

## A Foundations-First Approach to Fluent Reading

by Bill Walker

ORTESOL, 2008

### Into Thin Air, Gone with the Wind

Several years ago, students in my upper-intermediate reading/writing class were upset. It wasn't quite the middle of the term yet, but they were ready to rebel. Some were mildly glum; a few were very perturbed. Many were upset because the "textbook" for the course was a non-fiction novel, *Into Thin Air*. I was assigned to teach this course, but hadn't been involved in choosing that particular title. The only other text was a grammar reference book. There were some materials in a binder that other teachers had developed to accompany this particular novel. Some of these materials were not very neatly formatted, some had typos, and a few were somewhat ill-conceived. In addition, there were quite a few pages photocopied from "real" textbooks. I spent many hours trying to revamp the handouts to make them more interesting and presentable and did my best to motivate the students to read. However, some students still grumbled. At one point, a young woman gave me a steely-eye stare and said, "I hate this book. I would not read it even in my own language." Another said, "I'm paying too much money to be treated this way. I'm not coming back here next term." Most said, "The vocabulary is too difficult," while others wanted to know how reading about a mountain-climbing disaster could help them learn the kind of academic English they would be needing when they started taking university classes.

I had few answers. I explained that we had a "system" whereby students were supposed to read what they could, i.e., get the gist by reading "fluently" and not worrying about the details. Nevertheless, several students spent hours meticulously looking up words in their dictionaries. Some students stopped reading the novel altogether and just waited for the classroom discussions which usually gave them a good deal of information as to what was happening in the book, although that didn't really help them with the grammar lessons which were based on close readings of passages from the book. One student found a copy of it translated into Korean which she

read before she attempted it in English. Most students eventually gave up. It was not a pretty experience. Into thin air, gone with the wind . . .

Flash forward. More recently, also in an intermediate-level class, I caught students reading their novels during the break. In fact, I had to tell them to put them away so we could get on with our other readings. Also, I sometimes walked into class, and they were showing each other their novels and talking animatedly. During weekly "book club" sessions, it did not take much to get them started. They got right into asking each other questions about the novels they are reading, and soon I overheard them asking their classmates if they could borrow the book. Also, I noticed that their reading speed was improving. After seven weeks of one-minute fluency drills, some of them approached 160 words per minute, up from around 110 words at the beginning of the term. Moreover, they seemed to enjoy writing short response journal entries about the novels, and appreciated the fact they did not have to answer comprehension questions. I only required that they enjoy the experience.

No *Mutiny on the Bounty* in that class. Why? In the first place, they chose their own titles. Moreover, they were not reading the original, lexically-dense version that was not intended for them. There were no close-reading sessions where they got bogged down in analyzing grammatical structures. I rarely saw a dictionary, and almost never saw any glosses in the margins. Because it takes only one week to read these graded readers, students could easily read the three assigned books in one ten-week term. In fact, one student ordered several more titles on the Internet to share with his wife who was not a student here. He finished his three novels and read two of hers.

Ahhhh. Fluency. However, for fluency to develop, it takes more than just extensive exposure to comprehensible input. Every day, students work hard, very hard, doing intensive reading of academic texts that are rich in new vocabulary and grammatical structures. Day by

day the students build up their reading muscles, much the way an athlete goes to the gym for a workout. Similarly, when they hit the graded readers, they are like athletes set loose on the track. They run like the wind.

For many ESL students, the attainment of fluency in reading remains elusive. Every year, thousands of foreign students flock to Oregon to study in institutions of higher learning. Those who are bound for college in the US and who are less proficient in English enroll in intensive English programs with hopes of acquiring academic language skills sufficient to allow them to pass the TOEFL test in order to start taking university classes. ESL students in these intensive English programs, especially those whose L1 does not use the roman alphabet, often struggle to read accurately, much less fluently. Typical intensive-English programs in Oregon have students mostly from the Middle East and Asia. It is these students who, while being quite literate in their native languages, often have difficulty grappling with reading in English, from mastering basic decoding skills to developing complete comprehension of a text via a knowledge of the text's features: its vocabulary, structure, cohesive devices, discourse patterns, and genre features. While many reading strategies mastered in the L1, such as previewing a text, scanning for information, guessing from context, and judiciously using a dictionary, can somewhat easily transfer to reading in English, many students still have fluency issues that affect their ability to fully comprehend what they are trying to read.

