The MMU Freshmen English Reading Curriculum 2008-2013: Development, Implementation, and Assessment

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In 2008, curriculum developers and English instructors at Miyazaki Municipal University (MMU) designed and implemented a new reading curriculum for all freshmen students. Building on the previous curriculum, this new approach attempted to provide a standardized framework of reading instruction that included both an *intensive* and *extensive* approach to improving English reading skills. Intensive Reading (IR) focuses on teaching students techniques and strategies to deal with text well beyond their current level. Extensive Reading (ER), on the other hand, requires learners to read vast amounts of material that has been simplified to the learner's appropriate reading level; thereby, improving motivation to read in a foreign language. By combining both an intensive and extensive approach, the MMU curriculum hoped to synthesize the best of both approaches. The purpose of this paper to describe and analyze the 2008 to 2013 MMU reading curriculum.

Key Words :EFL reading curriculum, intensive reading, extensive reading, summative assessment

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Ⅰ　Introduction

　Since its re-emergence in the 1990's as a valued methodology for helping to improve reading motivation, Extensive Reading (ER) has received a lot of attention by language teaching researchers and instructors (see Jacobs, et al. (2006) for a comprehensive annotated bibliography of research into Extensive Reading). The basic tenet of ER is to have students read a large amount of material at their own level. Dozens, if not hundreds, of articles have been published praising the tenets of ER programs. Although other aspects have received attention over the years, the primary focus of ER research has been on motivation and the ability of ER to improve student attitudes toward reading, particularly reading in a foreign language. Unfortunately, the degree to which these more motivated students have become better readers has yet to be proven conclusively. Several researchers (Coady, 1997; Brown, 2009; Horst, Cobb, and Meara, 1998; Nation, 1999, 2009; Nation and Wang, 1999; Waring and Nation, 2004; Worden, 2014) have expressed doubts as to the validity of the current ER methodology, especially in the exposure to and acquisition of new vocabulary considered necessary for reading improvement.

　In comparison, the pedagogical opposite to Extensive Reading, Intensive Reading (IR), has seen comparatively little attention by researchers in recent years except in the focus on *intentional* vocabulary acquisition over the *incidental* acquisition of new vocabulary that debatably occurs in ER (Nation, 1999, 2009; Nation and Wang, 1999; Waring and Nation, 2004). Except for this focus on explicit vocabulary acquisition, IR, with its focus on teaching students techniques and strategies to deal with text well beyond their level, is now seen as somewhat old-fashioned. To students coming out of Japanese high schools, the IR approach is also hauntingly close to the dreaded "grammar-translation" approach they endure in preparation for college entrance exams. However, as Bingham (2007) pointed out, an IR approach can also teach necessary skills students can use to become more autonomous, independent learners by focusing on mastering a reading process that includes instruction in

effective reading strategies.

Having considered the ER and IR approach to reading instruction, the developers of the reading curriculum at MMU concluded that yes, it is important that students find pleasure in reading and that well-motivated students will probably become better readers (i.e., the ER approach). However, there will come a time when all students will need to learn skills in how to cope with material that is so far above their level as to be incomprehensible (i.e., the IR approach). Therefore, the curriculum that was developed and implemented at MMU since 2008 attempts to integrate the best of both of these approaches. That is to say, the inclusion of Intensive Reading activities into an Extensive Reading program.

II   Development and Implementation

The first and foremost goal of the MMU English reading curriculum was to improve the students' ability to read in English. However, at MMU, each year instructors were faced with a wide spectrum of incoming freshmen in terms of language ability and motivation to study - especially English. Therefore, the reading curriculum was also designed to address the individual needs of individual students. In addition to and in conjunction with improving individual reading skills, the reading curriculum also strived to improve the motivation of students to read in a foreign language. Finally, students were introduced a solid framework of reading strategies and independent study skills to not only improve reading abilities, but also help nurture confident, autonomous language learners.

In order to achieve these goals, the reading curriculum was developed to integrate two different, yet complimentary approaches to improving individual reading skills and the motivation to read in a foreign language: Extensive and Intensive Reading.

1   The Extensive Reading Component

As mentioned above, the basic tenets of an ER program is to have students read a large amount of material at a level that has been "graded" to their individual levels. The desired effect is that by becoming exposed to lots of English at a level that is not too overwhelming, students will not only increase their reading ability, but also become more motivated to read in a foreign language. In many ER programs, students are assessed on the amount of words they have read in a given period and comprehension is assessed through the completion of

reading journals or the taking of online quizzes such as those created by the MReader.org website (n.d.).

A key component of any ER program is the availability of "graded readers" at a wide variety of reading levels. Most graded readers range from 35 to 80 pages depending on the level. According to the ER Foundation,

> "graded readers are books of various genres that are specially created for learners of foreign languages. They may be simplified versions of existing works, original stories or books that are factual in nature. They are 'graded' in the sense that the syntax and lexis are controlled in order to make the content accessible to learners of the language. Publishers normally issue reader series with 4-6 different reading levels to suit a range of skill levels and allow progress over time." (n.d.)

