

# Why Extensive Reading? Seven Reasons

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Extensive reading, motivation, teacher beliefs, pedagogy

Effective and sustainable extensive reading (ER) programmes depend on orientation and re-orientation into the reasons for ER, as well as a supply of books, allocation of time, and careful consideration of assessment strategies. Below are seven reasons for doing ER, which teachers can use to explain to students why they should read extensively. 1) ER is a good source of input. 2) ER provides a wide range of vocabulary and collocation. 3) ER builds fluency. 4) ER means reading narratives, which have been central to the development of humanity. 5) Reading books is necessary for literacy. 6) ER encourages learner autonomy and puts students in control of their destiny. 7) ER is relatively easy to implement inside and outside the classroom. These reasons can be delivered as brief points before or after reading, expanded into full lessons including discussion points and possible homework assignments, or integrated into other activities. This paper is primarily aimed at teachers already practicing ER who need ways to persuade their students how important it is. It may also help to convince teachers who have not yet reached the conclusion that all language courses should strongly encourage their students to read extensively.

## 1. Introduction

Several researchers offer evidence that ER is effective for language acquisition (e.g. Elley & Manghubai, 1983; Nishizawa & Yoshioka, 2012), but conclusive proof is difficult to find. In many cases research using the ER label deals with short-term studies, and concludes that more research is needed; in these cases what is often needed is actually more reading. It is difficult to design research that can isolate specific factors or activities relating to the acquisition of a language in a way that is ethical, and most pedagogical research has a low signal-to-noise ratio.

It may be that extensive reading is the most efficient activity for students to get better at English. It may be that there are other, more efficacious ways for students to spend their time. It is most likely that various activities are effective, and that a variety of activities is most effective. All of these scenarios include ER. However effective an activity or practice is, it will only work if the students take part in it. This is more likely to happen if the students have faith in the activity, and they will not have faith unless their teacher does. While linguistic research strives to be more scientific, language teaching may be closer to religion, where the teacher's role is to change beliefs and inspire faith among students.

## 2. Extensive reading: How

Explaining how to do Extensive reading is relatively easy. Marc Helgesen has described the practice as “reading a lot of easy, enjoyable books” (2005). In Japanese, extensive reading is usually referred to by the literal translation *tadoku* 多読, but Yamanaka has referred to it as *rakudoku* 楽読, meaning enjoyable, or easy reading (2009). ER is sometimes called “side reading”, but that description is unhelpful, since reading can be a central activity within language learning, and activities such as grammar drills, essay writing and listening to language teachers may be better considered as “side” activities.

Sakai has proposed three rules for the reader to follow: No dictionaries; ignore words that you don't understand; and stop reading a book if it is boring (Sakai & Kanda, 2005). These rules provide an excellent introduction to ER.

If we use dictionaries, it can take a long time to find words that we don't understand. This can lead to a great deal of frustration, and often we seem to immediately forget the word we have looked up. In the time that we spent browsing through the dictionary, we could have read a few hundred words and enjoyed more of the story we were reading. Dictionaries are a fantastic resource for language-learners, and can be very useful in real-life language use, but they should only be used for emergencies. Extensive reading should avoid emergencies, and students should choose books they can read without relying on a dictionary.

When we come across a difficult word, and we are able to resist the dictionary reflex, the best strategy is to ignore the word (Wallace, 1992). A given page of 100 words should have one or fewer unknown words on it. Rather than focusing on the one unknown word, we should think about the 99 that we know, focus on the story that we are following, and ignore the one word we do not know. If we cannot follow the story without understanding this word, then we may either resort to the emergency measure of the dictionary, or follow Sakai sensei's third rule.

If we cannot follow the book without support or frequent guesswork, we will likely read slowly, and soon get bored of reading. In this case we should stop reading. There are many books out there and life is too short to read boring books. A major challenge of the ER practitioner is to get access to as many books as possible that are appropriate for our students at their various reading levels.

This also raises a question: if books are so easy, how will students learn anything? To answer this question, we can consider the input hypothesis, the nature of vocabulary, and fluency.

