AARON DAVID MERMELSTEIN

Taiwan

A Simple and Authentic Assessment of Language Learners' Reading Abilities: The Reading Level Measurement Method

For most language learners, reading is the primary goal in their education (Grabe 2009; Mermelstein 2014; Nunan 1999; Renandya and Jacobs 2016; Tamrackitkun 2010; Yamashita 2013), and for the majority of these learners, it will also be a vital language skill. Therefore, reading is one of the most heavily emphasized skills in language classrooms around the world (Day and Bamford 1998; Tamrackitkun 2010). Since reading is one of the main goals, reading assessment is crucial.

Assessment can provide information regarding the learners' progress and let the teacher know if their reading curriculum is adequate and effective. It can identify learners who would benefit from advanced teaching methodologies or who are in need of individual assistance. It also lets the teacher know exactly where their learners' reading abilities *are* and which direction they should be going. For example, if an assessment device establishes that an entire group of learners is below the desired level of reading competence, an instructor could then alter the curriculum, change the teaching methodology, or replace the texts being used in the classroom with something easier, like graded reader (GR) books, while adopting an enhanced method of extensive reading (ER) (Mermelstein 2014).

For many teachers, the goal of getting learners to a proficient reading level is vital, and they are looking for techniques to reach this outcome. Some teachers have adopted skill-building texts, which often focus on test-taking skills, like locating general or specific information in a given text, but that does not necessarily improve students' overall reading abilities. However, a great deal of research supports reading programs that utilize ER (e.g., Day and Bamford 1998; Lee and Hsu 2009; Mermelstein 2014, 2015c; Mo 2020; Nation and Waring 2019; Renandya and Jacobs 2016; Sheu 2003; Waring 2006; Yamashita 2013). No matter what methodology a teacher adopts, there is a need to assess students' reading abilities at the start, and perhaps at the end, of their reading program. This assessment needs to be based on the individual's abilities.

> **No matter what methodology a teacher adopts, there is a need to assess students' reading abilities at the start, and perhaps at the end, of their reading program. This assessment needs to be based on the individual's abilities.**

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In order to increase language learners' reading abilities, teachers need to establish reading programs using methodologies and materials that are able to produce accurate results without wasting the teachers' and the learners' time and energy (Fakazlı 2021). They need an assessment system that can also be used as a placement system for the learners. Therefore, teachers need an assessment device that is cost effective, non-time consuming, reusable, simple to create, and easy to implement, and with results that are easy to assess. Ideally, it should also be versatile.

Several reading-assessment devices and/or assessment formulas are available. Mermelstein (2015a) noted that two of the most common at that time were the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Formula and the Fry Readability Graph, but others are being used throughout the world. However, most of the tests available are "norm-referenced" tests or "criterion-referenced" tests. The Glossary of Education Reform (2014a) states that norm-referenced tests

> are designed to compare and rank test takers in relation to one another. Norm-referenced tests report whether test takers performed better or worse than a hypothetical average student, which is determined by comparing scores against the performance results of a statistically selected group of test takers, typically of the same age or grade level, who have already taken the exam. … Test questions are carefully designed to accentuate performance differences among test takers, not to determine if students have achieved specific learning standards, learned certain material, or acquired specific skills and knowledge.

Meanwhile, The Glossary of Education Reform (2014b) states that criterion-referenced tests

> are designed to measure student performance against a fixed set of predetermined criteria or learning standards—i.e., concise, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education. In elementary and secondary education, criterion-referenced tests are used to evaluate whether students have learned a specific body of knowledge or acquired a specific skill set.

While this information is important, in both cases the test most likely is comparing an individual learner with a national standard criterion that may be far different from the local standard, or educational standards, where the test is being taken. English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) is not taught the same everywhere. Neither the criterion-referenced exams nor the norm-referenced exams take into account an individual's real knowledge and abilities because they are not being compared with themselves. Further, neither of the two tests takes into account learners with special needs, like ESL/EFL learners, who may not have the same cultural knowledge or linguistic knowledge. There have been a number of debates arguing the benefits and the drawbacks of both criterion-referenced and

norm-referenced exams, but that discussion is beyond the scope of this article.

So, when teachers create reading programs or a reading curriculum using modern teaching methodologies and materials, they need a reading-assessment device that can offer specific feedback for the individual learner and one that is quick, easy to use, accurate, and cost effective.

