

READ

TESOL Arabia Special Interest Group

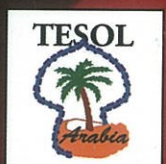
◆ READ Magazine 2010

◆ Issue 01



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Sheikha Bodour Al Qasimi, Isobel Abdulhoul, Clair Hattle, Peter Viney, Natalie Le Seilleur, Jo Kennedy and Peter Waters, Magda Khalifa, Nick Bullard, Jessica March, Lina Hejjawi, Fairlie Atkinson, Margaret Smallpiece, Alicia Salaz, Sarah Peoples Perry, James Schofield, Sadia Khan and Caroline Brandt



Written by: Sheikha Bodour bint Sultan Al Qasimi
*President of Emirates Publishers Association
Founder and CEO of Kalimat*

Once upon time... the **story** will begin

Spending just 20 minutes with a child before they go to bed is enough to create a close bond between parents and children – this precious time not only strengthens the parent-child relationship, it also creates lifelong memories. It can also improve a child's ability to analyze and innovate, it sharpens their sense of perception, and it expands their horizons. This is true even of infants, who might appear too young to understand, but can benefit from the colours, sounds and expressions associated with reading.

As parents, the most rewarding moments we experience are those that we share with our children; for example, reading them a bedtime story that they love before they fall asleep. It can be even more exciting to watch the expressions on their faces, see their reactions to events in the story, and listen to their comments on the sounds and movements we make during our storytelling as we attempt to create a lively, fun atmosphere. Our children's reactions while we are reading – and their desire to ask questions and express their comments and opinions – are signs of intelligence, maturity, innovation, and a vivid imagination. These are precisely the attributes that we need to enhance, stimulate and nurture. With that in mind, I would like to share some of my most memorable experiences with my own children as an example of how to enhance the special moments that you spend with your children.

When my son was an infant, he did not have the patience to

sit and listen for more than five minutes. So, I decided to make this brief period – only five minutes – interesting and amusing. I started purchasing large plastic books that were filled with colour, but no text, and which featured voices, lights and other audio-visual attractions. I wanted to create an interaction with my infant son, via sounds and expressions, that would attract and maintain his attention. While five minutes was enough during the first few months of his life, I slowly started to extend this period as he got older and his attention span increased.

Ahmed is now two and a half years old. He enjoys new and interesting books, and he likes drawing, colouring and making things. I am keen to share these activities with him, so we will write a story together about, for example, the things he loves. We will put his photo on the cover, as well as filling the inside pages with pictures of the things he likes most, including people, places, games and activities, foods, structures, songs and other positive images! We even decorated his room once with shining stars and a moon to illustrate one of his favourite stories.

My daughter, Mariam, is six years old and is of a more independent nature than Ahmed. She likes to select books and stories by herself. While some of these books are not quite to my taste, I know that her likes and dislikes will change over time, sometimes quite suddenly (what appeals to a child one day may lose its allure after two or three months).

Visiting libraries and book fairs is one of the pastimes we enjoy best and it is something we do regularly. I let her choose whatever she likes without comment. For I know that her desire to buy books is a positive step and one which will encourage a love of reading – a trait that I have strived to instil in her since she was born, and which is growing day by day.

I have also just discovered that Mariam enjoys reading new stories on the Internet. Why not! Inevitably our children are more open to electronic media resources and the Internet than my generation. At first, it was difficult for me to accept this development - I was concerned that she would choose stories that were unsuitable in terms of her age and culture. But today, we search for appropriate websites that contain beautiful stories together. We then read these stories via the computer for a specific period of time.

My children enjoy preparing the room for their bedtime stories. We start by taking the blankets from the beds and surrounding ourselves with pillows in order to create a warm, relaxing atmosphere. This preparation sets the tone for story time, and enables us to interact to better effect while I am reading to them.

Often, my children will bring their books and sit beside myself or their father, trying to imitate our manner of reading. This is not at all surprising, as parents set an example for their children. Importantly, my husband and I try to make reading part of our daily routine so that our children will learn this habit, and practice it forever.

It has been scientifically proven that there is no specific age at which children should start reading. Children like hearing voices, expressions and words even before they are born, and this habit grows during their first few years of their lives.

As parents, we should be happy to spend just 20 minutes a day reading to our children. Nor should we mind repeating the same story over and over again every night. Every time they hear a story, a child learns new words and expressions, and gains the ability to analyze the events in a different way. This spurs their imagination and allows them to invent new episodes for their favourite storybook heroes. Repeating the same story every night may bore you as a parent, but your children will love it!

Mothers, and especially working mums, often struggle to find enough time to complete their daily duties and tasks, and one



of the most difficult challenges is finding enough time to spend with their children. But it is rewarding – and necessary – to share time with them! Consequently mothers should be re-evaluating their schedules, and ensuring that they devote time to their children as part of their daily routine. Personally, I discovered that nothing beats reading bedtime stories to my children. I believe that this “quality time” is the most satisfying part of the day and gives my children a special feeling, safe in the knowledge that they have my undivided attention.

But it is also very important that we select carefully the books that our children read. There is a vast array of wonderful books available today for children of all ages to enjoy, and we should help our children choose stories that they will relish and that are suitable for their age.

In conclusion, the time that we spend with our children is as important to us, the parents, as it is to them. It encourages us to be innovative, introducing the contents of books in a fresh way even though we may have read the same stories many time before, and it prompts us to think carefully about how to make the most of the limited time that we spend with our children to ensure that it is as rewarding and fulfilling as it can possibly be.



Isobel Abulhoul
Festival Director



The importance of the Emirates Airline Festival of Literature

One of the main challenges faced when travelling to a foreign land is the sense of disorientation you feel when you first arrive. Even if you know the language it takes a while to adjust to the various signs and instructions but this challenge increases many fold if you have little or basic knowledge of the language. This feeling is only a taster of the experience felt by one fifth of the world's population as they awake every day to the foreign land that is the world around them.

Literacy is a term that defines the ability of a person to read and write to a certain level. If we do not have this essential skill, life can be very difficult. We need to be able to read and write to use a computer, to find directions to a place, to find out information, to read instructions, and as an entry to most other areas of academia. This is at a most basic level of need and something that governments around the globe are trying to provide for their people.

According to UNESCO's 'Global Monitoring Report on Education for All - 2008' 776 million people around the world, two thirds of them women, lack basic literacy skills.

The problem is particularly acute in the Arab World where the adult literacy rate is 66% - one of the lowest in the world. The overall figure, however, masks the huge discrepancy that exists within the Arab population with variations of around 50% of the population who are literate in Mauritania, Morocco and Yemen to more than 90% in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine.

The importance of this issue is evident in the multitude of studies over the years that have indicated a proven correlation

between illiteracy and poverty. So what's to be done? Fortunately there are many initiatives on an international, regional and local basis that are seeking to tackle the problem head-on, for example International Literacy Day, a day initiated by UNESCO in 1966 and designed to highlight the importance of literacy to individuals, communities and societies.

One of the key platforms of Dubai Cares which was launched by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum is the eradication of illiteracy in the Arab world. A number of initiatives are currently underway including a primary school education programme which will benefit more than 150,000 children in Niger.

There is, though, another issue that inhibits reading within the Arab world and that is the absence of a culture of reading encouraged from a child's early years. While there is a very strong tradition of oral storytelling, particularly across the Gulf states and the Levant there is not the same tradition of reading to children that is a commonplace habit in the West.

An absence of suitable texts in Arabic is a major contributory factor and this is partly being alleviated by programmes to translate major works into Arabic such as the Tarjem programme that The Mohamed Bin Rashid Foundation in Dubai are undertaking and the Kalima programme initiated by the authorities in Abu Dhabi. There has also been an encouraging growth recently in the number of authors within the Arab world who are now writing for children of all ages.

Too often, though, reading is associated with duty and school - it's a slog, felt to be an unnecessary burden by many children

across the region. One of the goals of the Emirates Airline Festival of Literature, of which I am Festival Director, is to encourage people of all ages to feel the joy of reading.

Prior to this year's Festival Nahad al Shawa, a well-known Saudi-based children's author visited Deira International School and it was a privilege to see how she was able to engage a group of around 20 six year old children as she read from a selection of her stories. She inspired the children to write down their dreams and send them to her, and in a very short time she had the whole group of young children looking at books and reading through different eyes and with such enjoyment.

This was a prelude to Education Day which took place at the Festival itself where more than 30 leading international authors went to schools and colleges throughout Dubai to read excerpts from their works and discuss their lives and literature with the students. The overwhelmingly positive reaction we had to this from teachers and students alike testifies to the enormous enthusiasm that exists for reading but this was only a small beginning. After the authors visits to the educational institutions, there was a notable increase in borrowing books from the various libraries and the teachers were thrilled that one visit had made such a difference.

For the 2010 Emirates Airline International Festival of Literature, we are again making literacy a key focus, with the addition of a strand looking at the issues surrounding translation from and to Arabic. We were very fortunate to be able to provide simultaneous translation from Arabic to English and vice versa at all 52 sessions at the 2009 Festival. This proved very popular and opened up sessions that would have been inaccessible otherwise and we will be doing this again this year.

In view of what we learnt from our inaugural festival, we have increased the number of children's authors, as we know this will have a very positive effect on young audiences in encouraging them to pick up a book for pleasure.

Reading books for pleasure is a joy that not everyone is lucky enough to discover. The more we can do, as parents, educators, writers, publishers, to open that magic door for children, in particular, will certainly be of long term benefit to those young people.

The second Emirates Airline Festival of Literature takes place from 10-13th March, 2010.



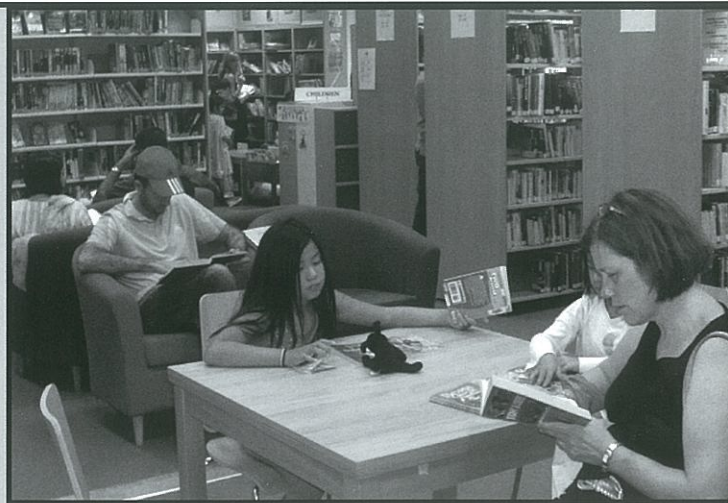
THE OLD LIBRARY, DUBAI

The Old Library is Dubai's oldest and leading English Language Lending Library. It is a non-profit organisation which is run entirely by volunteers and which, in 2009, celebrated 40 years of service to the Dubai community. The Library is part of the Dubai Community Theatre and Art Complex which is located at the Mall of the Emirates on Sheikh Zayed Road in Al Barsha.