### **Overview**

The premise behind a foundations-first approach to reading is that for fluency to develop, there needs to be a period of intensive language learning from reading and studying short texts which are somewhat difficult. After a sufficient amount of language proficiency has been acquired, fluency emerges, especially when the students have opportunities to read extensively, and especially if the extensive reading not challenging, but is at their proficiency level. Intensive reading focuses primarily on bottom-up reading skills, such as "word recognition, spelling and phonological processing, morphosyntactic parsing, and lexical recognition and accessing" (Hinkel, 2006, p. 120).

In addition, intensive reading includes such activities as finding the main idea, finding major and minor supporting details, finding pronoun referents, inferencing, interpreting graphics, recognizing discourse patterns (i.e., definition, listing, exemplification), and recognizing cohesive devices. While grammar knowledge is important, more vital to bottom-up reading is lexical competency. This is because "language is grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalized grammar" (Hunston and Francis, 2000, p. 280). It is primarily through intensive reading that the deliberate build-up of lexical competence occurs. Vocabulary is especially important for university-bound students because, in order to successfully comprehend academic materials, the L2 reader needs to know about 5,000 word families (Hu and Nation, 2000). In addition, having acquired proficiency in the fundamentals, i.e., bottom-up processing, the reader is ready for top-down processing, which some researchers see in relation to bottom-up processing as being "additive or compensatory" (Birch, 2002; Koda, 2005).

As a firm foundation in language proficiency is being established, the student is starting to become fluent. However, it is during extensive reading that the conditions for faster reading and a higher level of comprehension occur. This, of course, assumes that the reader is a rapid decoder and has a vocabulary so well-developed that she can read quickly and with the pleasure that comes with being able to engage in the ideas in the text (Waring, 1997) and is thus able to evaluate and synthesize information.

### **Whole-Language Learning**

The goal of getting students to reach fluency has been around for a long time. In the late 1980s and into the mid 1990s, it was approached from a whole-language learning perspective. At that time, proponents of whole-language learning advocated that students read massive amounts of authentic text, primarily novels written for native speakers, then do copious amounts of writing. Explicit language instruction was frowned upon; i.e., the emphasis was on the "wholeness" of language, not on the "bits and pieces of phonemes, graphemes, morphemes, and words" (Brown, 2001, p. 48). Students were not expected

to completely understand what they read, but rather to sample the text to find the few things that they could understand. It was assumed that after copious amounts of reading and journal writing, clarity would emerge, and then, finally accuracy would be achieved. For example, in the early 1990s, a Fluency First program consisted of a three-course sequence where students were first taught to “write intelligibly and with relative ease, and to comprehend popular fiction” (MacGowan-Gilhooly and Tillyer, 1996). Clarity was the goal of the second phase: students wrote well-developed prose with lexical accuracy. In the third course, grammatical and mechanical accuracy were stressed. “In all three courses, students read about 1,000 pages of unabridged text, and write upwards of 10,000 words” (MacGowan-Gilhooly and Tillyer, 1996).

However, the experiment in whole-language learning failed to live up to expectations. Even the original proponents of the Fluency First approach admitted that “efforts to arrive at a reliable assessment of reading ability improvement . . . have been unsatisfactory” (MacGowan-Gilhooly and Tillyer, 1996). In fact, after the Whole Language Approach was introduced in 1987 to L1 students in school systems across California, student’s achievement test results plummeted. By the early 1990s, according to Hinkel:

On national tests of reading, California 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders started to show up in 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> place from the bottom among the 50 states, together with Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi. . . . This is the reason one does not hear about the fluency first movement any longer. It died a dishonorable death. The whole point here is that if whole language and fluency first failed miserably with native speakers, non-natives don’t have a prayer of learning anything this way.” (Personal e-mail, July 25, 2008).

