students is not too high a number for a class library. Not all books are equally popular with students. Therefore, some books are constantly ignored by readers and cannot be regarded as part of the actual, actively used class library.

A book list is to be found in Appendix III.

4.1.4 Budget

As a next step, a budget has to be prepared. Often, but not necessarily, this involves co-operation with the headmaster or the librarian who may provide money for the setting up of an ERP.

4.1.4.1 General Guidelines

The crucial questions at the beginning of the setup of an extensive reading library are: How many materials are needed at the beginning of the program in order to run it successfully? And how much money is needed to fulfill these ideas. Definitely, more money is needed at the start of such a program, when the basis for the whole program has to be purchased (Day & Bamford 108).

4.1.4.2 The Field Study

For the field study, a mix of already existing library books and loans was set up in order to keep the costs low. Afterwards, the number of additionally needed books was estimated. The price for one book is no more than 10 Euros, even less, if bought in form of paperbacks, via the Internet or good book-sellers.

Accordingly, as the school provided about 160 Euros for the project, twenty new books could be purchased.

4.1.5 Reading Levels

As was shown in the chapters above, the question of reading levels is a crucial part in the ER discussion, especially as students are meant to read by themselves without the guidance or help of a teacher.

4.1.5.1 General Guidelines

Generally, it is wise to start reading easier books in order to build up confidence. The rule of thumb on reading levels is ´I minus one´, meaning reading material which is one level below students´ language competence (Day & Bamford 91). Mostly, learners´ comfort zone regarding their reading level expands after some time and they can start reading more demanding books. It is also normal to switch between different reading levels. An important phenomenon is the ´macho maxim´ of second language reading instruction: ´no reading pain, no reading gain´. This describes students who struggle with more difficult material, because they think this is the best way to make progress in language learning. Those learners should be convinced of the fluency effect which can be achieved by reading easier material (Day & Bamford 92). Clarity states "that only two out of one-hundred words should be unknown to the reader" in order to make reading a pleasurable activity.

Determining students´ reading levels can be done in various ways:

Either the teacher knows his students well enough to know which reading levels they can handle easily.

Another possibility is to give out samples of reading material which is tested by the class. Learners are asked to read the passages or pages and mark all unknown words. If a majority of them does not mark more than two words per page, the material is easy enough for them (Day & Bamford 109).

EPER also offers placement and progress tests which can be ordered directly at EPER (Hill e-Mail).

Personally, I consider the second possibility, giving out samples of reading material, as a very effective and at the same time uncomplicated measure of determining students´ reading levels. The teacher does not need any outer help

and at the same time, has the chance to confirm his/her decisions by a test and not just intuition.

4.1.5.2 The Field Study

As the class teacher has known the participating English class for at least one and a half years, no reading level test was needed. The reading material was thus chosen according to the teacher´s assessment.

It is important to include enough easier material in order to increase motivation and reading fluency. However, there are also more demanding texts in order to challenge very good students.

It was interesting to observe how differently students chose their books. One girl, at first interested in ´Angela´s Ashes´, immediately put the book back when she heard the teacher´s remark, "A good read, but a bit challenging maybe." At the same time, another student complained to the teacher that she wanted to read ´Pride and Prejudice´, but not the graded version, which was in the class library, but the original.

4.1.6 Raising Money

This chapter revolves around the question where financial means can be raised for the ERP. It is closely linked to the selection of books and the actual purchase, the next steps in the setting up of an ERP.

4.1.6.1 General Guidelines

There are several ways of raising money for a (class) library. However, it is important to carefully plan how the fundraising should be done. This includes the headmaster's approval, the involvement of other English teachers or even the parents´ organization in order to organize an orderly scheme (Nuttall 133).

Firstly, the school is a good contact in terms of money. Turn to the headmaster or the librarian, whoever is in charge of the school-budget for the purchase of books. Provide your partner with a budget and a list of books you want to order.

Another possibility is to ask for the students´ contribution. They could contribute money or buy books themselves which they give to the library.

Thirdly, money can be collected with the help of fundraising events. It is a good idea to invite the students to help, because their involvement in the whole reading project increases enormously if they feel responsible for the success of the library. Nuttall suggests sponsored spelling tests or other competitions. For every success, sponsors give a certain amount of money to the library (131-132).

A further way of raising money is to appeal to local firms and companies. Nuttall suggests inducements in return, like a story in the local newspaper or a label in the books which tells who has bought the book (133).

4.1.6.2 The Field Study

After discussions with the headmaster and the participating English teacher, the librarian was contacted. He promised a budget of 200 Euros for the purchase of English books.

Moreover, he informed me that in this particular school, students are asked to pay 5 Euros at the beginning of every school year for the library. This financial contribution adds up to a sizable budget. E.g.: For a school with 600 students this means an additional sponsorship of 3000 Euros per year! Of course this amount of money has to be split for buying books of all branches and subjects.

No fundraising events were set up, especially due to time.

Raising money from firms and companies appeared to be impossible:

An information sheet about the project was set up, which could be handed out to any sponsors. Moreover, confirmations in writing have to be provided in order to assure the sponsors the legality of the fundraising. It is also helpful to be able to show an official document from the school, affirming your project. Additionally, there were two inducements in return to be offered, namely a story and advertisement on the school home page and a label in the new books telling the sponsor's name.

Nevertheless, it proved to be hopeless to raise money from companies which are not privately involved with the school. If people do not feel a personal alliance with the school, for example their children or grandchildren attending

this school, they are not willing to provide money for school projects of any kind (especially in times of a financial crisis).

4.1.7 Selection and Purchase of Books

After money has been raised, the teacher has to decide on the kind of material s/he wants to include in the ERP and order those books.

Subsequently, various ways of finding suitable language learner literature are presented. Some sources are also assessed concerning usefulness and clarity.

4.1.7.1 General Guidelines

If teachers have to select books for their students, they can turn to the „three C´s - catalogue, canon, criteria" (see Thaler 18). Catalogues are provided by all publishing companies, listing books according to levels or age groups. Canons are provided by university departments or education secretaries and include a list of books which are considered to be the most valuable pieces of literature. Teachers often find canons problematic as they include works too difficult for younger learners or especially learners of English as a foreign language (Thaler 18-19).[9] Another way of selecting books would be to apply certain criteria like school (type and level), learner (age, interest, background), teacher (competences), text (availability, difficulty, topic etc.) (Thaler 20).

Nuttall argues for applying the acronym SAVE when choosing books. SAVE summarizes four important criteria, namely *Short, Appealing, Varied and Easy* [emphasis added]. There should be enough books which can be finished rather quickly in order to avoid boredom or discouragement. Moreover, the materials

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[9] The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) in England listed the following authors as being recommended for the secondary curriculum in 2007: Jane Austen, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, William Blake, Charlotte Bronte, Robert Burns, Geoffrey Chaucer, Kate Chopin, John Clare, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Charles Dickens, Arthur Conan Doyle, George Eliot, Thomas Gray, Thomas Hardy, John Keats, John Masefield, Alexander Pope, Christina Rossetti, William Shakespeare (sonnets), Mary Shelley, Robert Louis Stevenson, Jonathan Swift, Alfred Lord Tennyson, HG Wells, Oscar Wilde, Dorothy Wordsworth and William Wordsworth (Thaler 19).

should appeal to the readers also as regards their outward appearance, like cover and print. The books have to be varied in terms of level and content. Lastly, materials should be easier than textbook level, so students are able to read in a fluent manner (Nuttall 131).

Especially, for younger learners or English beginners, it is a good idea to turn to graded readers. Publishers are CER – Cambridge English Readers, EPER, MGR - Macmillan Guided Readers, MHCR – Macmillan Heinemann Children´s Readers, MHNW - Macmillan Heinemann New Wave Readers, OBF - Oxford Bookworms Factfiles, OBL - Oxford Bookworms Library, OBS - Oxford Bookworms Starters, OCLT-Classic Tales, OD – Oxford Dominos, OSL - Oxford Storylines, PR – Penguin Readers, PYR – Penguin Young Readers.

Contact addresses are (Day & Bamford 199-202):

- Cambridge University Press: www.cambridge.org/elt/readers - provides with catalogues from Starter Level to Level 6. Titles are available through the local bookseller.

- EPER to be found at www.ials.ed.ac.uk/eper.html.

- Macmillan Education: www.macmillaneducation.com/catalogue/readers/ readindex.htm is a clear website. After browsing the homepage you can contact the local booksellers for Austria, also to be found on the homepage.

- Oxford University Press: www.oup.com/elt/catalogue/general/readers. Unfortunately, it is difficult to orient oneself on the homepage.

- Pearson Education: www.penguinreaders.com is a well-arranged website. Penguin Readers can either be ordered online or if this is not possible, via an Austrian contact person.

4.1.7.2 The Field Study

For the field study, the World Wide Web was used as the main source of information on language learner literature.

Certainly, it is a good idea to browse the Web for either "children's literature", "young adult novels" or "language learner literature" to name only a few search terms for one of the various search engines. So-called "bestseller lists" are a

good means of finding up-to-date reading material, which your students will enjoy. Why should your students be an exception to the rest of the teenage world?

As a guideline for the selection of books we oriented ourselves on the students´ questionnaires, the topics they were interested in and the genres listed there (see chapter 3.4.2.2.) as well as the money available for the purchase of the reading material.

The class library then contained graded readers (Charlotte Bronte´s *Jane Eyre*, Stephen King´s *The Body*) for weaker students and newspapers and magazines (*Spotlight, Spot On*) as shorter forms of literature. Moreover, the students were provided with books on historical and cultural topics (*A Pocket History of Ireland*) as well as biographies (*Barack Obama- Yes We Can*) and drama. There were also novels (Charles Frazier´s *Cold Mountain*) and young adult novels (Haddon´s *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*) on various topics as well as fantasy (Eoin Colfer´s *Artemis Fowl,* J.K. Rowling´s *Harry Potter*), books that were made into films or TV-series (*Gilmore Girls*, *Bridget Jones*), thrillers (Simon Beckett´s *The Chemistry of Death*), current bestsellers (Meyer´s *Twilight*) etc. in order to meet as many interests as possible. See Appendix III for the complete list.

