

# Creating a balanced English communication curriculum through Extensive Reading: The implementation stage

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**Abstract:** This article reports on the implementation of Extensive Reading (ER) by integrating it into English communication courses to achieve a balanced curriculum. The practice of extensive reading is apparently spreading in many Japanese universities, and there is substantial evidence of its acceptance due to the potential benefits it brings. While English courses carry different textbooks catering to the intensive reading needs of the classes, ER was included to help create a balanced curriculum based on the four-strand framework by Nation (2007, as cited in Nation and Macalister, 2010). Three ER activities were explored in the courses — sustained silent reading (SSR), book talk, and writing a book report, to support the development of language communication skills — listening, speaking, reading and writing, as well as develop learners' English linguistic competencies, increase their level of motivation, and develop a positive attitude towards English. The teacher-researcher herein describes ER implementation and the practices adopted in the university's mandatory English communication course curriculum for freshmen.

**Keywords:** extensive reading, intensive reading, curriculum, communication skills

## 1. Introduction

There is a growing need to initiate the implementation of extensive reading (ER) in English communication courses to create a balanced language curriculum. As textbooks are not sufficient for supporting the development of learners' English language abilities (speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills), an innovation in language teaching and learning can be made possible through ER. It is often presumed that ER is mostly adapted in academic reading and writing subjects, but the fact is, that ER can be accommodated in any English course. ER can be incorporated into the second language curriculum as a stand-alone course, as an addition to an existing course, as a non-credit course, or as an extracurricular activity (Day and Bamford, 1998, p. 41).

There are justifiable reasons for integrating ER into

the language curriculum. It is observed continuously that many university freshmen are struggling to read in English. It can be presumed that reading classes in secondary schools concentrate on intensive reading so that students can pass the university entrance examinations. In this regard, students are trained in reading comprehension to answer the test questions, not to read to become good readers. Day and Bamford (1998, p. 44), assert that "ER should be integral, even major, part of preparing students for academic reading." Day and Bamford (1998) further added that ER is vital in developing the sight vocabulary, general vocabulary and word knowledge, which together are the foundation of fluent readers. This gives confidence and a positive attitude toward second language readers, which is a significant indicator of academic success. Most importantly, it can help develop the critical thinking skills abilities that are of great importance for success in higher education learning (pp. 44-45). To quote Waring

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(2006, p. 44), “ER is a completely indispensable part of any language program, if not all language programs.”

Besides the theoretical considerations in establishing an ER program, it usually takes committed ER believers and practitioners to bring ER into realization. Educators who have experienced the advantages of ER usually act as ER advocates. However, even with the robust research evidence proving the benefits of ER, many educators and administrators alike are still apprehensive about supporting the institution of ER in English programs (Macalister, 2019, Renandya, 2002). Nonetheless, ER in its long existence, “since at least 1917,” (de Lozier, 2019, p. 443) has proven its dominance as it continues to spread and be established in schools and communities. Recently, ER has been strongly considered as a tool for innovation in language teaching and learning. Many universities are including ER as an integral component in the language course to revitalize the English language curriculum. ER is also found thriving in public institutions like libraries and gaining support from private organizations (e.g., NPO Tadoku Supporters). ER as an approach to language learning is not only practiced in learning a foreign language, but also for nurturing one’s mother tongue. Amid the ER revolution going in Japan, ER is still an approach less traveled by many language teachers and learners. Neglecting ER means depriving the learners the experience of its valuable benefits for their language learning.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 The Four Strands (2007, as cited in Nation and Macalister, 2010)

A well-balanced English course is needed to prepare language learners to deal with future challenges in English language learning. The importance of a well-balanced course can be illustrated by the four

strands framework of Nation (2007, in Nation and Macalister, 2010) — meaning-focused input (MFI), meaning-focused output (MFO), language-focused learning (LFL) and fluency development (FD). According to the framework, each strand should be given an almost equal amount of time on teaching and learning.

1. Meaning-focused input (MFI) is learning from listening and reading. MFI is focused on the message. It is characterized by a small number of unfamiliar language features and a large quantity of input. Examples of activities are listening to stories, extensive reading, listening while reading, and communicative activities. In language courses, the essential way to provide a large amount of comprehensible input is to have an extensive reading program that involves the learners reading books that have been specifically written for English learners in a controlled vocabulary (Nation and Macalister 2010, p. 90).

