UNIVERSITY OF MURCIA

*International Journal of English Studies*

IJES

www.um.es/ijes

# Extensive Reading through the Internet: Is it Worth the While?

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## ABSTRACT

Reading materials written in English is the prime goal of many reading programs around the world. Extensive reading (ER) has for years aided new students at my institution to gradually acquire large vocabularies and other sub-skills that are needed to read fluently. To continue to do that effectively, a new scheme involving the use of internet - called w-ERP- was set in place in collaboration with the students. The main focus of this article is to describe the 3-phase, gradual process that led to the current design of the web-based ER scheme. The paper begins with a brief discussion of ER, reading on line (RO) and self-directed learning as part of the rationale for the new scheme. Participants' preliminary data on the benefits and potentials for learning to read and reading for learning other things are discussed.

**KEYWORDS**: extensive reading (ER); w-ERP; reading online; self-directed learning.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Extensive reading (ER) has gradually grown into a world-wide accepted practice in both ESL and EFL reading instruction programs. Researchers and practitioners have been closing ranks thanks, in part, to the initiative of a group who have put up a website (www.extensivereading.net) and a discussion group (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ExtensiveReading/), in which more than 200 members share and debate everything from new ideas about how best to manage an ER program, to research findings. In recent years, ER has begun to add the Internet to its traditional reading material sources: graded readers and, to a lesser extent, magazine articles. This comes at a time when the concept of reading online is increasingly gaining currency, as is particularly evident in the collection of papers on the theme in a special issue (Vol.3, N° 3, 2003) of The Reading Matrix, an on-line journal.

The aim of this article is to describe a Web-based ER program (w-ERP), which evolved from an earlier paper-based version (p-ERP) (See, Pino-Silva, 1992), both carried out with college students enrolled at Universidad Simón Bolívar, Caracas, Venezuela. The article begins with an overview of what extensive reading and reading online (RO) entail and a rationale for incorporating them to ESL/EFL reading programs. Secondly, a brief description of the program's paper-based predecessor is presented, followed by the design and procedural details of the w-ERP. The fourth part presents and discusses preliminary data on the benefits or gains perceived by participants in the w-ERP. The article concludes with comments on the pedagogical potential of reading online extensively, on the adjustments to be made to the w-ERP on the basis of experience and students' comments and suggestions for further research.

## II. EXTENSIVE READING: A BRIEF BACKGROUND

Extensive reading has been defined in several ways. For instance, Hafiz and Tudor (1989) defined ER as "the reading of large amounts of material in the second language over time for personal pleasure or interest, and without the addition of productive tasks or follow up language work" (p.4). Likewise, Grabe and Stoller (2002) in a comprehensive discussion of L2 reading stipulate that ER is an "approach to the teaching and learning of reading in which learners read large quantities of material that is within their linguistic competence" (p.259). The latter definition appears to implicitly recognize Krashen's (1982) Input

 

Hypothesis, a cornerstone of many ER programs in place today. In theory, this means that students are to read materials that are a little beyond their current reading skills levels.
Most ER procedures also capture the essence of "students learn to read by reading" slogan (Smith, 1983). In addition, ER has been defined by contrasting it with intensive reading, the reading of fewer texts in detail accompanied by linguistic activities of all sorts, teacher's explanation of discourse, vocabulary exercises, and grammar and text analysis, among other things. It is important to note that upon examination of Bamford's (2000) annotated bibliography on ER, one quickly discovers that a good number of ER programs use simplified books or graded readers as the basic reading material (Day and Bamford, 1988).

In brief, ER involves (a) the reading of large amounts of L2 written material, (b) for pleasure, (c) with the purpose of learning to read by reading, and (c) graded books appear to be the basic materials on which most programs are based.

