



Fast, fluent and confident

“In relation to language learning, the expectation that all learners in a class will be at the same level of proficiency ... is giving way to approaches which allow more personalised learning. Such trends stress further the need for learner autonomy and diversity of learning materials.”

English Next – David Graddol, British Council, 2006

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Overview

- What does reading feel like to a weak L2 reader?
- What can fast, fluent and confident L2 readers do?
- How can we train students to be fast, fluent and confident readers?



What does reading feel like to a weak L2 reader?

Nick Samuel was 48, married to Claire, had two nice children at an expensive private school and was worried that he was about to lose the job that paid for them all. He was the Human Resources director for Topfoods plc and normally enjoyed his work. Until the day the Chief Executive Officer for Topfoods, Jerome Jones (or JJ as he was called) discovered diversity.

“Full Moon” - James Schofield, Business Spotlight 03-2010

Good L2 readers ...

Handle the complex literacy demands of modern society because they can:

- rapidly find and identify main ideas in texts
- recognise and internalise recently learned vocabulary
- observe how language studied in class is applied in alternative situations
- develop fluency through 'chunk' recognition
- learn new words from context

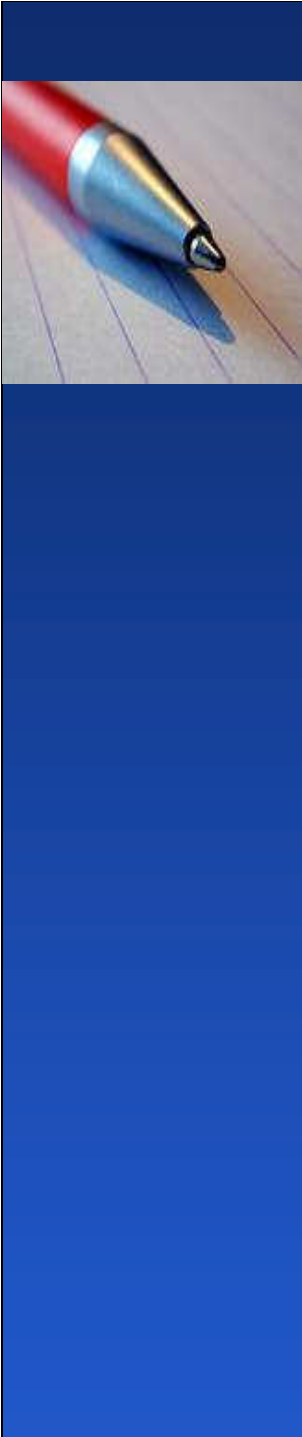
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‘Chunk’ recognition

Wilhelm Adler became the respected managing director of a large machine-tool company, largely thanks to his magnificent moustache.

Every morning he brushed each side fifty times with a special comb, cut any hairs that were too long and then practised making special faces in the mirror. These faces, combined with his moustache, were the secret of his success.

“The Moustache” - James Schofield, Business Spotlight 01-2011



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New words in context

devotchkas

malchicks

sharps

gullivers

glazzies

rot

New words in context

There were three **devotchkas** sitting at the counter all together, but there were four of us **malchicks** and it was usually like one for all and all for one. These **sharps** were dressed in the height of fashion too, with purple and green and orange wigs on their **gullivers**, each one not costing less than three or four of those sharps' wages, I should reckon, and make-up to match (rainbows round the **glazzies**, that is and the **rot** painted very wide).

“Clockwork Orange” Anthony Burgess

What should we aim for?

- An approach that emphasizes fluent reading of a lot of text at a comfortable pace and with a high level of understanding
- Reading is enjoyable and rewarding, not a struggle
- Ultimately, reading is done out of class, alone

How?

➤ **Research* shows following steps help fluency development:**

- Text preview
- Pre-presentation of vocabulary
- Repeated processing of same text leading to



- Close attention to language features
- Language 'chunk' recognition

* Teaching and researching: Reading – William Grabe, Fredericka L. Stoller, Pearson Education Ltd, 2002

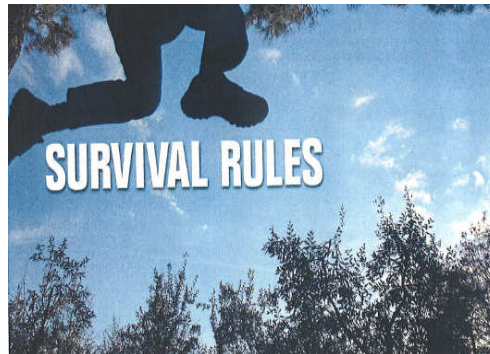
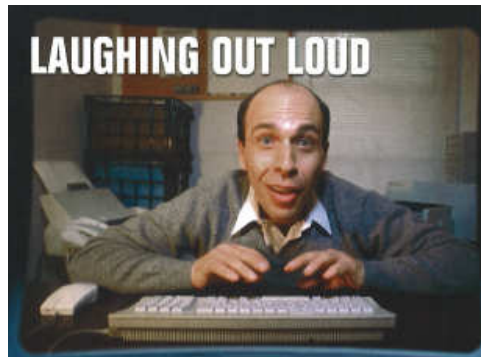
The ideal texts ...

- Comprehensible input (LL-1), level-controlled vocabulary / grammar / idioms, maximum 2-3 unknown per page
- Fiction (narrative and dialogue easier to read than pure prose)
- Variety of material to develop learner fluency

▪ ...and this means



Business Spotlight short stories!



short story

SURVIVAL RULES



There is an unwritten law in most companies: the sales and production managers don't like each other. But between Fitz Connolly, head of sales, and Carl Fink, head of production at Digicircuit, Inc., in Seattle, it was open war.

