

Exploring Extensive Reading to Sustain and Renew ELT Reading Instruction

Doreen Ewert, University of San Francisco

A Stand-Alone ER Course in an IEP

Convincing and training teachers and students:

This approach to reading fluency development is based on an understanding of the role of implicit learning in the ESL/EFL adult learning context. Most of what we do tends to be focused on explicit learning, which is not a problem as long as there is also room for fluency development and implicit learning. Teachers and students need to have a good understanding of this approach, its research supported rationale and the practices that distinguish it from intensive whole-class reading activity.

Extensive Reading Definition:

Reading quickly large amounts of easy, varied, interesting, and self-selected material.

Comparison of Reading Types:

| Type of Reading | Intensive Reading (most common in the ESL/EFL classrooms and in published classroom reading textbooks) | Extensive Reading |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Class goal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read accurately | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read fluently |
| Reading purpose | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • answer questions • study | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • get information • enjoy |
| Focus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • words • pronunciation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meaning |
| Material | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teacher chooses • often difficult | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student chooses • easy |
| Amount | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not much | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a lot |
| Speed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • slower | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • faster |
| Method | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must finish • use dictionary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stop if you don't like it • no dictionary |

Sample Seven Week Schedule for Extensive Reading Course (meets 50 minutes daily)

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|------------|----------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| Week One | Intro to Extensive Reading | Motivation for Rdg in English Questionnaire | ER Diagnostic Test | Graded Readers in class Make-up Test | Graded Readers in class Make-up Test |
| Week Two | Graded Readers in class | Syllabus Why we read easy books How to choose books | Public Library visit | Graded Readers in class | Graded Readers in class |
| Week Three | Intro: Journals Book chat | Graded Readers in class | Intensive and Extensive Rdg Discssion Graded Readers in class | Public Library visit | Graded Readers in a good reading location other than the classroom |

| | | | | | |
|------------|-------------------------|--|--|--|-------------------------|
| Week Four | Graded Readers in class | Book chat | Public Library visit | Graded Readers in a good reading location other than the classroom | Graded Readers in class |
| Week Five | Graded Readers in class | Graded Readers in a good reading location other than the classroom | Graded Readers in class | Book Chat | Graded Readers in class |
| Week Six | Graded Readers in class | Book chat | Graded Readers in a good reading location other than the classroom | Graded Readers in class | Evaluations |
| Week Seven | Graded Readers in class | Graded Readers students' choice of location | Final Reflection and Course Evaluation Book Chat | Diagnostic Post Test | Celebration of Reading |

Sample Syllabus

Goal

Students will become more fluent and motivated readers of English.

Objectives

Students will use a variety of level appropriate reading resources including library books and EPER resource books. Students will visit libraries as a class, choose books, read in varied locations, and talk to each other about what they are reading.

Reading guidelines

- CHOOSE what you read.
- Choose EASY material.
- Read for general meaning, information, and enjoyment. (No dictionary!)
- Enjoy!
- Enjoy!
- Enjoy!

Grading is PASS/FAIL. For a PASS grade students will:

- complete a reading log which is turned in 2 -3 times during the course (25%).
Bring your ER log to class EVERYDAY! You will keep a record EPER books and library books that you read in class (EPER days and Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) days) and at home.
- complete 4 journal assignments with a minimum of 750 words total (about 190-200 words per week) (25%).
15 pages or more=A 12-14 pages=B 9-11 pages=C 6-8 pages=D 5-0 pages=F
- complete a self-evaluation (25%)
Students will decide this part of their grade. It will be based on personal goals, effort, and learning.
- arrive on time, attend class and participate during class (25%).
We will be reading in class, so attendance is very important. Every absence affects your grade. If you are more than 15 minutes late, you are absent.

Sample Materials

1. **Extensive Reading Log** (on paper or online)

| Name _____ | | Class _____ | | | |
|---------------|------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Title | Book Level | Reading time in minutes | Number of words in the book | Level: easy, good, difficult | Opinion: good, fair, poor |
| The Long Road | B | 30 | 1056 | Easy | good |
| Peanuts | B | 15 | 2300 | Good | good |
| | | 10 | | | |
| | | 20 | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

2. **EPER Book Checkout List**

Class _____

| Name | Title |
|------|-------|
| | |
| | |
| | |

3. **Extensive Reading Classroom Survey**

On a scale from 1 to 5, express your opinion of the Extensive Reading class.
 5= Super! 4= Very Good 3= Good 2= So So 1= Bad

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Public Library: | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Education Library: | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. EPER books: | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. Library books: | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. Book Chats: | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| (when you talked to classmates about your books) | | | | | |
| 6. E.R. sites: | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| (the places we went to read) | | | | | |
| 7. E.R. log | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| (the yellow sheet) | | | | | |
| 8. How have your thoughts or feelings about reading in English changed? | | | | | |
| 9. Do you have any additional comments? | | | | | |

4. **Sample Book Chat**

Name _____ Class _____

Sample Book Chat Task: The Story and Me (Rodrigo, V. 2004, cited in Bamford and Day, 2006, p. 99-100)

- a. Make a copy of the Two Tasks handout (below) for each student and familiarize yourself with the questions on the handout.
- b. In class, distribute the handout. Go over each task with the students to make sure they understand what they are to do. After reading a book, have students do Task 1 (The Facts) and Task 2 (Personal Response) for homework
- c. In class after students have done their homework, have students work in small groups. Instruct them to exchange ideas and talk about their books using the questions in Task 1. When a groups finishes Task 1, tell the group to use the questions in Task 2 to discuss the books.
- d. When all groups have finished Task 2, lead a whole-class discussion about the experiences, feelings, and impressions that their books brought to mind.

| Two Tasks Handout | |
|--|--|
| Title of the book: _____ | |
| Task 1. The Facts The setting 1. When does the story take place? 2. Where does it take place? The characters 3. Who are they? 4. What are they like? The action 5. What happened? | Task 2. Personal Response Your impressions 1. What did you like best (or least)? 2. What would you change in the story? Your feelings and experiences 3. Have you ever experienced something similar to what happens in the story? 4. Do you identify with any of the characters? 5. Did you find any interesting cultural information? 6. What did you learn from the reading? |

5. **Sample Journal Topics**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Journal 1 (Week 3) a. How much reading do you do in your first language? b. What is your past experience reading in English? c. What is ER and what are your goals for this class? | Journal 2 (Week 5) a. What books do you like reading and why? b. Tell me about a character in a book you liked? c. How did you like the book chat? | Journal 3 (Week 7) a. How do feel about reading in English? b. What will you do to improve your reading in the future? c. How would you make this ER class better? |
|---|---|---|

6. **Sample Diagnostic**

Nation, P. & Beglar, S. (2007). Vocabulary Size Text, BNC Version (1-14K)
http://www.lexutor.ca/tests/levels/recognition/1_14K

Resources for getting started

Extensive Reading Foundation <http://erfoundation.wordpress>
 ER Central <http://www.er-central.com/>
 Extensive Reading <http://www.extensivereading.net/>
Journal of Extensive Reading. <http://jalt-publications.org/access/index.php/JER/index>
Proceedings of the Extensive World Congress <http://erfoundation.org/proceedings/>

Citations for my presentation at this colloquium will be provided upon request: dewert@usfca.edu