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Developing World Language Students’ Proficiency with Reader’s Workshops and Extensive Reading During Literature Circles

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Abstract

For students to achieve global competence, world language teachers must develop students’ literacy early and not wait until the third or fourth year of world language study. By incorporating Reader’s Workshops and literature circles into lessons, teachers can explicitly teach and model various strategies for students to improve their reading comprehension (Daniels, 2002; Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Keene & Zimmerman, 2007). Novice-level students can learn skills such as activating schema, scanning, and asking questions. Intermediate-level students can learn to make inferences, determine importance, and synthesize. Advanced-level students can read extensively inside and outside of class and be trained to discuss various texts during literature circles. If students are taught to use strategies when reading in their world language, they will learn to read text instead of translate it. Ultimately, students will be able to think critically, engage in meaningful dialogue with others, and communicate their ideas in multiple languages with a diversity of people to address global problems more effectively and improve our future.

Introduction

With the current emphasis on improving students’ oral proficiency in world language classrooms, it is important to remember that developing literacy in a language is as essential as learning to speak it. Even though one can develop oral proficiency skills in a language without becoming literate in it, being able to read
and write in multiple languages allows a person access to more knowledge, more expertise, and more professional and personal opportunities. While some gains have been made, illiteracy in general is a widespread and worldwide issue that presents major challenges in improving life quality around the globe.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2015) reports that there are 757 million illiterate adults (15 years and older) and 115 million illiterate youth (15-24 years) in the world. Sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia have the highest illiteracy rates. Adult illiteracy rates are above 50% in Afghanistan, Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guinea, Haiti, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and South Sudan (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015). As a result of increased access to schooling, youth illiteracy rates (15-24 years) are generally lower than adult illiteracy rates (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015). In the U.S., several illiteracy statistics show evidence for concern: 44 million adults cannot read a simple story to their children; 50% of adults cannot read a book written at the eighth grade level; 44% of adults do not read a book in a year; six out of 10 households do not buy a single book in a year; 50% of the unemployed between the ages of 16 and 21 cannot read well enough to be considered functionally literate; three out of five people in prisons cannot read; and 85% of juvenile offenders have problems reading (Literacy Project Foundation, 2015).

World language teachers have the ability to teach students another language while also improving their knowledge and skills in their first language. Even though students may not learn certain valuable skills in other content areas such as how to read effectively, they can learn these skills in world language classrooms. Freire and Macedo (1987) assert that illiteracy threatens democracy because illiterates cannot make informed decisions or participate in the political process. They call for “a view of literacy as a form of cultural politics” (p. viii) and challenge teachers to participate in a critical literacy campaign in which students learn more than words and letters. They urge teachers to develop a critical pedagogy and to view literacy as “the relationship of learners to the world, mediated by the transforming practice of this world taking place in the very general milieu in which learners travel” (p. viii).

Similar to Friere and Macedo (1987), Daniels & Ahmed (2015) warn teachers that the passive, top-down pedagogy many of today’s adults experienced in school caused them to become bystanders who do not possess the tools necessary to think critically, make informed judgments, and react in a variety of situations. They challenge teachers to inspire the present generation to become “upstanders” who are “active and informed human beings who will make thoughtful and brave choices in their own lives, in their communities, and on the ever-shrinking world stage” (p. 4). To become upstanders who effectively solve world problems and improve our future, Daniels & Ahmed (2015) believe students must be taught to read, write, think, investigate, and collaborate.

In order to foster connections, empower communities, celebrate the world, solve local and global problems, and improve our future, students must become literate and learn to think critically in their world language. Teachers can use the English
Language Arts Common Core Standards (2010) and World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (2015) to inform their curriculum and instruction and promote communicative and cultural proficiency in world language classrooms. To train students to read—and not to translate—in their world language, teachers can use the Reader’s Workshop model with Novice and Intermediate-level students (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007; Keene & Zimmerman, 2007). Intermediate High and Advanced-level students can read texts extensively and engage in literature circles (Daniels, 2002). If teachers focus on developing students’ literacy early on in world language classrooms, students will develop global competence and be able to think critically, engage in meaningful dialogue, and communicate their ideas in multiple languages with a diversity of people.

In this paper, I first review literature on the teaching of reading in world language classrooms. Then, I present two models for developing literacy in world language classrooms: Reader’s Workshop and literature circles. Next, I suggest strategies world language teachers can use to teach reading skills explicitly to Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced learners. In conclusion, I make recommendations for integration, research, and collaboration among world language researchers, applied linguists, and reading researchers to investigate best practices in teaching reading in world languages and to discover the effects of using strategies such as Reader’s Workshop, extensive reading, and literature circles.

Review of Literature

Recent studies that focus on the development of world language students’ reading proficiency in K-12 U.S. classrooms are non-existent, mostly because reading researchers cannot function in languages other than English (Bernhardt, 2005). They never developed proficiency to read, write, or speak in languages other than English. Nevertheless, multiple studies have been conducted in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, where students learn English during classes in European and Asian countries (Alhaqbani & Riazi, 2012; Fredericks, 2012; Loh, 2009; Parsons & Lyddy, 2009; Roohani & Asiabani, 2015; Takase, 2007; Yamashita, 2013; Zhang, 2012). Although most of these studies have occurred in university classrooms, some have taken place in K-12 schools. Perhaps little research has been conducted in the U.S. because teachers, administrators, and curriculum designers view reading in a world language to be too challenging. Grabe (2010) asserts “developing highly skilled reading abilities is a very challenging goal that takes a lot of effort (and motivation) and a long time” (p. 12). He believes that to be proficient independent readers in a world language, students must be able to engage in a wide range of comprehension and interpretive tasks. To succeed in developing reading proficiency, Grabe (2010) asserts students must possess:

1. A very large recognition vocabulary
2. A well-developed awareness of discourse (and genre) structure in a wide range of texts
3. The strategic resources to interpret (and use) complex and challenging texts for a variety of purposes
4. Extensive exposure to texts in the world language over long periods of time and with a variety of texts
5. The motivation to engage, persist, and achieve success with more and more challenging texts
6. An awareness of goals for learning that support motivation
7. A supportive and engaging curriculum (p. 12).