The Library has a collection of over 14,000 books and has well stocked specialist sections for Children, Teenagers, Adult Fiction, Science Fiction and Romance, as well as General Reference and the Middle East. New books are purchased every month for both the Children's and Adult sections of the Library. The library also has a children's reading session on Sunday mornings, and secondhand books for sale.

The Old Library is located in the Dubai Community Theatre and Art Center (DUCTAC) complex on the roof of Level 2 near the orange level carpark (S-Z) at the Ski Dubai end of the Mall See: <http://www.theoldlibrary.ae/location.html> for a map.

See: The Old Library website at: <http://www.theoldlibrary.ae> for more information.



First steps to creating extensive readers (I mean people, not books)...

The first question we might ask ourselves is, 'why do we want students to read?'

- Studies show that learners who read extensively greatly increase their vocabulary, gain intrinsic understanding of grammatical structure, punctuation/spelling and lexico-grammar
- Learners who read for pleasure gain further independence from the teacher and become more successful autonomous learners, responsible for their own development
- Learners enjoy it; it's fun. Anyone who has a passion for reading understands that it opens a whole new world of culture, travel, understanding and empathy.
- It is less work for the teacher! Although having a class reader is really useful, reading is ultimately a solitary activity, you can't read with someone else and extensive reading is about more than one book a term. For learners to make the kind of gains we're discussing here, they have to be reading regularly and with relish.



Where and when should they do it?

Nuttall, in her 2005 book, 'Teaching Reading Skills in a Foreign Language' talks about "the virtuous circle of reading", basically

the more you read the better you are at it and so the more you want to do it. We want to plan for success. The last thing we want to do is lead our learners to failure in reading and thus a vicious cycle causing them to dislike reading. Krashen (1981) states that even in our first language those who 'just' read achieve more than those who were 'taught reading'.

Of course, as language teachers we will be dealing with text in the classroom and maybe even a graded reader / set text. However, by 'extensive reading' we mean the reading that learners do in their own time and with more time dedicated to it that we could possibly apportion during term. International House Dubai strongly believes in the value of extensive reading and the benefits it gives to learners and so it is something that is actively *promoted* during lessons, but is for learners to take up *in their own time*. All educational institutes and places of learning should have books. I make no apologies for this assertion as I strongly believe that books are a wonderful and integral part of learning. If possible, a comfortable and attractive library can provide a comfy, quiet space to read and books on loan can be borrowed and read in the comfort of their own home.



How do you get them started?

I think that the most important element, above good materials and gripping books at the right level, is just having the right teacher. The right teacher is one who is enthusiastic about reading and who passes on that enthusiasm to the learners. In a school this might be one person, probably the one who volunteered to be the Reading Leader for their school in the Power of One campaign!

Of course, the teaching situation, or educational context, is extremely important too. Learners cannot read extensively without available reading materials at the right level and with clear progression. This, however, needn't mean spending thousands of dirhams on a brand new library. There are resources all around (newspapers, adverts, leaflets & brochures, learner-generated texts etc) and there is so much available on the internet that it would take lifetimes to go through it all.

Five fantastic ideas for encouraging learners to read

Use your peripherals: people naturally take in their surroundings and are aware of things around them, so don't limit your students with bare walls. Instead have student text and signs and articles of interest all around them. This allows for what some call 'Involuntary reading' or the 'STOP-sign' effect. So why not create posters or showcase students' work? This provides more (free!) reading material for your and all the other students.

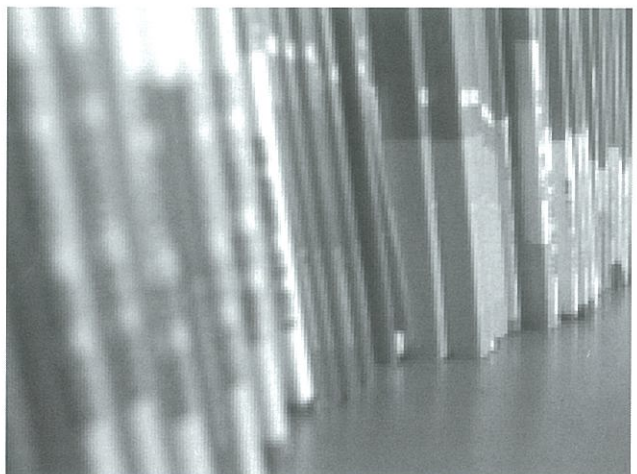
Exploit the context: there is more to reading than just words. A piece of text is also about the context in which you find it; part of the reason we know a newspaper article is a newspaper article is from the font, format, accompanying picture and caption. Don't take these things away from second language learners. If we use that support in our first language (L1) why should we deprive students of it? So use the blurb and the title on the book covers too. If you want to encourage learners to use your graded readers, bring a selection to class or use the publisher's catalogue to let students see the cover (picture and title) and read the blurb about the book. For multiple-skills work you can organise a pyramid discussion until the new class book is chosen.

Write to read: learners don't have to just read published material, they can create their own and read each other's too! Looking at a variety of different texts automatically brings you into the world of genre analysis, or understanding of the particular features which are important for a particular type of

text. With an understanding of these features learners can go on to create their own news articles, letters to the editor, mystery stories and advertisements.

Foster success: as I mentioned earlier, my experience has taught me that it is always worthwhile introducing readers at the level lower than the students' current ability. This helps ensure the reading is pleasurable and smooth and not like ploughing through mud having to check new words every 3 seconds. Later, as the learners have further developed their skills of working out meaning from context, they will look for greater challenge and enjoy reading the higher level books.

Help learners set off on the right foot: The wonderful techniques you learnt on your pre-service training course (CELTA, Trinity TESOL etc) still apply here. Yes we have a longer text but you can still pre-teach words that are crucial for an understanding of the text and set gist/detail tasks to help lead learners to comprehension. Otherwise you can break it down into smaller, more manageable pieces – book chapters lend themselves to this nicely.



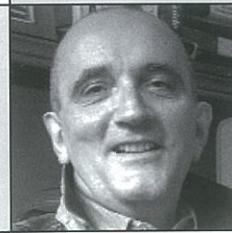
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Peter Viney
Editor

Writer and on Board of Extensive Reading Foundation



Preparing Reading Schemes

Peter Viney was the co-editor and a writer for the series of Streamline and Storylines Graded Readers (Oxford University Press). Peter's Grapevine series included four graded stories in each level of the textbook, and his recent IN English series contains graded stories in the self-study components. Peter has also written the Departures in Reading / Connections in Reading series which combine reading skill development, intensive reading and extensive reading activities. He has written for Penguin Readers, and his latest book is Fast Track to Reading (Garnet Education), which is designed to speed up interpretation of the written word in the Roman alphabet. Peter Viney is on the Board of the Extensive Reading Foundation.

When you set up a graded reading scheme at any institution, you will be using books from a number of different schemes from different publishers, and the primary task is to impose your own "super grading scheme" which ties all the different series together related to your teaching levels. We used to do this by putting coloured stickers on the books to create our own six levels. I mentioned this recently, and that it took some time to balance the levels between different publishers' schemes, and a teacher said, "Surely that's easy. All the 500 word lists must be the same nowadays. Surely you just take the first five hundred words of the British National Corpus for your 500 list, the first one thousand for your 1000 list and so on."

Not so. In practice, each publisher guards their grading schemes jealously. In the 1970s and 1980s, it was common for publishers to produce useful handbooks, listing the contents of

word counts for different levels, and also listing the structural grading for each level, as well as listing other considerations such as sentence length, number of sub-clauses allowed and so on. In 2010, the tendency is to say "This is a 500 word count book. It's Council of Europe A1. It contains 4,627 separate words. It's graded structurally, but we're not going to tell you how, or what the 500 words are. Trust us."

The list of the most frequent 500 words in the British corpus, or the American corpus is of interest. However, it cannot dictate the contents of a wordlist for a graded reading scheme. Any scheme will also need to be structurally graded in some way. Teachers might argue for weeks on the best order of presentation for various structures, but the vast majority will agree that you teach the present tenses first, before past tenses. Broadly, there will be a consensus on that progression. When you look at a frequency list, you will find that words like *went, would, should, gone* score highly for frequency. However, you could not integrate them into a reader for students who had not yet reached the past simple in their studies. Complexity will outweigh frequency.

A frequency list will indicate that *like* is highly frequent in spoken English, and in this current use: *My new laptop's like really cool. It's got like a small kinda screen, and a sort of apple thing in the lid that like kinda lights up when you, erm, like, open it.* It's a different use than the grammar book *I like tea, but I don't like coffee.* If we want to replicate modern spoken English, students need to be able to understand it receptively, or rather to understand that

like is a meaningless noise like um or er. However, students aren't native speakers, and there's no virtue in teaching them how to be inarticulate in a foreign language, just because many native speakers are inarticulate. It's an important receptive point, but of no productive value. Frequency among native speakers would not dictate its place in a scheme.

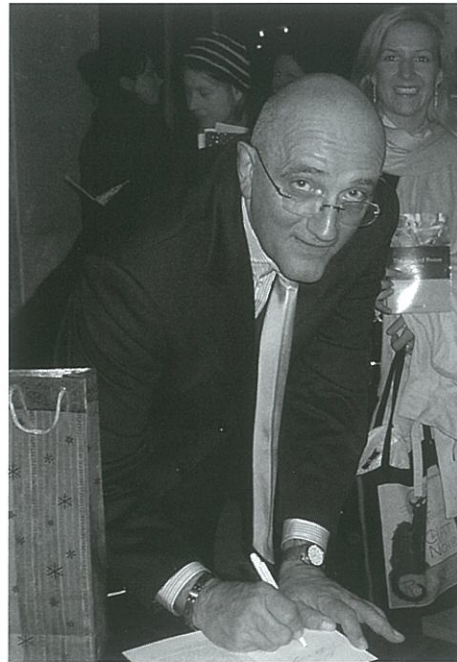
How are wordlists prepared, and how do they relate to your teaching? The Extensive Reading Foundation (ERF) has a grading scale to help teachers equate various word counts with levels. (See: <http://www.erfoundation.org/erf/node/44>). If you're starting a library, these lists will aid selection. The ERF website also contains a bibliography of articles on extensive reading, and a list of the winners and nominees in the annual Language Literature Awards¹.

When we were working on our own word lists for *Streamline Graded Readers*, which became *Storylines*, we had all the reference books and frequency counts that we could lay our hands on: *A General Service List of English Words*, *The Cambridge English Lexicon*, *The Leuven English Teaching Vocabulary List*, *The Threshold Level*, *English Grammatical Structure* (which related sets of words to structures for creating exercises), the defining vocabularies for various learners' dictionaries, just about every other graded reading scheme from L.A. Hill's ancient lists for OUP to the Ladybird list for children, and much more besides.

