Extensive graded reading as a means of bridging the divide to the authentic academic text

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Abstract
This article discusses the merits of an extensive, graded reading programme for low proficiency first years at tertiary institutions. Drawing on the work of Krashen (1982), VanPatten (1996), Van Lier (1996), Day and Bamford (1998), Elley (1991) and Grabe and Stoller (2001), the advantages of extensive reading as a means of improving academic reading proficiency are explored. The article surveys the results of extensive reading experiments conducted locally and internationally, highlighting the pedagogical implications. Finally, the implementation and small scale testing of such a reading programme at the University of the Free State is described.

INTRODUCTION
As educators (Yorio 1985; Day and Bamford 1998, 44), we universally accept the idea that one becomes a good reader through much reading, yet this widely-held view is rarely implemented as a means of improving proficiency in Higher Education and is even more rare as a structured intervention in tertiary institutions in South Africa. Extensive reading may be a useful tool for the ESL educator to bridge the gap between school-literacy preparedness and the authentic academic text as encountered by the tertiary learner in her first year of study (Day and Bamford 1988, 44; Nation 2005, 1).

The target group of this study is tertiary, first-year students who have been tested for language proficiency and, based on the results, required to register for an academic language course. These students will be expected to perform the following academic communicative tasks. Classroom activities involve the ability to understand instructions, perform discipline-related tasks in small groups, make notes, read passages and write answers to content-based questions as well as summaries and other reading-based writing tasks. Students have to be able to read prescribed texts with understanding as well as to read their study guides and complete the written activities set in the guides. The ability to write assignments, tests and examinations is also a required competence for students at the tertiary level.
EXTENSIVE READING IN CONTEXT

Extensive reading in this context refers to significant amounts of, out-of-class reading. Students select their own texts from a large collection of graded readers and are required to read a certain number of books per week. Graded readers are simplified texts carefully graded into reading proficiency levels to accommodate the developing reading competency of the SL reader (Waring 2005, 2). The idea of graded reading is for learners to develop adequate fluency at one level in order to move to a higher level. This principle is widely accepted as a means of improving reading proficiency. Other examples include the SRA Reading Laboratory. Thus, the term extensive reading in this context does not imply ‘free voluntary reading’ (Krashen 1993, 72) as is generally accepted. It is not voluntary as reading is an integral part of the syllabus and it is not free as students are required to read a certain number of pages per week and then complete writing tasks based on their reading. The students may, however, choose from a wide variety of available titles.

LOW PROFICIENCY AND EXTENSIVE READING

Low language proficiency is seen here within the context of tertiary learning. In this context certain communicative tasks have to be mastered by students if they are to achieve academic success. Blue (1993, 6) outlines these tasks in Figure 1.

As may be seen from the figure, academic discourse often requires much writing to be composed after reading various sources, an approach that often emphasises the ability to read fluently. It should be noted, however, that the communicative tasks listed above may not be uniform or universal as there is no such thing as a ‘stable academic discourse community’ (Raimes 1998, 149). The figure does, however, demonstrate the crucial importance of reading proficiency in a programme of tertiary learning.

