

drafts when delivering their presentations. It may take one or two days for them to develop a draft.

Procedure

Step 1: Each student delivers a three-minute presentation about the book of his or her choice. If students are not confident that they can give their presentation, allow them to have some presentation cards with some key words or expressions as a presentation aid.

Step 2: The presenter interacts with fellow students through a Q&A session.

Step 3: After all of the presentations are completed, the students vote to select the most interesting book. (They need not vote for the best presentation. Sometimes we discover an unexpected winner, which makes the battle more enjoyable for the students. The teacher can grade the presentations separately.)

Step 4: The book that receives the largest number of votes is declared the *Champion Book of the Day*.

Step 5: (Optional) Students read one of the books presented as a follow up.

Conclusion

Bibliobattle in English is a very good option for encouraging students to read and develop presentations. For most of my students, it is the first time that they read a complete book in English, which gives them a sense of satisfaction and confidence. Many of my students find it relatively easy to compose a draft for their speech because they can refer directly to the English sentences in the books they read. Although correcting their English was not part of the process, I found that their presentations were mostly clear and accurate. Very few of them used translation apps. Most importantly, *Bibliobattle* gives us a great opportunity to get to know the presenter's personality and foster an interest in reading for fun.

References

Taniguchi, T. (2013). *Biburiobatoru: Hon-o Siri Hito-o Siru Shohyoo Geemu [Bibliobattle: a book-review game to get to know books and people]*. Tokyo: Bungei Syunju.

[RESOURCES] TLT WIRED



Edo Forsythe

In this column, we explore the issue of teachers and technology—not just as it relates to CALL solutions, but also to Internet, software, and hardware concerns that all teachers face. We invite readers to submit articles on their areas of interest. Please contact the editor before submitting.

Email: tlt-wired@jalt-publications.org • Web: <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/tlt-wired>

Editor's Note: We are bringing you two articles in this issue about educational technology that will be discussed in sessions at the JALT Conference this month. Both authors will be doing presentations at the conference and the CALL SIG will have a forum discussing how we can use technology to bring diversity into our classrooms. Be sure to join us for that engaging discussion! The JALT Conference is sure to give you plenty of ideas to keep your language lessons Wired!

MReader for Extensive Reading

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Extensive Reading (ER) is a flexible and autonomous activity, which is ideal for setting students up with healthy independent reading habits that will serve them long after their language course is over. The ER approach encourages learners to read a large quantity of books at an accessible level—often simplified Graded Reader texts—in order to develop reading speed and fluency, vocabulary acquisition (Krashen, 1989), linguistic awareness and competence, and a range of affective benefits (Nation, 1997). The self-directed nature of ER however, means that teachers will face considerations of how to motivate students to participate with autonomy, and how to effectively monitor and measure their progress. Documenting students' reading practice using reading logs, book reviews, reports, etc., can be a time-consuming process to monitor and assess. Even then, the teacher may still be left doubting whether

the student has actively and honestly participated in the spirit of ER.

MReader was developed in 2013 as a “user-friendly, browser-based” version of Moodle Reader (MReader, n.d., n.p.), offering a database of over 6,000 online quizzes for Graded Reader texts from a range of publishers. Its subscription-based counterpart, Xreading, offers a variety of additional facilities, including an extensive range of online Graded Reader texts (Milliner & Cote, 2014). MReader, on the other hand, is a free system that focuses on tests and reading logs without providing the reading texts themselves. This article evaluates MReader as an online platform for monitoring students’ engagement and progress in Extensive Reading.

Setting Up MReader

First teachers interested in using MReader must set up an institutional MReader Admin account by emailing Tom Robb at <admin@mreader.org> to request permission and receive an access code. There is usually one site registration per institution (or faculty), although more than one site account is possible, depending on the size of the institution. This means that someone must take responsibility for administration at an institutional level: creating teacher accounts, setting up class groups, and registering students. This takes a little time initially, but requires minimal attention throughout the semester.