The deeper we looked into vocabulary lists, the more holes we found. The fun part of working on graded readers is writing the stories, not the wordlists, but for the series editor, that has to be the starting point.

The first issue is that these wordlists were ancient, even twenty years ago. Is seldom more frequent than rarely, which is more frequent than hardly ever? Everybody we asked rated them in the reverse order to the wordlists. Second, most reading schemes are fuzzy on the distinction between a word and a headword so that contractions and irregular forms are counted differently in different reading schemes. Then, in editing, we often noticed authors slipping the obscurer meaning of a word into stories, but only the defined meanings in the wordlist should count.

An area where frequency falls down is efficiency. At the earliest levels, the choice between frequent alternatives would be made on the grounds of cover. That is, in how many situations you could use the word - you can write seat instead of chair in most stories. Then there are words that you may want to include because they tell stories (lions, mice, dinosaurs, princesses) or relate to the lives of the readers (teacher, board). Finally,



authors of the books in a scheme use extra words in their story, which are usually listed and normally glossed (defined) or illustrated at the back of each reader. When we were editing *Storylines* we had a limit of thirty extra words.

For *Storylines*, we wanted to create a word list that combined frequency with narrative usefulness, a word list that was clearly related to the structure list, and a word list that would work in a contemporary setting.

My interest in graded reading schemes dates back to the late 1970's, when we organized a library system for our own students. We concentrated on getting students to read for pleasure. It's apparent that if students are interested in a title from a level higher, they will be motivated to read it, so a wide range of books is necessary as well as a flexible approach. Levels are a recommendation, not a barrier.

One of the most interesting results of our library was that the less we checked on reading, the more books the students borrowed. Eventually, we found that if a secretary issued books instead of the teacher, the students borrowed more books again. Some of our students on intensive courses were reading five or six graded readers a week. It would be nice to produce graphs and charts showing the effect on their English, but we didn't need to. We knew as teachers that reading - and reading strictly for pleasure - had an effect on the student's performance in all the skills. The greatest compliment the system had was when students told us they were beginning to read more in their own language as well.



¹ An international jury selects the winning books in five categories, taking into account the internet comments of teachers and students around the world. You and your students can comment on the 2010 nominations from April.

Natalie Le Seilleur
Madares Al Ghad Project



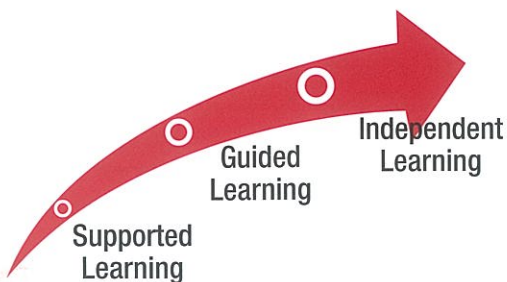
The English Club

Al Jurf School, Ajman

Project Overview

The English Club was re-designed in response to the needs of the learners. Within each class, a wide range of different levels of language ability exists and differentiation within a traditional class setting presented a number of challenges for the teacher and the students. The goal of the English Department is to look at each student as an individual and respond to their individual needs. Therefore it was necessary to:

- To set up an area to support the development of English Skills at the school
- To provide a study area for students with supported and guided learning
- To help students develop the skills needed for independent learning
- To develop a reading habit with reading both in the centre and at home
- To complement the curriculum



Resources and Workshops

At present, we have a range of materials across all four skill areas and interactive resources all of which have been developed by the teachers. In the future, we intend to add a complete range of resources to help students prepare for entrance exams for college and university. We plan to introduce a wide range of texts including graded readers and authentic texts. Plans also include offering weekly workshops on specific topics within each skill area as part of our extra-curricular activity program.



J Kennedy
President of TESOL Arabia



Peter Waters
HCT Abu Dhabi



UAE Faculty Scoop Award for Teaching Innovation

Two Abu Dhabi Men's College faculty have been recognized for their work in developing an online, integrated skills reading program for students.



Josephine Kennedy and Peter Waters received the Nikai Award for Innovation in Teaching for designing the i-Read program to promote reading among students.

i-Read uses technology to integrate reading with other skills and contains more than 50 hours of independent online work for pre-intermediate English language students, to help them improve not only their reading skills, but also their writing, listening, vocabulary and spelling.

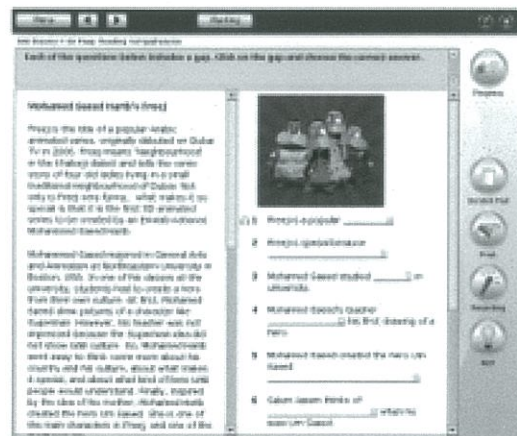
Topics students can read about include sports for charity, cars and status, UAE dreams, health and happiness, and reading the news.

Clarity, an English language teaching software company, are the makers of Author Plus, the flash-based platform used to develop i-Read. The company is very happy with the i-Read program.

"I love it! The contexts are interesting, the activities are varied and the videos and other media really bring it to life!" said Andrew Stokes, managing director of Clarity Language Consultants Ltd.

Mr. Stokes said that i-Read was on a level with material produced by professional publishers and was much better than most programs. i-Read is featured in Clarity's November edition of "Loud and Clear" online newsletter.

Many students are also happy with the program, and with the learning opportunities it provides.



"i-Read is a new thing to me, and it's a really useful thing. It's good to practice your language with different way to break the traditional learning. i-Read helps me to get new vocabulary words and learn about something that I don't know it. This program improves my skills in the English and let me to know how the language sounds," said an ADMC student.

"It's been a lot of work, but it's worth it," said Josephine and Peter. "It's great to see the students so interested in reading to learn."

For more information about i-Read, contact its creators Jo Kennedy (jkennedy@hct.ac.ae) and Peter Waters (pwaters@hct.ac.ae).

Magda Khalifa
Al Taleea High School for Girls



I am an English teacher in Al Taleea High School for girls in Al Shamkha, Abu Dhabi. I have 27 years of experience and have managed a number of ELT projects. I have taught all grades from 4-12. My contact email address is: rhman1234@yahoo.com

I attended a TESOL workshop in the AUS about reading projects and decided to adopt one in my classes. While planning this reading project, I find that it is easier to carry out with the university students than it is with high school students. University students are selected according to their academic scores, while high school students are at different levels starting from zero, and so the main problem is how to give effective guidance in reading to all students at different levels in the same period.

I believe that the best way to start the students reading extensively is by giving all the students in the class a story book and reading it with them. This will allow for teachers to address extensive reading as a class and to teach students how to figure out the meaning of new vocabulary. This will take approximately four hours. Then the following plan can be implemented:

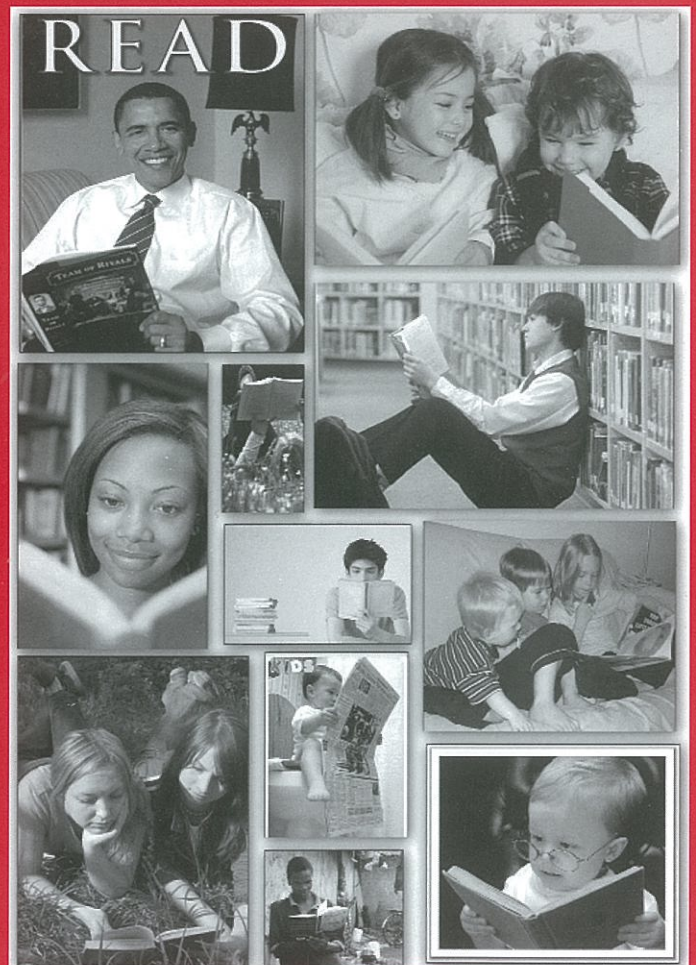
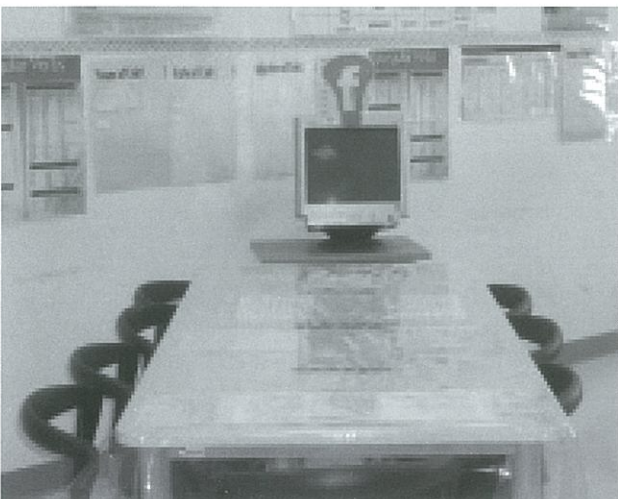
- 1) Two to three periods are taken from the timetable purely for reading.
- 2) Students are tested and classified according to their levels. Tests are taken from a graded reader website (e.g. Oxford University Press).
- 3) Students are divided into same ability groups (about 6 groups).
- 4) Books are bought according to the levels, starting from one line picture stories in order to motivate the unmotivated students. Multiple copies of some books are bought, as the budget allows.

