

## Book Review

**Title:** Teaching and Researching Reading (Third Edition)

**Authors:** William Grabe and Fredricka L. Stoller

**Publisher:** Routledge

**Year of Publication:** 2020

**Pages:** 320

**ISBN:** 9781138847941 (Paperback)

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Reading has been one of the significant skills in language education both in L1 and L2 contexts, playing a vital role in language acquisition for beginners and concurrently serving as a principal input to accommodate ranges of purposes for advanced learners. Whether a reading text is used to demonstrate certain language features or to reevaluate the essence of the implied messages, the teaching of reading is more than relevant to most, if not all, language teachers.

This third edition of *Teaching and Researching Reading* is a part of the *Applied Linguistics in Action* series, which aims at providing readers with the skills they need to conduct a research project in their contexts. The authors William Grabe and Fredricka L. Stoller are both professors of applied linguistics at Northern Arizona University, USA. In this latest edition of the book, a number of significant changes have been made which are generally outlined in the early part of the book. Added to this edition are Chapters 3, 4, and 5: Chapters 3 and 4 provide recent studies in L1 and L2 reading, while Chapter 5 discusses how research findings can inform the design and the development of reading curriculum and instruction. Moreover, digital reading and new models for conducting action research have been included in Parts III and IV respectively. Therefore, there are five parts covering the total of ten chapters:

*PART I: Understanding L2 Reading*

*1 The Nature of Reading Abilities*

*2 Comparing L1 and L2 Reading*

*PART II: Exploring Research in Reading*

*3 Key Studies in L1 Reading*

*4 Key Studies in L2 Reading*

*PART III: L2 Reading Curricula and Instruction*

*5 Principles for L2 Reading-Curriculum Design*

*6 Teaching L2 Reading Using Evidence-Based Practice**PART IV: Investigating Reading through Action Research**7 Reading Teachers as Action Researchers**8 Action Research Projects: Set I**9 Action Research Projects: Set II**PART V: Resources**10 Resources for Exploring L2 Reading****PART I: Understanding L2 Reading***

The first part introduces the theoretical conceptions in L2 reading which are essential for teachers and researchers who need to familiarise themselves with the basics before exploring the issues in depth.

*Chapter 1: The Nature of Reading Abilities* explains the reasons why reading is considered a unique ability closely connected to the function of the human's brain, yet no simple definition can sufficiently portray the complexity of the reading process. The chapter further discusses different purposes of reading, what it means to be fluent readers, and components of reading abilities (e.g., general cognitive processes) and how these processes relate to reading. In this specific section, readers will be introduced to, for instance, lower-level and higher-level processes and the role they play in aiding reading comprehension. The chapter concludes with useful reading models: namely, *the Simple View Reading Model*, *the Construction-Integration Model*, and *Landscape Model for Reading*, along with *the Reading Systems Framework Approach*.

For *Chapter 2: Comparing L1 and L2 Reading*, not only are certain differences between L1 and L2 central to the discussion included, but the issues of varying classroom instructions are also examined: *Linguistic and Processing Differences*, *Individual and Experiential Differences*, and *Socio-Cultural and Institutional Differences*. Finally, this chapter also discusses similarities between L1 and L2 reading which could help clarify the extent to which the two overlap.

***PART II: Exploring Research in Reading***

Following the complexity of reading abilities of both L1 and L2 learners addressed in Chapter 2, this section reiterates the issues drawn from L1 and L2 reading research respectively in more detail.

In *Chapter 3: Key Studies in L1 Reading*, several aspects of L1 reading research are included. Apart from topics related to vocabulary development, reading fluency, and strategy learning, the book also explores new variables in L1 reading being studied. The chapter begins with an overview of the development of relevant research milestones in chronological order by drawing on seminal work in reading, paying attention in particular to the *Reading System Framework* (Perfetti & Stafura, 2014). The chapter's major component comprises 10 empirical studies covering different themes in L1 reading research (e.g., cognitive skills, extensive reading, and relevant linguistic factors).

Another 10 more studies are presented in *Chapter 4: Key Studies in L2 Reading*, comprising a wide range of topics on L2 reading and how they are researched. All the studies cover the areas of 1) *extensive reading and cognitive abilities*, 2) *statistical learning and background knowledge*, 3) *component skills*, 4) *the impacts of component skills on reading comprehension*, and 5) *L2 language threshold and reading transfer*. Not only is the chapter updated with new studies, but it also provides research-based, instructional implications for L2 reading. Accordingly, Chapter 4 would be highly relevant to teachers and researchers in L2 contexts.