THE READING LEVEL MEASUREMENT METHOD (RLMM)

At the time this article is being written, no other assessment tools measure learners' reading levels in the same way as the Reading Level Measurement Method (RLMM) (Mermelstein 2015a). The first published study on the RLMM was Mermelstein (2014). The goal was to take a deeper look into the outcome of an ER curriculum and the reading levels of a group of university learners in Taiwan to determine if ER could be a viable alternative to the traditional curriculum-centered approach commonly utilized in Taiwan. An RLMM assessment was implemented to place the learners in appropriate levels, and the learners then participated in silent-reading sessions in class, along with an ER program. A second RLMM assessment at the end of the study showed significant improvements and demonstrated that implementing an ER program that uses the correct materials, methodology, and assessment tools can greatly improve learners' reading abilities in a relatively short amount of time.

Mermelstein's (2015c) study examined the writing abilities of EFL students using his enhanced ER methodology (2013). This year-long study involved 211 participants and utilized the Jacobs et al. (1981) assessment of writing that included five categories, and a sixth category was added. At the beginning of the study, all of the participants took an RLMM assessment in order to determine their individual reading levels and were placed at the reading percentage of unknown words at 3 percent. Afterwards, and

throughout the school year, the participants engaged in an in-class reading activity of silent reading, and they were also instructed to read from their GR books outside class for approximately 15 minutes each day, three to five days each week.

The outcome of this research suggested that when the learners were placed at the optimal reading levels and engaged in a Sustained Silent Reading ER activity, they improved their writing skills. While the "normal" instruction and course work that took place in the writing class for the year-long duration successfully improved the overall writing abilities of all 211 participants, the treatment group outperformed the control group in all six categories being measured.

A third study utilizing the RLMM assessment was by Mo (2020); results indicated that the learners who followed the program of silent reading and outside reading at the correct levels gained in their reading-speed skills by a statistically significant degree. Mo also used comprehension questions to demonstrate that the learners had understood what they were reading.

At the time of writing this article, five RLMM study articles have been published, and I am aware of more articles that are currently under review.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Extensive Reading (ER) and Intensive Reading (IR)
Grabe and Stoller (2011) define ER as a practice "in which learners read large quantities of materials that are within their linguistic competence" (286). Additionally, Bamford and Day (2004) explain that "extensive reading is an approach to language teaching in which learners read a lot of easy material in the new language" (1).

The British Council (2019) defines intensive reading (IR) as "reading in detail with specific learning aims and tasks." IR can further be clarified as the reading of short texts

> **There are several key distinctions between ER and IR. While the primary difference lies in the volume of texts the learner engages with, another important contrast is the level of intensity applied during the reading process.**

thoroughly and with clear goals, such as to answer reading comprehension questions or to analyze sentence structure.

There are several key distinctions between ER and IR. While the primary difference lies in the volume of texts the learner engages with, another important contrast is the level of intensity applied during the reading process. In IR, learners typically work with shorter texts that exhibit specific linguistic features of the target language. These texts are usually followed by activities designed to reinforce the particular reading strategy or technique being taught. Conversely, the goal of ER is to expose learners to large amounts of comprehensible input, meaning they can understand 95 percent or more of the material without frequent interruptions to consult a dictionary. In ER, the primary objective is simply to understand the text, and learners are generally not required to complete additional tasks related to the reading material.

A significant body of research supports the effectiveness of ER in language learning and acquisition (e.g., Iwahori 2008; Mermelstein 2015a; Nakanishi 2015; Nation and Waring 2019; Nuttall 1982; Nuttall and Alderson 2005; Tamrackitkun 2010; Yamashita 2013; Zhou 2024). Nuttall (1982) asserts that an ER program is "the single most effective way of improving both vocabulary and reading skills in general" (65). As a result, ER is widely considered one of the most effective methods for achieving high-level second language proficiency (Beglar and Hunt 2014; Day and Bamford 2002; Hitosugi and Day 2004). While IR can be essential for developing strong reading skills, relying solely on IR may limit learners'

exposure to the target language, potentially slowing their reading speed.