- 5) Books are displayed within the classroom in the same place with post reading activity papers within students' sight. (Response papers are taken from the corresponding website and are filled in as proof that students have read the stories).
- 6) To overcome working with multi level groups I decided to work with a team of three teachers to guide the groups. I am very lucky because my headmistress agreed to modify the timetable for the three of us. It was decided from the very beginning which teacher will work with which level and that is how the students can find guidance whenever they have a concern. Most of the reading should be completed outside the class, especially the students at an advanced level.
- 7) Students are asked to do some of the activities as a group (e.g. Book Talk – students discuss the books they are reading using a book review form; book review presentations; interviewing a partner about their book; designing posters that represent the books; designing alternative/more representative book covers for the books; or writing brief book reviews that will be used to help other students decide if they want to read the book). Again this is not obligatory as the main objective is reading for fun so the extra activities are not forced upon the students.

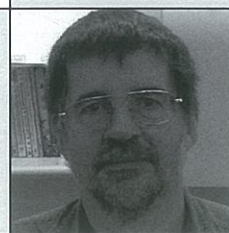
- 8) Students are informally evaluated (in order to focus on their reading for enjoyment) every two weeks with the intention of moving students up to another level as they progress.

It is hoped that all students are able to progress one or two levels over the project. The targeted number of books to be read during the project is 2-3 books inside the class and approximately five outside. The project should take about ten weeks in total. In this project, the teachers play a vital role in creating and managing the classroom library; from deciding where to place the books, how to administrate the borrowing and returning of books, and sourcing other reading materials other than graded readers such as magazines, internet resources etc.

We are fortunate at Al Taleaa School to have a vey big library with a lot of books but the students rarely visit this area without their teachers. It is my hope that by the end of this reading project, students will be equipped with the skills and the desire to not only visit the school library in their own time, but also to use the library efficiently.



Nick Bullard
Publishing Manager at Oxford University Press



Extensive Reading in Secondary Schools – an initiative in Bahrain

Introduction

We are all aware of the benefits of an extensive reading programme, as a means of contextualizing, extending and reinforcing contact with English outside of the classroom. If one looks at the literature, it seems that the majority of programmes around the world focus on extensive reading in tertiary education. Fewer programmes seem to have been attempted – or at least reported on – with students of secondary age. This is scarcely surprising. The logistics of running a programme which requires a certain amount of learner autonomy are greater with younger students. School budgets are often tighter, and there are problems in selecting appropriate reading material for younger students, whose parents may have concerns about content. In 2007, Oxford University Press embarked on a trial extensive reading project in a number of secondary schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Working closely with the Ministry of Education, we provided graded extensive reading materials for a number of schools – and observed the impact on the students. For a number of reasons, both pedagogic and practical, we focussed the trial on students in Class 10 – aged 15 or 16. Both we and the Ministry were concerned to investigate a number of alternative scenarios, and, from the outset, we agreed that we would try three different approaches. For each of these we worked with the Ministry to select a range of suitable titles.

Class Sets

Firstly, a number of classes were supplied with class sets of graded readers. This is almost certainly still the most widely used approach to reading in secondary schools worldwide, and was likely to be the most familiar approach for teachers. By equipping a number of classes with different sets, we made it possible for teachers to exchange class sets and give students access to a reasonable range of readers over time. We were able to supply teachers with a range of materials – primarily worksheets with Before, While, and After Reading activities.

Reading Circles

Secondly both OUP and the Ministry were keen to investigate whether the Reading Circles approach would be appropriate. Reading Circles (or Literature Circles) have crossed over from L1 classrooms – the work done by Mark Furr in Japan, with college students was the inspiration for this approach. Briefly, each class is divided into groups of around 6 students. Each member of a single group reads the same book – but each group reads a different book. To equip a class of 36 students we needed six sets of six books. Once a group had finished with their book, they could exchange sets with another group. Once a group had read the book (or part of the book) – which they did at home – they were required to discuss it as a group in class. Mark Furr recommends giving each of the 6 students a

specific role in such discussions – focussing for example on vocabulary or character – and this was the approach that we recommended teachers use. Role sheets were available for each of the six roles to help students prepare for their discussion.

Class Libraries

Finally, we wanted some classes to have a class library, which would operate in the classroom much like a traditional library. Teachers were provided with record sheets to allow them to track reading.

Training

At the beginning of the project, we ran a training programme (three half-days) to familiarize teachers with the three approaches and help them understand the objectives of the project. We also ran a number of refresher sessions once the project was under way, and these follow-up sessions also allowed us to develop a view on which approach was the most suitable for these classes.

Teacher Feedback

Surprisingly perhaps – given its unfamiliarity for both teachers and students - Reading Circles was the approach that elicited the most positive reactions. I had been concerned that Reading Circles would be organizationally challenging, but this seems not to have been the case. Students seemed to appreciate the autonomy that the groups provided, while the allocation of specific roles in the discussion phase helped them to focus, both while they were reading, and in discussion. An additional advantage with roles is that not all the roles required similar language ability, making it possible to cater for a certain amount of mixed ability.

It seems also that students were motivated to read, not just because of the intrinsic interest of the book, but because of peer pressure; they would not be able to participate in the discussion if they hadn't read the book.

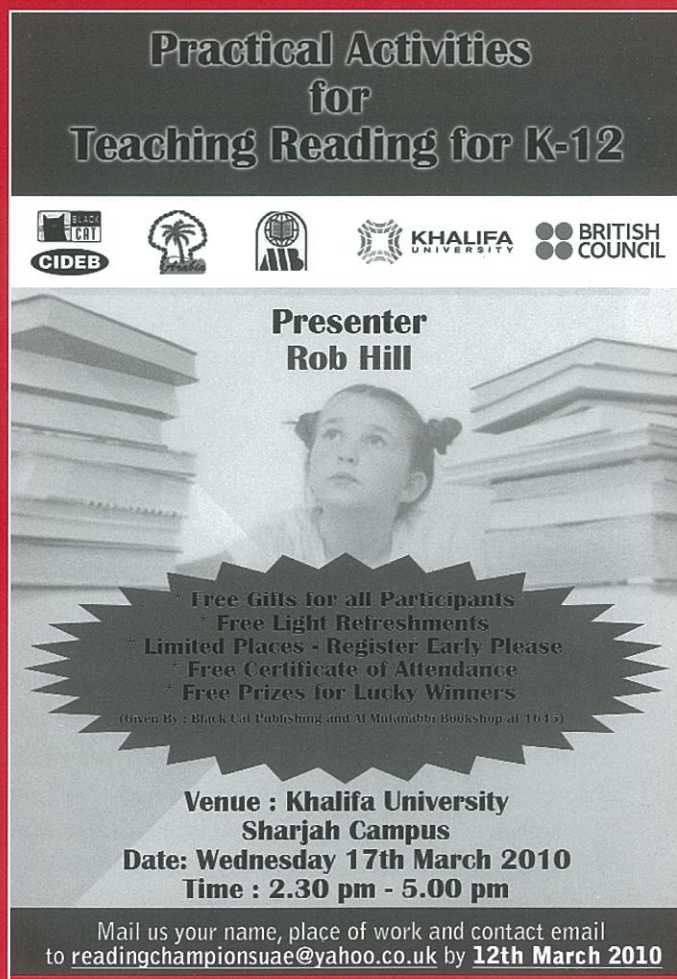
However, having observed a number of the Circles in operation, I suspect that the major motivation for students was the discussion itself. These were students with relatively little experience of the outside world, and the books that they were reading gave them the opportunity to expand their experience. What would be more natural that, having done this, they should then want to discuss and share their reactions with their friends?

Conclusion

Most teachers who want to move towards a reading

programme are likely to consider either a class set of readers or some sort of library. The Reading Circle gives a further option. The investment can be moderate, as rather than requiring class sets, the approach needs only sets of six books, which can rotate around the class.

Nick Bullard is Publishing Manager at Oxford University Press, where among other areas of publishing he is responsible for Graded Readers. He has been involved in Extensive Reading for nearly twenty years, and has conducted training sessions and seminars worldwide. For more on Reading Circles, go to <http://www.oup-bookworms.com/reading-circles.cfm>



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**Presenter
Rob Hill**

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Time : 2.30 pm - 5.00 pm

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Logos: CIDEB, CAT, AAB, KHALIFA UNIVERSITY, BRITISH COUNCIL

Jessica March
American University of Sharjah



English Through Soccer

“The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet”; these words, very much part of the pop-quotation culture, once resonated with my own teenage frustrations to escape the secondary school system. However, now I feel that Aristotle’s words, rather sadly, described an education system which was more concerned with the product of the learning rather than the process that the learner was engaged in. Learning is a very unique and personalized experience for each one of us. If we reflect on our own learning journey and successes, it’s possible to observe that it may have been interest in a particular subject, an inspirational teacher, notable success in a particular course or perhaps even a blend or many of these factors that ignited our intellectual flame. Now, as a teacher, I endeavor to make the learning experience more meaningful and relevant by tapping into a specific schema, in this case soccer, which is motivating to many students. The English Through Soccer course was developed as an elective Learning Enhancement Course which was offered to IEP students in Fall 2009 along with options like English for Math, News Magazine, English through Games, TOEFL PBT Preparation and CALL. The evolution of the course, now in its second rotation, and the content will be discussed.

The outcomes require students on the course to; recognize and use soccer metaphors, idioms, and vocabulary, identify

and understand main ideas in texts, write journals and/or paragraphs which display good knowledge of the content, demonstrate knowledge about individual players, teams, soccer related technology, and soccer institutions in a short presentation, and organize and conduct an intra-IEP soccer tournament. The aim was to develop writing, reading, listening and speaking skills through application to another medium; in this case – soccer.