### 3. Input hypothesis

Stephen Krashen's radical approach to language acquisition has been explained elsewhere, repeatedly by Krashen himself (e.g. 2004, 2014). In short, the hypothesis states that we acquire language by understanding messages in the language. Krashen imagines a series of language elements that we have acquired, up to *i*, and posits the innate ability of the brain to acquire the next language element, *i+1*, provided we encounter it within a context we understand, and surrounded by already-acquired elements. Krashen also makes the distinction between acquisition and learning: the former an unconscious process similar to our effortless experience picking up our first language; the latter the conscious process we engage in when we set out to deliberately study foreign languages. In addition he introduces the Affective Filter, which prevents acquisition from happening if we are emotionally compromised, for example stressed, nervous, anxious, frustrated, embarrassed, scared, angry, tired or bored. We can ask students to consider their own experience of language classes as teenagers, where at least one of these emotions is likely to have prevailed—an arena less suited to language acquisition is hard to imagine.

The hypothesis itself is not universally accepted. Critics question whether we can properly distinguish conscious from unconscious processes, and whether this can even be called a hypothesis, since it is difficult to imagine how it can be disproved. Swain has proposed an output hypothesis, denying that input alone is sufficient. Others criticise Krashen for lack of rigour, and others still for stating the obvious. It may not be possible to strictly determine whether mental processes are conscious or subconscious, but a common-sense consideration of learning and acquisition allows students to think about the activities of language acquisition.

And we may wonder whether first-language and second-language acquisition are fundamentally different. Of course there is a massive difference in the quantity and quality of input between the conditions typical in first and second language acquisition, and in the stark

difference between the almost universal success in first language acquisition, and the invariable failure of second language acquisition, where most students feel dissatisfied with their proficiency as they reach the end of their formal language studies.

Whether Krashen's ideas are strictly correct or not, they can help to introduce ER to students. Most of the criticisms are minor and irrelevant to students of English as a foreign language, unless they plan to continue as professionals in linguistics or EFL, in which case it is a good idea to teach both Krashen's ideas and the arguments against them.

Even if input alone is not enough to acquire language, a large amount of input is clearly necessary to become proficient in a language, and reading is a very practical way for students to get large amounts of input in foreign languages.

#### **4. Vocabulary and collocation**

Zipf's law states that the product of a word's frequency and rank in a frequency list is constant over a given text or corpus. This means that the top ten headwords of the English language represent around 25% of all running words written in English. The top hundred represent roughly 50%, and the top thousand approximately 75%. These high-frequency words are thus very important, and proficient language users need a thorough knowledge of them. The fifth thousand words of English, on the other hand, represent a mere 1% of all running words written in English. Definitive vocabulary lists are difficult to find, but the syllabi for each year of junior and senior high school in Japan contain several hundred words, and students may have come across five or six thousand English vocabulary items by the time they reach university, covering words of increasingly lower frequency each year. By definition, low frequency words do not occur in natural texts very often, and to come across the fifth thousand in natural language, you would have to read at least half a million words. ER proponents argue that is exactly what students need to do, but prescribed high school textbooks are typically only a few thousand words long, and to create reading passages short enough to fit into them while covering enough target vocabulary, authors must find already-difficult texts, then either remove the higher-frequency words, or replace the easier words with target words in the appropriate low-frequency bracket. Browne estimates the average high-school student can understand 67% of the words in their textbooks (2007).