At MMU, an ER program in different forms has been in place since 1999. From 2008 to 2013, the students were expected to read at least six graded readers for both the Spring and Fall terms for a total of 12 books (approximately one book every two weeks). In order to determine the students' initial reading levels and to help assess reading improvement throughout the term, students were required to take the Edinburgh Project on Extensive Reading (EPER) Placement/Progress Test (Edinburgh Project for Extensive Reading, 1994) at the beginning of their first term and at the end of each term. According to the scores they received on the EPER Placement/Progress Test and in consultation with their instructors, the students self-selected graded readers appropriate to their level from the large selection of readers in the MMU library. For each graded reader, the students were also expected to complete one entry in a Reading Journal. A detailed description of the EPER test and the results will be explained later.

2　The Reading Journal

As a record and assessment of their reading and to encourage explicit vocabulary development, students were required to produce a reading journal entry for each book they read. The reading journal was especially developed for this course and consisted of one A3-sized handout with three sections: Personal Vocabulary List, Summary, and Reaction (see Appendix 1 and 2 for a sample the reading journal).

The Personal Vocabulary List was designed to be a lexically-based list of new vocabulary that students encountered in their reading. For each new word, students included the

Japanese definition, the sentence from the original source, three related words (collocations, antonyms, synonyms, or derivatives), and a sentence created by the student using the new word. Each week, the students had a Weekly Vocabulary Quiz on ten of the words in their Personal Vocabulary List where they were expected to write the Japanese meaning and three related English words from memory. In addition, students were re-tested on this vocabulary on a mid-term and final exam. As a result, students learned 80 new vocabulary items for each Reading Journal entry and mastered 960 individually-selected vocabulary items over the entire 2 terms.

In the second section of the reading journal the students were asked to write a Summary of the story. For this, students were asked to pretend as if the instructor had never read the book and to explain the main points of the story from beginning to end - in their own words without directly copying sentences from the book. In addition to providing the instructor with some idea of how well they read the graded readers, the summary writing also allowed the students to reinforce the acquisition of vocabulary found in the stories.

Finally, the students needed to write a Reaction. For the Reaction, they were asked to a) write their general impressions of the story and b) write about one theme they encounter in the story. For the themes, they were asked to first briefly explain the author's viewpoint of that theme and then to compare and contrast their own viewpoint with that of the author. Finally, they students were asked to connect the theme found in the book with their own personal experiences.

Although the production of a hand-written reading journal was a low-tech approach and different from other ER programs that rely on more high-tech online quizzes to assess student reading, the reading journal was deemed to be more easily implemented. This is primarily due to the fact that most of the reading instructors were part-time employees of MMU who could not be expected to spend personal time and energy learning and implementing a more high-tech approach.

3 The Intensive Reading Component

In addition to Extensive Reading, the reading curriculum included an Intensive Reading (IR) approach to improving reading skills. In contrast to ER where students read material at their own individual levels, IR focuses on teaching students effective reading strategies that help overcome difficulties in reading material that is more advanced and challenging.

In developing the IR component of the MMU reading curriculum, several approaches were considered. A crucial concern was finding appropriate reading material in terms of

variety and interest to the students, and deciding which reading strategies to include and at what stage. In previous years, authentic material from newspapers, magazines and online resources had been used as the primary reading material, but this was found to be much too difficult for the lower-level students and very challenging for even the best readers. Another issue was an institutional concern that all students should be following standardized curriculum that included the use of the same materials in all classes. If all students were using the same material and same curriculum, grading would be seen as more consistent and "fair."

To address these concerns, several textbooks and online resources were considered. Although not entirely suitable, the textbook *For Your Information 2* (Blanchard and Root, 2007) was selected because it best addressed most of the aspects deemed most necessary and was appropriately challenging for the majority of MMU students; however, the reading passages and activities in each chapter were modified for the upper level students. The textbook includes reading passages on a variety of interesting topics. In addition, a variety of activities were presented in each lesson that helped students to acquire important reading strategies and further improve vocabulary development. These reading strategies include skimming and scanning, reading for gist, reading for comprehension, effective dictionary use, summarizing, paraphrasing, reading aloud, and an introduction to common English prefixes and suffixes.

As assessment, the students were expected to write the answers for the textbook IR activities on a weekly worksheet which was submitted to the instructor for evaluation. In addition, a mid-term and final exam was given that focused mostly on assessing acquisition of key vocabulary and knowledge of the reading strategies presented in each chapter.