Academic discourse is largely based on the production and reception of texts, and, as a result, background knowledge or previously acquired knowledge plays an important role. If a learner lacks general knowledge of the world or if this knowledge is limited as a result of bad schooling or other environmental factors, this deficiency impacts on the academic reading ability of the learner (Spivey 1990, 259; Reid 1993, 33; Ferris and Hedgcock 1998, 29). Very closely linked to background knowledge are schemata or ‘knowledge structures that the reader brings to the text’ (Hudson 1998, 185) which help to organise the reader’s knowledge of language and the world. Thus, the reader’s ability to understand a written text is based on prior knowledge. Prior linguistic experiences, semantic knowledge and general knowledge are all vital to learners who have to read academic texts (Basham, Ray and Whalley 1993, 300). A programme of reading intervention addressing these needs in a meaningful way could facilitate academic throughput for learners with low reading proficiency.
### Major Study Activities and Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study activities</th>
<th>Skills required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>Listening so as to understand content, coping with different accents and varying speeds of delivery, listening for key words and phrases, recognizing discourse markers, assessing the importance of different parts of each lecture, making notes (asking questions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars, tutorials, supervisions</td>
<td>Asking and answering questions, understanding and expressing different points of view, comparing different approaches/ideas, reporting on work done, making notes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicals</td>
<td>Understanding instructions, asking questions, requesting help, securing access to relevant equipment, etcetera, coping with informal language and jargon, recording results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading text books, articles, etc.</td>
<td>Understanding the overall content distinguishing main points from supporting detail, skimming, scanning, evaluating coping with constraints of time, making notes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing essays, reports, etc.</td>
<td>Construction of reasonably accurate sentences and paragraphs, coherent structuring of ideas, referring to other authors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing thesis/dissertation</td>
<td>As for writing essays, but with more importance possibly being attached to a thorough discussion of the literature, an adequate introduction, discussion, conclusion, reporting on the research project undertaken, knowledge of conventions for quoting and referring to other authors, etcetera.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examinations</td>
<td>As for writing essays, reports, etcetera, but with the added pressure of having to read and understand the questions, exercise one’s memory, plan relevant answers on the basis of present knowledge, and write coherently all under severe time constraints.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Blue, G. M. (1993, 6) Major study activities and skills.

Figure 1: Communicative tasks to be mastered by students to achieve academic success

### The Benefits of Extensive Graded Reading

No discussion on the benefits of extensive reading is complete without mention of the influence of the affect or the attitude of the student towards reading. Day and Bamford (1998, 25) make the point that second-language learners generally experience reading as ‘difficult’. A programme of extensive reading allows for individual choice of reading material so that the learner can follow her interests. Not only are the books at a level where the student understands what she is reading, but the titles are selected according to her interests. This sustained, interesting reading at a level of comprehension has the potential to foster a good attitude in the second-language (SL) reader (Hafiz and Tudor 1989, 10; Day and
Many academic literacy courses focus on authentic texts which are beyond the students’ level of comprehension, which could effect learners negatively as it ignores their individual levels of language and reading proficiency and ‘ignores the inevitable affective toll that difficult or unpleasant reading experiences take’ (Day and Bamford 1998, 25).

There is no single, correct approach to teaching reading, but there does seem to be what Eskey (1986, 20) terms a ‘pedagogical constant’: much reading. Learners exposed to a quantity of reading material, will develop their reading skills more quickly. Without continual and extensive practice there can be no real development of reading skills, or the fluency needed by the tertiary learner.

Fluency needs to be systematically developed and a programme of extensive, graded reading provides an opportunity to develop ‘the components upon which fluent second language reading depend: a large sight vocabulary; a wide general vocabulary; and knowledge of the target language, the world and text types’ (Day and Bamford 1998, 16). Class time is limited and extensive reading provides a means of ensuring the quantity of reading required to develop fluency. Learners are exposed to the writing of experienced writers modelling lexical features, syntax, cohesive devices and discourse markers in texts. This exposure develops automaticity which, in itself, is a crucial component in the process of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). The aim of a reading programme based on extensive reading is, thus, to provide plenty of comprehensible input to facilitate SLA. This particular model of extensive reading is partially based on Krashen’s (1981) model of comprehensible input.

**COMPREHENSIBLE INPUT**

Input is language that the learner hears or sees and which is used to communicate a message (VanPatten 1996, 6). Comprehensible Input (CI) is input that is understood by the learner. ‘Comprehension may be at the heart of the language acquisition process: perhaps we acquire by understanding language that is “a little beyond” our current level of competence’ (Krashen 1981, 103). This is referred to as Krashen’s i+1 Input Hypothesis Theory. Comprehensible input is not the only factor driving SLA (VanPatten 1996, 6; Ellis 1994, 278). There are differences in the ways that learners process input because acquisition and comprehension are different processes. Van Lier (1996, 45) prefers the term exposure, namely language that surrounds the learner. He (1996, 45) refines the concept of comprehensible input in that he identifies three characteristics that make language usable to learners, namely ‘when the learner can make sense of it, is receptive to it and makes an effort to process it’. Thus, not only must the learner comprehend the selected language input, but it should be positively received and processed. Krashen (1981), too, argues that extensive, comprehensible reading constitutes suitable language input to facilitate SLA provided that certain conditions are met, namely plenty of interesting material in a relaxed, tension-free environment.
Learners registered for the language development course at the University of the Free State are involved in an extensive, graded reading programme which exposes them to quantities of comprehensible input in the form of a wide variety of book titles which they read out-of-class, in their own time, with the proviso that the required number of readers be completed by the end of each week. The reading is on-going, and they choose when and how they do it. ‘These elements of students’ choosing what, when, how and where to read are hallmarks of autonomy in learning’ (Day and Bamford 1996, 27).

