



ER and reading targets: An investigation into teachers' choices and their rationales

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Language teachers make many decisions in the course of their lessons, and those choices can be influenced by previous training, beliefs, or external pressures. The setting of reading targets and grading policies for extensive reading (ER) is one such choice. While there is both quantitative and qualitative research on teacher rationales in general education and language teaching in general, there has been little focus on extensive reading targets and grading. Examining such targets and how teachers have arrived at their decisions may assist new and future ER practitioners in setting reading targets for their own contexts. This study used a questionnaire to investigate the reading targets and grading policies, and the rationales for such choices of ER practitioners within Japan. After highlighting common practices discovered through the survey of 22 respondents, the paper continues to shine light on the development of the rationales for those choices. Through thematic analysis of responses, the authors found five themes: Student-oriented, Practice-oriented, Socially-oriented, Contextually-oriented, and ER principle-oriented rationales. Based upon these findings the authors suggest ways in which teachers can develop extensive reading targets for their own contexts.

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Teachers make numerous decisions in the course of teaching their classes. Some decisions are made in real-time in the classroom in response to learner performance or behavior. A teacher may notice that students have not yet understood a key concept and postpone a quiz or may need to decide whether or not to rephrase an explanation for students. Such micro-

decisions may be considered reactions rather than decisions since there is little time to consider the various alternatives. Decisions made at the planning stage such as deciding what should be taught and the teaching method, however, are more deliberate (Borko, Livingston, & Shavelson, 1990). In language classrooms, teachers make decisions about which language tar-

gets should be taught, their sequence as well as designing activities to help achieve their teaching goals. Teachers are often keenly aware that there are many alternatives for a particular choice; these choices all have their own rationale or reasoning. When using extensive reading in language learning courses, teachers are tasked with getting their students to read large quantities of level-appropriate materials. Teachers need to decide how much reading is appropriate. For example, is one book a week enough? Teachers also need to make choices about how they measure the quantity of reading. Is counting the number of books the students read appropriate, or would something else such as the number of words, or total reading time be a better measurement? In this paper, we investigate teacher rationales for their grading policy choices in their extensive reading programs: What choices have they made, and why did they make those particular choices.

Literature Review

Teacher Rationales in General Education and EFL

Before we discuss teacher rationales for their grading policies in ER classes, we would like to look at how teacher rationales have been explored elsewhere. Kunnath (2017) investigated American high school teachers' rationales for creating report cards using a mixed methodology of quantitative questionnaires and qualitative focus groups. He found that report cards served several purposes at the same time, with different purposes being at the forefront of teacher rationales in different situations. While report cards served a purpose of accurately accounting for student proficiency to external stakeholders,

they also served a motivational purpose for individual students. He suggested that achieving a balance between academic rigor and promoting students to the next grade was often a challenge for teachers, using factors such as effort and attitude to inflate scores for low-performing students. This conflict between motivating students and accurately reporting performance to outsiders is just as important in the extensive reading classroom.

Studies have also been undertaken in Asian contexts regarding grading decisions for EFL classes. In a quantitative study of factors that Chinese teachers used in grading, Cheng and Sun (2015) found that teachers used factors such as student effort when grading for their English classes, which is in line with Kunnath (2017). Additionally, their analysis suggested that differences such as the amount of assessment training, grade level, and the class size were associated with differences in choice of assessment methods and weights of factors such as effort, in their grading. Such personal and contextual influences could foreseeably play a role in the choices of teachers when managing the extensive reading component of a language course as well.

Teacher Rationales and ER

Within the field of extensive reading, investigations of teacher rationales have largely been limited to teacher viewpoints on the merits of implementing an extensive reading program (Macalister, 2010; Schmidt, 1996), whether to allow students to self-select reading materials (Ramonda, 2020), the use of quizzes to assess reading (Stoeckel, Reagan & Hann, 2012; McColister, 2014), or the benefits of conducting extensive reading online (Cote & Milliner, 2015).

The Case for ER

Schmidt (1996) argued for implementing an extensive reading program in his particular context, and outlined how such a program might be run. His argument was largely based upon references to research in comprehensible input and application of personal logic. Macalister (2010) also investigated rationale for implementing extensive reading. However, rather than being a position paper, the study investigated the opinions and beliefs toward extensive reading among ESL teachers in New Zealand. The findings of the study suggested that although extensive reading may be perceived positively by teachers, there are several obstacles to implementing it in the classroom such as lack of awareness of extensive reading-related research and practice.

Reading Quantity Recommendations

Several studies have investigated the amount of reading necessary to achieve performance growth. Nishizawa, Yoshio-ka and Ichikawa (2017) conducted a longitudinal study investigating the impact of ER program length and quantity of reading (measured by number of words) on student scores on an English proficiency test. Their findings suggested that “students who had read 1.3 million total words of easy-to-read English texts with a yearly pace of 186 thousand words had the average TOEIC score of 548 at the end of the program.” (p. 7). Nation (2014) employed a different strategy for estimating how much reading students need to do in order to benefit from ER. His corpus study calculated how many total words would need to be read in order to theoretically encounter the 9,000 most common words in the English language at least 12 times. His findings suggest that although en-

countering the 2,000 most common words enough to learn them may only require 200,000 total words of extensive reading, to achieve the same result for the 9,000 most common words would require reading 3 million words. Although there have been some recommendations of reading targets based upon empirical evidence, individual teachers’ rationales for the reading targets that they set for their students have largely been ignored.