### ***PART III: L2 Reading Curricula and Instruction***

The third part might be of particular interest for those whose work involved curriculum design and teaching reading skills in their classes.

*Chapter 5: Principles for L2 Reading-Curriculum Design* features 14 “evidence-based” principles informed by the previous chapters. These principles are categorized into 3 sets: *Core reading-curriculum principles*, *reading skill development principles*, and *instructional-design principles* that are easy to navigate through the chapter. The chapter highlights, for instance, how to promote discussion surrounding a text, how to make students more aware of discourse structure, and the process of text selection and adaptation considering students’ proficiency and needs.

*Chapter 6: Teaching L2 Reading Using Evidence-Based Practices* is a collection of practices informed by the three sets of principles in Chapter 5, underlying how to translate all the principles into actual classroom practices. This chapter could be helpful especially for teachers who wish to see available options and possibilities in the form of feasible teaching frameworks and classroom activities.

### ***PART IV: Investigating Reading through Action Research***

The authors of the book emphasise that, in addition to learning some of the core principles and practices in the earlier section, the efforts should also go into understanding our classroom practices. Through action research models, this part of the book can be used as what the authors call “springboards” for teachers to begin examining their practices of teaching reading.

In *Chapter 7: Reading Teachers as Action Researchers*, readers will be guided by eight steps for carrying out an action research project. It first describes what action research is and what might entail in the process, followed by possible reading aspects which can be addressed by action research. In brief, the process includes 1) *identify an area of interest*, 2) *narrow down area of interest and pose research question(s)*, 3) *make an action research plan*, 4) *consider plan from the perspective of ethical data collection and reporting*, 5) *implement action-research plan and collect data*, 6) *draw conclusions*, 7) *adopt or adapt and monitor new ideas*, and 8) *share insights with colleagues*. The authors, quite convincingly, discuss in detail how teachers can exploit action research given its flexible, practitioner-friendly nature of the steps provided. Furthermore, the chapter encompasses two action research projects in which the eight steps are incorporated to demonstrate the step-by-step implementation.

To complement the research endeavor underlined in *Chapter 7*, the other two chapters in this part *Chapter 8: Action Research Projects Set I* and *Chapter 9: Action Research Projects Set II* comprise a total of 12 action research projects (six each) which can be easily adapted and used as guidelines for teachers to carry out their own projects. The first six projects focus on deliberate practice, motivation, vocabulary, discourse structure awareness, and fluency, while the other six concern strategic-reader training, main-idea comprehension, the pre-, during-, and post-reading lesson format, and digital literacy.

#### **PART V: Resources**

The final part of the book consists of a brief chapter *Chapter 10: Resources for Exploring L2 Reading* which serves as a convenient gateway for accessing more relevant research, both theoretically and empirically. Despite being labelled *L2 Reading*, the chapter in fact references both L1 and L2 reading research by categorising them into 9 sections ranging from relevant research journals to a comprehensive reference list of key studies in L1 and L2 reading from the suggested reading lists at the end of each chapter. Some of the interesting studies in the L2 context include Wang and Koda (2007), Gorsuch and Taguchi (2008), and Al-Homoud and Schmitt (2009).

This book, in contrast to many other textbooks, is truly one of the most reader-friendly publications. The organization of the book starting with a brief introduction of the structures and topics to be covered in each chapter not only provides an overview of the content, but it also enables readers to locate their specific interest with ease. The headings and sub-headings are clearly labelled with numbers and digits according to their corresponding chapter, again, making it easier for readers to follow along. What I really like about this book is that each chapter also consists of relevant quotes and concepts labelled separately in boxes making it even more convenient to cross-reference within a chapter. Concise definitions of certain research terms (e.g., meta-analysis and motivation for reading) provided are extremely useful for teachers who may not be familiar with research in reading. What makes the book exceptionally stand out is the action research components which encourage personal classroom inquiry and enhance teaching practices. In my view, this particular goal of the book that aims to transform reading teachers to action researchers is a distinct advantage for its readers.

Given the updated elements in this latest edition, *Teaching and Researching Reading* is an undeniably ideal reference for those who teach and will be teaching reading with its extensive coverage and state-of-the-art research. I believe the book would specifically appeal to teachers and practitioners who would like to research their reading lessons/classes and understand more about their own practice as well as their students following a separate chapter on action research.

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