

EXTENSIVE READING FOR LANGUAGE AND LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION

By Joseph Poulshock and Randall Short
Extensive Reading World Congress
Saturday, August 5, 2017

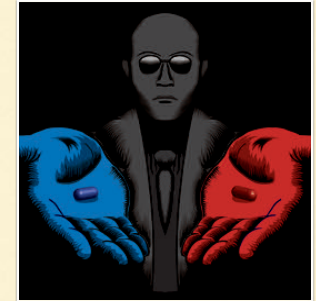
In 1984 at TED,
Nicholas Negroponte,
Founder of the MIT
Media Lab, made a
number of famous
predictions about
technology.



Then in 2014...

The Shakespeare pill
symbolizes liberal education.

The English pill symbolizes
language education.



Reading is the pill.

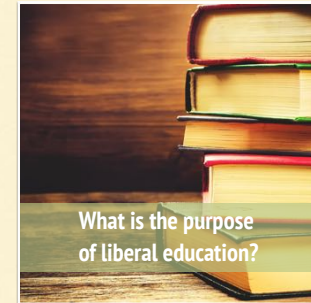


Reading is the
software update.



*Freedom to
Flourish*

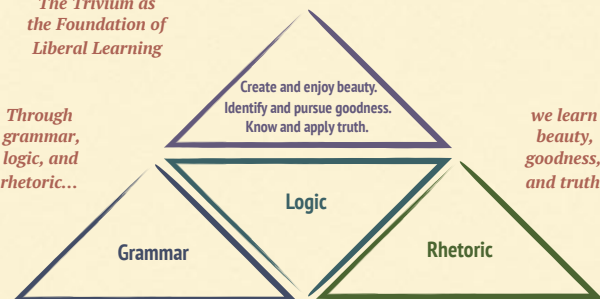
*through the pursuit
of beauty, goodness,
and truth.*



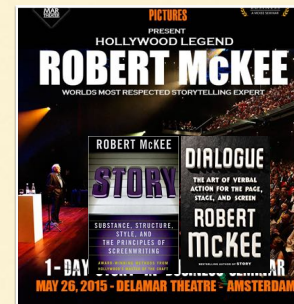
What is the purpose
of liberal education?

*The Trivium as
the Foundation of
Liberal Learning*

*Through
grammar,
logic,
and
rhetoric...*



Robert McKee's "Story"
exemplifies liberal education
in beauty, goodness, and truth
with grammar, logic and
rhetoric.



Big Reading and Liberal Arts Education

- Liberal arts education provides vital and practical knowledge.
- In a question designed to assess multi-cultural awareness, 69.3% of a group of university students (n = 268) thought there were more Jewish people in the world than Muslims.
- Other questions revealed a similar pattern of misconceptions.
- What was the pattern, and what caused it?

The Anatomy of Misinformation

- "The cognitive anatomy of misinformation appears to be one of too little exposure to print (or reading) and over-reliance on television for information about the world."

■ Cunningham, A., & Stanovich, K.E. (1998).

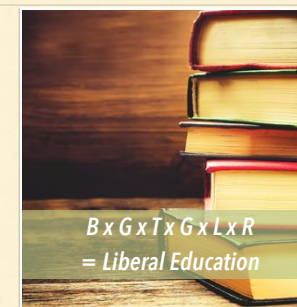
Liberal Arts: Reading Makes us Smarter

- "Ability is not the only variable that counts in the development of intellectual functioning. Those who read a lot will enhance their verbal intelligence; that is...

■ **reading will make them smarter."**

■ Cunningham, A., & Stanovich, K.E. (1998).

ER fosters LE.



What is language education?



- "We acquire languages by understanding messages."

■ Krashen's input hypothesis

- We acquire languages by understanding, sending, noticing structure, and negotiating the meaning of messages.

What is Big Reading?

- We call it avid reading, book floods, exposure to print, pleasure reading, or extensive reading (ER).
- We like "big reading."

Big Reading

- Big reading is hard to quantify.
- Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding (1988) showed how 5th graders spent time reading outside school.

But this doesn't tell us how much to read.

Amount of Independent Reading		
Percentile	Minutes per day	Words read 1/yr
98%	65	4,358,000
90%	21.1	1,823,000
80%	14.2	1,146,000
70%	9.6	622,000
60%	6.5	432,000
50%	4.6	282,000
40%	3.2	200,000
30%	1.3	106,000
20%	0.7	21,000
10%	0.1	8,000

Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding (1988)

Big, Easy, Enjoyable (BEE).

- Maybe reading is big when we can measure its effects.
- For language learners, reading 300,000 words is a threshold for:
 - (1) feeling at ease in reading English
 - (2) using English to understand (not translating)
 - (3) for increasing reading speed
 - (4) for scoring a measurable increase on the TOEIC.

■ (Nishizawa, Yoshioka, & Fukada, 2010).

Big, Easy, Enjoyable (BEE).

- For language learners, big reading needs to be easy.
- We define easy at 98% vocabulary coverage.

Big, Easy, Enjoyable (BEE).

- Most language learners don't know pleasure reading in English.
- But native speakers report reading as a "flow experience."
- For this fiction seems to work best.

■ *Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1991).

The Linguistic Benefits of ER



Cambridge Public Library (Creative Commons)

- ER helps create "masterful" verbal and general intelligence.

ER makes **MASTERFUL** English

- **Motivation:** ER motivates reading and learning.
- **Attitude:** ER improves attitudes.
- **Syntax:** ER develops learner syntax and grammar.
- **Thinking:** ER improves thinking, that is writing.
- **Ears:** ER benefits listening skills.
- **Riches:** ER enriches physical, emotional, and intellectual life.
- **Fluency:** ER increases reading automaticity and fluency.
- **Uber-text:** ER employs the supreme form of content, namely stories.
- **Lexis:** ER improves vocabulary and word knowledge.

Brains access big data with ER

- "Language acquisition is driven by exposure to a massive amount of data, utterances that exhibit statistical regularities at many levels" (Seidenberg, 2017, Chapter 5, Section 1, para. 8).
- "Readers gather data about the statistical properties of texts at multiple levels: letters, letter combinations, syllables, morphemes, words, sequences of words, phrases, and on to galaxies beyond" (2017, Chapter 5, Section 4, para. 2).

Conclusions

- ER & LE help people flourish.
- This includes physical, emotional, social, economic, intellectual, and linguistic flourishing.
- Therefore, we do well to promote its practice at the level of the individual, classroom, school, and society.
- For language education AND for whole person liberal education.

Actions

- Systemically implement ER programs in our schools.
- Build consensus among language teachers and all teachers.
- Build consensus among school administrators.
- Value, build, and promote our libraries.
- Hold book events at our schools.
- Become "book whisperers."

Thank You

- ❖ We welcome your suggestions and questions.
- ❖ For a copy of this talk visit www.ilinguist.net.
- ❖ Thank you!