Ⅲ　Assessment of MMU Reading Program

In order to assess the efficacy of the MMU reading program, both formative and summative assessment were used (Eberly Center, n.d.). Formative assessments are used to gauge ongoing student progress throughout the length of the term. Weekly scores for textbook activities and vocabulary quizzes and scores on bi-weekly reading journals formed the basis for the formative assessment of the reading program. Summative assessments evaluate student progress at the end of the course and often use some standardized

assessment tool. For the MMU reading program, summative assessments were based on comparisons between pre-course and post-course scores on the Edinburgh Project for Extensive Reading (EPER) Placement/Progress Test (Edinburgh Project for Extensive Reading, 1994). This study will focus on an evaluation of the summative assessment only.

1 EPER Test: Introduction

Questions on the EPER test ask the students to fill in missing words from several increasingly difficult reading passages. No item cues are given and correct answers must have correct spelling and punctuation. The EPER test comes in several different versions; however, to maintain consistency and to provide a more reliable post-course evaluation, only Test A was used (EPER, 1994) at the beginning, middle and end of the two-term course: April, July, and January, respectively. Samples of an easy and difficult passage are shown below (see Table 1 and 2).

Table 1. Sample of Passage from EPER Test A: Easy

> 1   There is an oak tree in Mary's garden. It ___(1)___ a big tree. David liked ___(2)___ climb the tree. One day ___(3)___ climbed very high. He looked ___(4)___ the garden wall and ___(5)___ all the fields around.
> "I ___(6)___ see some cows in the river," David called ___(7)___ Mary. "What else can ___(8)___ see?" asked Mary.
> "I can ___(9)___ two dogs on the road."
> " ___(10)___ are they doing?" asked Mary.
> " ___(11)___ are fighting."

(adapted from EPER, 1994)

Table 2. Sample of Passage from EPER Test A: Difficult

> 12   The Air Hostess went away and came back with a ___(130)___ of whisky. She seemed ___(131)___ . She had blue eyes. He wished he could be as calm ___(132)___ she appeared to be. The plane's ___(133)___ grew quieter. For a moment, they ___(134)___ to be stopped completely. The ___(135)___ dropped like a stone, and ___(136)___ dived into the grey clouds. He ___(137)___ see nothing except a ___(138)___ white mist outside the windows. ___(139)___ in the plane was talking to each ___(140)___ . The plane seemed to fall ___(141)___ and down.

(adapted from EPER, 1994)

In the data analysis below, standardized scores based on a standardization scale provided by the publisher will be used. The publishers also provide a guide which shows how standardized scores correspond to the levels of graded-readers published by several popular publishers. Table 3 shows the relationship between the raw scores,

Table 3. EPER Test Scores and Graded Reader Levels

Raw Score	Standardized Score	Graded Reader Level	Headwords	TOEIC
0 - 32	0 - 11	LEVEL G	200 - 400	<150
33 - 45	12 - 17	LEVEL F	～600	
46 - 59	18 - 24	LEVEL E	～800	150
60 - 76	25 - 34	LEVEL D	～1200	～400
77 - 89	35 - 44	LEVEL C	～1600	～530
90 - 100	45 - 54	LEVEL B	～1900	>650

(adapted from Edinburgh Project for Extensive Reading, 1994; Waring, 2013)

standardized scores, graded reader level, and Waring's (2013) estimated correlation to TOEIC scores. In addition to the standardized scores, this graded reader guide based will be used to discuss improvements in student reading levels.

2   EPER Test Results: Triannual Comparisons 2008-2013

As mentioned above, the EPER test was administered triannually over a 10-month period to all freshmen at MMU. Results for the six-year period from 2008 to 2013 are presented below. As noted above, standardized scores will be used to generate means, standard deviations (STDEV), standard error of measurement (SEM), and gains or losses for academic semesters of April to July, July to January, and the entire academic year of April to January (see Table 4).

In Table 4, the results for all students over the six period are shown. As will be shown later, these results are consistent for all students tested from 2008 to 2013 and when compared on a year-to-year basis. The average EPER exam score for incoming freshmen to MMU was 25.16 (n=1266). This average score of 25.16 corresponds to a low Level D on the EPER Graded Reader Scale where students can be expected to read graded readers with a maximum of 1200 headwords. However, scores ranged from a minimum of 4 to a maximum of 54 which correspond to a Level G (less than 200 headwords) and a Level B (1900 headwords or young adult fiction). This 50-point range clearly shows how diverse the freshman were in

terms of initial reading levels as measured by the EPER exam.

Table 4. Aggregate Results of Triannual EPER Test: 2008-2013

Raw Score	April (n=1266)	July (n=1246)	January (n=1192)
Mean	25.16	31.21	32.51
Stdev	7.64	8.31	8.61
SEM	4.58	4.96	5.04
April-July Gains	6.05*		
July-January Gains	1.29*		
April-January Gains	7.35*		

*significant at p<.001

When test results for all students were compared, scores increased significantly from April-July (n=1266), July-January (n=1192), and April to January (n=1189) (paired sample t-test, p<0.001). A gain of 7.35 over the two academic terms meant that on average students gained at least one reading level. However, most gains (6.05) were seen in the first term (April-July); however, although significant, the gains in the second term (1.29) were disappointing. When comparing results based on gender (one-way ANOVA, p<.05), no significant differences in means were seen (see Table 5).

