



# Proceedings of the Third World Congress on Extensive Reading

*Extensive Reading, an Oasis for Learning*

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# Proceedings of the 3rd World Congress on Extensive Reading

Melanie Gobert, Editor

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# Chapter One: Effects of Extensive Reading on Japanese Language Learning

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## Abstract

This paper reports the implementation of extensive reading in a Japanese as a Second Language class and discusses extensive reading's effects for Japanese language learning. The extensive reading class was offered in a Japanese university to 32 intermediate to advanced Japanese language learners. The results of questionnaires of two types indicated that by the end of the course, the students thought that they could improve their reading ability, they changed their reading strategy, and they began to desire reading more in Japanese. The students' comments also supported these findings. These results therefore indicate that extensive reading can be a powerful method for Japanese as a Second Language learning.

## Introduction

Extensive reading has been widely incorporated in second or foreign language classrooms. However, few extensive reading studies explore the method's potential in Japanese as a Second or Foreign Language (JSL/JFL) contexts. This paper reports on the implementation of extensive reading in JSL classes at a Japanese university and discusses extensive reading's effects for Japanese language learning. First, we will describe the extensive reading class in our university Japanese course. We will then report the method and results of the questionnaire conducted in the extensive reading class. Finally, from the study's results, we will discuss the effects of extensive reading.

### Extensive Reading for JSL/JSL Learners

Extensive reading is an approach where people read quickly and enjoyably with adequate comprehension without using a dictionary (Extensive Reading Foundation, 2011). To implement extensive reading, Day and Bamford (2002) have suggested the "Top Ten Principles for Teaching Extensive Reading."

1. The reading material is easy.

2. A variety of reading material on a wide range of topics must be available.
3. Learners choose what they want to read.
4. Learners read as much as possible.
5. The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding.
6. Reading is its own reward.
7. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower.
8. Reading is individual and silent.
9. Teachers orient and guide their students.
10. The teacher is a role model of a reader.

In JSL/JFL contexts, teachers can implement extensive reading in their classrooms as Japanese graded readers have become available since 2006. However, extensive reading is still uncommon in JSL/JFL classrooms and few articles report on the implementation of this technique. Hitotsugi and Day (2004) collected 266 Japanese children's books and asked elementary Japanese learners to read outside class. In their survey, they found an increase in students who responded positively toward studying Japanese. Interviews and surveys from other studies (Kawana, 2012; Matsui, Mikami, & Kanayama, 2012; Ninomiya & Kawakami, 2012; Ninomiya, 2013) also showed the positive effects of extensive reading when students freely read graded readers in class.

### **Extensive Reading Class in the Japanese Language Course**

#### *Overview*

In 2013, the extensive reading class was implemented in a Japanese language course at the target university. It was an elective class so that students' participation was voluntarily. The classes were 90-minutes long and were held for 15 weeks. The participating students' levels ranged from pre-intermediate to advanced.

The class' objectives are to help students: (1) enjoy reading in Japanese, (2) read without translation, (3) read faster, (4) increase receptive vocabulary, and (5) read habitually. In order to attain these goals, we asked students to read easy books, skip/guess what they do not understand, focus on the overall meaning, not read slowly, and select another book if the current one is too difficult.

Furthermore, the course's requirements include (1) weekly book reports and comment sheets, (2) three poster presentations, (3) number of the books they read, and (4) class attendance and participation. In the book report, students wrote on whether the books were interesting, how difficult the books were, and short summary of the books. For the comment sheet, students wrote about their thoughts on their reading ability, such as their reading speed and problems. In the poster presentations, students created a poster of their favorite book and used it to inform other students about the book in the class. Furthermore, the number of books students read was also included in the grade. However, as we intended the students to read both extensively and enjoyably, the number of books read only accounted for 10% of the final grade. Students who read over 60 books were awarded full marks; the points decreased as the number of the books read decreased.

Classes typically began with the teacher introducing some books to the students, who then quietly read their self-selected books. While the students read, the teacher talked to each student individually

to ask whether they have any problems or what they thought of the books they read. Approximately 10 minutes before the end of class, students form small groups to discuss the most interesting books they read that day.

### **Materials**

Currently, over 100 Japanese graded readers exist; with five levels between beginner and intermediate levels, there are about 10 - 30 books per level. Considering the number of students, their Japanese levels, and their varied interests, we thought that more books were needed for this study. Therefore, we prepared comic books, picture books, and children books for this class. A total number of 264 books were selected; Table 1 shows the breakdown of these books based on their category. The students were also encouraged to read other books as long as the books' levels were appropriate.

**Table 1. Books for the Extensive Reading Class**

Category	Number of Books
Graded Readers	101
Comics	61
Picture Books	44
Books for Elementary School Students	58
Total	264

### **Research Questions**

This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1.Does extensive reading change students' perception of their language abilities? 2.Does extensive reading change students' perception of their reading style? 3.Does extensive reading change students' attitude toward reading?

### **Method**

#### ***\*\*Participants \*\****

There were 32 students participating in the extensive reading class at the target university. Their Japanese levels ranged from pre-intermediate to advanced. Of the 32, 11 students were from the United States, five students from China, three students each from France, Germany, and Thailand, two students from Korea, one student each from Lithuania, Philippines, Russia, Serbia, and Taiwan. Furthermore, 31 of the 32 participants were exchange students who have been in Japan for one semester or just arrived in the country.

### **Data**

#### ***Questionnaire A (pretest and posttest)***

Questionnaire A was conducted twice (in the first and last class). The questionnaire aimed to identify changes in students' perceptions of their Japanese language ability, reading styles, and attitudes toward reading. The question types include questions on students' Japanese language ability (5

questions), strategy or habit (5 questions), anxiety (4 questions) and comfort (5 questions). The questions on strategy or habit were based on Hitotsugi and Day (2004), and the questions on anxiety and comfort were taken from Yamashita (2013). The questionnaire was written both in Japanese and English. Students responded to the questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale with 5 being “strongly agree” and 1 being “strongly disagree.”

#### *Questionnaire B (posttest)*

Questionnaire B was conducted in the final class. This questionnaire elicited student feedback on the class. Students were also asked whether they thought their language ability improved. The questionnaire was again written both in Japanese and English. Students again responded using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “5” (strongly agree) to “1” (strongly disagree).

### **Results**

#### *Questionnaire A (pretest and posttest)*

Table 2 shows the difference between the pre- and posttest of Questionnaire A. The difference was analyzed using the paired t-tests. Furthermore, as multiple t-tests were conducted, the alpha level was adjusted using the Holm’s method.



**Table 2. Differences between Pretest and Posttest Questionnaire**

Questions	Pretest		Posttest		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
<b>Ability</b>							
I know many Japanese words.	2.78	0.71	3.47	0.95	-4.98	0.00*	0.67
It is easy for me to read Japanese.	2.63	0.61	2.88	0.79	-1.49	0.15	0.26
It is difficult for me to read kanji.	3.47	1.16	3.28	1.05	1.10	0.28	0.19
I read fast when I read Japanese.	2.09	0.69	2.81	1.15	-3.39	0.00*	0.52
I have confidence in my ability to read Japanese.	2.50	0.76	3.19	0.97	-3.90	0.00*	0.57
<b>Strategy / Habit</b>							
I read Japanese books, comics, newspapers, etc. outside of class.	3.03	1.38	3.90	1.01	-3.28	0.00*	0.51
When I read Japanese, I look up many words in the dictionary.	3.88	1.04	2.44	0.98	6.54	0.00*	0.76
I like to watch Japanese television programs, anime, movies, etc.	4.09	0.93	4.38	0.75	-1.79	0.08	0.31
I try to use Japanese outside of class.	4.34	0.65	4.69	0.59	-3.23	0.00*	0.50
When I read Japanese, I don't translate it into my native language.	2.91	1.20	3.28	0.92	-1.75	0.09	0.30
<b>Anxiety</b>							
I feel anxious if I don't know all the words.	3.25	1.30	2.72	1.30	2.79	0.01	0.45
I sometimes feel anxious that I may not understand even if I read.	3.22	1.04	2.91	1.17	2.40	0.02	0.40
I feel anxious when I'm not sure whether I understood the book content.	3.00	1.16	3.03	1.20	-0.20	0.85	0.04
I don't mind even if I cannot understand the book content entirely.	2.69	1.15	3.34	1.04	-3.22	0.00*	0.50
<b>Comfort</b>							
Reading Japanese is troublesome.	2.56	0.91	2.34	1.00	1.27	0.21	0.22
I feel relaxed if I read Japanese.	2.69	0.74	2.97	0.86	-1.66	0.11	0.29
Reading Japanese is dull.	1.50	0.67	1.78	0.91	-1.96	0.06	0.33
I feel refreshed and rested if I read Japanese.	2.59	0.87	2.97	0.90	-2.10	0.04	0.35
Reading Japanese is enjoyable.	3.63	0.75	4.13	0.83	-3.94	0.00*	0.58

\* indicates statistical significant differences

The three “Ability” questions were found to be statistically significant between the pre- and posttest. This indicates that students perceived an increase in vocabulary, reading speed, and reading ability by the end of the course.

Additionally, the three “Strategy or Habit” questions were also found to be statistically significant. The question “When I read Japanese, I look up many words in the dictionary” was significantly

lower in the posttest, indicating that students relied on dictionaries less by the end of the course. On the other hand, the question “I read Japanese books, comics, newspapers, etc. outside of class” received significantly higher scores in the posttest. This suggests that by the end of the course, students were reading more outside of class. The question “I try to use Japanese outside of class” was also significantly higher in the posttest. It must be noted that these differences might be due to the factors besides extensive reading. Most of the participants have lived in Japan for less than a year, thus these differences may have emerged as they adjusted to living in Japan and made more Japanese friends. Lastly, while the question “When I read Japanese, I don’t translate it into my native language” scored higher in posttest, it was not statistically significant.

Only one of the “Anxiety” questions was statistically significant (i.e., “I don’t mind even if I cannot understand the book content entirely”). The two questions, “I feel anxious if I don’t know all the words” and “I sometimes feel anxious that I may not understand even if I read” were not statistically significant but had very low alpha levels. This indicates that students feel less anxious about not understanding every word or content by the end of the course.

The “Comfort” question on “Reading Japanese is enjoyable” was significantly higher in the posttest, indicating that students enjoyed reading more by the end of the course.

#### *Questionnaire B (posttest)*

In the final class, students were asked how they perceived extensive reading. Table 3 shows the mean scores and standard deviations of the questions on extensive reading. All the questions received high mean scores (i.e., above 4.0). More specifically, every question other than “I came to like reading” had very high mean scores.

**Table 3: Questions on Extensive Reading**

Questions	M	SD
Extensive reading was interesting.	4.47	0.66
Extensive reading is effective for Japanese language learning.	4.56	0.66
I came to like reading.	4.09	0.95
I want to continue extensive reading in Japanese.	4.53	0.66

The students were also asked if they thought their Japanese language abilities had improved through extensive reading. Table 4 shows the mean and standard deviations of the questions on students’ language ability. Only the questions on listening, writing, speaking had lower mean scores, which was expected for a reading class.

**Table 4. Questions on Language Ability**

Questions	M	SD
My reading speed became faster.	4.22	0.82
I could learn kanji.	4.19	0.68
I could learn vocabulary.	4.19	0.63
I could improve my reading skills.	4.44	0.61
I could improve my listening skills.	2.78	1.22
I could improve my writing skills.	3.38	0.70
I could improve my speaking skills.	3.19	0.81

## Discussion

Research question 1 asked “Does extensive reading change students’ perception of their language abilities?” As shown in Table 3, the mean score for “Extensive reading is effective for Japanese language learning” was very high, indicating that students strongly felt that extensive reading effectively improved their Japanese language ability. Additionally, the results of Questionnaire A show that students believe they have improved vocabulary, reading speed, and reading confidence. Furthermore, the results of Questionnaire B show that the students think that they could improve their reading skills, their reading speed became faster, and they could learn kanji and vocabulary. These results indicate that by reading extensively the students think that aspects of their reading ability such as reading speed, vocabulary, and kanji knowledge improved.

On a comment sheet for the final class, Student A from Thailand wrote about changes in her reading speed and extensive reading’s usefulness: “My reading speed is better. I don’t use the dictionary a lot when I find unknown words now. By reading Japanese books I can learn new words and practice grammar, so it is very useful.”

Research question 2 asked, “Does extensive reading change students’ perception of their reading style?” The student’s comment above demonstrates her change in dictionary use when encountering unknown words. Additionally, Questionnaire A’s results show that students looked up words less frequently when reading by the end of the course. These results suggest that students changed their dictionary-use strategy when reading,

On a comment sheet, Student A wrote about the advantages of reading without a dictionary:

When I see unknown words, it is better not to look at a dictionary. When I look at a dictionary, I can’t follow the content and the book becomes uninteresting. If you want to know the meaning, it is OK to look at a dictionary once or twice. The more I read, the better I like reading.

This student believes that constantly referring to a dictionary restricts her understanding of the books and her overall enjoyment. The last sentence from the above excerpt also suggests the student increased reading enjoyment through reading extensively.

On the other hand, no statistical difference was found in “When I read Japanese, I don’t translate it into my native language.” Although the reason for this result is unclear, the results may be due to how the rating scale was inappropriate for this question; it would be more appropriate to ask them to choose from “always” to “never” rather than “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.”

Research question 3 asked, “Does extensive reading change students’ attitude toward reading?” The results of Questionnaire A show decreased student anxiety toward not understanding everything when reading by the end of the course.

Student B from Korea wrote that her fear for reading unknown words changed during the course. In the 11th week, this student wrote: “I noticed my reading has changed. I felt uneasy when I saw unknown words, but not now.” By week 15, the same student stated the following: “My reading speed is faster and I don’t have fear for reading, and I am really happy. I am going to read various books during summer vacation.”

The results of Questionnaire A also show that students think reading Japanese is enjoyable and that they increasingly read outside of class. Questionnaire B also indicates that students think extensive reading is interesting and want to continue reading extensively in Japanese.

Student C from China commented that reading easy books is interesting and enjoyable: “I first wanted to challenge difficult books, but now I am enjoying reading. When I read easy books, I can learn more.” Other students mentioned their desire to continue reading even after the course finishes. One of them was Student D from Thailand.

I read various books. My reading speed is faster and I always enjoyed reading. I promise that I will not quit reading even after the class is over. I want to read many books from now on.

By reading easy books, the students felt less anxious and found reading in Japanese enjoyable. This feeling of enjoyment seems to encourage their desire to read more in Japanese.

## Conclusion

In this paper, we first described the Japanese extensive reading class at our target university. We then reported the method and results of the questionnaire conducted in this class. Finally, from the study’s results, we discussed the effects of extensive reading. The results of the study indicate that at the end of the course, students perceived improved reading ability, changed reading strategy, and increased desire for reading in Japanese. By reading many easy books that interest them, and trying to read fast without looking at a dictionary, the students notice their improvement in their reading skills as well as changes in their reading styles. The students’ comments also support these findings. These results suggest that extensive reading can be a powerful method for language learning.

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# Chapter Two: Raising a Biliterate Child in Japan: A Case Study of a Bicultural Family

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## Abstract

This paper reports on a case study of a bicultural family in Japan. Krashen (2004:61) claims “Often, those who ‘hate to read’ simply do not have access to books.” The bicultural family in this study tried to make sure of the opposite and provide books for their child. A Japanese/American child, who obtained sufficient input during her early developmental phase, has learned to read autonomously and achieved a highly proficient level of English. Several factors that have presumably contributed to her literacy will be discussed.

## Introduction

Although Smith (1994) and others have reported some successful case studies, for a native speaker of Japanese living and attending school in Japan, becoming bilingual is no easy feat. The survey results reported by Noguchi (1996a) reveal that the two language management strategies (“one parent-one language” strategy and home/community language strategy) “often face a wide range of problems, especially after the children reach school age and when families have more than one child” (p.245).

Therefore, becoming biliterate in English (and Japanese) is no doubt even more daunting. As Noguchi (1996b) argues, learning to read in one’s native language while living in one’s native country is hard enough; to attempt to learn a language as different as English is from Japanese is all the more so. The written and grammatical systems have nothing in common. With the exception of loan words, the spoken language is totally different as well.

Why bother with adding a second, unrelated language when school, community, and in many cases home life are conducted in Japanese? The obvious answers would include future professional

opportunities, being able to communicate with relatives and non-Japanese speakers, using email, a feeling of affinity with a parent's native written language, etc. Beyond these personal reasons, research has shown that multiple advantages accrue to those who attain a high level of literacy in two languages: creativity and divergent thinking (Baker, Rudd, & Pomeroy, 2001), metalinguistic awareness (Bialystok, Luk, & Kwan, 2005), cognitive flexibility (Hakuta & Dias, 1985), intercultural communicative competence (Lüdi, 2006), and enriched linguistic repertoire (Pavelenko, 2009).

Once one has decided to go down the path of biliteracy, the issue of how to proceed arises.

## **The Case Study**

### ***Participant***

The participant of this case study is Mona Matsuda. She was born in Kyoto, Japan, in 1998, and is currently 17-years-old. Her father is an American national who has lived in Japan for more than two decades. Her mother is a Japanese national who spent two years in the United States.

Mona's dominant language is Japanese (or, more specifically, Kyoto dialect), her second language English. She has spent her entire life in Kyoto, and attended local day care centers and public neighborhood elementary and junior high schools. She is now a second year high school student at a public school in Kyoto.

### ***Language & Culture Environments***

From the time of her birth, Mona was immersed in an unusual home language environment. For the first 5-6 years of her life, her parents alternated languages by day. For example, if on Monday they spoke in English, Tuesday would be a "Japanese" day. In recent years, however, Japanese has become the dominant language of the family.

Still, within the family, the parents have roughly maintained for 17 years a "one parent-one language" policy. That is, the father – with some exceptions (e.g., in a situation in which mono-lingual Japanese are present) – only speaks in English to Mona. Similarly, the mother only speaks in Japanese to Mona. Outside of the home, Mona's linguistic environment is overwhelmingly Japanese.

Both parents' knowledge of the two languages helped communication because Mona, in the first years of her life, responded only in Japanese to Father's questions in English; this did not, however, cause a communication breakdown. After Mona started speaking English with her father, Mother participated in Japanese, or Father sometimes joined in (in whichever language) when Mona and Mother were talking in Japanese. In other words, when it comes to a family conversation, the language spoken was flexible and depended on the situation: all Japanese, two people speaking English/one speaking Japanese, or two speaking Japanese/one speaking English.

Mona was fortunate to have cultural input at an early age as well. Her household celebrated events from both cultures. She enjoyed the traditional Japanese feast on New Year's day and threw beans to drive off evil spirits at Setsubun; similarly, she went egg hunting on Easter and trick-or-treating on Halloween. She also visited her American family and relatives once or twice a year.

### ***Bedtime Reading and More***

From a very young age, both parents read to Mona every night. The nightly reading selection was left to Mona, who sometimes chose English books for her mother and, conversely, Japanese books for her father to read. (In this event, her father would often read in Japanese and then summarize the story in English.)

In addition to the above routine, the parents provided additional access to books with frequent visits to local libraries and bookstores. Whenever and wherever they traveled, finding a good bookstore was at the top of things to do. They read on the train and the plane.

Her grandparents were also generous providers of books for her. Especially her Japanese grandfather, also a book lover, enjoyed taking her to bookstores and buying several books every time they went. He even gave her book coupons after he won in Go (an Asian board game) tournaments.

Mona liked Japanese folktales as well as *Dr. Suess's ABC*. She enjoyed demons and monks while she was fascinated by princesses and fairies. Her favorite books at an early stage included *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (by Eric Carle), *Good Night Moon* (by Margaret Wise Brown), *The Going to Bed Book & Moo, Baa, La La La!* (by Susan Boynton), and *In a Dark Dark Room and Other Scary Stories* (by Alvin Schwartz).

As she grew older, the effects of the “one parent-one language” system became more apparent. At bedtime her father read English books such as *Harry Potter*, and her mother read translated versions of Astrid Lindgren books in Japanese. Her mother had enjoyed reading these 40 year-old books when she was young. The end of the *Harry Potter* series coincided with the time in which the parents faded out of bedtime reading.

### ***Other English Input***

Other English input included videos and television programs, primarily from the United States. She started with *Sesame Street* and PBS kids programs and moved on to the Disney Channel. Another bilingual family gave her *Barney home* videos, which she enjoyed for a while. Her favorite videos, however, included *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Sound of Music*, and the *Indiana Jones* series. She often asked her parents to tell those stories at bedtime as well. She watched most of the Disney movies on video while she saw the latest animated movie at a movie theater. (This sometimes meant waiting for a night showing so that they could watch it in English with Japanese subtitles. Many films for children are, not surprisingly, dubbed.)

### ***Sunday Study Group: Completely Bilingual***

The second prong of attaining biliteracy was a “Sunday School” called *Completely Bilingual*. As Nobuoka, Isozaki, and Miyake (2015) pointed out, having “a group of their peers” is key. *Completely Bilingual* was a great boost to Mona’s language development. This was a group founded by three international couples in Kyoto. The group rented space at a Woman’s Center in the city, hired teachers, bought educational materials from the United States, and met every Sunday for one hour during the school year. The classes were set roughly based upon school grade level. Mona attended from approximately age four until the end of elementary school, at age 12, at which point the students “graduate” from the program.



