

## Characterizing Best Practices in an Extensive Reading Program

Aaron P. CAMPBELL, Mami YOSHIDA,  
Midori TANIMURA, Andy H. CLARK,  
Rebecca CALMAN & Iain DAVEY

### 〈要約〉

本学では、3年以上に渡り、多読学習を管理するオンラインシステム M-reader を用いた多読プログラムを実施している。小さな規模で実験的に始まった本プログラムは、現在、2000人を超える学生と約60人の教員が参加する大規模なプログラムにまで発展した。規模の拡大に伴い、クラス間での学生の到達度（読破語数）や学習態度の違いや、教員の指導方法や評価方法の相違も顕著である。本学の多読プログラムのより有効な支援方法を探るために、本稿では、より効果的な学生の多読の取組方及び教員の指導方法について探ることを目的とする。

調査手法として、M-reader から収集できるデータ（累積語数、参加率、確認テストの受験回数）を使用して、優秀な成績を取めた学生を特定し、インタビューを行った。また、学生の読破語数の平均が著しく高いクラスを担当している教員を特定し、当該の教員に対してもインタビューを行った。

これらのインタビューの結果、成果を上げている学生と教員の特徴を示し、共通する方略や活動内容を明らかにすることができた。具体的には、高い学習成果を修めている学生は、概ね多読活動の意味をよく理解し、日々の生活に多読活動を組み込んでいることが明らかになった。また、著しい成果を上げているクラスを担当する教員に共通することは、ペアやグループなどの形式で学生間で多読について話し合いをする場を設けたり、学生が授業中に読書活動（持続的黙読：Silent Sustained Reading）に従事できるように読書時間を設けたりしていることが分かった。

これらの結果から示唆をえて、多読プログラムを改善するための具体的方法を提案する。

### Abstract

Over the course of three years, an M-reader supported extensive reading program at a small, private Japanese university grew from a tiny pilot into a fairly large-scale operation with over 2,000 participating students and approximately 60 teachers. Throughout the program, methods of implementation and assessment varied from class-to-class, as did student achievement. The researchers wanted to find out what methods and strategies were working well for both students and teachers in the program. Using data from M-reader in the form of word counts, participation rates, and number of quizzes taken, researchers identified and interviewed students achieving success in the program. Researchers also identified and interviewed teachers whose students were collectively outperform-

ing other classes at similar levels in the program. From these interview results, researchers constructed profiles of students and teachers for whom the program was working well, highlighting the types of strategies and behaviors they had in common. Among these for students included a clear understanding of ER practices and the ability to integrate reading into their daily habits. Common practices amongst teachers were having students discuss their reading in pairs or small groups, and creating time for students to practice Silent Sustained Reading in class.

## Introduction

The practice of extensive reading (ER) has become largely ubiquitous in English language education throughout Japan. Extensive reading is defined loosely as 'reading many easy and interesting books at the appropriate level of comprehension'. In institutional EFL contexts, extensive reading is often takes the form of having students read graded readers of their choice consistently over time. As their reading abilities grow, they are able to handle higher level books. Along the way they are exposed to a wide variety of stories and topics from around the world. Extensive reading offers the learner a number of important benefits. Among these are increases in reading speed and fluency (Iwahori, 2008), vocabulary size (Nation, 1997; Horst, 2005), motivation to read more (Nishino, 2007; Takase, 2007), confidence and attitude (Mahmood, 2011), listening and speaking (Cho & Krashen, 1994), general language competence (Krashen, 2004), general world knowledge (Maley, 2008), and learner autonomy (Wu & Wu, 2009). In short: good things come to those who read (see Day, n.d.).

In an effort to improve the quality of English language education on campus, the Department of British & American Studies (Eibei) at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies (KUFS) started an extensive reading program with a small pilot of two classes in the fall of 2010. Since then, the program had grown to a fairly large scale by April of 2014, with approximately 2,000 participating students and 60 teachers spanning all departments in the Faculty of Foreign Languages, including the affiliated Junior College (Tandai). Generous support from the administration, the library staff, volunteer teachers, and other key faculty members had allowed the ER program at KUFS to grow rapidly and flourish. Also crucial to its successful implementation was the web-based software, M-Reader, which tracked student reading activity outside of the classroom and made assessment a cinch for teachers.

As one might imagine, increases in quantity of scale risk decreases in quality of implementation. Indeed, the rapid growth of such a large ER program posed significant administrative and pedagogical challenges. For example, ensuring uniform implementation campus-wide necessitates good organization, communication, and teacher training. However, most of the efforts in the begin-

ning stages of the program's implementation were focused on growth. This meant that the approaches teachers were taking to facilitate extensive reading in their classrooms widely varied. Furthermore, examination of student reading data from M-Reader revealed that some students were enjoying great success in achieving large word counts, while the word counts of other students were extremely low or non-existent.