Students cannot reach high levels of reading proficiency without extended reading practice and long-term intensive reading instruction (Grabe, 2010).

Bernhardt (2005) cautions world language teachers and researchers not to procrastinate any longer: reading in a second or world language is “a critical area for research and scholarship well beyond the borders of applied linguistics” (p. 133). In particular, she notes that a focus on compensatory processing, what students do to compensate for deficiencies in reading, is a particular area of need. She advises researchers to conduct studies that focus on strategy training and to collaborate with teachers in classrooms. Otherwise, students will continue to lack necessary instructional support and will be “forced to fend for themselves” and “rely on the Internet in conjunction with electronic dictionaries” to translate rather than learn how to read (p. 143). Urlaub (2013) concurs, claiming there are few concrete approaches available to aid instructors in developing students’ reading competencies. Research in this area will be challenging because in many EFL settings, and potentially in many U.S. world language classrooms, “teachers and administrators remain so heavily invested in grammar-translation and other methods that involve using reading as a route to form-focused grammar and vocabulary learning, to the exclusion or near-exclusion of developing fluent reading skills” (Huffman, 2014, p. 17).

In the following sections, I review research that has been conducted in EFL and world language classrooms in countries such as China, Iran, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Taiwan, and Tajikistan. First, I present research that demonstrates the need for teachers to train students to think in the world language as they read, and not to translate the text. Then, I review studies that focus on strategies that teachers can teach students to use when reading. Lastly, I discuss the success of using extensive reading and literature circles to improve students’ reading fluency, comprehension, and motivation to learn world languages.

**Training Students to Think in the World Language**

For world language students to develop high levels of reading comprehension, many researchers agree that they must possess certain vocabulary and grammatical knowledge (Alderson, 2000; Grabe, 2005, 2009, 2010; Ellis, 2005; Koda, 2005; Qian, 2002; Stæhr, 2008; Zhang, 2012). Most recently, Zhang (2012) examined the importance of vocabulary and both explicit and implicit grammatical knowledge on reading comprehension. The participants were 190 EFL learners working on their master’s degrees in engineering at a university in China. Most students had studied English for six years in secondary school and two years in college. The results showed that vocabulary knowledge was more strongly predictive of
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their reading comprehension abilities than grammatical knowledge. With further analysis of the data, Zhang discovered that implicit grammatical knowledge appeared to influence reading comprehension more than explicit knowledge. Zhang concluded, “effective comprehension requires a type of grammatical knowledge that can be rapidly accessed in reading for syntactic parsing or word integration” (p. 570). Implicit grammatical knowledge requires automatic processing and syntactic efficiency; effective readers must be able to think in the language with ease, and not focus attention on grammatical structures at the expense of understanding texts (Zhang, 2012).

In order for teachers to understand how students can be trained to think in their world language and develop implicit grammatical knowledge to improve reading comprehension and overall proficiency, it is important to understand Vygotsky’s (1962) socio-cultural theory, specifically the concept of inner speech or what Ridgway (2009) refers to as the “inner voice” (p. 46). Ridgway (2009) explains the inner voice as the language-productive module people think with and sometimes have difficulty shutting down. He explains the inner voice develops in childhood and remains with people for the rest of their lives. When reading, Ridgway suggests people hear voices in their head, which helps them comprehend texts. Specifically related to second and world language learning, he proposes that a “breakthrough period” occurs when learners begin to hear the inner voice in their second or world language, which aids them to think, and read, in that language (p. 51). To develop the inner voice in their world language, learners must develop automatized phonology or prosody, or recognized speech sounds and patterns (Ridgway, 2009). To promote inner voice and literacy development, Ridgway recommends teachers read stories aloud to students, allow students to listen to songs and rhymes, present vocabulary in written and spoken form simultaneously, and teach students poems and parts in plays that they can perform.

Teaching Reading Strategies Explicitly

As a result of the American Council of Teaching of Foreign Language’s (ACTFL) (2010) position statement recommending teachers and students use the target language at least 90% of instructional time, focus seems to be more on developing speaking proficiency than reading proficiency, and few approaches to teaching reading in world language classrooms have been proposed (Urlaub, 2013). To continue to promote target language use and to help students develop their inner voice, it is clear that world language teachers are in need of effective reading strategies and methods to avoid translation (Alhaqhani & Riazi, 2012; Stoller, Anderson, Grabe, & Komiyama, 2013; Urlaub, 2013).

Stoller et al. (2013) understand that world language teachers may feel restricted in their ability to be creative with curriculum and instruction. They recognize that teachers, particularly in EFL contexts, are provided established curricula, textbooks, and exams, and, as Giroux (1988) has pointed out, are sometimes treated as technicians as opposed to intellectuals. After meeting EFL teachers that said they had few opportunities to adjust instruction to address students’ needs, interests, and learning styles, Stoller et al. (2013) suggested teachers integrate
several strategies into lessons for at least 10 minutes a week. They recommend teachers expose students to a variety of texts by posting student work and creating a classroom library of texts in the world language that appeal to students’ interests and life experiences. They encourage teachers to read aloud to students and to promote paired or buddy reading where students alternate reading aloud to each other. Repeated oral reading, silent reading, and echo reading can take place during designated time periods with teacher guidance (Stoller et al., 2013). To build vocabulary, students can become “word collectors” and record new words in journals, eventually categorizing these words and using them in written and oral production activities. As opposed to testing comprehension, Stoller et al. encourage teachers to teach students reading comprehension strategies explicitly, model strategy use, and show students how to use graphic organizers to organize discourse of texts.