Table 5. Gender Comparison for EPER Test: 2008-2013

	Gender	N	Mean	Stdev	Difference in Means	Sig.
April	female male	986 280	25.21 24.98	7.65 7.58	.236	.648[1]
July	female male	987 282	30.79 30.13	9.17 9.40	.663	.287[1]
January	female male	943 249	32.62 32.06	8.54 8.83	.562	.360[1]

not significant at p<.05

In order to evaluate how students at differing levels performed on the test, the students were categorized into three groups (low, intermediate and high) based on their April

standardized scores. The low group (n=442) had scores between 4 and 22, the intermediate group (n=412) between 23 and 28, and the high group (n=412) over 29. A Pearson product moment coefficient was then computed to gauge relationships between the standardized scores for April, July, and January and the groupings of low, intermediate, and high scores (see Table 6).

Table 6. Correlation for Term Results and Reading Levels

		April Score	July Score	January Score	Low, Intermediate, High Level**
April Score	Pearson Correlation Sig. (1-tailed) N	1 1266			
July Score	Pearson Correlation Sig. (1-tailed) N	.767* .000 1266	1 1269		
January Score	Pearson Correlation Sig. (1-tailed) N	.829* .000 1189	.813* .000 1192	1 1192	
Low, Intermediate, High Level**	Pearson Correlation Sig. (1-tailed) N	-.882* .000 1266	-.674* .000 1269	-.722* .000 1192	1 1269

*significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed) **values for level: Low=3, Intermediate=2, High=1

As expected, term-to-term scores were highly correlated and significant (p<.01). The relationship between the individual term scores and the groupings of low, intermediate, and high were also significant (p<.001), but negatively correlated. The negative correlation for the July and January scores (-.674 and -.722, respectively) decreased in comparison to the April scores (-.882).

Further evidence of the discrepancy between gains in the low, intermediate, and high scoring groups can be seen when means are compared (see Table 7). Although significant gains were realized in all three groups over the entire year, the low level group had slightly higher gains (+0.21) than the intermediate group and much higher gains than the high level group (+1.32) over the entire year. Therefore, the data presented in Tables 6 and 7 give evidence that students at the lower reading levels seemed to have benefitted most from the MMU reading curriculum as measured by the EPER test.

Table 7. Comparison of Means for Low, Intermediate and High Score Groups

Group	April Score	July Score (April-July gain)	January Score (July-January gain)	Total Gain (April-January)
Low	17.14	23.71 (6.57*)	24.93 (1.21*)	7.78*
Intermediate	25.37	31.67 (6.30*)	32.93 (1.26*)	7.57*
High	33.55	38.63 (5.08*)	40.01 (1.38*)	6.46*

*significant at p<.001

3 EPER Test Results: Year-on-Year Comparisons 2008-2013

As seen above, the 2008-2013 MMU Reading program was successful in increasing reading skills as measured by the EPER test. To further evaluate the program, a year-on-year comparison is presented below. For the purpose of this evaluation, comparisons will focus on gains in the means of the standardized EPER test scores of April, July, and January of each academic year (see Tables 8 and 9). Except for the July-January gains of 2012 and 2013 (0.14 and 0.98, respectively), gains for each term of each year were found to be significant (paired sample t-test, p<0.001).

Table 8. Year-on-Year Results of Triannual EPER Test: 2008-2010

	2008			2009			2010		
	4/08	7/08	1/09	4/09	7/09	1/10	4/10	7/10	1/11
Mean	26.02	32.40	34.10	26.33	32.64	34.11	24.38	30.68	32.32
Stdev	7.33	7.48	7.29	7.82	8.41	8.62	8.03	8.43	8.74
SEM	4.63	5.02	5.10	4.66	5.04	5.12	4.53	4.93	5.03
April-July Gains	6.37*			6.31*			6.30*		
July-January Gains	1.71*			1.46*			1.63*		
April-January Gains	8.08*			7.77*			7.93*		

*significant at p<.001

Table 9. Year-on-Year Results of Triannual EPER Test: 2011-2013

	2011			2012			2013		
	4/11	7/11	1/12	4/12	7/12	1/13	4/13	7/13	1/14
Mean	25.45	30.92	32.93	23.71	30.10	30.25	24.97	30.34	31.32
Stdev	7.50	8.30	8.99	7.71	8.62	8.93	7.16	8.37	8.38
SEM	4.59	4.95	5.06	4.47	4.90	4.91	4.56	4.91	4.97
April-July Gains	5.47*			6.39*			5.37*		
July-January Gains	2.01*			0.14			0.98		
April-January Gains	7.47*			6.53*			6.35*		

*significant at p<.001

Although average scores improved across the board from 2008 to 2013, a careful look at the data in Tables 8 and 9 shows some disturbing trends. The first is a steady decrease in the students' initial average scores in April. From a high of 26.02 in 2008 to the low of 23.17 in 2012, initial average scores and their correlating reading levels decreased dramatically. This decrease is also seen the average gains over the entire academic year and term to term. In 2008, students had an April to January gain of over 8 points which for many students meant an increase in two reading levels according to the EPER Graded Reader scale. In contrast, the final year of 2013 saw gains of only 6.35 points.