An individual approach is taken to reading instruction in that students are tested for their language proficiency at the start of the programme. The core construct of the test is text-processing ability, which is a key aspect of both academic literacy and language proficiency. The test focuses on the following language constructs: understanding the meaning and accuracy of a word or phrase in extended text; understanding cohesion and coherence at the inter-sentential level within a discursive framework; understanding cohesion and coherence at the inter-paragraph level within a discursive framework and skimming and scanning a text for meanings, inferences and deduction. Once the test is scored, students are placed at an appropriate level of the graded readers from beginner to advanced levels.

Students move up a level each term as their reading proficiency improves. This approach enables the educator to avoid a ‘one-size-fits-all’ programme of reading instruction as each learner reads at a level that is comprehensible to her thus, facilitating language acquisition as posited by the Comprehensible Input theory outlined above.

**TOWARDS BRIDGING THE DIVIDE**

In the light of evidence such as Blue’s model (cf. Figure 1) of communicative skills required by the tertiary learner as well as the list of skills required by the target group of this study, it is evident that reading proficiency can be seen as ‘the critical skill needed by second language students for academic success’ (Grabe 1986, 35).

Grabe (1986, 36–37) lists five potent reasons why tertiary language skills curricula should include a large component of reading and reading instruction if it is to facilitate SLA and academic literacy. They are the following:

- The reading and writing skills of the SL learner improve by being exposed to much reading and the quicker the SL readers ‘achieve the capacity for creating, refining, and connecting diverse arrays of cognitive schemata’ (Grabe 1986, 36) the quicker they acquire the literacy levels needed for academic success;
- Several studies (Ostler 1980, Johns 1981, Robertson 1983) revealed that students and lecturers agree that reading is the most important skill needed for academic success;
- Without systematic, explicit, structured reading instruction, students resort to bad habits and do not ‘somehow’ acquire the ability to read academic texts fluently;
The SL reader needs to process texts rapidly so that the information can be stored, synthesized and retrieved in the same way as the fluent L1 reader does. Therefore, comprehension strategies should be taught so that the SL reader can progress to the phase of rapid text processing; and

Undergraduate and graduate students need to be proficient readers to be able to cope with large quantities of required reading material in their various fields of study.

These five arguments powerfully demonstrate the need for a comprehensive reading programme in an academic literacy course. If much reading, coupled with written tasks at a level that is comprehensible to the student, improves writing, builds schemata, develops fluency, develops SLA, ensures the acquisition of good reading strategies and assists the student to store, synthesize, retrieve and process information, then a programme of extensive reading could provide the bridge between low reading proficiency and academic reading ability (Ferris and Hedgcock 1998, 85). Thus, the main thrust of the language development programmes at the University of the Free State is reading. Students are provided with an out-of-class opportunity to read 100 pages per week at a level that is comprehensible to them. In-class activities focus on intensive reading of passages. Together, extensive and intensive reading derive the benefits as indicated above.

There is much international and some local evidence to support the above view.

INTERNATIONAL AND LOCAL RESEARCH RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

In a study (Flahive and Bailey 1993, 131) of 40 low-proficiency tertiary learners enrolled in a university level ESL composition class, the researchers tested three specific hypotheses, namely

- learners who read more are better writers;
- learners who are better readers are better writers;
- learners who read more and with better comprehension write more complex, more grammatically correct prose.