2. Meaning-focused output (MFO) is learning from speaking and writing. Like MFI, MFO should focus on the message. It is characterized by a few unfamiliar language features and should have a large quantity of output. According to Nation and Macalister (2010), learning from an input is not adequate because the knowledge needed to produce output is not covered by the knowledge received from input alone. This means that outputting can deepen the learning process. The activities recommended are short talks, monologues, communicative activities, writing stories and assignments, and letter writing (Nation and Macalister 2010, p. 91).

3. Language-focused learning (LFL) is learning through language features such as pronunciation, spelling, word parts, vocabulary, collocations, grammatical constructions, and discourse features. It can influence the thorough learning of language structures, and provide opportunities to learn in-depth what has been encountered in the input. The

activities that promote LFL are pronunciation practice, spelling practice, learning vocabulary from word parts, intensive reading, grammar study, substitution tables, drills, dictation, feedback, and correction (Nation and Macalister 2010, p. 92).

4. Fluency development (FD) is also focused on the message. All language features should be familiar to the learners, so they can go faster, and there is a large quantity of practice. The learners are learning to become fluent by practicing what is already known, so they are not learning something new at this point, but rather trying to use their stock knowledge. In particular, the materials should be easy and familiar so that they can practice a fast pace. Suggested activities are listening to stories, linked skill activities, easy extensive reading, repeated reading, speed reading, and ten-minute writing (Nation and Macalister, 2010, p. 93-94).

## 2.2 Intensive Reading vs. Extensive Reading

There are two methods for teaching and learning reading — *intensive* and *extensive* (Renandya, 2017). By intensive, students learn the language by reading in detail. They read and have to answer the detailed comprehension questions. The materials are often within the instructional level, which means they are a bit difficult, but with the help of teachers and other resources like dictionaries, learners can understand the materials (Jacobs and Farrell, 2012).

Most classroom instruction in English is intensive as teachers utilize textbooks that are often written for intensive learning purposes. The goals of teaching intensive reading are: to gain understanding of vocabulary and grammar; to recognize main and important ideas; to teach the skills and strategies of predicting, summarizing, checking comprehension; and to organize the skills and ideas to teach text structures (Macalister, 2011, as cited in Renandya, 2017, p. 2).

In contrast, extensive reading merely is reading a great deal for pleasure, which has the effect of improving reading skills and comprehension. “It is intended to develop good reading habits, to build knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage a liking for reading” (Richards, Platt, and Platt, 1992, p. 133 in Day and Bamford, 1998, p. 7). The definition also denotes that ER increases second language competence.

According to Jacobs and Farrell (2012, p. 2) in extensive reading:

- Students are reading regularly, and they read in large quantities
- Students learn to read better and enjoy reading more
- Students are responsible for selecting their reading materials with some guidance from teachers, peers, and others
- Students should be reading without assistance from reference tools or help from other people
- Students will be able to understand the general meaning of the reading material even if they do not know all of the vocabulary

In order to achieve the above, the materials should be within the students’ comprehension reading level (Renandya, 2019). According to Krashen (2003, p. 4), comprehensible input is “the last resort in language teaching”... “comprehending messages is the only way that the language is acquired.” Long (1983, as cited in Lightbown and Spada, 2017) agreed with Krashen and added that if the input is modified or simplified, it can be more comprehensible.

## 2.3 Benefits of Extensive Reading

Substantial research has been published on the benefits of ER. According to Extensive Reading Foundation Guide to Extensive Reading (2011) through ER, English learners can:

1. meet the language in its natural context

2. build vocabulary
3. understand grammatical patterns in text
4. build reading speed and reading fluency
5. build confidence, motivation, enjoyment, and a love of reading
6. read or listen to a lot of English at or about their own ability level

Specific advantages of ER were documented earlier on. According to Day and Bamford, (1998, p. 35-39), proponents of ER attest that ER benefits the language learners' *vocabulary* (Pitts, White, & Krashen 1989, Hafiz & Tudor 1990, Cho & Krashen 1994, Horst 2005, Nation 2008); *spelling* (Krashen 1989, Polak & Krashen 1988, Day & Swan 1988); *writing* (Elley & Manhubhai 1981, Janopoulos 1986, Hafiz & Tudor 1990, Mason & Krashen 1997); *reading rate, proficiency and strategies* (Elley & Mangubhai 1981, Robb & Susser 1989, Lai 1993, Cho & Krashen 1994, Musahara 1996, Bell 2001, Kusanagi 2004, Taguchi et al. 2004, Nishono 2007, Iwahori 2008); *linguistic competence* (Elley & Mangubhai 1981, Bell 2001, Sheu 2003, Iwahori 2008); and *affect — motivation and attitude* (Elley & Mangubhai 1981, Robb & Susser 1989, Elley 1991, Cho & Krashen 1994, Arsaf & Ahmad 2003, Nishono 2007).

