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総　説

A Model of an Extensive Reading Class
多読授業のモデル

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〔Abstract〕

This article presents a model for on extensive reading class. The emphasis is on how to retain a relatively pure form of extensive reading and yet satisfy the requirements of the typical university curriculum. All aspects of the model class, including goals and objectives, needs, syllabus, class materials and activities, and means and methods of assessment are discussed.

Intensive reading classes are firmly ensconced in English language curricula in Japan, from junior high school level to university level. And why not? The value of developing reading skills and using reading texts to develop language skills is readily apparent. Additionally, intensive reading, with its focus on skill-development fits effortlessly into these curricula. In recent years, however, researchers have also been looking at extensive reading. Extensive reading, though, has not gained quick or wide-spread popularity with teachers in Japan. Even for those proponents who accept its premise of having students read as much as possible for pleasure as useful, there is still the problem of how to fit it into a curriculum. The idea of focusing only on meaning without weighing students down with the usual tests or homework is at odds with the assessment-driven curriculum.

In talking with reading teachers, it has been my observation that many teachers merely adapt certain aspects of extensive reading, such as giving some student choice of reading materials and longer texts, while retaining the intensive reading focus on reading and language skills. This, of course, then becomes just another intensive reading exercise. Others include extensive reading, though with some modifications, in an intensive reading course. I contend that with a little work and planning an extensive reading course can fit smoothly into a curriculum and yet still remain in an almost completely "pure" extensive reading form. This paper will present a model for doing this.

The Case for Extensive Reading

Extensive reading differs considerably from intensive reading in most key areas, such as purpose, appropriate level, materials and classroom activities,

and student and teacher roles. Whereas the primary purpose for intensive reading is to develop L2 reading skills, the primary purposes for extensive reading are to encourage an enjoyment of reading and to develop reading fluency. In an intensive reading class, the class usually reads material that the teacher has selected to meet specific lesson objectives, while in an extensive reading class the students have some degree of choice from a variety of interesting reading materials. Intensive texts tend to be short with a 100% expected comprehension level while extensive texts are longer with an approximate 70% comprehension level. The intensive reading student should read texts that are one level of difficulty above his/her L2 language level $(i + 1)$ while the extensive reading student should read texts that are one level of difficulty below his/her L2 language level $(i - 1)$. Intensive reading is usually done in the classroom, as a group, with the teacher leading the group. Extensive reading is usually either done outside the class, or in class, individually, as uninterrupted sustained silent reading (USSR), or both. In this case, the teacher acts as a facilitator or resource person. The means of evaluation differ also. Intensive reading is evaluated with more traditional methods, such as comprehension questions and exercises to check understanding of language features and reading skills, while extensive reading uses methods such as self reports. The point in extensive reading evaluation is not to add burdensome, time-consuming tasks that would detract from the purpose of developing an enjoyment of reading. The focus of intensive reading is to study a text intensely, not only for meaning, but for all it has to offer, such as vocabulary, grammar, cultural knowledge, etc., while the focus of extensive reading is to read large amounts of material, as much as possible, concentrating only on the meaning and the pleasure of reading.

The obvious question, of course, why should we try to fit extensive reading into an already full curriculum. Considering the widely-accepted benefits of intensive reading, is it worth adding extensive reading at the probable cost of reducing intensive reading time? The answer to this is an unequivocal yes, for two reasons. First of all, the purpose in helping students to develop an enjoyment of reading is to encourage them to read more, which in turn will develop reading fluency. As Bamford and Day[1] point out "only by discovering the rewards of reading through actually engaging in it will students become people who both can and do read". Building reading fluency allows the learner to do what Waring[2] calls "[moving] from working with words to working with ideas". The working memory (sometimes called short-term memory) has limited space. Therefore, if a student reads a long sentence on a word-by-word basis, by the time he/-she gets to the end of the sentence he/she is going to have difficulty remembering the word or the idea at the beginning of the sentence. Multiply this by paragraphs and passages found in reading texts, and the struggle to decipher meaning efficiently increases. If the student can chunk together words of a sentence he/she will more easily grasp the idea and be able to store more information in the working memory, thus increasing reading speed and easing the understanding of meaning. As Day and Bamford[3] put it, "if the reader cannot hold the clause or sentence in working memory long enough to construct meaning, then comprehension is severely disrupted".