Their findings (Flahive and Bailey 1993, 129) suggest that reading, writing and grammar are related second-language abilities and they argue for a ‘unified language proficiency factor underlying reading comprehension, writing ability and the various measures of grammatical ability’ (Flahive and Bailey 1993, 137). They found that those participants who read more performed better on reading comprehension than those who read less and, most relevant to this study, that ‘reading abilities developed through pleasure reading transfer to more traditional academic reading tasks’ (Flahive and Bailey 1993, 138). Ferris and Hedgcock (1998, 24) state that ‘the ability to produce written text emanates at least partly from long-term, self-initiated reading and that this ability can develop without
learners’ conscious awareness’. Both writing and reading are processes of making meaning: they require similar patterns of thinking and ‘similar linguistic habits’ as both are multifaceted complex processes that involve many subskills and both depend on individual past experience’ (Ferris and Hedgcock 1998, 85).

Thus, the UFS reading programme takes note of the reading/writing connection as well as recognition of top-down (higher-order mental conceptualization) or bottom-up (decoding through building of meaning from the letters and words of the text) processing (Hudson 1998, 49, Carrell 1988, 2). This implies that extensive reading must be coupled with intensive (textual processing) reading in order to create an effective reading intervention.

Each class of students is a unique population as far as their needs and characteristics are concerned and the weight given to reading and writing tasks will vary accordingly. There is sufficient evidence (Day and Bamford 1998, 35, Hudson 1998, 49) that low-proficiency tertiary learners ‘with little or no ESL academic literacy may benefit from extensive and intensive reading coupled with abundant practice in writing for fluency’ (Ferris and Hedgcock 1998, 35). As mentioned above, learners need to be exposed to the writing of experienced writers in order to experience the modelling of lexical features, syntax, cohesive devices and discourse markers in text. In the words of Day and Bamford (1998, 13), ‘familiarity breeds automaticity’ a crucial factor in the process of achieving SLA.

Local (South African) experiments point to a positive link between CI and a reading-based approach to SLA. The research described below (Le Roux and Schollar 1996, 7) details an experiment conducted in township schools under the erstwhile Department of Education and Training (DET).

In 1996 the Read Educational Trust (a non-governmental organization which has for many years run reading programmes in disadvantaged schools and trained many teachers and voluntary workers how to teach reading) ran a survey to test the reading and writing skills of 4937 pupils from grades 5, 6 and 7 (then standards 3, 4 and 5). These pupils were randomly selected from 49 schools representing six of South Africa’s nine provinces:

- At 29 schools READ programmes were in operation (READ schools); the other
- 20 schools were carefully selected as matching control schools, without reading programmes in their schools.

The results of the survey (Figure 2) demonstrated remarkable differences between the READ schools and the control schools. Pupils all wrote a multiple-choice English Reading Comprehension Test and a Stimulus-Response Writing Test. The READ schools outperformed the control schools in both reading and writing.

The reading test results revealed that the READ schools outperformed the control schools by 24.1 per cent in Grade 5; by 28.8 per cent in Grade 6 and by
29.8 per cent in Grade 7. The writing test results were even more significant: the READ schools outperformed the control schools by 190.6 per cent in Grade 5; by 138.0 per cent in Grade 6 and by 111.9 per cent in Grade 7. The results of this survey led the researchers to conclude the following: ‘There is a very high correlation between the pupils’ reading skills and their ability to write good English’ (Le Roux and Schollar 1996, 5).