An individual MReader account is created for each student providing access to their individual homepage, which displays their Reading Report. Each teacher has an account that may be affiliated with multiple class lists. All enrollment processes, as well as institution-wide settings, are managed by the institution’s MReader Administrator (hereafter referred to as Admin), while some text level and test settings are administered by the teacher on a student-by-student and class-by-class basis. The institutional Admin may also adjust the administrative rights of teachers on certain settings, such as changing students’ word-count goals and allocating extra credit.

How Does MReader Work?

Students log into their homepage to view their Reading Report (Figure 1) or to access a new quiz. The homepage displays cover images of books students have successfully passed quizzes on, a table detailing all quizzes taken, and a tally of the total words the student has read. They can open a pop-up box for more details on the quizzes they have

taken across all courses. There is also a reading goal progress bar, information about their current level setting, and recent test status. When a student has finished reading a book, they enter the book title or keywords from the title into the search bar to access a page of book cover icons that match their search. They select the icon that matches the level and edition they have read in order to access the test for that reader.

Date	Publisher	Book Title	Level	Status	Total words	Flagged
19 Apr 2018	Cambridge	Jungle Love	Level 1 (3)	Passed	15442	
23 Apr 2018	Cambridge	Two Lions	Level 1 (1)	Passed	17846	

Figure 1. Example of MReader student homepage.

MReader tests typically comprise 10 questions that come in a variety of forms, including True/False, multiple choice, “Who said...?”, and drag-and-drop chronological sorting tasks. These questions are randomly selected from a bank of 20 possible questions per book, which helps to mitigate the risk of students sharing answers to cheat the system. The quizzes are purposefully “easy [and] relatively superficial in nature” (MReader, n.d., n.p.). MReader recommends the institutional Admin set a relatively low passing grade of 60%, so that the tests gauge

general understanding and fluency rather than intensive reading comprehension. To prevent students from looking up answers to questions in the book, MReader tests are timed, which means that students must have already read the book before attempting the quiz.

After a student takes a test, the result is logged. To prevent cheating or end-of-semester cramming, the system has a default 24-hour delay setting (which can be modified) before the student can take another test. This setting can be overridden at the discretion of the teacher, who can also allow a student to retake a quiz they have failed. There is an option for students to receive a word-count penalty if they fail a test three times in a row, and a facility for teachers to check on other tell-tale signs of cheating, such as two students taking the same quiz at the same time or having multiple quizzes in common. Teachers also have the ability to adjust reading levels and reading goals, grant students extra time to take a test, and give extra credit in exceptional situations, such as when a quiz is not available, or when a student has failed a test despite having read the book.

Affordances

In terms of monitoring and assessing ER practice, the data from MReader provides a clear and mostly self-maintaining record of student participation and performance, that can be used in graded assessments. Having an accessible record of a class' (Figure 2) and individual student's reading activity also makes it easy for teachers to identify students who need more encouragement and support, as well as those who are thriving. On this page, teachers are also able to set and change reading goals and levels, give extra credit, access individual students' pages, manage passwords, etc. In addition, the MReader site is accessible online, which means that students can take tests anywhere and in their own time, reducing the demands on class time in administering and monitoring ER activity. Book review activities may also be incorporated into class as part of students' wider literacy practice but are no longer necessary as proof of students' reading activity.

MReader seems to also enhance students' experience of ER. It provides students with quantifiable data regarding their own reading progress, which offers acknowledgement and validation of keen students and gives a platform for less outspoken students to shine. These students may have already been motivated to read extensively, but registering this activity on a visible and accountable platform provides an additional reward. There can also be an element of competition and self-imposed challenge

in which students are motivated to read beyond their classmates or be the first to exceed the word count target. The author is currently undertaking a comparative research project, to quantify how motivation and performance are affected by the MReader platform. From anecdotal observations and informal classroom conversations so far, students also seem to be more motivated to discuss their reading habits and make recommendations to their peers. In some classes, a community of reading started to develop, with books being passed between students, and between teacher and student.