Subsequently, some of the most useful websites and homepages will be presented.

- Homepages and websites which provide collections of websites on the topic of children´s literature:

The Digital Librarian, www.digital-librarian.com, by Margaret Vail. Under the headings of ´Literature´ and ´Children's Literature´ the librarian provides the reader with an enormously long list of various websites offering lists of reading material for children and teenagers. It is definitely an impressive collection, but it takes time to study all the information provided.

The Children's Literature Web Guide, http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/, by David K. Brown. For quick reference turn to ´Children's Bestsellers´ or ´Book Awards´. ´Lots of Lists´ offers recommended books for children.

- Websites which provide the reader with bestseller lists, summaries and recommendations:

Amazon, www.amazon.at, and Thalia, www.thalia.at, are widely-known online sales companies. They can serve as a wonderful basis for the selection of books if you trust the bestseller lists. Books I have never heard of, but nevertheless ordered there, proved to be very popular with the students of the field study and motivated them to read in English.

www.rezensionen.schule.at by Christian Holzmann offers book reviews particularly of young adult novels. The German descriptions of the English books provide the reader with precise and individual recommendations on which one can rely. The reviews are organized according to author or theme which is especially useful for classroom use. A very useful and clearly arranged website!

www.contemporarylit.about.com does not focus on children's literature, but literature in general. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find one's way on the site.

www.dawcl.com by Lisa R. Bartle. "*DAWCL* has over 7,000 records from 84 awards across six English-speaking countries". With the help of a search engine the reader may select suitable material for toddlers as well as teenagers. Due to the various choices in the search engine, like setting, keywords, gender or genre it is useful for classroom use.

www.carolhurst.com by Carol Hurst and Rebecca Otis provides reviews of children´s books arranged by title or grade.

www.cynthialeitichsmith.com by Cynthia Leitich Smith focuses on children's and teenage books and suggests books for all age groups.

www.parents-choice.org targets at books for younger learners. It gives books reviews and also articles like ´what boys like to read´ or ´what kids who don´t like to read like to read´ accompanied by book lists. All in all it is a good and

very appealing website if you search books for beginners; the same is true for RIF – Reading is fundamental – www.rif.org.

- Websites which list award-winning children´s literature:

CLA - Canadian Library Association www.cla.ca gives you suggestions for reading material at ´CLA at work´ under the subheading of ´awards´.

The Extensive Reading Foundation www.erfoundation.org. "The Extensive Reading Foundation is a not-for-profit, charitable organization whose purpose is to support and promote extensive reading. One Foundation initiative is the annual Language Learner Literature Award for the best new works in English."

- A further possibility is to browse the homepages of other schools. Often there are articles about reading projects or lists about currently used books to be found, which can serve as a supplement to other bestseller lists. This information gives an insight into projects of other schools and may be a thought-provoking impulse.

A book list containing all the reading material used in the extensive reading program is to be found in Appendix III.

If money is available and the books are selected, the actual purchase can take place. The main addresses for Austrian school teachers are at the moment:

- Online at www.amazon.at or www.thalia.at. They are often cheaper than local bookstores.

- Another tip by an English teacher was ´The Bookshop´ of Magister Wolfgang Steinhauser in Lower Austria, Am Berg 282, 3970 Weitra. This bookseller is known for his reliability, quick shipment and knowledge about the books he sells. He can be contacted via his e-mail-address office@thebookshop.at.

4.1.8 Cataloging, Displaying Material

For the cataloging of reading material each teacher has to find a method which is efficient in terms of time and clarity for their individual reading project. Firstly, preferences may vary among people and secondly, the requirements to such a cataloging system depend on the volume of the library

The display of reading material has a strong effect on students´ motivation to read. Chaotic book shelves do not contribute to efficient self-selection of material. This could also be seen in informal interviews with teachers and students in Austria.

4.1.8.1 General Guidelines

Nuttall gives a detailed account on how to display books. She names various possibilities such as a shelf running around the classroom, freestanding book racks or library corners (134).

4.1.8.2 The Field Study

A class library was introduced, because this proved to be the best way for gaining experience with ER. It is a relatively small form of an ERP with manageable costs and amount of organization. I found it especially useful that a class library makes books easier accessible to students. They do not have to go to the school library and browse book shelves, but a selection of varied material can be accessed by them during English lessons.

The material was catalogued before introducing the class library. All book titles were written down in a list which was given to the librarian, the English teacher and to one of the students.

The class library, consisting of about 80 titles, was kept in two big baskets. As there was not possibility to safely store and lock up the books in the classroom, the baskets were stored in the librarian's corner of the school library. From there, they were brought to the classroom at least once a week to enable students to exchange reading material. In order to make the choice of book easier for the students, the materials were spread upon two tables.

Consequently, students could look at the covers, read blurbs and choose whatever sounded interesting to them.

Figure 5: The material comprised about 80 titles in two baskets

4.1.9 Checkout System

The checkout system has to be chosen according to the dimensions of the library and the number of participating students.

4.1.9.1 General Guidelines

The teacher has to set up rules for the checkout of reading material, e.g. for how long a book can be borrowed. To keep record of the books it is necessary to write down which student has checked out which book.

This may be done in form of a notebook or library cards (Day & Bamford 115). However, I believe that the checkout system for a large school library best works with the help of a computer program.

4.1.9.2 The Field Study

As the participating pupils were already 16 years old, responsibility for keeping record of the checkouts was placed in the students´ hands. A notebook was introduced which was always in the book baskets. If students borrowed books, they wrote down the date, their name and the title of the book in the notebook. If they gave back a book, they crossed out their names. It was planned to find one or two students who were responsible for the organizational overview. Unfortunately, no one volunteered. Consequently, students were not really monitored by anyone during the reading program. However, the teacher tried to

direct students´ attention to the notebook every time they could choose new books which worked out well at the beginning. However, students stopped using the notebook when they were not reminded to do so.

4.2 Using the Class Library:

Using the library involves all activities which are necessary for the successful running of an ERP. It begins with orienting the students to the program, making them acquainted with the procedures and expectations the teacher has in mind. Moreover, this chapter presents model lesson plans which can accompany such a reading project.

4.2.1 Student Orientation

"Innovations in teaching must be explained to students, and extensive reading is no exception." (Day & Bamford 118)

4.2.1.1 General Guidelines

Students have to be prepared for reading extensively in order to avoid rejection of ER as a new methodology in the second language classroom. Day and Bamford point out that ER may be a challenge to students for various reasons (118). They may find it hard to believe in such a student-centered method if they are not used to it. Moreover, learners may rebel against reading easier material without the aid of a dictionary (119).

"An orientation tells students what they will do and why they will be doing it. Topics covered should include the goals and procedures of the program and the principles that underlie them, as well as an introduction to the reading materials and their availability." (Day & Bamford 120).

4.2.1.2 The Field Study

Some weeks before the initiation of the extensive reading program, the students were informed that there was going to be a program in which they could choose the reading material themselves.

At the beginning of the program, the book baskets were brought to the class. Afterwards, the differences between intensive and extensive reading were worked out with the students. This also included informing them about general rules concerning extensive reading, e.g.: no dictionaries, you are free to stop reading a book you do not like, etc. Also, the characteristics and benefits of extensive reading were presented to them.

The rest of the lesson was used to let the students choose their first book to read and start reading right in the English lesson.

In the second week and after getting acquainted with the books, students were informed about the requirements and the work they have to do during the program.

Throughout the extensive reading program, students were asked to talk about their books or do other reading activities. Afterwards, they were informed about the purpose of the activity. This resulted in discussions about the goals and benefits of extensive reading.

4.2.2 Goals

Hedge states that "the ultimate goal of a reading programme is to encourage independence in reading […]" (Using Readers 63).

4.2.2.1 General Guidelines

The students should be given an overview about the goals of ER. It is advisable to contrast extensive reading to other ways of reading in order to give weight to possible differences (Day & Bamford 120).

"Experience has also shown that this orientation process needs to be continued in various ways at appropriate intervals throughout the course until the students have truly made the principles and goals of extensive reading their own" (Day & Bamford 119).

Goals of ER are to understand texts without translating word by word, to focus on overall meaning, to read fluently at one's own speed and above all, to enjoy reading (Day & Bamford 120).

4.2.2.2 The Field Study

In the introductory lesson the students were told that ER is meant to make them more fluent readers by reading whatever they want to read in a fluent manner. They are also expected to read more than in a regular school year. Moreover, they should choose books they are interested in in order to enjoy reading.

4.2.3 Procedures

As most Austrian students will not be familiar with the term ´extensive reading´, the teacher has to explain the principles of ER to them.

4.2.3.1 General Guidelines

The most vital points are the self-selection of material and reading large quantities of text without the use of a dictionary. For a comprehensible presentation of those maxims the teacher may contrast intensive and extensive reading (Day & Bamford 121-123). Firstly, this includes information on the reading purpose which is to enjoy and inform oneself about a topic. Moreover, it tells them not to focus on single words, but rather on the overall meaning of a text. They can choose from easier material of all kinds of genres and read as much as possible. Moreover, students should try to read as fluent as possible, avoiding the use of a dictionary (Day & Bamford 123).

4.2.3.2 The Field Study

For the ERP, I presented a similar table to the one above to the class. It was a mixture of several tables from various articles. It also included the fact that they are allowed to read everything which is interesting to them. Moreover, it contained the information that they will mostly read at home, but also in the classroom (Waring, Getting Going and Welch).

