

Extensive Reading

- Brown (1989) explains that extensive reading is carried out "to achieve a general understanding of a text."
- Long and Richards identify extensive reading as "occurring when students read large amounts of high interest material, usually out of class, concentrating on meaning, "reading for gist" and skipping unknown words."
- The aims of extensive reading are to build reader confidence and enjoyment.
- Extensive reading is always done for the comprehension of main ideas, not for specific details.

Historical Perspective

- Harold Palmer (1917) in Britain and Michael West (1926) in India were the first to pioneer the theory of extensive reading as an approach to foreign language teaching and to reading, in particular. Palmer chose the term "extensive reading" to distinguish it from "intensive reading".



- The 1929 Coleman Report on "Modern Foreign Language Study", introducing the Reading Method, recommended the inclusion of *extensive* reading in its Method (as distinct from *inclusive* reading).
- Broughton(1978) argued for the important role Extensive Reading could play in second language programs.
- Nuttal (1998) argued the case for Extensive Reading programs citing research studies that showed "impressive" gains in reading ability, motivation and attitude, and overall linguistic competence. There was also evidence of gains in vocabulary and spelling.

How extensive reading may appear in a language class

Types of programs:

Extensive reading may appear as any of the following:

1. a complement to an intensive reading program
2. an extra-curricular activity where students read out of class
3. the main focus of a reading course (termed an Extensive Reading Program) where students work with a class set of books, individual reading of material, of their own choice, with follow-up activities such as reading logs, reading journals, book reports or projects. Although it is less common for extensive reading to form an *entire* reading course, there are well-established Extensive Reading Programs operating around the world. They have been carried on in many countries, at varying levels of education from Elementary School to College, and in different languages.

Characteristics:

Day and Bamford (1980) put forward ten characteristics identified in successful Extensive Reading Programs. They are duplicated (in abbreviated form) below:

1. Students read as much as possible.
2. A variety of materials on a 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 in terms of vocabulary and grammar.
7. Reading is individual and silent.
8. Reading speed is usually faster than slower.
9. Teachers orient students to the goals of the program.
10. The teacher is a role model of a reader for the students.

Activities that may occur:

- Reading may be combined with a speaking component. For example, they may interview each other about their reading.
- Reading may be combined with a writing component. For example, after reading the newspaper, students may be asked to write a newspaper report.
- Class time may be included for book exchange, if there is an in-class library.
- Students may set their own goals for their next session.
- Students may progress from reading graded reading material to authentic text. It should be expected that students will "slow down" in their reading then, it becomes more challenging.
- In some Extensive Reading Programs, teachers will allow their students to report on their reading in their native language so as not to make the "proof" of reading more difficult than the reading itself. This, of course, only works if the teacher understands the student's first language.
- Extensive reading programs are often cited as being more "pleasurable" because there are no "tedious" exercises to complete.

Role of Teacher

- The teacher gives recommendations on reading materials, based on student's interests.
 - The teacher guides students in choosing appropriate levels of material, beginning with easy books.
 - The teacher guides students in choosing a variety of materials of their interest. This may especially be necessary for students that choose the same type over and over.
- The teacher guides students in setting specific goals for amounts read.
- The teacher provides modelling. If class time is given for reading, the teacher reads at the same time.
- The teacher overlooks if students are not aware of the exact meaning of each word. The teacher should not jump in and explain.
- The teacher leads pre-reading activities to build interest in the text, such as in the characters, places, themes, and actions. The teacher must be careful to

provide just enough to stimulate curiosity but not so much that the need to read is removed.

Role of Student

- The student assumes total responsibility for developing reading ability.
- The student reads without the use of a dictionary.
- The student usually chooses their own material and moves along at their own pace but must push themselves in order to show greater progress.

Advantages

- The students may:
 - develop a "reading habit"
 - gain more confidence in reading
 - improve their attitude towards reading and become more motivated to read
 - feel more autonomous over their learning and more likely to take more initiative.
 - become more "independent readers", being able to read for different purposes and being able to change reading strategies for different kinds of texts.
 - become more aware of what's available to them to read and how to access materials.
 - expand sight vocabulary.
 - acquire "incidental" grammatical competence.
 - build background knowledge
 - increase reading comprehension
 - improve overall language competence.
 - be more prepared for further academic courses because they have read large quantities.

References:

<https://sllc.ucalgary.ca/Brian/611/readingtype.html>

http://www.e-osnova.ru/PDF/osnova_10_0_696.pdf