Beyond reading fluency, there is an ever-growing body of evidence which suggests that the benefits extensive reading offer in L2 acquisition are considerable. Perhaps the most comprehensive study thus far, conducted on primary school students in Fiji, by Elley and Mangubhai[4] and later reviewed by Elley[5] found improvements in writing, reading, speaking, and listening, in addition to vocabulary knowledge and grammar, in the "book flood" *group*

over the control group. Various other studies have supported these results. For a summary of the results of various studies of extensive reading programs, see Day and Bamford[3].

Model Class

This is an extensive reading class of approximately thirty Japanese nursing students attending St. Luke's College of Nursing. They are in the first or second semester of their freshman year of a four-year program. They also have a general English course, a writing course and another reading course in their freshman year. These are all one-semester required courses. It is presumed that these students have had some experience with intensive reading in high school, as it is part of the high school curriculum in Japan. The students' English levels and English reading abilities vary.

The extensive reading class meets for fourteen class times. Each class meets for an hour-and-a-half. The approximately thirty students can freely choose what to read from between approximately one hundred simplified readers. Simplified readers were chosen over authentic materials for two main reasons. First of all, these students have no formal need to read authentic or academic materials in the future. Secondly, simplified readers better meet the need for a variety of levels. In this class there are six different levels, ranging from elementary (at about 1100 basic words) to advanced (at about 2500). Thus, reading can be individualized; readers can proceed at their own pace and decide their own level of proficiency [see Saragi, Nation, Meister[6]]. As Nation[7] states "Without simplification, there would be too many unknown words and constructions, and the learners would need to give all their attention to them." Finally, simplified readers appeal to a variety of interests, covering categories such as mystery, cross-cultural, biographical, science fiction, horror, romance, gothic,

and adventure.

Students are free to read whatever they like at whatever level they like. They are also free to choose their own material from outside class, as long as they show it to the teacher for prior approval. Students are instructed that they should read at a level at which they feel comfortable and enjoy the book. I suggest that if they find the plot too simplistic they should try going up one level and that if it is too confusing they should try a book at one level lower. I also suggest that they experiment with different levels.

Students are charged a book fee for the class which covers the cost of two books. In the last class each student selects two books to keep. It is hoped that this will encourage students to read at least those books after the course is completed (informal surveys tell me that students usually choose books that they have not yet read). It also allows new books to be ordered each year, thus ensuring the books are in good condition.

Needs Analysis

There is no shared specific purpose for which these students will need English. Once they finish university some will choose to work in a hospital in Tokyo, some will go back to their hometowns and a few will enter the masters program at St. Luke's Nursing College. Of those who stay in Tokyo, a few will end up at St. Luke's Hospital. Probably those who go to St. Luke's hospital have the greatest chance of encountering a foreign patient who does not speak Japanese. However even still, in such cases, it seems spoken English would be the need in such a situation.

Given this, it makes sense to approach a needs analysis not from the perspective of what future situation (or need) this particular class will prepare individual students for, but rather where this particular class fits into the English program at St.

Luke's.

When looking at the program as a whole, it is apparent that the aim is to give students a comprehensive program designed to improve their general English level in all four skill areas (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). English reading courses in Japanese junior and senior high school at this point tend to be limited to intensive reading. Thus, looking at the program as a whole and the students' probable reading background, a "pure" extensive reading course complements and rounds out the English program at St. Luke's.

When first designing the course I based it on an article[8] which described what I now recognize to be a fairly typical extensive reading class. I made some modifications before starting the course, based on what I perceived to be general needs of students. For example, the article suggests having students take a half-hour to explain a book to their partners. However, I didn't feel that the ability to explain or discuss a book for thirty minutes was a very useful ability - or at least not one that was very applicable to the real world. I felt a more useful skill would be the ability to answer the question succinctly. To this end I kept the idea of talking about books in pairs, but reduced the amount of time to five minutes. This was an arbitrary time, but has worked well, so I've kept it at five minutes.

I was concerned that the course might seem confusing to students because the degree of individual responsibility and active participation is higher than any class they have had before. I realized that to counter this I would have to keep the organization of the class clear and simple. Thus now every class follows the same pattern of a (usually speaking) activity, followed by a journal activity, followed by reading time.