THE RLMM

An RLMM is created by the teacher who is assessing their own student's abilities. While the main goal is to get a measurement of the student's current reading level/ability so that it can be compared with another RLMM at a later time, this process also ensures that the student is properly placed in a reading program. It is to be used in conjunction with ER programs or at the very least with one single GR book series. I designed RLMMs throughout my teaching career in the United States and Asia so that I could more quickly assess my students' progress in my reading programs. The principles behind the RLMM reflect my experience working with students of all ages, especially in areas where classes with mixed-ability students are the norm.

Designing the RLMM

One benefit of the RLMM is that it is easy to design and does not require much time. If one person is working alone, the tool takes only about one hour to design and create. However, the process can be expedited if several teachers and/or administrators work collaboratively. The RLMM has six segments, with one segment to be used for each reading level that the GR publisher offers. Each segment can represent a placement or a "pre-assessment" and a "post-assessment." Therefore, a teacher must create one RLMM for placement for each segment—or two RLMMs for each segment if they intend to measure learner improvement at a future date.

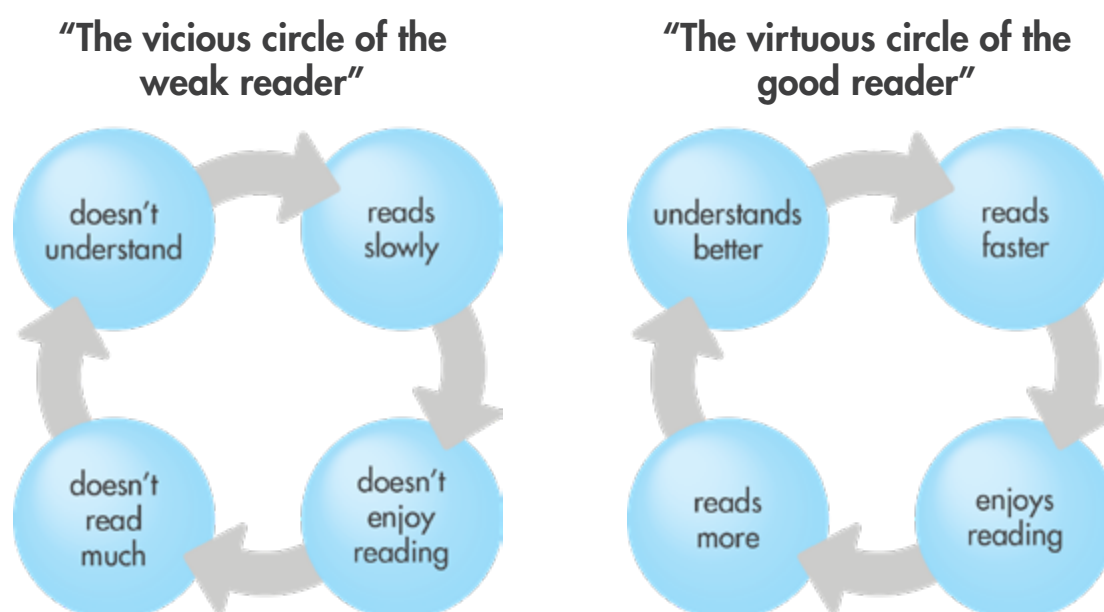An important design element of the RLMM is that it must use only one GR book series in

"The vicious circle of the weak reader"

"The virtuous circle of the good reader"

Figure 1. The "vicious vs. virtuous reading cycle" (The Extensive Reading Foundation 2011)

its full design, as this will ensure continuity. The principle behind the effectiveness and accuracy of the RLMM is that the publishing companies have previously completed the hard work, so teachers and/or creators do not have to. That is, each company has designed and created its own GR book series levels based on the number of "word families" that they use in their texts; this is why it is vital to use just one GR book series and not mix and match.

According to Twinkl (2021), "A word family is a group of words that may share a common root word with different prefixes and suffixes in morphology"; the words usually have "a common feature, pattern, or meaning." Often, word families are connected through their meaning, grammar, or morphology (roots, prefixes, and suffixes). An example of a headword family is *writer*, *written*, *writing*, *writes*, and *rewrite*. Although a teacher could measure the number of headwords used in a text by counting every single word, the publishers have already done something similar and calibrated each reading level within their GR book series. Therefore, when a learner moves from one reading level to the next higher level, it represents the learner becoming familiar with more word families and increasing their overall reading and

vocabulary knowledge. Exactly which word families and how many word families are learned are determined by the individual GR book series and the publisher, and of course which books have been selected to be read.

