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Extensive Reading and Reading Strategies: A Try-Out

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1. Introduction

English has become essential for every citizen in the global family. In today's world, a youth with a good English education can have a better chance of earning a decent livelihood. English is not only a tool of learning but also a matter of social prestige. As Parasher (1979) suggests, "it is found to be associated with formality and higher domains while the mother tongue is found to be associated with informality and lower domains". This being the situation, the second language learners, associated with informality and lower domains do not find an opportunity to develop their inner ability to process a text at a cognitive level, as they face problems with the subject because they have less chance to develop their skills in learning English even though English is being taught as a subject and part of the curricula.

1.1. Textbooks

The textbooks used in the classroom have literary pieces as staple ingredients, but the teaching of these pieces is often restricted only to surface-level comprehension.

Due to this, the learners lack the motivation to read through the texts and as a result the focus shifts to comprehension without basic understanding of the language. This becomes a serious problem.

1.2. Reading

Reading is a means of language acquisition, of communication, and of sharing information and ideas. It is a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols for the intention of deriving meaning and/or constructing meaning. It is a complex interaction between the text and the reader which can be shaped by the reader's prior knowledge, experiences, attitudes, and language community which is culturally and socially situated.

The reading process requires continuous practice, development and requirement because when reading in an unfamiliar language, even accomplished readers commonly function like novices, exhibiting many of the same problems as unskilled readers (Keiko Koda : 20).

Readers of lower ability tend to see reading as a serious, difficult process, requiring hard work and disciplined effort and students of higher reading ability see reading as a pleasant, imaginative activity. Therefore, it is necessary to find ways of exposing learners to language and enable them to go through some texts, which focus on the use of language in real life situations. This exposure could be given through literature. Extensive reading as a teaching procedure could be administered to encourage and help the learners with their reading during or after class time.

This article surveys extensive reading and tries to establish extensive reading as a language teaching tool as it explores the main issues in extensive reading, including the role of readers and teachers.

2. Reading – Definition

A simple definition of reading is that reading is the construction of meaning from a printed or written message. The construction of meaning involves the readers ability to construct information from the written message with previous knowledge to arrive at a clear or crystal like meaning by understanding. Reading begins with the accurate, swift and automatic visual recognition of vocabulary, independent of the context in which it occurs. This initial process enables the mind to use several simultaneous processes involving reasoning, knowledge of the word, and knowledge of the topic to construct meaning.

Reading is not a passive activity in which readers just move their eyes over the printed page in a linear order. It is interactive in that the reader brings his personal knowledge to the text in front of him. The interactivity is triangular: between the reader, the text and the message. The goal is specific. It involves the engaging of thoughts, facts, viewpoint, bias etc. that the writer has put together on the page in order to arrive at the best personal meaning.

3. Reading Skills

Davis (1968) classifies reading skills under eight heads such as:

1. Recalling word meanings (Prior knowledge of the word and its meaning is necessary.)
2. Drawing inferences about the meaning of a word in context
3. Finding answers to questions answered explicitly or in paraphrase
4. Weaving together ideas in the content
5. Drawing inferences from the content
6. Recognizing a writer's purpose, attitude, tone and mood
7. Identifying a writer's technique
8. Following the structure of a passage

Reading skills enables the readers to convert writing into meaning and achieve the goals of independence, comprehension, and fluency. In reading, independence is the ability to read anything in his/her language without depending on another's help. Comprehension is the ability to grasp something mentally and the capacity to understand ideas and facts. Fluency is the ability to read expressively and quickly without any flaw.

4. Process Of Reading

Proper reading is the process of the reading material, that is, the interaction between a reader and the text. During the process of reading, presumably, many things happen. The reader looks into the print and decides what they mean and how they relate to each other. The reader also thinks about what he is reading, how useful, entertaining, boring, the text is. The process is likely to be dynamic, variable, and different for the same reader on the same text at a different time or with a different purpose in reading.

5. Forms of Reading

Reading takes many forms. The various activities that can be labeled reading include, serious academic reading, reading the comics, scanning the list of favourite program, skimming a magazine article for minute details, reading a favourite author's novel, reading aloud to children, glancing at the notes and so on. The activities which go by

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the name of reading can be viewed from a number of different perspectives, including social, cultural, psychological, affective, philosophical, educational, and cognitive.

6. Ways of Reading

In language-teaching terms, there are two kinds of reading such as Intensive Reading and Extensive Reading, and the two techniques or styles of reading are Skimming and Scanning. Eddie Williams and Chris Moran note that these four ways of reading are recognized “on the basis of observable behaviour (notably speed of reading, degree of re-reading and ‘skipping’ of text)” (222)

6.1. Intensive Reading

Intensive reading involves learners reading in detail with specific learning aims and tasks. It is especially important for the first learners of a foreign language. In the words of Guozhang, a famous Chinese Professor of English, Intensive reading enables a student to “lay down a solid foundation in English, from vocabulary to spelling, to punctuation to pronunciation, to grammar to idiomatic ways of saying things in English”. In the process of Intensive reading, a student is helped by his teacher to dig deep into every word in every sentence in every text in the class. Here, the student goes slowly and carefully and no detail is too small for him. A drawback in Intensive Reading is that it can help to lay a solid foundation, but cannot help much to build up a large vocabulary and that can only be done by reading extensively.