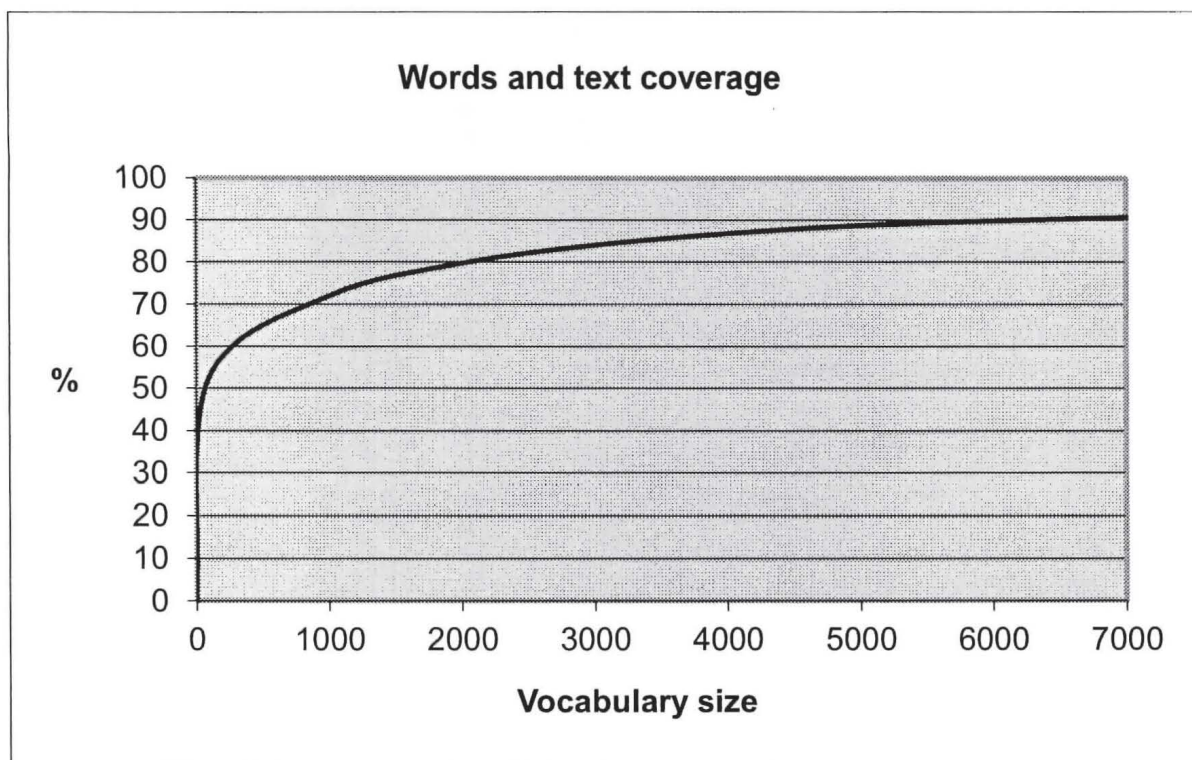


Figure 1. Vocabulary size and text coverage.

Research by Nation and Waring (1997) has suggested that we need to understand at least 98% of the running words to be able to read smoothly. Less than this and the unknown words will disrupt the reading so the story cannot be enjoyed. Waring (2012) has suggested that texts with over 95% coverage are suitable for study in a non-ER context; anything less than this is “reading pain”.

There are other ways of conceptualising vocabulary than in one-dimensional lists of words ranked in order of frequency and therefore importance. We cannot assume that if people know a lot of words between number 5000 and number 6000, they will know most of the “first” 5000 words. It may be more accurate to think of vocabulary in two dimensions, so there is some central point (“the” in English), and the words closest to that are the most frequent. Different publishers inevitably have different lists, because different books have different lists.

Rob Waring has described our vocabulary in terms of concentric circles. The largest circle contains all the words of the language. Within that is a circle containing all the words that we recognise. The next circle contains the words we know the meaning of, and the smallest circle holds the words that we can use. As our vocabulary grows, some words pass from the outer, unknown circle, into the known circle; some pass from the recognised circle into the understood circle; others join the active core of words that we can produce from the larger passive group of those we can only receive. Vocabulary learning is not a simple process where there is one step to learning a word; typically we must meet a word between eight and twenty times before we can start to say we know it. Even then there may be more to discover in nuances of meaning and subtleties of usage.