The second disturbing trend was also seen in the aggregate results presented above. Over the six-year period, students saw consistently lower gains in the second term (July to January) than in the first (April to July). With a high of 2.01 in 2011 to a low of 0.14 in 2012, the second term gains never came close to matching the gains from April to July, and the final years of 2012 (0.14) and 2013 (0.98) were less than all previous years.

Ⅳ　Discussion and Future Implications

As described above, the MMU freshmen reading program has attempted to blend two approaches: intensive reading and extensive reading. In previously reported research, both approaches have benefits which have been shown to improve student reading skills. By integrating aspects of both approaches, curriculum developers at MMU have attempted to apply the best of both approaches with the hope that this would be more effective than

implementing a single methodology. At first glance, the post-course results on the EPER test provide evidence that this blended approach has indeed significantly improved reading abilities; however, when long-term results over six years are taken into consideration, several trends that need to be addressed become evident.

1　Positive Results

In the ER component of the MMU reading curriculum, students read twelve graded readers, learned over 900 new vocabulary items from those graded readers, and produced twelve summary and reactions to the books they had read. In the IR component students were introduced to twenty-three, more challenging, contextually-based reading passages, key vocabulary from those passages, and important reading strategies. This resulted in a term-to-term improvement of over seven points in average reading levels as measured by the EPER test. Although beyond the scope of this study, when considering both gains in the summative assessment of the EPER test scores and the quality of the formative assessments such as reading journal scores, weekly vocabulary quiz scores, scores on textbook activities, and scores on mid-term and final exams, the developers and instructors of the MMU reading curriculum have felt confident they are providing an effective curriculum to the MMU students. Having said that, there are serious two serious challenges that both curriculum developers and instructors need to overcome.

2　Lower Gains in Second Term (July to January)

The greatest concern is the tendency for students to have lower gains in the second term than in the first. Familiarity with the EPER test is perhaps the most important factor in this difference. Different from the types of tests that incoming students may have faced in the high school career or in the entrance exams they will have had to pass to enter university, the items on the EPER test expect test-takers to provide answers completely from memory and in a literary context of which they might not be familiar. To provide a correct item, students must first understand the context of the passage and then provide an appropriate lexical item with correct spelling, capitalization, and an awareness of the correct part of speech. The "all or nothing" scoring rubric might be especially challenging to first-time test takers who might already be overwhelmed in their new environment. This unfamiliarity with the exam and the possible stress of entering a new environment could cause the April scores to be less accurate of students' true ability than might be the case. Later on the post-course test in July, students would be more familiar with the test and able

to perform at a higher, more accurate level.

Unfortunately, this theory of increased test familiarity equals higher scores does not extend into the second term. The January test is the third time the students will have taken the same test over a ten-month period. If test familiarity was a factor for better scores, the July to January gains should have been more similar to the gains of the first term. As mentioned above, the gains from July to January were much lower than the gains in the first term, and for many students January scores were less than those attained in July. As a result, for many students test familiarity may have been trumped by test fatigue.

Another possible reason for higher first-term gains might be the willingness of students to work harder in their first term at university. Anecdotal evidence provided by the instructors points out that first-term freshmen tend to put more effort into completing homework assignments, attending class, and participating in classroom activities. Students who ultimately fail the course are also quite low in the first term. In addition, the academic schedule at MMU has less distractions with the only all-campus event being a one-day sports festival in May. In the second term, on the other hand, instructors report an obvious change in student attitudes following the summer break. The quality of work lessens, homework assignments are more often turned in late or not at all, absences increase, failure rates increase, and all students, especially the freshmen, start to focus on the main campus event of the year, the two-day school festival. In this author's opinion, the amount of effort that students put into the school festival seriously affects academic performance and ultimately the post-course scores on the EPER test.

Additionally, by the second term, less motivated students may have learned how to satisfactorily complete homework assignments without really doing any work. Many of the weekly assignments depend on a student's sense of self-motivation to be effective. Or as one instructor puts it, "No pain, no gain." However, if a student is less motivated, it may be possible to game the system in such a way that homework assignments are finished, but reading skills are not being improved. The completion of the Reading Journal is a good example. If done correctly, the completion of the reading journal is a reflection of how much effort the student has put into weekly reading assignments. Unfortunately, students may learn how to produce an acceptable reading journal without putting in the effort to read the book. The effect of these short cuts may not be seen until the student takes the EPER test at the end of the term.