The English Through Soccer course embraces many aspects of football. Almost everything can be linked or associated with football in some way, but the length of the course and the linguistic level of the students have largely dictated what is covered on the syllabus. Each week covers a different theme; starting with famous players, the game locally, famous tournaments and venues, professionalism; planning; health, diet and fitness, uses of technology in soccer, and ending with the corporate world of soccer. On a weekly basis, classes encompass a newspaper reading component, a grammar review, writing, reading, listening and speaking tasks. Many of the topics in the course have been selected to provide a broader educational context which will contribute towards developing the students’ emotional intelligence and study skills as well as their linguistic competencies. Firstly, the ‘newspaper box’ is a daily warmer which requires students to

read an article of their choice from the National Sports section every night. This task echoes the endeavors of the National Literacy Trust 'Reading Champions' scheme in UK which aims to create a reading culture in the male population through the use of positive male role models. The aim of the 'newspaper box' is to create a more instinctive reading habit through the selection of news articles which contain information that the students are really interested in. Many students, even in a university context, still don't experience the pleasure of sitting down with a good book or reading the paper to relax. The result is that I now constantly see my students walking around the IEP with a newspaper under their arm, and this is an encouraging start. As an extension, we have our own Fantasy Football competition which is ongoing throughout the 8 week rotation. Each student has set up their EPL Fantasy Football team through www.Yahoo.co.uk. In addition, they have to read player profiles to inform themselves of their players' form and they have to read newspapers on a weekly basis to see who is injured, and who is worth buying and selling. Subsequently, on a weekly basis, students have to post their scores on the course discussion board and the student with the highest total number of points at the end of 8 weeks wins the prize. In doing this task, students are reading without even being aware that they are doing so because they are so focused on creating a 'winning team'. The extensive reading component strives to develop a lifelong habit, if not love, of reading, whereas the nutrition component aims to build an awareness about diet that can support the students through their independent university lifestyle and onwards in their parental roles when they start their own families. The initial input session on nutrition is delivered by a guest lecturer, Lee Mitchell (Director of Wellness at the American University of Sharjah), who offers professional expertise, hands on support and a positive role model. The guest speaker component of the course has been incredibly successful. Many students like the fact that the experts bring a 'real' edge to the course and offer a professional perspective. Even students who are not very interested in soccer have noted that they really enjoyed attending these sessions. During these lectures students are required to apply their note taking skills from their listening/speaking courses and then they have to complete a follow on task using the data. We have been lucky to have had experts like Ralf Schehr, currently the reserve team coach at Ajman Club and formerly second and first team coach at Hamburg SV, Lee Mitchell, Director of Wellness at American University of Sharjah and UEFA A License Coach, and Tim March, General Manager of Sharjah Football Club and community Football Coach, who have given lectures on youth development, tournament organization, professionalism and nutrition.

The positive feedback has affirmed my initial feelings that students would find the medium of soccer a motivating factor in developing and acquiring language. The positive and open rapport and trust that has emerged from the course shows that these students have enjoyed their time and have learned many valuable life and study skills.

Los Patones – IEP Soccer Tournament winners Fall 2009



Jessica March, wife of a walking football encyclopedia and mother of ardent Manchester United fans, is an Instructor in the Intensive English Program at the American University of Sharjah. Jessica has been working in the United Arab Emirates for nine years. Her specific areas of interest in EFL are learner motivation and differentiated learning.



- i Quotations Book (2008) *Aristotle quote* Retrieved from : <http://www.quotationsbook.com/quote/11846/>
- ii National Literacy Trust (2009). *Reading Champions* Retrieved from <http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/campaign/champions/index.html>

A Young Reader at Al Dhaid

Mohamed Khalifa Bin Howaiden is a 17 year old young man who decided to start reading for the first time. He wants to be a role model for the rest of his family members and to share the habit of reading with all his friends. Mohammad is at Al Dhaid High School studying in grade 11.

When I first met Mohammed, he was sitting in one of the General English Classes that American University of Sharjah offers at Al Dhaid, hoping that the course would help him to improve his English Language and to prepare him to meet the university entrance requirements. I had no doubt in my mind that this young man would succeed. He had the motivation to learn and to achieve the highest scores. Mohamed was the first one to respond to "Reading Champions," expressing his willingness to commit to this scheme and expecting that this reading engagement will help him later to succeed at university.

How long have you been reading?

I decided to start reading three days ago after I heard that AL Dhaid Club is promoting "Reading Champions." I told my dad, who has the greatest influence on me, and he encouraged me to join the group. We went together to the bookstore, and I bought a book and started reading it.

Which book did you choose to read?

I chose a book entitled "Sard Al That" (In Arabic: سرد الذات) by HH Dr. Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qassimi the Member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Sharjah.

Why did you choose to read this book?

I chose to read this book because of all the information provided in it. It talks about some historical events and the major milestones in the emirate of Sharjah, the Persian Gulf, and the Arab World. It also gives details about the Sharjah Ruler's life, from the 1940s to the 1970s. As an Emirati, this book means a lot to me because of all the valuable information it is.

How many pages are you planning to read daily?

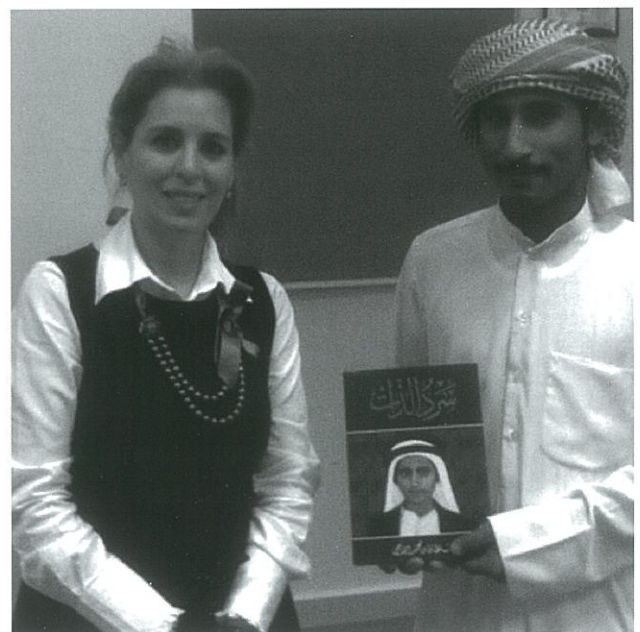
I am hoping that I will be able to read 30 to 50 pages daily. I like to read in the afternoon and before I go to bed. I know that 30 pages are not enough, so I will try to start reading on the weekends, too. I am aiming to become a fast reader before I enter the university because I know that I will be required to read a lot.

What are you going to do once you've finished reading the book?

The idea is to engage other people in reading, so I will encourage my younger brother Ahmed who is 15 years old to read the book. I am also willing to share my book with any of my friends.

Which book are you planning to read next?

I like biography, history, and geography books, so my next book will definitely be for Ibn Batootah. For a change, I might also read *A Thousand and One Nights*.



Fairlie Atkinson
Academic bridge program
Zayed University



ZUVL at ZU

ZUVL and the BNC

The Zayed University Vocabulary Lists (ZUVL) team in Zayed University Academic Bridge Program has taken on an ambitious project to improve students' vocabularies. A team of Instructors, overseen by the curriculum coordinators, has assembled 300 lessons for students to take home to work their way through the British National Corpus' first 3000 words (visit BNC at <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/>). Why? To enhance their vocabulary and construct a solid foundation that they can build on when they start studying their major.

What has this got to do with Reading?

Research has shown both in native speakers and in ESL students that those with larger vocabularies are better readers. In most Foundation Programs or Academic Bridge Programs in the Gulf, the vocabulary that is taught and tested is context specific. In my classroom I discovered very early on that students were in need of the vocabulary basics and that the vocabulary that was taught and tested bore little relevance to their needs when it came to reading. With this in mind I set about using the ZUVL lists with a view to improving student reading.

Enhancing Vocabulary

I set the ZUVL lessons for homework, asking students to complete 5 lessons a week which totaled 50 words. At the end of the week I tested the words. Zayed University is a very technology orientated university and I embarked on a mission to stimulate student learning by looking for spelling websites and programs to enhance their experience. My favorite by far was www.spellingcity.com. I uploaded the ZUVL lists and showed my students the 'teach me, test me, play a game' strategy used by the site. It was an immediate hit (so to speak).

Enhancing Reading

My underlying aim was to improve student reading so I started exposing students to graded readers that contained words that they had learnt that week. By recycling the vocabulary and



exposing it to them in books, I managed to reinforce the weekly quota of words. I also started to create my own modified texts and asked students to write their own too. With there being no reading age test for ESL students I found it hard to gauge the progress of my students over the short time that I had them. However, students who went on to the next level assured me that they found reading much easier than in the past.

What Next?

Now that the ZUVL lists and lessons have been created and some very nice electronic resources found to support them, I would very much like to see graded readers written for Gulf students. It is hard to inspire enthusiasm for reading when the graded readers available are not relevant to the students we teach. I would also like to see interesting reading lessons created around groups of the BNC words. If students have to learn 50 words a week it would be very handy to see them recycled in a set of motivating readings for the same week.

And Lastly.....

If we can ensure students leave our programs with strong vocabularies then it will not be a stretch for them to employ reading strategies in order to understand context specific vocabulary in their textbooks. Reading and Vocabulary are linked and the push to enhance vocabulary acquisition at Zayed University can only benefit our next generation of readers.



What is the **secret** extensive reading?

Would you like to know a way for your learners to improve their English enjoyably and effectively without you having to do any work? How about a way for learners to learn on their own, in their own time, at their own pace, without teachers or schools? How about a way of autonomous learning that beats being taught?

Sounds subversive, doesn't it? Or too good to be true. Yet there is now a substantial body of research which supports these claims for extensive reading. The benefits of encouraging our learners to read for pleasure are now a matter of fact, not belief. Pleasure is the key word here. We are not talking about having a class reader, useful as that may be in its own right. We are talking about students reading books on their own, books that they have chosen to read for enjoyment, in or out of class. Certainly a class reader can be the springboard for many useful language activities, but in this short survey of current classroom research we will focus on reading for pleasure.

A good starting point for looking at research into extensive reading is Stephen Krashen (yes, him again) and his book, *The Power of Reading*. Krashen reviews research studies worldwide and comes up with this typically understated conclusion:

'When [second language learners] read for pleasure, they can continue to improve in their second language without classes, without teachers, without study and even without people to converse with.'
(Krashen 1993 p. 84)

So where is the evidence? Krashen summarises studies comparing the achievements of students who received traditional reading comprehension classes with those who simply read on their own. His conclusion is that in 38 out of 41 comparisons (93%) those students who just read did better than those who were taught reading. Pretty convincing, though the research was done on students learning their first language and not an L2. What Krashen shows here is what Christine Nuttall in *Teaching Reading Skills in a Foreign Language* calls 'the virtuous

circle of reading'. Successful reading makes successful readers: the more students read the better they get at it. And the better they are at it the more they read. Contrast the vicious circle of reading failure where lack of success (often associated with forced reading) leads to lack of interest in reading.

What about the primary second language classroom? Warwick Elley has reported on 'book floods' in the primary classroom in Fiji and Singapore (Elley 1991). In Fiji in 1980/81 the research involved 500 nine to eleven year olds in 12 schools (eight experimental and four control). The control schools followed their normal audiolingual classes while the experimental schools used 250 largely illustrated story books with students either reading for pleasure for 20–30 minutes a day or having a 'shared book experience' with their teacher who read aloud and discussed the books with them. After two years there were extensive tests and in Krashen's words the experimental groups were 'far superior in tests of reading comprehension, writing and grammar.'

In 1985 in Singapore a similar study of 3000 six to nine year olds was carried out by Elley over three years and Krashen summarises his results thus: children in the experimental classes 'outperformed traditionally taught students on tests of reading comprehension, vocabulary, oral language, grammar, listening comprehension and writing.' Elley himself says:

'In contrast to students learning by means of structured audiolingual programs, those children who are exposed to an extensive range of high-interest illustrated story books, and encouraged to read and share them, are consistently found to learn the target language more quickly.'
(Elley 1991 p. 375)

'Perhaps the most striking finding is the spread of the effect from reading competence to other language skills – writing, speaking and control over syntax.'
(Elley 1991 p. 404)

The two significant points here are that reading improved all the language skills and that these experiments contrasted using a textbook with reading programmes.