Collocation is another important concept relating to vocabulary. If students translate the following phrases into English: *kutsu wo haku* 靴を履く, *ko-to wo kiru* コートを着る and *megane wo kakeru* めがねをかける, they will come up with something like “wear shoes”, “wear a coat” and “wear glasses”. This could be interpreted as the English word “wear” having a much wider semantic reach than the Japanese translations. An alternative view is that the English words “wear” and “shoes” like each other, while in Japanese the words *kutsu* 靴 and

*haku* 履く are friends. Similarly with *pan wo yaku* パンを焼く, *tamago wo yaku* 卵を焼く and *sakana wo yaku* 魚を焼く for “bake bread”, “fry an egg” and “grill a fish”. In English we say “have a cold”, “make a mistake” and “take a train”, but literal translations into Japanese are strange: *\*kaze wo motsu* 風邪を持つ, *\*machigae wo tsukuru* 間違いを作る and *\*densha wo toru* 電車を取る. Such relationships between words are very common, leading to Thornbury’s claim “words hunt in packs” (1998, 8).

Looking at word frequencies, we can see that “the” appears something like once every 20 words, and “of” appears once every 50 words. If the laws of probability were acting on the words distributed at random, we would expect “of the” and “the of” to appear something like once every 1,000 words. In fact “of the” appears every 200 words, and “the of” does not appear. We can go on to find “one” appearing once every 400 words, and when we put these high frequency words together we get “one of the”. This appears every 3,000 words or so, and is one of the most common three-letter collocations in English. Language is not obeying simple statistics where it would appear once every 400,000 words. Collocations like these are very important, and McCarthy notes that 11 of the 100 most frequent items of spoken American English in the Cambridge International Corpus are two-word chunks, such as “you know” and “I think” (2004). Dictionaries such as Collins Cobuild have made great strides since the 1990s in including collocations and using corpus data to indicate the most useful ones, but no dictionary is big enough to present all the collocations that appear in the English language. Extensive reading can provide a great opportunity for learners to meet and re-meet the most common pieces of English, whether high frequency single words or multi-word chunks.

Considerations of vocabulary and collocation sit well with a view of language as statistics, and its acquisition as, essentially, a numbers game.

## 5. Fluency and reading speed

As a concept, fluency is not well understood. In English, the word “fluent” is often used to mean that someone is really, really good at a language. However, fluency is not simply the size of a speaker’s vocabulary; consider children speaking their native language. Fluency is the ability to use language in real time. Rather than the *quantity* of a speaker’s vocabulary, it is about the *quality* of that vocabulary. Fluency is depth of word-knowledge rather than breadth. We may also relate fluency to the concept of flow, whereby an agent is absorbed in an activity with minimum anxiety and maximum concentration (see Kirchoff, 2013).

Although it is not a direct measure of fluency, reading speed is easy to measure and can give some indication of how fluent reading is. Online reading speed tests can be used, students can read standard texts to measure reading speed, they can be assigned graded readers, or they can be shown how to measure reading speed with the books they are reading. Each method has its advantages, but if students are measuring reading speed in books that they have chosen to read, the measurement will tell us whether they are reading at an appropriate level. Reading speed can be measured periodically over a course to show students whether they have got faster. Reading speed, and its units words per minute (wpm), can also be explained objectively.

One way in which reading speed can be interpreted is by telling students that, for native speakers, over 500 wpm is very fast, over 400 is fast, under 200 is slow, and under 100 is very slow. For learners of English as a second language, we can suggest to students that under 200 is still slow, and under 100 is still very slow, although non-native speakers are usually slower readers, so the average speeds will be lower. The ERF Guide to Extensive Reading recommends a reading rate of 150-200 wpm, but the Japanese translation notes that 80-120 wpm is a more realistic speed at which Japanese students can start ER (2011). By reference, in order to score well on the TOEIC language test, speeds of over 180 wpm are needed.

Another way to look at reading speed follows from Fry (1962), who states that all readers have three different reading speeds: study reading, everyday reading, and skimming.

Table 1. Three reading speeds (Fry, 1962)

Speed	Good reader	Poor reader
Slow Study reading	200-300wpm 80-90% comprehension	90-125wpm 80-90% comprehension
Average Everyday reading	250-500wpm 70% comprehension	150-180wpm 70% comprehension
Fast Skimming	over 800 wpm 50% comprehension	Can't do it!

Students who are reading slowly may be attempting study reading while they should be worrying less about comprehension and more about speed. In addition these speeds show that different people read at different speeds, which we should remind our students.