Student Perceptions of ER Implementations

Besides research advocating the implementation of extensive reading, and recommending specific reading quantities for learners, there have also been other studies that examined various aspects of extensive reading programs. Deciding how to run an extensive reading program requires making choices, and student perceptions of various implementations can become a basis for future rationales. One such area that requires a choice on the part of the teacher is whether or not to allow students to choose their reading materials. Ramonda (2020), surveyed 137 Japanese university students regarding their perceptions of extensive reading while reading teacher-selected and self-selected materials. Although choice is often described as important for student motivation, the results suggested that choice of reading materials may not be so important to students. Another decision regarding ER programs is whether or not to use quizzes or other assessments to determine if reading was understood. In McCollister’s (2014) collection of interviews with ER scholars and practitioners, opinions were split between those in favor of using quizzes and those who were not. In their quantitative study of student attitudes toward reading, Stoeckel et al. (2012) found no sig-

nificant differences between groups that used post-reading quizzes versus groups that did not, suggesting that using quizzes may not be detrimental to student motivation. Bieri (2015) similarly examined student perceptions of post-reading quizzes, and his study highlighted the diversity of influences behind his decision to employ the Mreader platform. In fact, the study by Stoeckel et al. (2012) which is mentioned above was listed as one of the influences.

Recently, the availability of online reading materials has also sparked interest in the choice of paper-based or digital reading materials for extensive reading programs. While some may argue that traditional paper-based books are superior, others find that the ease of access of online materials is attractive. In their questionnaire study of 90 Japanese university students, Cote and Milliner (2015) found that after one semester of extensive reading online, students in their study exhibited increased positive attitudes toward it. A common thread of these studies is that they tend to focus upon student perceptions of the various ER implementations rather than how teachers make those decisions.

The Present Study: Aims and Purpose

From the literature, it is clear that teacher rationales for their general grading policies have been examined in both general education and EFL contexts. Also, it appears that there is a growing body of knowledge concerning EFL extensive reading including rationales for employing extensive reading, student choice of materials, use of quizzes, and use of digital materials. However, despite the existence of several studies recommending reading targets based upon word frequencies, there are few studies exploring why individual teachers choose their reading

targets and grading policies for their extensive reading classes. Consequently, the present study aimed to explore and conceptualize teacher rationales for the reading targets that they set for their extensive reading classes. We posed the following research questions:

RQ1. What types of extensive reading targets do teachers in the Japanese EFL context set for their students?

RQ2. What are the main influences and rationales that teachers describe for those reading targets?

Methodology

In order to investigate the details of teachers' extensive reading assignments and their rationales, the authors implemented a questionnaire using both closed and open-ended items. For our research question regarding teacher rationales and influences, a qualitative exploratory design was used as we felt this would provide us with the rich data necessary to answer our question. Also, while the authors had some expectations as to the kinds of rationales teachers have for ER implementation and grading being ER practitioners themselves, we did not want to limit or influence the possible reasons for choices in the participants' answers. Therefore, for this present study, an online survey with closed-ended and open-ended questions was designed.

Ethical Considerations

We obtained informed consent from all participants in the study; all participants chose to participate in the study after reading the description of the study and reaffirmed their consent by choosing to submit their responses at the end of the

questionnaire. Pseudonyms are used for all quotations to ensure anonymity.

Participants

We selected 22 participants' responses (see Appendices A and B for demographic information) based on their teaching context being in Japan and having some degree of control over determining extensive reading targets and grading policies. Although it is possible that participants who did not have control over ER policies could articulate a justification for policies set by others, we decided that such explanations were different from rationales of actual choices. Participants were recruited by posting the online questionnaire to the JALT ER SIG's Facebook group, as well as directly contacting colleagues of the authors.

Data Collection

An online questionnaire using Google Forms was designed to collect data for this study. A questionnaire was chosen over interviews in order to ease scheduling constraints and increase the number of participants in the study. The questionnaire contained both closed-ended and open-ended items (See Appendix C for a list of questionnaire items). The closed-ended items were for collecting primarily demographic data such as length of teaching experience and context, while the open-ended items asked participants to describe and explain their ER grading and reasons for those choices. After the survey was designed, it was piloted by three members of the JALT ER SIG. Based on their feedback, slight revisions were made to the informed consent section and the choices for several closed-ended items.

Data Analysis

To answer our research question of the various parameters of the extensive reading assignments that teachers employ, we asked a closed-item question regarding weight of ER in overall grades and an open question asking about the specifics of their assignments. We split the open responses describing extensive reading assignments into categories of length of assignments, measures of ER quantity, and the methods used to confirm student reading.

To answer our research question regarding the teacher rationales and influences upon their ER assignment decisions, data were analyzed thematically based on the six-phase procedure described by Braun and Clarke (2006). As shown in Table 1, the first two phases of analysis were conducted independently, while the latter four phases were conducted together. Coding of the response data was performed using spreadsheet software following the procedure described in Saldaña (2016). Columns for entering codes were inserted into the spreadsheet of responses generated from the online questionnaire, with key components of responses separated by line breaks and descriptive codes entered adjacently (See Figure 1).

For a specific pattern within the responses to be considered a theme, it was deemed necessary for it to be either prevalent across the entire sample of respondents or across a clearly identified sub-group within the data. Our analysis focused upon semantic level themes, which themes were generated inductively. This means that codes and themes were mainly generated from the data rather than from previously developed theories. This analysis choice impacted the timing of engaging with relevant literature; in order to keep an open

mind, we conducted our literature review after the initial coding had been finished. For the same reason, after familiarizing ourselves with the data, we each conduct-

ed the initial coding of the data independently. We shared our codes and through our weekly discussions of those codes, arrived at various data-driven themes.

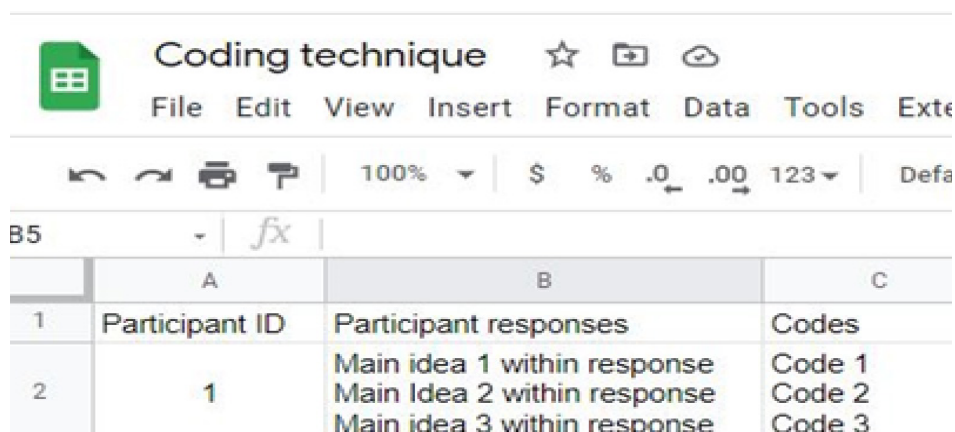
Table 1

Thematic Analysis Six-phase Guide (Braun & Clark, 2006)