In response to this variability, a committee was formed in the spring of 2014 to research and improve the quality of the ER program at KUFS. The committee decided that before improvements could be made, it was first important to find out what was actually working well for both students and teachers. For example, what habits, attitudes, traits, and strategies were common to students currently achieving success in the program? Likewise, what were the teachers doing whose students were achieving higher degrees of participation and word counts in comparison to those of other classes at the same level?

To answer these questions, the researchers decided to focus exclusively on the program as it was being run in the Eibe for two reasons. It was the largest and most active cohort of students and teachers in the program, covering the entire 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year student body in that department. Furthermore, most of the researchers involved were Eibe faculty, giving them easy access to teachers and students.

The purpose of this paper, then, is to describe the researchers' efforts to both identify and characterize successful students and teachers in the ER program at KUFS. After outlining the structure of the ER program and the specific challenges it posed, the authors will explain the research approach, present their findings, and end with a discussion on what these best practices mean in the context of the Eibe extensive reading program and how these practices shed light on what changes need to be made toward future program improvements.

## The KUFS ER Program

As mentioned above, the ER program at KUFS started out as a small pilot of 2 classes in the fall of 2010. In addition to the tremendous amount of support from faculty and staff, what encouraged its initial adoption and subsequent rapid growth was the fact that it was a low-impact, high-gain investment. Because M-Reader — at that time Moodle Reader<sup>1)</sup> — was free to use, it presented no economic burden to the department. In addition, it automatically tracked word counts, so it relieved participating teachers of assessment burdens. Furthermore, extensive reading was something the students could do outside of the classroom, so it posed no significant threat to pre-existing curricula and related classroom activities; it could essentially be plugged into any course. Also, the benefits of extensive reading were easy to see, and implementation (in its basest

form) was as simple as telling the students to check out books, read them, and take quizzes in their own time. Finally, the library welcomed the boost in book circulation. So it was a win-win situation for everyone, requiring minimal effort for maximum gain.

During the growth phase of its development, M-Reader-supported extensive reading was treated as an educational plug-in to existing compulsory courses. Among these were a reading/writing based course called *Academic Writing Skills (AES)*, a listening/speaking based course called *English Workshop*, and a research/presentation skills course called *English Seminar*. The decision to marry the ER program to one of these three compulsory courses for any given class of students was determined by the willingness of the teacher to participate. By not forcing the program onto a specific group of teachers, it allowed the program to grow quickly and cover the maximum number of students throughout the department. This meant that in-class facilitation of extensive reading was taking place in slightly different academic contexts, leading to what we surmised was considerable variation in how the program was being administered in any given class.

However, this structure began to change in the 2014–2015 academic year, as the university's new curriculum came into effect for 1<sup>st</sup> year students. Under this new curriculum, the ER program was to exist exclusively in the AES course, which met for two 90-minute sessions a week all year long. This was advantageous in a number of ways. First, it introduced a measure of consistency into the program that had previously never existed. No longer would volunteer teachers have to be recruited at the beginning of each year; there would be a specific group of teachers dedicated to facilitating ER. Over time, this would increase the quality of facilitation, as these teachers grew in experience. Secondly, it introduced a measure of uniformity. No longer would classroom facilitation take place in the midst of different academic courses; instead it would be exclusively conducted in a course more appropriate for dealing with reading activities. Furthermore, because the AES course met twice a week, it provided a better opportunity to grant students time to read books of their choice silently in class, a practice called Silent Sustained Reading (SSR). SSR has been shown to have positive effects on the learning outcomes of students (Garan & DeVoogd, 2008; Takase, 2011). Finally, being an official part of a single course, both the implementation and assessment could be more closely unified and tracked, which was deemed pedagogically desirable by the Eibei Department.

What this meant was that in the academic year in which this research was carried out, 1<sup>st</sup> year students and their AES teachers were part of the new curriculum, while 2<sup>nd</sup> year students and their teachers were on the old curriculum. And since both cohorts were being researched, there was still a considerable amount of variability taking place in approaches to facilitating ER. The researchers felt such variability was desirable, for it would allow them to examine different approaches that teachers were taking, so they could better see what was working well and what wasn't having much

effect.

## Research Questions

In the midst of these variations in reading activity throughout the ER Program in the Eibe Department, the researchers wanted to know who was currently achieving the most success, and what was the cause of this success. The research questions were:

A. What was the profile of a successful reader in the ER Program at KUFS?

1. What sort of attitudes toward reading did successful readers have?
2. What kind of behaviors toward reading were successful readers exhibiting?
3. What type of reading strategies were successful readers employing?
4. What sort of support were successful students getting from their classes and teachers?