A third way to interpret reading speed is by considering the way the brain processes language. We can store around two seconds of language in working memory, rather like a tape recorder with a short loop of tape (Walter, 2008). The language must be interpreted within these two seconds, since the actual words will usually be lost. If we consider how many words will fit into those two seconds, we get a series of reading speeds, starting with 30 wpm with one word in the loop, and getting to 210 wpm with seven words in the loop. Seven words is the typical length of idea units in native-speaker speech. If we imagine somebody with a reading speed of 120 wpm trying to read text where each idea is seven words long, they will start to forget the first words of the idea after they get to the fifth word. Therefore, as books get more difficult and the length of idea units gets longer, there is a minimum reading speed limit below which comprehension will be unreliable. This is in contrast to the intuitive notion that we are slower at reading more difficult books.

The emphasis on reading speed should encourage students to read at or below their level, which Richard Day has described as *i-1*. While this may not lead to acquisition of new distinct vocabulary items, it will lead to acquisition of collocations of already-familiar words, and will build fluency. Fluency means reading faster and more accurately, which means getting more out of reading, which in turn leads to more reading in a virtuous spiral.

## 6. Stories and the brain

Students enrolled in English classes may wonder why they are being asked to read stories, particularly in classes for university students who are not majoring in English, with labels such as “Academic English” or “Communicative English”. The huge overlap in high-frequency vocabulary between academic writing, conversation and fiction provides one justification, and another is the inclusion in fiction of other genres, such as dialogues, letters and newspaper reports. According to Hill, non-fiction graded readers are “excruciatingly dull” (1997) and the fact that good fiction is compelling is a powerful reason for reading fiction. All well-written narrative texts, including fiction but also biographies and true stories, have plot lines that we hope will encourage readers to keep reading and turning the next page.

As well as being compelling, and likely getting us to read more, fiction has a number of benefits. Kreamer (2012) quotes Henry James saying “a novel is a direct impression of life”

(probably ultimately misquoted from James, 1884). Fiction tells us how people feel, and allows us to live in other people's brains, helping us with empathy. Reading fiction makes better relationships, improves leadership skills, collaboration skills, emotional intelligence and general understanding of human character. We can tell our students that they don't have to read fiction, but it's easier to read, it's usually more interesting, it's good for them, and it's probably their last chance to get an academic credit for it.

By reading stories, students are participating in a very old human activity. The earliest written story is generally considered to be the Epic of Gilgamesh, over four millennia old, although stories themselves are certainly much older than this. Many cave paintings, which are the earliest recorded forms of human expression going back over thirty millennia, can be seen as stories. Harari (2012) suggests narratives have delivered abstract ideas that have been essential for many human endeavours, for example religious, military and economic. When people have fought wars, built cathedrals or traded in stocks it is because they were following narrative devices of nation states, deities and market economics.

The study of the brain is still in its infancy, and there is neither consensus on how humans acquire language, nor how language was originally acquired by the human race. The Linguistic Society of Paris banned discussion on the evolution of language in 1866 (Société Linguistique de Paris, 2012), and the academic world only began to revisit the topic towards the end of the twentieth century. While it may still be unsafe to bring up such topics in linguistic societies, the question of where language came from is certainly ripe for classes of students engaged in the study of language, and may be particularly appropriate for students with an interest in anthropology, sociology or biology.

Worden (1998) approaches the question from a Neo-Darwinian perspective, by comparing the design information in human brains, which are capable of language, with the brains of other primates, which are not. His hypothesis is based on an evolutionary speed limit, whereby the DNA coding from which the brain is made can change by no more than 0.1 bits per generation, on average. Looking back to the divergence between chimpanzees and humans around seven million years, or 350,000 generations ago, this suggests the difference in design data between human and chimp brains to be less than 5 kilobytes. If language is a *de novo* human innovation, then it must be possible to explain its workings in substantially fewer words than I have already written in this paper. In fact Worden suggests language appeared less than 2 million years ago, in *Homo erectus*, and possibly even more recently among *Homo sapiens*, 250,000 years ago. The latter would allow only 150 bytes of brain design code to account for our linguistic ability. It is ironic that linguists have written many orders of magnitude more than this without clearly explaining how language works. Worden concludes that our language ability is based on previously developed systems that are shared by other primates. Specifically: general learning, shared by other mammals; social intelligence, shared by other primates; and theory of mind, perhaps shared by other great apes. This allows chimpanzees to build cognitive scripts such as: "I bit [female chimpanzee] Portia. Portia got angry. Then Portia bit me."

