

PERC Held Two Member Gatherings in Shanghai and Beijing

PERC (Publink Extensive Reading Club) has successfully held two three-hour face-to-face exchange meetings in Shanghai and Beijing in November, inviting more than 30 first-line English teachers, teaching and research staff, and English education practitioners from public schools, presses, educational institutions and bilingual schools to discuss and exchange the successful experiences and confusions during the implementation of extensive reading. The meetings received great feedback.



The PERC gathering in Shanghai was mainly about ER best practices. Bill, an ER practitioner, shared his parent-child education experience and proposed that in the beginning of English learning, it is important to stimulate the child's interest while maintaining a fixed reading frequency.

Bill also said that the best model for extensive reading should be the “Blended Learning” model, which contains offline and online learning. It is impossible to ensure the implementation of extensive reading in an online-learning-only way. "There must be a face-to-face communication and guidance. Keep instilling your beliefs into parents' minds and encouraging

them.”

Zhang Ying, the head of four training schools, started with extensive reading in her schools. She said that “extensive reading and graded reading are the real ways to teach English”, emphasizing the importance of the combining extensive reading and intensive reading. She also shared her successful parent-child education model and used a teaching case to have further proved her point.



Jennings, Chinese-Canadians, shared her linguistic enlightenment experience in Canada, emphasizing the importance of parent-child reading and divergent thinking. She said that “Extensive reading is an experience.”

In China, many teachers have come to realize that extensive reading needs to be carried out both online and offline, but the methods of using online tools are still worth exploring. In the future, PERC will invite several ER experts to join us and further explore how to use online tools for better extensive reading practice.

The PERC member gathering in Beijing was held on 17th, mainly focusing on the difficulties English teachers and practitioners encountered during the extensive reading practice.



Mia from New Oriental, the biggest training school in China, mentioned that the biggest obstacle lay in the overall background. “Preschool children and their parents accept extensive reading readily, but the follow-up doesn’t work very well.” She believed the reason might include the low language exposure, the inapparent reading effect and the diminishing time students can give to English.

In answer to this, Tina from Palfish, an online educational company, said that the focus should be on improving students' interest in reading and in the meanwhile externalizing the learning effects. Richard pointed out that one existing problem now is that teachers cannot keep up with the demand out of his personal experience. “Many teachers lack professional instruction in extensive reading and are still using traditional English teaching methods.” Wang Qi proposed that there is a general misunderstanding among teachers in public schools that students can't read without the accumulation of vocabulary, but “international research has confirmed that students can read sometimes without certain vocabulary quantity”.

Jia Yunlong believes that this argument is based on the premise of choosing appropriate reading materials. He also proposed that extensive reading and vocabulary accumulation should be carried out simultaneously, and high-grade students in primary schools should choose more

targeted reading materials.



During the exchange, Teacher Vegetable also shared her extensive reading experience in New Zealand. She said that schools in New Zealand adopt a combination of intensive and extensive reading courses during language enlightenment stage. Although there are many sets of teaching methods for teachers to choose, the extensive reading is essential. She also mentioned a misunderstanding of the domestic extensive reading - the focus of the picture books on the pictures rather than the texts. "It is wrong to do this. We should use pictures to guide children to read. Only on the basis of a certain amount of vocabulary, can children use the wordless pictures to do some language output." Teacher Vegetable also pointed out that it is not meaningful to learn English by reciting words or texts. The best is to teach them how to read independently.



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In the last 40 minutes of the exchange meeting, the main focus was on the application of extensive reading in China. It is generally believed that it is imperative to persuade parents and teachers to accept extensive reading. The cooperation in exploring teaching models of extensive reading would become more feasible with unanimous support of all parties.

At the end of the gathering, Irene, the founder of PERC introduced the club and its future plans to new members. She also proposed a new “PERC Talk” project. In the future, PERC will regularly invite teachers and ER practitioners to present and share their experiences on running ER. The other teachers and practitioners will talk and exchange ideas on his or her project.

So far, PERC, with a membership of more than 300, has gathered a group of English education enthusiasts who have the courage to try and will continue to explore, which also motivates us and boost our confidence on this path. It’s a long way to go. Let us join hands and work together!

PERC up with Extensive Reading!