B. What was the profile of a “successful teacher” in the ER Program at KUFS?

1. How did successful teachers introduce ER to their students at the beginning of the semester?
2. How did successful teachers facilitate ER in their classes during the semester?
3. What did successful teachers do to motivate their students and encourage them to read?
4. How did successful teachers assess the ER activities of their students?

## Research Methodology

Naturally, answers to the above questions are meaningless without first defining what “success” meant when it came to the activities of the students and teachers involved.

Since the purpose of extensive reading is to read as much and as widely as possible, researchers decided that success for students would be measured in terms of quizzes taken (representing the number of books read) and/or the total word counts acquired (representing the total volume of reading). Students who had significantly higher numbers of quizzes taken and larger word counts in comparison to their peers at the same level would be considered for interview selection.

As for teachers, success would be determined by their students’ rate of participation and the average word counts achieved per student in their classes in comparison with other classes at the same level. Teachers with higher participation rates and average class word counts were labeled

'successful' for the purposes of the study, and would be selected for interview. It is worth noting that the term "successful" is a term of convenience for the purposes of this study and one that is defined using a very narrow range of criteria: namely, quantitative data from M-Reader. Teachers not asked for interviews may in fact have been successful with their students in many other ways. Likewise, teachers labeled as 'successful' in the study could very well have failed their students on other accounts.

It was thought that, by interviewing both successful students and teachers, the researchers could put together a list of attitudes, behaviors, and strategies related to extensive reading common amongst the participants involved. Those lists of common traits could then be used as a basis to construct a profile of a successful student and that of a successful teacher. The ultimate goal would then be to use those profiles as a basis for future development of the ER program, especially in terms of student induction, scaffolding, and motivation; along with more effective teacher training and ongoing support.

## Student Interviews and Results

After the completion of Week 12 of the 15-week Spring 2014 semester, researchers examined student data from M-Reader and selected 22 students to approach for interviews. Interviews were conducted in Japanese in small groups of 4 or 5 by Japanese teachers. The interviews were audio recorded and notes were taken on student comments. Efforts were taken to include students from all three levels (high, intermediate, and low) across the curriculum to ensure as much inclusion as possible. Two types of students were identified: a.) students who simply had high word counts and quizzes taken (top readers), and b.) students who had higher word counts than their peers in underperforming classes (see Table 1).

We can see in Table 1 that four students were selected for interviews. Students 12 and 14 simply had word counts (240,621 and 328,375) that were far above the average of their peers in the intermediate level (44,163). Students 7 and 13, however, did not have word counts that were even close to the top readers amongst intermediate students, but instead were top readers in underperforming classes. Underperforming classes were those that had average word counts and number of quizzes passed that were significantly below the averages for that level. In the case of Student 7, the average word count for a student in his class was 33,356, which was below the average for students in all intermediate classes: 44,163. The same can be said for Student 13, whose word count was 100,396 in the lowest performing class at the intermediate level, with an average word count of 23,467 and only 5.1 quizzes passed per student in comparison with 9.7 quizzes passed for the average intermediate student. The researchers felt that by interviewing the top readers in underperforming classes, they could hone in on the source of their motivation and type of reading strate-

Table 1. *M-Reader Data from Week 12 of 1<sup>st</sup>-Year Intermediate Students, students selected for interviews and their word counts in bold.*

Class	Number of Students	Students with Quizzes	Avg. Quizzes Passed	Average Words Read	Highest Word Count	Top Reader
Class 1	20	89%	8.1	46,556	173,735	S5 (m)
Class 2	21	85%	9.8	40,819	128,543	S6 (f)
Class 3	22	81%	6.9	33,356	<b>139,399</b>	<b>S7 (m)</b>
Class 4	20	84%	6.2	22,632	64,537	S8 (f)
Class 5	20	100%	8.3	61,991	145,516	S9 (f)
Class 6	21	85%	8.1	35,888	134,156	S10 (m)
Class 7	21	95%	16.5	69,271	157,854	S11 (f)
Class 8	23	86%	8.0	50,303	<b>240,621</b>	<b>S12 (m)</b>
Class 9	22	86%	5.1	23,467	<b>100,396</b>	<b>S13 (f)</b>
Class 10	20	95%	16.0	65,364	<b>328,375</b>	<b>S14 (f)</b>
Class 11	19	94%	14.2	36,150	78,683	S15 (m)
Average	21	89%	9.7	44,163	153,801	

gies employed. A similar selection process was carried out for the high and low levels for 1<sup>st</sup>-year students, and in all three levels for 2<sup>nd</sup>-year students.