In some GR book series, levels are set 100 words apart, and in others, levels are set at 200 word families. Since reading-level standards are different for each GR book series, it would be inaccurate to use different GR series when creating the RLMMs or comparing results. In other words, a Level 5 text in one series might be a Level 4 text in another series. Fortunately, The Extensive Reading Foundation (2011) offers free GR comparison scales by several publishers so that one can see differences and similarities.

When designing the RLMMs, the teacher has to decide on the percentage of known or unknown words that they want their learners to be placed at. This is an important decision because the percentage of unknown words on the pages of a text each learner is reading will have an enormous effect on the learner's results. As an example, if a teacher decides to place their learners on a level where 10 percent of the words are unknown, that means one out of ten words are new or

unknown to the learners. If a page has 200 words, then the learner would not know 20 of those words. This is probably too difficult for the learner to read and fully understand. Most likely, they would need to stop reading frequently and look up words in their dictionary. This in turn would make the learner frustrated, want to quit, and/or hate reading. Therefore, using the RLMM to determine the individual's placement level is important for a learner's success. Figure 1 offers an example of what might happen to a reader if there are too many unknown words while reading; this has been called the "vicious vs. virtuous reading cycle."

Constructing the RLMM

Constructing the RLMM is straightforward, as long as you have everything you need. The most important component is a single set of GR books from one publisher's series. It is not a requirement for a creator to have an entire GR set of books, but it is vital that the creator of an RLMM has enough books available, perhaps four to six books, at each level, in order to have an adequate selection. (See the Appendix for a list of websites for GR and ER materials.) Most GR book series have Levels 1 through 6, but some publishers offer an extra level, such as "starter." However, a creator does not need to make a starter level on the RLMM; if a learner has too much difficulty at Level 1, they will be placed at the starter level. Or, if an easier level does not exist, then the teacher has learned that this GR series is too difficult for the student and can adopt an easier GR series.

The next step is to select three different texts for each level. The RLMM consists of six segments, one for each level, so the teacher will need 18 books to create one RLMM. (If necessary, a creator could just use six books.) When deciding which texts to use, one

must be mindful that some books use British English and some use American English; the same standard of English should be selected for all of the segments of the RLMM. Further, one must use the same standard of English for both the pre-assessment RLMM and the post-assessment RLMM; doing so increases the validity and reliability of the assessments. Of course, the standard of English one selects would be based on where one is located in the world and which standard is preferred.

The teacher must then randomly choose one full page from each of the three texts at each level. There should be approximately the same number of words on each of the pages. Note that when creating the pre-assessment RLMM, the teacher should create the post-assessment RLMM at the same time or at least use the same GR texts for all six levels to create both the pre- and post-assessments. In other words, if the teacher uses the GR text *Stories of Detection and Mystery* by Agatha Christie and Others and chooses one page to create the pre-assessment RLMM, then they should also select one other page, a different page from the *Stories of Detection and Mystery* by Agatha Christie and Others, to create the post-assessment RLMM. Another way to increase the validity and reliability of the assessments is to read each page and segment of the RLMM to ensure that they are at the same level of difficulty and that there are different word families on every page. If possible, it is helpful to have additional teachers read all of the selected pages to determine whether they are on a similar level, but this is not a requirement for an average classroom instructor who just wants to get feedback on their students' improvement or on the quality of their own reading program.

The last step is to put all of the pages of the RLMM assessment together. You can create a

cover page if so desired, or you could just have the learners write their names on the top of the assessment. It is recommended to begin with the first GR level, and again, there must be three pages of the RLMM for each of the six segments, for a total of 18 pages. It does not matter that all of the pages are different or from a different text. In fact, when giving the assessment to the learners, the teacher should let them know at the beginning that each page is different, from a different story, and that the content will not flow from one page to another.

One of the flexibilities of the RLMM is that, depending on the abilities of the learners, not all six segments of the RLMM need to be created, saving time and resources. If possible, teachers can have the RLMM pages laminated so that they can be reused and shared by multiple teachers and students.

Using the RLMM in the Classroom
The teacher should tell the learners that they must read every page—and that they must circle any word that they do not know. They should circle the same unknown word only once (that is, if an unknown word is repeated on the page, they should circle it only the first time it appears). After they circle an unknown word, they should continue reading. When they have read every page, have the students count all of the words that they circled on each page, write the sum at the top, and underline the number. Make it clear to students that they should be honest about not knowing certain words and that the number of unknown words they circle will not affect their grade in the class.