A final possible explanation of lower gains on the EPER test in the second term might be with the EPER test itself. As a blend of IR and ER, the MMU reading program does

not follow a typical extensive reading approach where quantity of reading is given greater importance over quality. In addition, the content of most of the graded readers that are used in extensive reading are literature based. The passages on the EPER test as well are more literary in nature. Therefore, although test familiarity may help improve scores on the July test, the intensive reading focus on vocabulary acquisition and meta-cognitive reading strategies may not be very helpful in improving scores on the EPER test over time. What may be needed is a more traditional extensive reading approach where students are exposed to much more literature-based reading material.

3　Decrease in Initial EPER Scores

As shown above, initial scores on the April EPER test by incoming freshmen have decreased since 2008. Although an influx of students with lower English reading skills may be more of an institutional (or even national) concern, the ramifications are concerning to both the developers of MMU's reading curriculum and the instructors of the freshmen reading courses. As mentioned above, ER was originally designed to improve motivation to read in a foreign language - especially in lower level students. By improving motivation and by providing large amounts of exposure to language, reading abilities were assumed to increase. At MMU when the reading program was reformed in 2008, however, a greater number of students had been entering with higher reading levels and the curriculum developers felt this facilitated a need to include IR activities in addition to ER. This resulted in the blended curriculum used from 2008 to 2013. Through an analysis presented above, it has become obvious that overall reading scores have decreased over the past several years and this might be a continuing trend into the future. The purpose of this discussion is not to delve into the reason why that may be so, but rather to acknowledge that because of those changes, a different curriculum may need to be developed to meet future challenges.

One of the first issues that needs to be addressed is how to meet the needs of the greater percentage of lower level students without forgetting about the large group of higher level students. Until the present, all freshmen reading courses followed a standardized curriculum based on the level of a majority of the students. For example, the textbook for the IR activities is designed to meet the needs of a lower-intermediate level student. This was due to concerns for "fairness" where everyone would get the same credits for the same work. A standardized curriculum was also considered easier for instructors to implement. This was especially important since the majority of teachers in the reading program are part-time instructors. In the future, students may need to be more strictly placed into level-appropriate

courses with entire curricula designed specifically for that level. Content, class activity, and textbook decisions would also need to be based on these levels.

　　Although this may seem a simple solution, implementation of such an approach may prove difficult. First, at least three (low, intermediate, high) entirely new curricula would need to be developed and instructors would have to develop lesson plans and materials for variety of reading levels. In addition, initial placement decisions would need to be much more carefully made because students would be placed into a multi-track system that might be difficult or impossible to change later. With placement decisions becoming more crucial and "high stakes," the actual placement instruments would also have to be carefully selected. Until 2013, the EPER test had been the primary assessment instrument and as mentioned previously, this type of exam may not be entirely appropriate for both placement and long-term summative assessment. Additional placement mechanisms may need to be developed or acquired to provide a better, holistic assessment of initial English abilities and post-course progress.

V　Conclusion

　　The development and implementation of an effective, standardized reading curriculum has taken several years of effort by both curriculum developers and instructors at MMU. Although several hurdles still need to be faced, including extensive and intensive approaches to improving reading skills has proven that a more holistic curriculum can and should be used. Although some may propose that an "either, or" curriculum might be a more effective approach, the results presented in this study have shown that an integration of methodologies can increase reading levels, but also nurture students who are both comfortable with and motivated to read in English and who have been instructed in the types of reading strategies and explicit vocabulary acquisition that will be necessary to cope with real world situations outside of the classroom.

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Appendix 1. Sample of Reading Journal: Page 1

Personal Vocabulary List — Group: 1　Entry No.: 3　Date Submitted: 6/12　Quality 5　Quantity 5

1. (a) new word: gunman (日本語) 殺し屋　(b) word form: noun
   (c) original sentence: Giardello and his gunmen are behind all murders.
   (d) related words: 1. killer (日本語) 殺し屋　2. gunfighter (日本語) ガンマン　3. robber (日本語) 強盗　noun
   (e) new sentence: Gunman shoot himself with a pistol.

2. (a) new word: payment (日本語) 支払い額　(b) word form: noun
   (c) original sentence: Some of them took illegal payments.
   (d) related words: 1. fee (日本語) 料金　2. reward (日本語) 報酬　3. pay (日本語) 給料　noun
   (e) new sentence: I'll give you it in payment for your kind.

3. (a) new word: actress (日本語) 女優　(b) word form: noun
   (c) original sentence: Your father protected that actress.
   (d) related words: 1. actor (日本語) 俳優　2. oct (日本語) 演じる　3. performer (日本語) 役者　noun
   (e) new sentence: The actress is famous in Japan.