The lesson is obvious: children who read well, write well. Conversely, to improve writing skills, we need to improve reading skills. The report concludes further: ‘The READ programmes have indicated that pupils in these schools have accelerated their language proficiency skills by up to two years’. This is indeed evidence that cannot be ignored. What makes it even more significant for this study is that the pupils selected for the READ survey came from educational backgrounds similar to those of the learners under study in the UFS project. The READ survey findings are backed by similar results in other parts of the world.
Hafiz and Tudor (1989, 4–11) describe a three-month extensive reading programme using graded readers with one experimental group and two control groups of ESL learners in the United Kingdom. The experiment was inspired by Krashen’s Input Hypothesis. The experiment was based on the principle that extensive reading would be practised for acquisition and, simultaneously, provide a source of ‘comprehensible input’. Extensive reading aims to ‘flood’ learners with large quantities of L2 input with few or possibly no specific tasks or productive activities to follow the reading. The underlying pedagogical assumption is that exposing learners to large quantities of meaningful ‘comprehensible input’ will eventually have a beneficial effect on their proficiency. The experimental group consisted of a group of ESL learners whose home language was Punjabi and were matched with two similar groups of ESL learners as control groups. The extensive reading programme lasted for 12 weeks and participants were encouraged to select their own reading material from the titles provided. Learners were requested to give oral reports on their reading in the form of a reading reaction. They were not required to undertake any language exercises based on their reading. Not only did the reading of the experimental group improve markedly in comparison to that of the control groups, but their writing abilities also showed significant improvement. The researchers concluded: ‘This increase in productive skills is particularly significant in the present context, as it indicates that the receptive exposure to the language which subjects received during the reading programme (as already mentioned, no productive activities were required of subjects) would appear to have been transferred to subjects’ active L2 repertoire’ (Hafiz and Tudor 1989, 8). The pleasure reading or ‘comprehensible input’ provided learners with a range of lexical, syntactic and textual features as a source, and simultaneously created a more positive attitude towards the target language. Hafiz and Tudor’s study appears to give credence to Krashen’s Input Hypothesis in that learners were given ‘comprehensible input’ in a tension-free environment.

Another meaningful experiment in this regard is the research of Elley and Mangubhai (1983) which specifically examined the role of extensive reading on the development of proficiency in the second language. This study was also inspired by Krashen’s Input Hypothesis and is generally known as the ‘book flood’ study. Over a period of two-years they examined the effects of an extensive reading programme in a number of Fijian primary schools (using simplified reading materials in English). This study produced similar results to those of the READ project outlined above. Not only was a substantial improvement observed in the learners’ reading skills, but their productive skills had also improved markedly (Elley 1991, 375–411). It is of significance, too, that learners in the ‘book flood’ groups achieved greater success in their examinations than those in the control groups: a fact that has positive implications for academic success.

In spite of much criticism and accusations of vagueness and imprecision (McLaughlin 1987, 50) levelled at Krashen’s Input Hypothesis, there is enough substantial evidence to prove that his theories do merit scrutiny and are worth
noting by the educator wishing to set up a language programme for low-proficiency learners. Although many researchers (Van Lier 1996, 45; Ellis 1994, 26; Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991, 114) agree that meaning-bearing input or CI is axiomatic to SLA, there are those (VanPatten 1996, 7; Sharwood Smith 1993, 167) who posit that CI alone does not necessarily facilitate SL learning. Comprehensible input does not merely enter the learners’ linguistic system and result in instantaneous SLA. The input that learners receive is filtered and this ‘filtering’ process has to be guided by meaningful language activities. These activities aim at providing the embedded contextual support (Van Lier 1996, 45) which will facilitate the automaticity necessary for SLA to occur. Thus, this paper does not argue that extensive reading alone is a panacea for low proficiency, but that it is an excellent means of bridging the divide to academic success if it is coupled with intensive reading and structured language activities. Grabe and Stoller (2001, 198) put it succinctly: ‘The sustained silent reading of level-appropriate texts is the single best overall activity that students can engage in to improve their reading abilities, though it is not sufficient by itself for an effective reading program’. It is clear that one does not become a proficient reader if one does not read widely at a level of comprehension that is accessible.

The next section describes, in more detail, the implementation of an extensive reading programme as currently run in language development programmes at the University of the Free State.

**IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EXTENSIVE READING PROGRAMME**

The extensive graded reading component forms the core of all first-year academic language development courses at the UFS. Learners do the graded reading out-of-class in their own time, having to read approximately 100 pages per week. They are required to keep a reading log of all the books read during each semester and to write a short reading reaction to each book. The reading reaction formats differ from year to year to prevent plagiarism and copying. Students initially write a reading proficiency test and are placed at a reading level that constitutes comprehensible input. Most of our students fall into the low intermediate to intermediate reading levels and the goal is to develop their reading skills to the required advanced level. They read approximately 10 books at the initial level and then advance to three or four more levels during the rest of the year. Students have read about 40 books each by the end of the year. In the second semester, the focus is on raising their awareness of audience. Learners thus choose from a selection of creative writing formats each aimed at a different audience. These formats vary from writing to a friend about the book to writing a eulogy for one of the characters in the book or writing to the author about the book.

