



Reviewed work:

*Teachers Sourcebook for Extensive Reading* (2012). George Jacobs & Thomas S.C. Farrell. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc. Pp. 119. ISBN: 9781617357770 (paperback) \$29.99. ISBN: 9781617357787 (hardback) \$49.99. ISBN: 9781617357794 (e-book).

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*Teachers Sourcebook for Extensive Reading* (TSER) by Jacobs and Farrell is an easy-to-read tool for introducing beginners to and reminding experts of the theory and practice of extensive reading (ER). The three main units of this book are (a) Materials for ER, (b) Implementing ER, and (c) Teachers as Advocates for and Researchers of ER. The introduction and Chapter 1 present a rationale that makes the case for what ER is and why students and teachers should engage in it. The remaining chapters outline how to facilitate ER. The first unit has a chapter on finding materials for ER. It also has wide range of suggestions for helping students and teachers produce their own ER materials. The second unit is composed of useful chapters on motivation, ER activities, and ER and Cooperative Learning (CL). The third and final unit consists of chapters about convincing colleagues and others to do ER and performing action research (AR). Each chapter is filled with lists from tried-and-true to completely original ideas for starting and growing ER programs. Throughout the book, there are reflective questions, and each chapter is overflowing with quotes and anecdotes from a variety of ER teachers who have experienced success using the activities suggested in this book. Finally, each chapter has links to seminal readings in ER and popular collections of ER resources.

The introduction defines ER as reading large amounts of easy interesting self-selected books both in and out of class for the purpose of enjoyment (p. 2). This is immediately contrasted with or complemented by a definition of intensive reading (IR) which is the reading of short challenging passages with the help of a teacher, followed by explicit teaching of vocabulary, grammar, and reading strategies. The authors explicitly and ambitiously claim that anyone teaching L1, L2, or L3 etc. reading in any class with any age of students from language arts to math would benefit from this book. However, the majority of the voices from the author and

teacher anecdotes, which are presented throughout the book, have a decidedly English L1 or ESL feel to them.

Chapter 2 is concerned with finding materials for ER. It begins by defining three levels of text, *frustrational*=too difficult, *instructional*=IR, and *independent*=ER. The chapter gives eight reasons why readers should, under guidance, choose their own books (pp. 16–17). Because students can feel overwhelmed when facing a wall of books, this chapter introduces 14 guidelines to help students select appropriate reading materials (pp. 18–19). Some types of guidance include choosing your favorite genre, subject area, or author. The authors correctly state that comic books provide high interest reading with contextual clues via the graphic art. However, the discussion misses two important points. First, comic books are as lexically and syntactically complex as young learner and language learner literature (Krashen, 2004). Second, comic books are a conduit to reading other types of texts (p. 103). The next section on graded readers has only one meager paragraph that mentions neither the most popular series nor reasons why graded readers are the best place to start for L2 readers. It is almost as if the authors assumed that because the information had been presented elsewhere (Day & Bamford, 1998; Grabe, 2009; Krashen, 2004) it was not necessary to repeat it in a text that introduces newcomers to ER. However, the most useful part of this chapter is the list of 22 outstanding ideas for collecting a wide variety of books for ER students to read (pp. 22–27). Some ideas include class field trips to the used bookstore and donating the books to the class library when finished, classroom and school-wide book swaps, and helping parents select appropriate books for their children. This section alone obviates the common excuse often used for not introducing ER: I cannot find ER materials.

Chapter 3 focuses on student-created writing and lists several benefits such as student-centered learning, learner self-investment in materials development, and creating a lifelong love of learning (p. 30). It provides a list of writing activity suggestions which answer three fundamental questions. Can students (a) produce texts, (b) that are interesting to their peers, (c) without teachers taking over the writing process? Some of the suggested answers include slightly modifying already written stories, writing sequels or prequels, or writing about the course content. The most interesting idea is compiling student writings and placing them online in an e-book (pp. 32–35). These are good suggestions because students often write better on topics that they understand.