At King Saud University in Saudi Arabia, Alhaqbani and Riazi (2012) investigated 122 undergraduate, male, non-native Arabic students’ reading strategy awareness as they read academic texts in Arabic. Students reported high usage of reading strategies while they read Arabic, with the most preferred strategy being problem-solving; specifically, re-reading to improve understanding. The second most common strategy used was global reading. Students described a real purpose in learning to read Arabic because of their motivation to understand the Muslim religion better. Ninety-eight percent of the male participants were studying in the Department of Islamic Studies and the Department of Arabic Studies. Alhaqbani and Riazi found that students using global reading strategies used background knowledge and context clues, and they determined importance while reading. This study was limited in that it only examined students’ perceptions of strategy use and did not examine how students developed strategic competence in reading.

Roohani and Asibani (2015) compared the effects of self-regulated strategy development and non-strategic-based instruction on students’ reading comprehension of argumentative texts. Participants were 70 Iranian females aged 16-26 enrolled in two intermediate-level EFL courses at an English Institute in Neyriz, a city in the Fars province. The control group was given brief discussion questions before reading after which they read the text silently. The teacher then asked a student to read one paragraph of the text aloud, which the teacher re-read, and then gave students definitions and synonyms of difficult words. The teacher and students continued to read the text aloud, and the teacher explained important vocabulary. At the end of the lesson, students answered comprehension questions posed by the teacher.

The experimental group was taught the “TWA strategy”, a self-regulatory strategy in which students are prompted to think before reading, while reading, and after reading (Hoyt, 2010; Roohani & Asibani, 2015, p. 37). Before reading, students identified the author’s purpose, reflected on what they already knew, and determined what they wanted to learn. While reading, they monitored their reading speed, linked their knowledge to what they read, and reread parts of the text that were confusing. After reading, students established the main idea for each paragraph, summarized the text with supporting details, and identified what
they learned. The teacher modeled the TWA strategy, had students practice the skills, and asked students to use graphic organizers and highlighters while reading. Roohani and Asoabani (2015) found that students who used the TWA strategy performed significantly better than the non-strategy group on summary reading post-tests. They concluded that strategy training improves EFL students' reading comprehension and asserted that there is more to reading than decoding words.

Jiang (2012) investigated the effect of modeling reading strategies explicitly with students using discourse graphic organizers (i.e. cause and effect, problem-solution). The study included 174 first semester and 166 third semester undergraduates that were non-English majors at a major university in China. Their average age was 19.2 years and they had taken nine years of uninterrupted English courses. The researcher trained teachers during two 90-minute sessions on how to use discourse graphic organizers. The students' reading comprehension improved significantly as a result of teachers using discourse graphic organizers, with the effects of the instruction persisting seven weeks later upon retesting. Jiang recommended EFL teachers utilize discourse graphic organizers to keep students engaged and to improve reading comprehension. Additionally, Jiang believed teachers must be properly trained to recognize discourse structures and to integrate discourse graphic organizers into reading instruction.

Liu and Todd (2014) studied the effects of various repeated reading methods: visual only, shadowing (participants mimicked what they heard in real time), time-lapse imitation (participants repeated what they heard as accurately as possible after each sentence), and subvocalization (participants read in their mind while listening to recording). Eighty Mandarin-speaking college students majoring in Japanese at a university in Taiwan, who had been in Japanese classes for an average of 3.5 years, participated in the study. Liu and Todd found that only shadowing had a significant impact on vocabulary test scores. Students' reading comprehension; however, improved when using shadowing, time-lapse imitation, and subvocalization. Subvocalization showed the strongest effect in enhancing reading comprehension (Liu & Todd, 2014). The researchers cautioned teachers that repeated reading methods did not benefit all learners and advised them to assess students' learning styles to best meet their needs. It appears from this research that world language learners need to hear and see text, and think in the language, developing their inner voice, to improve their reading proficiency (Liu & Todd, 2014).

Integrating Extensive Reading and Literature Circles

Besides integrating reading strategy training into world language curriculum design, research in EFL settings, mostly in Japan, encourages the use of extensive reading to improve students' motivation, attitudes, and reading comprehension (Loh, 2009; Takase, 2007; Yamashita, 2013). Day and Bamford (2002) assert that extensive reading operates best when (1) a variety of texts are available on a wide range of topics at varied level of reading difficulty; (2) students choose what they read, read independently, and are intrinsically motivated to read; (3) students can read at a faster pace because they choose books that are at their reading level and
Yamashita (2013) studied the effects of extensive reading on students’ attitudes about reading in a world language. Sixty-one undergraduate EFL students who were majoring in agricultural studies, economics, and informatics at a university in Japan participated in the study. Students read during and outside of class. To earn credit in the 15-week course, they were required to submit book reports for each book they read, which they chose to write in Japanese instead of English. The students felt more comfortable and less anxious towards reading as a result of the course. Extensive reading had a positive effect on the intellectual value students attached to reading. In a short period of time, the participants’ attitudes improved significantly because they enjoyed the extensive reading (Yamashita, 2013). Yamashita believed that reading materials should be accessible to world language students in classrooms that use extensive reading programs, and that a classroom library “is a responsibility of teachers” (p. 259).

In Singapore, Loh (2009) described a setting in which teachers’ beliefs about modeling the act of reading did not match their actions during uninterrupted sustained silent reading (USSR). Ten teachers in an English-immersion primary school where USSR had been implemented to promote reading habits participated in the study. USSR took place for 15 minutes with the discipline mistress signaling the beginning and the end of silent reading time. During two five-week long semesters, Loh observed that teachers rarely read during USSR with two teachers confessing during interviews, “…I’m guilty of just standing there and making sure my pupils read…” and “…I don’t bring along my book, so I just sit and stare…” (p. 106). Even though teachers claimed in written questionnaires to value modeling of reading for students, they did not model in practice. Teachers did not value USSR as much as enrichment and remedial programs that were taking place at the same time. Loh suggested that Singapore re-examine their approach to extensive reading programs, emphasizing the need for teachers to read while students read during USSR or other activities.