The whole-language experiment was not entirely for naught. Nowadays, whole language is a term used to describe the wholeness of language and lends itself to such widely-accepted approaches as cooperative, participatory learning, and student-centered learning with foci on the social, community-building nature of learners. Wholeness often means the use of authentic,

natural language, as opposed to pedagogically contrived language, along with the integration of the four skills and holistic assessment techniques.

However, even today some instructors still believe that all they need to teach English is a good novel. A few instructors still use something they call “Fluency First,” but an examination of the actual classroom procedures shows that, in fact, they do a great deal of foundation work first. For example, Iancu (2005) integrates a great deal of pre-reading activities into her lessons, starting with watching and listening to short sections of a video based on the selected novel, then having students talk about the video. This results in a good deal of foundation work in vocabulary acquisition. Students then read the corresponding portion of the novel. Iancu is careful to select novels that are of high interest to her students and which are close to, but somewhat above, their proficiency level. Since students usually do not have high comprehension of the text, she tells them to just find passages that look familiar and try to read them. This, of course, is not what most people think of when they think of reading a novel, but it is a characteristic of the whole-language approach. In contrast, a foundations-first approach is designed to make sure that students do, indeed, have a high level of comprehension as they read.

In common with a wholeness-of-language approach, a foundations-first approach relies on integration of skills. Integrating skills means deliberately involving all four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in a principled, balanced way and is best implemented in a language course in which fairly equal time is given to four strands: meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and finally, fluency development (Nation, 2008, p. 4).

#### **Four Strands**

Nation (2008) describes a balanced language course as one in which equal time is given to these four strands. A foundations-first approach begins with the assumption that in the meaning-focused strands, the material must not be beyond the learner’s proficiency level. This is a key distinction between the a foundations-first approach and a wholeness-of-language approach. “Meaning-focused input involves getting input

through listening and reading where the learners' focus is on understanding the message and where only a small proportion of language features are outside the learners' present level of proficiency [italics added]" (Nation, 2008, p. 1). In the meaning-focused output strand, according to Nation, reading is related to speaking and writing where "the learners' focus is on others understanding the message" (p. 1). During the language-focused strand, the student engages in intensive reading, where the overall message is not worked out until a great deal of attention has been paid to language features. Students "consult dictionaries in reading and writing . . . get language-focused feedback on their writing . . . deliberately learn new vocabulary . . . practise spelling . . . and study grammar and discourse features" (Nation, 2008, p. 1).

The fourth strand is fluency development. For students to be able to read fluently, with speed and accuracy, "the reading materials needs to be well within the learners' level of proficiency" (Nation, 2008, p. 1). By contrast, in the old Fluency First approach, students were required to read massive amounts of authentic material (i.e., an entire, original novel) which was often far beyond their proficiency level. By contrast, when students do read huge amounts of comprehensible material, such as is found in graded readers, they are provided with opportunities to consolidate their previously learned language and to process (decode) the text rapidly, all the while easily *focusing on the message* and readily picking up the ideas. This type of reading does not occur when the student struggles to read an original text that is too difficult for them. Nation (2005) asserts that "without graded readers, reading for a second language learner would be one continuous struggle against an overwhelming vocabulary level" (p. 588). Nation (2008) also says that "fluency develops when complex activities like reading are made less complex by the fluent mastery of some of the subskills involved in the activity" (p. 54). Mastery of the subskills is what a foundations first approach is all about. This mastery begins with intensive reading.

### **Intensive Reading**

For the majority of learners, those who are beyond the beginning stages of learning the

language, a strong foundation in acquiring a knowledge of language features of text, along with being adept at using a variety of reading strategies, can be had via intensive reading. The aim of the intensive reading of a particular text is the comprehension of the text. However, the overall curricular goal of a course should be the transferable skill of being able to comprehend *a variety of texts*, not exclusively *the one text* or set of texts used in the course. In other words, there should be a focus on transferable language knowledge. Elements that contribute to this transferability are decoding skills, lexis, structure, cohesion, information structure, genre features and strategies.