## 2.4 Skepticism Regarding Extensive Reading

Why is there still a reluctance to administer ER in the classroom, even with the long history, well-grounded evidence, and ongoing advancement support? Renandya and Jacobs (2002) cited some significant reasons why there has been hesitation. One reason cited is that teachers believe that intensive reading alone is sufficient to produce good, fluent readers (Day and Bamford, 1998). Another one is that many teachers prefer a teacher-centered role, which is not a feature of ER. ER is student-centered. Students take control of the activity; they choose the materials and manage their learning to accomplish the tasks. Other reasons mentioned include assessment issues and the teachers lack of time to incorporate ER, because there is a specified

syllabus required by the school.

In a plenary speech delivered by Macalister (on August 12, 2019), at the Fifth World Congress on Extensive Reading, it was mentioned that “teachers would like to include ER as an in-class activity, but they already have a crowded teaching programme.” In addition, there were concerns about “time, resources, student expectations, curriculum, and assessments” (Macalister, 2019). In an unpublished survey in 2016 participated in by the author, when ER was integrated as a component of the existing curriculum, many teachers were extremely anxious about extra teaching loads, student loads, and cheating issues. Some teachers simply disapproved of doing ER without elaborating on their reasons. It can be concluded that when teachers are content with the success of the existing curriculum, introducing ‘a change’ can disturb the teachers’ comfort zones, and lead to resistance.

Day and Bamford (1998) reported several other reasons which still apply today:

cost; the work required to set up a program; the difficulty of finding time for it in the already-crowded curriculum; the different role of the teacher; the ‘light’ nature of the reading material; the dominance of the reading skills approach, especially in ESL academic preparation programs... (p. 47)

## 2.5 The Material

It is recommended that Extensive Reading learners read independently. According to Renandya (2007), learners should read material that they can comprehend, which is called independent level material.

The “*just right*” material. To encourage independent reading, the ER material should be “just right” for the levels of the learners, so that they can read

smoothly with little or no extra help. If the materials are just right for the learners' levels, they can understand the vocabulary easily and comprehend the material (Jacobs and Farrell, 2012 p.13). The more the learners comprehend, the better their language acquisition will be.

The "*slightly above*" material. It has also been suggested that learners should read materials that are slightly above their knowledge level. Krashen's input hypothesis (2003) supports this. "The input hypothesis claims that we move from  $i$  to  $i + 1$  by understanding input containing  $i + 1$  (Krashen, 2003, p. 4). Jacobs and Farrell (2012, p.14) also stated that "Learners can often understand materials that contain vocabulary, grammar, and content that is slightly beyond their current level. By using clues such as context, visuals, and their knowledge of educated guesses."

The "*below*" material. There are reasons why it is still desirable for learners to read materials that are below their independent level. Generally, easy materials can raise students' confidence and can help them do extra activities like discussions; they can help learners focus on the content and reading strategies; and can have "an impact on familiarity of context, the cognitive level of the content, the use of literary device like metaphor and flashbacks" (Jacobs and Farrell, 2012, p.15).

*Graded Readers (GR):* The Extensive Reading Foundation's Guide to Extensive Reading (2011) describes GR as books of various genres that are specially created for foreign language learners. *They are maybe simplified versions of existing works, original stories, or books that are factual* [italics added] Kato (2017). The guidebook describes the different levels of graded readers and suggests what learners should do to gain from them.

A *beginner level* graded reader has beginner vocabulary and the earliest stages of grammar and

simple story plot to make reading more comfortable and achievable. The vocabulary is around seventy-five different word forms and is repeatedly found in the whole book. A *higher-level* graded reader has advanced vocabulary and grammar and may contain several thousand different words. This follows to the highest level of the graded books. Through the grade levels, beginners should be reading the beginner levels, and the intermediates the higher levels. When learners read at their reading levels, learners are able to read with ease and feel more accomplished, and thus continue to read. It is also pointed out that graded readers and textbooks should complement each other and not compete (2011, p. 2).