In order to increase her second-year high school Japanese students’ motivation to study English and improve their reading proficiency, Takase (2007) implemented and researched an extensive reading program that spanned three years. Participants attended a private girls’ school and had received at least four years of English education, with reading proficiency levels ranging from Beginning to Intermediate according to the Second Language English Proficiency Test. A variety of graded readers and easy-reading books for high school students were available to students. The girls read primarily outside of the classroom, while rapid reading and reading comprehension skills were practiced in the classroom. Takase modeled expectations for students, showing them how to choose books, read extensively, write summaries, and complete book records. Each student participated in the extensive reading treatment for one academic year (11 months). They were required to write a book summary for each book they read. Unlike participants in Yamashita’s (2013) study, students wrote summaries in Japanese the first semester and in English the second semester. Takase (2007)
found that several students who liked to read in Japanese were not motivated to read in English, and students who enjoyed reading in English did not like reading in Japanese. Some students were motivated to read in English because “doing so attracted the attention of students from other high schools when they were using public transportation” and it “made them feel cool” (p. 11).

In another study examining high school students’ motivation for extensive reading in Japanese, de Burgh-Hirabe and Feryok (2013) collected data from nine advanced Japanese students at two high schools in a New Zealand city. Extensive reading was not part of a class, but rather an outside project for the students. Researchers met students at their schools, discussed reading materials (graded readers, children’s books, six newly published low-leveled books), and provided students with journals and reading records. Researchers instructed students to choose easy, interesting books, and to read as much and as often as possible. They also modeled expectations for students regarding journal and reading record completion. From analysis of participant interviews and journal entry data, de Burgh-Hirabe and Feryok discovered that motivation to read in Japanese changed for seven of the nine participants. Motivation increased for four students, decreased for three students, and remained stable for two students. All students remained positive about the experience, but some criticized their dedication to the project. Issues related to time management and social life affected students’ participation in extensive reading. Students appreciated being able to choose books to read, and several students mentioned how reading in Japanese would better prepare them for the national exam they must take to earn credits. de Burgh-Hirabe and Feryok (2013) concluded that implementing a monitoring system or doing extensive reading in class would be more effective than asking students to engage in voluntary reading.

Literature circles is an effective monitoring system, or discussion protocol, that could benefit world language teachers interested in integrating extensive reading in their classroom (Daniels, 2002). With Intermediate and Advanced adult EFL learners in Tajikistan, where Soviet-themed textbooks were being used, Fredericks (2012) moved away from traditional grammar-translation approaches to teaching reading, and instead she implemented critical literature circles. During critical literature circles, “the facilitator invites members to analyze depictions of events, communities, characters, and themes and to relate them to pertinent issues in their lives” (Fredericks, 2012, p. 495). Based on their schedules, 33 adults participated in five groups of six to seven students, with each group reading numerous texts during the academic year. Fredericks collected data through interviews, written participant reflections, and a researcher journal to study the effects of implementing critical literature circles with EFL learners. Participants most frequently discussed exploring life lessons and regularly debated political and social issues. They felt they became more confident readers because the texts offered them more linguistic input and they enjoyed reading texts they had chosen. Occasionally, participants felt challenged emotionally and psychologically by a text, especially when reading *The Pursuit of Happyness* (Gardner, 2006) and *The Kite Runner* (Hosseini, 2003). Fredericks concluded that the “flexibility of the [critical literature circles] revealed
members’ dynamic reading preferences and propensity for discussing opinions on issues such as relationships, social norms, traditions, and history” (p. 502). Critical literature circles allowed members to use English in meaningful ways and promoted critical discussion about culturally relevant topics (Fredericks, 2012).

Two Models for Literacy Development: Reader’s Workshop and Literature Circles

Some parents and teachers may wonder why it is necessary to teach comprehension strategies explicitly. They may think, “we learned to read without them”, and for those who became proficient readers, they intuitively determined which strategies helped them comprehend text (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 32). Harvey and Goudvis claim that teachers must explicitly instruct students “to ensure children don’t simply become expert decoders but also learn to create meaning naturally and subconsciously as they read” (p. 32). They believe students should read a wider variety of texts and a larger volume of reading materials. Students today frequently read information and texts on the Internet and must think critically and judge the credibility of authors more frequently (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). Harvey and Goudvis caution teachers that some children may not benefit from strategy training in reading because it slows them down and makes reading less enjoyable. Nonetheless, explicit comprehension instruction allows for children to think and learn at higher levels, and be informed citizens who are upstanders and not bystanders (Daniels & Ahmed, 2015; Harvey & Goudvis, 2007).

Reader’s Workshop

Daniels & Bizar (2005) present the “classroom workshop model”, which they describe as the “pedagogical embodiment of constructivist learning theory” (p. 152). They describe this best practice strategy as a student-centered experience where students do “less telling and more showing” and have “time to do learning” (p. 152). During workshop time, teachers model their thinking, investigating, and authoring processes (Daniels & Bizar, 2005). They conference with students after teaching carefully planned mini-lessons in which they model and explain the type of work students will engage in during the workshop (Daniels & Bizar, 2005). Daniels & Bizar (2005, p. 154) provide a schedule that could be useful for teachers interested in designing classroom workshops that includes a mini-lesson (5-15 minutes), status-of-the-class conference (5 minutes), work time/conferences (20-30 minutes), and sharing (10 minutes). They remind teachers that a defining element of the workshop model is student choice. Students must be allowed to choose “their own phenomena for investigating, topics for writing, books for reading” (p. 154).