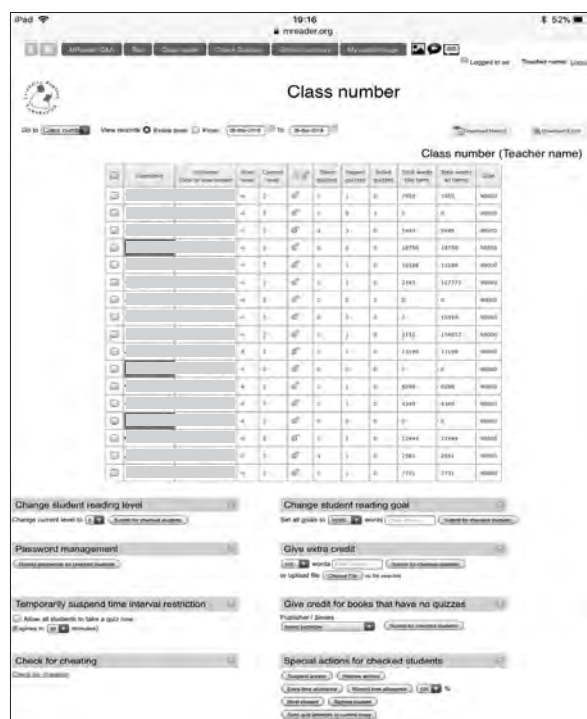


Figure 2. Example of teacher's overview of class progress from MReader.

Limitations

The MReader platform requires some scaffolding when being introduced to students initially, and teachers need to be able to deal with some issues that students will encounter. For example, a student may be confused about why they cannot access a quiz. Sometimes there is no quiz in the MReader system, or the search term does not work to locate the appropriate quiz. This was very rare, and could be addressed by the teacher by interviewing the student about the book and awarding extra credit if the teacher is satisfied that they had read it. Sometimes the search feature works, but if the book is framed in red, this means that the student cannot take the

quiz. This could be because the level of the book is different from the student's level setting, they have taken a quiz within the past 24 hours, or they have already taken this quiz before. It might also be because a student has opened a quiz accidentally, or finished taking a quiz, and exited the page without taking the post-quiz survey. This survey must be opened or completed in order for new quizzes to be made accessible again.

When students read a book at a level above their settings, they must request the teacher to change their account setting. This could delay the test and result in failure. They may also fail a quiz for a book they have read because the level is too high. Teachers can permit a retake or grant extra credit at their discretion. To avoid this, however, either the level could be enforced more strongly, or students could be encouraged to check the level before reading the book and request a change of level setting in advance. Students should also be advised that they are more likely to fail a test if they wait too long after reading the book.

On very rare occasions, a quiz exists, but some questions are blank. MReader will fix such issues immediately when notified. In the meantime, teachers can advise students to take a screenshot of the empty field, then choose a random answer. If this causes them to fail the test, they may speak to the teacher, providing the screenshot as evidence, and request a retake. Finally, in the case where a student has been enrolled in a class in a previous year, they must remember to select the correct class name/number on their homepage before searching for and taking a new quiz. If they fail to do this, the quiz data will be registered to their account, but allocated to the Reading Report of their former class.

Conclusion

MReader offers an accessible platform for teachers to monitor reading progress, holding students accountable for their reading practice without needing to collect and collate paper reading records. It is also a motivating and meaningful way to develop a culture of talking about reading, raising awareness of the benefits of selecting books at an appropriate level, and encouraging students to develop a healthy habit of regular reading for fluency. The limitations detailed above show that MReader requires careful scaffolding and monitoring to ensure that students face as few obstacles as possible in using the system. Small issues do arise from time to time, but none of these are insurmountable, and there are a variety of ways for teachers to deal with them, given a little patience and discretion. For teachers who are will-

ing to invest a little time and attention to introducing their classes to MReader, their students could become more motivated and engaged with their ER practice in general.