A total of 22 selected students from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year were contacted for interviews, of which 14 agreed to be interviewed: 8 high level, 4 intermediate, and 2 low level (see Table 2). Interviews were conducted jointly by two researchers in small groups of between 2–5 students. The questions were as follows:

1. How do you select books?
2. How do you find or make time to read?
3. What motivates you to read?
4. Do you take notes and/or use a dictionary?
5. Do you carry a book at all times?
6. Can you describe your extensive reading habits or processes?
7. How to your classroom activities support your reading?

Data from interviews was compiled and a ‘successful student’ profile was constructed from the common answers, representing what is currently working well for students in our program. Below are descriptions of the main themes that arose during the interviews.

Table 2. *M-Reader Data from Week 12 of students interviewed.*

<b>Student</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Quizzes Passed</b>	<b>Word Count</b>
S1 (f)	1	high	94	280,914
S2 (f)	1	high	22	338,235
S3 (f)	1	high	29	331,885
S4 (f)	1	high	9	140,982
S5 (m)	1	intermediate	10	139,399
S6 (m)	1	intermediate	31	240,621
S8 (f)	1	intermediate	106	328,375
S10 (m)	1	low	32	221,415
S12 (f)	2	high	69	862,393
S13 (m)	2	high	56	269,303
S14 (f)	2	high	69	1,188,291
S15 (f)	2	high	21	209,059
S18 (f)	2	intermediate	21	194,825
S20 (m)	2	low	15	79,485

### Book selection

One of the things common about book selection habits was random book selection. Successful students often pulled a book off the shelf, skimmed the first few pages, read the summary at the back of the book, and/or scanned through the illustrations in order to get a better idea if the book was truly of interest to them. This strategy ensures that students will be exposed to stories they don't already know, which stimulates their curiosity and interest.

Also common to the book selection process amongst successful readers in the program was the careful consideration of the M-reader quiz awaiting them upon completion of the book. Passing the quiz is necessary for receiving the word count for the book, so many successful readers were careful to choose books that were not likely to have difficult quizzes. This meant avoiding stories with seemingly complex plots with multiple characters, dates, times, and places, all of which could be difficult to remember accurately during the 15-minute quiz. In addition, books with high word counts and stories that the students were already familiar with (such as from movies) were particularly attractive for doing well on the quizzes and for lowering anxiety.



## Making time to read

Interestingly, successful students overwhelmingly reported that they did not make specific time for extensive reading as an activity in and of itself. Rather, students made use of commuting time on buses and trains or free time at school to pick up their book and read. Furthermore, students reported that they would pick up their books at home to relax or whenever they were feeling bored. In other words, students did not schedule time to read, but rather found a way to work it into their daily life patterns in an efficient way.

## Motivational factors

Causal factors related to motivation to read were definitely the most diverse in terms of student responses during the interview. Some students read simply because they enjoyed it, an intrinsic trait that purists of extensive reading would most love to see. And it's no surprise that students who felt joy from reading were amongst the top readers in the program. Indeed, Komiyama (2009) found that intrinsic motivation played the largest role in characterizing the reading motivation of her study participants.

However, extrinsic factors were also present amongst the successful students interviewed. One of these was the desire to improve their English proficiency, not only for their future careers, but, perhaps more urgently, as preparation for studying abroad, which a number of the students wanted to do. Raising their TOEFL, IELTS, and/or TOEIC scores was also part of this process of wanting to go abroad or secure employment after graduation. Other extrinsic motivational factors included the desires to be awarded at the end of the year in the top reader awards ceremony, to compete with other readers, and to get extra credit to raise their grades. Out performing peers and receiving recognition are definitely strong motivating factors (Komiyama, 2009).

## Taking notes and using dictionaries

Not a single one of the 14 students interviewed reported using a dictionary or taking notes while reading: two activities that are strongly discouraged in extensive reading practice. This suggests that students were aware of both the purpose and the proper practice of extensive reading and followed their teachers' recommendations on how to read throughout the semester. This also suggests that students were reading at the appropriate levels, since dictionaries were not needed. It also lends credibility to the fact that students employed a book selection strategy of choosing less complex stories, ridding themselves of the need to take notes to do well on quizzes.

## Carrying books

Not only did all of the students interviewed report carrying a book on them at all times throughout the day, but also they reported carrying two or three books at a time, rather than just one. One reason was that they could easily pick up a new story should the one they read turn out to be too boring or difficult. Likewise, they could start a new story upon immediate completion of the former one. In short, carrying multiple books around was a habit of successful readers in our program.

## Other reading habits

In addition to carrying more than one book around at all times, successful students also made it a point to read every day. They recognized the importance of consistency for achieving the best results, not only in word counts, but also in the benefits that arise from extensive reading. In addition, unlike many of their less successful peers, the students interviewed reported reading during the summer and winter breaks, while on holiday. That is, their reading activities never took a pause; they kept going whether or not school was in session.