## III. READING ONLINE (RO)

### III.1. General considerations

RO consists of reading texts from a portion of a computer screen. These texts are laid out by combining minimally and esthetically three colors: one for the background page, one for the actual written text and another for the purpose of highlighting a link. In addition to color, graphic information, still photos, audio and video can be added to a page, the latter giving a multi-textuality flavor books and magazines cannot offer. A key factor in RO is the concept of hypertext, which glues together the sections or pieces of a text. Information is thus shown on the screen in a non-linear fashion, with hyperlinks responding to a click of a mouse, an action which retrieves one or several sections of a single text. These electronic texts are produced by using an editor, or programmed using High Text Marked -up Language (HTML), put together in websites and stored in servers remotely located in relation to the reader. Interaction between electronic, HTML-based texts and the reader is made possible by retrieving the networked sections of a single text or texts in other web pages. A browser is needed to decode hypertext. Because most monitor screens allow only half of a page to be seen, scrolling may be necessary to get to end of the page.

In brief, RO involves the interaction of the eyes, the screen, the texts presented in hypertext and comprehension of verbal and nonverbal information. The term RO is usually reserved for the act of reading while connected to the internet, but given that hypertext can be browsed when connection is lost, the restriction may be unnecessary.

 

Research on the different aspects involved in RO is currently underway, but it is yet to appear published in the major journals. Studies have looked at the process strategies and at comparison with reading printed material. Comparing reading rates, for instance, Al-Othman (2003) found that RO is slower than on paper. In the literature, and especially among reading teachers, both promoters and detractors of RO can be found. While the former emphasize its powerful pedagogic potential (*i.e.* motivation, text enhancement), detractors point to the fact that text and visuals may confuse readers, overload their cognitive abilities, and damage vision.

### III.2. Rationale for RO in the context of the program

Universidad Simón Bolívar (USB) is one of the most prestigious universities in Venezuela. Every three months, it incorporates hundreds of engineers, mathematicians, architects, biologists and physicists to the Venezuelan workforce. As in other countries, the traditional dream of a lifetime job with a company and a secure pension has dramatically changed in Venezuela: unemployment is rampant, and college graduates and professionals already in the workforce find themselves in a fierce competition to get and/or keep their job. New job openings and already existing jobs require sets of skills which are in constant change. Retraining not once, but several times in the career is common place. In this regard, in the chapter "Confronting the Technology Challenge in Colleges and Universities", of his celebrated book *Managing Technological Change*, author A.W. Bates (2000) outlines the significance of acquiring the following basic skills.

- Good communication skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening)
- Ability to learn independently
- Social skills (ethics, positive attitude, responsibility)
- Team work skills
- Ability to adapt to changing circumstances
- Thinking skills (problem: solving; critical, logical, numerical skills)
- Knowledge navigation (knowing where to get and to process information)

Bates (2000: 11) underlines that "the education and training of the workforce must be continued throughout a person's lifetime because of the continuing pressure to remain competitive".

The present author contends that one way to do this is through approaches that emphasize self-directed learning and autonomy. These learning approaches, whether teacher-

 

led or self-directed, see learning as an individual quest for meaning and relevance and are thus potent tools to learn at one's own pace and on one's own time.

To illustrate the advantages of autonomy, Jones (1998) argues that:

- Autonomy may strengthen intrinsic motivation
- Absence of teacher control can enable personalization of texts and tasks. This personalized practice may increase retention of input
- Taking charge of one's own learning translates into self-empowerment

Thus, given these general principles, reading teachers may do a great service to L2 reading teaching by incorporating the principles of self-direction and autonomy to their pedagogical practice.

A second way to comply with the requirements outlined by Bates (2000) is using the web in tandem with the principles already mentioned. We must remember that one of the reasons the Internet is changing the way we learn individually is the existence of unsuspected and enormous amounts of information available to anyone equipped with a computer and access. For L2 reading teachers, the web is no doubt a gold mine that makes a smooth transition from *learning to read* to *reading to learn* possible. Taking this step brings us very close to helping the greater aims of modern education mentioned by Bates (2000). The well-grounded use of autonomy, together with the use of the Internet to carry out the extensive reading of electronic magazine articles, force students to practice or obtain navigational skills, and get them accustomed to turning to the web to find information and do research on topics that are not necessarily part of the reading curriculum, but that are written in English. In brief, extensive reading through the Internet thus conceived, does justice to the increasing demands placed on the teaching of reading skills. Because students at the USB are learning to read and reading in English to learn other things, the present author argues that it is perfectly feasible to teach L2 reading together with the skills and attitudes necessary to complete the training of future generations of engineers, science and technology professionals. By the time they are incorporated into the workforce, they should be able to see retraining as a natural way of learning, using the tools and Internet skills acquired in their college studies.