In other words, more than being very old human activities, stories may go back before humans and to the origin of language itself. Perhaps rather than looking at stories as collections of words, we should recast them as the primary building blocks of language, and sentences and words as pieces of stories that have broken off.

## 7. Literacy

Questionnaires to first-year students at a national university in Japan showed that in their six years of compulsory education, up to half of the students in each class had never read a book in English (Brierley & Ruzicka, 2008). In 2013 an informal questionnaire of 157 first-year

students from five faculties at Shinshu University showed more students having read books, but still a third having read less than one in their six years of compulsory English education, and very few having read more than one per year. See Figure 2.

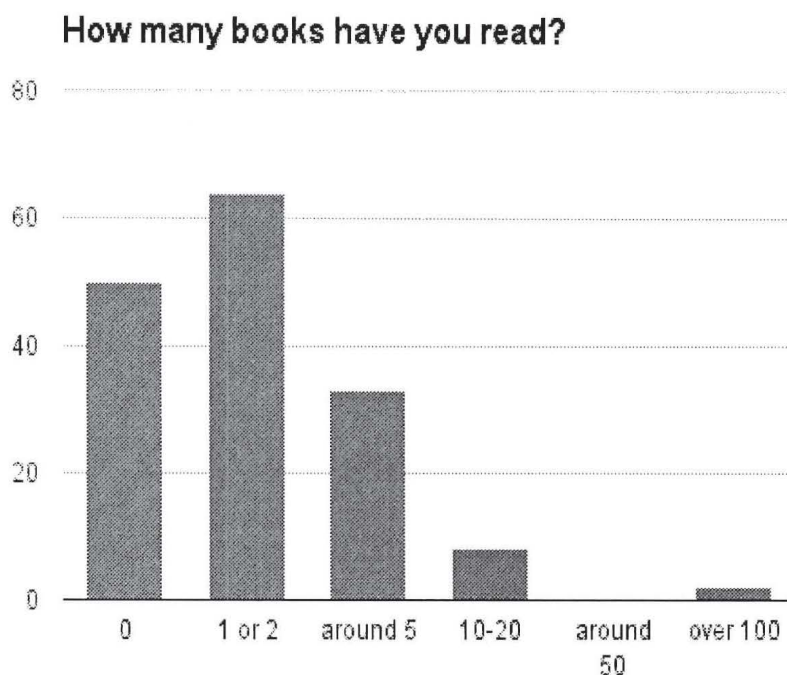


Figure 2. Number of books students had read at the beginning of university.

If students have never read a book in English, it is difficult to say that they are literate. Without the opportunity to read many books, we can say nothing about their ability to read.

### 8. Learner autonomy

In conventional classroom situations the teacher prescribes the text, but in extensive reading students choose their own. As well as allowing students in classes of mixed levels and mixed interests to find material that is appropriate in difficulty and content, this means more control by students of their own learning, leading to a sense of empowerment, and increasing the possibility for intrinsic motivation (see Jacobs & Renandya, 2015).

In some cases, the building of class libraries can directly involve the students as they choose and order books to fill the shelves, and they become literal owners and investors in their own learning resources (see below).

Many students in Japan have the impression that English is boring. The consumption of English media such as music and cinema clearly shows that it is not the language that is boring, but the subject; in other words, the textbooks, the teachers and the tests. If students are put in control of their own destiny, and allowed to choose texts that they find interesting, there is a chance of salvaging the reputation of English.