The first subskill that a beginning learner must master is decoding. At a very basic level, for a very few adult learners who are the least proficient readers, work must be done on phonics, the recognition of written forms of the language and being able to "connect them with their spoken forms and their meanings" (Nation, 2008, p. 11). It is a very demanding task for these students to visually process words and letters. Initially, beginners learn the shapes of the letters of the alphabet. Students whose L1 does not use the alphabet system will need to work on sound-letter correspondences, which, in English, involves regular rules for most words, especially those derived from Latin and Greek. Unfortunately, there are quite a few exceptions, especially among the high-frequency words, most of which come from old English. For these students, a systematic syllabus in phonics instruction may be in order.

Also within the realm of decoding is phonemic awareness: being aware that words consist of individual sounds. Wallace (2001) points out that there is a powerful connection "between phonemic awareness, the ability to process words automatically, and reading achievement" (p. 23). In addition, there is the often overlooked fact that some students need to overcome a lifetime of reading from right to left, or from top to bottom, and so must practice reading from left to right. Inadequate control over directionality can have an adverse effect on students' recognition of words (for example, confusing girl with grill) at the basic decoding level.

The lexical knowledge which is vital in the intensive reading process can and should be directly taught. Hinkel (2006) asserts that “irrespective of their aspirations to enter universities, L2 learners need to acquire substantial vocabulary to achieve competencies in practically all L2 skills, such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking” (p. 122). Direct teaching of vocabulary is advocated by Hinkel (2006). She notes that “explicit teaching of vocabulary represents the most effective and efficient means of vocabulary teaching [while] incidental learning leads to significantly lower rates of vocabulary retention” (p. 122). A vocabulary of 2,000 word families is considered sufficient for daily communication needs, while at least 5,000 word families are needed for the reading of general, non-specialist texts (Nation, 1998, p. 395). Having so many words to deal with, an instructor may be at a loss as to where to start. Nation (2008) suggests dealing with high-frequency vocabulary first, deal quickly with or ignore items that occur infrequently, and teach students strategies for tackling unknown words they encounter in any text, such as guessing from context, using word parts, using a dictionary judiciously, and engaging in vocabulary-retention activities, such as using flashcards (p. 36).

Grammar features that students meet in intensive reading passages need to be analyzed and explained. Learners expect grammar instruction. “Focusing on grammar features during intensive reading provides a good opportunity to satisfy this expectation and at the same time to deal with grammar in a meaningful context” (Nation, 2008, p. 34). As with vocabulary, attention should be first given to high frequency grammatical structures, while low-frequency grammar points should be dealt with later, more as a way to help the learner comprehend the passage rather than as points to be mastered for written or oral production.

In addition, discourse features such as cohesive devices, rhetorical patterns, information structure and genre features can be focused on, analyzed and explained in the context of the short intensive reading passages. At these higher levels of cognitive processing, pre-reading activities help facilitate comprehension and stimulate interest. In

addition, a variety of activities to be done during reading to help students focus on “understanding difficult concepts, making sense of complex sentences, and considering relationships among ideas and/or characters in the text” Grabe and Stoller (2001). Post-reading activities “extend the ideas and information in the text while also ensuring that the major ideas and supporting information are well understood” Grabe and Stoller (2000).

In sum, intensive reading passages, because of their inherent difficulty, are short. They are selected on the basis of their ability to focus on language-learning that “teach rather than just give practice” (Nation, 2006, p. 40). Knowledge, skills and strategies gained during intensive reading needs to be *transferable* to any texts, not just the ones used in the course. It is important that the material not contain too many unknown or difficult items.