Further Reading

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ZipGrade: Scan Response Forms with your Phone

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ZipGrade is a mobile application that uses your device's camera to scan and grade multiple-choice answer sheets. For teachers who give paper-based multiple-choice tests, or researchers who want to collect multiple-choice responses on paper, the time-saving benefits of marking and collecting data by simply pointing a camera at an answer sheet are enormous. I can attest that as a university teacher who was last year faced with five

TOEIC preparation classes in one semester, discovering ZipGrade made a world of difference to my mid-term and end-of-semester marking workload. In fact, I kept records, and found that marking each of the over 400 TOEIC Bridge answer sheets I collected took, on average, just 2.3 seconds to score. I have become somewhat evangelical about ZipGrade, and it is my pleasure to share this excellent solution to the tedium of multiple choice marking and data entry with *TLT Wired* readers.

Setting Up

ZipGrade is available on both iOS and Android and is used in conjunction with a desktop-optimized website (www.ZipGrade.com). You will need both to try it out. The ZipGrade website has downloadable answer sheets that feature the precise layout and alignment guides that the camera will search for when scanning. Three templates are available for tests with up to 20, 50, or 100 questions. Each question item has five answer options available, labeled A to E. The first step for teachers interested in using this tool is to download and print an answer sheet from the ZipGrade website. Next, download the ZipGrade mobile application, and create a ZipGrade account with an email address and password. (It is free to use ZipGrade to mark up to 100 answer sheets per month. To use it more frequently than that, there is an annual fee of US\$6.99.)

After creating an account, you will be prompted to create a new quiz by tapping the “New” button. Give the quiz a name, such as “Week 8 Review Test,” and select the appropriate answer sheet format (20, 50, or 100 questions) so that the app knows which alignment guides and layout to search for when scanning. Next, input the answers to the test by tapping the “Edit” key. A screen will come up with a row of selectable ABCDE options for each question. As you enter the correct option for each question, it will change colour. Alternatively, there is an option to enter the answer key by scanning an answer sheet that shows the correct answers, but I have preferred to use the first method so as to save a step. Once the quiz’s answer key has been entered, you are ready to scan students’ completed answer sheets.

There are spaces on the answer sheet for students to write their names, and (optionally) the date and the class designation. On the two longer test format answer sheets, students are asked for their ZipGrade ID, a numerical identifier with a bubble option for each numeral. Rather than assign any new identification number to students, I have utilised this by simply asking them to enter their university student

number without the department-identifying letters, for example, student EP16534 enters 16534. Students then carry out the test, using pen, pencil, or marker to darken the answer option of their choice for each question.

Scanning

Collect the answer sheets, and the fun can begin! Tap the “Scan Papers” button on the app. This will open your device’s camera, with four alignment guide squares appearing near the four corners of the screen. Simply align these with the four markers at the corners of an answer sheet. When they come into alignment, the device will suddenly vibrate or make a sound to indicate that the sheet has been scanned and marked, and the responses recorded. The image of the student’s name, ID number, score, and percentage will appear on the screen (Figure 1). It is incredibly fast. Scan the next paper, and the next, and before you know it, your marking is done. You will immediately regret ever having marked a multiple-choice quiz any other way!