Additionally, because this course is so different, students needed to understand what extensive reading is (as opposed to intensive reading) and what

benefits they can hope to gain. This was brought home to me when I received a comment of "I prefer a traditional reading course because I want to learn something" on one of my course evaluations. I realized that for students accustomed to teacher-centered lessons and intensive reading my class must seem easy and perhaps enjoyable, but without much purpose. Furthermore, I have found that after years of reading at an i+1 level in intensive reading students are not very willing to suddenly start reading at an i-1 level unless they understand why they should. Thus for a successful class it is essential that I recognize students' needs and attitudes and explain exactly what extensive reading is and how it fits into the overall English program at St. Luke's. Explaining the benefits of extensive reading also fits in with my goals of encouraging students to continue to read English books after the course.

Goals

My basic premise when starting this class was that because I myself love to read, I really wanted to create a reading class where students could enjoy reading. Additionally, I wanted them to realize that no matter what their individual level or areas of interest, there are English books available to them.

From this, goals and objectives have evolved into the following.

- Students will become aware of the existence and variety of English guided readers at various levels

- Students at all proficiency levels will realize that they are able to understand and finish English guided readers at the appropriate level

- Students will be able to select an English guided reader at an appropriate level and of a

genre of interest to them

- Students will increase their individual reading rates through extensive reading

- Students will be able to explain a book they have read in a sociolinguistically appropriate manner

- Students will be able to write a journal entry about a book they have heard about

- Students will be able to write a book report on a book they have read

The underlying purpose of the first two goals is to encourage students to continue reading English books for pleasure after they finish the course. The purpose of the third goal is also to encourage students to continue reading English books specifically by helping them to develop skills needed to choose books at their level and in their area of interest (obviously this skill is also useful for the course, but my purpose here is also long-term). The usefulness of the fourth goal is surely self-apparent, so I will address it when discussing the objectives that stem from it. The fifth goal initially came from needing something to do to fill class time and being aware that students want speaking practice. I have kept it because it works well. Eskey & Grabe[9] suggest that activities that integrate skills increase student interest, and when I see how animated students sometimes become when talking about books, I have to agree. Also, as stated, being able to answer in a sociolinguistically appropriate manner when asked "What's your book about" strikes me as a useful speaking skill, and one that is connected to reading. Finally, the sixth and seventh stem, quite honestly, from the fact that I need some method of assessment for this class. Writing a book report and keeping a journal seems the best way of allowing

me to assess students while still keeping with the idea of not imposing an undue burden on students in an extensive reading class.

Course objectives

- Students will be able to select a book of interest to them during the reading period in class by evaluating the book title, cover and blurb on the back

- Students will be able to identify the genre of a book by looking at the cover and reading the title and blurb on the back

- Students will be able to explain a book they are reading to another student within a five-minute period at a level of accuracy that allows the other student, through active listening, to understand and write about the book

- Students will be able to write about a book within a ten minute period that they have heard about in a manner in which the teacher considers to be clear and which allows the teacher to identify the book without looking at the title

- Students will read enough books to total 500-700 pages and be able to fill out a book report form on each book in a manner in which the teacher considers to be clear and which allows the teacher to identify the book without looking at the title

- Students will increase their individual reading speeds through timed readings, with a goal of 70% comprehension

The last objective has a very specific 70% accuracy criterion. This 70% is necessarily stated

because after intensive reading classes most of my students begin timed readings with a 90-100% accuracy level, but with a slow reading rate.

Students are also to read a specific 500 (enough pages for a 'D' reading grade) to 700 (enough pages for an 'A' reading grade) pages. I chose a very arbitrary 50 pages per week (for an 'A') to arrive at this figure the first time I taught this course. I've since asked about this figure on class evaluations and students consistently pronounce it reasonable.

Approach and Theory

This class incorporates, with two exceptions, the following points, which Day and Bamford[3] suggest are found in successful extensive reading programs:

- students read as much as possible
- a variety of materials in a wide range of topics is available
- students select what they want to read and have the freedom to stop reading material that does not interest them
- reading is related to pleasure, information, and general understanding
- reading is its own reward
- reading material is well within the linguistic competence of the students
- reading is individual and silent
- reading speed is usually faster rather than slower
- teachers orient students, explain methodology, keep track of what students read, and guide students
- teacher is a role model of a reader

One exception that I must take to the above list is reading being its own reward. This is a university class and I am required to assess students, and if students are assessed on what they read then they are no longer reading purely for the reward of

reading. However, as much as possible, I do "immerse learners in large quantities of second language input with few or no specific tasks." Yamazaki[10]. The other exception is the idea of the teacher as a role model of a reader. While I see the value of this in a children's class where students are still forming an opinion of reading in general, I am not sure this is necessary in a university classroom where students have already formed an opinion on the value of reading in society. I am trying to give them a positive impression of reading in English, as opposed to reading in general (i.e. in their L1). Moreover, I think that my reading in class on any kind of constant basis would be likely to create a negative impression among students, who would not see it as 'teaching'. Instead I try to address the teacher as role model role point not by reading, but by making sure that students are aware that I am familiar with the books and interested in what they are reading and their impressions of the books. I do this by letting them know that I am available for recommendations and by comments I write on their book reports.