"Why can't production deliver on time?" Fitz complained at every management meeting.

"Because your sales team never checks my production schedules before making stupid promises to customers!" Carl always replied, and the same fights would start again.

Which was why, one Saturday afternoon, they found themselves driving up a narrow mountain road in an SUV with Jenny Kobilke, a relationship coach. She was small, blonde, and about 35. She was also an ex-U.S. Marine drill sergeant. The company president was sending the men on a course with her "to improve their teamwork."

As a joke, Fitz decided to ask Jenny if relationship coaches ever dated their clients. She gave him a look that could have frozen a polar bear. "When this course is over, you will hate me so much you'd rather date Osama bin Laden!" said Jenny. "I teach the rules of outdoor survival. You're here until you've learned them!"

"But we thought the course was about team building!" complained Fitz.

"Your mistake. Now, here's my first survival rule: always get your camp ready before dark. Move!" (200)

The men put up tents, collected wood and started a fire. Jenny took two cans of food out of her backpack and placed them on a rock. Carl took one and was ready to open it, when Jenny pressed a point on his neck and he found himself lying on the ground in great pain.

"I know every pressure point in the human body," she said. "Touch my food again and I'll show you the rest."

"But I'm hungry!" said Carl.
"My second survival rule is: find your own food," Jenny answered.

Carl ate a few peanuts he had in his jacket pocket, and Fitz found half a chocolate bar in his backpack. But they were both still hungry when they got into their sleeping bags.

Some time later, Carl shook Fitz awake.

"Come on!" Carl whispered. "Let's go get something to eat. I saw a diner on the highway, just before we drove up this road. I've got the keys to the SUV."

"She'll hear us."
"We'll start the engine when we're a safe distance away."

The road went downhill, so Fitz started pushing while Carl steered. After about fifty yards, Fitz jumped inside and Carl

turned the key. Nothing happened, and the car rolled to a stop. He tried again. Nothing. The engine was dead.

"Lost something?" said a familiar voice. Jenny held up the engine's spark plugs. "You can push the SUV back to camp now."

"But it was Carl's..."

"Move!" (400)

It took them an hour to get the SUV back up the hill again, while Jenny sat behind the steering wheel and taught them Marine marching songs.

For the next four days, they learned how to catch rabbits and find wild plants to eat. They were wet, cold, and so hungry that they burned their fingers trying to eat food when it was only half cooked. Whenever possible, they searched for the spark plugs, but with no success. Then, one afternoon, a chance came to escape.

Jenny had used the men as a ladder so she could climb up a tall tree, with Carl at the bottom and Fitz standing on his back. Now she was standing on a high branch, trying to see if squirrels had left some nuts inside a hole in the tree. "Nothing!" she called, then looked around and found the men standing away from the tree, watching her.

"Come back here!"

"Where are the spark plugs?" asked Fitz. "We're leaving!"
"You haven't finished the course yet. Get me down!"

They left Jenny in the tree to rethink her decision, and went back to the camp. But when they returned to the tree an hour later, they found her lying on the ground with blood covering her face and hair. Her eyes were closed and she made no sound.

"Oh, my God! Is she alive? How can we get her to a hospital without the SUV?" asked Carl. "Can we carry her on our backs as far as the diner?" (400)

"No, it's too far," said Fitz. "And she's hurt. We'll have to make a stretcher."

They used Jenny's sleeping bag and some branches to make a stretcher. Then they lifted her onto their shoulders and started down the road toward the diner. To keep themselves marching in step, they sang the songs that Jenny had taught them.

"Everywhere I go..." began Fitz.

"Everywhere I go..." echoed Carl.

"There's a drill sergeant there..." continued Fitz.

"There's a drill sergeant there..." copied Carl.

After six long miles, they reached the diner, shortly after dark. Exhausted, they carefully put Jenny down by the door and went inside.

"We need a phone," said Carl to the waitress. Behind them, the door opened again.

"Has anybody here lost a drill sergeant?" asked Jenny. They stared at her in disbelief.

"Fake blood," explained Jenny. "Just like Hollywood. Well, congratulations! You guys have finally understood survival rule number three. You've passed the course." She looked at the waitress. "Can we order some steaks?"

"What... what is survival rule number three?" asked Fitz.

"Good teamwork!" said Jenny. "What else?" (100)

by James Schofield

Story matrix

- 1) Preview
- 2) Pre-teach vocabulary
- 3) Read alone and complete story matrix. Compare notes with partner
- 4) Listen to reading of story
- 5) Timed reading
- 6) Retell story with story matrix
- 7) Post reading activities

Title / topic			
When		Where	
Key characters			
Central issue			
Key events	Results		
1			
2			
3			
Final result			
Key phrases / vocabulary			



Useful references

Books

- 1) English Next – David Graddol, British Council, 2006
- 2) The power of reading – Stephen Krashen, Libraries Unlimited Inc., 1993
- 3) Teaching and researching: Reading – William Grabe, Fredericka L. Stoller, Pearson Education Ltd, 2002

Background articles

- 1) Graded readers in English – David R. Hill ELT Journal Volume 62/2 April 2008
- 2) Why extensive reading should be an indispensable part of all language programs – Dr Rob Waring, Notre Dame Seishin University Okayama, Japan August 2008
www.extensivereading.net

Websites

- 1) www.extensivereading.net
- 2) <http://www.business-spotlight.de>