Here Mona learned phonics, spelling, and reading. The students completed short homework assignments every week. By the time she had finished the program, she was for all intents and purposes an independent reader – in both Japanese and English.

### ***Scholastic Book Club***

A mother in *Completely Bilingual* group was a member of the *Scholastic Book Club* (currently called *Scholastic Reading Club*). Other families took advantage of this access and placed monthly orders for their children to encourage extensive reading outside of class. Mona received four catalogs (*SeeSaw* for Grades K-1, *Lucky* for Grades 2-3, and *Arrow* for Grades 4-6, *TAB* for Grades 7 and up) every month and happily circled the books she would like to read. Her mother examined what Mona had marked and ordered most of the selected items although some censorship came into play. When the books arrived, Mona buried her nose in books for hours and read one after another and another until she finished most or all of them.

### ***Extensive Reading in Japanese***

Mona's elementary school also encouraged reading. Every morning children had a "morning reading time" for 10-15 minutes. Students chose a book from the class library or read a book they brought. They were given a reading record booklet to note the books they had read. When they reached 100 books, students went to the principal's office and received a certificate and a paper medal. This way, Mona kept reading in both English and Japanese. As Cummins (1991) noted, there is an "interdependence of first- and second-language proficiency in bilingual children" – which was apparent in Mona.

### ***Extensive Reading Marathon***

When her mother initiated extensive reading at her university, she encouraged Mona to join. Mona started keeping reading records when she was 7. Although she had learned to spell English words by then, she needed help writing necessary information at first. Eventually she became autonomous and kept records quite diligently for the next 4 years. By the time she turned 11, however, she grew tired of recording the books she read, and she stopped keeping track. Although her reading records may not be totally accurate or consistent, it is worthwhile to see how she has developed her English literacy by analyzing her reading records.

### **Data Analysis**

Table 1 shows the total word count, the number of books, and the average length of books that Mona read each year from 2nd grade to 5th grade.

**Table 1: Books Read by Grade**

Grade(Age)	2nd(7-8)	3rd(8-9)	4th(9-10)	5th(10-11)
Total Word Count	1,843,075	1,798,009	3,538,427	2,811,838
Number of Books	142	66	91	74
Average	13,356	27,243	38,884	37,998

Figure 1 indicates the number of books she read by the length. When she was in 2nd grade, most of the books she read were less than 10,000 words, but when she was in 4th grade, the majority of the books she read fell into the “20,000-49,999” category.

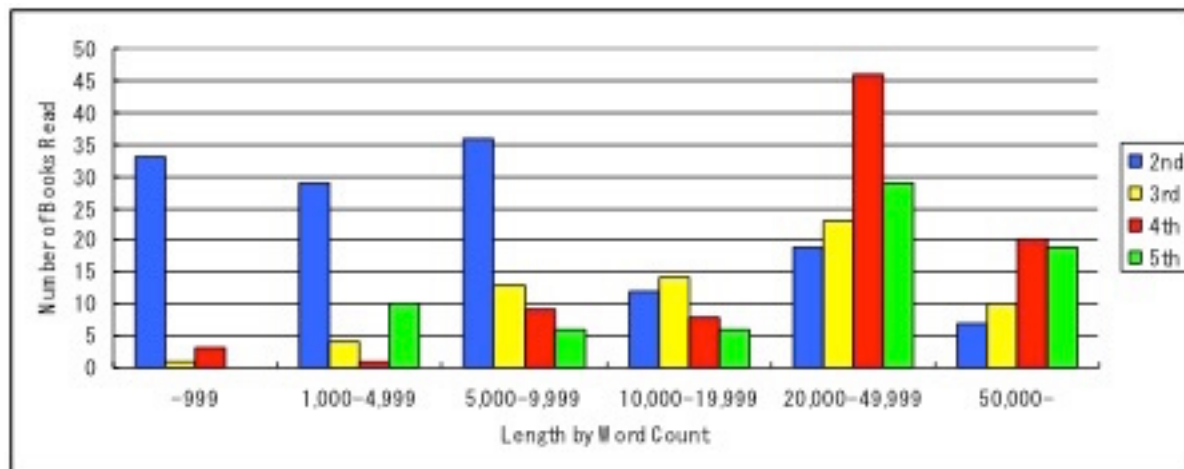


Figure 1. Books Read by Number of Words by Year of Elementary School

### Grade 2

The most read series was *Oxford Reading Tree* (27 titles), followed by *Magic Tree House* (15 titles). She also read the whole set of *A Series of Unfortunate Events*. Other series included *I Can Read*, *Geronimo Stilton*, *Captain under Pants*, *Oxford Bookworms* (Levels 2-3), *Penguin Readers* (Levels 2-3), *My Father's Dragon* series, *Nancy Drew*, and *Scholastic Reader* (Level 3). She also started reading *The Little House on the Prairie* series. In addition to series, she read *Flat Stanley*, *Dear Dumb Diary*, *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*, *Number the Stars*, and *The Diary of a Young Girl*.

### Grade 3

Mona became infatuated with *Nancy Drew* and *Hardy Boys* at this stage and read 12 volumes in total. She also read 8 *Princess Diary* books. Others were *Hannah Montana* (4), *English Roses* (4), *Charm Club* (4), *Rainbow Magic* (3), *In Their Own Words* (3), *The Dark Materials* (2), *How I Survived Middle School* (2), and *Magic Tree House* (2). In the previous year she discovered non-fiction reading Anne Frank's diary, and she continued to read serious themes this year such as *Witness* (a story of racial discrimination perpetrated by the KKK), *Four Perfect Pebbles* (the Holocaust), and *Code Talker* (about American Indians during WWII) in addition to a variety of other books such as *The Cupid Chronicles*, *Chasing Vermeer*, *Time Cat*, *Bad Bad Darlings*, and *Montmorency and the Assassins*. Mona discovered Meg Cabot here.

### Grade 4

Mona read *A Series of Unfortunate Events* for the second time and several new series such as *Candy Apple* (11), *Emily Windsnap* (5), *Rainbow Magic* (4), *The Uglies* (3), *Dear Dumb Diary* (3), *Eddie Dickens Trilogy* (2), *Melanie Martin* (2), *Twilight Saga* (2), and *Kiki Strike* (2). Other titles included

*Eggs, Bound, Fairest, The Boy in the Striped Pajamas, The Tales of Beedle the Bard, Pollyanna, Corby Flood, The Mysterious Benedict Society, Before Midnight: A Retelling of "Cinderella," and Airhead.* She started reading not only Meg Cabot but also Stephenie Meyer. Apparently she had entered an adolescent female stage here.

### **Grade 5**

She reread the full set of *A Series of Unfortunate Events* for the third time. Other series she read were: *I Can Read* (9), *Sisters Grimm* (5), *The Gemma Doyle Trilogy* (3), *The Clique* (3), *Geronimo Stilton* (2), *The Book of Time* (2), *Little Darlings* (2), and *Flat Stanley* (2). She also read *The Book Thief*, *Stuart Little*, *The Legend of Spud Murphy*, *Princess Protection Program*, *The Secret School*, *Green Angel*, *Shakespeare's Secret*, *My Life in Pink & Green*, *Ways to Live Forever*, *Cornelia and the Audacious Escapades of the Somerset Sisters*, *The Cupcake Queen*, and *The Sweet Far Thing*. She enjoyed a variety of themes both funny and serious and read a lot of adolescent female novels as well.

Thus, she simply kept reading and reading. How far did she get?

### **English Proficiency**

Her “formal” English education began when she entered public junior high school. In a sense, she “re-learned” the alphabet in the Japanese way; however, it became obvious that she had learned more from books than she would from public school English education. The school encouraged students to take an English proficiency test called EIKEN, and Mona agreed to do so. She passed Grade 2 test (equivalent to TOEIC® 500-640; TOEFL iBT 56-68) at the age of 13, Grade Pre-1 test (equivalent to TOEIC® 740-840; TOEFL iBT 80-97), and Grade 1 test (equivalent to TOEIC® 900-960; TOEFL iBT 104-110) by the time she graduated from junior high school at the age of 15. She didn’t prepare except for a bit of speech practice before the Grade 1 interview test and made “an educated guess” whenever necessary. Apparently her background knowledge and a wide range of passive vocabulary – acquired from books – made it possible.

### **Discussion**

Smith (1994) has argued for beginning teaching – that is, having children begin learning – in a second language after elementary school has begun. Others, like Noguchi (1996b), say, no, the reality of Japanese elementary school and its homework load demands beginning earlier. Mona started early – before elementary school – and it worked. As Noguchi (1996b) notes, English in Japan is highly valorized. From a very early age, like other bilingual/biliterate children Mona was envied for her proficiency in English. The positive image toward English no doubt motivated her to use the language as well.

The cultural environment Mona enjoyed was a household in which two languages were used freely, in which there were many books and reading materials in both languages, and supportive grandparents. The language used at home was flexible: somewhere between the “one parent-one language” strategy and the home/community language strategy. Mona spoke whichever language she felt like speaking and read in whichever language she felt like reading, or more precisely, in whichever language that was available at that time. Moreover, the parents were flexible in their

approach in teaching. At the very beginning, Mona and her father worked through phonics books. In addition, they read aloud (see above). In addition to phonics and decoding, they tried to keep the process as enjoyable and “natural” as possible.

Parents, however, do not always make the most patient or best of teachers. Mona and her father worked together for a year or so from age 3-4, and then to both of their relief they discovered the reading/writing program in Kyoto called *Completely Bilingual*. Mona enjoyed learning in a classroom setting with other children and started working on her homework more seriously. Having an hour-long weekly class may not have been sufficient linguistically, but it turned out to have another important aspect. Like Mona, most of the children were from bicultural families, and meeting them regularly had a positive effect on Mona’s identity. They often shared cultural events such as egg-hunting on Easter and trick-or-treating on Halloween. The interaction with other children and their families in and outside of class undoubtedly helped enhance Mona’s self-image as a prospective bilingual/billiterate child.

Mona learned to read quite early, yet even after Mona became an autonomous reader, the parents kept reading to her at night and made sure she always had easy access to books. As the reading records show, she gradually raised her reading (difficulty) level. When she was in second grade, she read many books shorter than 1,000 words, but in fourth grade she read much longer books, between 20,000 and 50,000 words. After she became a 5th grader, she grew tired of keeping reading records. However, she continued reading without keeping records. She enjoyed both fiction and non-fiction, and her choices included various categories such as adventure, romance, mystery, history, biography, and humor. As Noguchi (1996b, p. 35) writes:

One of the best ways to ensure that children learn to read English is to introduce them to the joys of reading at an early age. And the simplest way to teach children the joys of reading is to read good books — books that both you and your children enjoy — to them.

## Conclusion

Mona now reads at grade level in two languages, Japanese and English. Her stronger language – both spoken and written – is her native Japanese. However, due to her diligence and her parents’ sometimes hit-or-miss efforts, she reads independently and freely for pleasure in both languages. She does not need a dictionary, and she understands word play and cultural allusions. Aside from some prodding to do the *Completely Bilingual* homework, she never needed to be badgered into reading in English; it was a natural, normal, “fun” thing to do. She is proof that biliteracy is an attainable goal. One does not need to attend an international school or live abroad. With a willing child and parents, it can be accomplished.

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# Chapter Three: Project of an Extensive Reading Course for Brazilian Languages and Literature Teachers In-service

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## Abstract

Reading is a highly complex activity which requires an interaction among many factors, from which we cite the text, the purpose of reading, and the readers themselves. Besides, when we talk about reading in a foreign language, the challenge can become even more difficult. In this work, English, Spanish, Portuguese and Literature teachers from Brazil are the focus. The idea is sharing with them some ideas about the Extensive Reading (ER) approach. Here is the first draft of an ER course designed for them. This approach was chosen because it helps readers increase their vocabulary, their writing, listening, and speaking abilities, and above all, they start to read more fluently, which can lead them to develop a taste for reading and consequently, the habit of reading. ER can also increase their motivation to study more. In Brazil, there is a problem in the education of foreign language teachers: the majority of them do not get enough knowledge of the target language while pursuing their education. However, they have to teach it after graduating, even if they have only a poor language development. Besides, Portuguese teachers often teach only grammar, and the Literature ones, only literary trends, not being themselves good reading models. The point here is to help these teachers develop a reading taste and habit along with autonomy in their learning as well as in their teaching, with the aid of ER, so in the future they can be good reading models for their students.

## Introduction

Teacher education should be seen as a process, not as something still or finished, since a teacher is a professional who is always evolving personally as well as professionally. According to García (2013), “it is not intended that initial education offers ‘finished products’. It should be faced as the very first phase of a long and differentiated process of professional development ” (p. 55). This is clearly seen concerning foreign language teachers because of the issue of acquisition of the foreign language they

teach. In Brazil, the initial education of these teachers at college is commonly basic. They cannot start teaching intermediate or advanced levels. This only happens as time goes by and they build their proficiency in the foreign language. Concerning Portuguese teachers, they often teach only grammar, and the Literature ones, only literary trends, not being themselves good reading models.

On the other hand, for that teacher who is more experienced, continuing education is necessary to instill enthusiasm in their practice. This enthusiasm can be “described as a predisposition to confront work with curiosity, energy, renewal ability and a wish to fight routine” (Dewey, 1989, p. 44).

It is important to mention the aspect of continuing development that reading encompasses for the teacher:

The core of a teacher’s development is, doubtless, the reading. For them, reading constitutes an instrument and/or a practice, a way of existing. Their fundamental compromise, according to the society expectations, is the (re)production of knowledge and the educational preparation of the new generations. Teacher, a subject who reads, and reading, a professional behavior, are undichotomizable terms – a knot that cannot nor must not untie (Theodoro da Silva, 2009, p. 23).

Moreover, reading must be considered as a way of enchanting the soul. Everyday life imposes to the teacher various kinds of literacy, among them is the one of “continuous and unpretentious acquaintanceship with literary texts and arts in general, to feed fantasy and to build other views of reality” (Theodoro da Silva, 2009, p. 25). Reading cannot be considered only as regarding written texts, but in this work, as a need for delimitation, it is going to be considered as that: Reading of written texts (poems, short stories or longer narratives).

According to Theodoro da Silva (2009), the rushed education of teachers in Brazil, along with precarious work conditions, low salaries and tortuous educational policies are factors that corroborate for teachers carrying out their profession without having a strong basis of a reading education. This situation brings disastrous consequences for the classroom, such as un-updateness of the teacher, “restrict repertoire, absence of reading abilities and competence, intellectual stagnation”, among others mentioned by the author.

Celani (2010, p. 61) specifies more clearly this view regarding languages teachers education: She states that one of the reasons for the unsatisfactory initial education of languages teachers in both theoretical and practical, as well as in linguistic aspects, is the double licentiate/Bachelor of Arts, that links up the foreign language studies with Portuguese studies, making the preparation of the future foreign languages teacher weak. Therefore,

(...) the teaching of foreign languages at school, especially in the public school, will be delivered to teachers who do not have even the basic mastery of the foreign language they are supposed to teach. Additionally, they were not exposed to a minimum theoretical reference; a reflexive education on teaching and on teaching a foreign language was not provided, let alone on teaching in adverse situations. Pre-service

education is inadequate and unsatisfactory. Perhaps that explains the reason for the common belief that you do not learn a foreign language at school. With unprepared teachers, of course, you do not.

The question is: How to implement continuing education actions that are seen as relevant for the teachers and that can influence positively their classes? The extensive reading approach is considered one of the possible ways to make the continuous education of teachers a personally and professionally meaningful experience, improving their lives and consequently, their way of teaching. According to Day and Bamford (2002), “extensive reading, apart from its impact on language and reading ability, can be a key to unlocking the all important taste for foreign language reading among students.”

The general purpose here is to encourage those teachers to become teachers who read, with the accompanying influence on their students. It aims at building a more autonomous teacher profile since

(...) the good teacher is the one who is able to articulate, in their pedagogical work two basic instances: Theory (elaborate knowledge) and practice (action) so as to overcome a technical thinking of application and to take over an attitude of intelligent and creative reflection (Fávero; Tonieto, 2010, p. 63).

With the aim of clarifying what reading is, it is also important to have in mind the contribution of the literary understanding for the intellectual and human development (Langer, 2005, p. 7): “literary imagination (...) is a productive way of human reasoning which is useful not only at school, but also at work and in the daily life.”

According to Langer, when we read a book, we start a process called “envisionment building”. This process represents “the world of conceptualization a person has in a certain moment [of the reading]” (p. 22). It is different for each person and “includes what the person understands and does not understand, as well as any momentaneous suppositions about how the whole textual world will reveal, and any reactions to this” (p. 23). She states that “while we are reading, the envisionment buildings change; some ideas lose importance, others are added, and some are reinterpreted” (p. 24). Even after the book had been closed, the reader can still change some envisionments through additional thoughts, writings, and other readings or from discussions in the classroom. This process is highly social since it involves the intertextual web of history and experience which Bakhtin (1981) talks about: texts, subtexts, pretexts from past, the answers from the reader in the moment of the reading and the texts that will be generated or met in the future (as cited in Langer, 2005, p. 31). That is why, in this research, extensive reading is going to be faced as the basis for a broader discussion, because besides improving the readers fluency in reading, speaking, writing, in vocabulary acquisition, and even in listening, ER is going to be the fertile soil where the texts can seed ideas in students’ minds, and the teacher can help them harvest a better understanding of the world.



But what is extensive reading, exactly? According to Day (2003), “Extensive reading is based on the well-established premise that we learn to read by reading”. In this approach, reading is not seen as a simple ability or as translation of texts. Readers read having in mind the aim of reaching a general understanding and also to get information and pleasure. Readers can also be challenged to expand their comfort zone and read more demanding materials. This author, along with Bamford (1998, p. 7), cites the 10 basic principles of this approach:

1. Students read as much as possible.
2. A varied of materials on a wide range of topics is available.
3. Students select what they want to read.
4. The purposes of reading are usually related to pleasure, information, and general understanding.
5. Reading is its own reward.
6. Reading materials are well within the linguistic competence of the students.
7. Reading is individual and silent.
8. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower.
9. Teachers orient students to the goals of the program.
10. The teacher is a role model of a reader for students.

All these characteristics are important for developing a program in extensive reading, but due to certain peculiarities on the application of the approach to languages and literature teachers in Brazil, it is believed that some of them must be analyzed more deeply and, if necessary, rethought for a better result of the actions of this research, since ER is considered an approach, not only a method or technique: “The principles are best viewed as guidelines, not as commandments” (Macalister, 2015, p. 123).

## Method

This study aims at:

1. Proposing and applying a course of continuous education on ER for teachers of languages and literature from >public and private schools in Passo Fundo, RS, Brazil
1. Investigating the validity of this course for the Brazilian teachers.

The participants of this research are going to be Brazilian teachers of languages (Portuguese, English and Spanish) and literature from elementary and secondary schools, who enroll themselves in the Sensus Latu Specialization course at IFSul Passo Fundo Campus next year (2016). Twenty applicants are going to be selected to take part of the subject called “Extensive Reading: Theory and Practice.”

To achieve the objectives mentioned above, an action research is going to be performed with the teacher-students (The teachers who are students in the course; the author will be identified as the

teacher-researcher). This kind of research consists of people in action in a certain social practice and at the same time, investigating this very practice (Moita Lopes, 1996, p. 185). This action research is going to be qualitative and ethnographic, without working with categories previously established. It is going to use instruments such as diaries, questionnaires, interviews, recordings (audio and/or video), and notes from the teacher with the aim of >(...) trying to discover: a) what is happening in this context; b) how these events >are organized; c) what they mean for students and teachers; and d) how these organizations can compare with >organizations in other learning environments (Erickson, 1986).

The recordings are probably going to be made using the software called CLASS, a Windows laptop computer system for the in-class analysis of classroom discourse, by professor Martin Nystrand (2002).

For this research, the first draft of a learning plan (see the appendix) was elaborated having as its base theoretical and practical studies about extensive reading. The subject of ER is going to be allotted 30 hours distributed over four Saturdays. The classes are going to be in the morning and in the afternoon, from 8 am to 12 pm, and from 1:30 pm to 5:30 pm, with breaks for coffee (about 20 min) and lunch (1h30min). The ER classes are planned to take place in June, 2016. Previously, a questionnaire is going to be applied for the teacher-students, probably in March, so as to gather information about them, such as reading habits in the mother tongue and/or a foreign language, previous education, professional experience, etc. The main objective of this discipline is to introduce the extensive reading approach for the teacher-students. Also, there are going to be demonstrations, practice and reflections on possible methodologies and techniques to be applied with their students having in mind this approach and the reality of their schools. A post questionnaire is planned to be applied about six months after the classes to measure the impact of the ER approach on the participants.

On the first meeting, after the usual introductions, the teacher-researcher is going to explain the ER approach briefly, and the way the discipline is organized. Then, the results of the previously applied questionnaire are going to be made available for everybody, without mentioning any names of respondents. The materials (books, photocopies, etc) are going to be distributed. After that, the idea is to divide them in small groups of three or four and assign a small article on ER for each group to read, discuss and present to the class. The teacher-researcher thought of the articles by Day on Teacher Talk Journal. Now, the first problem arises: the teacher-students may not have a good fluency in reading texts in English, even the English teachers. It would be counterproductive to oblige them read scientific texts in English, and it would totally go against the objectives of this work. One of the solutions is the teacher to previously translate the articles into Portuguese. Another solution could be to work with more generic texts about reading using texts which are already written in Portuguese. Or maybe, the teacher can find texts about ER written in Portuguese, which would be the ideal solution. Even articles in Spanish would be fine.

