Larry J. Mikulecky
Mikuleck(at)Indiana.edu
Indiana University, Bloomington (Bloomington, IN, USA)

Introduction

Even though it has been nearly twenty-five years since scholars began exhorting EFL and ESL teachers to use children's and young adult literature to teach adult learners (Flickinger, 1984), the practice has never become wide-spread. During the past two decades, research has continued to document the benefits of extensive L2 reading within one's proficiency range (e.g. children's and young adult literature).

One likely explanation for this puzzling situation of documented benefits but little actual use is the problem of access (i.e. locating a sufficient range of simple literature in English in a form that is economically feasible). Goshen (1997), an EFL teacher with experience teaching in Lebanon, Syria and the United Arab Emirates, has noted that expense is a major hurdle. This is especially true if a teacher must order multiple copies of several different titles needed to address a range of student interests and language ability levels. Shipping costs can double the already high cost of books.

While this was clearly a problem in 1997, when Goshen first wrote of it, a growing wealth of children's and young adult literature available over the Internet can help overcome the problems of access and expense. Free and inexpensive Internet resources can now allow teachers to more easily use children's and young adult literature to gain the benefits of extensive L2 reading for their students.

Evidence Supporting the Extensive Reading of Comprehensible Material

If the only time one uses English is during English class, it is very difficult to secure the practice time and develop the vocabulary needed for rapid growth in English proficiency. During the past two decades, research has consistently documented the benefits of extensive reading in L2 to the development of second language mastery. Waring and Nation (2004) summarize and synthesize nearly three dozen studies that demonstrate and examine the benefits of extensive reading in L2 to improvement of vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension and writing.

In order for benefits to occur, the reader must already understand the majority of vocabulary on a page. For beginning and intermediate level students, this means relatively simple language such as that found in children's and young adult literature.   Laufer (1989) and Liu and Nation (1985) demonstrated that unless a reader has control of at least 95% of words on a page, it is unlikely that he or she will be able to use context to guess the meaning of unknown words. Subsequent research (Hsueh-Chao and Nation, 2000), indicates that previous mastery of even higher percentages of vocabulary (i.e. 98% or more) is associated with the most benefit in new vocabulary growth.

These percentages correspond with similar percentages presented in the 1940's by Betts (1946) for mastery levels in L1 reading of English. Betts suggested using vocabulary mastery as one indicator of a reader's independent, instructional or frustrational reading level.
Independent: 99% of words already known for fluent, enjoyable reading.
Instructional: 98%-95% of words known and some instructional support such as teacher suggestions, vocabulary explanations, illustrations etc. needed for benefit.
Frustrational: Below 95% of words known can damage fluency and lead to disruptions in comprehension strategies.

These suggested levels tend to match most of our experiences as readers. Few of us willingly continue reading books if we need to use a dictionary to understand 15-20 new

words on every page (i.e. 5% of the words of a paperback book page with 300-400 words), though we can usually continue to read fluently if we encounter only three to four new words per page. In American elementary schools, teachers show children how to use the "five-finger method" when selecting books from the library. For each unknown word a child finds on a page (usually containing about 100 words of print), the child raises a finger. If five fingers are raised before completing the page, the book is probably too difficult and the child should select another.

Depending upon the difficulty of material to be read and the technical complexity of academic and professional material, scholars differ on the number of words and word families a reader needs to master before benefiting from extensive reading (Waring and Nation, 2004). To benefit in vocabulary growth from extensive reading of simple, non-graded text, previous mastery of 2000-3000 L2 words is suggested as a minimal level. This is roughly comparable to the vocabulary level of an average 9-10 year-old L1 speaker. It also corresponds to the vocabulary level of many high school and beginning college level EFL learners.

Finding Simple, Accessible and Inexpensive Readings in English

As has been mentioned above, children's and young adult literature in English has been recommended for more than two decades as a potential source of reading material for extensive reading. It is only relatively recently, however, that the Internet has helped to overcome problems of access and expense.

There are four web-sites that are particularly rich in extensive and accessible children's and young adult literature and which have demonstrated a stable existence (as much as anything on the Internet can be called stable). These sites (described in the attached Appendix in more detail with URL's current in October 2007) provide a wide range of materials, topics, difficulty levels and sophisticated illustrations--sometimes accompanied by oral readings with animations. Even if one's EFL students don't have easy access to the Internet, it is possible for teachers with Internet access to download and print out materials for student use.

Ways to Use the Resources

The main point of using these resources to increase student practice time with English outside the classroom. Though some class time might be used to show web-sites to EFL students and model how to use the stories, the majority of time should be spent by students doing assigned or volunteer reading on their own.

There are some things the teacher can do to make the reading experience more productive for students. For example, the teacher can either match students to books at appropriate difficulty level or teach EFL students to use their own version of the five-finger method. The research cited earlier in this article indicates the most benefit is gained when students already know 98% or more of the words on a page. In addition, the teacher can produce questions to guide readers' attention and focus while reading. These same questions can be used by groups of two to three students for oral discussion after reading the same story.

