



Managing an Extensive Reading Program LTP TESOL Certificate TESOL 6

Dr. Rob Waring
Notre Dame Seishin University

How are students typically taught to read?

From textbooks with short difficult texts
Doing lots of exercises to practice the grammar and vocab, reading skills and strategies
Teacher leads the students
All students read the same teacher-selected material
All students read at the same pace
All students read at the same difficulty level
The text may or may not interest all learners
It's hard to develop fluent eye movements – fluency and reading speed – too many 'reading speed bumps'
This is called **INTENSIVE READING**

Intensive Reading

Provides good opportunities for the teaching of discrete language points (e.g. vocabulary and grammar)
Few chances for the development of fluent eye movements
Few chances to learn the patterns in the language because the student doesn't read much
Little allowance for student interest in what is read
Little allowance for reading at their own ability level
Often difficult for students to add new language to the existing store of language because the material is too difficult

What is Extensive Reading?

Fast, fluent reading of story books with high levels of comprehension
Focus on comprehension and enjoyment, not language learning
Aim is to deepen already met language through massive exposure
Typically this is done with 'graded readers' or 'leveled readers'
Extensive reading (ER) and Intensive reading (IR) are two sides of the same coin.
Intensive Reading builds language, Extensive Reading practices it.

IR and ER work TOGETHER, they are NOT opposites

When reading extensively, students should **READ**

It is CRUCIAL that learners read at the RIGHT level!

- R**ead something quickly and
- E**njoyably with
- A**dequate comprehension so they
- D**on't need a dictionary

If they need a dictionary, it's too hard and they will read slowly, get tired and stop

Their aim is fluency and speed, not learning new language

Typically students read at home or out of class- it doesn't take much class time for HUGE benefits

We **add** the reading to our existing program, we **don't** replace it.

Why build reading speed?

Natives read at 250-300 words per minute
Many non-natives read at less than 100 words per minute

If they can read faster, they will

- read more naturally
- process the language more effectively and efficiently
- understand more
- remember more
- read more text
- be able to finish tests faster

Fluency Reading class

READING PAIN does NOT equal READING GAIN

Choose reading materials where they can read quickly
 Have a wide variety of books – something interesting for everyone
 Have a wide variety of difficulty levels – easy to difficult

Most of their time should be reading

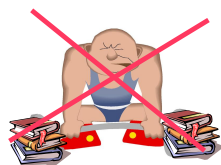
- not translating
- not answering questions
- not doing reports

Reading should be pleasurable

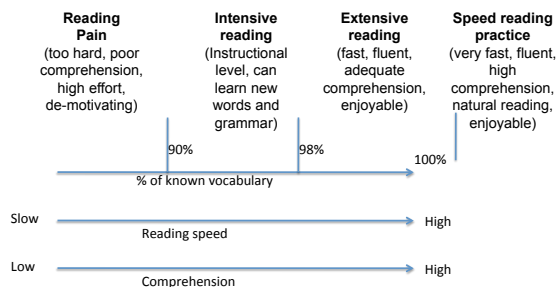
Reading should be motivating

Reading should be inspiring

Reading is more than language practice



What's the optimum vocabulary coverage for building fluency?



Summary of Extensive Reading

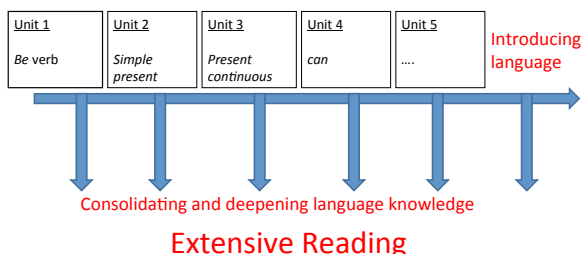
Massive language exposure at the student's level of understanding
 Excellent chances for the development of fluent eye movements (fluent reading) because the text is easy leading to faster reading
 Excellent chances to learn the patterns in the language because the student is reading a lot
 High probability the student is interested in what is read and that she will become a more confident reader

Comparison of IR and ER

Explain the differences between IR and ER

Intensive reading		Extensive reading
Language focus	Why?	Fluency meaning focus. 'real reading'
Very little	Amount?	A book at week at their level
Hard	Difficulty?	Easy – so they can read fluently
Teacher	Who selects?	Student
Text books	What?	Materials at smooth reading level
In class	Where?	In class at first, then home reading
With exercises	Comprehension	Not always necessary as students choose a

Course work and Graded Readers work together



To do list for starting an ER program

1. Find out about Extensive Reading
2. Make a plan
3. Get funding
4. Get everyone involved
5. Build a library
6. Build a book recording system
7. Make decisions about which books, which students, how much reading, how to assess etc.
8. Introduce the program
9. Evaluate it

How do I start my ER program?

