

The Case FOR Fiction (Literature). S. Krashen. (twitter: skrashen; sdkrashen.com)

My interest in fiction: Driving in Southern California; Conversations at parties.

Some Fundamentals www.sdkrashen.com; twitter = skrashen

The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis:

Acquisition - What the brain does well. Subconscious.

Learning – What the brain does poorly. Conscious.

Error correction is supposed to help learning.

The Natural Order Hypothesis: acquisition, not learning. (1) You can't change it (2) not simple to complex. (3) not the syllabus

The Monitor Hypothesis: Consciously learned language only available as Monitor, editor - before we say/write or after.

Conditions for Monitor use: (1) Know the rule; (2) Think about correctness (focus on form) (3) Time.

Conditions fully met: When we take a grammar test.

The Comprehension Hypothesis: We acquire language ONLY when we understand messages.

AMAZING FACTS: (1) Effortless: (2) Involuntary: Given comprehensible input you must acquire.

BEST INPUT: comprehensible, interesting (COMPELLING), rich, in abundance.

Krashen, S., & Mason, B. 2020. The optimal input hypothesis.

<https://tinyurl.com/y7h64zhr>

ACQUISITION IS GRADUAL: A little at a time...

Corollary: Talking/writing is not practicing

1) we acquire language by input, not output

2) ability to speak: the RESULT of language acquisition

The Reading Hypothesis: reading as a form of optimal input.

SELF SELECTION insures interesting/even compelling

Self-selection versus assigned:

Research: Lee, S. Y. (2007). Revelations from Three Consecutive Studies on Extensive Reading. *Regional Language Center (RELC) Journal*, 38(2), 150-170. Self-selected readers made superior gains on a cloze test and general vocabulary compared to readers who did assigned reading, gains for “academic” words not significantly different. Both groups read mostly fiction.

Gift books = assigned reading: “As a former English major I am a sitting duck for gift books, and in the past few years I’ve gotten Dickens, Thackeray, Smollett, Richardson, Emerson, Keats, Boswell, and the Brontes, all of them Great, none of them ever read by me, all of them now on my shelf, looking at me and making me feel guilty.” Garrison Keillor

My experiences in secondary school

OUR TASK: Bring them to the point where they are selecting and reading some authentic books.

THE CASE AGAINST SELF-SELECTED FICTION

1. The language of fiction is not "academic," not the language students need in school.
2. Fiction does not provide the knowledge students need in school or workplace.
3. Self-selected fiction does not develop the habits of thought needed for school and career success. A public library should not "provide people with flabby mental nutriment..." (H. Putman, 1890).
4. Self-selection > students will stick to easy books, and not progress to harder material.

ACADEMIC LANGUAGE?

The impact of Guided Self-Selected Reading (GSSR): One hour = .6 points on the TOEIC. Mason, B., & Krashen, S. 2017. Self-selected reading and TOEIC performance: Evidence from case histories. <https://tinyurl.com/yc9tc8ha> Largely fiction!!

McQuillan (Reading in a Foreign Language, 2020): Reading all seven Harry Potter novels predicts acquisition of 204 academic words, assuming 12 repetitions > acquisition. Three times as time efficient as direct instruction.

McQuillan (Reading Matrix, 2019) vocabulary in 22 novels for young people (e.g. Nancy Drew, Twilight): texts include 85% of 485 "academic" words on academic word list; 44% appear 12 times or more (213). Predicts that in one year, reading 30 min/day, readers will acquire 37% of core academic vocabulary needed for school.

FICTION > NONFICTION

Sullivan, A. & Brown, M. 2014. Vocabulary from Adolescence to Middle Age. University of London. 42 yr olds given vocabulary test: High/middle brow fiction > nonfiction. Independent of parent education, reading at age 16 or previous vocabulary knowledge.

Jerrim & Moss (2019). British Educational Res. Journal: 15 yr olds, 35 countries. Reading fiction excellent predictor of performance on international reading test, clearly better than reading nonfiction.

DOES NOT PROVIDE THE KIND OF KNOWLEDGE STUDENTS NEED.

(English as first language) – Adults who read more (fiction) know more about history, literature, science. (West, R., K. Stanovich, & Mitchell, H. 1993. Reading Research Quarterly 28: 35-50.)

READING and HABITS OF MIND

Empathy: Kidd, D., & Castano, E. (2013). Science, 342 (6156), 377-380.

Terry Gross: You're learning to be somebody else, learning to see the world through their eyes."

Tolerance for vagueness: Djikic, M., Oatley, K. & Moldoveanu, M. (2013). Opening the closed mind: The effect of exposure to literature on the need for closure. *Creativity Research Journal*, 25(2), 149-154.

"When I think about how I understand my role ... the most important stuff I've learned I think I've learned from novels. It has to do with empathy. It has to do with being comfortable with the notion that the world is complicated and full of grays, but there's still truth there to be found .. it's possible to connect with some[one] else even though they're very different from you." Barack Obama.

"It is quite possible—overwhelmingly probable ... that we will always learn more about human life and personality from novels than from scientific psychology." Noam Chomsky

WILL THEY STICK WITH EASY BOOKS?

First language reading:

- a. Self-selected books more difficult than assigned reading (Southgate, Arnold and Johnson, 1981), at or above "reading level" (4th graders; Shin and Krashen, 2007 Summer Reading: Program and Evidence. Allyn and Bacon).**
- b. Scholastic: grades 1-12: Pick books below reading level: 7%; Above: 28%.**
- c. LaBrant (1958): As children mature, select more complex books, wider variety.**
- d. Krashen, Lee, & Lao (2018), Comprehensible and Compelling: Books taken out of school library by grade 7 students in Hefei, China from start of grade 3 to start of grade 6. As they matured, students read more, longer, more complex books.**

EPILOGUE: ACCESS and LIBRARIES:

Better libraries (collections, librarians) =. Keith Curry Lance and Debra E. Kachel "Why school librarians matter: What years of research tell us," Phi Delta Kappan., March 26. 2018.

<https://www.kappanonline.org/lance-kachel-school-librarians-matter-years-research/>

Beniko Mason's 5000 graded readers