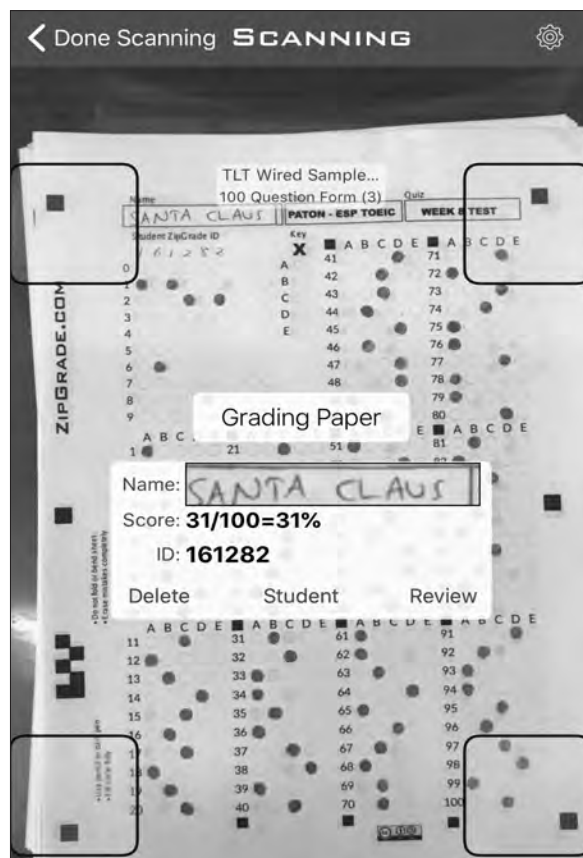


Figure 1. Screenshot of an answer sheet having just been scanned with name, score, and student ID visible.

Analysis

From within the mobile app, immediately after scanning all the answer sheets, it is possible to see a list of student names and their corresponding scores (Figure 2). This makes it possible to give feedback immediately, potentially within seconds of the student handing in their test. A photograph of each scanned paper, with a green circle around a correct answer and a red circle around an incorrect answer, is accessible with a tap on the student's name. It's also possible to see a rudimentary item analysis that shows what percentage of students answered each question correctly, and which answers were the most popular (Figure 3). A PDF or CSV spreadsheet file of all the collected data can be created and exported directly to email or cloud storage drives.

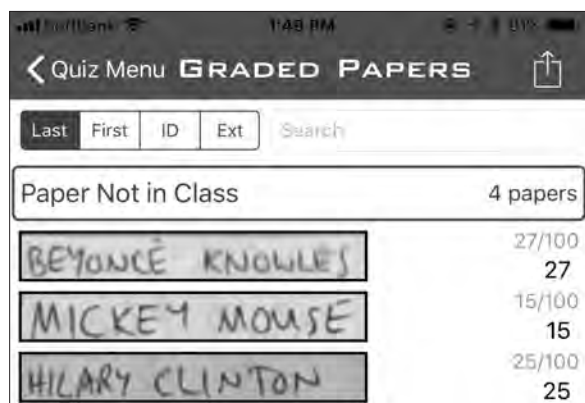


Figure 2. Summary view of names and scores from within the app.

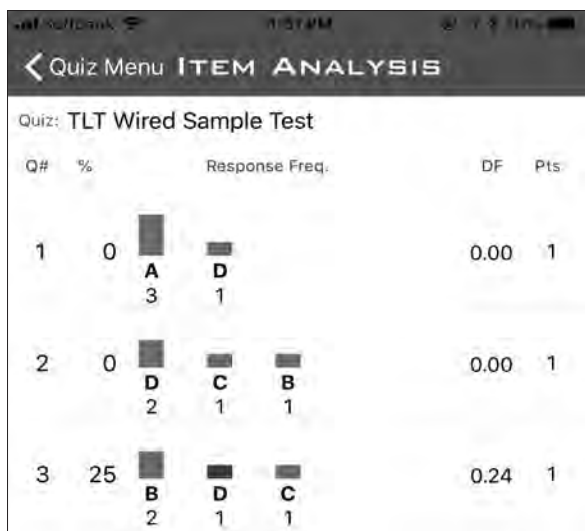


Figure 3. A rudimentary item analysis showing the percentage of students that selected each answer to each question.

A more detailed look at the results is possible on the ZipGrade.com website. When an internet connection is present—which is not necessary to create quizzes or scan answer sheets—data is synced from the mobile device to the website automatically. When you log in to the website and click on the quiz you just administered, you will find additional reports already compiled detailing the number of papers marked; maximum, minimum, and average scores; a score distribution chart; and links to downloadable PDF or CSV files (Figure 4).