### III.3. The paper-based ancestor

With the aim of developing fluent reading and attacking one of the most serious problems students confront when reading technical and scientific texts - lack of vocabulary knowledge -

 

a decade ago, this author started an extensive reading program at Universidad Simón Bolivar. Caracas, Venezuela. The program was, and still is, based on five main principles:

1. Reading is an interactive-compensatory process (Stanovich, 1980)
2. Students learn to read by reading (Krashen,1988)
3. Vocabulary can be incidentally learned and retained from exposure to texts (Rott,1999)
4. Reading for the gist or obtaining the main idea aids comprehension (Grabe and Stoller, 2002)

In agreement with the definition of extensive reading presented in the previous section, this author's Extensive Reading Activity (Pino-Silva, 1992) incorporated the "reading a lot" premise as a central part of his approach to ER. However, important differences are worth mentioning. A key innovation in this framework was that texts were accompanied by a non-obtrusive production task to check comprehension and other aspects relevant to the reading process. A one-page worksheet was used for this purpose. Secondly, the units of reading material were authentic, unedited magazine articles, and not graded books, since the aim of the reading program is to prepare students to read professional journals. Third, a portfolio assessment procedure monitored students' progress. Another difference is that the p-ERP asked students to read for the gist, hence, students were encouraged to ignore most details and focus on the time it took them to finish a text so that they could push themselves to read faster.

The activity started as a reading task using photocopied, magazine articles and the worksheet. The magazines used were Discover, Scientific American, Science, Time, Newsweek, The Economist and others (see Pino-Silva, 1992). The length of the articles was one page. The procedure consisted basically of selecting and reading an article from a pile of hundreds that the author made available to the students, filling in a worksheet that asked students to identify the text, provide its title of the text, the number of words it contained and to write down the beginning and ending time of reading. A self-rating comprehension scale and a second scale rating text familiarity, liking or disliking texts were also included. The worksheet mainly required students to use check marks. At the bottom of the worksheet, 3 lines were left for the students to write the main idea of the text, which could be written in Spanish [1]. This activity was largely unsupervised but required the student's presence in the classroom. One of the most outstanding effects of this pedagogical approach was to observe that, contrary to noisy, teacher-led reading classes, students here were immersed in silent reading from the first minute class, as if they were in a library. The "sound of silence" was the most immediate indication that reading was going on. This is quite an achievement since

 

students are not accustomed to reading silently in English. An orientation session preceded every new class and then, once a week, a one-hour session was done in-class with 10% of the course grade going to the performance of the students on this term-long task. A portfolio assessment procedure was done based on a rubric that included both quantity and quality of work. It is relevant to add here that out of 4 hours, only 1 hour was used for these purposes and 3 were dedicated to the work on the teaching of formal vocabulary learning, reading strategies, text discourse and genre.