6.2. Extensive Reading

Extensive Reading, also known as fast reading, plays two roles: the first one is to acquire a large vocabulary and the other is to develop the ability to think in English. The notion behind Extensive reading is that a lot of reading of interesting material will enhance the comprehension level of the reader and foster his or her language skills.

Extensive reading is sometimes called Free Voluntary Reading in which free reading is done with books and other written material that is not too difficult nor too easy. Altogether, Extensive Reading is used to obtain a general understanding of a subject and includes independent reading of longer texts for pleasure.

6.3. Skimming

Skimming is the most rudimentary type of reading and it is a process of speed reading that involves visually searching the main ideas of a text. Skimming is usually seen more in adults than in children, when they have lots of material to read in a limited

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amount of time. Skimming includes certain strategies such that, some people read the first and last paragraphs using headings and summarize the content, but usually reading the first sentence of each paragraph is useful to seek the specific information of that paragraph. Skimming is done when one reads the newspaper, magazines or travel brochures in which only the information is sought.

6.4. Scanning

Scanning is a technique used to look up key words or ideas. Scanning is the method of reading quickly in order to find the information. It only involves quick movement of the eyes down the page seeking specific words and phrases. Once the document has been scanned, the reader might go back and skim it. Scanning is useful in locating statements, definitions, schedules, meeting plans, a conference guide etc. And for this, the reader need not read each and every word, sentence and paragraph.

7. How to Improve Reading

Being a good reader is equally important for the academic achievement of a learner. The learners should know their best and provide time and attention that will lead them to success in reading. The learners can read aloud the reading material as this would produce significant gains in reading comprehension, vocabulary, and the decoding of words. In due course of time, it will increase their desire to read.

The learners should develop the library habit to enhance their reading ability. They should be instigated to make use of the library and get new reading materials. The reading programs offered by the libraries may further increase the learners' interest in reading.

The learners should come forward to get assistance from the teachers in case of necessity. The teachers should find out the problems faced by the learners and encourage them with a wide variety of reading activities.

Finally, the learners should show their own enthusiasm for reading and they should not be forced to practise the skill.

8. Conventional and Unconventional Reading Material

Reading is a skillful performance and it becomes the central activity of the classroom. Where different reading strategies, such as comprehension skill and study skill, are taught to secure information quickly, the reading material, conventional or unconventional, the 'text' itself, contributes to enable the reader to get at meaning. (L.Baten and A.M. Cornu)

The conventional reading materials that are used by learners outside class are novels, short stories, dramas, poems, diaries, anecdotes, biographies, letters, telegrams, newspapers, magazines, reviews, pamphlets, guidebooks, handbooks, posters, recipes, road signs, pricelists, railway/bus time tables, telephone directories, dictionaries and so on. The list is not exhaustive as in real life situation one reads varieties of conventional texts. The readers read these for pleasure or for information and knowledge.

The unconventional texts include the materials produced by computers which are read everyday by millions of people including airline reservation clerks, stock brokers, newspaper reporters, editors, business executives, secretaries, and others. These people interact directly with the computer, reading on a VDT (Video Display Terminal) instead of ink on paper. Almost every student uses a search engine for desired information to read on the computer screen.

9. Definition of Extensive Reading

Harold Palmer was a pioneer of language teaching in modern times, who first applied the term ‘extensive reading’ in foreign language pedagogy, which is evident in Louis Kelly 25 Centuries of Language Teaching. (1969, p.131) Among the multitude of synonyms which convey similar idea to “abundant reading” used in the landmark 1900 Report of the Committee of Twelve (Modern Language Association of America , 1901), Palmer selected the term “extensive” for his 1917 book *The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages*. According to Palmer, extensive reading means “rapidly” (1921/1964, p.111) reading “book after book” (1917/1968, p.137)

Extensive reading took on a special sense in the context of language teaching because texts were read for the purpose of language study and also read for ordinary real-world purposes of pleasure and information. Extensive reading is seen as useful to anyone who reads or intends to read a second language. It is clear that Extensive Reading helps learners learn to read in the second language and provides chances that make learners enjoy reading. The more students read, the better they become at it. The students are to be motivated to do the reading. They have to read extensively in order to become fluent readers. In addition, David Eskey states,

Reading ... must be developed, and can only be developed by means of extensive and continual practice. People learn to read, and to read better, by reading. (1986, p.21)

10. Extensive Reading: Approach

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Extensive reading is an approach to the teaching and learning of second language reading in which learners read large quantities of book and other materials that are well within their linguistic competence. Extensive reading, however, is not just a matter of submerging students in print. As Albert Harris and Edward Sipay observe, “It takes superior materials, clever teachers who love to read themselves, time, and effort to develop the reading habit”. (655)

Extensive reading approach aims to get students reading in the second language and liking it. Richards, Platt and Platt, have made this evident in the Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics that Extensive reading is, “intended to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure and to encourage a liking for reading”. (133). As an approach to learning to read a second language, extensive reading may be done in and out of the classroom. Outside the classroom, the students are encouraged to take home the books and read. In the classroom, silent reading enables students read individually. An extensive reading program consists of the following characteristics which gives way to understand the complexities of extensive reading. They are as follows:

- Students read as much as possible, in and out of the classroom.
- Students have the freedom to select what they want to read and stop reading the material if it fails to interest them.
- To encourage reading a variety of materials on a wide range of topics.
- Inside the class, reading is individual and silent at the student’s own place and outside the class; it is done when and where the student chooses.
- The speed of reading is faster than slower.
- Teachers orient students to the goals, explain the methodology and guide students in getting the most out of the program.
- The teacher, who is an active member of the classroom reading community, acts as a role model for the students and demonstrates what it means to be a reader.

