

Reading Quotes with Citations

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(Blue highlighting denotes my titles and comments)

THE EFFICIENCY OF READING

- *READING IS MORE EFFICIENT THAN TRADITIONAL INSTRUCTION*

“Picking up word meanings by reading is 10 times faster than intensive vocabulary instruction.”

—Stephen Krashen (1993). *The Power of Reading*, p. 15, citing a study by Nagy, Herman and Anderson

So why would we use the slower method of direct instruction of vocabulary rather than giving students stories to augment their language?

- *READING IS A GOOD USE OF CLASSROOM TIME*

“Teaching vocabulary lists is inefficient—the time is better spent reading alone.”

—Stephen Krashen (2004). *The Power of Reading*, 2nd edition, p. 19

- *READING STORIES HELPS STUDENTS REMEMBER*

“We remember things best when they are organized with everything else we know, when they come with stories attached, rather than as isolated bits of information.”

—Frank Smith (2007). *Reading FAQ*, p. 45

Human brains are not computers. Our brains frame the world in terms of stories, rather than bits of data.

READING & VOCABULARY

- *READING BUILDS BIGGER VOCABULARIES*

“Less frequent words... may best be learned by reading extensively, because there is just not enough time to learn them all through conscious study.”

—Norbert Schmitt (2000). *Vocabulary in Language Teaching*, p. 137

- *READING STORIES BUILDS VOCABULARY EASILY*

“It’s not easy to learn new words from word lists, where there is no meaningful context. But new words are learned with remarkable facility, especially in stories, when you are reading something that makes sense to you.”

—Frank Smith (2007). *Reading FAQ*, p. 40

- *VOCABULARY GROWTH IS EASIER AND MORE POWERFUL WITH READING*

“Incidental learning of words during reading may be the easiest and single most powerful means of promoting large-scale vocabulary growth.”

—Nagy, W.E. & Herman, P.A. (1987). Breadth and Depth of Vocabulary Knowledge: Implications for Acquisition and Instruction. In M.G. McKeown & M.E. Curtis (Eds.), *The Nature of Vocabulary Acquisition*, p. 27

- **PREPARE STUDENTS FOR READING BY TEACHING HIGH-FREQUENCY VERBS and FUNCTION WORDS**

“Given that verbs typically account for 20 percent of all words in a language [focusing on the verbs] may be a good strategy. Also, focus on the function words may be equally rewarding—60 percent of speech in English is composed of a mere 50 function words.”

—Mark Davies (2006). *A Frequency Dictionary of Spanish: Core Vocabulary for Learners*, p. vii
It is well worth our time to teach the basic verbs and function words (short grammatical words) early and often.

- **A LIFETIME OF THOUGHT CAN BE EXPRESSED WITH A LIMITED SET OF WORDS**

“The German peasant-farmer of [1825] had a vocabulary of only 600 words, all told.”

—G.G. Coulton (1925). *The Medieval Village*, p. 393
We live in a more complex and vocabulary-rich world now, but the point is that people can function with a limited number of words—so focusing on high-frequency vocabulary is a good use of class time and it can get students reading language learner literature quickly.

READING & GRAMMAR

- **STUDENTS CAN ACQUIRE DIFFICULT GRAMMAR JUST BY READING**

“The only significant predictor of the ability to use the subjunctive was the amount of free voluntary reading done in Spanish; the amount of formal study of Spanish, the amount of formal study specifically aimed at the subjunctive, and how long subjects had lived in a Spanish-speaking country were not significant predictors of subjunctive competence.”

—Stephen Krashen (2001). *Free Voluntary Reading*, p. 27

- **RATHER THAN LISTS TO MEMORIZE, STUDENTS NEED INPUT TO FIGURE OUT THE LANGUAGE**

“To become speakers, children cannot just memorize; they must leap into the linguistic unknown and generalize to an infinite world of as-yet-unspoken sentences.”

—Steven Pinker (1994). *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language*, p. 281
When students know the high-frequency verbs, they can understand and create unique sentences, most of which have never been uttered before.

- **INTERNALIZING GRAMMAR DOES NOT DEPEND ON “PRACTICING” GRAMMAR**

“Grammar development does not depend on overt practice, because actually saying something aloud, as opposed to listening to what other people say, does not provide the child with information about the language he or she is trying to learn.

—Steven Pinker (1994). *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language*, p. 280
“Practicing the language” is not nearly as important as getting quality input with comprehended and interesting language. That can happen with reading when individualized verbal interaction for each student is not practical.

READING ALOUD TO STUDENTS

- **VOCABULARY GROWS BY BEING READ TO AND BY READING**

“Students don’t learn new words by studying vocabulary lists. They do so by guessing new meanings within the overall gist of what they are hearing or reading. Substance, not skill, develops vocabulary and reading ability—there are no shortcuts.