Harvey and Goudvis’s (2007) Reader’s Workshop model complements Daniels and Bizar’s (2005) classroom workshop model. During a Reader’s Workshop, the teacher models a reading strategy to the whole class during a mini-lesson. Then, the teacher gives students time to practice the strategy in small groups, pairs, or independently (Harvey and Goudvis, 2007). At this time, the teacher circulates in the room, conferences with students to make sure they understand and can
apply the strategy, and meets with small groups, if needed, to provide additional modeling. At the end of the workshop, the teacher facilitates a debrief session in which students share their learning (Harvey and Goudvis, 2007). Keene (2008) also believes incorporating these four components ensures a successful Reader’s Workshop: mini-lesson, independent or small group practice, needs-based reading groups, and debriefing or sharing time.

After extensive collaboration with teachers in classrooms, Keene and Zimmerman (2007) developed a list of conditions necessary for a successful Reader’s Workshop, which world language teachers can incorporate when implementing the strategy (see Figure 1) (pp. 116-117).

**Figure 1.** Keene & Zimmerman’s (2007) Conditions for a Successful Reader’s Workshop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers…</th>
<th>Students…</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▶ Create a climate of respect and civility using rituals, a predictable schedule, and well-defined procedures for meeting routine needs</td>
<td>▶ Confer with teachers individually about their work as readers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Create a culture of rigor, inquiry, and intimacy by continually expecting more, probing ideas further, and pressing students to explore their intellect</td>
<td>▶ Engage in reading daily so they can apply strategies learned during workshop time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Create a culture conducive to in-depth study of books, genres, topics, authors, and comprehension strategies</td>
<td>▶ Choose most reading materials and the ways in which they share thinking and knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Provide equal access for all students to the materials and expertise needed by readers</td>
<td>▶ Participate in focused, intensive small-group instruction when needed to meet specific learning needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Serve as learners by living literate lives and modeling how literacy plans an important role in their lives</td>
<td>▶ Engage in in-depth discourse about books and ideas in groups of varying sizes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Share ways they have applied what they learned in new contexts, such as by teaching one another during reflection sessions</td>
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</table>

Keene and Zimmerman remind teachers, “Remember, the strategies are tools. They are a means to an end—comprehension—not an end in themselves” (p. 43). The main goal of the teacher should be to help students become avid readers who love to read (Keene & Zimmerman, 2007).

**Literature Circles**

In addition to recommending teachers use the classroom workshop or Reader’s workshop models to build literacy, Daniels (2002) designed a discussion-based, student-centered approach to reading books that he calls literature circles. Eleven features are important to the success of literature circles (Daniels, 2002, p. 18).

1. Students choose their own reading materials.
2. Small temporary groups are formed based on book choice.
3. Different groups read different books.
4. Groups meet on a regular, predictable schedule to discuss their reading.
5. Students use written or drawn notes to guide both their reading and discussion.
6. Discussion topics come from students.
7. Group meetings should be open, natural conversations about books that promote students to share personal connections, digressions, and open-ended questions.
8. The teacher is the facilitator rather than a group member or instructor.
9. Students are evaluated through teacher observation and student self-evaluation.
10. A spirit of playfulness and fun pervades the room.
11. When books are finished, readers share with their classmates, and then new groups are formed around new reading choices.

When first implementing literature circles, it is crucial that teachers train students how they function by using a story or novel and post-its, response logs, or role sheets (Daniels, 2002). Daniels recommends teachers (1) explain how literature circles work; (2) demonstrate what they look like by providing live or videotaped examples; (3) practice various approaches with students; (4) debrief activities and experiences while training and provide feedback; (5) provide ongoing feedback on how students can improve through mini-lessons and coaching. Examples of possible student roles during literature circles are connector, questioner, literary illuminator, and illustrator (Daniels, 2002). Once students become experienced with literature circles, roles might not be necessary (Daniels, 2002). Students can learn a variety of content and skills by engaging in literature circles by reading fiction and non-fiction texts in a variety of classrooms (Daniels, 2002).

**Integrating Reading in World Language Classrooms**

During my four years of high school French, I only remember reading one book, *Le Petit Prince* (de Saint-Exupéry, 1987), which I read my third year. We translated passages and answered questions about different sections of the book over a period of several weeks. As someone who enjoyed theatre, I asked my French teacher if we might be able to act out scenes from the book. He was intrigued by this idea and allowed us to pick partners to perform a scene in class. The next time I was asked to read a text in French was not until my second French course in college. Up until that point, I had thought of myself as an excellent French student, earning mostly As and some Bs. In this Intermediate-level college French course, the graduate teaching assistant required us to speak exclusively in French, which was motivating but also challenging because she did not coach students who had never experienced the immersion approach before on how to develop strategic competence. Even worse, she assigned us the text *Les Jeux sont faits* (Sartre, 1952) and did not provide students with any guidance on how to approach reading it. Consequently, I went straight to the Modern Languages library, checked out a translated copy in order to survive the next few weeks, and pretended
that I was reading the text in French. I knew something was wrong with this approach, but I wanted to be sure I earned a good grade in the course as I had just changed my major to French education.

Years later as a high school French teacher, based on my experiences studying abroad in France and participating in French literature courses, I understood the importance of developing curriculum and employing instructional strategies that helped students develop literacy in French. My goal was to teach students reading strategies to help them comprehend shorter texts in their beginning French courses, and then to build their literacy skills in ways so they could read longer texts in French (short stories, plays, fables, satires) without translating words or phrases. I wanted them to be able to really read *Les Jeux sont faits* in fourth year high school French without having to translate every word. In my classroom, whether reading, writing, speaking, or listening, I wanted to train students to think in French. Without having had any formal courses or professional development about Reader's Workshop, I used a modified version of this model with my first and second year French students. After further experimentation with my third and fourth year French students, I became more successful at integrating more student-centered strategies to discuss literature. Eventually, through graduate coursework, professional development, and working as a school designer and differentiation coach, I learned about Reader's Workshop and literature circles. To illustrate the potential of these two models to improve students' reading proficiency in their world language, I will now explore how they can be integrated effectively into world language classrooms.