After the coffee break, an activity called “From Concrete Poetry to Sonnets and Back to the Future,” made by the teacher-researcher, is going to be performed. This activity comprises some Concrete poetry, some poems by Shel Silverstein, Emily Dickinson, and Robert Frost (in English), and also some digital poetry (in Portuguese). After presenting some information about the writers, we are

going to read them together for the meaning, without stopping at each unknown word. The aim is to apprehend the essence of the selected poems and to feel their beauty. This is going to be the first time the teacher-students are going to be building envisionments. Alternatively, according the level of proficiency of the students, the poetry can be presented in Portuguese and/or in Spanish.

After the lunch break, we are going to carry out an activity with the previously read poetry and the use of double-entry journals so the teacher-students can note their thoughts and impressions about the poetry.

In the final part of the class, we are going to read and listen to a reader in English called *The Locked Room*, by Peter Viney. After that, we are going to play a card game. The reader can also be in Spanish, too. Some minutes are going to be reserved to DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) with texts of their preference (according to their answers to the questionnaire applied previously and the possibilities of the research). Then the homework is going to be explained: They are going to read a chapter or two of the book *The Giver*. The ones who cannot read in English are going to read it in Spanish or in Portuguese. This reading is going to be needed for the literature circles that are going to start next class, so they are going to get their roles now, too. Besides, some texts on ER are going to be assigned as homework to be read, and presented next class for the group. Again, the problem of the language of the articles is going to be an issue to be solved.

On the second Saturday, we are going to start discussing the articles on ER, which were read for homework. After that, we are going to read a short story (or two) and use graphic organizers, which is a new technique for the majority of Brazilian teachers. After the lunch break, our first literature circle is going to take place. The chapters and the roles for the next literature circle are going to be assigned then. After the coffee break, we are going to the lab to enter and examine some sites on ER. We either can talk about their impressions on the sites on ER so far, and/or the teacher can apply a questionnaire for them or can interview them in private. This still has to be decided.

On the third Saturday, we are going to start with different graphic organizers, this time, for the chapters read of *The Giver*, with the help of the e-board. Right after that activity, the teacher-students are going to be invited to write a letter or imagine a present to give one of the characters of the book. After the break, the second literature circle is going to take place. After lunch, the teacher-students are going to surf mreader and get to know the advantages it offers as an on-line resource for ER. Again, some time is going to be reserved for Sustained Silent Reading, and an activity which brings their ideas about ER is going to be planned.

On the last Saturday, we are going to start with our last literature circle. After that, an activity in the site Story Bird is going to be proposed. It is also important to give space for creative production, too. They can produce stories in English, Spanish or Portuguese using the resources this site offers. Their last reflections on ER are going to be taken. After the lunch break, their final work is going to be explained: They are going to write a small article to be submitted to a Brazilian journal called Bem Legal. They are going to choose some articles to read (they are in Portuguese) to see their structure. Then, after the second break, we are going to watch the movie *The Giver* and discuss the differences, comparing it with the book.

Since the research is going to happen only in the future, there are no results or discussions available

now.

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## Appendix

### Sensu Latu Specialization

**Subject:** Extensive Reading: Theory and Practice – 30h – Saturdays: mornings and afternoons – first semester of 2016, probably in June

**Subject target:** Brazilian teachers of Portuguese, English, Spanish, and Literature of elementary and high school, and interested people

**Syllabus:** Introduction to the Extensive Reading approach. Demonstration, practice and reflection on possible methodologies and techniques to be applied with students having in mind this approach.

**Content/activities:**

#### *Saturday 1*

- 1h: Teacher and students introduction; introduction of the ER approach; explanation about the subject; discussion of the results of the previous applied questionnaire; material distribution
- 1h: Reading and discussion of some articles on ER from English Teacher Talk (Hawaii) / or other material in Portuguese or Spanish

#### **Coffee break**

- 1h: Activity: From Concrete Poetry to Sonnets and Back to the Future.
- 1h: Activity: From Concrete Poetry to Sonnets and Back to the Future.

#### **LUNCH BREAK**

- 1h: Poetry activity: Double-Entry Journal
- 1h: Poetry activity: Double-Entry Journal

#### **Coffee break**

- 1h: Activity: *The Locked Room* + game
- 1h: Activity: DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) with readers and other books or texts (according to students' tastes). Homework: literature circles with *The Giver* / *O doador de memórias* (Portuguese) / *El doador de memorias* (Spanish); articles on ER to read for homework and present next class.

#### *Saturday 2*

- Presentation and discussion of articles
- Presentation and discussion of articles

#### **Coffee break**

- Short stories activity: graphic organizers

- Short stories activity: graphic organizers

#### **LUNCH BREAK**

- 1st literature circle
- 1st literature circle; homework

#### **Coffee break**

- Sites for ER activities: <http://www.er-central.com/library/>; <http://beeoasis.com/>; <http://learningenglish.voanews.com/>; <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/>
- Reflections on ER

#### ***Saturday 3***

- Graphic Organizers in the e-board: *The Giver*
- Drawing a gift for one of the characters, explain why and/or writing a letter

#### **Coffee break**

- 2nd literature circle
- 2nd literature circle; homework

#### **LUNCH BREAK**

- Moodle Reader / mreader
- Moodle Reader / mreader

#### **Coffee break**

- Sustained Silent Reading
- Reflections on ER

#### ***Saturday 4***

- 3rd literature circle: *The Giver*
- 3rd literature circle: *The Giver*

#### **Coffee break**

- Site: Storybird
- Reflections on ER

#### **LUNCH BREAK**

- Explanation of final work: enter the site of Bem Legal Journal. Choose an article, read it and present it to the group. Write (for homework) an article explaining how you would use the ER approach with your students in your context.
- Continuation of previous activity.

**Coffee break**

- Movie: *The Giver* + discussion
- Movie: *The Giver* + discussion / farewell

# Chapter Four: Longitudinal Case Study of a 7-year Long ER Program

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## Abstract

The duration of an ER program is an influential factor in EFL settings because, after the initial excitement, elementary EFL learners in ER programs seem to face a challenging period when they struggle to feel improvement before they start to read autonomously. The programs fail to satisfy their students if they end during this period. Therefore, it has practical value to examine how students read and feel in an ER program of long duration.

In this study, we ran a 7-year long ER program at a technical college in Japan, where students were elementary EFL learners when they joined the program. The program has a 45-minute weekly Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) lesson for 30 weeks per year, and 14 students completed the 7-year program. In the program, the average student recognized that he could actually read English texts without translation, increased his scores in standardized tests such as TOEIC, and came to read confidently until the end of the program.

The longitudinal study also revealed the influence of the amount to be read and readability levels of English texts. A million words were confirmed as a valuable milestone for the amount to be read. Reading picture books with high comprehension before starting to read Graded Readers (GR) was an effective practice to overcome the translating habit of Japanese elementary EFL learners, and the amount of reading easy-to-read books especially in early years had a strong influence on how the students improve their English proficiency.

## Background

Japanese EFL learners' English proficiency is generally low as is shown in score distribution of the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). The TOEIC is a standardized proficiency test of receptive English skills for nonnative speakers of English (Woodford, 1982) widely used in Japan. The institutional program of TOEIC had 1.26 million test takers in 2013 academic year (IIBC, 2014: 5), where 62% belonged to beginner or elementary levels (10 - 490) and 31% stayed in lower-intermediate level (495 - 740). University students' average scores except language majors also belonged to the elementary level.



### ***Effect of ER Measured with Standardized Tests***

ER was an approach rarely practiced in Japanese English education, partly because the benefits of ER had not been shown quantitatively. Even though Gradman and Hanania (1991) reported university ESL students' TOFEL scores were most strongly correlated with extra-curricular reading among 44 language-learning factors, it obviously required a large amount of reading and long duration. Japanese teachers and learners were wondering if the benefits were large enough for them to alter the current teaching/learning practices. They wanted to know the effect in scores on high-stake examinations or standardized tests.

There were several studies, where the benefit of ER was measured with standardized tests. For example, Mason (2004) evaluated the effect with reading section of TOEIC. 104 Japanese college students major in English had read about 500,000 words in three semesters (1.5 years). 88 students' TOEIC/Reading scores were measured as pretest and posttest, and the average was 121 and 157 respectively. If we assume the same score ratio of reading part and total score: 0.446 (123.64/277.26) was kept, their TOEIC total score was estimated to be 272 and 353 respectively (increase rate was 0.162 point / a thousand words). The score of the posttest, however, remained still in elementary level, and a half million words may not be large enough.

### ***Amount to be Read and Duration of ER Programs***

Sakai (2002) had proposed one million total words as a milestone for ER in Japanese EFL settings based on the experience of his ER program for university engineering majors. A million words was about eight to ten times of the total words read by the university students in Robb and Susser's ER project (1989) who had read 641 pages in average.

There were a few ER programs in which students actually read the amount close to a million words. Furukawa (2011) reported the average total words were 1.2 million words by 12th graders staying in the sixth-year form of his ER program. Kanda (2009) studied the ER of a university student for three years, who had read a million words. Either program needed longer duration.

### ***Readability of English Texts***

Another important aspect for ER in EFL settings is the readability of English texts. Sakai (2002) proposed Japanese EFL learners to start ER from leveled readers, such as *I Can Read Books* Level 1 (ICR1), series of picture books designed to invite L1 children to reading. They were easier books than the starter-level of GR. Furukawa et al (2005) recognized the impact of Sakai's (2002) proposal, and compiled a book-list for Japanese EFL learners including the *Oxford Reading Tree* series (ORT), *Foundations Reading Library* series (FRL), and starter levels of GR. They also defined the Yomiyasusa level (YL), a readability scale optimized for Japanese EFL learners. The scale is partially based on objective measures such as headwords, grammatical complexity, or length, but also on subjective measures such as how easy typical students find the story (Eichhorst & Sheron, 2013: 8). They were guided by the recognition "Even if a student knows all the words of a text in their decontextualized forms, it is still possible that the student may not comprehend that text" as McLean (2014) stated.

In their ER program guided by Sakai's (2002) advice and using the booklist of Furukawa et al (2005), Nishizawa and Yoshioka (2011) observed that students in their ER program were reading

GR of headwords fewer than 600. The GR were far easier books than the standard books for ER in ESL settings, edited by Edinburgh Project on Extensive Reading (EPER) (Hill, 1997, cited in Day & Bamford, 1998: 173-212). They argued that *Oxford Bookworms* Stage 1 (400 headwords) was a standard book-series read by their students whose TOEIC scores were 450 in their program and it was too difficult for elementary EFL learners to read extensively with sufficient comprehension.

Takase (2008) showed the positive effect of reading an average of over 100 very easy-to-read books (YL 0.0 – 1.0) at the beginning of her ER program on Japanese university students. Furukawa (2011) suggested that Japanese EFL learners should read at least 100 thousand words before finishing YL 1.0 (*Oxford Reading Tree* Stage 9), which was as easy as Takase's easy-to-read books (2008).

### Research Questions

We would like to answer the following three questions in this study. The first question is “Is a million words a valuable milestone for elementary EFL learners?” and the second is “How many years does an ER program need to accomplish it?” We need to improve the students' English proficiency from elementary level (TOEIC 408): 7th year kosen students (IIBC, 2014: 7) to lower-intermediate level (TOEIC 565): the expected level for newly employed university graduates (IIBC, 2014: 23). We would like to know if seven years is long enough for our students to read a million words when we add one 45-minute weekly ER lesson to traditional English classes.

The third question is “Is it necessary for elementary EFL learners to start their ER from picture books or starter level of GR?” The effect of reading those easy-to-read books must be evaluated by the students' proficiency improvement in a long-term program.

### Method

#### *Subjects and English lessons*

The ER program was conducted at a college of technology or kosen that was a specialized institution for early engineering education in Japan. Each of the five departments had a 5-year foundation course (class size from 1st to 5th year was 40 students each) and a 2-year advanced course (class size for 6th and 7th year was 4 students each). Kosen accepted graduates from junior high schools, where they had already learnt English for three years. Fresh kosen students were generally excellent in mathematics and science, but moderate or average grade in English skills. From 10 to 20 % of graduates from foundation course, whose English skills were in the middle range of the class, proceeded to the advanced course.

The subjects of this study were five students (Student A - E) who had entered a kosen in 2006 and nine students (Student F - N) who entered in 2007. They were the seventh year students in 2012 and 2013, and the groups were called as 2012 cohort and 2013 cohort in this study. The students who had studied abroad or stayed in the course shorter or longer than seven years were excluded from this study.

Their English education consisted of traditional lessons basically taught with the grammar/translation method and ER. English classes for the first year were three 90-minute weekly lessons for 30 weeks, in which 30 minutes a week were assigned to ER other than traditional lessons (Table 1).

**Table 1. Lesson Units per week for Traditional Lessons and ER**

Year	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	Total
Traditional	5.3	4	4	4	2 + 1	2	1 + 0	23.3 (78%)
ER	0.7	1	1	1	1	1		1 6.7 (22%)

\*one unit is a 45-minute weekly lesson for 30 weeks or a 90-minute weekly lesson for 15 weeks

Traditional English classes continued as two 90-minute lessons from the second year to the first half of the fifth year, and a class from the second half of the fifth year to the first half of the seventh year. In-class ER was conducted as a 45-minute weekly lesson from the second year to the seventh year. 150 hours (22% of total 30 units) were assigned to in-class ER during the seven years.

### *ER activities*

Main ER activity was sustained silent reading (SSR), plus some shadowing, and reading while listening. Shadowing was conducted mostly at the first year for the students to familiarize English sound. Reading while listening (LR) was a practice to read English texts along with listening to audio narration of the text. The readers were not supposed to interrupt the narration and were forced to read the text at the same speed of the narration. They comprehended the story mainly from the texts but not from the narration. The narration set the reading pace, and was expected to protect the students from their habit to translate English texts into Japanese. It made a good introduction to ER. Around 30% of the students did LR in average, but in turn.

*Reading Log* All the students had recorded their reading histories in and out of class in their logbooks, which were periodically reviewed by the teachers. The record contained the date, title, series name, YL, word count of the book, cumulated word count, five-graded subjective evaluation of the story, and a short comment describing how the students thought about the story or how they felt about their reading. After the program had finished, available earlier logbooks of six students (D, G, H, I, J, L) were analyzed thoroughly to examine how they had read the first 400,000 words. All the books were categorized by YL and the YL-layered word count were summed.

*Evaluation and Analysis* We used the total score of TOEIC tests to evaluate English proficiency of the subjects because the test had high reliability and was sensible to English skills of elementary and intermediate levels, and both scores of the reading section and listening section of TOEIC increased in balance in the past studies (e.g., Nishizawa, Yoshioka & Fukada, 2010). The students took from 7 to 16 TOEIC tests in the program from their second to seventh years. Because the date and total word count at the tests were recorded in students' reading logs, we could analyze the relation of total word count and TOEIC score to estimate the necessary total words to achieve TOEIC 400.

We also analyzed the effect of YL-layered word count in their first 400,000 words upon the TOEIC score increase rates of six students to know the influence of reading easy-to-read books at the start of the ER program.

Finally, we gave the nine students in 2013 cohort a questionnaire to ask two questions: 1) When they felt that they could read English texts fluently; 2) When they felt that they could avoid Japanese in

reading English texts. The questionnaire requested the students to describe “when” as a small circle on the 21-centimeter scale (3 centimeters per year), so we could know “when” in one decimal place, for example 4.6 years.

## **Results**

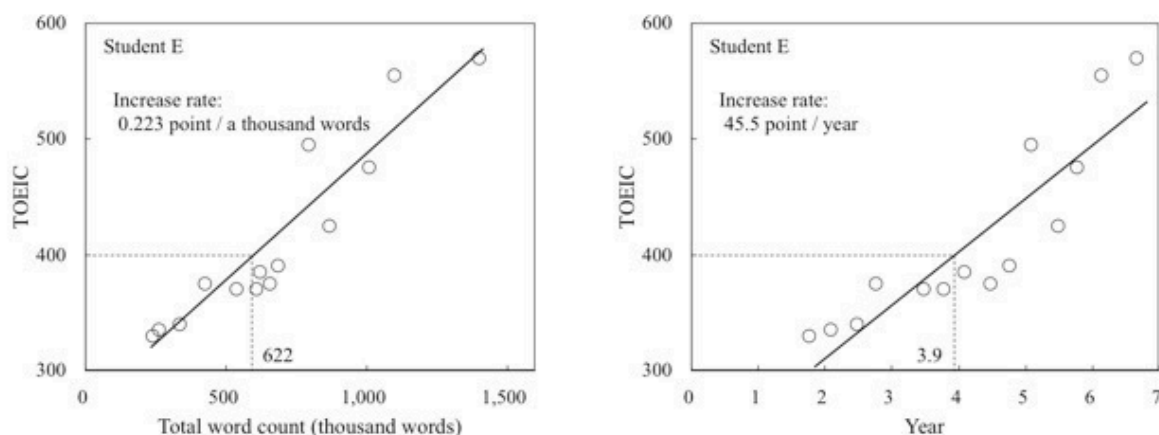
Average total words read by 14 students were 1,452,000 words, and all the students had read at least a million words during the seven years (Table 2). As the result, average TOEIC score increased to 562 with the lowest score of 460, which was a little lower than the border of elementary/lower-intermediate levels (470).

Because the students took from 7 to 16 TOEIC tests during their stay in the program, we could analyze the relation of TOEIC score depending on the total word count (Figure 1).

**Table 2: Total word count and TOEIC score of the students**

Cohort	Student	Total word count (thousand)	TOEIC		Increase rate* /a thousand words	Words for TOEIC 400 (thousand)	Years for TOEIC 400
			First	Last			
Average		1,452	355	562	0.228	628	3.4
SD		452	44	68	0.097	128	0.85
2012	A	2,211	385	610	0.115	601	2.4
	B	1,230	395	570	0.190	615	3.3
	C	1,344	280	560	0.245	821	4.6
	D	1,073	365	520	0.156	477	3.2
	E	1,430	330	570	0.223	622	3.9
2013	F	1,328	255	630	0.344	685	3.7
	G	1,020	405	525	0.333	404	2.3
	H	1,894	375	545	0.128	693	2.0
	I	1,885	350	515	0.122	845	3.7
	J	1,020	360	585	0.456	624	4.7
	K	1,627	320	605	0.211	445	2.5
	L	2,074	375	715	0.286	727	3.1
	M	1,162	380	460	0.164	652	4.0
	N	1,024	375	460	0.229	577	3.8

\* Deduced from the regression line of each student's TOEIC score and total word count (Figure 1)



**Figure 1: Relation of TOEIC score and total word count (Student E)**

The student's TOEIC score increased with the average rate of 0.228 point / a thousand words with a standard deviation of 0.097. The increase rate had a wide variety from the lowest 0.115 to the highest 0.456.

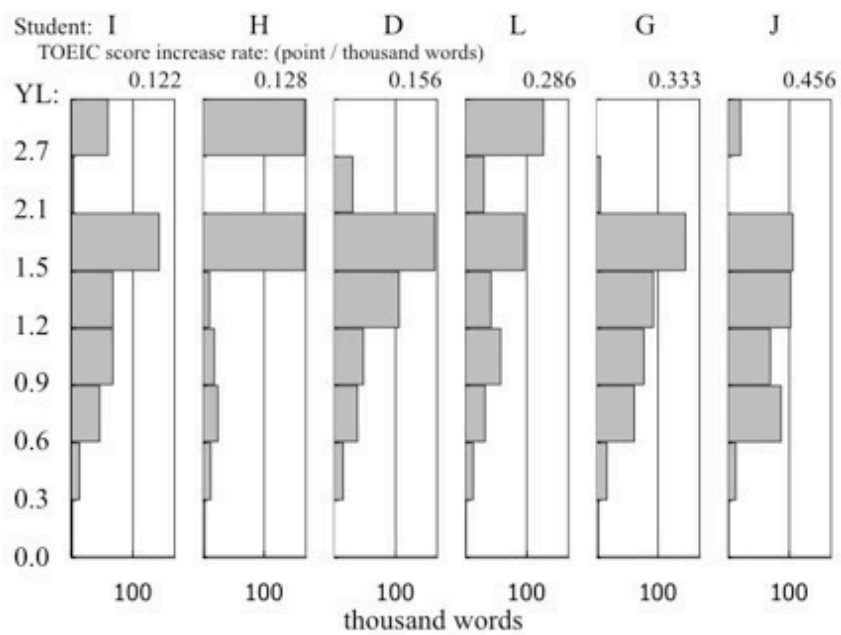
The necessary total word count to achieve TOEIC 400, which was calculated from the regression line of each student's TOEIC score and total word count as shown in Figure 1, was 628,000 words in average, and the slowest learner needed to read 845,000 words to exceed TOEIC 400. Necessary years to achieve TOEIC 400, which was calculated from the regression line of each student's TOEIC score versus years in the ER program, was 3.4 years in average, and the slowest learner need to stay 4.7 years to exceed TOEIC 400.