11. Role of the Teachers

Extensive reading belongs to an educational world different from the one that administrators, teachers, and students usually inhabit, because, reading is not confined to the four walls of the classroom. Teachers take the role of active participant and model reader, lending prestige, example, and support to the activity. Being role models also means that teachers participate in the extensive reading program with their students. Bright and McGregor point out in their book *Teaching English as a Second Language* that, “If we expect pupils to read the books in their library, we have an obligation to read them ourselves”. (70)

First of all, a reading teacher has to be a person who personally reads for enjoyment and for learning. As J.A. Bright and G.P. McGregor explain, “The teacher’s own enjoyment of books ... pleasure in sharing it with pupils and daily interest are of the greatest importance.

A teacher who does not read can hardly inspire others to do so” (69). The teacher considers that extensive reading which by nature is pleasurable will be a good balance to the high pressure cramming that characterizes most of the students’ language study. For this, the teacher can replace one of the weekly academic readings from the text book with an extensive reading assignment. If required, the teacher can assist the struggling students by reading aloud certain paragraphs from the book that the student is reading, and then the student can join in. This may help the students get motivation to read and increase their reading fluency. Later, when the student feels comfortable in reading aloud he/she goes back and continues to reread silently.

12. Classroom Activities in Establishing a Reading Community

Classroom activities can further develop extensive reading and help students begin to see reading as a valuable, exciting, pleasurable and worthwhile activity. There are certain class room activities which suit any level of linguistic or reading ability.

12.1. Sustained Silent Reading

Sustained Silent Reading has been viewed by Richard Robinson and Joycelin Hulett as “highly motivational because it encourages reading that is meaningful to the individual as opposed to reading as an academic subject” (106) The students and teacher silently read books or other material of their choice. Everyone in the room reads something different. Silent reading in class can also give teachers a chance to observe individual students reading. They may answer the questions raised by the students and by this the teacher comes to know about the students’ way of reading. The teacher has to see that the time allotted for the silent reading is utilized properly.

12.2. Teachers Read Aloud to Students

Reading aloud can be an initial strategy in promoting extensive reading. It is to introduce students to reading. In any reading program, reading aloud can be a way of introducing learners to genres, authors, and worthwhile books that they may not initially be attracted to. This method may also lead learners to appreciate more difficult reading material. The read-aloud material should be at the same linguistic level of the students. The teacher acts as a role-model for the learners by sharing their love of reading. Whether the material read is a book, an article, a poem, or a

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paragraph, when read aloud the focus is on the meaning and the teacher's appreciation of it, and the message being given to learners' through this is: "Reading is important enough to do and share".

12.3. Repeated Readings

In this process, the learners read the same material for the second time. This becomes effective in building both automaticity and confidence. Learners should be told not to skim but to read for meaning each time they read. This exercise is individualized and non- competitive and the learners are made to read at their own pace.

13. Technological Progress in Extensive Reading

The view towards reading as an art and skill has changed because of advances in computer and communication technology since 1950 and it is now rightly regarded as an active skill involving guessing, predicting, checking and asking oneself questions in order to construct meaning.

As a new technology which is fast changing, it demands a quick and efficient acquisition of new skills with the ability to transfer across tasks, one needs to probe into the media vis-à-vis reading. In recent years, Extensive Reading has begun to add the Internet to its traditional reading material sources, and with this a new version of the Extensive Reading has emerged. Internet gives complete freedom to students to access texts of their choices and submit their works to a website.

14. Merits of Reading Electronic Texts

An advantage of the web project is that it provides opportunities for students and teachers to work together. Learners aid the teacher by finding the materials on the web. The learners also get the chance of learning permanent skills needed in this information age beyond mere language skills. Due to this, the learners develop a positive attitude towards reading online and it appears to be a very promising pedagogical approach that may strengthen learners' learning. The web based Extensive Reading will empower not only students but also teachers themselves in a significant manner.

15. Defects in Reading Electronic Texts

In a society like India, a language teacher may be less advanced in tackling texts in electronic form. This process requires additional skills for which the training opportunities may not be easily available. Non- native English teachers may be pushed to a situation to work in large classes with little or no contact with modern

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educational developments in the field. And when the vast majority of learners of English in the world learn English on the floor, the money spent in developing and / or publishing mechanical / electronic texts is unlikely to reach to most learners. Even if the size and cost of electronic equipment may be decreasing, but it is still a barrier to widespread access. (Arels Journal, 1983)

16. Benefits of Extensive Reading

Extensive reading plays an important role in developing the components which enhance the fluency of second language reading. In a 1991, in TESOL Quarterly paper, William Grabe has discussed some of the benefits of extensive reading. To him, “Longer concentrated periods of silent reading build vocabulary and structural awareness, develop automaticity, enhance background knowledge, improve comprehension skills, and promote confidence and motivation”. (396) Extensive reading ensures that the students have the best possible chance of developing their knowledge of focusing on the meaning of what they read. In addition, Grabe(1986) asserts that, “the more reading done, of the greatest informational variety and range of purposes, the quicker the reader will achieve ... the capacity for creating, refining and connecting diverse arrays of cognitive schemata” (36).