The RLMM assessments should take about one hour or less for the learners to read and complete all six levels. However, if a teacher knows that every student's reading ability is

fairly high, they could have the students begin reading at Level 4, and then the assessments would not take as long for the learners to complete. Similarly, learners with a lower reading ability might not have to read beyond Level 3. This is what makes the RLMM flexible and learner-centered.

Assessing the Results of the RLMM
As stated earlier, assessing the results for placement in a reading program will depend on the percentage of unknown words the instructor sets from the beginning. In order to establish the percentage, one must do a simple word count of each page that is used in the RLMM. For example, if one of the pages has 150 words and the instructor sets the amount of unknown words at 2 percent, there should be about three unknown words on each page. Since an RLMM assessment uses three different pages for each reading level, then one simply averages the number of unknown words on the three pages. In the situation where the teacher selects 2 percent of unknown words, if a learner had two circled words on each of the first two pages at Level 3, but then circled eight on the third page, then the learner should be placed at Level 2. Even if this learner had circled only one or two words on the Level 2 pages of the RLMM, they should not move up to Level 3 if they are experiencing more than 2 percent of unknown words. It is better to place a learner at the lower level than to go above the percentage of unknown words. Doing so would defeat the purpose of most reading programs, especially ER programs.

Another flexibility of the RLMM assessment is that placement does not have to be concrete. After the learners are initially placed at a reading level, they should be told that if they feel the GR books at the level they are on are too easy or too difficult, they

One thing to keep in mind is that not all texts at the same level are equally difficult for the learner. Some texts might have vocabulary or topics that are more familiar than others.

should inform the teacher; the teacher can then adjust their reading level. This should be established at the beginning of a reading program because the learners will naturally be improving their reading skills over time, but they should not switch levels without talking to the instructor first.

One thing to keep in mind is that not all texts at the same level are equally difficult for the learner. Some texts might have vocabulary or topics that are more familiar than others, so a teacher should not adjust a learner's reading level based on one text. However, a learner who is finding a text too difficult should be told that they can discontinue reading the text and choose another one at the same reading level. If the second text is still too difficult, with too many unknown words, the teacher should then re-evaluate the learner's ability and probably place the learner at one lower level. This should be done as quickly as possible in order to lessen the learner's aggravation.

To make a final assessment, the teacher can simply use two RLMMs, one as a pre-assessment and the second as a post-assessment, and compare the results.

VERSATILITY

For the learners to have better gains, it is recommended that they participate in an ER program using GRs. However, it is also understood that not all ESL/EFL programs have access to the same resources. Fortunately, many online resources are available for free, and if a teacher cannot access the internet from their location or has a slow connection, several organizations, including The Extensive Reading Foundation, offer teachers free resources.

The following are additional notes about the versatility of the RLMM:

- If possible, teachers should keep an electronic copy of an RLMM and reuse it in the future. This will save time and money.

- An RLMM that is used as a pre-assessment one year can be used as a post-assessment another year.

- Different pages of text can be replaced on the RLMM before any new year of assessment begins.

- A teacher does not need to use all of the levels of an RLMM at one time; they can decide where to start and finish.

- The RLMM can be used with any language, either a first or second language, as long as there are GRs available in that language. At this date, this author is aware of GRs available in nine languages.

- The RLMM can be used with any age group.

When the RLMM is partnered with a well-designed ER program, several researchers believe learners can gain additional vocabulary understanding (Fernandez de Morgado 2009; McQuillan 2006), improve reading speed (Bell 2001; Fernandez de Morgado 2009), and build positive beliefs about reading and/or the language involved (Fernandez de Morgado 2009). It is suggested that teachers follow Day and Bamford's (1998)

ten recommendations for creating an effective ER program and Mermelstein's (2013) enhanced ER program formula.

DISCUSSION

Although the RLMM cannot measure knowledge of specific vocabulary or vocabulary gains, it can assess overall reading improvement or an increase in reading levels. Therefore, if a learner's reading level improves, it is reasonable to assume that the learner is increasing their sight vocabulary and/or they are acquiring more headword knowledge and improving their overall literacy skills. In addition, if a learner is increasing their reading level, then their reading fluency should also be improving (Mermelstein 2015b). The published studies on the RLMM demonstrate that it can be an effective assessment device capable of placing learners at optimum reading levels.