4.2.4 Requirements

Part of the orientation process is to tell students about your expectations as a teacher concerning their workload. Cashdan points out that teachers carefully have to balance their demands. If they are too low, learners may become uninterested, if they are too high, they could become frustrated (8).

4.2.4.1 General Guidelines

Clearly tell the students what they are expected to do. This includes the number of pages they should read or any written or oral follow-up work they are expected to do. It is important to assure students that the expected amount of reading is achievable. It may be necessary to explain in detail how much time they should spend on reading and what this means in consequence for your requirements (Day & Bamford 123).

Recommended quantities vary enormously. As a consequence, more research has to be done in order to establish a minimum level which is necessary for any learning benefits. (Rosszell 4)

4.2.4.2 The Field Study

At the beginning of the field study, students were given precise requirements concerning the number of pages they should read until the next English lesson. This proved to be useful for the students as they were used to be told what homework was. Accordingly, they had to be slowly led towards a student-centered reading method which allowed them to read at their own speed. Moreover, students did not have to do any written follow-up work at the beginning, but just had to concentrate on reading. Additionally, the first week's English lessons were solely used to manifest the extensive reading program. This included a lot of reading to be done at home and also in the classroom, reporting about reading experiences orally and describing the first experiences with the chosen book. All those teaching decisions made the extensive reading program part of the regular English education and showed the students the weight given to the program by the teacher.

In the following weeks, there was always time reserved for the reading program in class: students reported about their book in front of their students, gave recommendations or did reading activities with the teacher, e.g.: rereading passages to show how their fluency improves quickly.

In the third week, the teacher slowly informed the students about the requirements of the program. There had to be requirements, because the

teacher needed means to monitor and evaluate the students´ work and the students needed to know that their efforts were valued.

The requirements were:

Students have to keep a reading diary, giving information about how long they read every day and which book they read.

Every student has to give a short mini-speech about his/her book of choice in front of their class mates, describing what it is about and what they liked or did not like about it.

Students decide on one of a long list of alternative book reports (Carter & Rashkis 134-137) and hand in the product.

Every student has to write one "classic" book report about their book of choice.

The reading diary served as a means for the conductor of the field study to get an overview about students´ reading habits. It was no time-consuming assignment - about one minute per week.

The short talk about a book served as an instrument for the teacher to also assess students´ oral performance.

The alternative book reports provided a large repertoire of activities for the students. There were written tasks, oral tasks, artistic and creative tasks, etc. for all learner types. The effort for the various reports varies and depends on students´ own choice.

The last assignment was a classic book report of a book of their choice. The teacher did not give any specifications.

All in all, the most crucial point was to avoid any additional work for the students. This meant that any other homework or assignments were cancelled during the ERP.

4.2.5 Teacher as a Role Model

Elkin believes that "the adult student has to experience a personal love of reading children's literature to enable them to pass that passion on to children, whether as a teacher, librarian, social worker, carer, parent, or grandparent" (152).

4.2.5.1 General Guidelines

"It is up to the teacher to convince the reluctant reader that reading, either extensive or intensive, is pleasurable." (Greenwood Introduction 7)

> Students follow the example of people they respect, and above all that of their teacher. If the teacher is seen to read with concentration, to enjoy reading and to make use of books, newspapers and so on, the students are more likely to take notice of her when she urges them to do the same.
> It is important to demonstrate that you value reading, since we believe that reading is caught, not taught. Like an infectious disease (fortunately only in this respect), it cannot be caught from people who have not got it themselves (Nuttall 229).

ER requires the teacher to get involved in the program. Either the teacher also reads books from the class library, reads in class when learners are asked to read, gives recommendations or even book talks (Day & Bamford 136-137).

4.2.5.2 The Field Study

The participating teacher read some of the young adult novels from the class library which were new to her. She also gave recommendations when the students chose books.

4.2.6 Model Lesson Plans

The provided lesson plans are closely linked to the section of follow-up activities in chapter 4.3.1.

4.2.6.1 General guidelines

ER is a teaching method not restricted to the classroom. The main part of the work is often done outside the classroom by the students.

Consequently, there are, to my mind, only two main kinds of lesson plans for ER: introductory lessons which are meant to orient and guide the students on the one hand, and activity lessons on the other hand. The latter serve as a means of keeping the project going, keeping motivation high and providing the teacher with evaluation of the students´ efforts.

There are various articles on the question of how to introduce Extensive Reading to a class. Those are a good basis for introductory lessons.

The best source for planning activity lessons held during the ongoing project is *Extensive Reading Activities for Teaching Language* edited by Bamford and Day, a book from the series Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers. It is a collection of ER activities provided by numerous teachers. The activities are laid out as follows: level of proficiency, primary goals of the activity, preparation needed, procedure, tips for extension or variation and material which can be copied (Introduction 4).

The following lesson plans are for students of all levels of proficiency and can easily be adapted by the teacher to fit their students.

The lesson plans consist of different activities from Bamford and Day´s book on extensive reading activities. Those activities are combined into individual lesson plans by the author of the thesis.

Model lesson plan for an introductory lesson (any level!)

Time   5´

Content   presentation of discussion, questions to students, answers from their own experience

Skills   listening

Methods   teacher talk

Objectives   S get to know the questions

Materials   blackboard, chalk

Questions:

What are your first memories of reading?, Did anyone read to you? If so, who? If not, why was that?, What kinds of things did they read?, Where did this reading take place?, What kinds of things did you enjoy reading most?, Do you still enjoy reading these kinds of things today? If not, how has your reading changed?, Which author or types of reading have been most important to you?, What role does reading play in your life now?

Time   10´

Content   S discuss in small groups

Skills   speaking

Method   group discussion

Objectives   raising awareness of the importance of reading in their lives, S enjoy comparison with others, discussion about L1 and L2 (Burns 9-10)

Time   5´

Content   comparison of answers

Skills   speaking and listening

Method   class discussion

Objectives   comparison of experiences

Time	5´
Content	introduction of blurb activity, what is a blurb?
Skills	listening
Method	teacher talk
Objectives	inform S about blurbs on book flaps and the activity as a whole

Time	10´
Content	blurb activity: partners A and B, sheets A and B each containing 10 short blurb texts, A reads out one blurb text, B listens and tries to find the matching title, then B reads out…(Schmidt 23-24)
Skills	reading, listening, speaking
Method	pair work
Objectives	S get to know several books, practice reading aloud, curiosity in books as a kick off for ERP
Materials	sheets A and B, title list, 20 books

Time	10´
Content	comparison, books are shown to pupils
Skills	speaking and listening
Method	open class talk
Objectives	sharing impressions (Schmidt 23-24)

Model lesson plan for an activity lesson (any level!)

Time   5´
Content   explanation of task, acting out a scene from a book
Skills   listening
Method   teacher talk
Objectives   S get to know what to do
Material   work sheet

Time   10´
Content   S get together in groups which read the same book, filling out the
              work sheet (work sheet asks: name of book, page number of
              scene, names of characters, description of events)
Skills   speaking
Method   group work
Objectives   deciding on a scene

Time   20´
Content   rehearsing the scene, using props (work sheet says: performance
              of three to five minutes, speak loudly)
Skills   speaking
Method   drama
Objectives   improvement of oral fluency

Rest of lesson: stage performances of all groups!

(Kalinowska 119-120)

4.2.6.2 The field study

The presented model lesson plans were carried out in the field study.

The first one describes an introductory lesson.

The second one gives insight into an activity lesson set up and carried out by the class teacher who was very content with the progression and outcome of the lesson.

Model lesson plan for introductory lesson

Time	15´
Content	introduce Extensive Reading by drawing a chart on the board comparing intensive and extensive reading (Waring; Getting Going, Welch)
Skills	listening
Method	teacher talk
Objectives	orients students, guides S
Materials	blackboard, chalk

Time	25´
Content	the baskets with the reading material are presented to the S, books are spread out on the tables, S browse, choose and start to read the book of their choice (Holbrook 14)
Skills	reading
Method	S work alone or in pairs
Objectives	S should be given the opportunity to take their time when choosing a book
Materials	class library in baskets

Time	5´
Content	compilation of a list of all borrowed books by volunteers

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Objectives   S get involved in the class library notebook and are responsible for their borrowings Further explanations: This lesson was compiled in cooperation with the class teacher. A short theoretical introduction is meant to raise awareness on side of the students concerning the differences of extensive reading to intensive reading in terms of purpose, difficulty of texts, amount of reading, selection of material and where to read. The answers should make feel S interested in the project they are participating in, because they are free to read on any topic they want. It is okay to read easier material in order to increase reading speed and fluency. Moreover, the accompanying work cannot be compared to their regular homework. There are no tasks to every chapter or book they read, but the main focus lies on the reading process itself. Homework: Go on reading the book/magazine/graded reader you chose.

Model lesson plan for an activity lesson

Time   5´

Content   explanation of writing task

Skills   listening

Method   teacher talk

Objectives   S get to know their task

Time   30´

Content   S write and essay about their first impressions of their books and
              what they have read so far

Skills   writing

Method   S work alone

Objectives   thinking about what they have read

Central questions: Which book did you choose?, why did you choose it?, what
did you think it was about?, what is it about?, how do you like the writing style/
the characters/..?, do you have a favorite scene already? – if yes, describe it!,
what do you dislike about your book?, how do you think it will end?,….

Time   10´

Content   S gives essay to another student who reads it and writes a
              comment about the first comment (Do you like the description of
              the book?, Would you also be interested in the book? Why/Why
              not?...)

Skills   reading, writing

Method   S work alone

Objectives   S get interested in other books too

4.3 Ongoing Project:

"The apparently relaxed atmosphere of an extensive reading program does not mean that learners are simply left to their own devices." (Day & Bamford 126) Day and Bamford stress the fact that learners need encouragement throughout the project in order not to lose interest. The teacher has to supervise students´ reading progress and effort. They also have to be interested in learners´ attitude towards reading and guide them if necessary. Individual counseling in form of written responses or oral interviews may help the teacher to counsel their students more effectively (126-128).