*Why graded readers?* Probably the easiest and fastest way to gather materials in bulk for the ER program is by collecting graded readers. Since the books are graded from *starters/beginners* to *advanced*, students can quickly identify and follow the stages of the reader's level. This allows both teachers and students to keep track of the improvement in reading levels. In particular, students can partially assess their reading skills when they have knowledge of the book levels they read. They feel immediate satisfaction when they are able to read at a certain level. This enabling effect causes them to read more. Graded readers are also equipped with audio components, and are currently supported by online resources. Given the right budget, graded readers are highly approved when establishing an ER program.

### 3. The Implementation

*Theoretical Background:* "The Four Strands" (Nation, 2007, as cited in Nation and Macalister, 2010) and Extensive Reading. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, Sports, and Technology, MEXT (2015), reported an insufficient improvement in English abilities among Japanese students from lower and higher secondary schools. These conditions

are usually encountered in first-year English courses in the university. In addressing the development of all language skills, a balanced curriculum is probably a good starting point. The challenge is, in achieving a balanced curriculum using the textbooks alone. Teachers can attest that even though they are equipped with a textbook that addresses the development of the four language skills, favoring one skill by teaching it longer cannot be avoided. Oftentimes, meaning-focused input learning is the least attended to because the classroom material is not meaningful to the learners, and the lesson is leaning toward intensive learning. Therefore, innovation is needed, and based on the theory and practices of ER, it can be one of the best solutions to help attain a balanced curriculum with lasting effects. As Day et al. (2015, p. 15) pointed out, “the best result of ER is that students enjoy reading and learning English, and want to read more.”

*Research question:* To what extent can extensive reading assist the development of language communication skills and complement the textbook to achieve a balanced curriculum in English communication courses?

*Methods:* The study utilized *methodological triangulation*—used a questionnaire survey, classroom observations, and analyzed students’ records to gather data.

*The school and learners:* The students with varied English language capabilities, motivation, and attitudes toward English were enrolled from a medium-sized private university. At the beginning of the school year, most of the students admitted that they had poor English skills, lacked motivation, and disliked English.

*The English courses:* As mandated by MEXT, 90 minutes English courses are offered to all departments once a week in the freshman year.

The classes are taught by Japanese and non-Japanese teachers for two semesters, and by different teachers every semester. The classes vary from 25-38 students per class. There is no unified syllabus, and the learning materials (textbooks) are usually selected by the teachers. The English course is not offered in higher years except to the Faculty of Education. Students in the Faculty of Education are encouraged to take standardized tests to improve their prospects of future employment and to avail themselves of the privileges offered by the school. With the drive towards English language learning, students need additional support to increase their English proficiency and raise their level of confidence. Since English courses are not offered in the second, third, and fourth years, it is highly predictable that the English language abilities of students will drop due to lack of sustenance. At the same time, the courses in the first year are too short to support the development of students English language skills. The researcher’s English courses in the Faculty of Nursing, Physical Therapy, and Education were utilized for this report.

*Were the students interested in reading?* To observe students reading interests, a mixture of leveled readers and picture books were brought in classes for several weeks. It was observed that some students read quietly, some read aloud in English, while a few students would read aloud (to a friend) in Japanese, even the prints were in English. In a sense, the students were translating. This revealed that grammar-translation is rooted in the reading habits of the learners. In the “grammar-translation approach, students translate short often difficult passages into their mother tongue” (Day et al. 2015, p. 12).

*Were the students motivated to read?* One student, in particular, would regularly visit the teacher’s office to loan picture books. In class, the student’s written composition was far better than the others

and the teacher could figure out that it was the result of the love of reading. The student had experienced ER in high school. To encourage others to read, the teacher kept bringing the books to class, so that other students could get closer to the books as well. In general, students read in class when they were asked to do so, but most lack the interest to read intrinsically. Considering the situations mentioned, adapting ER in the course can be useful to introduce an innovation.

*Procurement of materials:* Cost is indeed a big concern in establishing an ER program. However, “if there is a will, there is a way” (unknown). With the assistance of libraries, seventy-nine GRs were purchased to start piloting the ER in classes as part of in-class activities. In the following year, additional GR books were purchased. Currently, there are more or less 2,400 GR books in the library of two campuses.