## III. 4. The web-based program

### *III. 4. 1. Phase 1: Extensive reading at home*

After many years of implementation of the p-ERP, evidence collected through various questionnaires that tapped students' perception of the task, gradual changes were introduced to the original approach. For instance, photocopied articles were dropped and downloaded articles from the web were printed in color to resemble as closely as possible articles taken from the Internet. These were used in class. An out-of-class reading program was also designed. Students were asked to photocopy and read articles from the above-mentioned magazines and prepare a second portfolio, which they were to turn in at the end of the course. The grade was averaged with the one obtained in the in-class ERA. Again, guided by students´ suggestions, electronic texts soon started to be distributed for this out-of- class extensive reading approach. Each student received a diskette with 100 texts written in HTML to read off-line on a computer screen. The idea was to train students to use their browsers to read electronic texts on screen, to use and hence understand how hypertext works and to turn in their work in electronic files in diskettes in much the same way authors submit their work for publication these days. Paper in the out-of- class program was well on its way out, but students wishing to read on paper continued to do so since it has never been intended to be replaced completely. It was also observed that during this time more and more students started to use the Internet spontaneously to complete this task. Some students downloaded electronic texts and the author jumped at the opportunity to start a bank of electronic texts, which would be shared with classmates who did not have access to the internet. Thus student-generated materials began to be used instead of the teacher-led text selection. These initiatives led to a series of events, which were visualized as the first serious attempts to a web-based ER. By then, a project about reading online, started years ago in one computer in this author's own office, had been designed to learn as much as possible about online reading. The "one-

 

computer lab" changed with a donation of 4 computers made to the Languages Department to develop the project. With this donation, a small internet lab was installed to provide access to a number of students who had not been able to get access to the web. To get here though, a whole year had passed and several students had participated as users and subjects of informal observation. Three types of users were identified: (a) web or online readers; (b) screen readers and (c) readers of printed Internet articles. The latter readers claimed that they had felt much discomfort with either online or screen reading and preferred to go online, locate a text, and print it before reading. Given the expense involved, this approach quickly died out. Another important obstacle related to cheating. There were signs that some students simply copied the work of other students by using the word processor's cut and paste tools, thus defeating the purpose of the task. Future research could be carried out to learn what percentage of students are inclined to cheat as well as to discover the ways to counteract cheating in unsupervised, autonomous tasks. In brief, though not perfect, the out-of-.class ER still proved useful in that it paved the way for the 100%, web-based ER, since students got familiar with both reading online and on screen. In addition, the amount of reading done at home autonomously, added to the work done in class, bringing to the fore the idea that the presence of the teacher, was not all that necessary in order to learn to read L2 texts.

The net result was that students were learning to read hypertext, getting accustomed to reading on screen and learning how to process information available on the Web. The sheer amount of reading material, added to the amount read in class, increased considerably during a quarter-long reading course. These observations were all considered good sign of a program that started with very modest aims, resources and, needless to say, with very little knowledge and experience on the part of the teacher. Phase 1 prepared, in many ways, the road to the design of a more ambitious, online ER program.

### *III.4.2. Phase 2: Extensive Reading through the Internet*

Encouraged by students' reaction, a reading online project was started in 1999. The diskette was partially eliminated and a new version of the ER emerged. Thus, by the time Discover, Scientific American, the Economist, Newsweek, Time, and a host of magazines went online, the author turned to the Internet to give complete freedom to students to access texts of their choices and submit their work to a web site. Two procedures were designed, one involving the author's own web page and one involving a Yahoo Group. The former procedure, simply asked students to open two websites: www.discover.com and

 

www.Juanpino. com (now under re-construction). In the first site, students would find authentic, scientific texts written in English for native speakers and in the second site, students would find the electronic version of the worksheet used in the paper-based program (See appendix 1). The worksheet was programmed in Java script and required students to provide the information by clicking their mouse to mark a simple checkmark. A space was left at the end to write the main idea of the text. By pushing the button **submit**, all the data and main ideas written by the students were housed in a server that kept all the information collected in the electronic worksheets. By using these two web pages, students worked outside class-time at their own pace and their own time in a completely autonomous manner [2].

After three years in place, this fancy arrangement runs into problems. First, personal funding was quickly running out and attempts to finding alternative funding sources failed. Secondly, by the third year, the program was attracting an average of 40 to 58% of students in whole classes. Compared to the face-to-face scheme, p-ERP, the w-ERP was falling behind expectations. A new perspective was deemed necessary. The second procedure was implemented in 2002. It involved the use of a Yahoo Group – readingonline1 -- perhaps the most successful and cheapest tool thus far at the disposal of teachers who may wish to adopt an ER approach. This site immediately attracted a larger number of students to do the extensive reading through the Internet, mainly because students were familiar with the internet and Yahoo was already familiar to most students for different reasons. A web page Https://USB.Profs/jpino, held some 100 suggested texts, categorized by scientific discipline (Biology, Chemistry, etc), from which students selected the text to be read online. The same page had a link to the yahoo group where students posted the main idea of the texts they read. This web-based ER procedure is in constant change following research and students´, teachers´ and research assistants´ suggestions. A case in point is the follow-up task. At this point only the main idea is being requested and although it appears to be working well, this is yet to be confirmed by on-going research.