### 9. Classroom logistics

The most powerful reasons for reading lie within books, and the best way to encourage students to read is to allocate class time to reading. As well as the direct increase in reading time, there is a strong inference that reading is a worthwhile activity. In addition, the teacher can monitor reading, and express interest in the books students have chosen, providing further



motivation.

Access to a wide range of books is essential for extensive reading, and the provision of books is perhaps the biggest challenge in setting up extensive reading programmes. It remains a challenge in established programmes, as lost and damaged books need to be replaced, and new books need to be added to the collection. The process of building and maintaining a library can also provide opportunities for students to consider *why* they are reading as they focus on *what* they are reading.

As reported in Brierley and Ruzicka (2012), the initial approach in the Shinshu University ER programme was for students to choose and buy their own books, then swap them with other books in the evolving class libraries. At the end of the course students were encouraged to donate their books to the libraries for future students, but it was possible for them to retrieve the books they had originally purchased. The class libraries involved a paper-based borrowing system, and small groups of students were assigned in class to manage lending and return of books. In addition, class librarians had to keep the books in order, which could be based on publisher and level, or like a real library based on different genres.

As the programme developed, we found more ways to allocate institutional funding to the supply of books, and later moved most of the books to the library. This had the huge advantage of taking responsibility for library management out of the classroom and out of the hands of busy teachers. It meant that students were expected to arrive in class with a book they were ready to read. At the same time, we lost many opportunities for using books and their management to enhance learner autonomy.

Assessment is another important part of the classroom logistics of extensive reading. In their ten principles for teaching extensive reading Day and Bamford declare “reading is its own reward” (2002: 143), although they specifically refer to the usual absence of comprehension activities. Assessment within ER should have careful consideration of backwash, so that assessment activities encourage the behaviour we want in students, which is primarily to read a lot of easy interesting books. There should probably be more emphasis on construct validity than reliability, so we should give credit for measures of word counts even if they are not completely accurate, because it will encourage more reading.

There are several ways in which assessment can reinforce motivation and reorient students into why they are reading. Assessment strategies for extensive reading should encourage students to read more, they should encourage students to find out about books they have not yet read, they should focus on the stories and what the students think and feel about them, rather than simply whether they understood. The appendix includes activities which can promote extensive reading, and can be assessed. (See also Brierley, Ruzicka, Sato, & Wakasugi, 2010.)

## 10. Conclusion

The fundamental task of an ER practitioner is to get students reading. This requires the provision of books and the allocation of class time to reading, but we must also orient and re-orient our students. As teachers we must repeat and repackage our messages, firstly because the students may not be listening the first time, secondly because we usually have many different students whose enthusiasm will depend on the approaches adopted.

Discussions of vocabulary and collocation may appeal to the mathematically minded. More competitive students may react well to measurements of reading speed. The explanations of the story brain may appeal to students interested in literature, but also those thinking about careers in business or marketing, while biologists may connect with discussions of brain evolution. Classroom management and learner autonomy may be most suitable for education majors. While it may be approached from the perspective of epistemology and the philosophy of science, the Input Hypothesis can speak to any students who have suffered boredom and

frustration in the face of language education, and may unfortunately have wide application! Whether the Input Hypothesis is strictly correct or not, it provides meta-language to open a discussion about language and how students should study it.

There are many different ways to introduce ER, and those presented in this paper are not exhaustive. In designing courses and planning lessons, I encourage the teacher to use as many different ways as possible. Language classes have many priorities, so there is a tendency to be complacent if our students are spending any time sitting quietly behind their books. Reading itself is an individual activity, and we must look for ways to socialize reading.

### **Appendix 1: Measuring reading speed (five minutes)**

Preamble: students are asked how fast they can run, walk, swim, ride a bicycle, drive a car. Then reading speed is introduced, along with the units: words per minute.

Measurement: using the books they have been reading, either self-selected or allocated by the teacher, students are told to start reading from the beginning of the paragraph, page, chapter or book. They are timed for two minutes, then told to stop.

Students count the number of lines read, then estimate the average words per line, for example by counting the number of words in ten lines, then dividing by ten.

The reading speed is calculated as Number of Lines x Average Words per Line / Number of Minutes. Eg  $30 \times 10 / 2 = 150$  wpm. Students should record their reading speed, and the book title, publisher and level.