Extensive reading includes individualized free choice of reading material, which makes it possible for individual students to follow their own interests in reading and it also places great emphasis on positive classroom environment, and on enjoying reading experience. It is indeed the on going experience of extensive second language reading that has (provides) the most potential to establish positive attitudes towards second language reading because the students are not forced to read about topics in which they have no interest. Extensive reading also plays an important role in developing the capacity for critical thinking which is so important for success in higher education.

17. Factors Affecting Extensive Reading

There are certain factors that affect extensive reading, and various reasons have been suggested for it. Some of them are

- Finding time for extensive reading in the already crowded curriculum is a matter of priority.
- The different role of the teacher in extensive reading can be a problem for teachers who are used to traditional roles. This factor becomes a challenge in the Extensive Reading Program.
- The nature of material used in Extensive Reading may be controversial and it is only termed as “light reading”. It is feared that this light reading

may decline the taste and detract the learners from appreciating the classics.

18. Materials Suggested for Extensive Reading

The basic principles that underlie in the successful development of the reading process have been admirably summarized as consisting of a 'lure and a ladder'. In extensive reading, the lure is the interesting and attractive material that helps to hook the students and make them read. The ladder is the wide range of material that allows the students to progress their fluency in reading. However, the choice of the material is so important as stated by Cdin Davis (1995): "The watchwords are quantity and variety, rather than quality, so that books are selected for their attractiveness and relevance to the pupils' lives rather than for literary merit". (329).

The major categories of material potentially useful for extensive reading are

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Children's magazines
- Popular and simple literature

18.1. Newspapers

The cheap and widely available newspapers are deemed to be the exquisite resource for intermediate and advanced students, particularly for reading outside the classroom. Brevity of the newspaper articles benefits the less proficient second language readers to read them quickly and successfully. The variety of content in a newspaper provides some excellent reading practice, because different sections encourage reading in different ways. Browsing through a newspaper is also natural practice in skimming and scanning. T.V. listings, sports results, horoscopes and weather forecasts are an incitement to scanning. On the other hand, articles and captions, invite closer and more careful reading for as long as they hold the reader's interest. Extensive reading ideally includes the reading of various materials for different purposes to practice appropriate choice of reading style.

18.2. Magazines

The weekly and monthly magazines are usually colourful and attractive, and their visual emphasis can help readers understand the content as they are browsed rather than read from cover to cover. Unlike newspapers, which have a variety of content, magazines usually focus on one topic and as a result comparatively few people may be interested in a particular magazine alone. To meet the needs of the different

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members of a second language reading class, a variety of magazines are to be supplied by certain organizations and local distributors. Students can be encouraged to buy second language magazines in their own area of interest, and these magazines could be shared among themselves to be read and by this the class begins to take on the feeling of a reading community.

18.3. Children's Magazines

Children's magazines are written for children of various ages, some of which are suitable for less proficient second language learners. These magazines have many illustrations that help reading comprehension. The activities and language games also help the second language learners to improve their language with interest. The stories in the children's magazines are simple and designed in such a way that the learner could read it aloud. This category is generally suitable for those who have an intermediate fluency.

18.4. Simple and Familiar Literary Works

The simple and familiar literary works which are short and straightforward in content and language are accessible to intermediate and advanced-level learners. The familiar content tends to create an interest among readers. In short, the simple literary works can be a precious and most adored resource in an extensive reading library.

Apart from these reading materials, the teachers can also help students write their own material for their classmates to read, as Edward Dwyer and Evelyn Dwyer state: "Teachers must create within each classroom a positive atmosphere, a way of life conducive to promoting reading through positive affect" (72).

19. Aim or Goal of an Extensive Reading Program

Possible goals have been framed for the extensive reading program. The framed goals for the students are

- To create a positive attitude toward reading in the second language.
- To develop confidence in their reading.
- To increase their word recognition ability.
- To become familiar with unknown or difficult words.
- To read at an appropriate rate for their purpose in reading.

20. The Sample

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As a sample for this study, the researchers have selected the first year B.A (English) students of Virudhunagar Hindu Nadars' Senthikumara Nadar College, Virudhunagar, TamilNadu, India. They are identified randomly.

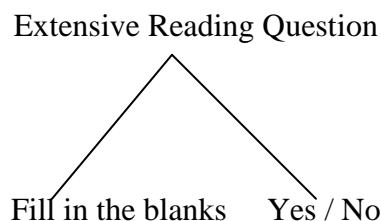
The purpose of selecting this group of learners is to make them aware of the process of extensive reading and enhance their vocabulary and develop their ability to think in English. Before giving the instructions, in a pre-reading stage the learners are encouraged to take interest in the sessions. The exercises chosen are based on different areas- a prose piece, a poem, and an one-act play. Different reading techniques are used in the reading program. After the reading session, the students' performance in reading is evaluated with a questionnaire.

21. Activity

The reading materials are selected carefully keeping in mind the background and capacity of the learners. A simple prose piece, poem and an one-act play are selected because the learners have to cope up with the different reading levels.