According to the questionnaire to nine students in 2013 cohort, they felt that that they could read English texts fluently when they had read 821,000 words in 4.0 years, and they felt that they could avoid Japanese in reading English texts when they had read 876,000 words in 4.3 years in average. To either of the questions, the slowest learner answered that they needed 6.5 years to feel that way.

**Table 3: Self-evaluation by the students (N =9, 2013 cohort)**

	Could read	Avoid Japanese
Words (thousand)		
Average	821	876
Deviation	505	425
Max.	1,585	1,585
Min.	142	151
Years		
Average	4.0	4.3
Deviation	1.9	1.9
Max.	6.5	6.5
Min.	0.8	0.9

Increase rate of TOEIC score seemed to be influenced by how the student had read in their first 400,000 words (Figure 2). The correlations of the Increase rate and YL-layered word count in their first 400,000 words were negative when the YL was higher than 1.4, but turned positive if YL is lower (Table 4). There was significantly positive correlation for YL 0.6 - 0.8, not-significantly positive correlation for YL 0.8 - 1.0, not-significantly positive correlation for YL 1.1 - 1.4, and not-significantly negative correlation for YL 1.5 - 2.0. Coefficient  $\alpha$  for YL 0.0 - 1.1 suggested that if a student had read 100,000 words more in his first 400,000 words, his TOEIC score increase rate would be 0.25 higher, for example, not 0.132 but 0.387.



**Figure 2: YL-layered words distribution of 6 students in the first 400,000 words**



**Table 4: Correlation of YL-layered words and TOEIC score increase rate**

Student	I	H	D	L	G	J	$r^{*1}$	$t^{*2}$	$\alpha^{*3}$
Increase rate / a thousand words	0.122	0.128	0.156	0.286	0.333	0.456			
YL	thousand words								
2.7 –	60	166	0	127	0	22	- 0.375	-0.81	-.0007
2.1 – 2.6	4	0	31	30	5	0	- 0.168	- 0.34	-.0008
1.5 – 2.0	142	166	165	96	144	106	- 0.710	- 2.02	-.0033
1.2 – 1.4	67	11	106	42	92	103	0.467	1.06	.0017
0.9 – 1.1	67	19	48	57	77	69	0.593	1.47	.0038
0.6 – 0.8	46	26	39	33	62	86	0.824	2.90*	.0050
0.3 – 0.5	14	14	15	13	17	13	- 0.158	- 0.32	-.0134
0.0 – 0.2	2	4	0	2	4	2	0.166	0.34	.0146
0.0 – 1.1	130	62	102	105	160	170	0.760	2.34	.0025

\*1  $r$ : confidence coefficient, \*2  $t$ :  $t$ -value (\*  $p < .05$ ), \*3  $\alpha$ : correlation coefficient (point / (thousand words)<sup>2</sup>)

## Discussion

### *Total word count to be read and feasibility of the recommendation*

We suggest that Japanese elementary EFL learners should read a million words, because average kosen students had read 628,000 words to exceed TOEIC 400, they felt that they could avoid Japanese in reading English texts when they had read 821,000 words, and they also felt that they could read English text fluently when they had read 876,000 words. Many students would enjoy the benefit if an ER program was designed for the students to read the amount.

We believe it is feasible to design an ER program to achieve a million words because it is achievable in 6.2 years with a reading rate of 120 wpm, by using the whole lesson time of a 45-minute weekly SSR lesson of 30 weeks. The yearly word count becomes 162,000 words per year. The necessary duration could be shortened if students read also out of class or increase their reading rate during the program.

The actual yearly word count of this study, 207,000 (1,452,000 / 7) words per year was a little more than the suggested yearly pace or 171,000 words per year for meeting 2nd 1,000 word families twelve repetition in average and learn the vocabulary incidentally (Nation, 2014).

### *Readability of English texts*

We also point out the necessity that elementary EFL learners should read as many easy-to-read books

as possible, because the word counts of easy-to-read books (YL 0.6 – 0.8) significantly correlated with TOEIC score increase rate in Table 4, and total word counts of generally easier books (YL < 1.5) rather than more difficult books tended to correlate positively with the increase rate.

We currently propose our students to read 200,000 words from the easiest book of YL 1.1, which were a little more than the word count read by student J (170,000). The recommended amount was seven times the amount set by Eichhorst & Shearon (2013: 37) for top-level Japanese university students, more than the minimum volume recommended by Furukawa (2011), or the 100 books (possibly 50 – 100 thousand words) recommended by Takase (2008).

We assert that reading books from this level may be a key to transform Japanese EFL learners' default habit of translating English text into real reading, as automatic processing skills in the L1 can produce interference effects and the L2 learner needs to work explicitly to reset associative processing to L2 input by engaging in L2 processing (Ellis, 2005; Ellis, 2006, cited in Grabe, 2009: 150).

#### *Limitations and need of further study*

Firstly, the sample size of this study is small, so we have to assume the estimation is rather inaccurate. Repeated studies may estimate the milestone as 670,000 words or 1.5 million words.

Secondly, the estimated amounts to be read may depend on the students' initial English proficiency and the approach of concurring English lessons. It is possible that older EFL students with more knowledge of English need smaller amounts to enjoy the same benefit. The interaction of ER and concurring English lessons were not discussed in this study.

Thirdly, the necessity of starting ER with the easiest books (YL 1.1) must be examined further for EFL learners of many proficiency levels. Researchers and educators in Japan often argue about this notion, but we did not have enough evidence to support the assertion and we found no arguments from outside of Japan. We do not know yet if the assertion is deeply dependent on Japanese educational settings which are dominated by the grammar-translation approach or if it is applicable to more universal EFL settings.

#### **Conclusion**

A 7-year long ER program was conducted for elementary EFL learners in a Japanese technical college. When the students had read 1,452,000 words in average, their average TOEIC score increased from 355 to 562, from elementary level to lower-intermediated level. The students needed to read 628,000 words in average to exceed TOEIC 400. The students felt that they could read English texts fluently when they had read 821,000 words, and that they could avoid Japanese in reading English texts when they had read 876,000 words. These facts suggest that a million words is a necessary amount for a successful ER program for elementary EFL learners.

Reading logs of six students showed that TOEIC score increase rate at around a million words might depend on how much easy-to-read texts they had read in the first 400,000 words. Total word counts of easier-to-read books (YL 1.4) were positively correlated with score increase rate. The recommended books for elementary EFL learners were the easiest level of GR (headwords 300) and easier-to-read picture books such as *Oxford Reading Tree* series.

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# Chapter Five: Public Libraries Support ER of Adult EFL Learners in Japan

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## Abstract

There were many Japanese adults who restarted to learn English after their graduation from college or school, but the learning in EFL setting was often difficult because they stuck to the once learned grammar translation method. They often started to analyze English texts grammatically and to translate them unintentionally. The concentration dropped their reading rate and forced them many hours to finish several pages. As a result, few of them enjoyed reading novels or magazines in English.

Extensive Reading (ER) has been changing the situation gradually since 2002. By reading easy-to-read English books, adult EFL learners found that they could actually read English texts without translation and started to enjoy reading. To answer their needs, more than 10 public libraries have set up special bookshelves and installed easy-to-read English books for ER in Aichi prefecture. For example, Toyota City Library, which already had 10,000 English books before the introduction, purchased 3,000 easy-to-read books from picture books to graded readers, and set introductory lectures teaching why ER was necessary, how to start ER, and how to select appropriate books from the library.

Major users of those books were middle-aged or senior people who had wanted but could not read English novels earlier. Compared to college students in an ER program, they had more knowledge of English but less experience of actually reading or listening to English materials. Their need to start reading from picture books to unlearn translating habits was the same as college students'.

In this paper, we present when, why and how those libraries set up such bookshelves, and what are the current issues and future prospects.

## First and Second Waves of Installment

The first wave of installing easy-to-read English books to public libraries had started from Komaki City Library in 2004, was followed by Gamagori City Library, Toyota City Library (Picture 1), and several public libraries in Aichi prefecture (Nishizawa, 2007).



Figure 1: Special Bookshelf for ER in Toyota City Library

The wave was triggered by Sakai's (2002) guidebook to one-million-words ER, was encouraged by the active discussions on bulletin boards of SSS website (2001), and was supplied with an exhaustive list of easy-to-read books and Yomiyasusa level (YL): readability levels optimized for Japanese EFL learners (Furukawa et al, 2013). Leaders of a few local governments or the heads of some public libraries led the introductions of several hundred ER books for the lifelong learning of Japanese adults. They were, however, limited to some libraries in Aichi and surrounding prefectures in Tokai region, or a few libraries in big cities such as Tokyo or Kyoto. Although the number of ER books in school/college libraries had increased since then, most public libraries had hesitated to add English books or had not simply recognize such phenomenon for a while.

The second wave in 2014 was bigger. Public libraries which had installed or been planning to install ER bookshelves in Tokai region increased more in recent two years, and still seemed to be increasing (Table 1). The difference of the first and the second wave was the decision makers. This time, not only the leaders of institutions but also the librarians had found the benefits of ER for local society and started to promote ER (Sakai & Nishizawa, 2014). We knew the increased interest of librarians from the fact that the first symposium of ER in libraries had participants from 22 public libraries and 20 school/college libraries from wide area of Japan (NIT, Toyota College, 2015).

**Table 1: Public libraries with bookshelves for ER in Tokai region**

Year	Name	ER books	Prefecture	Promotion*
2004	Komaki city	1,200	Aichi	
2005	<u>Gamagori</u> city	2,765	Aichi	<u>Lc</u> , Mt
2007	Toyota city	2,900	Aichi	<u>Lc</u>
	Ichinomiya city	3,500	Aichi	<u>Lc</u>
2008	<u>Tahara</u> city	1,224	Aichi	<u>Lc</u>
	Chita city	3,000	Aichi	<u>Lc</u> , Mt
2009	Aichi prefectural	400+ <i>a</i>	Aichi	
	Toyohashi city	300+ <i>a</i>	Aichi	
2010	<u>Toyoake</u> city	320+ <i>a</i>	Aichi	
	<u>Fujinomiya</u> city	1,200	Shizuoka	
2011	<u>Toyokawa</u> city	740	Aichi	
	<u>Kariya</u> city	440	Aichi	
2014	<u>Kakamigahara</u> city	1,600	Gifu	<u>Lc</u> , Mt
	<u>Tajimi</u> city	1,125	Gifu	<u>Lc</u> , Mt
	Hamamatsu city	410	Shizuoka	
	<u>Obu</u> city	1,200	Aichi	
2015	Gifu city	800	Gifu	
	Shizuoka city north	1,200	Shizuoka	<u>Lc</u>
	Mie prefectural	200	Mie	

\* Lc: Regular introductory lectures, Mt: Regular meetings of users

The librarians recognized that the need of EFL learners was quite similar to the need of Japanese

children. EFL learners required a lot of easy-to-read English books, as children needed easy-to-read Japanese books. Most libraries already had a special corner for children's books, and some even had a separate building for them, but they did not have English books for Japanese EFL learners. The librarians correctly understood that the books must be easy enough for EFL learners because the books were not for learning English knowledge but just for reading English books fluently and enjoying them.

### Promoting ER and Supporting Users

Collecting ER books was the first step for the libraries. The book guide written by Furukawa et. al (2013) and SSS website (2001) supplied the necessary information about ER books. ER practitioners in the region also gave advice adaptable to the local situation. The libraries also had to promote ER itself in their second step because ER was still a new and unknown approach in Japanese schools, where grammar-translation had been and still was the dominant approach.

For promoting ER, many libraries set up introductory lectures, in which the concept and method of ER were explained. Expected benefits of ER appealed to the adults who had learned English the hard way with the grammar translation method in school but had not become fluent readers in English. They usually had enough knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary to start ER, but lacked fluency and had no experience of enjoying reading English materials. Their progress would often be faster than young students' who had less knowledge of English if they could change their "reading" style from translation to reading. However, it was actually not easy for them to change the reading style because they had their self-image that they were already fluent readers of English texts and they did not need to read any easy-to-read book. It was important in the introductory lectures to distinguish ER from their "reading" using the grammar translation method, and to explain the reason why ER was necessary. Both theory and practice were needed to convince them and a long-term ER program offered convincing data based on a practice.

Practical guidance for selecting appropriate books was also important in the introductory lectures. General guidance was to start from reading as many books as possible from picture books such as *Oxford Reading Trees* series, to read most of graded readers (GR) in starter and elementary levels, and continued to read GR of headwords fewer than 1,000 or YL lower than 3.0 until total word count exceeded a million words. After reading that amount, many adult users became able to separate easy books to read from difficult ones and to select appropriate materials for themselves without much help from instructors or veteran readers.

The monthly circulation of Tahara City Library showed that such annual introductory lectures increased the number of checked-out books for the following three months (NIT, Toyota College, 2015). The lectures invited new users to ER books and also activated ER of veteran users. Several libraries held such lectures several times a year for promoting ER further.

Setting up regular meetings of users was another effective method of promotion. In the meetings, there was usually no instructor but the participants talked about their experience of reading and exchanged information related to English books to each other. Such meetings encouraged library users to continue their ER even if they had no friends who enjoyed ER around them. It was also common that a novice user found a role model in one of the veteran users in a meeting and followed



her reading history as a guide. The regular meetings held by the college library of NIT Toyota or Tajimi City Library were quite popular among the library's users.

多治見市図書館英語多読資料シリーズ一覧 2015年7月31日現在

	シリーズ名	略号	YL	冊数	総語数	付属CD
1	<a href="#">Oxford Reading Tree</a>	ORT	0.0～1.4	456	72,629	76
2	<a href="#">Cambridge English Readers</a>	CER	1.0～6.0	91	1,319,681	91
3	<a href="#">Foundations Reading Library</a>	FRL	0.6～1.2	42	60,778	7
4	<a href="#">I Can Read !</a>	ICR	0.3～1.2	56	44,829	3
5	<a href="#">Ready-to-Read</a>	RTR	0.7～1.0	28	19,547	0
6	<a href="#">Mr.Putter and Tabby</a>	MAT	1.0	18	12,993	0
7	<a href="#">Macmillan Readers</a>	MMR	0.8～4.5	163	2,077,765	109
8	<a href="#">Cengage Page Turners</a>	CPT	1.2～4.8	34	341,441	0
9	<a href="#">Magic Tree House</a>	MTH	2.4	28	151,079	0
10	<a href="#">Nate the Great</a>	NTG	1.2～2.0	26	56,775	0
11	<a href="#">英語多読絵本</a>	多読	0.5～2.0	9	5,866	0
12	<a href="#">The Cobble Street Cousins</a>	CSC	2.2	6	20,217	0
13	<a href="#">Marvin Redpost</a>	MRP	2.5	8	51,063	0
14	<a href="#">Roald Dahl</a>	RDH	2.0～5.0	10	197,201	0
15	<a href="#">Penguin Kids</a>	PGK	0.4～2.2	81	102,217	0
16	<a href="#">Building Blocks Library</a>	BBL	0.4～2.0	36	46,468	6
17	<a href="#">Clifford the Big Red Dog</a>	CBR	0.6	7	3,041	7
18	<a href="#">Curious George</a>	CG	0.6～1.5	26	24,831	2
			計	1,125	4,558,912	301

Figure 2: Series List for ER posted on Tajimi City Library Website (2014)

Websites also promoted ER in libraries. For example, Tajimi city library website (2014) put the list of ER books in the library, introduced the newly installed books, and announced the meetings of users or other events related to ER. Websites not founded nor operated by libraries, such as SSS website (2001) and Tadoku supporters website (2013) also supported ER and ER in public libraries by offering bulletin boards where the information of books and the opinions of adult EFL learners were exchanged. They sometimes were the only guide for independent learners, whose nearest library did not have some supporting functions or did not even have enough easy-to-read books for ER. Adult readers had often slowed their reading pace (word / month) when they had read more than 100 thousand words but less than a million words, which must be the period they needed any support the most (Furukawa, Nishizawa, Uruno, Yoshioka, 2007).

### Evaluating ER in Libraries

Circulation of ER books was generally higher than the one of Japanese books because ER books for starters had shorter texts and could be read in shorter duration. Their circulation must be compared

only with the one of children's books. However, many users tended to give up ER if there was not enough guidance or support. Circulation might also decline when the regular users improved their reading skills through ER and started to read more difficult books with longer texts because those books required more time to complete. Regular flow of starting users was necessary to keep or increase the circulation of ER books.

Other than higher circulation, ER books in libraries and the supporting events must be evaluated by their functions to activate lifelong learning and to construct a learning community of English or other foreign languages in the region. If the current users, middle-aged or senior people, improve their language skills through ER, they might invite younger people or even school children into the learning community. When ER books in public libraries helped to change the norm of reading from English-to-Japanese translation to simple reading, they must be evaluated by the social impact.

### Summary and Expectation

Public libraries in Tokai region had successfully installed special bookshelves holding easy-to-read English books for ER, and started to support lifelong learning of adult EFL learners. Their experiences told us that the books must be very easy, and the users needed guidance for starting ER and support for continuing ER, which might be supplied or organized by the libraries, ER practitioners in the region, or the users. The experience could be transferred to libraries in other regions and even to school/college libraries. If the movement spreads over the country, ER in libraries has the potential to develop a new frontier of EFL learning.

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# Chapter Six: Exploring Teacher's Practice and Impacts of Extensive Reading on Japanese EFL University Students

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## Abstract

Among foreign language educators, interest in Extensive Reading (ER) is growing along with questions about how to effectively implement ER in class and its effects. The purpose of the study is to show the effect of ER on three different levels of students in a Japanese EFL university setting over a 14-week semester. An ordinary classroom schedule consists of mainly 3 sections; 1) Repeated Reading to increase reading fluency, 2) Sustained Silent Reading for a block of time to maintain opportunities to read English, 3) Peer Discussion to practice summarizing a book and enhance understanding of the story of books. Students are required to keep a record (reading log) and write a short summary and their reflection (report) on the story after reading each graded-reader book. The teacher's role in the class is not to impart knowledge as much as guide students and remind them of the purpose of doing ER as a member of a reading community. Results are discussed in light of the importance of extensive exposure to reading over time to build their self-confidence and their attitudes towards reading in English in a positive way. The researcher further explores the role of the teacher in facilitating students' ER activities.

## Introduction

In a foreign language learning setting such as Japan where exposure to authentic language and opportunities to use the target language in natural situations are limited, what learners do outside class takes especially an important role to develop appreciation of the target culture and fluency in the target language. Extensive reading (ER) might be one of the ways to afford learners extra time outside of class to get a good deal of that extra practice they need on a regular basis. ER class activities allow students to choose the books they read depending on their interests and fluent reading level from various interesting topics. Furthermore, copious research evidence bears out the many benefits

which come from ER (Day & Bamford 1998; Waring 2000, 2006). Yet, only a few studies on affective aspects of ER activities have been done (Day & Bamford, 1998; Fujita & Noro, 2009; Matsui & Noro, 2010; Robb & Susser, 1989). In addition, there are some practical issues many teachers face which have not been discussed enough such as the effects of ER on different levels of students and a lack of interest in reading among young people. In this study, a questionnaire survey was given to 87 freshman students twice, in Week 1 and Week 14, to observe the effects of ER in a teaching context. As a conclusion, students' motivational and attitudinal changes toward reading books in English throughout a semester-long ER class during the transition between high school and university is discussed.

## Method

### *Participants*

Participants were a total of 87 freshmen that were enrolled in compulsory extensive reading (ER) and intensive reading (IR) classes taught by the author at a university in Japan. They were from three different levels: 1) advanced, 2) intermediate, and 2) low English proficiency classes classified according to their TOEIC score at the time of their entrance exam participated in the study. Students' ages ranged from 17-19 years and came from the same academic program, School of International Studies. Many of those who are in advanced class have experiences of having studied or lived abroad, and many of those who are in lower class are athletes with special sport skills. Since there was a huge proficiency gap between intermediate and low, the author combined advanced and intermediate students as one group, namely Group AI, and set low students as the second group, namely Group L (Table 1). All the participants were required to take a total of four English subjects weekly, writing and oral communication besides ER and IR during the semester when the study was conducted.

**Table 1. Descriptive of Participants**

Level	Group AI	Group L	Total
Number of students	52	35	87
Male / Female	M=17 / F=35	M=14 / F=21	M=31 / F=56

## Materials

All surveys were completed during ER class time in Week 1 and Week 14. A common approach to the measurement of attitudinal variables is the use of a questionnaire employing a Likert scale. In this study, a questionnaire of this style constructed in Matsui & Noro (2010) and Yamashita (2013) were adopted to support evidence for the instrument's reliability for students learning English in the Japanese context. In Matsui & Noro (2010), a 31-item questionnaire scored on a Likert scale in the categories of Intrinsic motivation, Self-confidence, Exam-related extrinsic motivation, Internal-related instrumental motivation, and anxiety and negative attitudes toward English reading was administered to examine Japanese junior high school students' motivation at the end of their program. Yamashita's (2013) survey was designed to measure five attitudinal variables using a 22-item questionnaire in the categories of Comfort, Anxiety, Intellectual Value, and Linguistic

Value. In this study, a questionnaire form using 21 items categorized Intrinsic motivation, Extrinsic motivation, Internet-related instrumental motivation, Anxiety, and Self-confidence was used. (See Appendix.) The reliability of the created instrument was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha which was higher than .881 for Group AI, .890 for Group L in the pretest, and .894 for Group AI and .830 for Group L in the posttest. In addition, book report, reading record, and students' comments on ER class were collected 3-4 times a semester were used as a part of the data for further analysis.