## Classroom activities

For some of the successful students, their teacher made time for them to read silently in class, usually for an average time of 20 minutes. This supports the research that Silent Sustained Reading (SSR) plays an important role in the success of readers in an institutional setting (Garan & DeVoogd, 2008; Takase, 2008, 2011; Yoon, 2002). Interestingly, outside of discussing their books with other students, none of the students reported any kind of special teaching activities related to extensive reading in their classes.

## Profile of a Successful Student

Successful students in the ER program at KUFS were likely to . . .

- Be willing to try new stories and unknown titles
- Choose books they think will have easy quizzes
- Integrate reading into their daily routine in natural ways
- Have a variety of different motivations for reading

- Never take notes or use dictionaries while reading
- Carry multiple books with them wherever they go
- Bring books they are reading to class
- Read during holidays
- Practice SSR in their classes

### Teacher Interviews and Results

Similar to the students, successful teachers were also identified and approached for interviews after Week 12 of the Spring 2014 semester. In this case, successful teachers were those whose classes either had higher average number of quizzes taken per student or higher average word counts than other classes at the same level. In other words, “success” was defined by these two metrics by comparing all classes at the same level and honing in on teachers of above average performing classes (see Table 3).

As indicated in Table 3 above, three teachers of 1<sup>st</sup>-year intermediate level students were selected for interviews on the basis of above average word counts or, as in the example of Teacher 12, higher than average number of quizzes taken per student. A similar process was carried out with teachers of high and low level classes during the 1<sup>st</sup> year, and for all three levels of the second year.

Table 3. *M-Reader Data from Week 12 of 1<sup>st</sup>-Year Intermediate Classes; teachers selected for interviews and their significant metrics are in bold.*

Class	Number of Students	Students with Quizzes	Avg. Quizzes Passed	Average Words Read	Teacher
Class 1	20	89%	8.1	46,556	T4
Class 2	21	85%	9.8	40,819	T5
Class 3	22	81%	6.9	33,356	T6
Class 4	20	84%	6.2	22,632	T5
Class 5	20	<b>100%</b>	8.3	<b>61,991</b>	<b>T7</b>
Class 6	21	85%	8.1	35,888	T8
Class 7	21	95%	<b>16.5</b>	<b>69,271</b>	<b>T9</b>
Class 8	23	86%	8.0	50,303	T10
Class 9	22	86%	5.1	23,467	T11
Class 10	20	95%	<b>16.0</b>	<b>65,364</b>	<b>T7</b>
Class 11	19	94%	<b>14.2</b>	36,150	<b>T12</b>
Average	21	89%	9.7	44,163	

A total of six teachers were selected for interviews after examining the data from both years. Four of the teachers were native Japanese speakers, while two were native English speakers. Interviews were carried out by the same researcher; all of the interviews were in English. The research questions asked were as follows:

1. How did you introduce extensive reading to your students at the beginning of the semester?
2. How did you facilitate extensive reading in your courses this semester?
3. What did you do to encourage and/or motivate your students?
4. How did you assess the extensive reading activity of your students?

Data from interviews was compiled and a 'successful teacher' profile was constructed from the common answers, representing what is currently working well for students in our program. Below are descriptions of the main themes that arose during the interviews.

### Introducing extensive reading

In examining the way ER was introduced to students, there were three things common to more than one teacher. The most common was scaffolding the extensive reading process by assigning reading and quiz taking as a first homework assignment. These teachers thought that the students needed some structure at the beginning of the process, rather than just turning them loose with a semester-long word count goal and telling them to read.

In addition to scaffolding through homework assignments, in-class website demonstrations at the beginning of the semester on how to take a quiz was also practiced by two teachers. They thought that by showing students how easy it was to take a quiz, they would help alleviate their anxiety and give them some confidence toward the process.

The final common practice amongst successful teachers to introduce their learners to ER was class visits to the extensive reading room at the beginning of the semester. Two of the teachers used the opportunity to introduce their students to the different collections of graded readers and non-graded readers, as well as show students how to choose the right level, which involves making sure students do not encounter more than just a few unknown words per page; something that Bamford and Day (2004) stress is extremely important. These teachers thought that having a hands-on experience in the ER room would be informative and alleviate student anxiety about how to choose the right kind of book.

In addition to these practices, the most successful teacher in the program started her students

at the lowest reading levels, even though she taught high level students. She believed that starting her students reading at such low levels would build confidence and momentum that could be carried over into higher levels as the students progressed. Her students took 2–3 quizzes per week at the low levels before moving onto higher level books. Indeed, this same ‘Start with Simple Stories’ (SSS) method (Sakai & Kanda, 2005) has been used to considerable success by Akio Furukawa (2011) and his students in Tokyo (Shearon, 2014); and is a practice Takase (2008) deems as critical to success when starting to read.