Conducted independently	Conducted together
Phase 1: familiarizing yourself with your data	Phase 3: searching for themes
Phase 2: generating initial codes	Phase 4: reviewing themes
	Phase 5: defining and naming themes
	Phase 6: producing the report

Figure 1

Response Coding Using Spreadsheet Software



The screenshot shows a spreadsheet titled "Coding technique" with a menu bar (File, Edit, View, Insert, Format, Data, Tools, Extensions) and a toolbar. The spreadsheet has columns A, B, and C. Row 1 contains headers: "Participant ID", "Participant responses", and "Codes". Row 2 contains data: "1" in column A, and "Main idea 1 within response", "Main Idea 2 within response", and "Main idea 3 within response" in column B, with "Code 1", "Code 2", and "Code 3" in column C.

	A	B	C
1	Participant ID	Participant responses	Codes
2	1	Main idea 1 within response Main Idea 2 within response Main idea 3 within response	Code 1 Code 2 Code 3

Findings

Types of Extensive Reading Targets (RQ1)

As shown in Figure 2, the weight given to the ER component of final grades by the questionnaire respondents is quite diverse, ranging from 0% weight (not graded) to greater than 75% of the final grade. The two most frequent grade weights amongst the respondents were weights of less than 25% and between 26% and 50% of the final grade with 8 responses each. These two grade weights were employed relatively equally between teachers following purist and integrated forms of ex-

tensive reading and were in a university context. Also, the amount of time devoted to in-class reading for these two choices varied from no in-class reading time to 30 minutes per class.

Grade weights of 0% (not graded) and greater than 75% were employed by teachers less frequently. The two teachers who responded that they did not assign a grade for their extensive reading component were both in a private language school context and followed a purist form of extensive reading. Also, for both of these teachers, extensive reading was done by students outside of the classroom. The three respondents who assigned grade

weight of greater than 75% taught in a university context. While one of the respondents devoted greater than 60 minutes per class to extensive reading, the others did not do any in-class reading (See Appendices C and D for teaching context and grading details).

The length of extensive reading assignments set by teachers is shown in Figure 3. Weekly and semester-length assignments were most frequent with nine and five responses respectively. When compared with the number of years teaching extensive reading classes (See Appendix B), teachers with 1-5 years of experience employed weekly more often. Those with 6-10 years of experience were split evenly between weekly and semester-length assignments, while those with 11 or more years of experience employed weekly assignments slightly more frequently than semester-length. This may indicate that weekly assignments are a relatively recent trend in extensive reading assignments. One possible reason for this is the recent proliferation of computerized tools for tracking reading progress such as Mreader and Xreading.

There are several ways in which the quantity of reading can be measured, but the various measures are not necessarily equivalent. Books can have widely varying lengths in terms of the number of pages or words. Also, reading time can result in different word counts or book counts depending on reading speed. The method of measuring ER quantity is shown in Figure 4. Word count was used by 17 respondents who were teaching in a university context while book count was used by 2 respondents. One teacher measured student reading time while another did not measure how much students read. Both of these respondents were teaching in a pri-

vate language school context (See Appendix B for teaching context details).

While word count was most often used by respondents to the survey, there was a wide range in the word count targets that they set for their students. Figure 5 shows the frequency of word count targets in increments of 30,000 words. Respondents who did not use word count as a measurement are not included in this graph. Although 17 respondents used word count targets, some provided information for multiple classes resulting in 25 word-count targets. Also, word-count targets are adjusted to reflect semester-length assignments. Semester word targets in the range of 80,000 to 105,000 words were most common. Lower targets were often used for younger students or for non-English majors such as Engineering. The higher targets were primarily for students in English-related majors and those taking several semesters of extensive reading.

In addition to reading targets, teachers have a wide range of methods to check whether students have actually read. Figure 6 shows the frequency of the various methods used by the respondents. Quizzes were used by 17 of 19 teachers in university contexts. In many cases, they used multiple methods to confirm the reading of their students. Methods such as user logs and reading speed records used in conjunction with quizzes suggests that online tools such as Mreader and Xreading are used to deliver quizzes on student reading. For teachers in private language school contexts, self-reports were the primary method of confirming student reading quantity. See Appendices B and D for details of respondent contexts and assessment methods.