### **Extensive Reading**

When students are reading intensively, they are, by definition, not reading fluently. They are putting a great deal of effort into learning a lot of new language. However, there are delicious fruits to be had from this labor. Intensive reading results in building up a strong foundation upon which faster reader with greater comprehension can occur. While intensive reading gives the students the language foundation they need, it is extensive reading that allows for fluency to develop. The purpose of extensive reading is not to spend a lot of time working out the meaning of unfamiliar grammatical structures and new vocabulary, but to proceed quickly through the text with a high level of comprehension so that the reading experience is pleasurable. One knows that learners are not reading fluently when one sees glossing and notes in the margins of the texts and when students keep getting out their dictionaries. That is an indication that they are “bogged down in the decoding of the linguistic puzzle” (Waring), i.e., engaged in the intensive reading process.

In order for extensive reading to be fluent, the lexical load must be such that the reader is no longer engaged in working hard at decoding and deciphering the text. Instead, she is focused on the story itself, comprehending virtually

everything, and, hopefully, enjoying it. By reading fluently at or slightly below her proficiency level, the student can consolidate her previously learned language, reinforcing language learned in her intensive reading sessions. In addition, she can gradually broaden her knowledge of previously learned language. According to Bell (1998), this is because of the regular and sufficient repetition of language forms. "Students automatically receive the necessary reinforcement and recycling of language required to ensure that new input is retained" (p. 3).

Vital to the ability to comprehend fully is an adequate vocabulary. Hu and Nation (2000) have established that L2 readers reach at point at which reading comprehension is almost total and the reading process becomes "pleasurable," i.e., not a struggle, when not more than one word in fifty is unknown, which is to say that 98% of the running words on the page are known. This seems like a rather high percentage. However, if you imagine a novel, for instance, that has about ten words per line and perhaps forty lines per page, at 98%, there might be eight words per page that are unknown to the reader, requiring the reader either to tolerate them and keep on reading, or slow down in an attempt to guess their meaning or stop altogether and resort to using a dictionary.

Contrast this with an unsimplified novel. It is possible that anywhere from 8% to 20% of the running words on the page are unknown to a student who has a vocabulary of about 2,000 word families. That means that there is one, and possibly two, new words in almost every line of text. A study by Horst (2005) showed that in the initial 3,000 running words (about nine pages) of an unabridged version of *Treasure Island*, there were 145 words that did not occur in the 2,000 most frequent word families of English (West, 1953) or in the Academic Word List (Coxhead, 2000). Here is a small sample of some of these infrequent words:

admiral alarmed awaited beach briskly  
buccaneer connoisseur cove dreadful effectual  
fawning filthy frost glared grumbling horn  
incivility insist lingering magistrate mingled  
oath parlor peering pigtail rebuff ruffian  
scoundrel skipper snort strode surf tarry  
threshold tottering tyrannized villainous (pp.  
369–370)

Compare these to the list of words of the simplified version published by Oxford. This version uses a headword list of 1,400 word families. Horst (2005) reported that the number of words which occurs outside the 2,000 word list in the first 3,000 running words is a mere eleven (about one new word per page):

admiral ail anchor cabin crew crutch knelt  
mate pirate rum squire (p. 370)

When the vocabulary load is negligible, "extensive reading provides the conditions for fluency development" (Nation, 2008, p. ). Thus, even without a well-developed vocabulary, fluent reading can take place with a graded reader.

Fluency, according to Grabe and Stoller (2000) requires readers to do the following:

1. Read rapidly for comprehension.
2. Recognize words rapidly and automatically (without seeming to pay any attention to the words).
3. Draw on a very large vocabulary store.
4. Integrate information in the text with their own knowledge.
5. Recognize the purpose(s) for reading.
6. Comprehend the text fully.
7. Shift their purposes for reading strategically and use strategies to monitor comprehension.
8. Repair misunderstandings.
9. Read critically and evaluate information.

