

Easy English: Creating an Extensive Reading Collection for English Language Learners

Liz Svoboda esvoboda@umflint.edu
Frances Willson Thompson Library, University of Michigan – Flint
MLA Academic Libraries 2016, 20 May 2016

What is Extensive Reading?

Extensive reading is an approach to teaching reading skills in which language learners build their reading fluency by reading as many materials at their linguistic competency level as possible (Day & Bamford, 1998).

Librarians can play an important role in supporting English language learner literacy gains by developing and maintaining a dynamic, varied, and balanced collection of extensive reading materials.

Extensive Reading Materials

- Language Learner Literature (LLL), aka graded readers
 - Written specifically for language learners
 - Series leveled based on vocabulary and grammar
 - Typically have vocabulary & pre- and post-reading exercises
 - Major publishers: Oxford Univ. Press, Cambridge Univ. Press, Cengage/National Geographic, Pearson, & Macmillan
 - Genres: adapted classics, movie novelizations, original fiction, original nonfiction
 - Read-along: books accompanied by audio tracks

- High interest/low literacy (Hi/lo) books:
 - Written for native speakers with low literacy
 - Typically have vocabulary help
 - Help fill out gaps in LLL levels and subjects
 - Major publishers: Saddleback & Orca

- Graphic novels & comics
 - Images give context clues
 - Attention grabbing
 - Link to American popular culture

- Young adult and children's literature
 - Authentic English, should include at upper intermediate and advanced levels
 - Multicultural stories
 - Link to American popular culture

Organizing the Collection

- Leveling the collection
 - No standard LLL levels between book series, even under same publisher
 - Extensive Reading Foundation has equivalence chart.
 - UM-Flint solution: Create our own system
 - Color coded 3 larger collections
 - Letters G – A to break down larger collections
- Cataloging the collection
 - No assigned/suggested Library of Congress call numbers
 - UM-Flint solution: Create LC call numbers
 - Original fiction: PE 1100s
 - Adapted fiction: variation of original text's LC number
 - Nonfiction: classified by subject
- Displaying the collection
 - Books tend to be very skinny, and hard to see on shelf
 - UM-Flint solution: Display some book covers and rotate them

Orienting Students

- Classes visit library toward beginning of the semester.
- Orientations should vary based on student's language skills.
- Try to discuss students' reading habits.
- Model read-along.
- Explain leveling system.
- Explain call numbers, especially how to tell which are fiction and nonfiction.
- Demonstrate how to search the library catalog.
- Lay books out for easier browsing experience.
- Assist students through check out process.

Suggested Reading

Bryan, S. (2011). Extensive reading, narrow reading and second language learners: Implications for libraries. *The Australian Library Journal*, 60(2), 113-122.
doi:10.1080/00049670.2011.10722583

Claridge, G. (2012). Graded readers: How the publishers make the grade. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 24(1), 106-119. Retrieved from <http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl/April2012/>

Day, R. R., & Bamford, J. (1998). *Extensive reading in the second language classroom*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

The Extensive Reading Foundation. (2011). *The Extensive Reading Foundation's Guide to extensive reading*. Retrieved from http://erfoundation.org/ERF_Guide.pdf