4.3.1 Follow-up Activities

Activities in connection with the ERP are a good means of guiding students, keeping interest high and supporting them.

Generally, all reading activities, also those for extensive reading, can be classified into pre-, while- and post-reading activities. Pre-reading activities could be previewing a book by looking at the title and predicting the content. While-reading activities are carried out during the reading process and could include tasks like self-questioning or self-monitoring. Post-reading strategies are either done orally or in writing, summarizing what was read or responding to the reading material (Urquhart & Weir 184-188).

4.3.1.1 General Guidelines

Day and Bamford list various activities which can be done at all levels of reading competence:

Sustained Silent Reading means every student reads his/her own book during the lesson. The teacher can decide how much classroom time is given to this activity and how often it is done. Another advice for the teacher is to really focus on the ER done by the students during this set of time. The teacher may do individual counseling, answer questions or observe the students while they are reading. However, it is no time for leaving the learners by themselves (128-129).

Browsing and selecting books during the lesson is a good way of advising pupils on their choice and observing their way of selecting reading material (130).

Teachers can also read aloud to students, providing them with a possibility to acquire a feeling for the language's rhythm and pronunciation. Moreover, it shows how to read in chunks rather than word by word. Basically, the activity is carried out while the students read along on a transparency or copy of the text while the teacher reads aloud. The activity is especially useful for younger learners (130-131).

´Repeated timed readings´ is a way of developing sight vocabulary and making the students aware of this process. Pupils have to mark a passage in their book where they want to start reading. The teacher times two to three minutes and telling the students to stop after this time span. They learners, then, have to mark where they stopped reading. This is done two more times, the students always starting at the same passage as the first time. With every reading the learners should have read more than the time before. The activity is meant to build confidence and automaticity in reading in the foreign language. Pupils read at their own speed and are able to see their improvement (132).

A myriad of other activities can be found in Bamford´s and Day´s *Extensive Reading Activities for Language Teachers*. In his review, Maley points out that "[…] the activities presented here, with very few exceptions, are originally related to, and support, the act of reading itself, rather than being grafted on as largely irrelevant appendages." (355)

4.3.1.2 The Field Study

We gained positive experience with Sustained Silent Reading in the field study. It proved to give weight to the ERP as students saw that classroom time was spent on actual reading.

The pupils also had the possibility to choose books during lesson time. Again, this was especially useful for students who struggled to find a suitable book for themselves. They could ask the teacher or fellow students for advice.

The teacher did not read aloud to their students, because we believed that learners of the age of 16 would not approve of listening to their teacher reading a story to them.

The activity called ´repeated timed readings´ was also carried out in the ERP. Unfortunately, it did not work out at all. The students did not understand, despite explanation, why they were doing the task. Moreover, they did not experience great differences in fluency when reading the same passage three times. We assume that this effect is due to their advanced knowledge of English.

An activity of which the students approved is called ´Match covers and excerpts´, an adapted form of an activity by Schmidt (23-24). The learners were given a worksheet containing covers and titles of books. All of the books on the worksheet were in the class-library. Moreover, they were handed out short descriptions, reviews, passages from the book or blurb texts, but mixed up and without the book titles. The students´ task was to match covers and excerpts. Afterwards, the results were discussed open class. The teacher gave recommendations and asked the students about their impressions. The activity triggered a lot of interest on the side of the students. They became aware that an attractive cover did not necessarily meet their taste in books. Moreover, a lot of students told me, "Now I know which book to choose next week after I have finished the one I am reading at the moment." It could be observed that students really borrowed the books from the handout after the activity.

Work sheet[10]
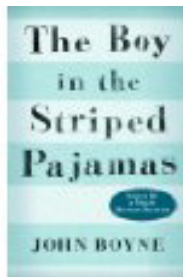
"The boy in the
striped pajamas"

"The curious incident
of the dog in the night time"

"Holes"

"Make lemonade"
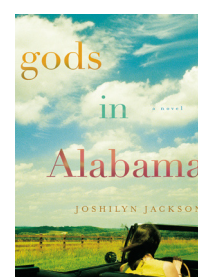
"Gods in Alabama"

"The perks of being
a wallflower"

"Stargirl"
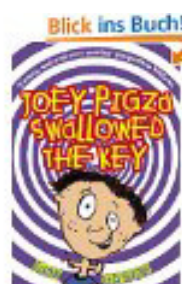
"Joey Pigza
swallowed the key"

"Hole in my life"

1) MATCH COVERS AND EXCERPTS:

At school they say I'm wired bad, or wired mad, or wired sad, or wired glad, depending on my mood and what teacher has ended up with me. But there is no doubt about it, I'm wired. This year was no different. When I started out all the days there looked about the same. In the morning I'd be okay and follow along in class. But after lunch, when my meds had worn down, it was nothing but trouble for me.

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[10] The work sheet and the answer sheet were compiled from original blurb texts and reviews taken from www.bookbrowse.com, www.amazon.com or www.bookrags.com,

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The points of the fork must have gone all the way through the dog and into the ground because the fork had not fallen over. I decided that the dog was probably killed with the fork because I could not see any other wounds in the dog and I do not think you would stick a garden fork into a dog after it had died for some other reason, like cancer, for example, or a road accident. But I could not be certain about this.

Stanley Yelnats was the only passenger on the bus, not counting the driver or the guard. The guard sat next to the driver with his seat turned around facing Stanley. A rifle lay across his lap. Stanley was sitting about ten rows back, handcuffed to his armrest. His backpack lay on the seat next to him. It contained his toothbrush, toothpaste, and a box of stationary his mother had given him. He'd promised to write to her at least once a week.

September 7, 1991 Dear friend,

I do not like high school. The cafeteria is called the "Nutrition Center," which is strange. There is this one girl in my advanced English class named Susan. In middle school, Susan was very fun to be around. She liked movies, and her brother Frank made her tapes of this great music that she shared with us.

But over the summer she had her braces taken off, and she got a little taller and prettier and grew breasts. Now, she acts a lot dumber in the hallways, especially when boys are around. And I think it's sad because Susan doesn't look as happy. To tell you the truth, she doesn't like to admit she's in the advanced English class, and she doesn't like to say "hi" to me in the hall anymore.

In school they had talked about their fathers one day and Karl had said that his father was a greengrocer, which Bruno knew to be true because he ran the greengrocer's shop in the centre of town. And Daniel had said that his father was a teacher, which Bruno knew to be true because he taught the big boys who it was always wise to steer clear of. And Martin had said that his father was a chef, which Bruno knew to be true because he sometimes collected Martin from school and when he did he always wore a white smock and a tartan apron, as if he'd just stepped out of his kitchen. But when they asked Bruno what his father did he opened his mouth to tell them, then realized that he didn't know himself. All he could say was that his father was a man to watch and that the Fury had big things in mind for him. Oh, and that he had a fantastic uniform too.

From my cell window I could see a line of houses in the distance. All week the people had been putting up Halloween decorations. We didn't celebrate Halloween in prison. . or, I should say, every day in prison was scarier than any Halloween, so there was no reason to do anything special on October 31st. But thinking of Halloween reminded me of a funny story from when I was in fifth grade. We were living in Kendall, Florida, right on the train tracks. One Halloween afternoon police cars flooded our neighborhood and announced that Halloween was canceled because there had been a prison break upstate at Raford. A couple of guys had hopped a freight and the cops thought they may have jumped off in our area. We locked our doors and turned on all the lights.

Suddenly Kevin's eyes boggled. The girl was picking up her ukulele. And now she was strumming it. And now she was singing! Strumming away, bobbing her head and shoulders, singing "I'm looking over a four-leaf clover that I over-looked before." Stone silence all around. Then came the sound of a single person clapping. I looked. It was the lunch-line cashier.

Jolly is seventeen, she can't really spell. She doesn't have much of a job. And she has two little kids, from two different, absent fathers. Jolly knows she can't cope with Jilly and Jeremy all by herself. So she posts a notice on the school bulletin board: Babysitter needed bad. No one replies but Verna LaVaughn, who's only fourteen. How much help can she be?

I made a deal with God two years before I left there. At the time, I thought He made out pretty well. I offered Him a three-for-one-deal: All He had to do was perform a miracle. He fulfilled His end of the bargain, so I kept my three promises faithfully, no matter what the cost. I held our deal as sacred for twelve solid years. But that was before God let Rose Mae Lolley show up on my doorstep, dragging my ghosts and her own considerable baggage with her.

2) WHICH OF THE BOOKS WOULD YOU LIKE TO READ AND WHY?

Answer Sheet

THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PYJAMAS

The story of 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' is very difficult to describe. Usually we give some clues about the book on the cover, but in this case we think that would spoil the reading of the book. We think it is important that you start to read without knowing what it is about. If you do start to read this book, you will go on a journey with a nine-year-old boy called Bruno. (Though this isn't a book for nine-year-olds.) And sooner or later you will arrive with Bruno at a fence. We hope you never have to cross such a fence.

THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT TIME

A murder mystery like no other, this novel features Christopher Boone, a 15 year-old who suffers from Asperger's syndrome. When he finds a neighbour's dog murdered, he sets out on a journey which will turn his whole world upside down.

HOLES

Stanley Yelnats' family has a history of bad luck, so he isn't too surprised when a miscarriage of justice sends him to a boys' juvenile detention centre. At Camp Green Lake the boys must dig a hole a day, five feet deep, five feet across in the dried up lake bed. The Warden claims the labour is character building, but it is a lie. Stanley must dig up the truth.

MAKE LEMONADE

Virginia Euwer Wolff's story Make Lemonade is about a deepening friendship between a 14-year-old girl and the 17-year-old mother of two who hires her to babysit.

THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER

It's a story of what it's like to grow up in high school. More intimate than a diary, Charlie's letters are singular and unique, hilarious and devastating. We may not know where he lives. We may not know to whom he is writing. All we know is the world he shares. Caught between trying to live his life and trying to run from it puts him on a strange course through uncharted territory. The world of first dates, family dramas, and new friends. The world of sex, drugs and The Rocky Horror Picture Show, where all you need is that perfect song on that perfect drive to feel infinite

STARGIRL

Stargirl is like no other. She's as magical as the desert sky. As mysterious as her own name. From the day she arrives in a bust of colour and sound, people notice her. People remember her. She captures Leo Borlock's heart with just one smile, and sparks a revolution with just one cheer. Everyone is enchanted. At first. Then they turn on her. Stargirl is suddenly shunned for everything that makes her different. And Leo, panicked and desperate with love, urges her to become the very thing that will destroy her: normal.

JOEY PIGZA SWALLOWED THE KEY

Joey Pigza is a nice kid who happens to get into a lot trouble, from sticking his finger in the pencil sharpener and swallowing his house key, to running with scissors, but when he ends up in the district special-ed program, he knows he must stop making bad choices.

HOLE IN MY LIFE

Hole in my Life is a personal story about a life-changing event. It was the summer of 1971 and Jack Gantos was only 20 years old. He was an aspiring writer looking for an adventure to write about and quick cash to pay for college. At this point in his life he was living in the Virgin Islands and just about any offer that would make him money was a good offer to him. He knew his passion, but lacked the funds to achieve his dream.

GODS IN ALABAMA

Arlene Fleet has been keeping her promises to God for twelve years and avoiding a visit home to Alabama for ten when a familiar face forces her to begin breaking those promises. Those gods are the things that loom large in the southern imagination, like football and Jesus.

4.3.2 Evaluation of Success

Day and Bamford differentiate between two forms of assessing an ERP: either it is done in an ongoing and subjective manner by looking at students´ participation, reports and gains in language competence, or assessment is done more formally, if the teacher wishes to be able to prove his/her assumptions about what the program has achieved (156-157).

4.3.2.1 General Guidelines

There are three main reasons for assessing the results of an ERP: to see whether the program's aims were achieved, to discover additional goals that were achieved but not intended at the beginning or, lastly, to get insight into parts of the program which need to be changed in the future (Day & Bamford 157).

Evaluation can either be done by a test or a questionnaire, depending on the purpose of the assessment (Day & Bamford 157).

4.3.2.2 The Field Study

The reasons for the evaluation of the field study's ERP were to see if the program had achieved its aims and to identify areas which needed improvement.

As the program was, to a great extent, concerned with the attitude towards reading in English, a questionnaire as a means of qualitative evaluation was chosen. It included open-ended questions, as well as multiple-choice answers and also scales.

The teacher also reflected on the progress of the ERP and wrote a report about her experiences.

The findings of the evaluation will be presented in the last chapter of this thesis.

> Tests and questionnaires cannot replace observing, sharing, talking with, questioning, listening… It is through such interaction that the sensitive teacher can come to know what might otherwise remain unnoticed: that a student is becoming a reader. Ultimately, an extensive reading program must be evaluated in terms of how successfully it provides the environment for this to happen (Day & Bamford 163).

4.3.3 Common Problems

Clarity lists several common dilemmas in running an ERP and the solutions to them.

4.3.3.1 General Guidelines

- Reading books is too difficult

Again, here the obvious solution is to include graded readers and enough other easier material in the extensive reading library in order to provide suitable material for all levels of English proficiency (Clarity).

- Reading is not valued

If learners feel that reading for its own sake is a loss of time, give them enough reasons to believe in ER. This could be done by telling students about studies on ER and the positive influence of reading on reading skills, writing skills and language competence in general (Clarity).

- Time

A time-problem occurs if no reading is done inside the classroom. Students, then, often feel that reading is not valued enough and they do not get enough support from the teacher. Consequently, a successful ERP gives assistance to students and spends classroom time on choosing books, reading and activities which are linked to the pupils´ reading at home (Clarity).

- Motivation on the long run

By giving goals to the students, motivation can be kept high. Either pupils can fill in opinion slips which are placed in the books or they can vote for the best book at the end of the year. However, the number of goals should be balanced in order not to distract learners from the actual reading (Clarity). Heal proposes to introduce a competitive activity in form of regular group quizzes into the lesson if participation of students is low.

4.3.3.2 The Field Study

By providing enough easy material, doing ER-related activities during the English lessons, providing the students with a profound introduction to the principles of ER the problems named above could be avoided.

5 <u>Reflective Evaluation and Discussion</u>

The field study aimed at answering the research questions of the study. By setting up and running an Extensive Reading Program for the duration of two months, a first-hand account of the procedures can be given.

The program was evaluated in a qualitative manner. The students were given questionnaires which they had to fill in, while the teacher and the conductor of the field study reflected on their experiences.

Before summarizing the findings of the final assessment, the students´ questionnaire can be perused here.

Evaluation sheet – Extensive Reading Program

You have participated in an Extensive Reading Program for some weeks now. This questionnaire asks for your opinion on the project, on your experiences and suggestions.

Do you think you have changed since entering the program (e.g.: your attitude at the beginning and now, your reading speed, etc.)? If yes, describe how! If not, explain why!

Circle the answer that best reflects your feelings:

Through reading extensively (self-selection of books, reading a lot),..

..my reading motivation.. has increased/ is the same as before/is weaker
..my reading fluency.. has improved/ is at the same level/ is weaker

---

..my self-confidence concerning reading English texts.. has increased/ is the same/ is weaker

..I enjoyed reading.. more/ the same/ less than with class readers (everybody reads the same book)

Do you think you have read more English books/pages than in a regular school year? Yes/ No

If yes, what would be the estimated difference (e.g.: 2 in a regular year, 3 in the last few weeks) ?

Do you like reading for pleasure without doing detailed follow-up activities for every chapter?

What are the best points of the program? What did you like about it?

What are the worst points of the program? What would you change?

Did/Do you have any difficulties during the program (e.g.: choice of books, vocabulary, level of difficulty, etc.)?   Yes/No

If yes, describe which difficulties you had/have:

Could/Can you overcome those difficulties on your own?   Yes/No

If yes, how did/do you do it?

If no, which help would you have needed? Give suggestions!

How useful do you find a class library (book baskets) in comparison to the use of the English section of the school library? Do you see any advantages in a class library? Which of the two do you prefer and why?

Circle the number that best reflects your opinion on the topic (1 is best, 5 is worst, like school grades – please give reasons for low grades and also give suggestions for improvement):

Materials and checkout:

Variety of books   1   2   3   4   5
Number of books   1   2   3   4   5
Condition of books 1   2   3   4   5
Checkout system   1   2   3   4   5

Homework assignments:

Amount of reading 1   2   3   4   5
Amount of writing   1   2   3   4   5

How did you like the class activities?

Silent reading in class   1   2   3   4   5
Repeated reading times   1   2   3   4   5
Partner discussion   1   2   3   4   5
Oral book reports   1   2   3   4   5
Writing comments   1   2   3   4   5
Any other:

Would you want to change any of the things above? In which way would you change things?

Do you feel the reading program has caused a good atmosphere for your learning process (e.g.: no testing,..) ? Did you feel comfortable? Give reasons for your answer.

All in all, what are your experiences and thoughts about the reading program?

The findings will be grouped according to subject areas:

- organizational questions concerning reading material, homework and activities;
- class library versus school library;
- attitudinal factors such as motivation, self-confidence and learning atmosphere;
- further results like rise in reading quantity and rise in reading fluency and speed;
- difficulties and areas for future change;
- best parts of the program;

The presentation of the evaluation will be based on a suggestion by Day and Bamford:" […A] final report, while acknowledging all answers, will probably quote from a selection of the responses perceived to be most pertinent and useful."[11] (162). Also keep in mind that

> [s]ome information provided by an evaluation is likely to be positive, and some negative. Negative information may indicate that change is necessary, but it does not necessarily mean that a program should be modified or discontinued. […] Perhaps the wrong questions were asked […]. On the other hand, even positive results can be used to reexamine a program. […] Perhaps an aspect of a program that receives an overwhelmingly positive response can be expanded (Day & Bamford 162).

5.1 Organizational Questions

Running an ERP proved the importance of a variety of reading material in order to provide all students with books of their interest and allow them to enjoy reading. Experiences with homework and activities in the ERP are very subjective. Consequently, it is the class teachers' task to try out different things and find out what works well for them and what does not.

5.1.1 Reading Material

Students answered:

"I think the variety of books could be a little bit improved. There were no science books or some about our world and geography."

"Maybe some persons could take books from home with them to school."

"As I mentioned above I really like my books. I think I have made a very good choice of my books, so I could enjoy reading."

All in all, students claimed to be quite satisfied with the variety of reading material provided for them in the book baskets. However, some of them immediately detected the weaker points, namely the lack of science and geography books. Unfortunately, at the time of the book purchase no suitable

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[11] The students´ answers were quoted directly, but spelling mistakes were omitted in order to make the statements easier understandable.

material on these topics could be found. The statement of the pupil, though, shows how important it is to provide material for all kinds of interests.

Another new idea for setting up an ERP is, to not only interview the students on their reading preferences in advance, but rather involve them more actively in the purchasing process. Teenagers could be asked to find one particular book they want the school to buy for their class library. They could browse the Internet and provide suggestions.

To sum up, on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being the best grade, 5 the worst), learners assessed the variety and number of books as well as the checkout system with an average grade of 2 and the condition of books with 1.8.

5.1.2 Homework

Students reported:

"I don´t like being told how much I have to read every day. I prefer having to read for example half of the book in two weeks."

