



Reviewed work:

*Extensive Reading Activities for Teaching Language.* (2004).  
Bamford, J. & Day, R. R. Cambridge: Cambridge University  
Press. <http://uk.cambridge.org/> Pp. 232. ISBN 0521016517.  
\$30.00.

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This volume presents reading activities designed to integrate extensive reading into the general second or foreign language curriculum. It is designed to put into practice in the second or foreign language classroom the 10 principles of extensive reading originally published in Day and Bamford's previous volume from Cambridge University Press, *Extensive reading in the second language classroom* (1998). The previous volume is part of the Cambridge University Press Language Education series; the new book is part of the CUP series Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers.

The activities were contributed to the volume by practicing classroom teachers and other second language professionals, including Bamford and Day themselves. Day, in particular, has contributed a large number of the activities. Most of the contributors provide multiple activities. Many of the contributors are former students or colleagues of the co-editors.

In many ways, this book is like Day's previously edited volume *New ways in teaching reading* book (TESOL, 1993) – in that it is a compilation of various reading activities – but this time the focus is exclusively on extensive reading activities. Moreover, the stated focus of the book is on integrating extensive reading activities into the overall foreign or second language curriculum, whatever the focus of a particular class – grammar, listening, speaking, writing, or reading, whether the program is intensive or whether the class meets infrequently, regardless of the age of the students and their language level (p. 1). The only prerequisite, according to Bamford and Day, is that students have a basic knowledge of, and therefore be literate in, the second or foreign language (p. 1). Another prerequisite Bamford and Day subsequently articulate is, of course, "that students have access to suitable reading materials, normally a library of books, from which they can select what they want to read" (p. 4).

The book organizes the activities into five main sections, with decreasing emphasis and decreasing number of activities in each of the subsequent parts: Part I ( 84 pages) presents activities that are designed to help classroom teachers get started introducing extensive reading

to students, identifying and organizing suitable reading materials, motivating and supporting extensive reading, and finally monitoring and evaluating reading. Parts II through V present activities that tie extensive reading to other aspects of language learning, specifically oral fluency (Part II, 44 pages), writing -- both in response to reading and creatively (Part III, 35 pages), reading (Part IV, 19 pages), and vocabulary (Part V, 14 pages). While there are no specific activities linking extensive reading to listening, the activities in the oral fluency section normally involve some of the students "speaking" while other students are "listening." What are missing are any activities specifically tying extensive reading to the teaching or learning of grammar.

The standard format of each activity includes an indication of the **Level** or approximate level of proficiency that students should have in order to do the activity; the **Aim(s)** or primary goals or purposes of the activity; the **Preparation** the teacher must engage in and the materials needed in order to introduce the activity to students; the **Procedure** to be followed in using the activity; **Tip(s)** or ideas to make the activity easier to use; **Extension(s)** or ways of expanding the activity beyond the basics; **Variation(s)** or alternate ways of performing the activity; and a **Contributed by** section which identifies the contributor and her/his affiliation and home country. The latter also contains additional information from the contributor, as well as, frequently, comments and suggestions provided by other teachers who have used the activity. Finally, where relevant, there may also be a **Box** containing photocopyable material for the activity, with a copyright line identifying the source of the material. Some of the boxes also contain uncorrected example material from students.

Bamford and Day encourage users of these activities to modify them as needed for their particular teaching situations, and, above all, they urge teachers to encourage students to enjoy the activities.

One weakness of the collection of activities is their "thinness" -- both in the sense that there are relatively few activities presented in some areas, as well as in the sense that many of the activities are obvious. In the first sense, for example, there are only two activities related to "reading rate," four related to "evaluating reading," six related to "monitoring reading," and only seven on the critical topic of "vocabulary development and consolidation." Examples of rather obvious activities which do not present anything new or particularly innovative include writing book reports and book reviews, dramatizing or role playing from readings, keeping reading records, keeping vocabulary journals, timed repeated readings, and paced reading. Only very inexperienced teachers would not already be familiar with many of the activities.

As is true of most compilations of classroom activities, there is, unfortunately, no information provided as to how a classroom teacher can evaluate the effectiveness of the activities with regard to improving the learner's language learning (specifically, their speaking, writing, or reading skills, or vocabulary development). While there is an overwhelming consensus that extensive reading should be a positive contribution to any language program, it would be nice if there were ways to confirm that devoting scarce and precious classroom time to these activities -- at the expense of other instructional activities -- is justified by the payoff.

In short, this volume is to be commended in its attempt to incorporate extensive reading activities into the mainline second or foreign language curriculum. However, it is much like other

compilations of second or foreign language classroom activities. If a teacher feels the need for such a resource, it may be helpful. If the teacher is experienced, s/he won't find very much new or novel in this collection. And, of course, it will be up to teachers and their students to evaluate the effectiveness of the activities.

### **References**

Day, R. (Ed.). (1993). *New ways in teaching reading*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL.

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

### **About the Reviewer**

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