### **Procedure**

Pretests and posttests regarding reading attitude questionnaire were administered in Week 1 and Week 14 during ER class time. Throughout the course, students were able to access a series of Oxford, Cambridge, Penguin, Macmillan, and Scholastic Readers at the university main library. They could select books and the level according to their interest and proficiency, and read them both inside and outside the class. The ordinary classroom schedule consists of mainly 3 sections; 1) Repeated Reading (fluency practice), 2) Sustained Silent Reading (reading opportunities), 3) Peer Discussion (deeper understanding of a story). Students were required to keep a record and write a short summary and their reflection on the story after reading each graded-reader book. The teacher's role in the class was not to impart knowledge as much as guide students and participate with them as members of a reading community.

### **Analysis**

Based on the instrumental design of Matsui & Noro (2010) and Yamashita (2013), this study chose 21 items narrowed down to two aspects of reading attitude for detailed analysis – anxiety and self-confidence. There were four items for Anxiety, and four items for Self-confidence. Responses on conversely worded items (e.g., "I don't mind even if I cannot understand the book content entirely" to measure Anxiety) were reversed, so that a higher score indicated a higher degree of feeling or belief in that variable. Descriptive statistics for the two variables are summarized in Table 2. A two way ANOVA was run to observe the interaction between Pre-Post test and proficiency group.

**Table 2. Two Way ANOVA (Pre-Post X Group interaction)**

<b>Variable: Anxiety</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>
Pre-Post	.042	1	.042	.112	.739
Skewness	25.271	68	.372		
Group	0.874	1	0.874	0.469	0.469
Pre-post X Group	1.102	1	1.102	2.964	.090
Skewness	25.271	68	.372		
<b>Variable: Self-confidence</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>
Pre-Post	1.714	1	1.714	7.37	.01
Skewness	16.556	68	.244		
Group	6.017	1	6.017	7.395	0.008
Pre-post X Group	.749	1	.749	3.77	.084
Skewness	16.558	68	.244		

## Discussion

The results reveal that, the ER class influenced students' anxiety towards English reading in an opposite way. For Group AI, ER helped lessen anxiety. It was confirmed that anxiety toward encountering unknown words and understanding the book content entirely were reduced. On the other hand, Group L felt more anxious after a semester of ER. Taking a close look at their responses to each item, reading record, and comments, it was observed that their negative change was generated by feeling less competent in relation to goal pursuits, in other words, anxiety has a direct relation with what many students call "an unrealistic goal." This subsequently affected their selection of books (more difficult level to reach the word count required), which might give no clear differences between IR and ER to them.

As for confidence, both groups of students felt more confident in English. However, the cause of gaining confidence seemed different for the two groups. First, many students in Group AI felt confident of reading many easy English books. They also commented that their confidence was derived from the feeling of using English as a tool. This is understood to mean that they used ER class as a chance and enjoyed using and confirming knowledge what they had studied. For Group AI, it is also inevitable to say that due to a ceiling effect, no significant change in self-confidence was confirmed. On the other hand, the cause of positive change in Group L derived from a comparison with IR. From their comments, it was understood that they compare ER and IN and responded they felt self-confidence and satisfaction after completing a story, which they were not capable of with IR materials. Also, it was pointed out that they rather felt development in their summarizing skills

or logical thinking than reading fluency.

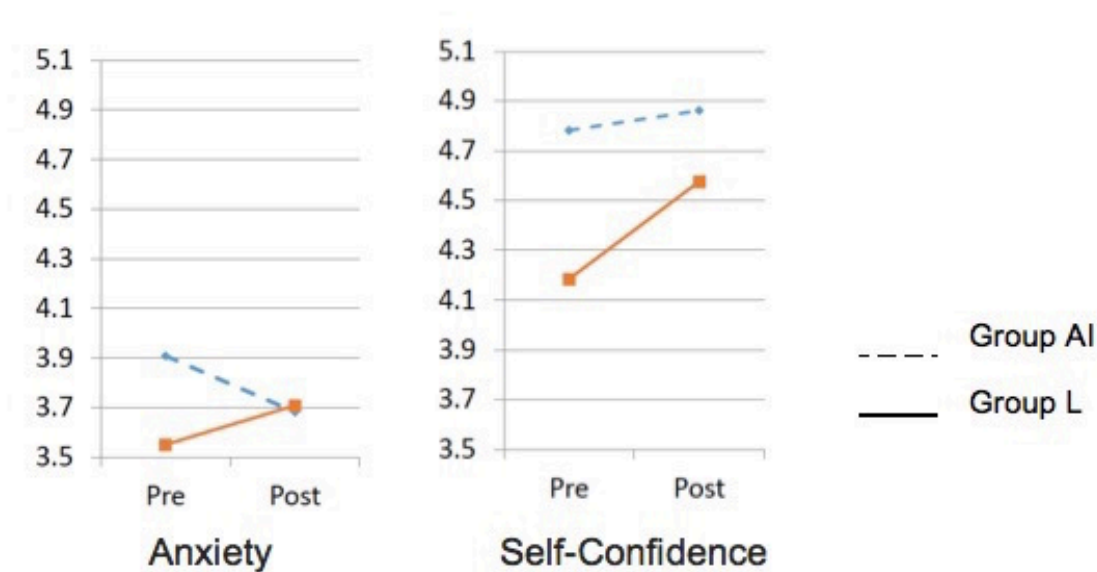


Figure 1. Two Way ANOVA (Pre-Post X Group Interaction)

## Conclusion

The affective domain of ER has received less attention than has the cognitive domain in previous studies. The present study has gone a step further into the affective domain and examined our understanding of the impact of ER for different levels of students. It revealed that a semester length ER class influences university freshmen's attitudes towards English reading after introducing ER. Many of them have long studied IR to prepare their university entrance exam. After experiencing ER for the first time, ER helped enhance self-confidence in both advanced and low level students. However, the lower group had anxiety towards English reading due perhaps to their basic proficiency level or because of the teacher's guidance. This implies that meticulous, individual-targeted teaching is needed. With regards to understanding the logic behind their responses, further qualitative investigation is necessary.

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## Appendix

### Reading Attitude Questionnaire Items

#### F1: Intrinsic motivation

19 I want to learn more about English culture and customs through English.

15 I want to broaden my views by reading English books.

2 I want to study reading most of all English skills.

18 I want to acquire new knowledge by reading English books.

6 I learn English reading because I want to read newspapers and magazines in English.

10 I enjoy reading English books.

*F2: Self-confidence*

8 I am very confident of reading many easy English books.

16 Reading many easy English a lot is not difficult for me.

1 It is easy for me to read many easy English books.

13 I don't care even if I can't understand the contents of a book.

*F3: Extrinsic motivation*

20 I read English books to pass entrance exams.

7 I read English books to become good enough to pass entrance exams.

3 I read English books because most of my friends do.

12 I read English books to get better grades.

*F4: Internet-related instrumental motivation*

21 I read English book because I want to get information on the Internet.

11 I want to look up new words in the dictionary while I am reading.

9 I read English books because I want to exchange e-mails in English.

*F3: Anxiety*

5 I feel anxious if I don't know all the words.

17 I sometimes feel anxious that I may not understand even if I read.

4 I feel anxious when I am not sure whether I understood the book content.

14 I don't mind even if I cannot understand the book content entirely.

# Chapter Seven: An Evaluation of Progress Measurement Options for ER Programs

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## Abstract

In any Extensive Reading (ER) program, one of the most important factors in assessing and evaluating students is how many books the students have read. Thus, it is important to keep a record of the total number of books or the total number of words students have read, as well as the level of those books. It is also important to remember that there is nothing in the ER literature that says teachers cannot keep records of their students' ER or give them grades based on their ER. However, assessing and evaluating student progress in an ER program can be challenging, as every student has a particular preference for how they wish to be assessed. This paper, a continuation of two previous studies (Campbell & Weatherford, 2013; Weatherford & Campbell, 2015), is based on surveys of first- and second-year Japanese university English majors who were asked which assessment and evaluation method they preferred in their ER—book reports or the M-Reader online quiz system (a free online graded reader assessment system that checks whether students have read their books). This paper will start with a brief discussion of assessment in ER. Then it will discuss some arguments to consider concerning assessment and evaluation of students' ER and examine some current and typical assessment and evaluation methods for ER. The survey results will then be discussed, showing an overwhelming preference for M-Reader. Finally, an analysis of the students' reasons for choosing M-Reader as their preferred method of assessment will be provided.

## Assessment in ER

Extensive Reading (ER) is a method of language learning that involves students reading a large amount of easy-to-read and enjoyable books in order to develop reading speed and fluency. The Extensive Reading Foundation's Guide to Extensive Reading states, "When students are reading extensively, they READ: Read quickly and Enjoyably with Adequate comprehension so they Don't need a dictionary" (2011, p. 1). Harold Palmer, the first person to use the term ER in foreign language pedagogy, argued that ER meant "'rapidly' reading 'book after book'", and the "reader's attention should be on the meaning, not the language, of the text" (Day & Bamford, 1998, p. 5). In addition, numerous published articles and books conclude, as Nuttall (1982) argues, that second language (L2)

learners fall into “the vicious circle of the weak reader” (p. 167): they read slowly, they don’t enjoy their reading, they don’t read much, and they don’t understand. What ER tries to do is to break that vicious circle and get the L2 learner into the “virtuous circle of the good reader” (Nuttall, 1982, p. 168): they read faster, they read more, they understand better, and they enjoy reading. In addition, one of the basic principles of ER is that students should read with minimal accountability (Krashen, 2004). In other words, assessment should be kept to a minimum. In educational settings, however, teachers are required to assess and evaluate their students for institutional purposes. Therefore, teachers managing an ER program need some way of keeping track of their students’ reading progress. While there are plenty of assessment and evaluation methods in the ER literature (see Typical Assessment and Evaluation Methods of ER below), ER teachers are still skeptical as to whether or not these methods provide sufficient evidence that students have read the books they claim to have read. Fortunately, the M-Reader online quiz system, a rewritten version of the original Moodle Reader, “a free online graded reader assessment system that assesses whether students have read their books” (Robb & Waring, 2012, p. 168), is becoming more and more popular in the ER world as a reliable and valuable ER assessment and evaluation tool, thus holding students accountable for their reading.

Day and Bamford (1998) argue, “There is nothing about extensive reading that says that requirements cannot be set, records kept, or grades given as in other forms of instruction” (p. 86). However, a controversial issue to consider is whether ER programs and teachers should in fact check how well a student has understood a book (a graded reader) they have read (Nuttall, 1982). There are two views here: one in favor of assessment and evaluation of students’ ER, and the other against it. Unfortunately, there is not a lot of research in the ER literature that discusses which is the best method for assessing and evaluating students’ ER. According to Sargent and Al-Kaboody (2014), “There is a surprising lack of methodical investigation into the ways in which ER might be assessed” (p. 3). Robb (2009) also argues that many ER researchers and advocates are convinced of the effectiveness and power of ER in L2 learning, but others are concerned with “student management issues, particularly the need of an efficient mechanism for holding students responsible for actually doing the reading” (p. 109). Thus, ER programs and teachers are free to choose which assessment and evaluation method best suits their students’ ER needs. As Nuttall contends, ER teachers can choose either view, or both (1982). The authors of this paper are in favor of assessment and evaluation of their students’ ER via the M-Reader online quiz system. According to Tom Robb (2015), the creator of M-Reader, it is:

Designed to be an aid to schools wishing to implement an Extensive Reading program. It allows teachers (and students) to verify that they have read and understood their reading. This is done via a simple 10-item quiz with the items drawn from a larger item bank of 20-30 items so that each student receives a different set of items (para. 2).

As of November, 2015, there are over 4800 quizzes available via 117 different ER graded reader series (publishers) on the M-Reader website with a current user base of about 80,000 students in about 25 countries (Robb, 2015).

## Assessment and Evaluation Arguments to Consider

Waring (1997) makes a very valid argument concerning assessment and evaluation of ER, contending that if we test students on their ER, then students may regard the purpose of their ER as test preparation, which is the opposite of one of the ten characteristics of an ER approach to second language (L2) learning: “#4: The purposes of reading are usually related to pleasure, information, and general understanding” (Day & Bamford, 1998, p. 8). Krashen (2004) argues that there should not be any kind of evaluation (e.g., book report evaluation) and that students should just read for the pleasure of reading, while Nutall argues that testing students encourages them to cheat, and as soon as grades or marks are considered, enjoyment tends to disappear and reading for pleasure becomes reading for credit (1982). Day and Bamford also maintain that answering comprehension questions hinders self-motivation and independence (1998). We have seen that there are many ER educators who feel that students should not be assessed and evaluated on their ER, and to strengthen this view is an argument from the Extensive Reading Foundation’s (2011) Guide to Extensive Reading:

Teachers often feel they should check students’ understanding of their reading directly through tests and quizzes or even just to assess whether the reading has been done. In Extensive Reading, as long as students are reading a book at their level, there is then no need to test their comprehension. This is because part of the decision about which book to read involved making sure they could understand most of the book before reading it. Extensive Reading is **not** about testing (p. 9).

This is a very powerful argument to consider for ER programs and teachers as both views—in favor of ER assessment and evaluation, or against it—can be considered acceptable in the ER literature (see Day & Bamford, 1998). However, according to the Edinburgh Project on Extensive Reading (EPER) Guide to Organizing Programmes of Extensive Reading, checking the ‘quality’ of students’ ER is very important as it is very easy for a student to borrow a book and then return it without even reading it (1992). The EPER’s guide offers numerous ways to check whether or not a student has read a book or not, one of which is via book reports, where students are asked to write a report on each book they read. However, Weatherford and Campbell (2015) conclude, “Book reports can be easily faked” (p. 662). Therefore, the authors believe that an additional method of assessment such as the M-Reader online quiz system is necessary as it obviates “the need for other more cumbersome and laborious measures such as book reports or summaries” (Robb, 2015, p. 146). In addition, M-Reader can boost students’ self-efficacy and increase students’ motivation. As one student said, “I think this is the perfect program for raising my English ability. It was really fun, so I want to read more and take more Moodle quizzes” (Miller, 2012, p. 80, as cited in Robb, 2015, p. 149). The next section will examine some of the other typical assessment and evaluation options in ER.

## Typical Assessment and Evaluation Methods of ER

Typical Assessment and Evaluation Methods of ER There is a vast array of assessment and evaluation methods in ER for checking whether students have read the books they claim to have read. Here are some of the more popular methods:

Day and Bamford (1998):

- Written reports
- Answers to questions
- Number of books read
- Reports turned in
- Assign a certain number of books or pages to be read (e.g., a book a week)
- Reading notebooks
- Weekly reading diary
- Reading tests (Cloze tests)
- Negotiated evaluation (e.g., forming book promotion teams; writing sequels)

Bamford and Day (2004):

- One-minute reading (via a pre- & post-test on the first & last day of the semester)
- Cloze Test (to test the impact of ER on proficiency)
- One-sentence summary test
- Speed answering

Bernhardt (1991):

- Cloze test
- Multiple-choice tests & T/F tests (She argues these tests are problematic because they are not passage-dependent.)
- Direct content questions
- Alternative method is to use Immediate Recall

Oxford University Press (2015) (from downloadable materials available to registered users):

- Activity worksheets
- Exercise answers
- Editable tests
- Fill in the gaps
- Matching questions
- Who said this? Who thought this?
- T/F
- Missing words

- Choose the best answer

EPER Guide to Organizing Programmes of ER (1992):

- Checking entries on a wall chart
- Checking book reports in a reading notebook
- Personal interviews
- Matching titles with students

As you can see, the range of methods for assessing and evaluating students' ER is wide. However, the authors use only two of the methods as their main source of students' ER assessment and evaluation: book reports and the M-Reader online quiz system.

### **Research Design**

The following sections are based on the same format employed in Weatherford and Campbell (2015). New survey data are compared with the data in that paper.

### ***Participants***

Participants were 107 freshman and sophomore university students majoring in English in the Department of English Language and Literature at a small women's university in Western Japan during the first semester of the 2015 academic year. All of the second-year students had previous experience with ER and M-Reader during their first year. Extensive Reading was a requirement for the Reading Lab course (described below) that all of the participants were enrolled in. The first-year students' reading goal was between 40,000 and 80,000 words per semester, depending on their level of English proficiency. The goal for all second-year students was 80,000 words.

### ***Reading Lab***

Reading Lab is a new course that was introduced in the 2014 academic year. Although not a required course, all first- and second-year students in the Department were strongly encouraged to enroll, and most did. Reading Lab is essentially an independent study course, and students are not required to attend classes other than an orientation session on the first day. This initial session introduced students to the principles of ER and provided an orientation to M-Reader. ER/M-Reader accounted for 50% of the grade in this half-credit course. The other 50% was based on the students' performance on WordEngine (an online vocabulary-learning system) for first-year students and participation in Moodle Forums for second-year students.

### ***Materials & Methods***

Students were asked to complete a survey to indicate their opinions of ER as a learning method and to provide their evaluation of M-Reader as an assessment tool. The survey was completed at the end of the first semester in July 2015. We used a paper-based questionnaire in Japanese (see Appendix for a translated English version), which the students completed in approximately ten minutes during the final class session. In order to keep track of the data and to sort the students into

groups, students were asked to provide their university ID numbers. Although the survey was not completely anonymous, students were assured that they would not be identified by name and that their responses would not affect their grades.

The survey included 36 individual items: one question about the number of books students took quizzes on; 12 six-point Likert scale items to gauge student opinions of the enjoyment and the usefulness of the reading materials; four semantic differential items concerning the difficulty of the books; five semantic differential items about the M-Reader website; one multiple-choice question regarding students' assessment preferences (M-Reader versus book reports, with the option to select "other"); and one multi-select multiple choice question with eight options for each choice (M-Reader or book reports) regarding students' reasons for their preferences. These reasons were based on student responses to an open-ended question on a similar survey administered in the first semester of the 2013 academic school year (Campbell & Weatherford, 2013), plus some additional reasons that were expected as possible responses. Finally, one open-ended question asked students who did not take any quizzes to explain their reasons why.

### ***Analysis***

The results were analyzed with Stata Statistical Software (v. 12) using a two-sample t test with unequal variances. This test was used to determine if the means of different groups were equal. We compared the results of two groups: students who chose M-Reader versus those who chose book reports. We considered the means to be different at the 0.10 significance level.

### **Survey Results**

#### ***Assessment Preferences***

The students indicated an overwhelming preference for M-Reader (84%) over book reports (16%), and no students selected "Other." However, there was a slight discrepancy between the first- and second-year students' preferences. First-year students (n=56) preferred M-Reader to book reports 91% to 9%, while second-year students (n=51) indicated a slightly higher preference for book reports (24%) compared to the first-years. These results contrast considerably with previous results where students were nearly evenly divided overall (56% for M-Reader versus 44% for book reports), and freshmen and sophomores indicated practically opposite preferences, with a majority (74%) of freshmen preferring M-Reader and a majority (69%) of sophomores preferring book reports (Weatherford & Campbell, 2015). It is important to note here that the previous results were based on responses from students who matriculated before the Reading Lab course became part of the curriculum. Further analysis will be provided in the Discussion section.

After stating their preferences, respondents were asked to indicate their reasons. They were given seven options (plus "other") to choose from and were instructed to choose as many reasons as applied (see Appendix, questions 10A and 10B). The results for M-Reader are shown in Figure 1.



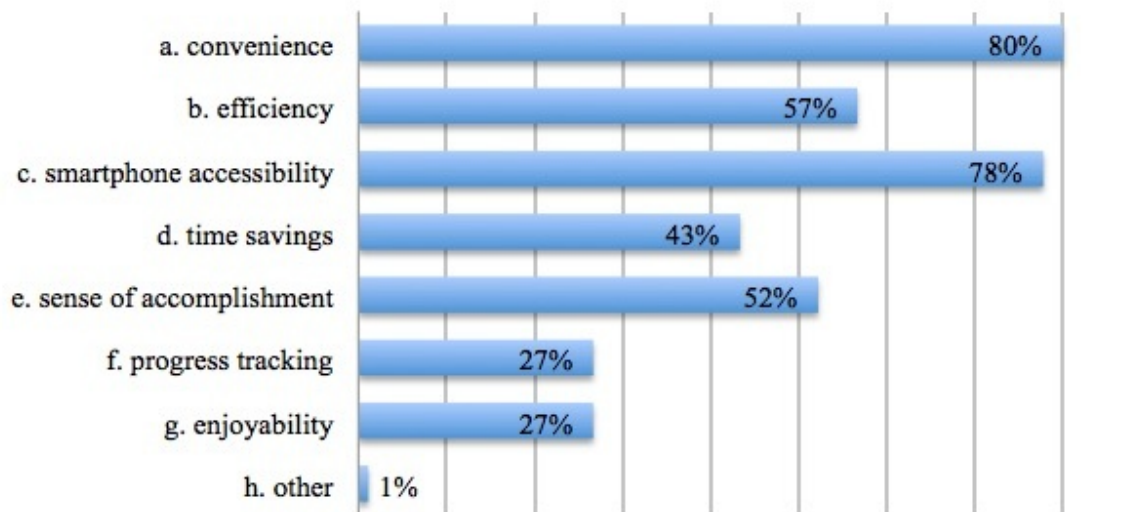


Figure 1. Reasons for Preferring M-Reader

These results are nearly the same as those reported in Weatherford and Campbell (2015), with one notable exception. In both cases, the convenience of accessing the quizzes on the Internet was the most common reason for preferring M-Reader. However, in the most recent survey, the ability to access M-Reader on smartphones is a close second at 78%, whereas only 54% of respondents selected this option in the earlier survey. This is likely a consequence of the proliferation of smartphones over the past few years.