"Making a timetable is in my opinion not advantageous." "I didn´t like writing exactly what and how long I read every day."

It is interesting to note that students perceived the amount of reading to be done at home in quite different ways, either very positive or negative. Nevertheless, it was obvious that some students prefer to have long-term goals. They want to know how many pages they are expected to read in a fortnight rather than being told to read 30 pages from one lesson to the next one. However, I believe that the articulation of the teacher's expectations is vital to the success of any ERP and the commitment of the students. Learners have to be challenged to make them read a lot and fast.

Another surprising observation concerned the reading diary the students were asked to keep. This only asked them to note down when, what and how many pages they read in order to provide an overview for the teacher. Although the activity was not at all time-consuming, a few students strongly disapproved of it.

All in all, pupils evaluated the amount of reading to be done for homework with an average grade of 2.2 and the amount of writing with 2.1.

The teacher found it "difficult to tell how much students can manage to read. […] after all, 30 pages from one lesson to the next may be a lot if it is a difficult book; on the other hand, I sometimes felt they could have read more." (Hartmann e-mail attachment)

5.1.3 Activities

Pupils said:

"The ´Repeated Reading Times´ was unnecessary, because my reading speed was three times the same." Learners assessed this activity with a low grade of 3.5., because they did not see any benefit in it.

"I also liked the little things to do like questionnaires, diary entries and some other things."

"I liked talking about my books in class and with my neighbor."

"Yes, I like that (reading without doing detailed follow-up activities) much better. I hate having to stop after every chapter and maybe writing some words about it. When I´m into a book I don´t want to stop."

A lot of students reported that they liked that they could read a book without being interrupted by detailed follow-up activities after every chapter. Generally, they evaluated the various activities with grades ranging from 1.9 for partner discussions, 2.2 for silent reading in class to 2.3 for writing comments and 2.4 for oral book reports in front of their fellow students.

The ´match blurb and cover´-activity also proved to be very useful. It makes students interested in books they would not choose themselves. Moreover, it is a way of supporting students in selecting books, an area of difficulty for some of them.

The last activity, doing an alternative book report also resulted in creative products. The pupils could choose from a list including suggestions like:

"Design an advertising campaign to promote the sale of the book you read[…]", "Design a movie poster for the book you read […]", "Make a test for the book you read […]", "Change the setting of the book you read […]"(Carter& Rashkis 134-137). Some pictures can be viewed underneath.
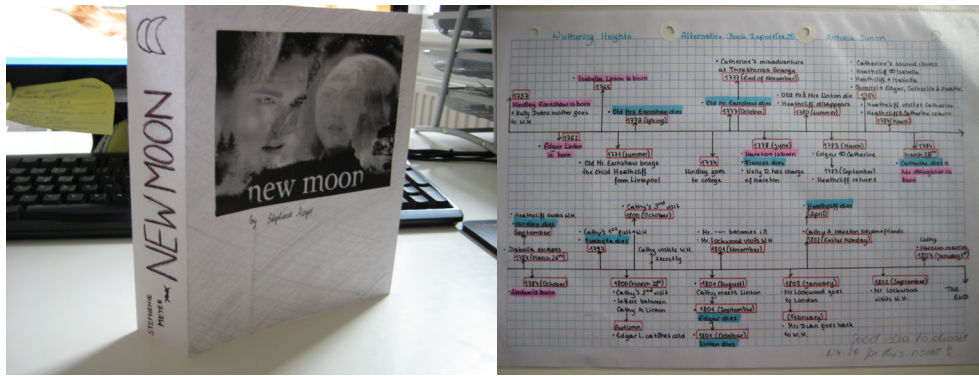
Figure 6: Design a book jacket. Make a time line of the major events. Design a wanted poster for a character. Make a newspaper title page.

The teacher found that the mini-speeches given by the students as well as speaking activities in pairs worked very well for the class and the students generally spoke a lot during the ERP. She also experienced that the matching-activity (blurbs and titles) increased interest on side of the pupils. The sustained silent reading proved to be useful at the beginning of the project, but was found to be a bit artificial afterwards. In order to assess students´ achievements, the teacher also found a classic book report at the end of the project to be necessary. (Hartmann E-mail attachment)

5.2 Class Library versus School Library

Students answered:

"I think a class library is unnecessary, because we have a big school library, where you can borrow books. But it would be nice, if the school library has got more English books."

"I don´t care. I´ve never borrowed a book from our school library."

"I think in a class library a lot of books would get lost."

"I prefer the library, because I can choose a lot more books and it´s there a whole year long, and not just for the duration of the project."

"I don´t see any advantages in a class library. I´m not even a fan of the school library. Choosing books out of the huge section at amazon.de/co.uk. is what I enjoy."

"I don´t prefer any of them."

"A class library is great, because the students can place books there which are in their opinion great and so other classmates maybe also like them."

"I prefer a class library, because in our school library there aren´t any interesting English books in my opinion."

"A class library is maybe more based on the interests of the class and gives you a wider selection."

"It would be nice to have a class library because it´s more handy, but in a school library there could be more books and you would have a bigger choice."

"I think it would be better if there was a class library, because you can choose a book whenever you want."

"I think a class library is often better because you know the people who borrow your books. You can also ask your classmates what they thought about the book and if they would recommend it."

Personally, the program convinced me of a class library as an alternative to an English section in a school library. As some students found it hard to select books for them, a class library gives a pre-selection that may support students in their choice of reading material. Moreover, the books are brought to the learners and not vice versa. Consequently, English books are more present to

the pupils and it is a fact that some of them do not use the school library at all. Additionally, students are given the opportunity to select books at the same time as their fellow students. Hence, they can deliberate on their choices and advise each other.

5.3 Attitudinal Factors

The learning atmosphere during the reading project was very positive. Students who did not like to read English literary classics found books they were interested in, e.g. a biography about Barack Obama. Voracious readers enjoyed the project and read even more than they would have done regularly.

5.3.1 Motivation

Pupils said:

"[My motivation as not changed], because I have always loved to read books."

"I think that such projects improve the mood of reading of the class. I liked it."

"I get more interested in reading English books."

"When I go book shopping now, I look for English books as well. Before entering the program I mostly looked for German books."

"I´m not bored after some pages."

"First of all, I hated reading in English more than in German. Now it´s on the same level."

Half of the participating pupils reported that through reading extensively, meaning the self-selection of books on one hand and reading a lot on the other, their reading motivation had increased. This is particularly remarkable as a majority of the learners whose motivation remained the same, added that they had always liked reading and still do so.

The teacher reported about the ERP:

 "[It] made some of the less talented students overcome their distrust of English books to some extent." (Hartmann E-mail attachment)

5.3.2 Self-Confidence

Only four out of twenty students claimed that their self-confidence concerning English texts had increased. There seems to be no major effect of ER on self-confidence.

The teacher, however, reported that she had the feeling that especially weaker students gained self-confidence in their handling of English texts and crossed a barrier.

5.3.3 Atmosphere

Students reported:

"It was great just to read and not have to worry that there will be a test about the book."

"[I felt comfortable] because we really concentrated on reading and so we didn´t have any other homework. Moreover, we had the chance to discover new literature."

"I like the relaxing atmosphere in class."

"It was more comfortable than the normal lessons."

More than half of the students assessed the atmosphere of the program as being positive. The rest of the pupils did not answer the question or did not give a precise answer. Yet, no learner evaluated the atmosphere as having being negative.

The teacher experienced "genuine interest on the part of most of the students." (Hartmann E-mail attachment)

5.4 Reading Quantity and Fluency and Other Effects

Learners answered:

"Without the Extensive Reading Program I would have read the same books anyway."

"I read more English books."

"In a regular year I read about 400 pages and in these three weeks about 280."

"300 pages in a regular year, 500 in the last few weeks."

"Three to four books in a normal year, two in the last few weeks and I have already started the third one."

Fifty percent of the students claimed to have read more than in a regular school year which definitely counts as a success of the ERP.

"I don´t know exactly, but I think I´m a bit faster in reading books."

"When I began reading, I read slowly, because I didn´t know this book, but then after reading some pages, I was able to read faster and more fluent."

"I don´t think my reading speed or my attitude really changed because I also liked reading English books before. However, I learned some new vocabulary."

9 out of 20 learners felt their reading fluency had improved, whereas 11 students said to be on the same level as before.

To sum up, the ERP seems to have achieved the goals of raising reading fluency and quantity.

The teacher observed that "students with a (very) good level of English improved their written English as they [generally] learn quickly." (Hartmann E-mail attachment)

5.5 Difficulties and Areas for Future Change

The two major and only problems students experienced in the program concerned the selection of books and the understanding of vocabulary.

Generally, almost half of the pupils reported that they had had difficulties during reading alone. All of them could overcome them by themselves or by the help given by the teacher.

Concerning areas for future change, the teacher reported that she would do such an ERP with younger students the next time. (Hartmann E-mail attachment)

5.5.1 Selection of Books

Pupils answered:

"It wasn´t easy for me to choose the right book and there were a lot of books that were very interesting."

"I had problems with choosing my books because there were so many good books in the box."

Possible solutions suggested by the learners:

"[…M]aybe some short book-reviews to know which book to choose."

"The teachers helped me with my book choice. They told me what they read and what they like."

It could be observed that students need advice when selecting their reading material. This can be for example done when the books are spread out on the tables to browse them. Other successful methods are activities which provide the learners with information about books from the library, like guessing games, matching tasks or book lists.

The teacher pointed out that no student picked a graded reader. She will take this experience into consideration when purchasing new books for the school library. (Hartmann E-mail attachment).

5.5.2 Vocabulary

Learners said:

"Sometimes I didn´t understand the vocabulary, but then I looked up these words in the dictionary."

Solutions given by the students:

"Context."

"I used my English dictionary."