*Extensive Reading Orientation:* Other than the preparation of resources, it is crucial to plan properly from the beginning. The classes should have explicit knowledge of the following: The roles of ER in the course and its benefits; the tasks of students and teachers; expectations; library visitations; appropriate use of ER forms; ER activities and assessments.

#### 4. Results and Discussions

*Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) activity:* SSR was considered as the main activity to carry out the meaning-focused input (MFI) strand. In SSR, “students and teachers silently read books of their choice. By giving students valuable class time in which to read is one of the things the teacher can do to demonstrate the value of reading and to establish a reading community” (Day and Bamford, 1998, p. 128).

*SSR in classes:* Before class time, the teacher would

pick up the Graded Readers from the library and brought into the classroom. For easy browsing, the books were spread on the tables according to the levels. SSR was done during the last 20 minutes of the class hour of 90 minutes. The students chose the book of their levels (Rule: if there are three unknown words or more, that students do not understand in a page, the student should change the book). The students were encouraged just to read and enjoy reading smoothly without using the dictionary. When they finished, they logged on their record sheets. The students were also reminded to visit the library to read more.

*Observations:* If reading is a reward itself, the 15-20 minutes reading of easy and short leveled/graded reader books are already a significant accomplishment in every English lesson. It was noticeable that as the weeks went by, the number of easy books and pages the students read per meeting increased. Since SSR serves as the main activity for meaning-focused input (MFI), it is useful to do it for 6-7 weeks or more, before another activity is added. It is better to have more prolonged exposure to SSR so that the students become more familiar with the different genres and types of reading materials, and develop an interest to read more.

*Results:* When asked if they learned new words, out of eighty-two students, seven (8.5%) students strongly agreed, twenty-six (32%) agreed, thirty-one (38%) were undecided, sixteen (19.5%) disagreed, and two (2%) strongly disagreed.

When asked if they were confident in reading English, out of eighty-two students, none (0%) of the students strongly agreed, nine (11%) agreed, twenty-eight (34%) were undecided, thirty-one (38%) disagreed, and fourteen (17%) strongly disagreed.

*Interpretation of students' responses:* The primary purpose of SSR in class was to introduce students to

reading a lot of comprehensible materials. It could be interpreted that (8.5% + 32%) 40.5% of the students read books that were “slightly above or more” of their reading levels, so they met unfamiliar words. There were 38% who probably read materials that were “just right” or “below” their reading levels as they were not sure if they had learned new words or not, and (19.5% + 2%) 21.5% most likely read materials that were “just right or below” their reading levels so the words were easy and familiar, therefore, they could say that they did not learn new words. Based on the Graded Reader Record Sheets, some students were reading slightly higher level materials. The comprehension input hypothesis,  $i + 1$  (Krashen 2003) allows students to read materials that are slightly above their reading level within tolerable comprehension. Since the aim of SSR was to provide comprehensible input which could not be received from using the textbook, the results of SSR activity in the classes were justified.

However, the survey revealed that students' confidence in reading English is weak. It is understandable that low confidence can result when students read above their reading levels because of many unknown words; thus, makes reading difficult. Since the use of dictionaries is discouraged during SSR, learners have to rely on other reading strategies like guessing the meaning from the context and pictures. Similarly, the students did not have the opportunity to hear the words aloud, so they were not sure of pronunciations. These reasons can trigger doubts about one's reading abilities. Nonetheless, experiencing SSR in class is one of the objectives of implementing ER, so that students can discover another approach to reading. For the students who already have confidence, SSR is even more meaningful.

*Book talk activity:* As the name implies, it is a speaking activity and serves as one of the meaning-focused output (MFO) activities. As mentioned earlier, meaning-focused input (MFI) alone is not

enough. In order to deepen the learning process, there should be a balance between the meaning-focused input (MFI) and meaning-focused output (MFO), and short conversations done a few times can help produce substantial output.

In the book talk activity, students were given a list of questions to answer before getting to class. The process of writing down the responses to the pre-determined questions can deepen language learning and provide time for preparation, so students can increase their confidence in speaking during the actual activity. It is often observed that when learners are prepared, there is a higher possibility of better engagement and success in doing the activities.

*Results:* What do students think of book talk? The class survey revealed that, students enjoyed the book talk activities. All sixty-nine students (100%) agreed that book talk is enjoyable. Twenty-five (36%) students commented that it is easy and forty-four (64%) students commented, that it is challenging.