Figure 2
ER Grading Weights

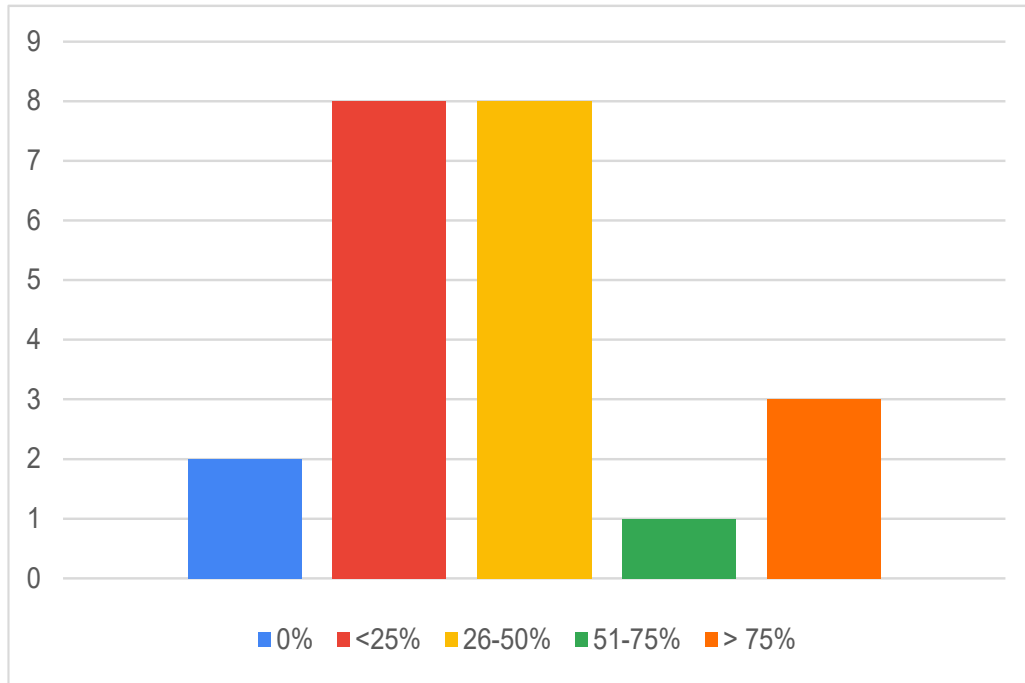
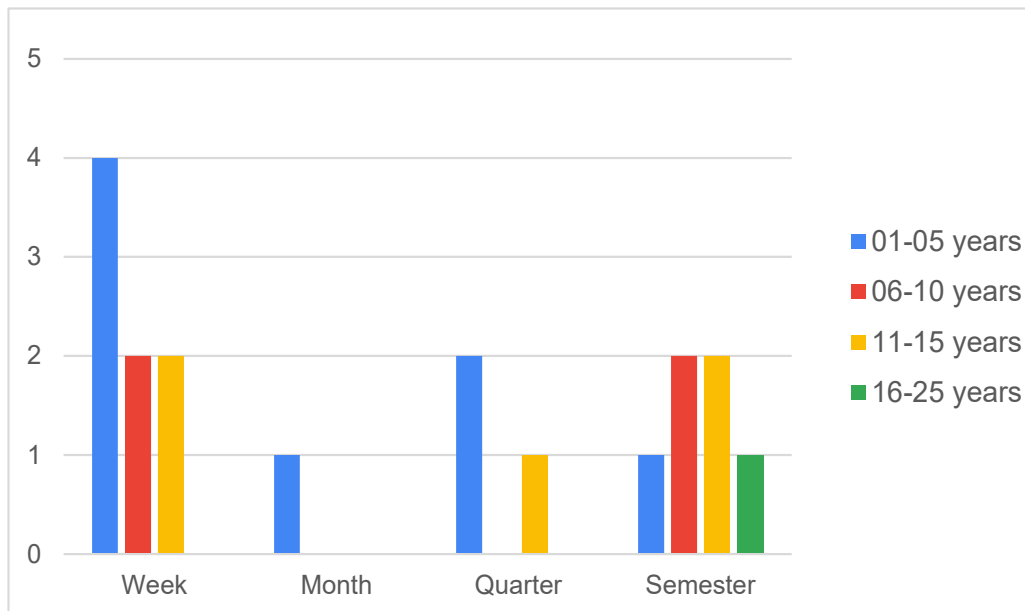


Figure 3
ER Assignment Period and ER Experience



Note. Four respondents did not provide information on assignment periods.

Figure 4
ER Quantity Measurement

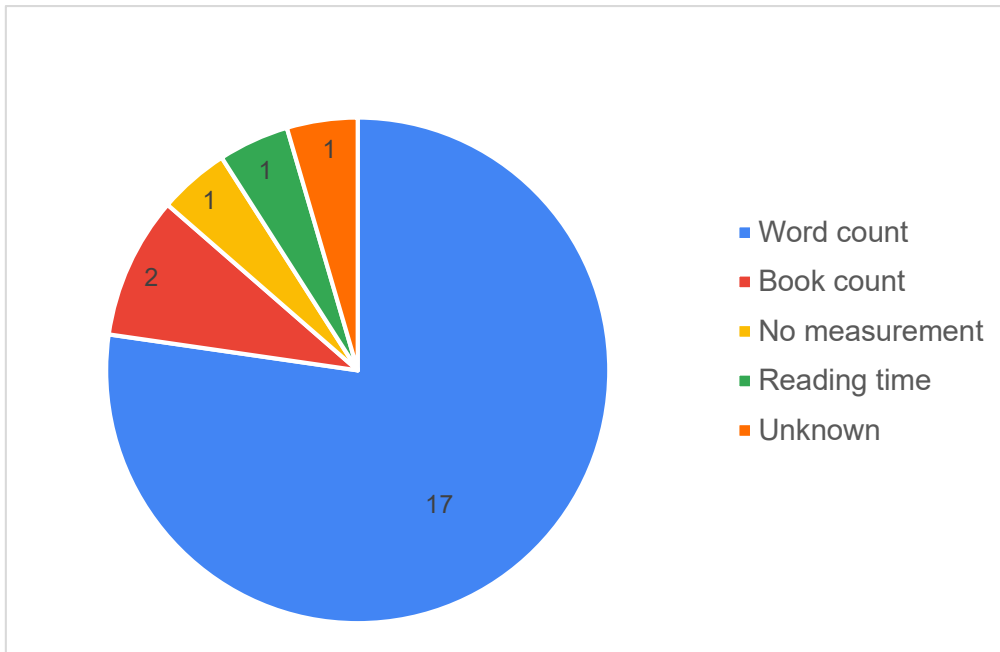


Figure 5
Word Count Targets (by Semester)