1. The first level: Activate the pre-knowledge, skim the text, and build necessary information and accomplish the task.
2. The second level: Reading involves linguistic interaction with the reading material in a dilated speech situation. This co-operation is not only based on a shared goal but also on passing psychological knowledge from one generation to the next and it enables the reader to think about what the author's goal is and how it is related to one's personal goal in the reading of the text.
3. The third level: To secure comprehension of the text, for this is the characteristic task in the pursuit of reading.

Reading activity among students is to be assessed in terms of two types of questions given under in a diagram



“Fill in the blanks” is used to assess whether they retain the text they have read at a reading session. It is to their memory. However, yes /no model is also used fearing that the trained-readers may find it difficult to answer the questions.

22. Activity - I

The approach of reading a prose essay may enable to discover the needs and interests of the learners. It helps them to get into the moods, tastes, and feelings of other persons besides themselves.

Prose Piece

Arguing

-Robert Lynd

If there is one thing for which I honour the human race more than for another, it is the way in which it goes on arguing. A visitor from another planet, landing on earth, would be amazed at the extent to which controversy flourishes everywhere except in those ultra-modern countries in which it is forbidden. He would say to himself: 'Why do these people argue so hotly? Those who argue were not converted to their beliefs by reason, so why should they hope to convert others by arguments that would not have convinced themselves? The human being seems to be a person who jumps mystically to conclusions, yet who never loses hope of being able to reason others into the same conclusions. The fact that, in spite of the obvious truth of this, men go on arguing, is a proof of the unquenchable optimism of the human race.

Consider for a moment. You who are middle-aged must have taken part in thousands of arguments. You argued in the nursery and you won, though your nursery did not admit it. You argued with uncles and aunts, with great-uncles and great-aunts, and thrashed them all without making the slightest impression on them. You argued triumphantly at school without ever converting a school fellow. Later, your college rang with your incontrovertible statements on matters religious, political, literary, and metaphysical; and not a single contemporary of the opposite opinion even knew that you had won. In the wide world you continued to fight for the truth like a skilled fencer—in your and other people's homes, in offices, in restaurants, in the streets, perhaps in public – houses. You have been arguing, say for forty years, and how many converts have you made? You will be lucky, I think, if you can name three.

I do not mean to make the absurd suggestion that people never change their opinions. I doubt, however, whether they often change them in consequence of an argument. I myself became a Socialist in my teens, but I was no more reasoned into it than into smoking. The thing simply happened without my knowing how or why it had happened. Yet no sooner was I mystically converted to a belief in Socialism than I began to badger all my friends and acquaintances with arguments that, sound as they were, I should have laughed at a month or two before. In vain did they try not to listen or to turn the subject. To me they were brands to be plucked from the burning by controversy. I plucked my hardest, but how merrily they all continued to burn!

My conversion to Nationalism was more rational, but even so, it was not the result of other people's arguments. I had come to England from the north of Ireland,

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believing in my simplicity that the English spent their days and nights thinking out plans for the welfare of Ireland- for improving the land system and the education system, and for draining the regions of the Bann and the Barrow. To my surprise, I found that the English were a very practical people who had enough problems of their own to solve without spending sleepless nights over the drainage of the Bann.

Most of them seemed to look on the Irish as a pampered people living largely at the expense of the English tax-payer. Finding that they regarded Ireland mainly as a nuisance, I concluded in the course of a few months that it would be better for the country to be governed by people who were, at least, interested in it. That, however, was the beginning, not the end of my conversion. The conversion became complete only on the day on which I went to see Synge's Riders to the Sea at the Royalty Theatre. That, again, was a mystical experience, but none the less, I immediately set out to try to convert everybody I knew to my opinion by process of argument. My arguments, I may say without vanity, were so convincing that they would have got through the hide of a pachyderm, but they never got through the hides of my friends. The human being is all but argument-proof.

This is obvious if you consider the results of all the public debates that have been held since the beginning of time. Take, for example, the debates in the House of Commons. Were Disraeli's supporters ever known to throw in the towel because Gladstone had felled him with an unanswerable argument? What would Mr. Baldwin's followers think, except that he was mad, if he suddenly got up and announced that Mr. Atlee had defeated him in argument and that henceforth he would take his place as a private soldier in the ranks of the Labour Party? Ever since the days of Demosthenes and Aeschines, it has been taken for granted that no eminent man is ever converted by an opponent by process of debate. Even in those old-fashioned debates which used to be held between humble Atheists and humble Christians, the leading Christian and the leading Atheist always went home with their opinions unchanged. In view of this, I have sometimes wondered whether it would not be a good thing to have referees at debates, as at football matches and at boxing matches, who would decide when one side had scored or when one of the opponents had received a knock-out blow. At present, each side is left to believe that it has scored a smashing victory. I should like to see the loser, not only publicly declared to be the loser, but compelled to go over to the other side.