### *III.4.3. Procedural details of the web based program*

At the beginning of a term, the author conducted an orientation session with his students in a 4- Personal Computers Multimedia and Internet Laboratory. Questions about access, discussion and ways to circumvent the lack of access on the part of those who did not yet have computers, collection of their e-mail addresses were part of the content of this orientation session. Then, the *readingonline1 Yahoo Group* was shown and instructions were

 

imparted to students to send their work to this site. The Yahoo Group had been previously set up by the author and the most computer savvy students helped to "invite" students to join the group. The author demonstrated how to become a member of the group and post messages to all members and upload files to each student's electronic portfolio. These are nothing but folders with the students' names on them. A manual with instructions to get a free e-mail, get online, sign in, as well as motivating information and statistics from previous terms is given to each student. Examples of main ideas sent by participants in the program and some of their testimonies are also included in this manual which was compiled and regularly updated by the author. An explanation of what students exactly had to do once they get online followed. Students are then dispatched home with the instructions (a) to read the manual, (b) send an introductory note to signal the group moderator that they are in the group, and (c) do their first W-ER assignment. The procedure is as follows.

Students (a) sign in to enter Readingonline1; (b) press the LINKS button to access a web page containing 100 hypertexts, (c) select and read a text and (d) write the main idea in their word processor, save the file, and upload it the corresponding folder in the YG. Class management, questions and answers, track keeping, and students' comments on the activity are done by posting messages to the YG. 25 folders, one for each participant, is found in the FILES component of the Yahoo Group. Students' main ideas are collected here and each one of these folders is a private student portfolio. As for feedback, the teacher examines each file containing a main idea and posts comments for every 5 products. Students then select their best work for evaluation. Portfolios were monitored by a research assistant and the author. The teacher also writes polls on ER themes for the students to answer. These polls give further self-expression opportunity on ER themes.

Because all students could see and open other students' file, cheating (cut and paste) was heavily penalized. The research assistant kept track of all files containing the main ideas and the author checked the quality of the work using a rubric. The research assistant was a student who had already gone through the w-ERP and was a computer expert as well. Plans have been made to increase the cognitive load of the tasks as students show progress in their course level. Beginning with main ideas in their first term, by the time they enter their third and last reading course, students will be reading longer texts and writing summaries rather than main ideas.

 

### III.5. Reported benefits of the web-based program: Some preliminary data

The author is currently working on a project to evaluate the web-based program. Part of the project is a questionnaire of ten open ended questions on the potential benefits and downsides of Web-ER. The questionnaire was given to students who had uploaded at least 12 main ideas to the ***readingonline1*** group. For the purposes of this study, only the answers to the first question will be reported.

Question 1 asked "What benefits did you obtain from the extensive reading though the Internet?" To process the data, provided by 18 students, comments were first transcribed and then translated into English. Some of the positive statements were the following:

1. Extensive Reading through the Internet helps to gain access to hundreds of newer and interesting articles magazine articles
2. I can practice reading after the course is over. It only depends on my interest
3. It is easier, faster and more practical than reading from a book
4. The Internet activity is a great help. I 'd like to do it again
5. I turn in my work anytime I want and the teachers get it right away
6. One has to read faster to find the main idea, write it and send it
7. I have more frequent access to the teacher
8. Extensive reading through the internet helped me with my vocabulary
9. One learns to focus on the main idea only
10. I had my doubts but I began to like the method. I did lots of readings

Some negative statements that appeared in the data are given next:

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11. My computer crashed many times while reading online. I hated it.
12. I could not get access at home when I had the time to read because my brother was hooked up
13. Too many commercials pop up in the Yahoo Group
14. The texts selected by the teacher weren't interesting. I'd prefer texts about gossips. Those are fun.

