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Reviewed work:

Bringing Extensive Reading into the Classroom.
(2011). Richard Day, Jennifer Bassett, Bill Bowler,
Sue Parminter, Nick Bullard, Mark Furr, Nina
Prentice, Minas Mahmood, Daniel Stewart, Thomas
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Bringing Extensive Reading into the Classroom (BERC) is designed as “the ideal companion for teachers who would like to add the substantial benefits of extensive reading to their language programs” (back cover). This guidebook is an edited collection of chapters contributed by well-known teachers, authors, and researchers in extensive reading (ER). As shown in research studies, students who engage in ER increase their reading speed, comprehension, vocabulary knowledge, motivation to read, and positive reading attitudes (Day & Bamford, 1998, pp. 33–38). ER approaches have also positively impacted listening and speaking proficiency (Cho & Krashen, 1994) and writing proficiency (Elley & Mangubhai, 1981; Janopoulos, 1986; Mason & Krashen, 1997).

For teachers who are interested in introducing ER into their classrooms, this book aims to “provide the logic for doing so, some possible approaches, and some fine examples of programs in actions” (p. 8). *BERC* is divided into three main sections, entitled (a) “Extensive Reading: The Theory”; (b) “Extensive Reading: The Practice”; and (c) “Extensive Reading: Case Studies.” “Extensive Reading: The Theory” is composed of two chapters that introduce and explain the significance of ER and graded readers. “Extensive Reading: The Practice,” with four chapters, explains how to incorporate graded readers, class readers, libraries, and reading circles into the classroom. The final section, “Extensive Reading: Case Studies” presents four examples of ER programs in action. Most of the chapters follow a similar organizational pattern beginning with background information and concluding with reviewing the main points explaining how they will

benefit students.

This book is not intended to be read straight through, although teachers who are completely unfamiliar with ER should begin with Chapter 1 in order to learn more about its theoretical foundations and benefits. This chapter explains ER by introducing Day and Bamford's (2002) ten principles for teaching ER, comparing ER with other reading approaches (p. 13), and highlighting the advantages of ER found in research studies. As graded readers are frequently used and highly recommended for ER programs, Chapter 2 introduces the main purposes and basic structures of graded readers. In this chapter, the author, Bassett, also provides useful suggestions that will help teachers select appropriate reading materials for their classroom.

In section 2 concerning ER Practice, Chapter 3 continues the discussion on graded readers, and then expands into teaching strategies and accountability activities that can support students in their ER. Chapter 4 addresses class readers and reading activities for mixed ability classes. Because ER is about having a wide range of books available and allowing students to choose what they want to read (p. 11), a chapter on class readers might seem out of place. However, Parminter and Bowler, the authors of this chapter, maintain that class readers provide many advantages in the initial stages of ER and for weaker, less confident students (p. 44). Both Chapters 3 and 4 have many examples of pre-, while-, and post-reading activities including puzzles, games, worksheets, and group-work that are useful for teachers.

Next in section 2, Chapter 5 introduces classroom libraries. Here, Bullard, as the author, guides teachers through the process of constructing and organizing a classroom library. There is specific advice on the amount and types of reading material to include, as well as a preview of digital libraries, which have many advantages including greater accessibility and efficiency. To conclude this section, Chapter 6 introduces and explains the role of reading circles in an ER program. After reading this chapter, teachers will have a clear understanding of how to create successful reading circles, in order to motivate students to read and naturally increase their overall language proficiency (p. 63).

The final section, which reviews ER case studies, presents examples of ER programs in Jordan, Bahrain, and Japan. This section includes detailed information on the set-up process (fundraising, training, administrative support, parent involvement), evaluation methods (assessment tasks, stakeholder feedback), and program results (both positive and negative effects) that can benefit teachers who are seriously interested in incorporating ER into their classroom. In Chapter 9, there is specific advice on frequently encountered issues and problems in ER programs. The last chapter of the book is about the Moodle Reader which is a free, open source management system with pre-made quizzes for graded readers that allows teachers to determine and pace student quizzes, as well as record students' reading progress (p. 106). Stewart, the author of this chapter, claims this new technological tool has potential to greatly enhance any language program.

From my perspective as a reviewer, one of the most prominent features of the book is the substantial amount of practical advice and sample activities that can be directly applied to the classroom. It is also reassuring that the majority of the authors have a great deal of experience in developing graded readers, developing ER programs, or teaching ER. Another strength is the consistency in the layout and structure, which helps to familiarize teachers with this book and

allows greater attention to be placed on understanding the content.

Within each chapter, there are frequent subtitles and headings and most of the key terms are bolded. Each chapter also has two types of icons, *Get it right* and *Try this*, which highlight advice and sample activities. As previously mentioned, many of these recommended ER activities and tasks can be used in classrooms. ER activities are significant because they help teachers introduce ER to students, organize and introduce suitable reading materials, motivate and support students' reading, and monitor and evaluate reading progress (Bamford & Day, 2004, p. 4). Teachers interested in gaining more information about the various aspects of ER can refer to recommended readings and websites found at the end of some chapters. Teachers with little knowledge in ER, will find that the strengths already mentioned create an easy-to-understand guidebook that can be applied to many different types of classrooms.

Despite the strengths of the book, there were a few weaknesses beginning with the lack of an index may hinder teachers from being able to locate specific information and relocate useful sections. As there is a broad range of topics that are repeated throughout the book, an index is greatly needed. Another weakness is that several key terms, such as "sight vocabulary," "readability formulae," and "process-based approach" are not adequately explained. Most of the terms are explained in only a few words and not included in the limited, one-page glossary. There are also several topics that needed further explanation. For instance, there is only one paragraph on evaluating reading programs. In contrast, Day and Bamford (1998, p. 157) do manage to emphasize that formal evaluation allows teachers to determine if the goals and objectives were met, identify aspects that may need improvement, and present results to show stakeholders for funding or administrative purposes.

Another weakness is the lack of variety found in the ER case studies section. All four case studies focus on large-scale ER programs in high school and university settings. Teachers who are planning to use ER with younger students may have difficulty relating to and applying the information from these case studies, although as previously mentioned, teachers can refer to the first chapter to find out some information about research studies on primary and secondary students (p. 15). However, teachers of young learners might welcome one or two detailed case studies illustrating the application of ER in primary school settings.

BERC is designed to be a practical guidebook with a lot of helpful advice, suggestions, and examples. It is clearly intended to introduce teachers with little knowledge of ER to a broad range of topics with straightforward text and visual aids (e.g., tables, icons, subtitles) to capture teachers' interest and ensure overall understanding. After reading the book, teachers would certainly be able to answer the following questions: What is ER? How can ER benefit my students?; and, How do I start incorporating ER into my classroom? Then, teachers who are interested in learning more about ER can refer to the additional resources cited in the book as well as to this book review.

As an English language teacher working with beginning to high intermediate middle school students, I use this book as a resource for practical advice and sample activities. Reading this book has increased my interest in ER, and I have continued to deepen my understanding through other sources mentioned in this book. I would recommend this book for any language teacher

who wants to engage their students more actively in second language reading.

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About the Reviewer

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