If ER is done with younger learners it is important to ensure they are able to use a dictionary successfully. Moreover, it is useful practicing the guessing of word meaning from context.

5.6 Best Parts of the Program

Students answered:

"I think the best point was, that we were allowed to read when and how much we liked. Some days I didn´t feel like reading, so I just read the next day. I also liked that we were allowed to choose any book we like."

"[…] For a lot of people I believe it was the first time they read more than one English book in two months."

"[I liked reading for pleasure], because I can enjoy reading. When we discuss one chapter again and again, it´s really getting boring."

"I think the reading project is a very good idea and every class should do it. It is a very good chance to improve the reading habits and also fluency of reading."

"I would like to do such programs more often because reading in class is fun."

"Nobody told us to take this and this book."

Generally, the pupils reported that they liked the reading program. 7 out of 20 learners said that they enjoyed reading in English in this program more than with class readers. 1 student said she did not like reading at all and the rest of the class claimed to enjoy reading the same as when all of them have to read the same book.

The teacher said that she "would certainly take part in such a project again […] as she perceived the ERP to be a] highly interesting and rewarding experience for students and teacher." (Hartmann e-mail attachment)

All in all, the ERP can be considered a success and was an enriching experience for all participants.

6 Conclusions

Extensive reading as a didactic approach to second language learning believes in reading for pleasure as a means of improving pupils´ overall language skills and attitude towards the second language.

Pleasure may be achieved by providing learners with a variety of reading material which is not too difficult and allows fluent reading. It is a special form of teaching reading in English. Extensive reading is a student-centered method which asks the teacher to guide their pupils through individual reading experiences.

While a majority of English teachers in Austria believe in the usefulness of a combination of class readers and individual silent reading as promoted in extensive reading, the organization of such an individual reading program in class seems for most of them to be too expensive and time-consuming. Teachers are also unsure how to efficiently build an ERP and how to run the ERP successfully.

By setting up an ERP in an Austrian grammar school, experiences on the topic could be gained which facilitate answers to the research questions of this paper.

How time-consuming is the buildup of a class library containing about 50 books? This certainly depends on how detailed the teacher works on every step of the planning phase. Considering the major steps of the buildup, namely getting informed about ER in advance, raising money, choosing and purchasing books, cataloging those books and informing students about the procedures, it is possible to organize such an ERP in about fifteen hours, if doing it quickly. A list of reading material used in the field study is to be found in Appendix III of the thesis.

Where does a teacher get the best information on the topic? Teachers may turn to Richard R. Day´s and Julian Bamford´s book *Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom* which is the most suitable source on the topic. The World Wide Web provides numerous articles for the interested teacher. However, it takes more time to browse all the material for the essential and

most useful information. This paper offers an overview about useful websites useful for the buildup of an ERP.

Which guidelines work and which do not? Generally, the guidelines for the setting up of an ERP given by various sources can be followed as they have already been tested by many teachers. However, some guidelines like curricular decisions, definition of goals or the decision of the size of the program can be shortened. The same is true for drawing up the budget, determining students´ reading levels or raising money. Often, fortunate facts like the already existent knowledge of pupils´ language abilities or a librarian offering money for the project, abbreviate the whole organizational process.

A checkout system led by the students themselves was not completely satisfactory and needed more guidance than expected. Moreover, the learners were not attracted to the graded readers provided for them. The reasons may lie in the students´ age and advanced language ability.

These observations tie in with the question concerning problems which can be observed when setting up an ERP for the first time. The raising of money on the one hand and ways of assessment on the other hand, have to be added at this point. Moreover, the teacher has to find out during the program how much students should be asked to read in order to keep them motivated.

By contrast, positive guidelines especially concerned the ER-maxim ´read whatever you want to read´. Young adult novels proved to be very popular.

Lastly, it could be seen that a class library in combination with an ERP affected students´ intrinsic reading motivation.

To conclude, the setting up of an ERP in an Austrian English class has shown that it can be done efficiently and is not a ´mission impossible´ for any English teacher. ERP has positive effects on learners´ language ability and attitude towards the second language.

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7.3 Tables and illustrations

Illustrations´ Sources:

Figure 1: Nuttall, Christine E. Teaching reading skills in a foreign language.
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Figure 5: private picture
Figure 6: private pictures

"Ich habe mich bemüht, sämtliche Inhaber der Bilderrechte ausfindig zu machen
und ihre Zustimmung zur Verwendung der Bilder in dieser Arbeit einzuholen.
Sollte dennoch eine Urheberrechtsverletzung bekannt werden, ersuche ich um
Meldung bei mir."

8 Index

Appendices

I) For a better understanding, the more detailed original German passages are included here:

> […] Allgemeine Fachziele sind
> - das Verstehen von gesprochener Sprache bei Standardaussprache und durchschnittlicher Sprechgeschwindigkeit
> - das selbstständige Erschließen und Erfassen schriftlicher fremdsprachlicher Texte verschiedener Art mit Hilfe angemessener Lesestrategien […]
> Didaktische Grundsätze:
> Kommunikative Kompetenz als übergeordnetes Lernziel Als übergeordnetes Lernziel in allen Fertigkeitsbereichen ist stets die Fähigkeit zur erfolgreichen Kommunikation – die nicht mit fehlerfreier Kommunikation zu verwechseln ist – anzustreben. Somit sind die jeweiligen kommunikativen Anliegen beim Üben von Teilfertigkeiten in den Vordergrund zu stellen. […]
> Ausgewogenheit der Fertigkeitsbereiche
> Die Fertigkeitsbereiche Hören, Lesen, An Gesprächen teilnehmen, Zusammenhängend Sprechen und Schreiben sind in annähernd gleichem Ausmaß regelmäßig und möglichst integrativ zu erarbeiten und zu üben. Im Anfangsunterricht allerdings sind die Teilfertigkeiten des Hörverstehens und der mündlichen Kommunikation durch regelmäßige Hörübungen sowie durch ein möglichst häufiges Angebot an Sprechanlässen verstärkt zu fördern. […]
> Differenzierung der Arbeitsformen
> Unterschiedliche Voraussetzungen bei den Schülerinnen und Schülern (Lerntypen, Lerntempo, Neigungen und Interessen, soziale Fertigkeiten, Stärken und Schwächen) sowie unterschiedliche Stundendotationen müssen durch verschiedene methodische Zugänge, Umfang und Komplexität der Aufgabenstellung bzw. durch entsprechend individualisierte Formen der Arbeitsaufträge und der fachlichen Förderung Berücksichtigung finden. Hierbei sind vielfältige Arbeitsformen wie zB offenes Lernen, eigenverantwortliches Lernen, Portfolios, Lerntagebücher, Kurzpräsentationen einzusetzen. […]
> Durch Schaffung und Erhaltung eines positiven Lernklimas sollen Schülerinnen und Schüler entsprechend ihrer individuellen Leistungsfähigkeit und Leistungsbereitschaft unterstützt, gefordert und gefördert werden. Ein solches Lernklima soll durch Stärkung des Selbstwertgefühls und Fokussierung auf vorhandene Fähigkeiten der Schülerinnen und Schüler erreicht werden. (Education Highway)

II) BUILDING AN EXTENSIVE READING PROGRAM – information sheet

BUILDING AN EXTENSIVE READING PROGRAM – information sheet

Extensive Reading – The Characteristics:

- Students read as much as possible in the foreign language.

- A variety of materials on a wide range of topics is available (young adult novels, comics, thrillers etc.).

- Students select what they want to read and reading is done individually.

- The purposes of reading are usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding and does not need detailed follow-up activities.

- Reading materials are well within the linguistic competence of the students.

- Reading is individual and silent.

- Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower.

- The teacher orients the students to the goals of the program, explains what they are expected to do and keeps track of the work done.

- The teacher is a role model of a reader for students (S/he also reads in class when students are reading).

Results of Extensive Reading Programs:

- Gains in reading and general language proficiency, including writing and listening.

- Growth in positive affect towards reading (higher motivation).

- Gains in vocabulary knowledge.

Steps in the buildup of a class library:

1) Deciding the size of the program → e.g.: building a class library

Drawing up a budget → for 50 books it is a maximum of 500 euro

Raising money (from school, library, companies, parents etc.)

2) Determining the students´ reading levels and discovering students´ interests.

Selecting and purchasing the reading material.

Cataloging and organizing the materials.

Displaying the books.

3) Introductory lessons in which the teacher explains the goals and guides the students.

In the following, activities throughout the program: e.g. reading diaries, mini-speeches, in class-reading etc.?

4) Afterwards the program´s success has to be evaluated in order to discover strong and weak points of the ERP (questionnaires for the students).

(Day, Richard R. and Julian Bamford. *Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.)

III) List of material used in form of a class library:

Graded Readers:

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Austen, Jane. *Emma*. 1816. Canterbury: Black Cat Publishing, 2002.
Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. 1813. Harlow: Penguin Readers Level 5,
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Dick, Francis. *The Edge*. 1989. London: Penguin Readers Level 6, 1992.
Grisham, John. *The Rainmaker*. 1995. Harlow: Penguin Readers Level 5, 2008.
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King, Stephen. *Misery*. 1987. Harlow: Penguin Readers Level 6, 1994.
King, Stephen. *The Body*. 1982. Harlow: Penguin Readers Level 5, 2008.
Lamb, Mary. *More Tales of Shakespeare*. Harlow: Penguin Readers Level 5,
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Paton, Alan. *Cry, the Beloved Country*. 1948. Harlow: Penguin Readers Level 6,
          2008.
Stevenson, Robert Louis. *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. 1886.
          Harlow: Penguin Readers Level 5, 2008.
West, Michael. *Seven Detective Stories*. London: Longman Group, 1969.