Below are some assignment ideas and choices that can foster extensive reading by EFL students. These assignments might be spread over several weeks.
- Ask students with access to younger relatives to read and teach the English stories to their younger relatives.
- Ask future teachers of English to read simple stories and then design lessons for younger students.
- Ask students to keep a list of what they have read, brief summaries of stories or chapters, and new vocabulary learned.
- Have students do presentations on stories to "sell" them to other students.
- Have students create their own simple stories in English, possibly with illustrations.

The key elements here are fostering more practice reading English outside the classroom and finding enough variety of materials so all students can read something they can understand. In the last few years, the availability of children's and young adult literature on the Internet has exploded and these resources will continue to grow. In many places, access to Internet technology has become easier than access to resources for purchasing printed books. For teachers and students with Internet access, it is time to reconsider how English reading practice might be expanded through the use of online children's and

young adult literature.

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Appendix

Examples and Discussion of Useful Web-Sites Containing Children's and Young Adult Literature in English

(All links current as of October 26, 2007)

1. Magic Keys: The Magic Keys web-site (http://www.magickeys.com/books) contains more than thirty illustrated stories at a wide range of difficulty levels. At the beginning reader level, a good example is Rolando Merino's illustrated and animated Alphabet book (http://www.magickeys.com/books/alphabet/index.html). For low intermediate level readers (i.e. 1000-2000 word or about 3rd grade for L1) an interesting example is Valerie Hardin's Grow Your Own Gargoyle (http://www.magickeys.com/books/gargoyle/index.html) story about a girl ordering strange things from comic book advertisements. High intermediate readers (i.e. 3000+ words or about 6th grade for L1) might try Carol Moore's science fiction story Second Thoughts (http://www.magickeys.com/books/alien/index.html).

2. ByGosh: Classic illustrated short stories, poems and short novels can be found at the Bygosh web-site (http://www.bygosh.com/index.html). There are more than 100 selections ranging from short, simple folktales like The Fox and the Crow (http://www.bygosh.com/Features/092000/foxandcrow.html) written at the low intermediate level to Jack London's classic young adult novel Call of the Wild (http://www.bygosh.com/cotw/index.htm) written at the high intermediate level to several classic adult novels written at still higher levels. Though many of the readings will be too difficult for beginning and intermediate readers, the variety of free materials available from this site is impressive.

3. Children's Digital Library: For the widest selection of materials in English, a useful site is the Children's Digital Library (http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/SearchWorld). This site has illustrated children's books in many languages and more than 1000 illustrated children's books in English. Books on the site can be searched by continent, length, topic, reader age and several other useful descriptors. One of the advantages is that it is sometimes possible to find material in English about topics with which EFL readers might already be culturally familiar. For example, Vivian Tan's Sights and Sounds of Singapore and Feasts and Festivals deal with topics and places that may already be familiar to many Asian EFL students. When a student already knows a good deal about a subject, it is easier to learn related English vocabulary for that subject. Renee Villaneuva's Lola's Extraordinary Hair or Why Pinay's Are Strong Women is a folk-tale-like story about the courage and hope of a young girl in the face of repeated typhoons. This is a bilingual novel (i.e. written in both English and Filipino). There are many bilingual and trilingual

novels on this site such Rose Shomali Mulseh's Sawa Sawa bilingual Arabic/English story of a boy trying to decide if doing housework is just "women's work."

One of the more useful features of this site is the extensive search capacity. Though it doesn't categorize books by language difficulty level, it does categorize them by age. Books in the 3-5 age category tend to be aimed at beginning readers and deal with the English alphabet and very simple vocabulary. Books in the 6-10 age category are also mainly aimed at children, but there are still some titles that are both useful and acceptable for adolescent and adult English learners. For example, Dorothy Whitfield's Carib Breeze (http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/SimpleSearchCategory?ids=&langid=&pnum=1&cnum=1&text=Carib&lang=English&search=Search) is a collection of poetry with subject matter appropriate for both children and adults. The stanza, below, from "The Wind and I" is a wonderful example of straight-forward poetic language accessible to low intermediate level adults and adolescents.

I have been talking with the wind
The flying wind,
The crying wind.
He told of fishermen far from home
On treacherous seas that sigh and moan.
Of a lone bird's call in the empty air
Of darkening waves—of chilling fear—
The flying wind
The crying wind
I have been talking to the wind. (p. 5)