The reasons for preferring book reports are shown in Figure 2. Notice that most of the reasons are complaints about M-Reader rather than the merits of book reports themselves.

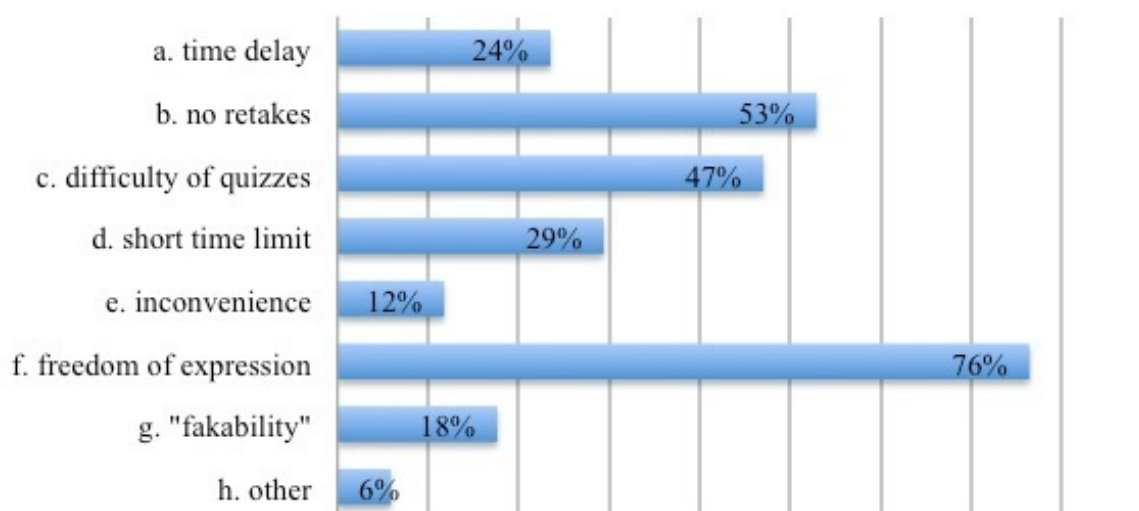


Figure 2. Reasons for Preferring Book Reports

Overwhelmingly, the most popular choice was f.: “I can express myself freely in a book report.” This contrasts significantly with the previous survey results, where 81% of respondents selected a.: “The 24-hour time limit between quizzes is too long.” This means that students did not like the way that the M-Reader system was set up to make them wait for 24 hours after finishing a quiz before they were allowed to take the next one. In response to the students’ dissatisfaction with this constraint, the wait time between quizzes was changed to three hours. As a result, the students were not as concerned with the time delay in the most recent survey.

### ***Number of Quizzes Taken***

Students were asked to indicate the number of quizzes that they took during the semester by selecting a range (1=0, 2=1–2, 3=3–4, 4=5–6, 5=7–8, 6=9–10, and 7=more than 10 quizzes). As reported in Weatherford and Campbell (2015), students who stated a preference for M-Reader reported that they took more quizzes on average ( $\mu=5.7$ ) than those who preferred book reports ( $\mu=4.3$ ,  $p=0.012$ ).

### ***Opinions about Graded Readers***

Table 1 illustrates the students’ opinions of graded readers, comparing the average responses of the M-Reader (MR) group with the book report (BR) group. This data is based on 12 six-point Likert scale questions, where 6=strongly agree and 1=strongly disagree.

**Table 1. Opinions of Graded Readers**

Item	MR	SD	BR	SD	<i>p</i>
a.fun reading materials	4.133	1.265	3.000	1.369	0.002
b.enjoyable as English learning materials	4.233	1.237	3.353	1.412	0.012
c.something I looked forward to reading each week	3.022	1.245	2.294	1.160	0.013
d.not my favorite assignment	3.678	1.253	3.765	1.640	0.419
e.boring reading materials	2.811	1.141	3.294	1.263	0.078
f.materials that I want to keep reading during vacation	3.056	1.155	2.118	1.269	0.004
g.useful for increasing my vocabulary	4.278	1.218	3.529	1.625	0.043
h.useful for improving my reading fluency	4.389	1.251	3.588	1.661	0.036
i.useful for improving my reading comprehension	4.544	1.153	3.647	1.618	0.020
j.useful for improving my reading speed	4.433	1.218	3.471	1.505	0.010
k.useful for improving my overall English ability	4.378	1.066	3.588	1.543	0.028
l.unsuitable as English teaching learning materials	2.278	1.071	2.824	0.951	0.022

As reported in the previous survey (Weatherford & Campbell, 2015), students who preferred M-Reader were more favorable toward graded readers than those who chose book reports. As expected, the averages for all of the items with a positive attitude toward graded readers (a, b, c, f, g, h, u, j, k) were significantly higher among the M-Reader group, and the averages for the negative items (d, e, l) were significantly lower.

The opinions concerning the difficulty of graded readers are shown in Table 2. Although the M-Reader group appears to have found the books less difficult than the book report group, the differences between the two groups were not statistically significant.

**Table 2. Difficulty of Graded Readers**

Item	MR	SD	BR	SD	<i>p</i>
a. too easy/difficult	-0.067	1.305	0.412	1.622	0.132
b. familiar/unfamiliar words	-0.1	1.454	0.412	1.734	0.133
c. not at all/extremely difficult to read	0.011	1.639	0.471	1.908	0.182
d. easy/difficult to finish	0.2	1.595	0.588	1.938	0.223

### ***Opinions about M-Reader***

The students' opinions of the M-Reader website were measured using five semantic differential items. The mean results are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Opinions about M-Reader**

<b>Item</b>	<b>MR</b>	<b>BR</b>	<b><i>p</i></b>
4. The M-Reader website was difficult to use/easy to use	0.578	-0.706	0.014
5. The M-Reader quizzes were difficult/easy	-0.7	-1.176	0.153
6. The 15-minute time limit was insufficient/sufficient	0.2	-0.941	0.020
7. Reaching the word-count goal was difficult/easy	-1.133	-1.765	0.064
8. The time delay was short/long	1.078	-0.176	0.021

In this instance, larger averages indicate a more positive opinion of the website, except in the case of item 8. Predictably, students who preferred M-Reader were generally more positive: they found the site easier to use, the quizzes easier to pass (although this item was not statistically significant), the time limit sufficient, and the word-count goal easier to reach. However, the M-Reader group indicated that they felt the time delay between quizzes was too long compared to the students who preferred book reports. Although this result seems to exhibit a negative stance toward M-Reader, other explanations will be explored in the following Discussion section.

### **Discussion**

The results of this survey revealed an overwhelming preference for M-Reader over book reports. These results contrast significantly with those reported in Weatherford and Campbell (2015), where the students were evenly divided. One major difference between the two studies was the introduction of the Reading Lab course in the 2014 academic year. All of the respondents in the current survey were enrolled in Reading Lab, while none of the students in the previous survey had taken the course. M-Reader performance accounted for half of the students' grades in the Reading Lab course, whereas extensive reading had previously made up only a small portion of the students' grades in their required Reading courses. It should also be noted, however, that only a small portion of the respondents to the most recent survey had been required to write book reports. (One teacher had his first- and second-year Reading classes of approximately 20 students each write a book report every two weeks.) That means that it is possible that most students indicated a preference for M-Reader because that was the assessment method they were most familiar with. However, it is also possible that students could imagine that doing book reports might require more effort or be otherwise less desirable than taking M-Reader quizzes. In future surveys, additional questions may be added to clarify this issue.

The other results of the current survey are comparable with previous surveys. As in past surveys, students who preferred M-Reader took more quizzes and were more positive about the enjoyment and usefulness of extensive reading than students who said they would rather write book reports. In addition, students in the M-Reader group were unsurprisingly more positive about the functionality

of the M-Reader website itself, except in the case of the imposed time delay between quizzes. However, this may not be so much a criticism of M-Reader as an indication of the students' eagerness to keep reading and taking quizzes. This should be taken as an encouraging sign for proponents of ER and M-Reader. After all, most survey respondents indicated a preference for M-Reader, which suggests that a majority of students have gained an understanding of the value of Extensive Reading.

## Conclusion

Among all of the ER assessment and evaluation options available, the authors believe that the M-Reader online quiz system is the best method for ensuring students have actually read the books they claim to have read. M-Reader also provides an efficient and reliable system for keeping track of the students' reading progress. In addition, the survey results reported in this paper demonstrate that students are generally in favor of M-Reader. Following the arguments of Robb (2015), the authors feel that even though ER principles originally presume that students should be reading simply for the pleasure of reading without any follow-up activities, teachers need some kind of system where they can keep track of whether students have done their reading or not. Moreover, in institutions where not every student is motivated to study or read extensively, some tracking method of students' ER is required. The M-Reader online quiz system is therefore the best assessment method to date for accomplishing this without adding any extra work for teachers.

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## Appendix

### English Translation of the Survey

M-Reader Survey July 2015

Student Number:

Class:

1 How many books did you read and take M-Reader quizzes on this semester?

2 0 2. 1-2 3. 3-4 4. 5-6 5. 7-8 6. 9-10 7. more than 10

If you answered 1 (0 books), please skip to question 11.

How much do you agree with the following statements?

3 The library readers were: Strongly agree Strongly disagree

- a. fun reading materials. 6 5 4 3 2 1
- b. enjoyable as English learning materials. 6 5 4 3 2 1
- c. fun to read every week. 6 5 4 3 2 1
- d. not my favorite assignment. 6 5 4 3 2 1
- e. boring reading materials. 6 5 4 3 2 1
- f. materials that I want to keep reading even 6 5 4 3 2 1 during school vacation.
- g. useful for increasing my vocabulary. 6 5 4 3 2 1
- h. useful for improving my reading fluency. 6 5 4 3 2 1

- i. useful for improving my reading comprehension. 6 5 4 3 2 1
- j. useful for improving my reading speed. 6 5 4 3 2 1
- k. useful for improving my overall English ability. 6 5 4 3 2 1
- l. unsuitable as English learning materials. 6 5 4 3 2 1

What did you think of the levels of the readers?

4 The readers were:

- a. too easy (in content) -3 -2 -1 1 2 3 too difficult (in content)
- b. contained only unfamiliar words -3 -2 -1 1 2 3 contained too many familiar
- c. not at all difficult to read -3 -2 -1 1 2 3 extremely difficult to read
- d. easy to finish -3 -2 -1 1 2 3 difficult to finish

What did you think of M-Reader?

5 The M-Reader website was difficult to use -3 -2 -1 1 2 3 easy to use

6 The M-Reader quizzes were...difficult -3 -2 -1 1 2 3 easy

7 The 15-minute time limit was...insufficient -3 -2 -1 1 2 3 sufficient

8 Reaching the word-count goal was... difficult -3 -2 -1 1 2 3 easy

9 The time delay between quizzes was...short -3 -2 -1 1 2 3 long

10 Would you prefer to do M-Reader quizzes or write book reports to show that you have read the books?

- a. M-Reader quizzes (go to question 10A)
- b. book reports (go to question 10B)
- c. Other: )

10A Why did you choose M-Reader quizzes? Circle as many of the reasons below that apply.

- a. It is convenient to take the quizzes on the Internet.
- b. Taking quizzes is more efficient than writing reports.
- c. I can take quizzes on my smartphone.
- d. It does not take a lot of time to take the quizzes.
- e. I feel a sense of accomplishment when I pass a quiz.
- f. I can keep track of my reading progress.
- g. Using M-Reader is fun.
- h. Other:

10B Why did you choose book reports? Circle as many of the reasons below that apply.

- a. The time delay between quizzes is too long.
- b. There is no chance to retake a failed quiz.
- c. The quizzes are too difficult.
- d. The quiz time limit of 15 minutes is too short.
- e. Accessing the Internet is inconvenient.
- f. I can express myself freely in a book report.
- g. I can write a book report without reading the entire book.
- h. Other:

11 If you did not take any quizzes on M-Reader during the semester, please explain why.



# Chapter Eight: Implementing Extensive Reading in Japanese as L2 Environment: A Case Using Facebook to Build a Reading Community

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*Shobi University, Japan*

## Abstract

Integrating e-learning using graded readers (GR) with the existing curriculum solves the teacher's difficulty of finding time to embed extensive reading into an already-crowded curriculum. A learning management system (LMS) is effective to build a learners' community outside the classroom. In this study, international students who are studying Japanese language at a Japanese university were required to read Japanese GRs on their electronic devices and post their comments written in Japanese to Facebook which was a social media tool used by most of the students. The majority posted their comments about GRs and all of the students read each other's comments, which suggests that it was possible to conduct discussions on Facebook. These results revealed that Facebook is a tool that can possibly replace a LMS and enable teachers to build a reading community outside their classrooms at institutions where a LMS is not used.

## Introduction

In higher education programs focusing on Japanese as a second language (JSL), learners of Japanese come from a range of backgrounds. Learners with a first language that does not use kanji (henceforth non-kanji users) often have difficulty with kanji (Chinese characters) in reading. Kumada (2013) indicated that non-kanji users often believe that they are poor readers because they compare themselves to the kanji users in the classroom. Kanji users may sometimes have difficulty because of the difference in pronunciation between their first language and Japanese, but they will still be able to access meaning through the kanji, even though they cannot produce them in an appropriate Japanese way or use them in conversation.

Learning kanji is a major component of Japanese language learning. The Japanese Graded Readers Project Group (JGRPG) has developed a series of Japanese graded readers (GRs) (JGR SAKURA;

JGRPG, Tokyo, Japan). JGRPG believes that extensive reading (ER) is an efficient way to learn Kanji, and the same notation of Kanji commonly used by native Japanese speakers is used in JGR SAKURA. All kanji are accompanied by kana, written along side, to show how to pronounce the item. The rationale is that learners who already know the kanji will recognize the meaning of the word, and can thus accelerate their reading rate and comprehension. Learners who do not know the kanji can guess the meaning of the word, including the kanji, from the context in which it is embedded. If learners know how to pronounce the kanji from kana, they can incidentally acquire the kanji through ER (Reynolds, Harada, Yamagata & Miyazaki, 2003).

ER is one aspect of an approach taken in teaching English to speakers of other languages to build vocabulary and develop reading comprehension. Day and Bamford (1998) note that ER encourages students to read and comprehend fluently without using a dictionary, which stands in contrast to intensive reading approaches. Comprehension in ER is conducted using top-down processing in contrast to intensive reading, which relies on a bottom-up approach. Matsuoka (1990) considered ER to be one of the effective approaches to enable intermediate and advanced learners to read and understand at the same time. International students at advanced levels at a Japanese university still need to acquire top-down reading approaches because they have been learning Japanese through an intensive reading approach.

### **Research Background**

One challenging aspect of ER is that it is not a common approach in higher education JSL programs because it is time consuming and qualitatively different to typically offered reading courses. To manage these time constraints, the author implemented a blended ER instruction that involved e-learning and classroom discussion as a noncredit addition to an existing reading course (Nakano, 2013). This method enables learners to use ER outside school hours.

Another issue is that some students with insufficient vocabulary are reluctant readers, although ER is a learning method that can be used by individuals outside the classroom because of the possibilities created by its autonomous learning aspects. Day and Bamford (1998) state the importance of organizing a reading community as a postreading activity that “allow(s) students to support and motivate one another” (p. 141). Day and Bamford (1998) gave examples of postreading activities, such as “writing summaries, writing reaction reports, giving oral reports, and answering questions” (p. 141).

Learning effectiveness was improved by providing learners with information on the progress and achievements of their peers (Kuga, Nakano, Cong, Jung & Mayekawa, 2006). In the previous study, there were learners who had not yet read the assignment and they were encouraged to read by observing the progress of other learners on the web site that the author created (Nakano, 2013). Therefore, it is necessary to maintain students’ motivation to read GRs in between classes by organizing a community where these students can participate with peers. However, because the web site is a passive tool, only the students who logged in could see the progress. Furthermore, the author could not provide a means by which students could receive peers’ comments in real time. Therefore, it takes time for students to receive others’ comments to their posts about GRs.

Harada (2015) suggested the possibility of combining ER and discussion using a learning manage-

ment system (LMS) by implementing ER lessons in which students read GRs as a PDF file on Moodle in class and post their comments to a Moodle forum. The merit of this method is to enable students to receive their peers' comments to their posts in real time because students write them on Moodle during class. However, it is impossible to conduct this type of lesson if the institution does not use LMS.

This study implements a Japanese ER program for international students studying at a Japanese university using Facebook as a tool to organize a reading community. Following the implementation results, the author discusses the following hypotheses:

1. It is possible to use Facebook to build a reading community outside the ER classroom.
2. It is possible to use Facebook to organize discussion about GRs outside the ER classroom.

## Method

Currently, over 100 Japanese graded readers exist; with five levels between beginner and intermediate levels, there are about 10 - 30 books per level. Considering the number of students, their Japanese levels, and their varied interests, we thought that more books were needed for this study. Therefore, we prepared comic books, picture books, and children books for this class. A total number of 264 books were selected; Table 1 shows the breakdown of these books based on their category. The students were also encouraged to read other books as long as the books' levels were appropriate.

## Participants

Nineteen international students studying at a Japanese university participated in the research. There were 15 freshmen (9 Chinese, 5 Korean, 1 Malaysian) and four sophomores (2 Chinese, 1 Korean, 1 Singaporean). Freshmen and sophomores take Japanese as a compulsory course twice a week (90 min × 30 sessions/semester). For freshmen, the goal of the course is to acquire a strategy for studying at university, focusing mainly on academic writing. A goal for sophomores is to be able to construct a convincing argument. As both courses also focus on oral expression and rely on classroom discussions, ER was embedded in them in a blended way. As both courses included ER classes in the previous term, it was the second time that ER had been used in these courses. The ER lesson took place over two individual sessions. A 1-week interval between the first and second session allowed for preparation time. As a noncredit addition to an existing reading course, the ER lesson was treated as part of the Japanese language course, but GR contents were not included in the course test.

To understand participants' needs and abilities, the Simple Performance-Oriented Test (SPOT), vocabulary assessment, and prequestionnaire were given to the participants in the first session. SPOT was used to assess grammar (Kobayashi, 2003). A previous Japanese language proficiency test was used to assess vocabulary. The prequestionnaire asked about the student's time spent learning Japanese and whether he or she had used social networking services (SNS). To those students who answered "yes," the prequestionnaire used multiple-choice questions to ask about the kind of SNS used, device used, frequency of use per week, with whom, language used, and for what purpose. The prequestionnaire included open-ended questions, such as "In what kind of situations do you

think that SNS is useful?” and “How can we ensure that SNS will be useful for ER lessons?” The students’ average period of learning Japanese was 2 years, with the shortest being 1 year, and the longest 5 years. If the period after university entrance is counted, sophomores study Japanese for 1 year longer than freshmen do.

### ***Reading Materials***

JGR SAKURA is a small library of Japanese GRs divided into eight levels from A to H. Level D in this series targets beginner to intermediate learners and was used in this research. The author selected Kaeru (2474 characters) and Sen-nin (17,591 characters), which are short stories in level D, as assignments for this ER lesson because all participants read and discuss the same GRs. The two JGR SAKURA titles were made available as PDF files in the library e-learning system for this ER lesson.

### ***ER Assignments***

The author explained to participants the purpose of ER, how it differs from intensive reading, and how to read GRs and undertake the reading assignment steps (1) to (3) described below. In the previous semester, all participants wrote their reviews on forms (an A4-sized page). The review form included questions, such as “How do you rate the book?” and “Which is the most interesting part, and why?” In this semester, Facebook replaced the forms in step (3). Once their assignments were prepared, participants took part in step (4). However, step (4) is outside the scope of this paper.

1. The author creates a private group on Facebook and invites participants to join the group. The author adds PDF files on Facebook and on the e-learning system (Nakano, 2013).
2. Participants read the assignments (PDF) on their devices. The assigned books are Kaeru for the first session, and Sen-nin for the second. The topic for discussion in the classroom is “If you were the character in the story, what would you have done?”
3. Participants post their comments about the assignments to Facebook by the day of the ER lesson. Participants who do not have a Facebook account are given a form to write their review. They are then asked to bring the form to class for each session. Participants who read beyond the assignments may also post their comments to Facebook or present their reviews to the classmates.
4. In the ER lesson, groups of three–four participants are formed to discuss GR texts according to the review form. One person from each group presents what they have discussed to the wider group.

## **Results**

### ***Prequestionnaire***

The results of the prequestionnaire found that 16 of the 19 participants had used SNS (84% of all participants). Facebook was ranked first of all SNS used by participants (Figure 1).