Newspapers, magazines, comics, short stories:

Burton, Tim. *The Nightmare before Christmas*. Comic. New York: Disney, 2005.
Keyes, Marian. *Under The Duvet*. London: Penguin, 2002.
King, Stephen (ed.). *Best American Short Stories*. New York: Houghton Mifflin,
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History and cultural studies:

Jones, Ron. *The Beatles´ Liverpool*. London: Ron Jones, 1991.
Garen, Thomas. *Barack Obama – Yes, We Can.* New York: Feiwel and Friends, 2008.
Obama, Barack. *Dreams from my father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*. New York: Canongate, 2004.
O´Brien, Maire and Conor Cruise O´ Brien. *A Concise History of Ireland*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1985.
O´Heithir, Breandan. *A Pocket History of Ireland*. Dublin: O´Brien, 1989.
Schaller, Bob. *Michael Phelps: The Untold Story of a Champion.* London: Saint Martin´s, 2008.

Young Adult - / Novels:

Abdel - Fattah, Randa. *Does My Head Look Big In This?* London: Marion Lloyd, 2006.
Blume, Judy. *Forever.* London: Pan, 1984.
Boyne, John. *The Boy In The Striped Pyjamas*. London: David Fickling, 2006.
Chbosky, Stephen. *The Perks Of Being A Wallflower*. New York: MTV Pocket Books, 1999.
Cooney, Caroline B.. *Driver´s ED.* New York: Random House Children´s Books, 1982.
Dahl, Roald. *The BFG.* London: Puffin, 1982.
Gantos, Jack. *Hole In My Life*. London: Random House Children´s Books, 2002.
Gantos, Jack. *Joey Pigza Swallowed The Key*. London: Corgi Yearling, 2000.
Green, John. *Looking For Alaska.* New York: Dutton, 2005.
Greene, Shep. *The Boy Who Drank Too Much.* New York: Dell, 1980.
Griffin, John Howard. *Black Like Me.* New York: Penguin, 1976.
Haddon, Mark. *The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night Time.* London: Vintage, 2003.
Hedges, Peter. *An Ocean In Iowa*. New York: Hyperion, 1998.
Hinton, Susan E. *The Outsiders.* New York: Puffin, 1997.
Kerr, M.E.. *Night Kites.* New York: Harper Collins, 1986.
Laird, Elizabeth. *Kiss The Dust.* London: Mammoth, 1991.
Mackler, Carolyn. *The Earth, My Butt and Other Round Things.* New York: Candlewick, 2003.
Oates, Joyce Carol. *Big Mouth and Ugly Girl.* London: HarperTeen, 2003.
Orgel, Doris. *The Devil In Vienna*. New York: Puffin, 1978.
Orwell, George. *Animal Farm.* London: Penguin, 2000.
Pilkington, Doris. *Rabbit Proof Fence.* New York: Hyperion, 1996.
Sachar, Louis. *Holes.* London: Yearling, 2000.
Sefton, Catherine. *Starry Night.* London: Mandarin, 1986.
Spinelli, Jerry. *Stargirl*. New York: Dell Laurel Leaf, 2000.
Thompson, Emma. *Sense and Sensibility. The Screenplay.* London: Bloomsbury, 1996.
Ure, Jean. *See You Thursday.* London: Penguin, 1981.
Wells, H.G.. *The Time Machine.* Stuttgart: Reclam, 1984.
Wolff, Virginia. *Make Lemonade*. New York: Henry Holt, 1993.

Zindel, Paul. *The Pigman and Me.* London: Random, 1992.

Fantasy, tales, Science Fiction:

Colfer, Eoin. *Artemis Fowl.* New York: Hyperion, 2001.
Cormier, Robert. *The Chocolate War.* New York: Pantheon, 1974.
Meyer, Stephanie. *Twilight.* New York: Hachette, 2005.
Priestley, Chris. *Uncle Montague´s Tales of Terror.* London: Bloomsbury, 2008.
Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and The Chamber Of Secrets.* London: Bloomsbury, 1998.
Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and The Philosopher´s Stone.* London: Bloomsbury, 1997.
Rowling, J.K. *The Tales of Beedle The Bard.* London: Bloomsbury, 2008.

Thrillers, crimes, detective stories:

Beckett, Simon. *The Chemistry of Death*. London: Bantam, 2006.
Brown, Dan. *The Da Vinci Code*. New York: Doubleday, 2003.
Jackson, Joshelyn. *Gods in Alabama*. London: Hodder, 2005.
Leon, Donna. *Death At La Fenice*. New York: Harper Collins, 1992.
Wallace, Edgar. *The Man Who Was Nobody.* London: House of Stratus, 2001.

Books made into films or TV-series:

Burgess, Melvin. *Billy Elliot*. London: Egmont, 2001.
Clark, Catherine. *Gilmore Girls – Like Mother, Like Daughter*. New York: Harper Entertainment, 1999.
Clark, Catherine, Amy Sherman Palladino and Daniel Palladino. *Gilmore Girls – I Do, Do´nt I?*. New York: Harper Entertainment, 2000.
East Dubowski, Cathy and Amy Sherman Palladino. *Gilmore Girls – I Love You, You Idiot*. New York: Harper Entertainment, 2002.
Fielding, Helen. *Bridget Jones.* New York: Penguin, 1996.
Frazier, Charles. *Cold Mountain.* New York: Grove/Atlantic, 1997.
Kleinbaum, N.H. *Dead Poet´s Society.* New York: Bantam, 1992.
McCourt, Frank. *Angela´s Ashes.* London: Flamingo, 1990.

Drama:

Albee, Edward. *Who´s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* London: Penguin, 2000.
Shakespeare, William. *A Midsummer Night´s Dream.?* Ed. Russ McDonald. New York: Penguin, 2000.

The categories above are a means of showing the diversity of the reading material used in the field study. Certainly, the books could also be grouped

differently (e.g.: Frazier´s *Cold Mountain* is not only popular with students because it was made into a movie, but is at the same time a book with a historical topic).

IV) Deutsche Zusammenfassung der Diplomarbeit:

Die vorliegende Diplomarbeit beschäftigt sich mit dem Thema des ´Extensive Reading´ als didaktische Methode im Englischunterricht.

Extensive Reading bedeutet wörtlich übersetzt ´ausführliches Lesen´ und ist eine schülerzentrierte Methode, die Freude am Lesen in der Fremdsprache vermitteln soll. Außerdem zeigen Studien, dass sich die generellen sprachlichen Fähigkeiten in der Fremdsprache durch extensive reading steigern.

Lesen als eine der vier Sprachfertigkeiten neben Schreiben, Sprechen und Verstehen ist aber nicht nur wertvoll, wenn sich die SchülerInnen literarische Klassiker zu Gemüte führen. Eine Kernüberzeugung der Methode ist, dass jedweder Lesestoff, vom Bilderbuch über den Jugendroman bis zu vereinfachten Literaturversionen, seine Berechtigung und auch seinen Nutzen hat. Das Wichtigste ist, dass die SchülerInnen an ihrem Lesestoff interessiert sind, ihn leicht verstehen, daher schnell und flüssig lesen und so Spaß am Lesen entwickeln.

Viele Lehrpersonen werden aber durch den Organisationsaufwand für den Aufbau einer Klassenbibliothek von der Einführung des extensive reading abgeschreckt.

Aus diesem Grund beschreibt diese Diplomarbeit die Organisation und die Einführung eines solchen Leseprogramms an einer niederösterreichischen AHS. Die aufbauenden Schritte werden allgemein erläutert und die gemachten Erfahrungen als Hilfestellung für potentielle NachahmerInnen und AnwenderInnen beschrieben. In diesem Erfahrungsbericht finden sich Stolpersteine, Tipps und Tricks, Erfolge und Misserfolge dieses ersten Versuchs.

Extensive Reading als Lehr- und Lernmethode im Englischunterricht zeigte in dieser Untersuchung, dass es sowohl SchülerInnen als auch Lehrpersonen begeistern kann.

V) Curriculum Vitae

PERSÖNLICHE DATEN:

Name:	Gudrun Peham
Geburtsdatum:	13.06.1982
Geburtsort:	Melk (NÖ)
Familienstand:	Ledig
Kinder:	1 Tochter
Wohnort:	3680 Hofamt Priel
Staatsbürgerschaft:	Österreich

AUSBILDUNG:

09/88 – 06/92	VS Persenbeug (NÖ)
09/92 – 06/00	BG/BRG Wieselburg (NÖ), neusprachlicher Zweig Reifeprüfung am 27. Juni 2000 mit ausgezeichnetem Erfolg
11/00 – 07/02	Ausbildung zur Exekutivbeamtin der österreichischen Bundesgendarmerie im Bildungszentrum 3370 Ybbs/Donau. Dienstprüfung mit ausgezeichnetem Erfolg am 22.07.2002.
10/04 – dato	Universität Wien – Lehramtsstudium Englisch/ Psychologie und Philosophie Abschluss des ersten Studienabschnitts am 30.06.2006 im UF Englisch und am 29.06.2006 im UF PP. Abschluss des zweiten Studienabschnitts im UF Englisch am 30.01.2009 und im UF PP am 03.07.2008. Abschluss der pädagogisch wissenschaftlichen Berufsausbildung am 10.04.2008.

QUALIFIKATIONEN, BERUFSERFAHRUNG UND PRAKTIKA:

Fremdsprachen	Englisch: Sprachaufenthalte in England (London, Eastbourne) und Kanada (Ontario, British Columbia) Französisch Latein
08/02-10/04	Exekutiver Außendienst am Gendarmerieposten 2100 Korneuburg.
05/07-03/09	Jugendhelferin beim NÖ Hilfswerk 3680 Donautal Ysper.
02/08-04/09	Vorsortierkraft bei der Post AG.
10/06-12/06	Unterrichtspraktikum Englisch im Gymnasium 1210 Franklinstraße.
03/08-04/08	Unterrichtspraktikum Psychologie/Philosophie im Gymnasium 3250 Wieselburg.