Books are selected for the collection using the guidelines of the Edinburgh
Project for Extensive Reading (EPER) (Hill 1992, 42–163). A number of available series are used, such as the Oxford Bookworms Library series and the Cambridge English Readers series.

Of the 12 notional-hour week allocated to the programme per week, students do 4 hours of out-of-class extensive reading, as well as 2 hours of intensive reading in class per week, thus the reading component is weighted quite heavily in terms of assessment and time. Students keep reading logs documenting the title and author of each book as well as a score out of five indicating their own enjoyment level of the book. Books that are highly rated are listed and shared with other students in the class.

The implementation of the extensive reading programme is facilitated by tutors who take on certain responsibilities. Tutors on the programme play a very important role as they are responsible for motivating the students and monitoring their progress. Firstly, they must convince the students that the programme will improve their reading skills. An orientation session at the beginning of the year gives tutors the opportunity to explain the programme’s rationale and benefits. Tutors introduce some of the titles and read extracts from selected graded readers. Our experience indicates that students are willing and eager to participate in the reading programme if the orientation is done thoroughly. Tutors also monitor the students’ reading and to try to ensure that they are keeping up with the requirements. It is important that this monitoring should not interfere with the students’ actual reading. Students should be reading the books for enjoyment and understanding, not as if studying for a test.

The initial funding, for the first graded readers came from sponsorships, but the UFS library has now taken on the regular purchasing and updating of the collection, which is growing and now provides students with a large selection of fiction and non-fiction titles.

**Small-Scale Experiment**

A small-scale experiment was set up to explore whether the extensive graded reading could indeed improve the reading proficiency of our student population. A group of first-year, second-language speakers of English were selected for the experiment. They were all on a university access programme and registered for an academic literacy course based on intensive, classroom reading and writing. Topical passages were selected from a variety of sources and coupled with activities focusing on features of the texts such as anaphoric and cataphoric referencing, the use of pronouns, the differences between fact and opinion, the authority of the writer, pre-reading and post-reading strategy training, vocabulary building, comprehension and a writing activity aimed at synthesizing the information gained in the reading process. Approximately 48 students took the intensive classroom reading programme coupled with the extensive graded reader programme. The control group of 48 students also did the in-class activities, but
did no graded reading. Students wrote a reading test as well as a reading rate test at the start of the programme. Both groups scored at the same level for reading rate and comprehension. Both these tests were again written at the end of the academic year. In addition, the students all wrote the same examination paper. These results were tabulated. The graphs in Figure 3 demonstrate the results of the post-sessional tests taken down at the end of the year after the intervention had taken place as well as the examination results.

### Reading test

![Graph showing reading test scores for Experimental Group and Control Group (Experimental Group: 77.2%, Control Group: 67.5%)](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Rate Group</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Reading rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental group</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>136 w.p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>102 w.p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Examination results

![Graph showing examination results for Experimental Group and Control Group (Experimental Group: 51%, Control Group: 45.7%)](image)

Figure 3: Results of the post-sessional tests and the examination results

The reading rate and reading comprehension scores of the experimental groups were distinctly higher than the control groups which had not been exposed to the extensive out-of-class reading programme. As evidenced above, the experimental
groups also outperformed the control groups in the examination. This experiment seems to suggest that an extensive graded reading programme does have benefits, but much more testing needs to be done. The differences were not subjected to statistical analysis to establish the statistical significance as this is still work in progress and similar experiments need to be done on larger groups.

CONCLUSION

Local and international research results confirm the generally held idea that much reading, at an appropriate level of comprehension, does improve reading proficiency. This route, however, is not a choice many tertiary educators make. Day and Bamford (1998, 3) confirm this, referring to extensive reading programmes as ‘an approach less taken’.

Meaningful reading instruction cannot be limited to the classroom (Grabe and Stoller 2001, 191). Reading fluency development should be central to any programme of reading instruction. Extensive graded reading focusing on much reading is an effective means of developing that fluency which is ‘one of the central foundations for efficient reading’ (Grabe and Stoller 2001, 196) and crucial for academic success.

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Extensive graded reading as a means of bridging the divide to the authentic academic text


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