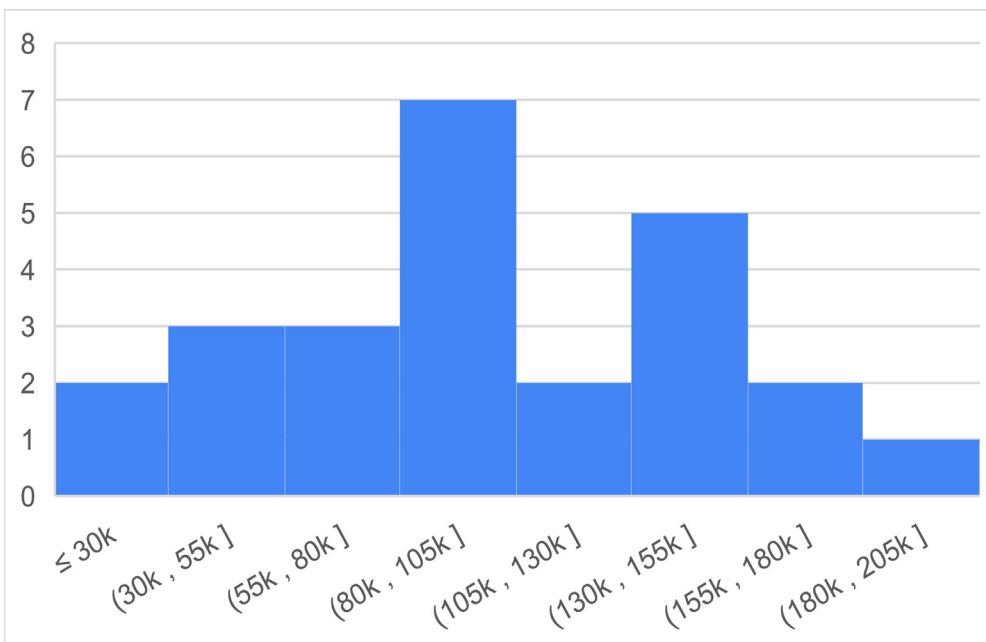
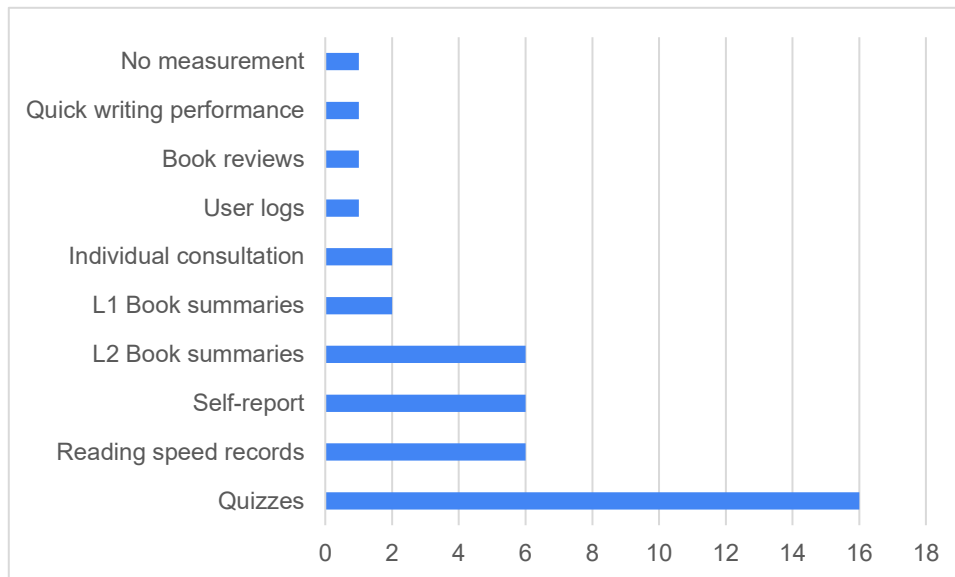


Figure 6
ER Quantity Assessment Methods



Primary Influences and Rationales for Teachers' Reading Targets (RQ2)

Based on our discussions of the different codes, five themes emerged that appear to describe the rationale for ER practitioner grading practices.

Theme 1 - Learner-oriented: Promoting Consistency in Addition to Quantity & Extrinsic Motivation

It goes without saying that reading large quantities of English is part and parcel of ER, and this is highlighted by the fact that many of the participants stated that they use total word or book counts in their grading. However, some also expressed the importance of encouraging students to read on a regular basis in addition to setting total reading goals such as Participant O who stated that "By grading on weekly benchmarks, I promote both volume and consistency." Ensuring that students were reading consistently over a period of time rather than all in one go can be considered vital for students' read-

ing growth.

This also points to the importance of extrinsic motivation. While being intrinsically motivated to read is ideal, realistically it is the rare case to have such students at least in the beginning. By encouraging students to read through such weekly goals, it could be said that ER practitioners hope that students would eventually come to enjoy reading in its own right. In this sense, extrinsic motivation appears to be looked upon in a positive light. Although one of the principles of ER is reading for pleasure, the reality for many ER practitioners is that many students may need external encouragement to read. For example, Participant N wrote that "If we do not assign marks most students do not do it. If we only assign 10% of the grade to ER, students see that it is not worth the time." For this practitioner in particular, we see that not only is grading ER important but that the weight of the grade for the reading component can also be equally vital to get students to read.

Theme 2 - Practice-oriented: Experimentation & Experience

This rationale encompasses two interrelated components, experimentation and experience. From the data, we can see that various ER practitioners are trying out different things to see what works and what does not and what has positive effects on students' reading and what may negatively impact their reading. For example, Participant K states: "This is the first year I have been teaching ER as a full course, so I am seeing how some students test the system to read as little as possible and to see where students may need more support." Interestingly, while this practice-oriented rationale can originate from both informal and formal experimentation, it seemed that most of the respondents did not refer to any published studies based on their own classroom practices, but that their choices seem to be influenced by informal practice and experience as can be seen in Participant T's comment: "I used to completely rely on self-reporting and easy reports in the L1 or L2, but some students didn't do any of the reading and quickly fell behind."