However conclusive these results may be at primary level, what about at secondary level? Can we do away with the secondary textbook, or were the primary results something to do with child development? We stay in Singapore and look at a project called PASSES reported by Colin Davis in *ELT Journal* in 1995. The project was very straightforward and involved 40 of the weakest secondary schools in the country. PASSES included a number of components of which extensive reading was the most significant. In each school students read silently for 20 minutes a day and had an extensive reading lesson a week for more reading and talking about the books (which could also be borrowed for home reading).

After five years (1985–90) the project was assessed by checking the schools' English Language examination pass rate and it was found that these 'weakest' schools now had results above the national average. Colin Davis concluded:

'Pupils developed a wider active and passive vocabulary. They used more varied sentence structure, and were better at spotting and correcting grammatical mistakes in their writing and speaking. They showed an overall improvement in writing skills and increased confidence and fluency in speaking.'
(Davis 1995 p. 330)

Very convincing evidence – and note that here reading supplemented the textbook rather than replaced it.

But what about adults? Is there any evidence there? Inevitably less because adults are often outside formal education and are therefore less likely to be experimented on. However there is one fascinating, and controversial, study into vocabulary acquisition for us to look at. This is the famous Clockwork Orange Study of 1978 by Saragi, Nation and Meister. Briefly the experimenters gave a group of American adults copies of Anthony Burgess's novel *A Clockwork Orange* and asked them to read it in their own time and return a few days later for a comprehension test and a literary discussion. The key thing about the novel is that Burgess's teenage characters use an invented (although heavily Russian based) slang called 'nadsat'. There are 241 'nadsat' words in the book, repeated on average 15 times. This extract gives the flavour:

I opened the door of 10–8 with my own little klootch, and inside our malenky quarters all was quiet, the pee and em both being in sleep-land, and mum had laid out on the table a malenky bit of supper.

However, when the readers returned they were given a multiple choice vocabulary test on the 'nadsat' words rather than comprehension questions and literary discussion. The results were stunning with scores of between 50 and 96% and an average of 76%. These adults had learnt the new words from context, without trying to, just by reading. There have been attempts subsequently by Krashen and others to replicate these results in an L2 context with limited success. Others have criticised the relevance of the Clockwork Orange

study by pointing out that the 'nadsat' words are set in English syntax. The latest challenge comes from Horst, Cobb and Meara (1998). They report an experiment where 34 university low-intermediate students in Oman were read aloud to by their teachers as they followed the printed text of a simplified version of Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. On conclusion the students were given a 45 item multiple choice test and a 13 item word-association test which showed that from the 21,232 words in the book the students had learnt on average only five words which were new to them. They therefore conclude that extensive reading is not a time-efficient way for learners to acquire vocabulary. It is my view, however, that the methodology of the experiment may have influenced the result. Being read to aloud in class is not the same as reading in your own time at home and more significantly there is a massive cultural gulf between the students and the background of nineteenth century English society. Contrast the gripping nature of *A Clockwork Orange* and its modern relevance. You must draw your own conclusions.

One further study is worth mentioning as it links extensive reading with successful examination results. Gradman and Hanania (1991) report that extensive reading was 'a strong predictor of TOEFL scores'. This is something that teachers preparing students for FCE and CPE have always known intuitively but it is nice to see it proved through research.

And that is where we came in! Research shows that extensive reading works. But how are we going to get this keyboard obsessed, video-game playing generation to start reading? As a teacher commented to me 'They don't read in their own language. How on earth can I get them to read in English?' In the following sections we will look at how to organise a reading programme and share ideas from successful teachers around the world for activities to enable our students to benefit from the secret of reading.

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Margaret Smallpeice
Librarian at IAT Dubai



Initiatives to Build a Reading School- IAT Dubai

First: catch your student

By introducing a series of information literacy workshops, we fill a perceived need in the students' education and have given teachers an incentive to make time in a busy timetable to bring students into the library. Each workshop is kept short, normally 20 – 25 minutes which still leaves time in each lesson for students to read. Many of the workshops are based on using resources in the library so students become familiar with what is available to them.

Second: provide the right atmosphere

By creating a welcoming and comfortable environment, students can see that reading need not be associated with work. Beanbags, majlis seating and even permission to sit on the floor can make a huge difference in students' perceptions of reading. Keeping up-to-date stock enticingly arranged, encourages students to see the library and all its resources as an attractive place to be.

Third: give them what they want to read (even if they are not aware of it yet)

Students have a hugely greater diversity of leisure options available to them than even 10 years ago. Telling them that reading will improve their overall standard of English isn't good enough. Appealing to their existing interests is far more effective. Manga, DC comic books, Asterix are all visually appealing and the use of pictures makes comprehension easier for EFL readers. Graded Readers certainly have their place but how many of today's teenagers voluntarily pick up the classics? Whilst not ideal, books published for teenaged dyslexic students provide short, often exciting vocabulary-controlled reads. UK publishers Barrington Stoke and the Canadian company Orca Books both publish with the reluctant teenaged reader very much in mind. But boys the world over are often resistant to reading fiction. How-to books, books on sports, cars, music appeal to their interests. Film and TV tie-

ins enable students to build on their experience of these media. Offering audio CDs, with or without the text, opens another avenue to experiencing the written word. Magazines to flick through, books of lists, the Guinness Book of Records and books on trivia can all keep students absorbed and lead to book related discussions.

Fourth: pique their curiosity

Get the teaching staff to be your advocates. Invite 'cool' teachers to either read from a favourite book or speak about why they enjoy reading. Make use of the school email system to tell every student in advance of these sessions. Run competitions along the lines of 'Get Caught Reading' – teachers in national dress posing with a book hiding most of their face. Bring in visitors from outside to speak about how they became an author or their approach to writing.

Fifth: appeal to their technological savvy

Ask students to make podcasts about their reading and publish the results on the school website. Ask them to prepare a presentation using slideshare or similar to explain to new students what is available in the library and make this available to students - and parents.

Sixth: If all else fails – bribery

My most successful reading initiative involved offering house points to 5-year olds for every book they finished. Older students can be offered music vouchers or cinema tickets if they read a certain number of books – and can answer some simple questions about the books they have read.

Atmosphere, stock, technology all have a part to play in encouraging students to read but the most important is enthusiasm on the part of the teacher, the librarian and the parent to demonstrate that reading opens up whole new worlds of experience and must be worth a portion of anyone's valuable time.

Alicia Salaz
Librarian at Dubai Womens College



DWVC Library

Teachers, administrators and librarians at Dubai Women's College recognize the profound value of reading to both English language development and to higher education in general. We know, however, that our Emirati student body, to a large extent, has not grown up in a culture of reading and most students have not developed a habit of or an affinity for reading as young adults. That's why the college has supported several recent, innovative reading promotion activities spearheaded by the library department in order to support the development of a reading culture and to attempt to shift student attitudes about reading as they become adults, employees, active citizens and parents in the UAE. Two of them are described here.

Librarians designed and implemented a reading incentives program entitled "Leaders are Readers" which was launched in September 2009. The program allows students to track their reading on wallet-sized stamp cards, similar to a coffee or bookstore loyalty card, and to drop completed cards into a prize drawing held once a semester. It incentivizes reading more, more often, and relies heavily on the support/participation of faculty, who must validate the cards for the students when they report reading activity. Students are asked to report on what they read either orally, or by entering a book review into the library's catalog. Teachers, if satisfied with the "evidence", then initial the appropriate number of spaces on the students' reading card. In the inaugural semester, 336 students participated and our winning student took home an iPod touch. The program is currently funded by the college but we are pursuing private sponsorships to continue and expand it. The main challenge to this program currently is that it is labor intensive; staff and faculty participation and enthusiasm is a requisite for its' success.

The Library is also spearheading a current, grant-funded community reading program entitled *One Book, One HCT*, which is supported by the Emirates Foundation for Philanthropy with additional support from Coutts Information Services and the Higher Colleges of Technology. In May of 2010 the library will promote to a community of 18,000+ HCT students at campuses across the country the book *Around the World in 80 Days* by Jules Verne, and will host a variety of events, lectures and activities related to the themes in the book. The book is being purchased and distributed in quantity to enable as many students as possible to read it. As a side event, Dubai Women's College will be hosting the *Adventure Speakers Series*, bringing a selection of locally and internationally renowned adventurers to inspire the HCT audience with their experiences. This program is being planned and organized by a team of librarians from HCT campuses across the UAE, as well as students from many of the campuses. The idea behind One Book is that reading can be a social activity – and can increase engagement with the local community and the world outside. The program has been under development since early 2009.

These and other initiatives aim to encourage reading in our students as a lifelong habit, and we always welcome opportunities for partnership and development.

Alicia Salaz is currently a Faculty Librarian with Dubai Women's College, having joined in February of 2008. Prior to that she was the Access Services & Acquisitions Manager for Concordia University in Portland, Oregon, USA and has worked in libraries for a total of over 10 years. She earned an MLIS from the University of Washington in Seattle in 2006.

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Sarah Peoples Perry
Al Saada Primary School (MAG)



Through The Words

A teacher sits down at a round table with a group of children, a table, writing chart and a marker. The children have a book and a writing tablet in front of them. They are told not to open the book but to look up at the chart. On the chart are the words "Flower Garden" by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Kathryn Hewitt. The teacher reads the title and the other words on the chart.

The *Survey* begins. "What do you think the story will be about? Pick up your book, flip through the pages and tell me what you think about the pictures, the graphics, the illustration, etc." After listening to the children and writing some of the responses down, the teacher asks "Can you read the first sentence.... Now, can you read the last sentence for me? What do you think the book will be about now?" She listens for responses. "Have any of you ever given a special gift to someone? What was it?" Again she listens to the responses. "Did you see any words in boldface or italics? Read the sentence with the word in it. What do you think it means?" She writes down the words, seeks a consensus on their meanings and writes them down on the chart.

This is the beginning of a reading comprehension strategy called SQR3 (or SR3). This program was developed at the University of Mississippi. Of course this is nothing new; for there is nothing new in education, just a retake or renaming of the strategy or technique. It is, however, good to be reminded of best practice.

The teacher then turns over the page of the chart to reveal some **questions** about the book. She has *turned the headings into a question* before reading the selection. "Here are some questions we will be answering as we read the story." (1) What made the shopping cart look great? (2) What are some

BACKGROUND

Al Saada Primary School is located in the Hor Al Anz East section of Dubai. It is one of the Madaras Al Ghad Program Schools. The school serves over 500 children including students in the categories of learning disabled and Gifted. The students come from families in the low to low-middle socioeconomic groups. The ethnic makeup is composed of students from India, Pakistan, UAE, Sudan, Ethiopia, and other nationalities. Appropriate services are provided to meet the needs of this diverse population. The teachers and staff are determined to help their students develop into productive, contributing, citizens of tomorrow by building a solid foundation for the future of the UAE.