The measurement may be repeated, with students starting at the same point and reading the same passage. They are likely to read faster a second time, and probably even faster a third time, and this may serve as repeated reading (see Taguchi, Takayasu-Mass & Gorsuch, 2004).

Reading speed should be measured every few weeks, hopefully showing students that their reading speed is increasing, they are reading books at higher levels, or both.

### **Appendix 2: Reading allowed (two minutes to whole lesson)**

First time: at the end of reading time, all students continue reading their books, reading aloud. Since everybody is reading aloud, none of the other students are listening, and students should be relatively comfortable. The teacher may patrol during this activity to monitor students' book choices.

At a later lesson: students choose a passage from their book to read aloud to partners or groups for exactly one minute. This includes an estimate of the number of words a student can read aloud in a minute, which is around 100. The teacher should also teach or elicit the factors of reading aloud, which include speed, volume, intonation, rhythm, and feeling.

### **Appendix 3: Reading marathon (whole lesson)**

The teacher brings at least five low-level books per student to class. Students get into groups of around four people. First, group leaders choose four books. Students read the books, and when finished, go to the teacher. The teacher asks a quick question about the book, ideally specific to the content to act as a comprehension check. Then the student returns the book and chooses another. The teacher keeps a score of the number of books each group reads, and the group who have read most are the winners.

### **Appendix 4: ER activities (whole lesson plus homework)**

Students are shown five activities and must choose one, and then choose one book they have read, and choose one character from the books. Five writing activities include:

1. Self-introduction – students imagine they are a character from one of the books they have read, then write about themselves: eg. “My name is Tom Sawyer. I am twelve years old, and I live in Missouri...”

2. Diary – again imagining themselves to be a character from a book, students write a diary of a day or a series of days.

3. Letter – either from a character in a book, or to one of the characters.

4. News report – students imagine themselves to be a journalist or TV reporter within the book, and must write a news piece about an incident within the book.

5. The prequel – students write a story or episode from before the story starts.

For groups with weaker or younger students, drawing activities, such as a picture or a map, can be given as options.

After writing in class, students can present their activities to others, then for homework could write it up on an online forum.

### **Appendix 5: ER Surveys** (Whole lesson plus homework, or two or more lessons)

Several different sets of four or five questions are prepared, copied onto A5 with tables next to each question and on the back to write several answers, and one sheet is given to each student in a class. Students may first write their own answers to their own questions, then beginning in pairs should ask another student, write their answers, answer their questions, then change partners. After collecting answers, students may work individually to consider the answers to these questions and write a brief report, or work in pairs or groups and give a presentation of their results in a later class.

The sets of questions are below:

1. What is your favourite book?

Publisher/Level: (e.g. Oxford 1)

Why did you like it?

If you could meet a person from a story you have read, who would you meet?

What would you say to them?

2. What book are you reading now?

Publisher/Level: (e.g. Oxford 1)

Why did you choose it?

How is it?

What is your reason for doing ER?

3. Which do you like better: fiction or non-fiction?

What is your favourite kind of book (e.g. horror, romance, thriller)

Do you like the same kind of books in English and Japanese?

What book are you going to read next in English?

Why do you want to read that book?

4. How many books have you read?

What was the last book you finished?

Publisher/Level: (e.g. Oxford 1)

What was it about?

How did you feel at the end of the last book you read?

5. Which is your favourite ER publisher?

If you could read any book in English, what would you read?

What do you think is a good title for a new ER book?

If you wrote a story in English, what would you write about?

- What can publishers do to make ER books better?
6. Where is your favourite place to read?  
When do you read English outside class?  
If you could go to a place in one of the books you have read, where would you go?  
What would you do there?
  7. What are the good points of extensive reading?  
What are the bad points of extensive reading?  
What is your reading level?  
How long should we spend reading in class each week?  
How does ER help you to learn English?
  8. How often do you use a dictionary when you read graded readers?  
How many books do you borrow when you go to the library?  
How do you choose books?  
What is your advice for other people doing ER?

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