

## **Lessons Learned:**

### Setting up an ER Friendly Library

“The purpose of education is to create learners. The purpose of reading instruction is to create readers-not only people who can read but people who will read. Literature promotes the inclination to read by producing an affective response”

(Savage, 1998, p. 14)

## **Cheryl DICELLO\***

After a short literature review, this paper reports the making and maintaining of an extensive reading/graded reader library, the book selection, the ordering process, the difficulty level division and future recommendations for this library. It is the hope of the author that this article may facilitate those in charge of continuing to maintain and improve the extensive reading/graded reader section of the library here at Sugiyama Jogakuen University.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Sustained Silent Reading (SSR)**

In regards to teaching literature and literacy in the elementary classroom in the U.S, Savage (1998) defined sustained silent reading as a daily classroom activity, “a time set aside when pupils and teachers read books of their own choosing” (p. 7). Savage (1998) noted the importance and reasoning behind SSR stating, “sustained silent reading is a time to truly enjoy reading. It is also a time when teachers enjoy their own recreational novels, becoming models for students (p. 7).

#### **Extensive Reading (ER)**

Day & Bamford (1998) defined extensive reading as “an approach to the teaching and learning of second language reading in which learners read large quantities of books and other materials that are well within their linguistic competence” (p. xiii). This is very similar to SSR except that ER has been geared toward second language learners whereas SSR has been commonly associated with children developing their L1 reading abilities. Both L1 SSR and ER approaches are based on the belief that “the ability to read fluently is best achieved through an instructional program that emphasizes reading extensively in the language (Renandya & Jacobs, 2002, p. 296).

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\* 国際コミュニケーション学部 国際言語コミュニケーション学科

### **Extensive Reading Libraries**

The Extensive Reading Foundation recommended planning your library by “imagining what the Extensive Reading program might look like in five years time. The program needs to be designed so it can grow each year” (The Extensive Reading Foundation, n.d., p. 6). They then recommended thinking about the following nine questions while planning out the library: (1) “How much do students need to read, and how often?” (2) “Should class time be allocated to this? If so, how much and when?” (3) “How many books do we need to cover different levels of abilities and interests?” (4) “Should we integrate Extensive Reading into an existing class, or have a special Extensive Reading class?” (5) “Where should we keep the books? How should we manage the library?” (6) “When, and how often do students change their books?” (7) “How do we assess the students?” (8) “How do we find money for this?” (9) “Who is responsible for running this program?” (The Extensive Reading Foundation, n.d., p. 6).

### **The Making and Maintaining of an Extensive Reading Library at Sugiyama**

#### **Book Selection**

At the start there was one full bookshelf of graded readers located at the library on the Hoshigaoka campus. These readers were mainly upper level Oxford Bookworm, Macmillan and Cambridge upper level series. I noticed a lack in starting levels, but it was still a nice collection to start with.

#### **Ordering**

I asked students to select books from a list of starting level books (under 300 headwords). I used this list to order from our department’s library budget in the summer of 2013. For the summer of 2014 I ordered series that were recommended from other Extensive Reading practitioners at other universities, along with ordering new editions to series that were often liked by students. I found this list by analyzing the reading logs and recommendations of the three sections of the second year reading students. This particular group had highly recommended Sherlock Holmes and non-fiction graded readers, therefore I focused on these books for the 2014 order.

#### **Library Meetings**

In the Spring of 2013, I met with the librarian in charge of our department’s ordering. We discussed mutual issues concerning students trying to select books. He had mentioned that many students had been frustrated because they did not know which books were the appropriate levels. He was very happy that we had a mutual concern. I discussed the leveling system I wanted to add to the books in the library, how I planned to label it, and how we could set it up in the library. He volunteered to cover the costs of the protective clear labels to go over the color stickers and word count and headword count labels. He also suggested adding the exact word counts to the front of the books to assist students.

During the winter break (January 2014) the library was remodeled and the extensive reading

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section was given more shelves to locate books. We also discussed adding monthly student book recommendations to be displayed above these bookshelves. In addition we decided to add a level explanation display above the graded reader section to inform other students (in other departments) how the levels worked to facilitate their selection. This is because other departments also order graded readers from their library budgets.

### **Level Divisions**

The difficulty levels used for our library follows a simplified version of the Extensive Reading Foundation's difficulty level scale. Yellow level is anything up to 300 headwords, red is between 301–800 headwords, blue is 801–1500, green is 1501–2400 headwords, and purple anything more than 2400 headwords. The level is shown by a circular sticker that matches the level of the scale in color. In addition, on the front of each book is a small rectangular white label with the word count and headwords for the book. This is so that student do not have to struggle finding this information when selecting a book.