It may be urged, however, that public debates achieve their object, not by the conversion of the leaders on either side, but by the conversion of their more open-minded followers. Among people of real convictions, these open-minded followers are known as wobblers; and a wobbler who has yielded to argument is known to the party he has left as a turn-coat. How suspicious people are of a politician who has listened to reason and so deserted their party for another! Yet, if we believe in controversy, we should honour the wobbler and the turncoat above all others. These are the men who put reason above prejudice, and have the honesty to admit that they have been beaten by arguments better than their own. They are men who are not

afraid of their past, and are glad to feel that what they say in 1936 is different from the nonsense they talked in 1913. Their opponents do not feel like this, however. They say, 'Just for a handful of silver he left us,' or something of that kind. They say it sometimes with truth, but, whether it is true or not, they say it.

Considering the number of wobblers there are in the world, it is perhaps not surprising that we go on arguing as we do in parliaments and on platforms. A large audience will probably contain at least one or two reasonable men. What particularly astonishes me, however, is that we go on arguing just as hotly in private life-arguing with people who have not the remotest resemblance to reasonable men-people who would not show the faintest sign of wobbling even if Socrates and St. Thomas Aquinas made a combined and overwhelming assault on them. Again and again I find myself arguing passionately with men who are not open to argument and whom I know I could no more convert by arguments than I could turn a stone into butter. They are men, I tell myself, so steeped in illusion that they can believe almost anything so long as it is not quite true. Yet I go on trying, vainly, to outshout them, and to blow down the fiat of illusion with a mighty wind of argument. In cold blood I realize that this is foolish-that, for all the effect my argument produced, I might as well be the street-evangelist whom I once saw preaching salvation with no audience but a lamp-post.

No doubt they feel much the same about me. I, too, am not exactly open to argument-at least, not to the only sort of arguments other people seem to be able to think of. Yet who that is of an argumentative disposition has ever given up hope? To the genuinely argumentative man every other human being remains a potential convert while alive. I have known enthusiastic youths who would spend a whole evening trying to convert an octogenarian miser to the moral beauty of Socialism. I have heard a Free Trader in a public-house fanatically expounding the case for Free Trade to a tipsy book-maker who could scarcely pronounce the word 'whisky'. We are all born canvassers for our causes, and are all the more deserving of admiration because we go on canvassing without ever turning a vote.

Is controversy entirely useless, then? I do not think so. For one thing, it clears the controversialist's mind and so enables him gradually to become a more lucid exponent of his creed. For another thing, it keeps ideas in the air; and it is by these ideas, not by immediate arguments that men in the end are mystically converted, or, if you prefer the word, infected. Finally, controversy is a very good sport. It is because it is a good sport that I wish a referee had been present in my house on Sunday night to decide who won in the great welter-weight argument between Paddy Freeman and Al Communismo.

23. Activity-II

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Reading of poetry will open unexpected windows of delight for the learners. The learner understands the words, phrases, and figures of speech in order to grasp the full significance of what he reads. After reading the poem aloud, the teacher leads the class to suggest the mood of the author and arrive at the message delivered. The learners are made to read poetry in the light of their own experiences, visualize, emotionally, respond to, and consequently get pleasure from it. To know about the construction of poetry is also a satisfying experience to the learners.

Daffodils

-William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.
Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.
The waves beside them danced, but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company!
I gazed – and gazed – but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought.
For oft when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in Pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills.
And dances with the daffodils.

24. Activity - III

The habit of reading dramatic literature will help the learner grow up mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. No literature programme is well balanced unless it
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contains drama in every grade, leading consistently from the simple to the more complex. The careful reading of stage directions and descriptions will help the reader to piece the story together.

A Miracle of St. Antony
- Maurice Maeterlinck
Summary of the one-act play

Maurice Maeterlinck was a poet, playwright and essayist. The main themes in his work are death and the meaning of life. This play is about St. Antony and the miracle that he has assumed to have played on Miss. Hortensia.

The play opens with the entry of St. Antony at Miss. Hortensia's house. Virginia, the old drudge of the house comes to know that he was from Padua and has come to restore the dead lady, Miss. Hortensia to life. She considers St. Antony to be a holy man and falls on her knees and begins to pray rapidly. Virginia gives details about the dead lady that she was just seventy-seven, and has left two millions behind her and that amount was shared by her two nephews Mr. Gustavus and Mr. Achilles, their children, the pastor, the sacristan, the sexton, the vicar, and all her domestics. According to that Virginia gets 3,300 francs, which is a handsome sum.

Virginia leads St. Antony to the parlor where the corpse of Miss. Hortensia was laid. Her relatives who were all rich people stood around the corpse. They were all involved in the mourning ceremony. St. Antony tells Gustavus that he has come to revive their dead aunt to life. Gustavus and Achilles consider St. Antony to be a drunkard and force him out of the house with the help of Joseph. But St. Antony was not prepared to leave the room without completing his work. Everyone makes a try in sending St. Antony out of the house but could not. Finally the doctor takes the responsibility of giving a chance to St. Antony and see what he does.

They all move near the corpse of Miss. Hortensia. Suddenly St. Antony raises his voice in a commanding tone and asks Miss. Hortensia to rise up. To everyone's surprise Miss. Hortensia rises and sits up. They believed that St. Antony has really performed a miracle, and as a sign of gratitude Gustavus and Achilles wanted to do something for St. Antony. But Miss. Hortensia who sees St. Antony with his bare foot inside her house starts shouting at him. Immediately St. Antony raises his voice and asks her to keep silent. Gustavus enquires St. Antony why his aunt could not speak. St. Antony tells that he has made her dumb fearing that she may reveal the secrets of the world of the dead.