In order to achieve fluency, Nation (2008), Grabe and Stoller (2000) and others strongly advise making extensive reading an important part of in-class and out-of-class practice. It is a fundamental principle that "students become better readers by reading a lot. There are no shortcuts. All researchers agree on this principle" (Grabe and Stoller, 2000). Day and Bamford (1998) emphasize that extensive reading is characterized by a large quantity of reading of a variety of texts which students select themselves, which students enjoy reading and which students can read at a reasonably fluent speed. Nation (2008) is explicit as to the quantity of extensive reading that a student should engage in. "This quantity of input needs to be close to 500,000 words per year, which is equivalent to twenty-five graded readers a year, or one and a half substantial first year university text books, or six

unsimplified texts” (p. 41). Though he mentions unsimplified texts for comparison purposes, he strongly favors using graded readers. Insofar as the optimal vocabulary density is 98%, or even 99% for adequate comprehension (Nation, 2008, p. 42), it is “essential that [L2 learners] read graded readers that have been specially prepared for learners of English. It is only by reading such texts that learners can have the density of known words that is essential for extensive reading.”

One can measure students’ receptive vocabulary knowledge by testing them on their knowledge of the most frequent 2,000 words of English. One way of doing this is to use a test developed by Schmitt, Schmitt and Clapham (2001), or by using bilingual vocabulary tests such as can be found in Paul Nation’s Vocabulary Resource Booklet at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul-nation/nation.aspx>.

### **Graded readers**

The success of any extensive reading program depends on the learners being motivated. Since teachers’ ideas of what is interesting can be quite at odds with what students think is interesting, it is imperative that students be allowed to choose their own reading materials. Since the emphasis is on the pleasurable reading of a great quantity of material, it is vital that the reading process not be bogged down with “elaborate reading comprehension tests or exercises on the books they read” (Nation, 2008, p. 44). It should suffice for students to simply fill out a form on which they indicate the title of the book, its level, how many pages it contains and how long it took to read it. In addition, there can be a brief comment on something they found interesting in the book.

Nation highly recommends graded readers. Some ESL instructors recoil at the idea of using graded readers. Critics of poorly-written graded readers see these readers as being “inauthentic, watered-down versions of richer original texts” (Nation, 2008, p. \_\_\_). Because of vocabulary limitations, grammatical structuring suffers, so that “what could be neatly expressed in one word is now expressed in several simpler words” (Nation, 2008, p. \_\_\_). It is true that in the early days of graded readers, connectives between sentences were deleted in an effort to shorten the texts, thus

resulting in a lack of cohesiveness. Therefore, “attempts at simplification often result in a text that is more difficult to comprehend . . . than an authentic text” (Crossly, McCarthy, Louwse and McNamara, 2007). Compared to the lack of a few transition words, however, the heavy lexical load of the original text vastly overpowers the student and adds to immensely to the difficulty she has in comprehending. In other words, the original text, with its complex syntax, sophisticated grammar and high percentage of low-frequency words forces the student to stop reading fluently and switch to an intensive reading mode, which, unfortunately, requires a great deal of effort, thus precluding the possibility that she will do a great deal of reading. Original novels, therefore, are poor choices for extensive reading practice.

A study by Bell (2001) clearly shows that “subjects exposed to ‘extensive’ reading achieved both significantly faster reading speeds and significantly higher scores on measures of reading comprehension” than subjects who were limited to “intensive’ reading, this despite the fact that the intensive group were “faster readers at the start of the program.” Because the texts chosen for the extensive reading experiment were graded readers, Bell recommends that “reading speed will develop rapidly if learners are motivated to read interesting graded readers that are accessible linguistically.”

Luckily, as Day and Bamford (1998) point out, there are many high quality graded readers on the market today. In addition, nowadays there are many new titles coming out that are not simplifications, but original, authentic language learner literature. Modern authors are sensitive to the need to avoid stilted, unnatural language. Moreover, the argument that a simplified novel is not authentic does not entirely hold up. If a novel written by a native speaker is authentic, is not a simplified novel written by a native speaker authentic? In the case of the unsimplified version, the writer most likely had an specific target audience in mind: other native speakers. In the case of the graded reader, the author also has a specific target audience in mind: the language learner. Perhaps it would be better to refer to these two types of books as “original” and

“simplified,” rather than classify one as authentic and the other inauthentic.