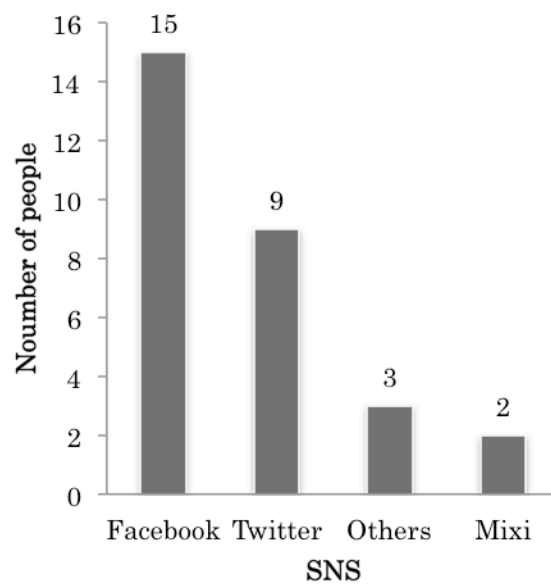


Figure 1. SNS Used by Participants

Smartphones were used slightly more frequently than PCs when participants used SNS (Figure 2).

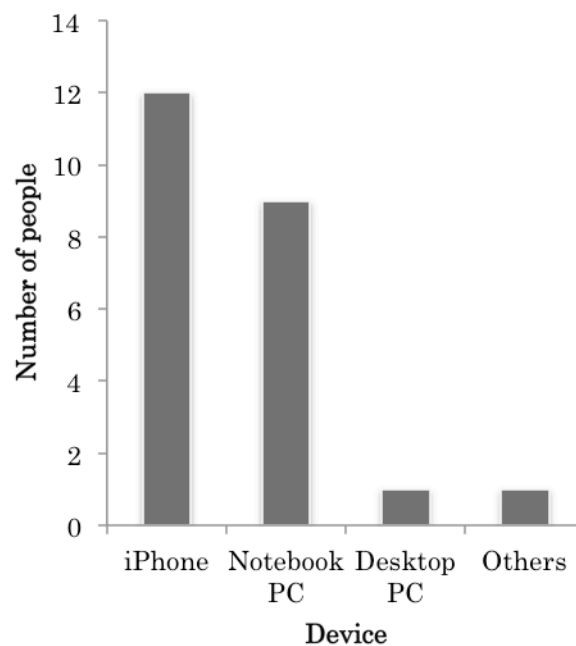


Figure 2. Devices Used to Access SNS

Eighty percent of participants used SNS every day and other participants used SNS as frequently as 2 or 3 days per week (Figure 3).

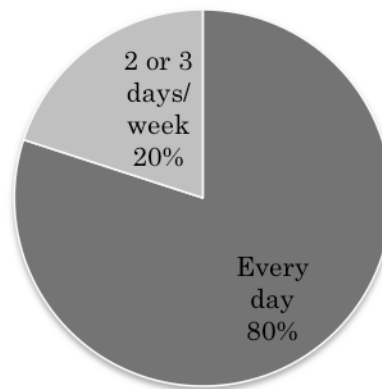


Figure 3. Frequency of Participants' SNS Use per Week (N=15)

Participants used SNS mostly with “friends in their country,” followed by “family” and “friends in Japan.” Sixty-eight percent used SNS to communicate with “friends in their country” and “family.” That is, participants used SNS to communicate with others who live in their home countries and used their first language (Figure 4).

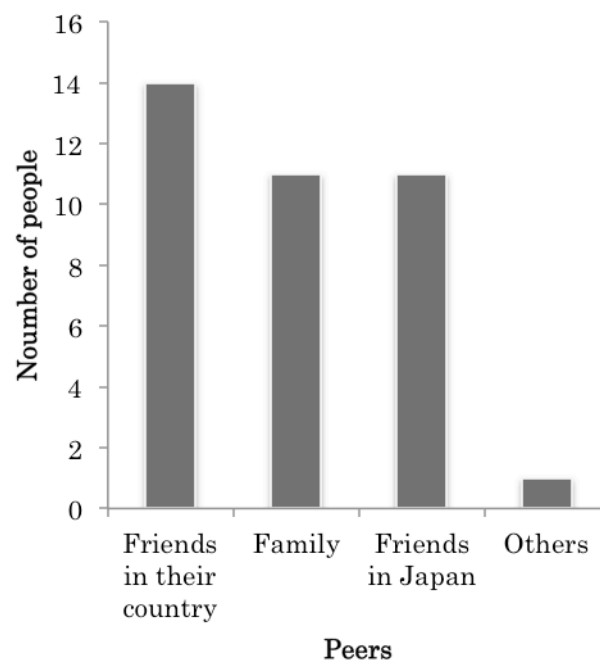


Figure 4. Participants' SNS Peers

This result is reflected in the language used (Figure 5).

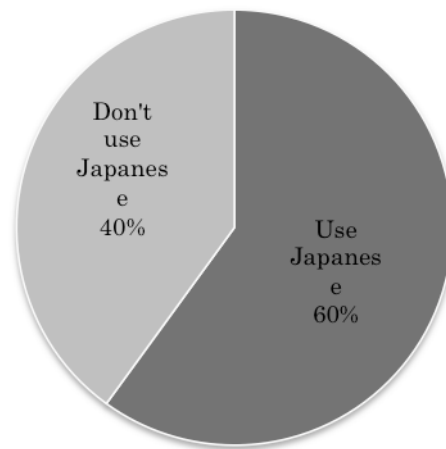


Figure 5. Participants' Use of Japanese on SNS (N=15)

Sixty percent of participants used both their first language and Japanese, and the remainder used only their first language. Participants ranked “contact” first in their purpose of using SNS, followed by “get information” (Figure 6).

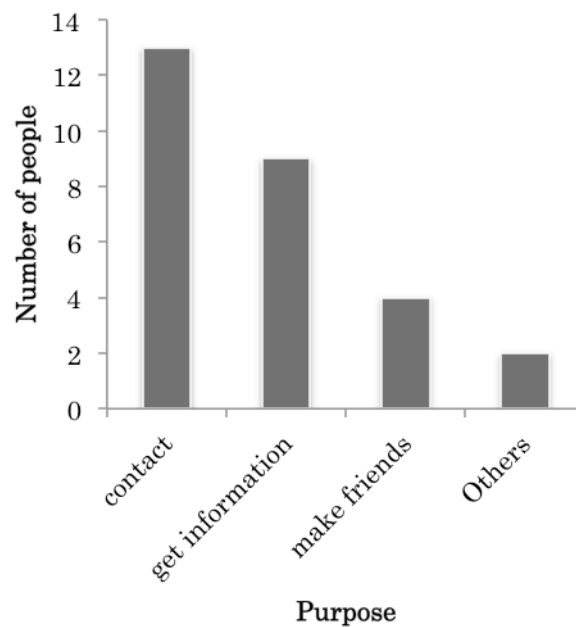


Figure 6. Participants' Purposes for Using SNS

The answers to the question “In what kind of situations do you think that SNS is useful?” were as follows:

- “We could know what’s going on with friends and family without making contact with them.”
- “It is convenient to look at photographs, gossip, and keep a diary.”
- “It is convenient to make contact with the course instructor.”
- “It can be used at any time and place. The cost is economical, especially when in a foreign country.”
- “I do not feel that it is so convenient.”

The answers to the question “How can we ensure that SNS will be useful for ER lessons?” were as follows:

- “It is better to organize a private Facebook group and upload photographs to the group.”
- “It is better to use a PC for lessons.”
- “It is better to use an app.”
- “I do not know whether we would enjoy ER lessons, but the frequent use of SNS would accustom us to them.”

### *Posting Comments about GRs*

Fifteen of the 19 participants had been using Facebook. Of these 15 participants, 9 participants (60%) wrote their comments about the assignments on Facebook. The 15 participants were divided into upper (7 participants) and lower (8 participants) groups based on their pretest scores, and were divided into two categories by asking whether participants usually used Japanese on SNS (Table 1).

**Table 1. Relationship between Comment Posts and the Use of Japanese in SNS**

Posted comment	Japanese used on SNS	Number of people	Vocabulary		SPOT	
			Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower
Yes	Yes	7	3	4	4	3
	No	2	1	1	2	0
No	Yes	2	0	2	0	2
	No	4	3	1	1	3
N=15.						

Seven participants usually used Japanese on SNS, and two of the participants who had not used Japanese on SNS before, wrote their comments on Facebook. The rate of participants who usually used Japanese on SNS was higher than that of participants who had not used Japanese on SNS. There



was no significant difference between the upper and lower groups in their vocabulary pretest scores. However, the rate of participants who wrote their comments on Facebook was slightly higher in the upper SPOT group. Six participants in the upper group wrote their comments on Facebook compared with three from the lower group.

### ***Comments on Other Participants' Posts***

The author posted a response to each post made by participants. One participant replied to the author's response and continued the discussion. Participants did not comment on each others' posts. Finally, the author made a post about the GR, and one participant commented on it and continued the discussion.

### ***Seeing Other Participants' Comments and Using "Like"***

All Facebook comments were seen by everyone. Some participants also used Facebook's "Like" function on their peers' comments.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Participants can freely register to use SNS, which is a positive quality of the SNS environment. Although some participants in this study who did not have a Facebook account were asked by the author to write their GR comments on paper sheets, there was no problem using SNS for postreading activities.

We discussed whether it is possible to use Facebook to build a reading community and organize discussions about GRs outside the ER classroom. The implementation results showed that 60% of participants who used Facebook in the activity made posts about GRs and all posts were seen by all participants using Facebook. In this survey, however, the discussion did not extend to a stage in which participants responded to each other. This may be because the author did not instruct participants to do so. Posting on Facebook replaced writing a review of the GR on a paper form which is mentioned above.

Another reason may be because there are several steps in participating in a SNS discussion; that is, reading other person's posts, posting "Like," and writing responses or debating about other people's comments. No participant was excluded from any step of the discussion, and this result shows that all participants joined the reading community. During classroom discussions, there were differences in quantity and quality of speech between learners who were more proficient in Japanese and those less proficient. For less proficient learners, they had positive attitude to join the community of readers. The fact that every student read posts, with some of them also either posting or liking, may be interpreted as a willingness to use Facebook to build a reading community. The results revealed that 40% of participants who had used Facebook, but did not post comments, tended not to use Japanese on SNS and scored poorly in their grammar assessment because of their lack of Japanese language skills. It was difficult for those participants to write comments in Japanese at that point.

From these study results and considering that participants in the reading community read their peers' comments, the author concluded that Facebook could be used to build a reading community outside the ER classroom. These results suggest that learners can discuss GRs on Facebook outside

the ER classes. At institutions where LMS has not been introduced, Facebook could be used instead to organize postreading activities outside the classroom.

### Limitations and Future Directions

A limitation of this study is that the author did not survey whether participants were stimulated to read by observing other learners' progress. However, the author did confirm that Facebook could possibly be used to organize postreading activities because all participants read each other's Facebook comments.

A reading community outside the classroom in which learners can know that other learners are also reading would be effective, if it motivates learners who have not yet read the assignment to begin reading. ER is essentially autonomous learning, and if supported by a community, for example on Facebook, learners may be encouraged to continue ER. Future studies are exploring methods of creating an online learner community to support ER learners who are reading JGR SAKURA.

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# Chapter Nine: Making Quizzes for M-Reader and the MoodleReader Quiz Module

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## Abstract

The MoodleReader Quiz Module ([moodlereader.org](http://moodlereader.org)) and MReader ([mreader.org](http://mreader.org)), are effective tools for tracking student progress in an Extensive Reading program and are being used in hundreds of Extensive Reading programs around the world. The MoodleReader quiz module generates ten questions randomly from a quiz bank of 20-30 items. Generally, quizzes are composed of four main question types: true-false, multiple-choice, who said questions, and an ordering problem, in which quiz-takers put the events of the book into the order that they happened. The questions are weighted according to difficulty and an adjustable score of 60% is considered a passing grade. So, how are these quizzes made? This paper describes how the MoodleReader works and the procedure for making quizzes. Teachers are encouraged to try their hand at making quizzes for easy graded readers. It is hoped that the teachers will be inspired to make quizzes for books in their collections in the future.

## Introduction

The MoodleReader [Quiz Module] <http://moodlereader.org> and [MReader] <http://mreader.org>, are effective tools for tracking student progress in an Extensive Reading (ER) program and are being used in hundreds of Extensive Reading programs around the world. The MoodleReader quiz module generates ten questions randomly from a quiz bank of 20-30 items. Generally, quizzes are composed of four main question types: true-false, multiple-choice, who said questions, and an ordering problem, in which quiz-takers put the events of the book into the order that they happened. The questions are weighted according to difficulty and an adjustable score of 60% is considered a passing grade. So, how are these quizzes made? This workshop describes how the MoodleReader works and the procedure for making quizzes. Attendees can try their hand at making quizzes for easy graded readers. It is hoped that the presentation will inspire the attendees to make quizzes for books in their collections in the future.

## Tracking Extensive Reading for Assessment

### *Assessment of ER*

The case for inclusion of an Extensive Reading (ER) component in second language curricula is becoming stronger (Grabe, 2009; Nation, 1996; Waring, 2009). A growing body of empirical studies leave little doubt as to the effectiveness of ER for language learning. Surveys of the literature on ER in L2 acquisition have been published (Grabe, 2010; Iwahori, 2008; Robb & Kano, 2013). Day and Bamford describe ten characteristics of a successful ER program, among them, “Teachers orient students to the goals of the program, explain the methodology, keep track of what each students reads, and guide students in getting the most out of the program,” (1998, p.8). There is less agreement, however, regarding how ER should be assessed and whether ER should be assessed at all (Day & Bamford, 1998; Prowse, 2002; Krashen, 2004). In an ideal world, reading should be its own reward, but teachers rarely have that luxury. In reality, teachers often have little choice whether to assess students’ ER (Brierley et al., 2010; Robb, 2002, 2008) and there is even mounting evidence that students want their reading to be assessed (Robb, 2015), but in a simple manner and with rapid feedback (Campbell & Weatherford, 2013; Stoeckel et al., 2012). Success with Moodle quizzes can positively affect students’ motivation (Bieri, 2015).

For curriculum-wide implementation of ER, Robb identifies two main obstacles: the physical and the pedagogical (Robb, 2008). To purchase, store and manage a library large enough for hundreds of students is an enormous undertaking. While no simple solution exists to that problem, the MoodleReader was created to address a second concern: How can teachers be assured that students actually have read the books they claim to have read?

According to the MoodleReader website:

The MoodleReader Module provides quizzes on over 4500 graded readers and books for young readers, so that teachers can have a simple way to assess their students’ work. All quizzes are randomized with a time-limit for their completion which allows students to take the quizzes open-book, even at home, while minimizing the possibility of cheating.  
(para. 1)

The MoodleReader is installed as an activity on existing Moodle websites. However, not every teacher or institution has Moodle installed on the university servers and teachers often need support from the technical staff of their institution. To address this problem, a more user-friendly version, the [M-Reader] <http://mreader.org> was developed, and is described as “a completely rewritten version of the “MoodleReader” module. This version, which is supported by the various graded reader publishers, is intended to be easy for administrators, teachers and students to use.” (moodlereader.org, About M-Reader, para. 1)

Although written logs, journals or book reports can be effective, the MoodleReader or MReader are free programs currently used in hundreds of ER programs throughout the world.

### ***Making Quizzes***

Quizzes are essential to the success of an ER program managed by MoodleReader. When no quiz is available, that book will very likely go unread. The greatest challenge is that there are thousands of titles which do not have quizzes. The quiz-making task falls on the shoulders of volunteer teachers and free-lance quiz-makers who contract with publishers.

As summarized in Table 1, there are nearly 3,500 graded readers, and the coverage for these titles is greater than 70%.

**Table 1. Summary of Graded Readers, Youth Literature and Moodle Quizzes**

	Count	Quizzes Done	Pct. Done
Graded Readers	3488	2537	72.74%
Youth Literature (Anything not a 'graded reader')	5199	2296	44.16%
Total	8687	4833	55.63%

(GradedReaders-Master\_List, n.d).

However, there are far many more so-called “leveled readers.” These books’ lexis and syntax are usually controlled but the target audience is first-language readers. In addition, there is a vast amount of youth literature, books aimed at young readers in their first language. These books often appear in ER collections and so if they are to be included in the MoodleReaders, quizzes must be made for them as well.

Turning to graded readers, and specifically to the major publishers whose titles commonly appear ER collections, the rate of coverage is higher than 90%, as seen in Table 2.

**Table 2. Summary of Moodle Quizzes for Four Major Publishers**

Publisher	Count	Quizzes Done	Pct. Done
<i>Cambridge English Readers</i> (CER)	95	94	99.05%
<i>Macmillan Readers</i> (MMR)	189	177	94.7%
<i>Oxford Bookworms</i> (OBW)	242	224	92.3%
<i>Penguin Readers</i> (PR)	498	450	90.2%

(GradedReaders-Master\_List, n.d).

The Oxford Bookworms series, perhaps one of the most popular, has a high rate of coverage, especially at the lower levels. Oxford University Press publishes about 7-10 new Bookworms titles each year, so quizzes must be made for those as well. (See Table 3.)

**Table 3. Summary of Moodle Quizzes for Oxford Bookworms Series**

Oxford Bookworms	Count	Quizzes Done	%
OBWS	29	29	100.00%
OBW1	41	40	97.56%
OBW2	47	44	93.62%
OBW3	42	39	92.86%
OBW4	39	33	84.62%
OBW5	23	20	86.96%
OBW6	21	19	90.48%
Total	243	224	92.3%

(GradedReaders-Master List, n.d).

As can be seen from the section above, quiz-makers are constantly playing catch-up as publishers create more and more series and publish new titles in existing ones. It would be a great service to the ER community if publishers could provide ready-made quizzes for their books.

### Procedure for Making Moodle Quizzes

Now, let's turn to the actual process of making quizzes. The procedure can be summarized in these five steps:

1. Identify books that need quizzes to be made.
2. Read the book(s).
3. Make questions in GIFT format according to the Guidelines.
4. Submit the quiz for processing into Moodle.
5. Download the quiz for MoodleReader.

The first step for the quiz-maker is to identify which books do not have quizzes. The Extensive Reading Foundation provides Google docs spreadsheets with publishers' lists of books, searchable by individual publishers (<https://sites.google.com/site/erfglist/>). In addition to word count, yomiyasusa (YL) level and other data, the site indicates if a quiz is available for the MoodleReader. It is important that quiz-makers do not duplicate their efforts, so care should be taken before embarking on making a quiz.

Once a title has been identified as not having a quiz, the quiz-maker should read the book. For longer books, the quiz-maker may need to read it more than once, especially if the book could not be finished in one sitting.

Quizzes must be created in a text-based file according to a GIFT format. This is a kind of coding that is then processed so that the quiz will properly display on the MoodleReader. A template is available from <http://moodlereader.org>. Novice quiz-makers may be slightly intimidated at first, but after a period of getting accustomed to the format, it is relatively straight-forward as shown in Figure 1.

```
$CATEGORY:MC
What did the children use for windows? {
~A piece of ice
~A piece of glass
~A piece of plastic
~A piece of tape
}.
```

Figure 1. Sample of a Multiple-choice Question

Detailed guidelines for making quizzes are available at <http://moodlereader.org>. There are many factors to be taken into consideration when making a quiz. The nature of the book will determine the most suitable question types. For example, a non-fiction may not have a sequence of events, but could describe a process, which could be used in the ordering question type. Because the quiz the student takes usually has 10 questions, the question bank should have at least 20-30 questions in it. Of course, it is better to have as many questions as possible, because the more questions there are, the more randomized they become in the MoodleReader.

Once the quiz has been made, it must be sent for processing. During processing, the quiz will appear on the MoodleReader Updates spreadsheet, as below. Once it has been processed, it will be marked OK in the Quizbank column and is now ready for download to the users' MoodleReader as shown in Table 4.



**Table 4. Excerpt from MoodleReader Updates Spreadsheet**

Pub/ Level code	Publisher/ Series	Level/Sub- Category	Title	Action	Date	Contributor/ Editor/ Reporter	Quiz made/ updated in Moodle	Quiz uploaded to <u>Quizbank</u>
SIR2	Step into Reading	Level 2	A Mother's Love	New	7/2/2015	Toby Curtis	OK	OK
SIR2	Step into Reading	Level 2	Honey Bunny's Honey Bear	New	7/2/2015	Toby Curtis	OK	OK
SIR2	Step into Reading	Level 2	Platypus!	New	7/2/2015	Toby Curtis	OK	OK
SIR2	Step into Reading	Level 2	Ready? Set. Raymond!	New	7/2/2015	Toby Curtis	OK	OK
SIR2	Step into Reading	Level 2	The Worst Helper Ever	New	7/2/2015	Toby Curtis	OK	OK

(MoodleReader Updates, n.d).

Finally, once the quiz has been uploaded, there is a review process by the Quiz Quality Assurance project, a team of volunteers who review quizzes, looking out for faulty questions, coding and spelling errors.

## Conclusion

The author's motivation to make Moodle quizzes sprang from personal and institutional needs. First, when a coordinated curriculum was adopted in the Faculty of Engineering, all engineering majors (n=560) were required to do extensive reading for one year in their general-education English courses. Although teachers have autonomy on how they choose to evaluate ER, the author and several other teachers adopted the MoodleReader. However, numerous students claimed to have read books for which there were no quizzes. In other words, our ER collection did not match up well to the MoodleReader quiz database. To address this problem, students were allowed to write book reports. However, "resourceful" students quickly caught on to this fact and soon more and more students were submitting the same book reports that had previously been submitted by other students. These students were often, though not always, behind in their reading and were trying to avoid taking quizzes. Thus, the need was obvious to fill the gaps between our ER collection and the quizzes available on the MoodleReader. In addition, the author felt compelled to create quizzes to contribute to the effort to promote ER through the MoodleReader.