SURVEY

At the beginning of the strategy, students are asked to preview the reading assignment, noting headings and skimming the introduction and summary. They should also note any BIG IDEAS that are presented. The aim is to activate prior knowledge and organize what students will read. Students can write the information under the heading "Survey" in their reading journal and in their own words.

Question

At this stage of the process the teacher and students can turn each heading into a question. Students will use the questions to focus their reading, thus setting a purpose for reading. Students can write their questions in their journal as they skim the book under the heading question. (Write “who” “What”, “When”, “Why” and “How” questions from the main topics.)

READ

The third stage of this process is to **read** to find answers to questions formulated. The students will use context clues to help with unfamiliar words. They may even think of or generate additional questions by focusing on unclear passages, confusing terms, and questionable statements.

RECITE/RETURN

After reading the story, the students are asked to *recite* in their own words the answer to the questions on the chart and or/ those formulated from their reading and other important information read. They return to the story to reread the questions. Return to the passage to find answers and to justify their answers.

RETURN

This is the final stage of the process. At this stage the students write a summary for each question in the writing notebook. They may use graphic organizers to help with the summarization of the information learned. The teacher discusses the organizer with the group before allowing them to work independently. At the next meeting with the teacher, the children are asked to share their thinking, in writing or orally (dependent on grade), to refer to the story and to reread the text or show illustrations that correspond to the student's comments. Children may be allowed to draw illustrations of their answers to the questions.

Contributor

Sarah Peoples Perry is the Instructional Leadership Coordinator for the Madara Al Ghad Program. She is a retired teacher, administrator, college professor, consultant and principal mentor from Virginia, USA. This was an invited article

things the girl and her father do to get the window box garden ready? (3) Why do you think the girl worked hard? (4) How do you think the girl feels about her gift? “As we read the story and you think of other questions, write them down, or raise your hand and I will write them with the other questions.”

The teacher begins to read the story with the children to find the answer to the formulated questions. She has a few volunteers share their thinking with the class about the answers. “What has happened in the story so far? Which of the questions have we answered?”

At the end of the story she asks the children to turn to a partner to discuss and elaborate on the questions. She then has a few volunteers share their thinking with the class.

The teacher tells the children that she will reread the story. The children are asked to listen carefully to hear anything they might have missed the first time. She now rereads the story aloud, slowly, and clearly, showing the illustrations as she reads. She asks the children to summarize the story, giving the main points. The teacher writes the main points on the chart paper. If the children are able to do this then the teacher may be confident that they understood what was read.

Through the use of words in the survey, the questions, and the reading, reciting and reviewing phases of this technique the students develop comprehension skills. Isn't that what we are seeking as teachers? After all the purpose for reading is comprehension.

Sarah Peoples Perry, educational consultant, has served in the United States as a teacher, administrator, teacher mentor, university professor and instructional specialist. Her educational repertoire includes the United Arab Emirates, as a Principal Advisor with the Ministry of Education, Madares Al Ghad Program in Sharjah (Al Andulus) and Dubai, (Al Saada).



James Scofield
Manager at Training Department at Siemens, Munich



Power of One in Germany

One of the side-effects of the Harry Potter craze on my business English students in Germany was that a few of them chose to read the books in English.

I must admit I was not encouraging. I couldn't see that some of the technical vocabulary such as *wand*, *broomstick* or *goblin* was going to be much use to them, though I could see the advantage of having a death-curse up your sleeve during difficult negotiations.

I was proven wrong. Although a certain amount of redundant vocabulary was retained, a much bigger push was given to their general vocabulary competence (especially their ability to decode new words from context) their grammar and their overall self-confidence.

I now encourage all my students to read outside class in English because it is clear to me that reading in English is the best way for students to quickly improve their language performance. As teachers, we only have our students for a limited time in the classroom per week. Unless they use their own time to work at their English, progress is slow. We can give them homework to do, but such exercises are seldom fun.

Reading on the other hand is a motivating way to achieve a number of things: Firstly, it recycles the language they are encountering in class. Not necessarily technical vocabulary that they need in their studies or job, but all the critical in-between words which make a sentence intelligible. Secondly, it provides students with different models and contexts for language they've encountered in class, helping them to develop accuracy in vocabulary and grammar. Thirdly, it allows students to develop a feeling for suitability and what kind of language is appropriate in which situations.

But what should they read? I give them graded readers. The success of my few students with Harry Potter was aided by the enormous hype behind the books and the films. It is normally better for students to read material slightly below their actual language level. The satisfaction and motivation they gain from completing a book in English by themselves can keep them going through dealing with those horrible 3rd conditionals in the classroom. It's a little bit demoralizing as a teacher to realize this, but in reality we can teach very little in the time we have. But get your students to read regularly in English and they have the real key to language success.



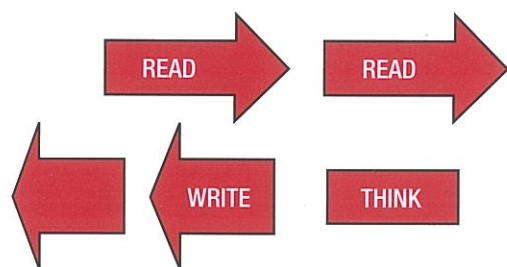
James Schofield has worked in Europe and Asia for various organisations including the British Council. He now runs English training for a central department at Siemens in Munich. Aside from running courses and teaching he wrote the popular business English course series 'Double Dealing' and his current interest is in writing graded readers.



The Reading Power Club Overview

The “Reading Power Club” was an initiative taken by me to create awareness on the importance of Reading at an International School in KSA. At that time, there was no concept of “Reading” to increase one’s language further. Therefore, a complete reading program was introduced to the students and staff members at that International school, followed by a complete Reading Methodology created and implemented by myself.

The Reading Methodology



I created the above Methodology to improve the process of learning for the students. The first two stages, “READ”, “READ” include Guided Reading, Group Reading and Independent Reading. This is where the students read their books through our guidance. They then follow it up by reading books in small groups. Finally, they do independent reading which includes reading at home or in the class. I follow this up with the “THINK” stage i.e. think further on what you have learnt. Is there anything you learned from the book that you can bring out into your personal life? Many questions are brought forward by the students during this stage. Hence this stage becomes very interactive.

Finally, I try and help the students move into the “WRITE” stage. This includes writing a book review on the books they have read. A book review is very helpful in understanding what a child has learnt.

During the Reading Club, I arranged special certificates to the readers on the successful completion of a certain number of books during a period of time. This motivates them to read more books and understand the true meaning of these books.

I have also implemented after-school reading clubs where students can bring their books and share their own stories with each other. In addition, they are also allowed to illustrate their stories.

Points Considered in Creating the Above Methodology:

- I assigned teachers to go to the classes and read a book to the students specifically KG-1 and KG-2
- Motivated students to read through the Reading Club and gave several incentives as well as praise
- Became a progress monitor periodically
- Set reachable goals/targets
- Challenged students to achieve the goals/targets
- Allocated a silent reading time in the class room and had a time for myself to read a book (have the students see the teacher reading)

Special Thanks

Gold, Silver and Bronze awards were given to the students who completed their targets successfully. In all, I believe the Reading Club was run very successfully and achieved results above and beyond anyone’s expectations.

My New Initiative

At present, I am working alongside my school head on planning and developing EAL/ESL policy.

- To improve learning outcomes for ESL/EAL learners across the curriculum
- To develop a model to improve ESL/EAL practices in the class room

A Brief on Me

Currently I am teaching at STAR International School in Mirdif, Dubai. I have been living in Dubai for the last four years with my husband and three children. In addition, I am a PGCE qualified teacher with ten years of international teaching experience. I have recently completed my MA TESOL course.

If you need any further information on the above or require some sort of assistance, please contact me on sadiamahmood_khan@hotmail.com.



The Power of One

Interview

What memories do you have of reading or being read to when you were a child?

Reading has been a passion as far back as I can recall. I would go so far as to say that is an obsession. Reading has always provided me with two things: an escape from the demands of daily life, and access to other worlds.

I remember my parents reading to me as a very young child, but by far the greatest influence in developing my love of reading was our local public library. Going there was a regular event: we went every weekend, without fail. I returned the two books I'd borrowed the week before and took out two new books. One was always a novel and the other was always non-fiction, about plants or history, for example. To this day I can recall the atmosphere of the different libraries we used when I was child.

Can you name a book(s) that you particularly liked when you were younger?

I think I must have read everything that Enid Blyton ever wrote, from her books for the very young, like 'Noddy', to books for older children, such as the 'Famous Five' (see <http://www.enidblyton.net/famous-five/>) or the 'Secret Seven' series (see <http://www.enidblyton.net/secret-seven/>). I loved mystery or adventure books in particular. Later I came to enjoy those set in a historical context. For example, I enjoyed Rosemary Sutcliffe's 'The Eagle of the Ninth' series. These stories are set in Roman Britain, and after reading them I became interested in Latin and Ancient Greek, and studied both these subjects at 'A' level, eventually taking a degree in Linguistics. Books can be hugely influential at that age, helping to shape the direction of one's life.

What do you enjoy reading for yourself?

I particularly enjoy fiction that is set in other countries, no doubt reflecting another passion of mine – travelling, particularly when it means living and working in other countries. I've just finished 'A Life' by Guy de Maupassant. This was written in 1883 and is about Jeanne de Lamare, the daughter of aristocrats in Northern France, and the difficult life she led as she tried to find happiness. I enjoyed reading about her lifestyle and expectations, as well as about the period and the countryside. I also I like reading about contemporary issues. For example, I've recently found 'Bad Science' by Ben Goldacre and 'The Economic Naturalist' by Robert H. Frank very thought-provoking. But I don't only read books: I enjoy a range of reading matter, from newspapers such as the UAE's *The National* and the UK's *Independent*, to serious magazines such as the *Economist* and the *New Scientist*. I often read poetry (I particularly like the way e.e. cummings plays with words) and drama, too. Tom Stoppard is one of my favourite playwrights.

How do you find time for reading for pleasure?

Reading is relaxation for me, so whenever I relax, I need a book. To this end I have books that I'm currently reading in various locations about the house so that when I get the chance to sit down, wherever it is, I don't have to waste time hunting for my book first. This also means that I read more than one book at a time. I make sure that they are different types of books – a novel and a non-fiction book, so that there's no possibility of confusing the stories. For example, in my living room, I'm reading "Two Planks and a Passion" at the moment, which is a history of skiing (another passion of mine), while just before falling asleep, I'm reading Jane Austen's 'Sense and Sensibility', which stays on the table next to my bed. I've been saving this last book for some years now – it's the

only one of Austen's that I haven't yet read and I will be so sorry to have finished all of her novels!