**Reader’s Workshop in World Language Classrooms**

Harvey and Goudvis (2007) and Keene and Zimmerman (2007) discuss multiple strategies teachers can teach explicitly during Reader's Workshops to improve students' reading comprehension. These strategies were intended for use in first language reading instruction, but students learning to read in an additional language also can benefit from explicit strategy instruction. Harvey and Goudvis (2007) define and provide examples of strategy lessons that focus on: monitoring comprehension; activating and connecting to background knowledge; questioning; visualizing and inferring; determining importance in text; and summarizing and synthesizing text. Similarly, Keene and Zimmerman (2007) explain and give classroom examples of monitoring for meaning; using and creating schema; asking questions; determining importance; inferring; using sensory and emotional images; and synthesizing.

With Novice-level students, world language teachers can teach simpler strategies such as activating schema, scanning, and asking questions. During the first Reader's Workshop with Novice-level students, for example, teachers should stress that reading is not translating, and that there are various types of reading, including scanning, skimming, intensive reading, and extensive reading. A handout that explains the process of reading in a world language is provided to students (Appendix A). In English, the teacher and students read this handout and discuss how to approach reading in a world language. After discussing the importance of reading without translation, teachers model reading strategies that are easier for Novice-level students to understand and practice.
With my undergraduate and graduate methods’ students, I model a Reader’s Workshop on activating schema, scanning, and asking questions, similar to what I did with my first year high school French students during their first semester (Appendix B). I choose different texts according to students’ interest, and use current events or culturally relevant topics. Since I teach students at Bowling Green State University in Ohio to use Expeditionary Learning design to plan curriculum and instruction, I encourage them to incorporate Reader’s Workshops into their in-depth investigation plans (see Burke, 2007, forthcoming).

As a high school teacher, for the first Reader’s Workshop I implemented with Novice-level students I chose texts that activated students’ background knowledge: a short newspaper article on the Chicago Bulls and a brief article about the French presidential election. Being from Chicago, everyone had an interest in the Chicago Bulls, and students also were curious about who the French president and prime minister were at the time. To begin my mini-lesson, I provided each student with a copy of the Chicago Bulls article and gave them a separate sheet with five specific questions to answer while reading the text. In French, I modeled how students could scan the article, looking for key words from the questions. I asked them to use colored pencils or markers to underline and mark #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5 in the text where they thought they could find possible answers for each question. Then, I demonstrated how students could answer each question by going back to the sections they had marked. I taught them to answer questions in a few words. They were not required to respond in complete sentences. After answering each question and writing responses on the board, I read the questions aloud and chose students to read the answers aloud. Students verified that their responses matched those on the board.

After modeling activating schema, scanning, and asking questions, I distributed the article on the French presidential election along with five more questions to answer using the text, and asked students to apply the skills they had seen me demonstrate. They were allowed to work with a partner, and as was typical in my class, they spoke only French. After students had marked their article and written responses to the questions, I asked student pairs to write their responses on the board and we discussed the questions together as a class. At the end of the workshop, we debriefed the experience in English.

After modeling simpler reading strategies, Novice High and Intermediate-level students can be taught reading strategies such as re-reading, making connections, determining importance, making inferences, and synthesizing. Teachers can choose appropriate texts, or excerpts from texts, and follow the same format for their Reader’s Workshop: mini-lesson, practice/application, and group share/debrief (Appendix B). World language teachers should design a variety of graphic organizers appropriate for the specific reading strategy they are modeling to improve students’ reading comprehension and engagement (Jiang, 2012; Roohani & Asoabni, 2015; Stoller et al., 2013) (Appendix C).
Extensive Reading During Literature Circles in World Language Classrooms

My first two years as a high school French teacher, I struggled to motivate my third and fourth year students to engage in reading literature. I used methods I had experienced myself, assigning pages or chapters for students to read with reading comprehension questions to answer and vocabulary words to define. Students often did not complete their homework, so I tried giving pop quizzes to help motivate students, which also was ineffective. With experience, my methods improved and became more student-centered. I abandoned traditional approaches, and student groups became responsible for leading discussions, providing peers with questions, identifying important vocabulary, and developing engaging activities to help understand texts. We read portions of text aloud in class, and some groups asked students to act out parts of the story. Additionally, for every genre we read, students wrote their own satire, fable, play, etc.

Once students are experienced readers and can read more challenging text, literature circles provide an excellent format for Intermediate High and Advanced-level students to read and discuss texts in their world language. Teachers can still use Reader’s Workshop to reinforce specific reading strategies as needed. Several researchers have recommended using extensive reading with Intermediate and Advanced world language students, but have reported challenges in keeping adolescents motivated to read (de Burgh-Hirabe and Feryok, 2013; Takase, 2007; Loh, 2009; Yamashita, 2013). Literature circles offer students opportunities for socialization while they discuss life and debate political and social issues (Fredericks, 2012). Students might feel “cool” reading and discussing texts in their world language and thrive on having a group with which to share emotional and psychological challenges (de Burgh-Hirabe and Feryok, 2013; Fredericks, 2012; Takase, 2007).