The whole family's anger turns against St. Antony and they call for the police. Two officers and a police sergeant enter the house to arrest St. Antony. Finally the Police Lieutenant, Mitou comes in and reveals the truth about St. Antony that he

has some mental disorder and has escaped from the hospital. He turns out and plays the same pranks, heals the sick, steals the doctor's work and all without a license. They take St. Antony with them. Virginia who still believes him to be a holy man goes along with him. And Miss. Hortensia really dies only at the end.

25. QUESTIONS AND ANALYSIS

S.No	PROSE	RIGHT/WRONG
1	A visitor from another planet is amazed on seeing the _____ on earth.	18/2
2	Argument flourishes everywhere except in those _____ countries.	20/0
3	Lynd became a _____ in his teens.	20/0
4	Lynd came to England from _____.	20/0
5	The Bann and the Barrow are the _____ in North Ireland.	19/1
6	A schoolboy argues with his classmates and converts them. Yes /No	19/1
7	Arguing is compared to the skillful fighting with a sword. Yes /No	18/2
8	Synge's 'Riders to the sea' did not create any change in Lynd. Yes /No	17/3
9	Argument creates an intellectual climate. Yes /No	19/1
10	The youths converted the miser to a Socialist. Yes /No	17/3
11	A street evangelist is one who preaches ordinary people in _____.	16/4
12		18/2

13	Socrates is an ancient Greek _____.	15/5
14	Wobblers are people who are _____ in their view.	20/0
15	Lynd blindly believed that the _____ government would support Ireland. The English people were too _____.	14/6

S.No	POETRY	RIGHT/WRONG
1	The poet caught sight of the daffodils on a _____ morning.	20/0
2		19/1
3	The statement "I wandered lonely as a cloud" is a figure of speech known as _____.	19/1
4	The poet saw a crowd of _____.	18/2
5	The daffodils were seen beside the lake and beneath the _____.	18/2
6	The daffodils danced along with the _____.	20/0
7	The poet was not happy to see the daffodils. Yes / No	18/2
8	Daffodils are trumpet shaped yellow flowers that grow wild in English Woods. Yes / No	16/4
9	The daffodils were lit up in the sun and danced in the wind. Yes / No	20/0
10	The memory did not bring back the beautiful scene of daffodils to the poet. Yes / No	16/4

11	Unforgettable mind pictures give us joy when we are alone and at leisure. Yes / No	17/3
12	The term 'jocund' means _____.	20/0
13	The daffodils were continuous as the _____ that shine.	15/5
14	The term 'inward eye' is _____.	19/1
15	The term 'pensive' means _____.	16/4
	The meaning of the word 'solitude' is _____.	

S.No	ONE-ACT PLAY	RIGHT/WRONG
1	The name of the old drudge is _____.	19/1
2		20/0
3		
4	St. Antony was from _____.	20/0
5	St. Antony had come to restore _____ to life.	20/0
6	The age of the dead lady was _____.	18/2
7	Virginia spent every penny of her earning for her sick _____.	19/1
8	The relatives of the dead lady were all poor people. Yes / No	20/0
9	The dead lady left a sum of two millions behind her. Yes / No	18/2
10	Miss. Hortensia was made deaf by St.Antony. Yes / No	17/3
	St. Antony was finally arrested by the officers.	

	Yes / No	15/5
11	Did St.Antony really restore the dead lady? Yes / No	19/1
12	Miss.Hortensia left _____ francs for Virginia.	15/5
13	The place Padua is in _____.	17/3
14	_____ revealed the truth about St.Antony in the end.	15/5
15	_____ still believed that St. Antony has done a miracle. The word 'queer' means_____.	19/1

26. Findings

The selection of the reading material is made according to the learners' capacity and interest level. The chosen material is of simple language. There are no complex events or incidents that may hamper the learners' interest. The questions are devised in such a way that the learners not only process the text but also motivated in further reading.

Readers have been given the objectives of extensive reading and their subsequent performance is inspected. The content of the questions is varied according to whether they are higher or lower-level in terms of the information-processing required. At the processing level, differences in reading and directions present challenges for the readers. The researchers are very particular in testing the learners' previous knowledge, understanding level, thinking capacity, memory level and their capability to interpret the intricate mood of the writer.

From the study, it is understood that the learners are excellent in answering the direct questions, which are set in such a way that they just to recall from memory what they have read from the reading material. The learners are also competent in responding the questions that stimulate their previous knowledge because pre-knowledge elements depend on the interest of the learners. The Yes/No format questions enable them to think and find what is right and what is wrong. Mostly, by choosing the correct answer the learners prove that they are good at comprehending the

information. Few learners have found difficulty in interpreting the mood of the writer and certain others find difficulty in grasping the meaning of certain obscure words.

This study shows that the readers not only have knowledge, but also, they have abilities: abilities not only to learn new knowledge but also abilities to process information. The learners become better and more confident readers. By this, they can write better, listen better and speak better. Their vocabulary will also be enriched and in addition, they will develop positive attitudes toward reading.

The students become effective, efficient and independent second language readers through extensive reading with the encouragement of the teacher, cutting across all the differences in cultural background, and purpose of study. There are some significant findings which are noticed during the research.