In the preceding comments one finds a number of potential benefits. Most of them confirm that extensive reading through the Internet helps students to (a) learn vocabulary, as comment 5 seems to indicate; (b) learn to read for main ideas as comment 9 implies, (c)

 

acquire speed and/or fluency in reading a text as indicated by comments 3 and 6; (d) develop skills that remain over time, as seen in comments 1,2, and 4. Comment 10 is particularly interesting in that it points to a transition period needed by students to make the necessary adjustments in their affective structure. It would appear from this comment, that given time, students may well develop positive attitudes towards reading online and Web-ER. Likewise, comment 7 is also revealing; critics of online education argue that it isolates students from their teachers, an undesirable result. This comment tells us that set-ups like Web-ER may actually facilitate access to teachers. Indeed, my experience behind the students' screen is that they do reach for help or advice from me despite the hours and distance. Certain course management activities or conflicts that used to require face-to-face contact are resolved faster through e-mail. One disadvantage though is that of work interference in the teacher's private hours and how this may test and even exhaust our patience and time. This is in fact one of the arguments from colleagues not yet online.

A number of positive attributes of reading through the Internet are reflected in students' comments. To one student "One learns to read in a natural way, practicing by reading"; to other "Web-ER was nurturing and I learned from the texts I read"); still other commented positively on the computer and internet skills though failed to mention reading skills ("One learns to use the best web tools to find information for one's courses not just English classes"; "Web-ER pushed me to use the Internet more efficiently").

The last comment also points to a value-added effect of Web-ER. Students appear to learn more about internet and computer while at the same time they struggle to interpret a text online. These are among the skills Bates mentions as proper of the times we live.

But comments are not always positive. For instance, some students complain that texts are uninteresting. Probably, one can solve the problem and change this negative perception if one gave students the option to ramble around the web in search of what they consider interesting. Comments 11 and 12 point to problems of access from the students' homes. Unfortunately, the problem of access to the Internet continues to exist. To alleviate it, we have set-up free hours for students to work in our computer and internet lab. Some sign up, others don't. However, online teachers have the obligation to remind students that technology, any technology, is likely to break up and cause frustration. Access has also a social side to it if only one computer is available per family. When does Dad get see his e-mail? When does junior get to play his favorite games? No good answers to that can be offered this point other than recommend organizing "user time" just like some parents had to do with the phone a few years ago.

 

In brief, this preliminary data on the benefits of Web-ER seems encouraging, since it points to the perceived usefulness of the approach.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

This paper has presented a rendition of how a successful, 10-year-old paper-based extensive reading program has gradually developed into a web-based procedure. The choice of magazine articles as the source material to be read both in and outside class has greatly facilitated the transition. The web tools, a webpage and a yahoo group, one provided by my university and the other offered free by Yahoo, are very basic and unsophisticated tools but easy to learn and use. Yahoo groups have everything one needs to maintain students' materials in well organized electronic portfolios (*i.e.* one folder per student). This reception process does have rough edges just yet but none seem impossible to improve. A much more serious concern, however, relates to online reading. Although it is a truism that it is important, much remains to be established about the precise nature and theoretical significance of online reading to the central concerns of L2 reading models. Of particular interest is to probe what effect exposure to online reading has on actual reading performance.

The title of this article asked whether having students read extensively online was worthy of attention. First, comments indicate that students do learn vocabulary incidentally. Lack of vocabulary knowledge is consistently mentioned by students of all levels as the greatest problem they have in order to comprehend texts written in English (Pino-Silva, 1993). Being aware of this deficiency, teachers, researchers and material designers have gone to great lengths to think of methods or approaches to teach vocabulary in the context of reading pedagogy. The fact that the sheer exposure to online texts might produce positive results in that direction, even if they were modest, is a good indication that we are walking the right path to alleviate this language and reading problem. Even poorly written main ideas constitute grist for the mill. The benefits of writing brief chunks using own words seem to foster English learning in general. To a researcher, these bits of writing pieces may be a window to the internal click that takes places when comprehension has taken place.