While I was a differentiation coach in the Chicago Public Schools, I worked with a classroom teacher to train second graders in literature circles. I was surprised at how well second graders could function in student-centered discussions on books of their choice. As a result of this experience, I believe world language teachers can use similar strategies to train their students. We found that using a common text to teach students how to assume various literature circle roles was effective. We modeled each role with the students: discussion director, summarizer, word watcher, illustrator, and connector. Students learned to read text and focus on certain aspects of reading comprehension according to their roles. For each role, we had a recording form students completed before and during their literature circle discussion (Appendix D). We discovered it worked better to give each student a separate role sheet.

Once students are trained in literature circles, the teacher can offer a variety of texts in the world language from which students can choose to read inside and outside of class. Enough time must be scheduled weekly so that students can prepare for discussions in class and meet in their literature circles. Weekly self-evaluation is important so that teachers can assess students’ performance. Teachers should praise students for working well during literature circles, and,
when needed, they can coach students on explicit strategies they should use to improve their collaboration and discussions. Although Daniels (2002) suggests only teacher observation and student self-evaluation be used to evaluate student learning during literature circles, authentic, performance-based assessment also can be integrated. With the second graders in Chicago, we created a choice board based on students' levels of readiness, interest, and learning styles (Appendix D). Students chose between writing a book review, creating a commercial, writing a letter to the author, drawing scenes from the book and writing a summary, acting out a scene from the book, or writing a different ending for the book. Teachers can decide how to evaluate student performance based on their particular assessment criteria and overall learning goals.

Recommendations for Integration, Research, and Collaboration

If students are taught to use reading strategies in the first and second years of world language instruction, they can learn to read text rather than just translate it. By training students to think in their world language, they will be able to think critically, engage in meaningful dialogue, and communicate their ideas in multiple languages with a diversity of people. Using the English Language Arts Common Core Standards (2010) and World Readiness Standards for Language Learning (2015) to inform instruction, teachers can integrate Reader's Workshops, extensive reading, and literature circles to promote communicative and cultural proficiency.

Research is severely lacking in the area of reading proficiency in world languages other than English (Bernhardt, 2005). Multiple studies have been conducted in EFL classrooms and world language classrooms outside of the U.S. It is necessary for U.S. world language researchers, applied linguists, and reading researchers to collaborate with classroom teachers to investigate best practices in teaching reading in world languages and to discover the effects of using strategies such as Reader's Workshop, extensive reading, and literature circles with students. If students are literate in more than one language, they will be able to read, write, think, investigate, and collaborate with many more people. In order to foster connections, empower communities, celebrate the world, solve local and global problems, and improve our future, our students must develop literacy in multiple languages and learn to think critically in those languages so they can make informed decisions for themselves and participate in the political process in our country.

Note

1. Examples in Appendices B-D are in English so all teachers can understand them. Teachers should revise these documents to be in the world language students are studying. Appendix B is the plan from the Reader's Workshop modeled at my session at CSCTFL 2016.
References


Appendix A: Student Handout on Reading in a World Language

Reading in Your World Language

Many of you will want to read signs, advertisements, and menus when you travel to the countries where your world language is spoken. Others of you may read literature in your world language eventually. Whatever the reason may be, remember that reading is a skill that will help you acquire proficiency in your world language.

At least four reading skills that you probably use regularly in English can be transferred to world language reading: scanning, skimming, intensive reading, and extensive reading.

- Scanning means searching for particular information. You scan a menu to find something you want to eat. You scan the Internet when looking for topics of interest to you. When scanning, you do not need to understand every word in the document or website to find the information you need. Read or listen to the questions your teacher asks you and scan for that piece of information.
- Skimming means getting an overview of the main ideas in the reading. You may skim newspaper articles or websites, or skim a new chapter in a textbook or book before deciding on which section(s) to concentrate.
- Intensive reading is what you do when you study. You need to read every sentence carefully when you prepare for history or English class because you will likely be assessed formally on the information within days of reading it. You will read more intensively in your world language at the intermediate and advanced levels of study.
- Extensive reading is what you do to understand the main ideas and most of the content in a reading. You usually do not study the materials and there are usually words or ideas you do not understand. When reading extensively, you use the context and your common sense to guess the meaning of words you do
not know. Sometimes there will be whole sentences, or even paragraphs, that you only vaguely understand. You may use a dictionary or ask someone for help to understand what you are reading when unknown words prevent you from understanding the main ideas of the passage. Extensive reading is associated with reading large quantities.

Reading is not translation. If you look at the different readings you are assigned for this class and translate the words into English, you are not reading but rather translating. This is an extremely slow and laborious way of extracting meaning from the text. It is understandable that translating into English may be your natural inclination when you first start to read, but you must resist the temptation and try to think in your world language. If you are looking up a lot of words and translating, you are not reading.

The best approach to take is to follow your world language teacher’s instructions about how to go about reading your assignment in or out of class. Find out if the goal is to scan, skim, or read intensively or extensively. S/he usually has a specific goal in mind related to the assignment you are reading.

Good luck as you begin a new venture in reading…reading in a world language!

*This text was adapted by Brigid M. Burke from an edition of *Dos mundos: En breve* (Terrel, Andrade, Egasse, & Muñoz, 1998) that she received in a world language methods course as an undergraduate at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. It is to be used with world language students as they begin reading in their world language.

Appendix B: Sample Reader’s Workshop

Reader’s Workshop Planning Template

Preparation

**In-depth Investigation or Learning Experience Topic:** “*La Santé et Le Bien-Etre*”

**Comprehension strategy to be taught:** Activating Schema, Scanning, and Asking questions

**Text/s to be used for modeling and practice:** «*L’aloïe vera*» (Romance, 2011) and «*Monsieur Bernard*» (Valette & Valette, 1996)

**Background Information:** (What scaffolding needs to be done prior to this workshop?)

Teacher must read “Reading in Your World Language” handout with students to discuss the difference between translating and actually reading in French.