Buy books at the levels your students can read FLUENTLY
 They choose something that they can **READ**
 Get a wide variety of materials
 Put the books into difficulty levels with color codes
 Put a book number inside each book
 Make a book borrowing sheet
 Make sure the first book they read is SUPER-easy
 Introduce the reading as a class story at first
 Do 2-3 class readers together over several classes
 Introduce your library of books
 They take it home and discuss it the following week
 They take home another book, and so on and so on

How much reading should they do?

About a book a week or more.
Beginners - A book at week at their ability level
 They can meet unknown words easily, so they don't need to read much.
Intermediates - A book at week at their ability level
 They don't meet unknown words all the time, but their books are thicker, so they are reading more.
Advanced - 2 books at week at their ability level
 They rarely meet unknown words, so they have to read more to meet language they don't know.

When do they read?

Class Reading

They read a book together as a class, a few pages each class

Independent reading

A silent reading time in class – say 10-15 minutes per week
 They take a book home and read it for next week

Remember - if they need a dictionary, it will slow them down.

How many books do I need?

At least one book per student so they can swap.
 If you have 30 books for 30 students you then have 30 books to share.
 They only cost say 450-700 yen each.
 And you can use them next year.
 Go for variety.
 Aim for 2-3 readers per student.

How does the student know her 'level'?

The student looks at books at different difficulty levels.
 She finds one that she feels comfortable with (good reading speed, few unknown words, enjoyable, easy etc.).
 She then **reads** it.
 Stop if it is too difficult / boring and find an easier book.

How do I introduce this to my students?

1. Explain to them WHY they need to do it.
2. Get them to look at some books (preferably a VERY one easy for them) – something achievable. It is **vital** that the first book is a good experience. It should be easy, enjoyable, with very few unknown words per page.
3. If they like the book, ask them to read it for 10 minutes. (silent reading)
4. If they like it, tell them to take it home and bring it back later (say after one week). If they don't tell them to change it for a different one.
5. Make a list of who has each book
6. The next week ask them to talk about their books, what they liked and didn't. They return the books.
7. Get them to choose another book (easier if the last one was difficult).
8. Do this again every week.

Make some reading record sheets

One for the class

Name	May 23	May 30	June 7	June 14
Ko, Hui-Chia	Y-012	Y-16Z	G-024		
Maldini, Antonio	P-034	X	G-024		
Oliviera, Miguel	Y-072	Y-059	G-024		

or one per person

Name: Fukumoto, Aya Student Number: 12345 Class: _____

Title	Reader number	Date borrowed	Date returned	Number of pages read	Comment
Kung Fu Kid	G-084	April 13	April 20	16	Very enjoyable, but a little easy
I Spy	G-145	April 20	April 27	24	Exciting and fun
Anne of Green Gables	B-023	April 27			

How do I know they understand? Why don't I need to test them?

"If I don't give tests, how do I know they understand?"

If they already are **READING**, then they already understand

Sometimes we have to trust the students

Students shouldn't believe everything they do should be tested

They can be assessed on:

- the number of pages, words, books they read
- Online quiz performance (www.moodlereader.org/)
- Quality of reading report
- Quality of oral reports - speak about their book

How can I assess the reading?

Because extensive reading is individualized we cannot give a general vocabulary or grammar test to *all* the students because maybe not all the students met all the words or grammar on the test.

Alternatives include (see the graded readers handbooks for more ideas);

Completion of ER page goals e.g. xxx pages per semester / course.

Students write a short report on each book read. Assessed by adequate completion of reports / summaries.

Active participation in In-class discussion of ER texts.

Demonstration of the development of strategy use.

Self-assessment (if it is not for their grades!!)

Understanding the program

How much time does the curriculum allow?

How flexible is it? How much time for homework?

Make a new ER course? Add to an existing one?

Do you have suitable materials?

Budget? (one off or recurring?) Staff?

How will you manage the materials? Library? Class bags?

What borrowing systems do you need?

How will the reading be assessed?