Theme 3 - Socially-oriented: Influence of Colleagues

This refers to the human influence especially within one's immediate context as well as in the wider ER community of practice. In some cases, we see that a teacher takes over for someone whom they trust in regards to his or her practice and therefore deems it to be an appropriate way to set reading goals. An example of this is Participant M who states, "I got this grading plan from the person who previously set up the ER program at my school." Beyond this context, we also see a major influence on one's decision making from presenta-

tions given by ER practitioners or by discussions often experienced at the many conferences held throughout the year. Indeed, Participant O writes, "Also, [I have been influenced by] conference presentations and discussions at ER-based events such as the JALT ER SIG Seminars and the ERWC." It is interesting to note though that few respondents mentioned papers in our study despite the fact that there is some discussion of research online and on social media. As this could also be considered another socially-oriented influence, this is something that we intend to investigate further in future studies.

Theme 4 - Contextually-oriented: Class Sizes, School Type & Adapting to ERT

The first contextually-oriented aspect which has been more or less constant in ER practices is class size. When faced with having to teach classes with large student populations, grading becomes an issue as it becomes nearly impossible to adequately grade each student individually. An example of this rationale can be seen in Participant V's answer: "...Mreader is a convenient and efficient tool for checking students are reading at appropriate levels. There are of course deficiencies of this tool but [it] is efficient when checking the quantity of English read by so many students." In this case, assigning word or book targets and using tools such as Mreader or Xreading to check such achievements becomes the most logical choice.

Another factor is school type. Participant H wrote: "There are no grades in Eikaiwa (English conversation) schools, so I don't have the pressure to assess. I do keep casual track of what the students are reading." Unlike universities, where assigning grades is mandatory, some English conversation schools do not have to follow

such requirements allowing the teacher to focus on the content of what is being read as opposed to how much was read. In addition to this, some private language schools do not have the large numbers of students in a single class thereby making it easier for teachers to focus on each student and what they are reading so that they can offer the help the students may need.

For the past two years, however, the factor that probably has had the greatest impact on grading choices is that of COVID-19 and having to adapt to emergency remote teaching (ERT). "Pre-COVID, we used paper graded readers and Moodle Reader with a simple end-of-semester word count target. During COVID, we use Xreading with 5 three-week blocks of time that have itemized percentages for the total reading grade" (Participant D). For practitioners in similar situations, the ER program and reading goals were predicated on the fact that paper graded readers were being used. However, once they had to change their classes to an ERT format, they had to choose a digital reading system such as Xreading for their program which altered their choice of goals.

Theme 5 - ER-principle-oriented: Reading a Lot, Reading for Pleasure & Teacher Support

The final theme that came from our analysis of the data was that of goals being determined by ER principles put forth by Day and Bamford (1998). The three principles that stood out in the respondents' answers were reading a lot, reading for pleasure and teacher support. The first principle does not really need much explanation since almost any ER practitioner will state that this is fundamental to an ER program, such as Participant B explained, "It reflects the fundamental goal, which is

reading as much as possible." Indeed, if students are not reading a lot, one has to wonder if that course can really be classified as an ER course. Yet, although there is general agreement that a lot of reading is necessary, there is little consensus on what constitutes "a lot" of reading.

For the second principle, many practitioners understand the importance of reading for fun since that is how students can be encouraged to make reading a lifelong habit, and in some programs, assessment is considered less important such as Participant I, who states, "My way of using ER comes from a mixture of trial and error and also believing in the idea of extensive reading should be something that promotes reading for enjoyment rather than reading for assessment." However, with the rare exception such as the private language school mentioned above, most post-secondary-level programs are bound by the requirement of grading which can make it challenging for those teachers to persuade students to read solely for enjoyment.

Finally, one of the respondents also explained that they chose their method of grading because it freed them up to support their students more effectively, which can be seen in Participant B's comment: "I can focus on helping students select books better and develop reading routines [using word counts]." Assigning word goals as opposed to reports would be easier and faster to check, allowing the teacher to help students select appropriate books or to deal with issues that may arise throughout the reading course.

Discussion

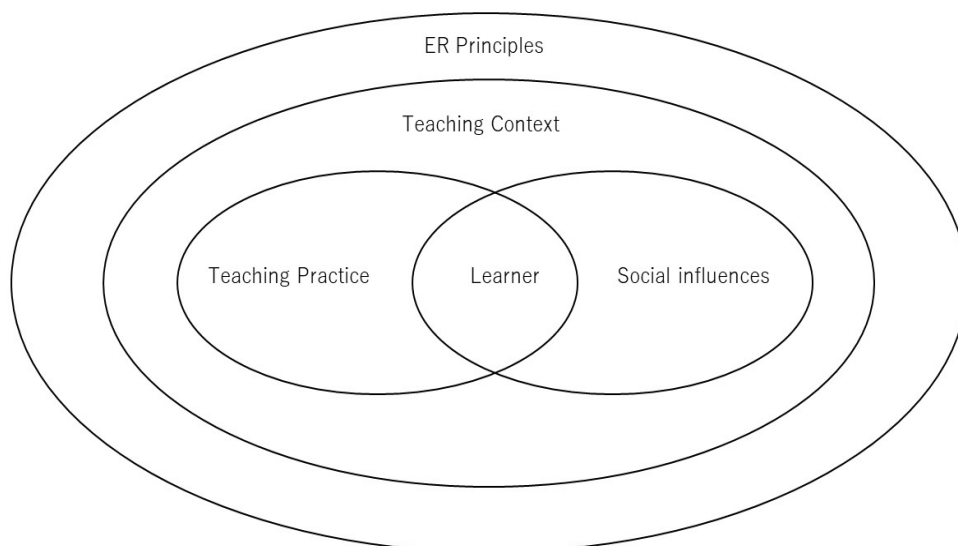
This study explored and conceptualized the rationales of EFL teachers in Japan

for extensive reading targets and grading policies in their classes. We employed an open-ended questionnaire with the aim of allowing the respondents to focus upon what they each found to be relevant and important regarding their extensive reading target and grading policy decisions. We examined the ideas and concerns regarding extensive reading targets and grading of EFL teachers in both university

and private language school contexts. Thematic analysis of their responses allowed us to make a set of five reading target rationales, namely themes oriented to the learner, teaching practice, social connections, teaching context and ER principles. It should be noted, however, that the various themes are in fact interrelated and influence each other as has been visualized in figure 7 below.