### Facilitating extensive reading

Of the four questions asked to the six teachers, Question 2 (How did you facilitate extensive reading in your courses this semester?) elicited by far the most varied responses. It seemed that teachers had their own methods of carrying out extensive reading in their classes. However, the single most common practice was that of putting students in pairs and/or groups for the purposes of discussion. Two of these teachers had students make book recommendations to one another. Another teacher gave students questions to answer, while a fourth teacher encouraged his students to discuss the books in Japanese. This teacher made a point to emphasize how important this was to him and his students in order to have meaningful, deep communication of feelings and opinions related to the stories read. Indeed, this is echoed by O’Brien (2014), who claims that student use of L1 to speak about the books they are reading promotes a sense of meaningfulness and enjoyment in ER programs. Also, a study in 1984 (Manning & Manning; in Jacobs & Gallo 2002) concluded that students who did ER accompanied by peer-to-peer interaction significantly outperformed students who read alone in reading achievement.

Outside of pair and group discussions, half of the teachers had the following two practices in common: Silent Sustained Reading (SSR) and Open Progress Reports.

In an institutional context, SSR is the practice of reading silently in a classroom for an extended period of time. Three of the successful teachers had their students read silently in class for at least 20 minutes each week. And as we saw in the interviews with successful students, SSR was the only significant classroom activity reported as being noteworthy. Indeed, the benefits of SSR on L2 readers are well reported in the literature (Shimo, 2009; Sakurai, 2014; Takase, 2009, 2011).

Open progress reports took the form of announcing to the class the weekly progress of each student. One teacher had the students report out loud their own progress, one-by-one in front of the other students. Another teacher made the individual announcements herself for each student, while a third teacher simply focused on the top 3–5 readers in class for her announcements. Making each student’s individual progress known to other students is bound to stimulate extrinsic motivation to

arise, as students don't wish to be embarrassed in front of their peers.

Other practices common to more than one teacher included having students bring books to class, maintaining reading progress charts, and taking M-reader quizzes in class on smartphones. Two teachers also reported setting interim target goals. One teacher set a midterm target goal of half the semester word count and imposed a penalty of 5% of the total semester grade for students who didn't reach it. Another teacher set weekly word count goals for each student and held them accountable in their weekly report for the successful completion of those goals. It is worth noting that this teacher had the highest performing classes in the program in terms of quizzes taken and word counts achieved.

In addition, two teachers talked about the importance of being a model reader for the students. Not only did they also bring books to class that they were reading, but they also talked openly about their opinions and feelings about the book, and shared these stories with students. They felt that this was an important part of connecting with students and motivating them to be an engaged reader.

Finally, there were a number of other practices that teachers reported related to facilitating extensive reading with their students. However, these were not practices in common with the other teachers, but rather unique to each teacher (see Table 5).

Table 5. *Teacher responses to Q2, "How do you facilitate ER with your students?"*

Question 2	Responses (n=6)
How do you facilitate extensive reading with your students?	Pair and group work (4) Silent Sustained Reading (3) Open progress reports (3) Book recommendations in pairs and groups (3) Bring books to class (2) Maintain reading progress sheets (2) Teacher as model reader (2) Interim target goals (2) Taking M-Reader quizzes in class (2) Group reading with Q&A in pairs (1) Use of L1 for talking about books (1) Connecting books to textbook content (1) Teacher-student individual interaction related to books read (1) Weekly reminders to read (1)

## Motivating Students

A discussion of motivation separate from the practices of facilitation and assessment is difficult, as often the reasons behind such activities and assessment involve a consideration of how they will motivate students. Speaking with the six successful teachers about ways they motivate or encourage students brought out three common themes.

The first common approach to motivating students involved creating a good classroom atmosphere. Two of the teachers made a point to create a relaxed atmosphere by chatting with the students in casual ways, using humor, and by allowing the students to speak freely in pairs and small groups. These teachers thought that having a good atmosphere would lower the affective filter and make it more likely that students would enjoy the process of discussing their books and sharing their opinions in discussions with their peers.

The second approach involved positive reinforcement. These teachers felt that since the effectiveness of extensive reading involved choosing interesting books and reading for pleasure, that extrinsic motivation would work better in the form of positive reinforcement rather than penalties, peer pressure, or scolding for poor performance. One teacher made a point to openly celebrate the successful passing of the first quiz by drawing attention to, and to continue praising students throughout the semester for their accomplishments and progress. Another teacher recognized the top readers openly, while encouraging others to keep reading.

Interestingly, the third approach involved the use of peer pressure and open accountability to motivate students. For one teacher — the most successful in terms of average word counts achieved and quizzes taken in her classes — this took the form of having students openly report their reading progress in front of the class. Another teacher took a similar approach, by reading out the progress of her students in front of the class. This kind of open accountability introduced peer pressure into the classroom atmosphere, and clearly had an effect on the amount of reading done throughout the semester.