Why do you think extensive reading is so important for academic success?

Extensive reading is enriching in terms of both the process and the content. To return to an example above, in reading 'The Eagle of the Ninth', I learned a great deal about life in Roman Britain (the content), but I was also developing and practicing my reading skills. For example, the author used some words that were new for me at the time, and I learned to deal with this without letting it interfere with the pleasure of reading, by guessing the new words from their context, and checking them later in a dictionary. This is a skill that is useful to me even now; if you are a reader, you will continue throughout your life to read material that, from time to time, contains new vocabulary.

Reading for academic purposes, which students are required to do at college or university, is a very sophisticated process. For example, students need to be able to understand specialized terms and relationships within the text, to identify the main argument that the author is making and make a judgment about the validity of this claim. You are also expected to be able to read efficiently as there's never enough time to read everything on a particular topic. You therefore need skills such as the ability to identify useful writing from less useful writing, and to skim and scan in search of specific information. Clearly, someone who has read extensively as a child will have more extensive world knowledge and more developed reading skills, and will therefore be more likely to be able to put these skills to immediate use in higher education. The students who perform best in my classes are usually those who are keen readers, because they arrive with a good foundation of skills on which to build.

Is it important for parents to be active readers at home? Why?

Yes, it is. Parents are first and foremost role models to their children. Seeing parents read encourages children to do the same and it also means that there is reading material lying around the house, which from time to time will be referred to or discussed. All of this draws children in to a culture of reading. Having three children of my own, I have seen this process work in practice, three times over!

How do you encourage students to read?

Some of my students need no encouragement. I see them with novels, and we talk about them as I often find that I've read the book or other works by the same author. I often lend books to my students, too, when I see this interest. For others, who may be less avid readers, when the opportunity arises in class I talk about my own passion for it. I know that some of the things I do surprise them greatly and so I know that talking about them has an impact. For example, I collect books that I want to read and

line them up on my shelf (reserved for these unread books) in the order I want to read them in. I always have about 30 books in this collection, and I enjoy replenishing this collection when out shopping. It would make me very nervous to have no such collection in my home to anticipate! I also have a fear of being somewhere without a book, so I keep a supply in my car too. Then, if my car breaks down, I'll have something to do while I wait for rescue! Students are often astonished to learn these facts, and it helps them to see what enjoyment reading can bring.

From a more academic perspective, I encourage my students to read by showing them that they can. Sometimes they are intimidated by academic texts such as journal articles, which can be long, dense and complex. I show them first that not all articles are like this; and secondly I show them how to make such articles approachable, for example by reading the abstract to get an overview of the content, then the introduction and conclusion to help them to understand the context and the main points the author is making, and then, finally, the main body of the article. I also help them to understand the purpose of features of academic writing, such as the abstract and the list of references at the end.

Any other points you would like to add?

Yes, reading is a skill like any other to the extent that it is developed through practice. So anyone thinking about university studies needs to read as much as possible and as widely as possible. It's important however not to struggle too much with a text, because this can prevent practice. If it's too difficult to be enjoyable, I always tell my students to reject it (when they have the choice, of course!) and find something else to read. After all, there's no shortage of alternatives.

Thank you Caroline

Bio

Caroline Brandt teaches academic communication skills to female engineering students taking B.Sc. degrees at the Petroleum Institute in Abu Dhabi, UAE. She has a Ph.D. in TESOL Education, an MA in Linguistics for TESOL; an undergraduate MA in Linguistics as well as a Cambridge ESOL Certificate and Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults. Caroline has been in education since 1982 and has taught in several countries in Europe, Australasia and the Arabian Peninsula. She has been a teacher trainer and trainer of trainers, and has worked at foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate levels and held various positions of responsibility in several universities. Her publications include several journal articles, book chapters and two books that reflect her two main areas of research interest: Read, research, write: Academic skills for ESL students in higher education, UK: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2008; and Success on your certificate course in English Language Teaching: A guide to becoming a teacher in ELT/ TESOL, UK: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2006.

The Power of One in the Emirates

Susan O'Neill currently working in a government school called Al Saada – Dubai.

This Month the staff at Al Saada have organised a range of activities within the school for Reading. Book fairs.

Thouraya Cherbib teaches at Shamsa Bint Majid School, a MAG school in Umm Al Quwain

My reading project is entitled: It's Fun to Read. It aims at changing students' negative attitude towards reading as well as helping children acquire the habit of reading by showing them that reading can be fun. It consists of downloading stories from www.readinga-z.com. Grade 12 students select the stories, a trip to the kindergarten is organised, during which grade 12 students read the story for the children and engage them. This project has resulted in a remarkable change in my students' attitude towards reading. This year's program is entitled READING BUDDIES, according to which every 12 grader is responsible for a small group of 3-4 KG children. Their photos carrying out the activities are published on their teachers' facebook account, to which, they themselves and their parents have access to.

Ozge Yilmaz is a TDS-teacher development specialist in a secondary school for girls in Dubai.

We have been trying to encourage students to read in our school. We take students to the library for an hour every week for free reading. We also read books in the resource room of our school. In addition, students read books in the morning assembly on Tuesdays.

Shaheena Fazaldin the Head of the English Department at Al Ansar International School in Sharjah,

I love reading and I try to promote reading and literacy as much as possible. My motto is that "EVERY CHILD SHOULD BE A READER.....for today's readers are tomorrow's leaders!!" I have designed readathon books (reading logs) that our children use at school, as well as organize a Reading Awareness Week.

Katrina Kinsella is a teacher at the British Council in Sharjah.

In Sharjah, UAE, we are very pleased to have re-systematised and reopened our library. With a stock of new titles and audio-books, more and more of our learners are joining up. As part of an ongoing programme of encouraging students to read for pleasure, we are actively promoting library membership throughout the centre and in all classes.

Naomi Richard, a TDS in Al Raheeb School for Basic & Secondary Education, Dadna, Fujairah. (MAG)

I have started the Reading Club & Book Making Club in our school for Grades 6 and 7. It is going very well. I maintain a Reading Log. We have the Reading Buddies system as well – grade 9 & grade 7.

Mohsen Ismail Abd El-Mageed teaches at Al-Jawdah Boys' School for Secondary education RAK

Reading up-to-date themes that can develop students' reading and writing skills. Reading up-to-date themes that teachers can make use of for professional development. Reading about current worldwide issues.

Nejib Ali teaches at Mohamed Bin Hamad Al Sharqui Secondary School in the Emirate of Fujairah

We have been promoting reading at our school, and we are currently having a Reading for All campaign at our school. We are using some of the National Geographic pamphlets.

Mrs. khawla Naif and I work as an English school in Shamsa Bint Majed School in Umm Al Quwain

I started a new project called (Book Club) in my school which emphasises the importance of reading in our life and it offers a lot of activities for the students to practice.

Aziza Ghafari a teacher from RAK city teaches Grade 12 English.

I have a project called "STREAM" which is a reading project aiming to improve students' quality of reading.

Nasser Eltartoshy teaches at Alrashedya for Secondary education in Ajman

My reading project is " Reading Groups". Reading Groups have been embraced both as an audience marketing tool, a root to social improvement and also as a place to cultivate dialogues and discussions along distinct themes.

Samaa Zaki is a primary teacher at Al Ramaqeia Primary Boys School in Sharjah (MAG)

The Al Ramaqeia team is applying a reading program. Students are given a story according to their level to read at home with their family. I encourage students to read every day through various reading activities. However, some of children and their families are not so keen in reading. For that reason, I was so happy to read about The Power of One campaign and I am interested to act as Reading Leader in my school.

Editorial

Welcome to READ. This magazine is a celebration of thoughts and ideas, projects and initiatives, articles and opinions on the idea of reading extensively or for pleasure. READ SIG aims to create a reading culture by engaging parents, students, librarians and teachers through the Power of One. It only takes one person to start something.

Imagine what a difference it would make to teaching and learning if every child, every pupil, every student and every parent loved to read. Up and down the UAE, schools, libraries and colleges have raised the profile of reading. READ SIG aims to celebrate and publicize initiatives, projects and ideas.

The READ SIG and READ magazine will be used to highlight these achievements, share successes and demonstrate the variety and depth of reading projects, schemes and activities happening throughout the UAE. The pooling of ideas and resources and the ability to publicize and advertise our triumphs is essential. Everyone needs to know that the UAE is reading.

In our first issue, we are delighted to share a wealth of ideas and initiatives. Our contributors from across the region, from schools, libraries and organizations and from all backgrounds have generously offered their expertise. Through the power of these individuals, reading has become more important in many people's lives. We hope you enjoy reading about their experiences enough to be inspired to follow their lead, and become the power of one in your home, school, community or country.

We would like to thank a number of individuals who made this publication possible. Sudeep Kumar has worked frantically to design and layout our magazine at very short notice so full recognition must be made for his efforts. In addition, Nicolas Moore has without a doubt been a pillar of strength with proofreading who's attention to detail has made sure that their well known spelling mistakes or typos. Hannef Puttur for graphics. Support from Melanie Gobert, Jo Kennedy and

Heather Baba from TESOL Arabia as well as Phyllis Burns, Eileen O'Brien. Valentine Moran and Gillian Knight at Khalifa University have provided essential support and encouragement. Thank you everyone.

Vision of Read SIG:

Create a reading culture in the UAE and Middle East through the **POWER OF ONE:**

One in every Emirate

One in every major city

One in every town and village

One in every community and library

One in every nursery, school, college and university

One in every classroom

One in every home

Everyone

We need to establish Reading Leaders in all the Emirates, in every city and in every community to ensure that this campaign is truly national. We need people in schools, colleges, universities, libraries and I.L.C.'s. Each Reading Leader will be responsible for creating a reading culture and forming lasting relationships with parents, teachers, librarians and local leaders in order to achieve this. This environment may already exist in many places making them role models. Reading Leaders should establish a range of initiatives from creating a reading friendly classroom to building a community library. We would also welcome Reading Leaders for KSA, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Yemen and Kuwait. We intend to be an active Special Interest Group that will grow and develop and learn.

Please visit our website for news, updates and views:
<http://www.tesolarabia.org/sigs/read/>

Tom Le Seilleur

Chair READ SIG

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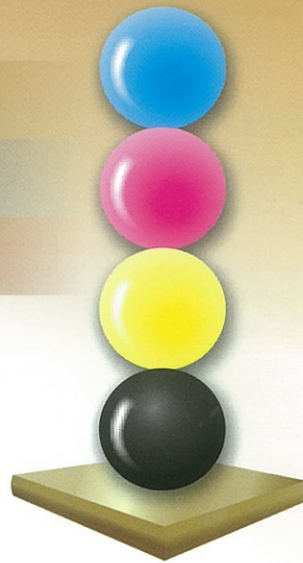
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