Figure 7

Visual Representation of Interrelatedness of the Five Themes



External-level Themes (ER Principles and Context)

It can be argued that almost any teacher who is considering implementing extensive reading in their classes would begin with the ER principles as described by Day and Bamford (1998). Although individual definitions may vary, nearly every extensive reading practitioner endeavors to get their learners to read a large quantity of materials that are of interest to the students and of appropriate difficulty. These principles themselves can be at odds with each other at times, adding difficulty to teacher

decisions. For example, learners may be very interested in reading books that are far beyond their skill levels. Such conflict between principles was also observed in Kunnath (2017), which described a conflict for teachers between inflating grades in order to motivate students to continue their efforts, and providing accurate assessments of student performance.

In addition to conflict between competing principles, practitioners may be constrained by a variety of contextual factors whether it be curriculum or course design, the number of students or even the kinds

and number of resources available. Institutional policies and classroom sizes can strongly influence whether a teacher employs assessments such as word targets and quizzes. Cheng and Sun (2015) found a strong contextual influence in their study of EFL teachers' grading policies in China. Particularly, the grade level of the class was related to choices in assessment methods and the weight of effort in final grades. As highlighted previously, the mode of teaching such as ERT can also affect how one chooses to implement ER. It is therefore within these varied contexts that ER practitioners need to make choices as to which principles can be kept and how to adapt ER to best suit that context.

Internal-level Themes (Social Connections, Teaching Practice and the Learner)

While each ER context will differ, it can be said that most practitioners will share the freedom to implement ER in the way they see fit, albeit to varying degrees depending on their context. When making such decisions regarding ER and especially grading, some practitioners may look toward the literature for guidance or attend conferences or join a community where they can discuss various practices and gain new ideas to try out in their classes upon return. Such social connections can have a large impact on how ER is conducted in future courses as an ER practitioner may choose to experiment with the newly-learned skills or tools. Through this experimentation, experience is gained, and if they choose to do research on their experiences this may then contribute to the ER community potentially influencing others. Although it was not possible to observe all of these themes within each participant's

responses, it is not unreasonable to assume that the various themes have some importance to the respondents even if they did not explicitly mention them. Bieri (2015) is an excellent example of the full range of these influences. In his paper, he describes his own reluctance to adopt an assessment method prescribed by his own context. It would be reasonable to believe that such reluctance was informed by his previous teaching practice. Through his interactions with colleagues, published research, and feedback from his own students he decided to change his own teaching practice.

However, as each context is different, learners, too, will vary, so what may work well with one group of learners may not work as well, or at all, for another group. It can be argued therefore that the interplay of experimentation and experience focusing on the needs of one's learners over time will more than likely have the biggest impact on one's choices. Since our priority as teachers is to support our learners in achieving their language learning goals, it is imperative that our choices regarding ER and grading in ER be made with the learner first and foremost in mind. One must not forget, however, the powerful influence one's context has over these choices, and that this may actually make it challenging for some practitioners to make such decisions with the learner in mind.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

The specificity of the questionnaire and the representativeness of respondents were two limitations of this study. During the analysis of participant responses, it became apparent that rationale can be construed in a variety of ways.

Some respondents wrote about the various interactions and outside influences that helped develop their rationale while others focused on the specific reasoning for pedagogical choices. Our questionnaire did not distinguish between these two aspects of rationale, which resulted in some respondents describing only one aspect of the rationale for their extensive reading targets. Employing an interview research strategy for future studies can explore these two components of rationale in more depth.

For this study, membership of the JALT ER special interest group was targeted for participation. Membership of this group tends to be native English speakers who teach in a university context. As a result, our study was unable to adequately investigate the rationales of Japanese teachers of English, especially in junior high school and high school contexts. In the future, we hope to conduct a similar study targeting the members of the Japan Extensive Reading Association (JERA) to fully explore the Japanese context.

Conclusion

Although this study did not thoroughly explore the rationales of Japanese EFL teachers in Japan, and was not always able to capture the multidimensional character of teacher rationales, we suggest that the findings have implications for EFL teachers using extensive reading. This study contributes to the field and to teachers by offering a conceptualization of teachers' rationales for how much they expect their students to read, and the ways in which grades are assigned for that reading. The main finding is that EFL teachers in Japan who participated in this study often relied upon personal experience and experimentation for developing their rationales for reading targets and

grading policies, with less explicit reference to specific research findings. It is possible that respondents were not aware of pertinent research findings. However, another possibility is that some respondents were influenced by various extensive reading studies, but did not mention them because of the questionnaire format, or have internalized the results. One suggestion based on our findings is to increase opportunities for extensive reading practitioners to interact socially. Such interactions could facilitate sharing of individual experience gained from experimentation. With some planning, events could also raise awareness of various empirical research related to extensive reading.

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Appendix A
Demographic Information A

Participant	Gender	# of Years w/ ER	Primary ER Context	# of ER Classes per Week
A	Male	6 - 10	Private University	4 - 6
B	Male	6 - 10	Private University	1 - 3
C	Male	11 - 15	Private University	1 - 3
D	Male	11 - 15	National University	1 - 3
E	Male	> 25	Public University	7 - 10
F	Male	1 - 5	National University	1 - 3
G	Male	16 - 25	Private University	> 10
H	Female	11 - 15	Conversation School	> 10
I	Female	6 - 10	Conversation School	> 10
J	Female	1 - 5	Private University	4 - 6
K	Female	1 - 5	Private University	1 - 3
L	Male	1 - 5	Conversation School	4 - 6
M	Male	1 - 5	Private University	1 - 3
N	Male	11 - 15	Private University	None
O	Male	11 - 15	Private University	1 - 3
P	Female	1 - 5	Private University	1 - 3
Q	Female	6 - 10	Private University	1 - 3
R	Male	6 - 10	Private University	4 - 6
S	Male	11 - 15	Private University	1 - 3
T	Female	1 - 5	Private University	1 - 3
U	Male	1 - 5	Private University	4 - 6
V	Male	11 - 15	Private University	4 - 6