## Assessment

Five of the six teachers allotted 20% of the semester grade to extensive reading, as was recommended by the department. Two of those teachers gave extra credit for word counts surpassing the target goal, and one of them levied a 5% penalty for not reaching a midterm goal. A third teacher gave no credit for word counts up to half of the semester word count, and then began to give credit for students as they surpassed the half way mark, all the way up to full credit for reaching the final goal.

Only one teacher used an alternative approach, by purposefully deemphasizing assessment by not even discussing it with students. He was deliberately vague with his students about assessment, telling them that it would count for a certain percentage of their grade, but without going into specifics. He stressed the importance of focusing on the reading, not on the scores. He instructed them to take quizzes in M-Reader, but not to worry if they passed or failed. He silently allotted 10%–15% of the semester grade to ER activities.

### Profile of a Successful Teacher

Successful teachers in the ER program at KUFS were likely to . . .

- Give considerable attention, support, and scaffolding to students at the beginning of the semester to get them off to a good start
- Encourage students to discuss their books with their peers in pairs and groups
- Bring books to class and talk about books they are reading themselves
- Practice Silent Sustained Reading (SSR)
- Address student progress (or lack of progress) on a weekly basis
- Motivate students either through a relaxed class atmosphere, positive reinforcement, or open accountability

### Conclusion

Clearly the role teachers play in the extensive reading success of their students is significant, as evidenced by higher than average word counts and number of quizzes passed by their own students relative to those in other classes at the same level. By the same token, it would not be surprising to learn that a majority of the top readers in the program were products of these “successful” classes. This was in fact not the case at KUFS, as only 27% of the selected students were students of “successful” teachers. This suggests that while having a good teacher ensures more books read on average and above average word counts, it is certainly not the sole determining factor in a student’s ER success. Students’ own reading strategies, attitudes, and motivations play perhaps a bigger role in determining their success over the course of time.

The key questions moving forward then are twofold:

1. How can we better induct students into our ER program at KUFS and help them to adopt the type of strategies that are common to successful readers in the program?



2. How can we create programs for teachers to pique their interest in adopting some of the approaches to induction, facilitation, motivation, and assessment that are common to successful teachers in the program?

Achieving future success all starts with better teacher support. Just like the students in successful classes, teachers will achieve more success with better help and assistance from the structure and resources the program offers them. If teachers become more aware of what is working for successful students in the program, and are given adequate support from program administrators in the form of workshops, online support materials, tech support, and an avenue to raise discussion in online forums and occasional face-to-face meetings, then they are more likely to see better results from their own students.

Once teachers across the program refine their ER facilitation practices over time, this will have a positive effect on students. In addition, perhaps the ER program at KUFS can devise better approaches that make adoption of successful reader practices more likely amongst average students. Designing activities that make it more likely that students will be carrying multiple books around might be one example. Having more discussion in class in L1 and L2 and devoting more time each week to SSR might be another. Furthermore, designing program-wide motivational initiatives like milestone recognition prizes, reading competitions, and student written book reviews could serve to further motivate students in the program. Finally, an effort to create a stronger online presence in the form of a resource and discussion site for teachers, along with news and information online for students could yet be another way to increase the feeling of a reading community on campus.

In the near future, more research needs to be done on the experiences of students and teachers for whom the program is not working well in order to determine what might be the current factors inhibiting success. Then, perhaps steps can be taken to adapt the program to better meet the needs of those participants.

## Notes

- 1) Moodle Reader was the precursor to M-Reader. It was a module based entirely on Moodle: an open source LMS widely used in educational contexts. M-Reader is a completely re-written version of Moodle Reader. It features a non-Moodle interface which allows the site to be more mobile response, run faster and lighter, and be more user-friendly. The quiz database for M-Reader is still Moodle-based, however.