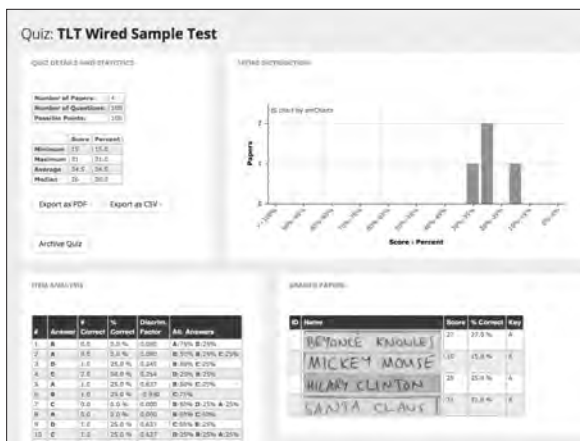


Figure 4. A detailed analysis of the quiz response data.

Research Purposes

In addition to finding and scoring correct and incorrect test answers, ZipGrade can also be used to gather survey data for analysis. The five answer options might be used as a Likert scale, with respondents perhaps being asked to select how strongly they agree or disagree with a statement.

The ZipGrade website advises that in this case, the software does still need an answer key, but only so that it knows to gather data on that question item. The app will not scan or record answers on items that do not have an answer key assigned. This allows for a 70-item test to be administered on the 100-question answer sheet. It is possible when entering the answer key to assign one point for a “correct” item, and one point also for any “incorrect” answer, thus rendering all responses equally valid. Item analysis will then show which respondents and what percentage of respondents selected each answer option.

Additional Functions

ZipGrade has far more complicated functions and uses than only scanning answer sheets and compiling spreadsheets of results, but doing only that has been enough to make me a passionate user and fan! I have not needed to venture further than marking one test at a time and exporting the data to my class Numbers spreadsheet. The website provides information on more complicated applications and customisations that users may find useful:

- classes can be established, with results of multiple tests being attributed to students by name, and record-keeping carried out across a longer timeframe.
- custom answer sheets can be created.
- tests can have multiple answer keys.

Conclusion

ZipGrade is a fantastic, time-saving tool for teachers and researchers who need to collect and process multiple-choice data. Completed tests for a whole class can be marked within seconds with scores being saved and synced automatically. Students can be told their scores even before they leave the classroom. Using ZipGrade is simple for anyone who is familiar with mobile devices. For me it has meant that the daunting task of concentrating through a great deal of tedious marking and data entry has been simply eliminated. Feeling my phone buzz each time it scans an answer sheet is a joy, and I can't recommend ZipGrade strongly enough.

[JALT PRAXIS] BOOK REVIEWS



Robert Taferner & Stephen Case

If you are interested in writing a book review, please consult the list of materials available for review in the Recently Received column, or consider suggesting an alternative book that would be helpful to our membership.

Email: reviews@jalt-publications.org

Web: <http://jalt-publications.org/tlt/departments/book-reviews>

This month's column features Winifred Lewis's review of *Smart Writing: Active Approach to Paragraph Writing* and Chumei Huang's evaluation of Keynote 1.

Smart Writing: Active Approach to Paragraph Writing

[Miyako Nakaya, Manabu Yoshihara, & Ruth Fallon. Tokyo: Seibido, 2016. pp. x + 91. ¥2,000. [Includes Teacher's Manual and audio CD.] ISBN: 978-4-7919-6032-3.]

Reviewed by Winifred Lewis Shiraishi, Nihon University College of International Relations

Smart Writing: Active Approach to Paragraph Writing is an academic skills textbook for beginner-level EFL students. This is a bilingual Japanese-English text that is designed to aid students in developing basic English paragraph writing skills.

Smart Writing explains the key parts of a paragraph for the purpose of communicating with unity, coherence, and cohesion. The textbook helps students write a variety of academic paragraphs, with opportunities for both classwork and homework activities. It includes units on how to write Narrative, Process, Description, Compare-and-contrast, Cause-and-effect, Problem-and-solution, and Opinion paragraphs. There are also additional sections on Data Analysis and Email Writing.

Each chapter begins with pre-writing that covers key concepts. For example, *Chapter 3: Process* has a set of instructions for how to use a train ticket machine which students must put in the correct order. Students then read sample paragraphs to use as models for a writing section that comes later in the unit. There is also audio of the example paragraphs. Each unit has two of these model paragraphs, with the second generally being more advanced than the