Syllabus

This course is not divided into individual units with assessments, but rather operates as one complete unit with assessments over the entire course. As previously stated in the needs analysis section, class time is divided into an activity (usually a task), the journal activity and USSR. The class activities are divided into three types. For the first three weeks the purpose of the activity is to provide students with either the skills or models needed to accomplish later requirements (such as explaining their book to a partner or choosing a book). The second type of activity has the purpose of making students aware of what kinds of books and what books are available in class. This

allows students to make more efficient use of class time when choosing a book and it also addresses the goal of becoming aware of the variety of books available. This type of activity is done for a relatively short period of time as soon students start hearing about various books during the journal activity and also receiving recommendations from friends. The third type of activity is timed readings. The purpose of this activity is to increase reading speed by introducing students to the idea of using the rauding process (see Carver[11]) for reading novels. Also, since students can chart their progress and since the vast majority of students make progress as they begin to focus on less than 100% accuracy, this is a very encouraging, confidence-building activity. Type I activities are done the first three weeks of the course, and then we switch to type II activities. About halfway through the course enough books have been read that students begin to get recommendations from journal partners and friends, and so at this point we switch to type III activities.

One Unit

Because my syllabus is not divided into units, because it follows basically the same pattern throughout the course and because assessment is not of any individual unit, I will give an example of each type of activity and then address the journal activity and timed readings. This should give a basic idea of the procedural details of the lessons without going into an overabundance of detail on the entire course.

Activity - Type I

Each student is given a Heinemann guided reader catalogue and a piece of paper. The students are told to individually select three books that they would like to read from the elementary, intermediate and/or upper level section of the catalogue and

then to write down the book titles and a reason why they want to read each book (for example, they liked the title, cover design or book description). The students are told that they will have 30 minutes.

The objectives are:

- students will choose three books from the catalogue within a thirty-minute period that they would like to read by looking at the titles, cover designs and reading the book descriptions

- students will write a reason for choosing each book, thus becoming aware of their own reason(s) for choosing a particular book

While I don't do anything more than give liking the cover design, title or blurb as examples of reasons they might choose a book, this activity is a prelude to later activities that focus on identifying genre by looking at those three things.

Beyond the above objectives, the purpose of this activity is two-fold. First of all, when students all stand up at the same time to choose their first books, they are armed with three titles they have already chosen. While they don't have to choose one of those titles, it is certainly likely that they will. I feel that this diminishes the anxiety of having to choose a book from amongst so many in a relatively short period of time. It is also advantageous in that it enables students to choose faster and more efficiently, thus cutting the noise and confusion level.

Secondly, after students have chosen their books, I collect and go through the papers. If three or more students have chosen a book that I have not ordered, I then order that book. I also check to make sure that students have come up with plausible reasons for choosing books.

Activity - Type II

The purpose of this activity is to familiarize students with books available in class. Students get into groups of four or five and each group is given A3 size poster board. The task here is to make a poster advertising a book read by at least one member of the group. Students may instead make a poster advertising a movie made from the book, if they would prefer.

The activities designed to familiarize students with the books available in class address the class goal of students becoming aware of the variety of guided readers available (and in this particular activity students hear about three or four books that other students really liked). This particular activity addresses the course objectives dealing with students talking about and understanding books.

The lesson objectives are as follows:

- Students will explain a book they are reading to other students within a five-minute period at a level of accuracy that allows the other students, through active listening, to understand the plot

- Students will listen to another student tell about a book and ask any questions needed to enable them to understand the plot

- Students will discuss various books and then decide which to make a poster of

Activity - Type III

The third activity type is timed readings. Before I start these the first time, I explain the theory behind it, as I am sure this is the first time it has been suggested to students that they read for speed and for less than 100% comprehension. I explain that native speakers retain about 70% when reading a novel, and I explain that there are different reading speeds according to purpose

Students are given a progress chart and shown a timed reading with questions on the back. Both the chart and the timed readings are from Timed Readings (Spargo 12)) however to ensure that the passage is at an i+1 level I have altered it in that potentially unknown words have a Japanese translation above them. Students are told to read the passage as fast as they can while still understanding 70% of the content.