### **Future Recommendations**


At the time of this journal article, the graded readers have been only divided by level of difficulty. It is a future plan to further separate them by genre. Other future recommendations is to have students get involved in the process of labeling future books along with selecting new orders. I also recommend that whoever takes over the position of managing the graded readers take advantage of the large network of help available through the Extensive Reading Foundation and the JALT Extensive Reading Special Interest Group which at present has a large membership base in Aichi.

## Appendix A

### Example of Book Recommendation Display

JUNE 2014 Five ★★★★★ Star Student Book Recommendations

Blue Level


The cover of the book 'Rapunzel' features a young girl with long, flowing blonde hair looking out from a window. The title 'Rapunzel' is written in a stylized, decorative font at the top.

Rapunzel (Recommended by YW AE Reading)

Publisher: Penguin  
Genre: Classic, Love, Fantasy  
Word Count: 1,180  
Headwords: 900

Comments

"I read this for the first time. She is a lonely girl. I can't stay alive if I were in Rapunzel's situation."


The cover of 'The Mark of Zorro' shows a man in a dark coat riding a dark horse. The title 'The Mark of Zorro' and the author's name 'Johnston McCulley' are printed at the bottom.

The Mark of Zorro (Recommended by YO AE Reading)

Publisher: Macmillan  
Genre: Classic, Detective Story  
Word Count: 12,144  
Headwords: 1,100

Comments

"After reading the story I admired Zorro because he is clever and he is very cool!"

The cover of 'Frankenstein' features a close-up of the creature's face, which is pale and has visible scars. The title 'Frankenstein' and the author's name 'Mary Shelley' are at the bottom.

Frankenstein (Recommended by YT AE Reading)

Publisher: Penguin  
Genre: Classic, Horror  
Word Count: 12,000  
Headwords: 1,200

Comments

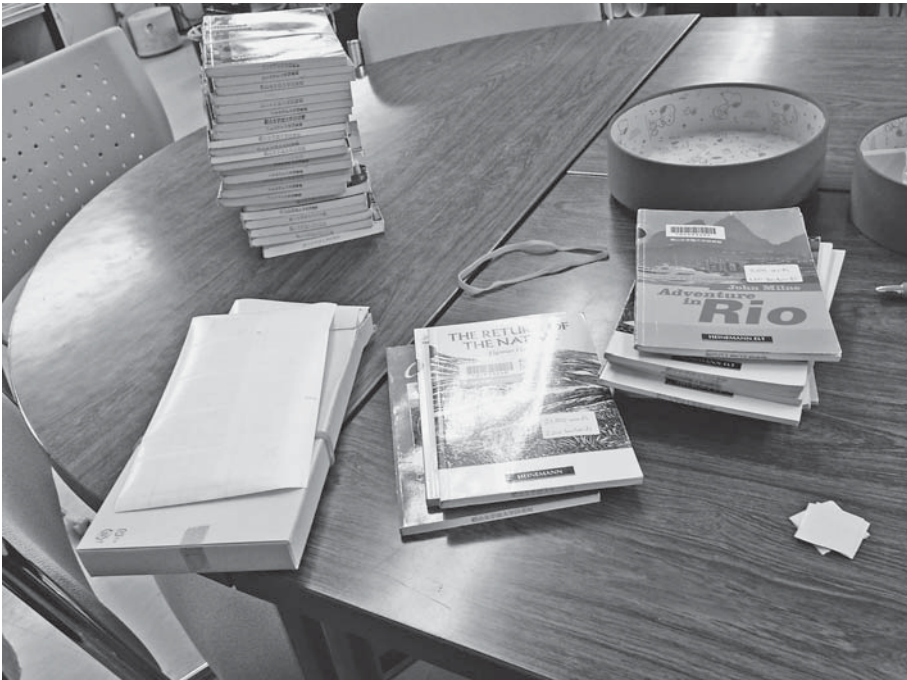
"It was a little fear, but this story was very interesting for me, so I want many people to read it."

"I thought that Frankenstein was a monster before I read this book."

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**Appendix B**

**Adding Difficulty Level Stickers, Headword and Word Count Labels**



**Appendix C**

**Finished and in the Remodeled Library (Total of Five Book Shelves)**



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