The second reason is that, as the MoodleReader became more robust, it made it possible for non-English teachers to use it. This was key in extending our ER program beyond one year. When the engineering students entered their second year, there were required courses in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), but no ER program. At many universities in Japan, it is common for science and technology faculty to teach courses in English for Specific Purposes (ESP). If there were a quiz for every title in our collection, then it would be easier to persuade the Engineering faculty to include an ER component, managed through MoodleReader, in the students' second year.

Then, at the 2012 ER World Congress held in Kyoto, Japan, Matthew Claflin offered a workshop in which attendees could try their hand at making quizzes for books in the *Oxford Reading Tree*



series. From that point, the author became a regular quiz-maker, writing several hundred quizzes. A positive by-product of making quizzes is that teachers become intimately familiar with the books that students are reading. This possibly encourages more teacher-student interaction and can serve as a point of contact between teacher and learner. Secondly, if students know the teacher is also reading the books, the teacher becomes a role-model, which is considered key to the success of an ER program (Day & Bamford, 1998).

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# Chapter Ten: Three Steps Toward Authenticating the Practice and Research of Extensive Reading at a Japanese University

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## Abstract

This study documents the first two of three steps taken by one teacher to deepen and authenticate the practice of Extensive Reading (ER) in non-Reading-based classes at a Japanese university. Step One began in the fall of 2014 through the establishment of a paper-based form of ER in a second year discussion course; Step Two was taken from spring 2015 and expanded the program to cover five non-reading-skill focused courses. Step Two continued the use of paper-based books and included three first year courses (two communication courses and one writing course) and two second year courses (one communication course and a new discussion course). It differed from Step One in that two forms of ER were used: Communication students in first and second year courses read “x” number of books and wrote responses; Discussion course and Writing course students read “x x 2” books, wrote responses, and noticed three words they either did not understand or were unclear about their meaning. In both forms a total of 99 students provided data through a) written responses, b) questionnaire responses, and c) the results of two vocabulary size tests that bookended semester one of academic year 2015-2016. The data allows for assessment on the worth of the ER practiced in the courses, to investigate the attitudes and performance of students, and to consider how such a program may be used with future students at the institution. The decision to give students vocabulary tests allowed for additional speculation on matters related to vocabulary acquisition, and utilized a research tool that may provide fruitful data with future students. Results saw students wholeheartedly endorse the practice of ER and approve the writer’s third step (currently in progress): a movement from solely paper-based ER to a mix between paper-based and online screen-based ER.

## Introduction

For a still-growing number of EFL researchers in tertiary education Extensive Reading (ER) is an approach to reading that has definite benefits for students of foreign languages. Researchers cognizant of its benefits find it remarkable that some institutions that offer EFL programs do not utilize its proven potential to get students reading large numbers of foreign language books. The inescapable case for extensive reading (Waring, 2006; 2009) has long disseminated far and wide, but perceptions that a) ER is unworthy for lower level university students, and b) uses up valuable time that could be more profitably used for commercial tests such as TEFL or TOEFL still linger and prevail. While the former is easily contested the latter is harder to disprove and provides oxygen for those who wish to resist such change. As Humphries and Burns (2015) recently noted, opposition to curriculum change is often a default reaction and is strengthened through teacher beliefs, lack of understanding new approaches, and a lack of ongoing support. In the case of ER, even where a teacher is open to change, there remain considerable problems: as with the Sciences, ER research has a replicability crisis. Existing research has not or cannot be replicated satisfactorily, and certainly not to convince stakeholders in Japanese institutions of its worth. One only needs to look at Nakanishi's (2015)'s meta-analysis to understand this: the lack of specificity in detailed and descriptive statistics, control groups, and sample size in many studies has diluted ERs potential impact.

Another reason for lukewarm welcomes to ER is confusion over its definition. Day and Bamford's 10 principles (1998, 2002) kick started the modern ER Movement and provided room for a wide umbrella of research, but differing research focuses have obfuscated an agreement as to its essence. However, Waring and McLean's (2015) search to clarify core and variable dimensions in research and pedagogy have led to four core elements that may be present in a "purified" form of ER: fluent comprehension, high reading speed, the reading of large amounts of text, and a focus on meaning. When satisfying all of these, a reader practices the first language reading concept of "rauding" (Carver, 1992), but it may be that "ER" practiced by students in many departments and faculties that offer English Language, English Linguistics, or English Culture based courses in Japan do not (and cannot) consistently promote reading where students regularly raud.

This is a shame but is something that needs to and can change. While most forms of ER have much pedagogical validity, a purified form of ER (as referred to above) would likely move students towards a deeper understanding of English written texts, whether this be English language emails at work, a BBC news text, or a modern rewrite of a Shakespeare classic. Indeed, while secondary education in Japan continues to overlook the use of graded readers in English courses, university students (whether majoring in communication, linguistics, or literature fields) need ER to deepen the acquisition process of large numbers of half-understood words. Quite possibly, a purified ER operated in conjunction with courses that promote intensive reading is the optimum way to provide quality reading courses for most students majoring in English language fields. This writer sees purified ER as a hypothesized "heavenly" state that manifests when environments support large-scale rauding. Co-opting the title of US singer Eddie Cochran's (1960) *Three Steps to Heaven*, this paper looks at two steps taken and ends with a third step that has moved the project into a more effective ER program.

### **Background to Step One: The University Environment (and Why ER May or May Not Manifest)**

Although many English departments in Japanese tertiary education still do not recognize ER, or utilize purified ER, Reitaku University's Faculty of Foreign Studies has long allowed individual teachers to use undocumented forms of ER (within Reading classes) at their own discretion. These forms of ER may have included those outlined by Waring and McLean (2015: 164), (i.e. a focus on texts to promote cultural understanding, on reading English language books, on the provision of meaning-focused input, and on the building of cultural capital). Whether past students read texts in which they understood 97% of the vocabulary is unlikely, but what is certain is that individual teachers in Reitaku classes integrated ER into courses to put it on the pedagogical menu for students to chew on (if not feast). While the university has made the sensible decisions to focus on tangible and visible ways to serve students, research-based activities of individual faculty members led to the development of a sizeable library of graded readers which allowed teachers to experiment with ER within courses.

Its manifestation has, however, provided limited fruit for definite reasons. The foremost opposition to it is teacher belief. Naysayers may not have read studies such as Nation and Wang (1999) and Nishizawa, Yoshioka and Fukada's (2010) but they understand the herculean task facing students who use ER to improve vocabulary acquisition. Still, as with most universities, the commercially important TOEIC tests have shown that student reading score is far lower than the average listening score; and this points to a specific need to improve reading skills. Waring and McLean's (2015: 164) suggestion of weekly, monthly and semester-long reading targets on reading speed may be worthwhile. Increasing reading speed and completing the acquisition of incompletely acquired words, as opposed to vocabulary growth, are, after all, possibly the main functions of extensive reading (Nation & Wang, 1999; Waring & Takaki, 2003). Reading fluency, or the state of completion in knowing how to practically use a language is something that does not emerge via a concentration on intensive reading (IR), textbooks, or translation.

It is fair to say that ER was far from the forefront of my mind when I started teaching a new Discussion class in mid-2014, but a growing sense of student frustration at the slew of words tantalizingly poised on the tip of their tongues made me reflect and face the obvious truth that they had not received sufficient input or produced sufficient output to stimulate the automaticity required to participate skillfully in discussion. The course was improving their ability to use discussion functions and promoted word acquisition but the sheer amount of undigested (i.e. not fully acquired) words reduced the effectiveness of their present output. Upon being asked whether they had read graded readers, many replied in the affirmative. When asked "How many have you read," their reply tended to be "one or two." It was clear that they had inhabited zones of incomplete development in their academic past and had not spent sufficient time in Vygotskian zones of proximal development, where encouragement and structured programs would have seen instructors help them acquire vocabulary at a deeper level. Perhaps this was a ramification of excessive translation, but, whatever the reason, ER seemed to be a tool to expose them to large amounts of clear comprehensible text. Thus began the road to Step One: where an action research impulse led to a non-Reading-course based ER program.

## Method

### ***Step One: Testing the Field: “SR” not “ER” – Supplementary Reading not Extensive Reading?***

Step One began in September 2014 when I introduced the idea of using graded readers in the second year Discussion class. Exploratory in intent, I first requested they read a mere three graded readers, but target five or more for which 10% of the grade would be based on written responses and in-class book talks. It was deliberately undemanding because students had other classes (including Reading) in which ER could have been used. After one semester with freedom and encouragement to read as much as they could, the highest amount read was 11, the average a lowly 4. The student who read 11 books commented that “... my reading section (sic) in TOEIC jumped up,” while a student who barely managed one noted “it is difficult for me because I don’t like reading books.” Unenthusiastic readers had one text in their bag for fifteen weeks; others, unchecked by the teacher, read slowly but far from extensively. However, questions from a post-course questionnaire (see Table 1) allowed for an insight on student perception towards extensive reading and showed unanimous support in using it.

**Table 1: Key Questions from Post Course Questionnaire Given December 2014**

	Yes	No	No answer
1. Was this the first time you read a non-textbook book in English?	65%	35%	
2. Should we use class time to do ER?	65%	29%	6%
3. Should future students in this university use ER?	88%	6%	6%

Question One probed whether these second year English language students had read non-textbook books in English before and 65% explained it was their first time to read one. Question Two showed the same percentage expressing a wish to read books in class time. Two of these students responded they didn’t have time to do such reading at home; one hoped to talk about books in class time, and almost 90% agreed that ER should be used with future students at the university.

### ***Step Two: Deepening and Extending the Experiment - More Recognizable ER***

The students in the discussion class had effectively given me carte blanche to continue my experiment with graded readers in non-Reading classes. Mentioning this, previously uninterested members of the faculty made encouraging noises and money was allocated to purchase books for the English Faculty Office. Other teachers who practiced forms of ER as a pedagogical tool requested purchases of new graded reader texts: “Ones with CDs please!” and “More Disney!” were two common calls, while in a separate development, the English Faculty requested me write “anything” for a departmental newsletter. I chose “Extensive Reading” and channeled Rob Waring to explain its indispensable nature for the English language learner (Walker, 2015). Too lexically dense to be “rauded” it was used in a translation competition: a piece about ER used for IR (Reitaku, 2015). For good or ill, word was spreading; (supplementary) reading was happening. A plan for stage two was

set in place but, once again, because the classes were not Reading classes, caution prevented me from insisting that students read more than one book a week.

Knowing we had enough books, I used five classes instead of one: three communication classes (two first year and one second year class), a first year writing class and a second year discussion class. With ER not being an official goal, I again took care not to over-burden students and divided the classes into two groups: ER A and ER B. Communication classes formed ER A; the writing class and the discussion class formed ER B. ER A students would read a minimum of five books and a maximum of their own choice; ER B would read a minimum of ten books and a maximum of their own choice. ER B students would also be expected to write down three words they did not know or were unclear about (to practice “noticing”). In addition, as an experimental means of tracking change in vocabulary size, in Week One and Week 15 I used the PC version of the Mochizuki Vocabulary Size Test (1998), a test designed specifically for Japanese students to measure receptive vocabulary size. One test was administered in April 2015 and another in July 2015.

**Table 2: ER Plan for Five Classes from April 2015 to July 2015**

Required Activities	ER A	ER B
Book number	3 Communication classes a minimum of 5 No set maximum	1 Writing, 1 Discussion a minimum of 10 No set maximum
Written response	Yes (shorter)	Yes (longer)
Notice vocabulary?	Not requested	Requested
Vocabulary test	April and July 2015	April and July 2015

### ***Procedure: Step Two***

Class one for each group saw the introduction of the course curriculum which included informing students about the supplementary ER program that would give them large-scale practice in reading English for pleasure. Students signed a consent form, written in English and Japanese, that gave me permission to use specified data over the 2015-2016 academic year, and which a) explained the concept of ER, b) informed them that non-participation would not affect their grade, and c) assured them of their anonymity. All assented to participate in what remained action research but was becoming “proper research.” At the end of the class students took the vocabulary size test. The consent form included three questions on the topic of reading and gave insight into their history and opinion about reading. (See Tables 3 and 4.)

**Table 3: April 2015: Pre Course Questionnaire (First Years)**

	Yes	No
1. Have you ever read a non-textbook book in English?	60%	40%
2. Is it beneficial to read “Easy English?”	100%	0%
3. Do you like to read books in Japanese?	73%	27%

**Table 4: April 2015: Pre Course Questionnaire (Second Years)**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1. Have you ever read a non-textbook book in English?	87%	13%
2. Is it beneficial to read “Easy English?”	100%	0%
3. Do you like to read books in Japanese?	47%	53%

Tables 3 and 4 show that the majority of first and second year students had read a non-textbook English book prior to April 2015. That 40% of first years had not done so reflects on the lack of reading such texts in high school; 13% of second years, however, had evidently not been forced or expected to do so in their first year in university. Unsurprisingly all students wanted to read easy English, but almost 30% of first years stated they did not like reading in their mother tongue. Even more surprisingly a majority of second years did not either. This might be explained by several of the second years having a year-long study abroad program ahead of them in semester two, but might also suggest that a) reading in Japanese is unappealing to large numbers of students in the Faculty of Foreign Studies, or b) that within this context – and it obviously could be read as such – they were reacting to the number of lessons in the Japanese medium. Further research would be fruitful in discovering the reasons behind this.

The procedure for overseeing the readings of ER A and ER B were similar. Both groups were informed that they should read every week throughout the semester, and would have to participate in five graded “book talk” discussions. They were informed that this was a supplementary activity to the course and as university students they were responsible to maintain notes in journal or note form, the teacher giving them examples of how to do this in English and Japanese. They were informed that the teacher would check their progress intermittently with 30% of their grade allocated to their spoken in-class and written class responses. The instructor also group emailed each class several times during the semester to remind them of the readings but took care not to interfere too much with their own personal progression. In practice large numbers of the first year communication classes did not follow the program as well as one had hoped, making the instructor react by bringing in simple *Oxford Reading Tree* books to do simple ER activities in-class. A mid-term questionnaire given in late May 2015 saw these students comment on the high volume of homework in their other classes, though the second year communication group and the first year writing group reported no such difficulties.

However, as Tables 5 and 6 show, students did exactly what they were told to do.



**Table 5. July 2015: EFC A – Books Read in Semester One**

ER A	0-4 books	5-9 books	10-14 books	15 plus books
First year – ECS – low level*	40%	60%	0%	0%
First year – ELC – low level*	17%	83%	0%	0%
Second year – ECS top level*	21%	47%	32%	0%

\*This does not include four books read in-class to raise awareness of ER.

**Table 6. July 2015: EFC B – Books Read in Semester One**

ER B	0-4 books	5-9 books	10-14 books	15 plus books
First year - Writing ECS – high level*	16%	41%	32%	11%
Second year - Discussion – medium level*	5%	31%	47%	16%

\*This does not include four books read in-class to raise awareness of ER.

In fact most read beyond the required number of books in their own time. Unsurprisingly, through reading between ten and fourteen books, 32% of the highest-level second year communication students read beyond the minimum, but none of the lower level first year communication students did. With twelve out of nineteen second year discussion students reading ten or more ER books and eight out of nineteen writing students doing so, it also seemed that their schedule did not prevent the practice of ER as a supplementary activity.

### ***Vocabulary Test Data***

Step Two also saw students also take the Mochizuki Vocabulary Size Test at the start and end of the semester. They took one version in April, and a different version in July. The results allow for a view of changes in vocabulary size through a test that measured promptness of lexical retrieval. There was little expectation for a statistically significant change in student scores over one semester, and any increase or decrease in vocabulary size would reflect more on the overall English language program than ER in the first semester. However, Table 7 shows that a slight change did occur in the scores for the ER A group, but not for ER B. A possible explanation for this is given below.

**Table 7. ER A and ER B Average Scores for the Mochizuki Vocabulary Size Test**

ER A classes	Week 1/15* average score	Week 15/15* average score
First year – ECS – low level	61.6%	65.6%
First year - ELC – low level	63.2%	68%

Second year - ECS top level	85.6%	89.6%
<b>ER B classes</b>	<b>Week 1/15* average</b>	<b>Week 15/15* average</b>
	<b>score</b>	<b>score</b>
First year - Writing ECS – high level	80%	81%
Second year - Discussion – medium level	77%	77%

\*Students took a different version of the test in April and in July 2015

An explanation for improvements in the ER A first year low level communication classes may be a positive reaction to intensively studying English in an environment that contrasted greatly with their former high school environment. In addition, when we recall that two fifths of these students had not read a graded reader prior to entering the university, it may well be that 'ER' played a part in the improvement. The increase in the score for the second year high level communication course could be attributed to higher word knowledge having a larger impact on vocabulary learning through ER (Webb and Chang, 2015). Notably this class also chose more complex ER texts. Improvement in scores for the ER B group was unexpected and did not occur: the students appeared to choose texts from well within their reading comfort zone. To make significant improvement it is expected that either specific IR together with a more intense ER program would be needed. These scores reflect the whole program of which ER is a small part.

## Discussion

Stage Two of my exploration into using ER with non-reading-skill classes can be said to have been a success in further promoting the act of reading graded readers to aide comprehension, to read for pleasure and to increase the number of texts read over a semester. An end of course questionnaire (See appendix) of three sets of questions saw students approve ER and its projected future use. The first covered ER – in general and included the finding that 80% found ER to be of interest, with 80% acknowledging the importance of teacher reminders. The second set were Finding the Books and saw students report no difficulty in locating books. 60% however stated they prefer them in one location rather than divided between the Faculty Office, library and teacher offices. From ER in the future 90 % believe that future students should do ER, with 65% seeing the use of iPhones as a good idea. Students did not give a preference for starting ER programs on the same book nor for doing quizzes instead of book reports.

## Conclusion

Step Two of my move to authenticate ER at my workplace led to a significant increase in students reading graded readers which, for some of them, would have involved more rauding than in Step One. At the time of writing (midway into semester two in November 2015), step three has seen the following changes: ER A classes continue to use paper-based texts but ER B classes have started to use the online reading medium: Xreading (2015). Both groups have to read an increased minimum number: 15 or more books; but ER B classes still have the option of using paper-based books. The Mochizuki Vocabulary Test was taken again in September 2015 and will be taken again in January

2016. The signs so far are that students are reading (and rauding) more: the majority already have surpassed 15 books and two students having read over 40.

Over one year this supplementary ER program for non-Reading-classes has approached a purified ER: future papers will report on the findings of one full academic year, and on student perception of paper- versus screen-based ER.

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## Appendix

### Questionnaire Results

#### ER Program In General

1 How interesting was the practice of ER?

Interesting	Okay	Neither okay nor uninteresting	Uninteresting	Boring
31%	48%	17%	5%	0%

2 How well did you understand the reason for ER?

Very easy	Quite easy	Neither easy nor difficult	A little difficult	Very difficult
31%	50%	17%	2%	0%

3 How clearly did the teacher explain the need to do ER?

Very clearly	Clearly	Neither clearly nor unclearly	Not clearly	Very unclearly
50%	36%	13%	1%	0%

4 How often did the instructor remind you to do ER?

Always	Often	Neither often nor sometimes	Sometimes	Rarely
40%	43%	11%	6%	0%

#### Finding the Books

5 How easy was it to find books?

Very easy	Easy	Neither easy nor difficult	A little difficult	Difficult
41%	37%	16%	4%	2%

6 Would you prefer all the books to be in the same place?

Yes, definitely	Yes, a little	Neither yes nor no	Not really	Definitely not
21%	42%	25%	9%	3%

7 Could you find an interesting and useful range of books?

Very easily	Easily	Neither easily nor with difficulty	With a little difficulty	With difficulty
14%	51%	23%	10%	2%

8 How did Mr. Walker help you understand how to find books?

In a very useful way	In a useful way	Neither in a useful nor a not helpful way	Not in a helpful way	In an unhelpful way
40%	45%	14%	1%	0%

## ER in the Future

9 Should RU students use ER in the future?

Yes, definitely	I think so	Neither agree nor disagree	I don't think so	Definitely not
37%	53%	8%	3%	0%

10 Would the use of iPhones be a better way of doing ER?

Yes, definitely	Yes, a little	Neither yes nor no	Not really	Definitely not
37%	28%	17%	14%	4%

11 Should all the books be on the 1st floor of the library?

Yes, definitely	Yes, a little	Neither yes nor no	Not really	Definitely not
36%	27%	26%	9%	2%

12 Is it a good idea for books to be kept in three locations?

Yes, definitely	Yes, a little	Neither yes nor no	Not really	Definitely not
11%	35%	33%	17%	4%

13 Is it true that ER is OK for students from other universities but not for this university?

Agree very much	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Very much disagree
7%	20%	30%	27%	16%

14 Would you like to start ER with everybody reading the same book?

Yes, definitely	Yes, a little	Neither yes nor no	Not really	Definitely not
9%	25%	29%	26%	11%

15 Would you like to do quizzes about the book instead of book reports?

Yes, definitely	Yes, a little	Neither yes nor no	Not really	Definitely not
10%	31%	32%	16%	11%