—Cox Gurdon, Meghan (2019). *The Enchanted Hour: The Miraculous Power of Reading Aloud in the Age of Distraction*, p. 110.

We need to expose students to meaningful language—lots of meaningful language—if we want them to develop vocabulary and reading ability.

- **READING ALOUD CONNECTS STUDENTS SOCIALLY**

“When we read with a child, we are doing so much more than teaching him to read or instilling in her a love of language. We are doing something that we are losing as a culture: by reading with a child, we are teaching that child to be human.”

—Cox Gurdon, Meghan (2019). *The Enchanted Hour: The Miraculous Power of Reading Aloud in the Age of Distraction*, p. 218.

Your students need to hear your voice to connect with you as well as to acquire language.

AUTHENTIC TEXTS

- **AUTHENTIC TEXTS MAY NOT ALLOW STUDENTS TO READ FOR ACQUISITION**

“The use of authentic texts with learners often has an effect opposite to that intended: instead of helping the reader to read for the meaning of the message, an authentic text at too difficult of a level of language forces the reader to focus on the code.”

—Eddie Williams (1983). Communicative Reading. In K. Johnson and D. Porter (Eds.), *Perspectives in Communicative Language Teaching*, p. 175

Students will acquire more language if they read for meaning, rather than merely reading to decode.

- **NOVICE & INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS NEED A BETTER DEFINITION OF “AUTHENTIC TEXTS”**

“The usual definition of ‘authentic’ is ‘a text written by native speakers for native speakers’. Perhaps a better definition is this one: ‘A text that is interesting and comprehensible’ ... In other words, there is nothing wrong with reading texts that are specially prepared for second language students, as long as they are interesting and comprehensible. They can be a helpful first step, leading to the reading of texts that are authentic in the traditional sense.”

—Stephen Krashen (1997). *Foreign Language Education the Easy Way*, p. 34

Language learner literature—texts that are vocabulary controlled— are the bridge that prepares students to read authentic literature. Students will be able to read authentic texts for meaning and pleasure much faster if we provide them with that bridge.

READING VERSUS VIDEO

- **READING ALOUD ENGAGES MORE OF THE BRAIN THAN VIDEO**

“When a child is watching a video story on a laptop or tablet, the act may appear indistinguishable from his looking at a story in a picture book while someone reads to him. But these two means of receiving a story are in fact radically dissimilar... When children looked at picture books while listening to a story, Bam! All these networks are really firing and connecting with one another... But then if you compare that with the video everything kind of drops off. Except for the visual perception. They’re

seeing the story and watching it, but nothing else is going on in terms of these higher-order brain networks that are involved with learning. What seems to be happening is a decoupling of vision, imagery, and language. The child is seeing the story and watching it, but not integrating it with other higher-order brain networks. The brain just doesn't have to do any work... The brains that seemed to flatline when their young owners were watching a video are the same brains that appeared to sparkle when presented with images and sound of Robert Munsch reading his picture book... Reading aloud from picture books seems "just right." Children have to do a bit of work to decode what they're hearing and seeing, which not only makes the experience engaging and fun but also helps reinforce the brain connections that will enable them to process harder and more complex stories as they get older."

—Cox Gurdon, Meghan (2019). *The Enchanted Hour: The Miraculous Power of Reading Aloud in the Age of Distraction*, p. 10-14. From a conversation with Dr. John Hutton.

We need to read aloud to our students as often as possible. Having a story read to you is a much richer experience than watching a story on video. Reading aloud lets the hearers use more of their brains and reinforces learning more than video.

- **BOOKS CONTAIN MORE COMPLEX LANGUAGE THAN VIDEO**

"TV language is not nearly as complex as book language."

—Stephen Krashen (2004). *The Power of Reading, 2nd edition*, p. 78

Paradoxically, book language is more complex but also easier to understand because the reader controls the input.

SELF-SELECTED READING

- **SELF-SELECTED READING WORKS**

"According to the research, students who do SSR typically gain at least as much on standardized tests as students who participate in traditional programs, and usually do much better if the program lasts long enough. SSR is ideal for the intermediate level but also can begin earlier."

—Stephen Krashen (1997). *Foreign Language Education the Easy Way*, p. 26

- **SELF-SELECTED READING IS THE BEST WAY TO IMPROVE**

"The best way to improve in a foreign language is to do a great deal of comprehensible, interesting reading... The case for self-selected reading for pleasure is overwhelming."

—Beniko Mason (1997), *Extensive Reading in English as a Foreign Language* (monograph), p. 14.

- **SELF-SELECTED READING IS A POWERFUL MOTIVATOR**

"Numerous studies have found the most powerful motivator that schools can offer to build lifelong readers is to provide students with time in the school day for free voluntary reading."

—Kelly Gallagher (2009), *Readicide: How Schools Are Killing Reading and What You Can Do About It*, p. 75.