Still, there might be a teacher who would ask why they should use the RLMM instead of a placement test offered by one of the publishing companies that makes the GRs. There are actually several reasons.

The first is that a publisher-designed placement test works only in conjunction with the texts they publish, whereas the RLMM can work with any GR series because it is designed by the teacher using the GR series they select. Additionally, if one wants to use a publisher's exam, they must pay a fee or buy one of the publisher's reading programs. The reality is that most classroom teachers are on a restricted budget and cannot afford a publisher's exams.

Another thing to consider is time. Getting through some publishers' websites to their exam can take time, and there might not be a method of saving data results unless one prints out the data, which again takes time, especially with a large class taking the exam. The school must also have enough computers available for the learners and a strong internet connection that will not lag or stall during the exam.

With the RLMM, one does not have to worry about any of that. There are no fees, besides buying the GR books that a teacher intends to use with their students anyway, unless one is able to get their reading materials for free. And, when asked, some publishers may even provide samples of their GR books that teachers can use to create an RLMM assessment. The Extensive Reading Foundation will also provide free sets of GR books to those who qualify. Further, teachers can work together to create their RLMM assessments or freely share them with each other for years to come.

As stated earlier, the RLMM is best designed to work in conjunction with ER programs utilizing GRs because GRs have been proven to be one of the most efficient sources of improving a learner's reading, writing, and listening abilities. Moreover, the RLMM is designed to be a student-centered authentic device to assess the student's language abilities and/or any reading program.

CONCLUSION

Understanding the limitations that classroom teachers around the world have in assessing their language learners and developing a reading program that can give their learners an opportunity for greater success, the RLMM can offer teachers a quick, easy, and reliable method that does not place a burden on the teacher or the learner. Assessing a learner's reading level accurately and giving them proper placement is paramount to any reading program. Misplacement means a missed opportunity, which could be catastrophic to the learner and greatly affect their reading motivation. Negative feelings about reading can easily

> ## The RLMM is designed to be a student-centered authentic device to assess the student's language abilities and/or any reading program.

lead to negative feelings about themselves, the teacher, or school in general.

People who have a vested interest in their education program hope to find a method of accurately assessing their students in order to establish whether they are improving their reading abilities. The RLMM takes only a short time for a teacher to create and then use to accurately position their learners at the proper reading level, providing an authentic solution to a real problem in real time.

REFERENCES

Bamford, J., and R. R. Day. 2004. *Extensive reading activities for teaching language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Beglar, D., and A. Hunt. 2014. Pleasure reading and reading rate gains. *Reading in a Foreign Language* 26 (1): 29–48.

Bell, T. 2001. Extensive reading: Speed and comprehension. *The Reading Matrix* 1 (1). https://www.readingmatrix.com/articles/bell/index.html

British Council. 2019. "Intensive reading." *Teaching English*. https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/knowing-subject/d-h/intensive-reading

Day, R. R., and J. Bamford. 1998. *Extensive reading in the second language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Day, R., and J. Bamford. 2002. Top ten principles for teaching extensive reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language* 14 (2): 136–141.

Fakazlı, Ö. 2021. How does extensive reading promote language development? *Journal of International Social Research* 14 (78): 498–506.

Fernandez de Morgado, N. 2009. Extensive reading: Students' performance and perception. *The Reading Matrix* 9 (1): 31–43.

Grabe, W. 2009. *Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139150484

Grabe, W., and F. L. Stoller. 2011. *Teaching and researching: Reading*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315833743

Hitosugi, C. I., and R. R. Day. 2004. Extensive reading in Japanese. *Reading in a Foreign Language* 16 (1): 20–39.

Iwahori, Y. 2008. Developing reading fluency: A study of extensive reading in EFL. *Reading in a Foreign Language* 20 (1): 70–91.

Jacobs, H. L., S. A. Zinkgraf, D. R. Wormuth, V. F. Hartfiel, and J. B. Hughey. 1981. *Testing ESL composition: A practical approach*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Lee, S. Y., and Y. Hsu. 2009. Determining the crucial characteristics of extensive reading programs: The impact of extensive reading on EFL writing. *The International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching* 5 (1): 12–20.