Appendix B
Demographic Information B

Participant	# of Students per Class	Amount of Classroom SSR (minutes)	ER Variation
A	10 - 20	16 - 30	Purist
B	20 - 30	None	Integrated
C	20 - 30	None	Purist
D	40 - 50	16 - 30	Integrated
E	10 - 20	< 15	Integrated
F	20 - 30	None	Integrated
G	10 - 20	None	Purist
H	Fewer than 10	None	Purist
I	Fewer than 10	None	Purist
J	20 - 30	< 15	Integrated
K	40 - 50	None	Purist
L	Fewer than 10	< 15	Purist
M	20 - 30	> 60	Integrated
N	20 - 30	None	Purist
O	20 - 30	16 - 30	Integrated
P	20 - 30	< 15	Integrated
Q	20 - 30	None	Integrated
R	20 - 30	16 - 30	Integrated
S	Unknown	16 - 30	Purist
T	20 - 30	< 15	Purist
U	20 - 30	< 15	Purist
V	20 - 30	< 15	Integrated

Note. Purist refers to mainly self-selected reading with little assessment or follow-up activities while Integrated refers to mainly self-selected reading, but follow-up activities are used to develop the 4 skills (see Waring & McLean, 2015).

Appendix C
Extensive Reading Assignment Rationales Questionnaire

Demographics

Gender

Male

Female

Non-Binary

Prefer not to say

What country is your primary teaching context in?

How long have you been teaching language?

1-5 years

6-10 years

11-15 years

16-25 years

More than 25 years

Prefer not to respond

How long have you been practicing ER?

1-5 years

6-10 years

11-15 years

16-25 years

More than 25 years

Prefer not to respond

Teaching Context

What is your primary ER context?

Conversation school

Junior High School

High School

Kosen

Private University

Public University

National University

Other

How many classes with ER do you teach per week?

1-3 classes

4-6 classes

7-10 classes

more than 10 classes

How many students do you typically have in ONE class?

Fewer than 10

10-20

20-30

30-50

More than 50

Who makes the decisions regarding how ER is conducted in your primary ER context?

Yourself

Yourself with input from others within your teaching context

Yourself with input from others outside your teaching context

Others within your teaching context

ER Implementation

How much time do you devote to sustained silent reading (SSR) in each class?

Less than 15 minutes

16-30 minutes

31-45 minutes

46-60 minutes

More than 60 minutes

What variation of ER do you predominantly teach?

Purist – Mainly self-selected reading with little assessment or follow-up activities

Integrated - Mainly self-selected reading, but follow-up activities used to develop 4 skills

Class reading - Students read the same book with lots of follow-up activities

ER as literature - Students read the same book and discuss it together

Other

If there is anything you would like to add about the style of your ER classes, please do so here.

ER implementation decided by self

Why did you decide to implement ER in the way that you do?

Was there anything such as papers, books, or presentations or anyone such as a colleague that influenced your decisions?

How did they affect your choices?

ER implementation decided by others

Were you provided with an explanation of why ER was to be conducted in that way?

If yes, please describe in as much detail as possible their rationale.

Also, were you provided with any literature on ER? If yes, what were you given?

Assignment Grading Policy

Do you give grades for your ER component?

Yes

No

If you give grades for your ER component, what weight are they of the final grade? (If you do not give grades, please choose 0%).

0%

Less than 25%

26-50%

51-75%

More than 75%

If you require a specific quantity of reading for assignments, please describe it in detail, including the time frame within which students are expected to complete the reading.

How do you check that the reading quantity is accurate? Check all that apply.

Self-report

Book summaries / reactions in L1

Book summaries / Reactions in L2

Quizzes

Reading speed records

Individual consultation with students

Some other method

Do not measure reading quantity

If you selected “Some other method” or “Do not measure reading quantity”, please describe what you do in terms of grading.

If there is anything else you would like to share about your ER grading, please do so here.

Did you have the choice to decide how you grade your ER component?

Yes

No

ER grading decided by self

If you did have a choice, why did you choose to grade in that way?

Was there anything such as papers or presentations or anyone such as a colleague that influenced your decisions?

How did they affect your choices?

ER Grading decided by others

If you didn't have a choice, what was the rationale given for the grading?

Were you provided with any literature on grading?

If yes, what were you given?

Appendix D
Extensive Reading Grading and Assignments

Participant	Grading weight	Timeframe	ER Quantity	Assessment methods
A	< 25%	Weekly	Word count	Quizzes, reading speed records, user logs
B	> 75%	Semester	Word count	Quizzes
C	26-50%	Weekly	Book count	Self-report, Book reviews
D	< 25%	Semester	Word count	Quizzes
E	26-50%	?	Word count	Self-report, Quizzes, Reading speed records
F	< 25%	Every 3 months	Word count	L2 Book summaries, Quizzes
G	< 25%	Semester	Word count	Quizzes, Reading speed records, Quick writing performance
H	0%		No measurement	No measurement
I	0%	Weekly	Word count	Self-report
J	26-50%	Every 5 weeks	Word count	Quizzes, Reading speed records
K	> 75%	Weekly	Word count	Quizzes, Reading speed records
L	26-50%	?	Reading time	Self-report
M	> 75%	Weekly	Word count	L2 book summaries, Quizzes
N	26-50%	Weekly	Word count	Quizzes
O	< 25%	Weekly	Word count	Quizzes
P	26-50%	Weekly	Word count	Self-report, L2 book summaries, Reading speed records, Individual consultation
Q	26-50%	?	?	Self-report, L1 book summaries, L2 book summaries
R	< 25%	Semester	Word count	L1 book summaries, Quizzes
S	51-75%	Semester	Word count	Quizzes
T	< 25%	Weekly	Word count	Quizzes, Individual consultation
U	26-50%	Quarterly	Word count	L2 book summaries, Quizzes
V	< 25%	Quarterly	Book count	L2 book summaries, Quizzes

Note. The responses L2 book summaries and L1 book summaries have been shortened from book summaries/reactions in order to conserve space.