**Handouts and student materials:**

Copy of readings and question sheets for each reading; copies of “Reading in Your World Language” handout, colored pencils, pens, or markers
**Materials & Teaching Tools:** (What tools will you need to perform your think aloud and to capture students’ thoughts from the debrief?)
SMART board or document viewer, pdfs or copies of articles, colored markers, copies of question sheets

**Mini-Lesson (5-15 minutes)**

**Introduction:** (How will you introduce this strategy?) **5 min.**
I will tell students we will be focusing on activating schema, scanning, and asking questions after we read the “Reading in Your World Language” handout. I will model the strategies with the story «Monsieur Bernard» and then they will do their independent practice with the «L’aloe vera» article.

**Think aloud:** (The teacher models strategy with no student interruptions) **5-10 min.**

**Amount to be read:** I will read the first question on the question sheet for the «Monsieur Bernard» article and then begin reading the article, scanning for the same words in the question, underlining the possible answer with colored marker/pen. I will do this for each question.

How will students distinguish when you are sharing your thinking and when you are reading? What type of signal will you use?

I will refer to the text when I am reading, and I will look at the students when I am thinking aloud.

What questions will you ask during your think aloud? (refer to recording form you are using)

I will make comments in French like, “oh I think the response might be…because these same words can be found right here, and it seems that at this time, he is doing this and she is doing that.”

How will you record the questions you have just listed so that they are accessible as you do your think-aloud in front of the students?

I will not record the questions because as beginner French students this will be too much information for them to focus on at one time. I only want them to focus on the questions we are trying to answer about the story Monsieur Bernard. We will go over all the questions together and read the story at the end.

**Practice/Application (20-30 minutes)**

**Individual work:**
Students will then get a copy of «L’aloe vera», which relates to our in-depth investigation specifically. I will model scanning again for the first question, and then ask student to mark the other possible questions with their colored pens or markers. We will share these ideas with the large group.
Small group:
After marking where all the possible responses are to the questions, students will work in small groups to answer the questions.

Individual work: (as needed)
Small group: (as needed)

**Group Share/Debrief (5-15 minutes)**

How are students going to report out on work they have done during Application/Practice? How will the teacher record the responses?

Students will be assigned a certain question from the «L'aloe vera» article to write on the board. We will go over all the questions as a class.

Will students share in pairs, a group, or as a whole class? As a whole class.

**Debriefing Questions:** What question(s) will you ask the students in order to focus their debrief?

- How did you feel about learning to read and write in French?
- What strategies did you use to understand the context of the story and article?
- Were you translating or reading?

**Recording:** How will you keep track of this great thinking? (Anchor chart, student journals, sticky notes on wall, etc.)

The students will be asked to write a reflection about their first reading experience in French in their journals. They will be asked to write in French. They also will be asked to discuss what they learned about aloe vera and its magnificent benefits to our health.

**Appendix C: Sample Graphic Organizers**

**Determining Importance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text quote</th>
<th>This quote is important to me because…</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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**Making Connections**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text quote</th>
<th>This quote makes me think about… (make text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections)</th>
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</table>
Re-reading

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<th>This sentence confuses me…</th>
<th>I think it means…</th>
<th>After asking questions and clarifying meaning…</th>
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Synthesizing

The three main parts of the chapter/story were about:

1. 
2. 
3. 

At this point of the story/book, I know/understand:

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Appendix D: Role Sheets and Choice Board for Literature Circles

Literature Circles Role Sheets

**Discussion Director:** Write your group’s questions and possible answers here about the story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our questions</th>
<th>Possible answers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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**Summarizer:** In 4-5 sentences, write a summary of what you read about your story/book today.

____________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________

**Word watch:er** List 3 new words that your group learned today and explain what they mean in your own words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New word</th>
<th>Our definition</th>
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Illustrator: Draw a picture to show what you read about today (important event, character, setting).

Cool Connector: Write about 4 connections your group had to the story today (text-text, text-self, text-world).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text quote or summary</th>
<th>Connection</th>
<th>Type of connection</th>
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Literature Circles Choice Board

- Write a one page book review
- Write a one page letter to the author
- Act out a scene from the book

Possible grading scale or rubric:

A  Effort is high, work is high quality, and understanding of book is obvious
B  Effort is good, work is good quality, and understanding of book is obvious
C  Effort is mediocre, work is mediocre, and understanding of book is not obvious
D  Effort is low, work is low quality, and understanding of book is not obvious

Possible guidelines for Literature Circles projects:

Book review
Summarize the book, talking about the best parts and the worst parts. Share with the readers why you would recommend the book to other kids or why not, and to whom. The review must be 1 page handwritten. Be sure to include the price, number of pages, and publisher, along with the title and author.

Letter to the author
You must write a letter to the author of the book. Share with the author what you liked best about the book and what you would have done differently. Be specific about different parts of the book, citing page numbers. The letter must be at least 1 page handwritten.

Act out a scene
Choose one scene from the book that you will act out in front of the class. You can choose whether or not you memorize your lines. If you do not memorize your lines, the lines must be written on note cards. You must wear a costume to
represent the character you are interpreting. Be ready to answer questions or take comments at the end of your performance from your classmates.

Change ending
Rewrite the ending to the book. Follow the author's writing style and do not change the events that happened before the ending too much. If the story had a happy ending, consider changing it to a sad ending, and if the story had a sad ending, consider writing a happy ending. Use the same characters and setting, but change the outcome of the plot. The ending must be at least 2 pages handwritten.

Commercial
Pretend that you are the Public Relations person for the author of your book. Design a commercial to convince people to buy it, writing out the words and creating scenery. The commercial should last between 1-2 minutes and be persuasive.

Draw scenes
Choose important events from the story and draw them. Be sure to use pencil and then color in the pictures. Then for each scene, write a short explanation of what happened in the scene you drew.