Francine Haskins' I Remember 121 and Things I Like about Grandma (http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/SimpleSearchCategory?ids=&langid=&pnum=1&cnum=1&text=Haskins&lang=English&search=Search) are narratives that use illustrations and simple language to portray family relationships, daily life, and a solid sense of culture. These books use basic vocabulary related to families and growing up and clear illustrations to support much of the language being used. Other titles, like Sooriyarachchi's The Witches Daughter (http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/BookPreview?bookid=soowitc_00840002&summary=true&categories=false&route=simple_0_0_Witch's%20daughter) or Hurd's Axel the Freeway Cat (http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/SimpleSearchCategory?ids=&langid=&pnum=1&cnum=1&text=Freeway&lang=English&search=Search) are written with a sense of humor that appeals to both children and adults.
There are 117 books in English in the 10-13-age category. Several are biographies, histories and moderate length novels that are appropriate for adolescents and adults, though the language might be challenging for some low intermediate students. Harriet Cheever's Lord Dolphin (http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/SimpleSearchCategory?ids=&pnum=1&cnum=1&text=dolphin&lang=English&langid=11), for example, is a 97 page novel written from the point of view of a dolphin. It is an engaging story written at the average reading level of an 11-12 year-old L1 English reader (i.e. 3000+ words). A sample passage from Lord Dolphin follows below.
"As the storm went crashing on, I kept thrusting myself downward in hopes to plunge lower than the storm circle. No use. I was upborne every time and after many attempts knew it would be best to simply float as I must. I had drifted far from the sailing vessel, when as I floated high on the crest of a wave, I looked upon a pleasure craft of some kind, riding high upon the breakers."(p. 25)

Not all students would benefit from reading this particular novel, but it would be of use to some and it has the benefit of being both accessible and free.

4. Tumblebooks: The most technologically sophisticated site described in this article is Tumblebooks (http://www.tumblebooks.com/). This is a subscription service with access to more than 100 children's books ranging from the beginning to intermediate range of difficulty. Books are labeled with both age and difficulty level ratings. In the "Storybook" section of the web-site, one can find several dozen widely recognized titles in children's literature like Robert Munsch's Paper Bag Princess (http://www.tumblebooks.com/library/asp/full_book.asp?ProductID=85)and Darlene Cronin's humorous Diary of a Worm (http://www.tumblebooks.com/library/asp/full_book.asp?ProductID=2253) . These online stories take the illustrations of the books and animate the action. The stories are read

orally while visually highlighting phrases and vocabulary words being read. This provides both a guide to pronunciation and a sense of the rhythm of the English language. Clicking on a particular word or phrase can repeat the pronunciation.

I've shown several of these stories to college level EFL students who found them highly entertaining and asked to see more when I wanted to move on. They seemed genuinely pleased to be able to use the English they had learned to easily follow the stories.   They also enjoyed the adult humor many contemporary children's authors have embedded into books designed to appeal to both children and their parents, who buy and re-read the books to their children countless times.

The Tumblebooks site also has more difficult material in the section labeled "Tumble Readables".   Here on can find more difficult young adult novels that can be read online without the illustrations or audio support. Though these are less current than the children"s picture books in the "Storybook" section, Tumblebooks does present in a very readable format popular classics like Barrie's Peter Pan and Kipling's Junglebook.

It is possible to get a free 30-day trail subscription from Tumblebooks. In addition, several public libraries like the Illinois Network of Libraries (http://www.ilkidszone.info/) and the St. Helena Public Library (http://www.shpl.org/pages/tumblebooks.html) as well as the Halifax Regional Library in Canada (http://www.halifaxpubliclibraries.ca/kids/tumblebooks.html) have made Tumblebooks available online. I'm almost reluctant to point this out since I don't know how long this open access is likely to last.

Many language teachers understand that the use of literature helps studentsâ€™ literacy practice in their rst language (L1), but we know little about the e ect of reading and writing literature on literacy development in second language (L2) education, especially within the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context.Â Chen looked at the e ect of reading childrenâ€™s literature on the development of the writing abilities and narrative thinking of 43 college freshmen. eir re ective comments and responses in an interview about the literature-based tasks indicated that the features of childrenâ€™s literature (e.g., the simplicity of language style, a variety of cultural information, and comfortable length of.Â Literature in the EFL classroom: Making a comeback? PALA Occasional Papers, 6, 3â€"16. EFL teachers use stories to supplement their core materials or to create self-contained units of work that constitute mini-syllabuses. In this way, a story provides the starting point and rich context for developing a wide variety of related language and learning activities involving children personally, creatively and actively in an all round whole curriculum approach (see Ellis and Brewster 1991 and 2002).Â Pupil responses The educational gains from using authentic children's literature are very rich indeed as reflected by pupils' personal response to the stories.

Using the Web to access free and inexpensive children's lit to teach EFL. Even though it has been nearly twenty-five years since scholars began exhorting EFL and ESL teachers to use children's and young adult literature to teach adult learners (Flickinger, 1984), the practice has never become wide-spread. During the past two decades, research has continued to document the benefits of extensive L2 reading within one's proficiency range (e.g. children's and young adult literature). One likely explanation for this puzzling situation of documented benefits but little actual use is the problem of access (i.e. locating a sufficient range of simple literature in Engli... Until quite recently, Internetbased Language Learning was a relevant topic mostly to those with a special interest in that area. Recently, though, the internet has become so widespread in educational institutions and homes and its uses have expanded so dramatically that the majority of English language teachers have started the implications of the internet for language learning. This article provides brief overview of how internet resources can be used for language teaching. 3 Agarwal. Internet-based learning How to Use a Computer in Class Computers with internet resources can be used effectively in classrooms if teachers use the following structure of language learning. 1. Select computer materials that are going to be used i.e. a program or the internet resources.