Graded or not? Formal or informal assessment?

Things to recommend

Start small - their own class and then expand later

So slowly at first - new things take time

Look for potential problems when expanding and think what they can do about them. Help them with ideas

Experiment with different styles of ER to see what suits them and their learners

Set aims for the students, the program and themselves

Be aware that things don't always go well - so they need your support

What is done in and out of class?

Out of class:

Development of sight recognition for new vocab (from word lists) ER to - deepen the knowledge of the independent vocab learning and to give chances for the students learn patterns in the language

In class:

Normal class work - to develop awareness of language patterns

Training in focusing on the message not the text

Training in strategy use (e.g. Dictionary use / guessing from context / inferring skills / building word family knowledge / etc. etc.)

Some silent reading time of ER texts (if time allows)

Management of the ER materials

Teacher helps with training in independent vocabulary learning

ER Program types

Purist ER program

Lots of self-selected reading at home with no / little assessment or follow up. Often is a stand-alone class.

Class reading - study

Students read the same book and work through it slowly. Lots of follow up / comprehension work and exercises.

ER as 'literature'

Students read the same book and discuss it as if it were a work of literature.

Integrated ER program

Lots of self-selected reading at home and in class. Follow up exercises / reports which aim to build the 4 skills.

Why do ER programs fail?

If it's optional:

students will opt out

the message is 'do the reading if you have time, it's not as important as other things'

It says the administrators don't see it as valuable

it becomes a target to be cut out completely

ER should be **REQUIRED**. Requiring ER means:

the teachers value this reading, so we want you to do it.

It's part of the full course work – and you'll be graded on it.

the students see it as 'natural' and 'normal' not an 'option'

Why do ER programs fail II?

Curriculum changes

Change to 'test' / speaking / CLT focus

ER enthusiast leaves the school

Inappropriate materials

Reading is too difficult

Age inappropriate

Books don't get replaced when lost

Starting badly

Too fast, Too high, Too much to read too soon

Students don't understand why they need ER

Dealing with objections

"The books are too easy and childish. They are not learning anything."

-> easy is good - so they can build reading speed. Choose books are at the student's fluent reading level

-> Native materials are too hard, demotivating, inappropriate

-> 'intermediate' learners can't read intermediate graded readers

"I'm not teaching so they aren't learning"

-> our job is not to 'teach' but to help people learn, build independence, reading speed, fluency etc. etc.

"I don't know how to do it, or where to get information"

-> I'll help

Dealing with objections II

"Nice idea but I have no time in my course"

-> If you don't have graded reading where will your students get the massive exposure they need?

-> How else will they get the 'sense of language' they need?

"We don't have the money for this"

-> Ask your schools to reallocate funds so this reading is done; ask for donations; get some free samples etc.

"We have to go through our set curriculum"

-> Speak with your course designers to build in graded reading. Re-allocate resources and re-set class hours

"We have to prepare the students for tests"

-> Research shows students perform better on tests if they have a general sense of language, not a deconstructed 'bitty' one.

Extensive reading and young learners

Recent research shows :

Young learners learn much slower if they do not have massive text input (i.e. story reading)

Extensive reading leads to large increases in implicit knowledge

There's no advantage to starting English early if students don't have massive text support

Learners starting ER early end up with higher natural English ability than students in intensive programs in High School

Be careful about using Native-level (L1) materials to build fluency

Native books, magazines etc. are too hard to read fluently for MOST Japanese learners
 Children's books for natives are full of difficult words, phrases and concepts
 Native children already know 5000 words and almost all the grammar BEFORE they start to read
 Japanese children know almost no English words and no grammar before they start English. Native texts usually are NOT suitable.
 Don't confuse the *final target* (to read native texts) with the starting point and the way to get there.

Discuss

Does your school have an ER program? Tell others about it.

If you want to start an ER program what do you need to know?

Finally ... The Assignment

Choose one of these.

1. Select a course book you are working with and analyze how well it meets the principles outlined in this course. What changes would you make? What would you add or remove? Why?
2. Assess your school's reading needs. Plan an ER program for the next semester. What would you do and why? What would be your goals? How would you know you achieved them?

Today's presentations are available online along with other presentations. Feel free to use and abuse as you wish.

<http://www.robwaring.org/er/>
<http://www.extensivereading.net>
www.erfoundation.org/

waring_robert@yahoo.com

Thank you for your time.