Chapter 4 asks teachers to write ER materials. It begins with a teacher quote that succinctly accounts for the majority of objections busy teachers might have to creating reading materials for their own classes (pp. 39–40). The chapter then turns to how to make ER materials. Some of the best ideas are to start small, make durable hard copies and online collections of your work, adapt professional texts and student writings, and use the Language Experience Approach (pp. 42–47). However, it could be said that from an ER perspective, the problem with student and teacher created materials is that they are primarily collections of glossed and/or simplified IR materials.

Chapter 5 seeks to provide advice on how teachers and peers (and the materials and activities they select) can motivate readers, especially reluctant readers, to develop a lifelong love of reading. The authors recommend that teachers evangelize about how ER can improve test scores while taking students to magical times and places. Teachers should also read with and to the

students. Also, teachers should *bless books* (Marinak, Gambrell, & Mazzoni, 2013) which means reading several pages out loud in class, encouraging the students to read the book, and placing it in a prominent location in the classroom. Peers should recommend good books to their classmates so that they develop an interest in choosing and reading the suggested materials. Teacher anecdotes illustrating how reluctant readers can be helped to engage effectively in ER are also presented (pp. 69–71). Some suggestions for teachers are modeling good reading habits, taking a reluctant reader to the library with a small group of enthusiastic reader peers, and improving a reluctant reader's confidence. This section is one of the strong points of the chapter.

Chapter 6 begins with a caution to avoid too many book reports as they cause *readicide* (p. 74). This chapter then introduces 50 activities that aim to strike a balance between producing book reports and not accounting for reading at all. Some examples are making a flow chart or timeline and comparing two books in the same genre or by the same author. There are tried-and-true suggestions along with several new activities accompanied by web addresses where materials and further information can be found (pp. 75–79). However, it would have been helpful if the list were organized by difficulty (e.g., retell one event → summarize the whole story → write a new ending → write a sequel).

Chapter 7 introduces the concept of cooperative learning (CL) and a rationale for combining ER with CL. In this chapter, eight principles of CL (pp. 82–84) are presented, including, among others, positive interdependence, maximum interaction, and heterogeneous grouping. These principles help teachers ensure that students are actually learning through cooperation rather than studying separately or distracting each other. The authors refer to ER combined with CL as *reading alone together* (p. 84) because students begin with individual readings that are processed in pairs and groups through a variety of cooperative activities such as *literature circles* and *circle of interviews* (pp. 87–91). The steps of *circle of interviews* are then analyzed according to the eight principles of CL. This helpful example provides a framework for adapting and creating other activities that fit the principles of extensive reading with cooperative learning.

Chapter 8 outlines and refutes four common reasons teachers believe that they cannot use ER with their students (pp. 96–102). This chapter then focuses on ten ways that teachers can collaborate with colleagues in order to establish and grow ER programs in cooperation with a variety of stakeholders (pp. 102–104). Chapter 9 provides arguments that are intended to motivate ER teachers to do research on their own teaching methods. The major vehicle is action research (AR), and both practical and participatory AR are introduced. Nine steps involved in doing AR are then presented and explained (pp. 109–110), after which, an example AR study is outlined following the nine steps of the AR process. Finally, several excellent ideas for action research on extensive reading are given.

Overall, TSER is a valuable book, but it faces some challenges. The definition of ER is stretched, particularly in chapters three and four. Also, it seems to be assumed that key theoretical information concerning ER that has been reported in other books does not need to be included in this text. However, as the book is packed with so many excellent practical ideas many teachers are likely to be willing to overlook those aspects. Another problem is that, although several useful online resources such as the ER Foundation, Moodle Reader, and the Yahoo ER Forum site are included, others such as the ER YouTube Channel, Rob Waring's and Paul Nation's

Homepages, and ER Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are left out. A more comprehensive list of important electronic ER resources would have been valuable to include in the appendices, particularly because such extensive lists of activities are indeed provided elsewhere in the book. In conclusion, I agree with the authors when they write “This book offers an overflowing buffet of classroom-tested ideas for bringing the promise of ER to your students. All that is missing is the magic touch of you, your students, and your colleagues; the magic touch needed to bring the ideas to life” (p. 9). For me, *Teachers Sourcebook for Extensive Reading* is a new resource that I will certainly use in my ER and teacher training classes.

## References

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