In summary, extensive reading, according to Bell (1998):

1. can provide comprehensible input
2. can enhance learners’ general language competence
3. increases the students exposure to the language
4. can increase knowledge of vocabulary
5. can lead to improvement in writing
6. can motivate learners to read
7. can consolidate previously learned language
8. helps to build confidence with extended texts
9. encourages the exploitation of textual redundancy
10. facilitates the development of prediction skills

University-bound ESL students need to attain a high degree of reading fluency and comprehension. Gone are the days of programs that focus exclusively on the intensive examination of texts for language-building, or, at the other end of the spectrum, the whole-language approach which floods the student with language that is over their heads, in hopes that as it washes over them, some of it will soak in. In fact, gone are the days of slavishly following one specific approach.

“Recognition of the essential roles of the teacher and the learner and of the need for situationally relevant language pedagogy has brought about the decline of methods, with their specific philosophies and prescribed sets of classroom procedures” (Hinkel, 2006, p. 110). Any reading program that embraces methods solidly based on empirical principles and uses a balanced combination of intensive and extensive reading components has a very real chance of its students achieving the goal of true fluency.

## References

Bell, T. G. (1998). Extensive Reading: Why? And How? *Internet TESOL Journal*, 4(12). Retrieved June 15, 2007, from <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Bell-Reading.html>

Bell, T. (2001) Extensive reading: speed and comprehension. *The Reading Matrix*, 1(1). Retrieved August 14, 2008, from <http://www.readingmatrix.com/articles/bell>

Birch, B. (2002). *English L2 reading: getting to the bottom*, 2nd Ed. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Brown, H. D. (2002). *Teaching by Principles*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents.

Coxhead, A. (2000). A new academic word list. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34, 213–238.

Crossly, S., McCarthy, P., Louwse, M. and McNamara, D. (2007). A Linguistic Analysis of Simplified and Authentic Texts. *The Modern Language Journal*, 91(1), 15–30.

Day, R.R. & Bamford, J. (1998). *Extensive reading in the second language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Grabe, W. and Stoller, F. (2001). Reading for academic purposes: guidelines for the ESL/EFL teacher. In Celce-Murcia, M. (Ed.) *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (3rd ed.). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Hinkel, E. (2006). Current perspectives on teaching the four skills. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40(1), 109–131.

Horst, M. (2005). Learning L2 vocabulary through extensive reading: a measurement study. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 61(3), 355–382.

Hu, M. H-C. & Nation, P. (2000). Unknown vocabulary density and reading comprehension. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 15(2), 403-430.

Hunston, S., and Francis, G. (2000) *Pattern Grammar: a corpus-driven approach to the lexical grammar of English*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Iancu, M. (2005). Fluency first through the kaleidoscope of grammaring. *ORTESOL Journal*, 24(1), 16–24.

Koda, K. (2005). *Insights into second language reading*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Nation, I. S. P. (1998). Materials for Teaching Vocabulary.. In Tomlinson, B. (Ed.), *Developing materials for language teaching*. London: Continuum.

Nation, I. S. P. (2005). Teaching and learning vocabulary. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research on second language teaching and learning* (pp. 581-596).

Nation, I. S. P. (2008). *Teaching reading and writing*. London: Routledge.

Schmitt, N., Schmitt, D. & Clapham, C. (2001). Developing and exploring the behaviour of two new versions of the Vocabulary Levels Test. *Language Testing*, 18,(1), 55–88.

Wallace, C. (2001). Reading. In R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (pp. 21–28). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Waring, R. (May, 1997). Graded and Extensive Reading - questions and answers. *The language teacher*. Retrieved October 20, 2007, from <http://www1.harenet.ne.jp/~waring/papers/LT9705.html>

West, M. (1953). *A general service list of English words*. London: Longman.