Secondly, one of the advantages of the web project is that it provides opportunities for students and teachers to work together. Students aid the teacher by finding the materials on the web they would like to read or learn about; assisting by teaching peers how to best work with computers and by offering suggestions to improve logistics and the procedure. The teacher helps students construct main ideas, build vocabulary, develop positive attitudes

 

towards reading, monitor their conceptions and misconceptions of language learning, and keep constant and interactive contact with them.

Third, students seem to learn permanent skills needed in the information age beyond mere language skills. It is likely that, in addition to learning to read hypertext, learners may have developed strategies not yet detected by researchers. It may well be due to this that students develop a positive attitude towards reading online.

Finally, this article has shown how the use of the internet can be instrumental in constructing pedagogical options for the students. The very fact that as demonstrated here it is possible with very few resources to create a second option to an already successful one, should be encouraging for reading teachers out there to put their liking or disliking of online reading in the back seat and put the necessary motivation to provide students with a web-based option in the driver's seat. Follow-up action research could tell tells us how far off target one can get to correct whatever aspect of such option is not working to one's satisfaction.

In short, extensive reading through the Internet appears to be a very promising pedagogical approach that may strengthen students´ learning in that they (a) capitalize on the opportunity to gain access and read from the vast amount of information available on the web, (b) ensure access to updated and varied information , (c) develop discipline in the use of their own time, and take the necessary risks to explore, evaluate and make their own decisions on what to read now and what to postpone for later.

I find it necessary to emphasize that web-based ER, is a new perspective, born out of the paper-based procedure, that challenges conventional ER wisdom in that it does away with graded books, but this does not in any way preclude the clear role graded book-based ER pedagogy has had in helping L2 students develop a wide range of reading and language proficiency skills. Used together, paper-based and web-based ER may lead us to entertain a combined teaching strategy that increases the options available to students with somewhat different learning styles. It is hoped that taking this path will empower not only students but also teachers themselves in a significant manner.

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Notes

1. Spanish is allowed as a legitimate option here because it is likely that these students be required to read English written materials (journal articles and books) but write reviews, summaries, reports and papers in Spanish since the latter is the language used in content courses, the official (legal) language of Venezuela. Main idea writing in English is, nonetheless, strongly encouraged.

2. This w-ERP version was demonstrated at the XXXIV Annual Tesol Convention Electronic Village (EV) in March 14-18, 2000.

 

## APPENDIX

**EXTENSIVE READING WORKSHEET**

Universidad Simón Bolívar
Departamento de Idiomas
Prof. Juan Pino Silva

Student's Name: _____Class: _____Date: _____

A. Text title:_____

B1. Text number:_____ B2. Number of words:_____

C.1 I began reading at _____ C2. I finished reading at _____

D. Did you use a dictionary? Yes_____ No _____

E. Self-rating of text comprehension. My understanding of the text was …(Check one √ )

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Very poor | ☐ |
| 2 | Poor | ☐ |
| 3 | Acceptable | ☐ |
| 4 | Good | ☐ |
| 5 | Excellent | ☐ |

F. In my opinion, the text is…

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Very easy | ☐ |
| 2 | Easy | ☐ |
| 3 | Not difficult | ☐ |
| 4 | Very difficult | ☐ |
| 5 | Extremely difficult | ☐ |

G. Express your opinion circling one of the numbers in the scale below.

| | | Very Little | | Very Much | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Did you enjoy reading the text? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. | Did you learn anything from the text? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. | Was the general topic of the text familiar to you? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

H. Would you recommend your teacher to give this text to another student in the future?

**Yes: _____ No: _____**

**I.I think I learned the following new words from the text I just read *(write as many as you want)***

| |
|---|
| |

The main idea of this text is

_____

_____

_____

_____

 