Journal Activity

This activity is as follows:

Step 1: Student A tells Student B about the book he/she is reading (5 minutes)

Step 2: Student B tells Student A about the book he/she is reading (5 minutes)

Step 3: Each student writes about the book he/she heard about, including whether or not her partner liked the book and why (10 minutes)

Step 4: Students double-check any points they feel they need to (3 minutes)

The times included here were arbitrarily selected, but have worked out well, so I have not changed them. When students start this activity at the beginning of the course they have a difficult time explaining their books in five minutes. By the end of the course they are comfortable with this time limit and sometimes finish in less time.

The objectives for this activity are:

- Students will be able to talk about a book they are reading to another student within a five-minute period at a level of accuracy that allows the other student, through active listening, to understand and write about the book

- Students will be able to understand a book that they hear about by asking any questions necessary to ensure understanding

- Students will be able to write about a book within a ten-minute period that they have

heard about and in a manner in which the teacher considers to be clear and which allows the teacher to identify the book without looking at the title

USSR

One reason that I include silent reading time during class is because fifty pages per week plus book reports is a lot of homework for an extensive reading class, and so I want to offset that somewhat. Additionally extensive reading theory supports a silent reading time[13][14]. The time given varies, depending on the time the activity takes, but students are given approximately 30 minutes, or about one-third of each class.

Assessment

Extensive reading does not lend itself well to assessment; however, I am required to assess the students and so I gingerly do so. Student grades are based on the following: number of pages read, 60%; book reports, 20%; journals, 20%.

Each time students turn in a book report they are given credit for reading that book, which means I record the title and number of pages in the book. Students reading 700 pages receive 100% of the 60% for number of pages read, students reading 650 pages receive 90%, those reading 600 pages receive 80% and so on. Students fill out a book report form. Nation7) feels that it is not a good idea to have students do book reports, but this is the only way I have of making sure they are reading, besides needing an assessment. However, I am careful to grade them in such a way that students will not feel the need to spend excessive amounts of time doing them. Ostensibly I grade on a five-point scale, but in reality I would ask students to redo any book report receiving a 2 or 1 grade, as I could not be sure they had really read the book. The minimum requirement for a 3 score

would be that I recognize the book from what the student has written without looking at the title. After teaching this class for many years I need very little to recognize the book, so if I cannot it is a clear indication of a problem. Additionally the student would have to include enough information, no matter how convoluted, to convince me that he/-she had read the book. A 4 grade would be given to a book report that was reasonably clear, but left out points central to the plot. Examples of this would be a book report on Frankenstein that did not mention that Frankenstein had made the monster, or a book report on Dorian Gray that did not mention the figure in the picture getting older. A 5 score would be a reasonably clear book report that included any central points and whatever else the student wants to add. A 5 score is reduced to 4 if the student does not write about their feelings about the book in any detail at all. An example of this would be "This book was interesting" with no reason or detail given.

The journals are graded in the same way, except that instead of writing about their own feelings, students write about their partners' feelings. Also, I put less emphasis on getting the central point (since they are hearing about books instead of reading them) and more emphasis on clarity, or how well I can follow the plot.

At St. Luke's we average the other (intensive plus modified extensive) reading class grades with mine. This prevents an undue number of As, and thus allows me to incorporate extensive reading theory more fully than I think I would otherwise be able to do. The ideal, of course, would be to be able to give the grades students deserve based on course objectives, no matter how many As that would entail. However, that is not the reality at universities in Japan right now, so the above system seems a reasonable compromise.

Conclusion

The above model is, of course, only one possible way of incorporating an extensive reading class into a university curriculum. The point which I wish to stress in presenting this model is that extensive reading and its benefits do not need to be ignored. While "purely" extensive reading might not at first seem to readily lend itself to the typical curriculum, it in fact can be incorporated quite successfully, and with less difficulty than might be imagined.

It is also rewarding. By incorporating extensive reading, not only do you provide learners with the advantages previously discussed, but you open them to a whole new way of looking at reading - i.e. reading for pleasure- which they can continue to enjoy and benefit from long after the course is over.

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