4. (a) new word: fair (日本語) 金髪　(b) word form: adjective
   (d) related words: 1. blond (日本語) 金髪の　2. brown (日本語) 茶色の　3. brunet (日本語) 黒褐色の　adjective
   (e) new sentence: He has fair hair.

5. (a) new word: fire (日本語) 発砲する　(b) word form: verb
   (c) original sentence: The tail for gunman fired.
   (d) related words: 1. discharge (日本語) 発射する　2. shoot (日本語) 撃つ　3. launch (日本語) 発射する　verb
   (e) new sentence: I fired at the robber.

6. (a) new word: frighten (日本語) おびえさせる　(b) word form: verb
   (c) original sentence: He was suddenly very frightened.
   (d) related words: 1. fright (日本語) 恐怖　2. scare (日本語) 怖がる　3. fear (日本語) 恐怖　verb
   (e) new sentence: I'm frighten of you.

7. (a) new word: responsible (日本語) 責任のある　(b) word form: adjective
   (c) original sentence: You're not responsible.
   (d) related words: 1. irresponsible (日本語) 無責任な　2. tension (日本語) 責任　3. guilty (日本語) 有罪の　adjective
   (e) new sentence: He should be held responsible for this thing.

8. (a) new word: ambulance (日本語) 救急車　(b) word form: noun
   (c) original sentence: Sibawiz called an ambulance.
   (d) related words: 1. vehicle (日本語) 乗物　2. crane (日本語) クレーン　3. tractor (日本語) トラクター　noun
   (e) new sentence: Call an ambulance or he will die.

9. (a) new word: mess (日本語) 取り散らかした状態　(b) word form: noun
   (c) original sentence: He looked at the mess round him in the room.
   (d) related words: 1. confusion (日本語) 混乱　2. disorder (日本語) 無秩序　3. chaos (日本語) 混沌　noun
   (e) new sentence: Clear the mess of toys.

10. (a) new word: explosive (日本語) 爆発物　(b) word form: noun
    (c) original sentence: It's explosive.
    (d) related words: 1. explode (日本語) 爆発する　2. explosively (日本語) 爆発的に　3. explosiveness (日本語) 爆発　noun
    (e) new sentence: The explosive used in terrorism.

11. (a) new word: envelope (日本語) 封筒　(b) word form: noun
    (c) original sentence: He put them in an envelope.
    (d) related words: 1. letter (日本語) 手紙　2. stamp (日本語) 切手　3. card (日本語) 葉書　noun
    (e) new sentence: I put letter in an envelope.

12. (a) new word: cigarette (日本語) 巻きたばこ　(b) word form: noun
    (c) original sentence: Looks like cigarettes all night.
    (d) related words: 1. tobacco (日本語) たばこ　2. cigar (日本語) 葉巻　3. smoking (日本語) 喫煙　noun
    (e) new sentence: It is bad for your health to smoke cigarette.

13. (a) new word: limousine (日本語) リムジン　(b) word form: noun
    (c) original sentence: What about a limousine?
    (d) related words: 1. sedan (日本語) セダン　2. saloon car (日本語) 乗用車　3. wagon (日本語) 荷馬車　noun
    (e) new sentence: The actress rode this limousine.

14. (a) new word: swipe (日本語) さっと通す　(b) word form: verb
    (c) original sentence: I'll swipe it for you.
    (d) related words: 1. (日本語) 盗む　2. import (日本語) 持ち込む　3. capture (日本語) 捕らえる　verb
    (e) new sentence: I swipe to pass my credit card.

15. (a) new word: immigration (日本語) 入国　(b) word form: noun
    (c) original sentence: It took a long time to get through Immigration and Customs.
    (d) related words: 1. entry (日本語) 入国　2. immigrate (日本語) 移住する　3. emigrate (日本語) 移住する　noun
    (e) new sentence: I couldn't get through customs and didn't do immigration.

16. (a) new word: declare (日本語) 申告する　(b) word form: verb
    (c) original sentence: Have you declared your motor yet?
    (d) related words: 1. declarer (日本語) 申告者　2. announce (日本語) 知らせる　3. declaration (日本語) 申告　verb
    (e) new sentence: They declare a state of emergency.

17. (a) new word: accounting (日本語) 会計（学）　(b) word form: noun
    (c) original sentence: You should right here, counting 204.
    (d) related words: 1. count (日本語) 数える　2. account (日本語) 勘定　3. bill (日本語) 請求書　noun
    (e) new sentence: I need an accounting of all the money they spent.

18. (a) new word: waive (日本語) 放棄する　(b) word form: verb
    (c) original sentence: I was waived my right.
    (d) related words: 1. cover (日本語) 覆う　2. demand (日本語) 要求する　3. abandon (日本語) 捨てる　verb
    (e) new sentence: The rules can only be waived in exceptional circumstances.