Summary of students' comments on the book talk

1. “My partner speaks with many gestures, so it is easy.”
2. “I know the story, so I can understand.”
3. “There were many new words, but I watched the movie, so I enjoyed it.”
4. “All partners speak clearly, so I have no problem.”
5. “I have problems with pronunciation.”
6. “My partner speaks very fast.”
7. “My partner is reading. No gestures. I do not understand.”
8. “I do not understand some words.”
9. “I lack the confidence to speak.”
10. “I am too slow to speak.”
11. “I can not hear my own voice.”

*Interpretation of students' responses:* Although



students find book talk to be a highly engaging and enjoyable activity, many students find speaking activities challenging, especially if the activity requires critical thinking skills and the use of speaking strategies. However, the book talk activity allowed students to use their stock vocabularies and knowledge of language structure in both writing and speaking. Thus, outputting and inputting (or vice versa) were practiced. When students converse, one's output is another's input — which supports the MFO strand. During the interaction process, they were able to use speaking strategies to express their ideas. Students realized how important gestures are for better comprehension; thus, language competence was practiced. Fluency-development (FD) learning was also covered during the listening and speaking activity, during which words and language patterns were recycled without worrying too much about mistakes. Similarly, the shift from high structured atmosphere to low structured one encouraged the students to relax. During the process, the students were also able to practice noticing. It was observed that students corrected each other's mistakes without hesitation when they were having fun.

*Book report activity:* In writing a book report, students were taught to write a summary paragraph. Depending on the class levels, they write between one hundred to one hundred eighty words. Writing a book report is another activity for meaning-focused output learning (MFO).

*Results:* According to the survey, expressing one's ideas in writing was not easy. Out of eighty-two respondents, twenty-six (32%) students strongly agreed, twenty-three (28%) agreed, twenty-eight (34%) were undecided, two (2%) disagreed, and three (4%) strongly disagreed, that writing a book report was difficult.

When asked if doing a book report was useful in learning English, out of eighty-two respondents,

twenty (24%) students strongly agreed, twenty-one (26%) agreed, twenty-four (29%) were undecided, fourteen (17%) disagreed, and three (4%) strongly disagreed, that doing book report was useful in learning English.

*Interpretation of the students' responses:* Writing a book report is new for all students, and, since writing is a process, the students certainly feel the pressure. However, just because it is challenging, it does not mean that it is not doable. Although most students found writing a book report challenging, the written compositions submitted were mostly satisfactory. In fact, classes from the Faculty of Physical Therapy were able to write summary paragraphs with an academic writing style, as taught in class prior to the writing process. Even with lower-level students, writing a book report was possible with the right scaffolding. To support lower-level classes, a writing template could make writing easier for the students. As suggested by the MFO strand, learning comprehension can be deepened through writing, and ER can address this through book reports. Students with higher English abilities, can practice in-depth the language features that they learned intensively in high school. Some students showed good writing abilities, such as knowledge to organize ideas, and the use of transitions, so the activity provided a chance for them to practice. Both in the pilot and the implementation stages, writing book reports paved the way to introduce academic writing in class with ease, which was not possible by just using the textbook.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The teacher found that the success of implementing ER is highly dependent not only on factors such as resources, proper planning, and the cooperation of colleagues, but the commitment to do the ER activities consistently. In particular, it is crucial to be consistent in doing SSR to promote it to students,

who can feel its relevance. On the one hand, showing SSR a special treatment by encouraging the students to respect the books gives ER some prestige in the language classroom. On the other hand, doing SSR alone without doing post activities like speaking and writing will not make it a significant course component.

To conclude, extensive reading is a powerful tool in language teaching and learning. Some of the results reported in early research were justified in the short period it was applied. Students learned new vocabulary, and enjoyed interacting in English about the books they read. Students were able to write an academic paragraph, and some admitted that they gained confidence in reading in English. At this stage, it is still hard to determine the effect of ER on the motivation to learn English since the one-semester class was too short. However, in general, the results showed that ER could supplement language skills development and complement the intensive learning required from the textbook in one semester. This is proof that ER as an in-class activity can help improve the course curriculum, which the class textbooks can not wholly provide. Therefore, the teacher concurs that, through ER, it is possible to achieve a balanced curriculum. With these findings, ER is highly recommended in English language courses.

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