McQuillan, J. 2006. The effects of print access and print exposure on English vocabulary acquisition of language minority students. *The Reading Matrix* 6 (1): 41–51.

Mermelstein, A. D. 2013. "The Effects of Extensive Reading on 4th Year Taiwanese University Students' Reading Level, Reading Speed, and Perceptions of Reading." PhD Diss., Tamkang University, Taipei, Taiwan. https://tkuir.lib.tku.edu.tw/dspace/handle/987654321/86899

Mermelstein, A. D. 2014. Improving EFL learners' reading levels through extensive reading. *The Reading Matrix* 14 (2): 227–242.

Mermelstein, A. D. 2015a. Reading level placement and assessment for ESL/EFL learners: The reading level measurement method. *ORTESOL Journal* 32: 44–55.

Mermelstein, A. D. 2015b. Increasing language learners' fluency. *WAESOL World Quarterly*. Spring Issue: 4–7.

Mermelstein, A. D. 2015c. Improving EFL learners' writing through enhanced extensive reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language* 27 (2): 181–196.

Mo, A. 2020. Improving 9th grade EFL students' reading speed through an enhanced extensive reading methodology. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher* 30 (2): 109–117. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-020-00518-w

Nakanishi, T. 2015. A meta-analysis of extensive reading research. *TESOL Quarterly* 49 (1): 6–37. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.157

Nation, I. S. P., and R. Waring. 2019. *Teaching extensive reading in another language*. 1st ed. New York:

Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367809256

Nunan, D. 1999. *Second language teaching & learning*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Nuttall, C. 1982. *Teaching reading skills in a foreign language*. 1st ed. London: Heinemann.

Nuttall, C., and J. C. Alderson. 2005. *Teaching reading skills in a foreign language*. 3rd ed. Oxford, UK: Macmillan.

Renandya, W. A., and G. M. Jacobs. 2016. Extensive reading and listening in the L2 classroom. In *English language teaching today*, ed. W. A. Renandya and P. Handoyo, 97–110. New York: Routledge.

Sheu, S. P.-H. 2003. Extensive reading with EFL learners at beginning level. *TESL Reporter* 36 (2): 8–26.

Tamrackitkun, K. 2010. "Extensive Reading: An Empirical Study of Its Effects on EFL Thai Students' Reading Comprehension, Reading Fluency and Attitudes." Unpublished Diss., School of Languages, University of Salford, Salford, UK. https://salford-repository.worktribe.com/OutputFile/1500996

The Extensive Reading Foundation (ERF). 2011. *The Extensive Reading Foundation's guide to extensive reading*. https://erfoundation.org/guide/ERF_Guide.pdf

The Glossary of Education Reform. 2014a. "Norm-referenced test." Last updated July 22, 2015. https://www.edglossary.org/norm-referenced-test/

The Glossary of Education Reform. 2014b. "Criterion-referenced test." Last updated April 30, 2014. https://www.edglossary.org/criterion-referenced-test/

Twinkl. 2021. "What is a Word Family?" https://www.twinkl.com/teaching-wiki/word-family

Waring, R. 2006. Why extensive reading should be an indispensable part of all language programs. *The Language Teacher* 30 (7): 44–47.

Yamashita, J. 2013. Effects of extensive reading on reading attitudes in a foreign language. *Reading in a Foreign Language* 25 (2): 248–263.

Zhou, J. 2024. *Extensive reading*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009474153

Aaron David Mermelstein is a Washington State certified K–12 teacher with a PhD in TESOL. His specialties include student-centered teaching methodologies and assessment. He is currently teaching ESL/EFL at the post-secondary level at the National University of Kaohsiung in Taiwan.

APPENDIX

Free and/or almost free Graded Readers for the RLMM or ER programs (in no particular order)

Online for Reading Fluency: https://or4f.org/

The Extensive Reading Foundation: https://erfoundation.org/wordpress/graded-readers/

American English: https://americanenglish.state.gov/ebooks

Free Graded Readers: https://freegradedreaders.com/wordpress/

Extensive Reading Central: https://www.er-central.com

Rong-chang ESL: https://www.rong-chang.com/

Reading A-Z: https://www.readinga-z.com/

ReadTheory: https://readtheory.org/

Oxford Reading Club: https://www.oxfordreadingclub.com/

ESL Fast: https://www.eslfast.com/