## References

- Bamford, J., & Day, R. R. (2004). *Extensive Reading Activities for Teaching Language* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Cho, K., & Krashen, S. D. (1994). Acquisition of vocabulary from the Sweet Valley Kids series: Adult ESL acquisition. *Journal of Reading, 37*: 662–7.
- Day, R. R. (n.d.) The Benefits of Extensive Reading (ER). Retrieved from <http://www.oupe.es/es/ELT/supplementary-material/Readers/bookworms/Recursos%20Destacados/the%20benefits%20of%20extensive%20reading.pdf>
- Day, R. R., & Bamford, J. (1998). *Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom* Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Day, R. R., & Bamford, J. (1997). Extensive Reading: What Is It? Why Bother?. *The Language Teacher Online*. Retrieved from [http://jalt-publications.org/old\\_tlt/files/97/may/extensive.html](http://jalt-publications.org/old_tlt/files/97/may/extensive.html)
- Furukawa, A. (2011). Seven Keys to a Successful Extensive Reading Program. Presentation notes from the *The First Extensive Reading World Congress*, September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011, Kyoto, Japan.
- Garan, E. M., & DeVoogd, G. (2008). The Benefits of Sustained Silent Reading: Scientific Research and Common Sense Converge. *The Reading Teacher 62* (4), 336–344.
- Horst, M. (2005). Learning L2 Vocabulary Through Extensive Reading: A measurement study. *The Canadian Modern Language Review 61*: 355–82. Retrieved from <http://utpjournals.metapress.com/content/96035r8253436173/fulltext.pdf>
- Iwahori, Y. (2008). Developing reading fluency: A study of extensive reading in EFL. *Reading in a Foreign Language 20*/1. Retrieved from: <http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl/April2008/iwahori/iwahori.html>
- Jacobs, G. M., & Gallo, P. (2002). Reading alone together: Enhancing extensive reading via student-student cooperation in second-language instruction. *Reading Online, 5* (6). Retrieved from [http://www.readingonline.org/articles/art\\_index.asp?HREF=jacobs/index.html](http://www.readingonline.org/articles/art_index.asp?HREF=jacobs/index.html)
- Krashen, S. D. (2004). *The Power of Reading: insights from the research*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Mahmood, M. (2011). The Extensive Reading Program in Bahrain. *Bringing Extensive Reading into the Classroom, 86–94*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Manning, G., & Manning, M. (1984). What models of recreational reading make a difference? *Reading World, 23*, 375–380.
- Nation, P. (1997). The Language Learning Benefits of Extensive Reading. *The Language Teacher 21* (5). Retrieved from: [http://jalt-publications.org/old\\_tlt/files/97/may/benefits.html](http://jalt-publications.org/old_tlt/files/97/may/benefits.html)
- Nishino, T. (2007). Beginning to Read Extensively: a case study with Mako and Fuko. *Reading in a Foreign Language 19* (2). Retrieved from: <http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl/October2007/nishino/nishino.html>
- O'Brian, A. (2014). Using L1 to get more out of your extensive reading program. *The Language Teacher 38* (5). Retrieved from [http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/issues/2014-09\\_38.5](http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/issues/2014-09_38.5)
- Sakai, K., & Kanda, M. (2005). *Kyoshitsu de Yomu Eigo Hyakumango [Extensive Reading in the Classroom]*. Tokyo: Taishukan Shoten.
- Sakurai, N. (2014). Survey Results: Attitude toward Sustained Silent Reading and Extensive Reading outside the Classroom. *Kyoto Sangyo Daigaku Ronshu. Jinmonkagakukeiretsu 47*, 1–19. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10965/1084>
- Shearon, B. (2014). SEG: The Best Extensive Reading Program in the World? *Extensive Reading in Japan 7* (1).

- Shimo, E. (2009). Student reactions to extensive reading: A comparison of three Japanese university English classes. *Kinki University Department of Language Education bulletin*. 9 (1), 1–19. Retrieved from [http://kurepo.clib.kindai.ac.jp/modules/xoonips/detail.php?id=AA11591720-20090731-0001&ml\\_lang=en](http://kurepo.clib.kindai.ac.jp/modules/xoonips/detail.php?id=AA11591720-20090731-0001&ml_lang=en)
- Takase, A. (2011). The Effectiveness of Sustained Silent Reading in Becoming Autonomous Learners. *Gaikokugo Kyoiku Forum* 11, 1–14. Retrieved from, [http://www.kansai-u.ac.jp/fl/publication/pdf\\_forum/11/1\\_takase.pdf](http://www.kansai-u.ac.jp/fl/publication/pdf_forum/11/1_takase.pdf)
- Takase, A. (2009). The effects of SSR on learners' reading attitudes, motivation, and achievement: A quantitative study. In A. Cirocki (Ed.), *Extensive reading in English language teaching* (p. 547–559). Munich, Germany: Lincom Europa.
- Takase, A. (2008). The Two Most Critical Tips for a Successful Extensive Reading Program. *Kinki University English Journal*, 1, 199–136.
- Takase, A. (2007). Japanese High School Students' Motivation for Extensive L2 Reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 19 (1).
- Wu, F., & Wu, Z. (2009). Developing learner autonomy through extensive reading in the context of Chinese EFL colleges. In A. Cirocki (Ed.). *Extensive reading in English language teaching* (p. 561–576). Munich, Germany: Lincom.
- Yoon, J. C. (2002). Three Decades of Sustained Silent Reading: A Meta-Analytic Review of the Effects of SSR on Attitude toward Reading. *Reading Improvement* 39 (4), 186–95.