19. (a) new word: apply (日本語) 申し込む　(b) word form: verb
    (c) original sentence: You should apply for a waiver.
    (d) related words: 1. application (日本語) 申込み　2. subscribe (日本語) 応募する　3. applicant (日本語) 応募者　verb
    (e) new sentence: He applied to unlock.

20. (a) new word: opt (日本語) 選ぶ　(b) word form: verb
    (c) original sentence: A waiver gives you the right to opt out of a clause.
    (d) related words: 1. elect (日本語) 選ぶ　2. select (日本語) 選ぶ　3. choose (日本語) 選ぶ　verb
    (e) new sentence: He didn't opt in do his homework.

Additional New Words or Expressions (optional)

English	日本語	English	日本語
Synonym	同義語	quality	質
antonym	反意語	route	道筋
definitive	決定的	survey	ざっと見渡す
entirely	完全に	scrim	細い布
summary	要約	personal	個人的な
description	描写	accept	受け取る
impression	印象	plagiarism	盗作
general	一般的な	immediately	ただちに

Appendix 2. Sample of Reading Journal: Page 2

Weekly Reading Schedule

Days 1-2 a. Choose a graded reader.
b. SURVEY your graded reader (BEFORE you read the book).
1. Look at the illustrations (絵) in the book.
2. Skim the book for all the words you don't know.
3. Copy all your unknown words in the Personal Vocabulary List
4. Find the Japanese meanings
5. Find 3 related words and their Japanese meanings

Days 2-10 c. READ FOR PLEASURE!
1. For at least 30-40 minutes every day, read your graded reader.
2. The first time, read quickly and lightly to get a general idea of what the book is about.
3. The second and third time, read the story more carefully, more deeply.
4. Continue completing the Personal Vocabulary List in your Reading Journal.

Days 11-14 d. Write your Summary and Reaction
1. After you have finished reading the story, go back and review each chapter, then if you have time re-read the story again 2 or 3 times.
2. Write a brief summary of the main points of the story.
3. After finishing the Summary, choose your Theme and write your Reaction.

Book Title: NYPD BLUE   Publisher: MAX ALLAN COLLINS   Grade Level: level 3

Summary   Quality ___ Quantity ___

Kelly and Sipowicz are detectives. They were at hotel in Manhattan on August day. They find Dietrichson and Nardi. He is professional killer. They protected him because they wanted him.

He gave information about other murder. But he didn't try to escape. Sipowicz told Kelly that he wanted to go out and went out. Kelly looked after Nardi. Kelly's father is also detective. Someone shoot him when Kelly was going out. Kelly never was plan. Kelly thinks he was innocent and great of him. But Nardi said he was dirty and he protected actress who is Tony Manino's killer. He didn't believe this story. Suddenly there was a knock at the door. He looked through spy hole. Is the lawyer. He opened the door and two men jumped into the room. They had guns. The tall fat gunman find Nardi and killed him. Kelly killed the gunman. Black-haired gunman ran out of a room. After that Sipowicz come back. He looked at the mess against from the room. The lawyer and fat gunman were lying. He died in ambulance. Nardi and two men worked for Al Giardella. Kelly told his wife Laura that he wasn't safe in story of Kelly's father. They were Henry, Wayne and knew about Bob bar story. Then Kelly and Sipowicz ran into the room where Giardella and lawyer stayed. Sipowicz find Viana. They get Giardella. Sipowicz helped Giardella into the police car. All of things ended.

Reaction   Quality ___ Quantity ___

1) your general impression

I don't like this story because many people died in this story. Many people was shoot and killed. Of course. It was fine that the murder was caught. However I didn't get to be happy when I read it.

2) author's viewpoint on theme   Theme: Arresting murder.

I guess that there is not author's viewpoint especially in this story. In this story policemen tried to arrest murder hard. Then the murder was caught. Judging from this story, author may think that murder must be caught and police men must arrest the murder.

3) your viewpoint on theme

I think murder should we arrest soon. Of course it is for maintaining an orderly society and victims and especially for helping murder. Almost murder didn't won't to be murder but they become by terrible condition and on. Criminals are awkward when they escape from arresting. In my childhood I did not like long. There was a class of drawing and manual arts and we draw a poster of the time. All mess I drawed over a darker and spilled the water. Then others' poster was get wet. I escaped unconsciously. After the mess everyone found the poster was get wet. I didn't say that. I did it, an that one. For a while I didn't come out this evil but I was always awkward until I came out it. Everyone do a bad thing. I think murder should be caught soon to atone for his sin and release from guilt as fast as possible. Then the murder can come back to a quiet normal life. So policemen should work hard like the policemen in this story. I think it is very wonderful that everyone including people that committed a crime, in the past can lead a happy life.