- The chosen texts enable the learners to develop confidence to read new and unfamiliar material. This allows the learners to become familiar with the language usage and text structure.
- The learners who lack the motivation to read began to show confidence and likeness in reading the second language materials.
- Regardless of proficiency and grade level, the learners are able to capture some meaning from the texts.
- Due to the nature of the texts, the learners actively involve in the reading process.

The researchers would also like to put forward some suggestions for teachers and researchers.

27. Suggestions

- Pre – reading session is essential for extensive reading.
- The teacher should assist the learners in selecting appropriate reading material of interest to them.
- In the session involving reading, a teacher has to see to it that each and every student participates in reading.
- Sustained Silent Reading should be encouraged to develop automaticity, confidence and enjoyment.
- Students should be encouraged to read longer texts, rather than short snippets.
- Background knowledge should be recognized as influencing all comprehension.

- A researcher could include more interesting tasks so that the learners can enjoy reading.
- Language games could be made a part of the reading process.
- Learners can be encouraged to borrow books to read at home.

28. Conclusion

Reading is no longer viewed as a passive activity in which the reader strives to find all and only what the writer has written. It is a process of mind engagement which results in gaining knowledge of language and comprehension at various levels; from a surface-level understanding of stated facts to opinions, preferences to prejudices, beliefs to biases. A successful and effective extensive reading program does not just happen but it needs guidance, counseling, and the creation of activities to encourage and allow students to read as much as possible and require careful thought and preparation.

New ways of reading have to be searched. New developments in teaching and learning should be made to create effective reading in the classroom. At the same time, empirical studies are also needed in transfer of traditional reading skills to novel, electronic – based reading skills to cope up with the changes of modern communication technology.

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APPENDIX QUESTIONNAIRE

This Questionnaire is circulated among the first year English students to know the validity of the tool used in preparing a research paper under the caption

Arguing

1. A visitor from another planet is amazed on seeing the _____ on earth.
a. nature b. development c. controversy d. people
2. Argument flourishes everywhere except in those _____ countries.
a. backward b. modern c. ultra-modern d. developing
3. Lynd became a _____ in his teens.
a. Communist b. Socialist c. Marxist d. Educationalist
4. Lynd came to England from _____.
A. Netherland b. Finland c. Ireland d. Switzerland
5. The Bann and the Barrow are the _____ in North Ireland.
a. mountains b. rivers c. areas d. dams
6. A schoolboy argues with his classmates and converts them. Yes /No
7. Arguing is compared to the skillful fighting with a sword. Yes /No
8. Synge's 'Riders to the sea' did not create any change in Lynd. Yes /No
9. Argument creates an intellectual climate. Yes /No
10. The youths converted the miser to a Socialist. Yes /No
11. A street evangelist is one who preaches ordinary people in _____.
12. Socrates is an ancient Greek _____.

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13. Wobblers are people who are _____ in their view.
14. Lynd blindly believed that the _____ government would support Ireland.
15. The English people were too _____.

Daffodils

1. The poet caught sight of the daffodils on a _____ morning.
a. Summer b. Spring c. Autumn d. Winter
2. The statement “I wandered lonely as a cloud” is a figure of speech known as _____.
a. Metaphor b. Simile c. Irony d. Personification
3. The poet saw a crowd of _____.
a. trees b. birds c. daffodils d. clouds
4. The daffodils were seen beside the lake and beneath the _____.
a. mountain b. sky c. sun d. trees
5. The daffodils danced along with the _____.
a. birds b. waves c. bees d. clouds
6. The poet was not happy to see the daffodils. Yes / No
7. Daffodils are trumpet shaped yellow flowers that grow wild in English Woods.
Yes / No
8. The daffodils were lit up in the sun and danced in the wind. Yes / No
9. The memory did not bring back the beautiful scene of daffodils to the poet.
Yes / No
10. Unforgettable mind pictures give us joy when we are alone and at leisure.
Yes / No
11. The term ‘jocund’ means _____.
12. The daffodils were continuous as the _____ that shine.

13. The term 'inward eye' is _____.
14. The term 'pensive' means _____.
15. The meaning of the word 'solitude' is _____.

A Miracle of Saint Antony

1. The name of the old drudge is _____.
a. Ferdina b. Virginia c. Debora d. Catherina
2. St. Antony was from _____.
a. Greece b. Israel c. Padua d. Jerusalem
3. St. Antony had come to restore _____ to life.
a. Miss. Jaculin b. Miss. Delshia c. Miss. Delighta d. Miss. Hortensia
4. The age of the dead lady was _____.
a. Fifty-seven b. Sixty-seven c. Seventy-seven d. Eighty-seven
5. Virginia spent every penny of her earning for her sick _____.
a. brother b. mother c. father d. sister
6. The relatives of the dead lady were all poor people.
Yes / No
7. The dead lady left a sum of two millions behind her.
Yes / No
8. Miss. Hortensia was made deaf by St. Antony.
Yes / No
9. St. Antony was finally arrested by the officers.
Yes / No
10. Did St. Antony really restore the dead lady?
Yes / No
11. Miss. Hortensia left _____ francs for Virginia.
12. The place Padua is in _____.

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13. _____ revealed the truth about St. Antony in the end.
14. _____ still believed that St. Antony has done a miracle.
15. The word 'queer' means _____.
-
-

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