# Book clubs and extensive reading in a predominantly media-oriented world: Reflections on an experience in Croatia

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## ABSTRACT

The speed of life is on the increase, leaving not much time for extensive reading. We now read more off screens (TV, computer, mobile phone screens) than paper. When turned into a group activity, reading becomes a social event and can considerably contribute to the development of language learning ability. I will share my experiences of setting up a book club for adult learners of English, which can also be applied to teenage learners. A positive book club experience can contribute to popularizing reading in a foreign language and have a washback effect on reading in general. The paper points out some issues that arose in the organisation of a book club, the process of selecting texts to be read and discussed and the selection of participants. Extensive reading in a foreign language is analysed in the context of a book club. I also look at the importance of motivation, the methodology aspect of running a book club and forms of facilitation. The social and psychological ramifications of (the lack of) more extensive reading and book clubs are also looked at in a national and regional context. In conclusion, it is my opinion that book clubs can be gratifying whether as part of teachers' regular workloads or as a gift to their communities, instantly and in times to come, as they tend to influence more than one generation of readers.

## Introduction

My personal experience of setting up a book club for adult learners of English as a second language stems from working with adult learners of English in Croatia and recognizing their need for guidance and instigation, both during a language course and once the course finished. I teach English in the town of Split, in a foreign language school which is part of an organisation and the adult learners are its employees. Their professions and levels of education vary. After the completion of an intensive English language course, they all go back to their jobs hoping to be sent to another course soon, as their jobs do not provide English language challenges that often; but when such a challenge arises, it is often in a high-stakes situation and then it is crucial that their language be at its best.

In-between courses, learners do very little to preserve or expand their language skills: despite their teachers' efforts to foster learner independence during the course, once learners are on their own, they generally complain of not really knowing how to work on their language skills independently. That is why they

were provided with a self-access centre, equipped with multimedia, reading materials and worksheets. While we were waiting for the completion of the centre, I thought I could try and prepare learners for self-study by instituting a book club as a transitional stage. I also thought it would be useful to find out what kinds of texts would be suitable to recommend to my higher-level students in general.

As I prepared for the project, and as it went on, I started to realise the potential that extensive reading in the form of a book club had in the study of foreign languages in Croatia and beyond. Thus, the initial idea of the book club came as a transitory project but, as I experienced it firsthand, I realized that it does bring about many advantages to language learners. I would therefore like to propose that book clubs be set up as supplementary work in foreign language learning. I ran weekly sessions of the book club for five months, leading to the opening of the self-access centre. We met once a week for sixty minutes which, in the course of five months, amounted to twenty hours in total. A group of a dozen students met on Thursdays at 2 p.m. in one of the classrooms, after the lessons but during working hours. That way both the students who attended courses at the school during that period and those who attended courses before, and were back at work, could get together and discuss the texts that they had read on their own. I gathered feedback from the small community of students who shared their views for almost half a year, which helped me realise, among other things, that in the case of adult learners of foreign languages, the washback effect of a book club in some cases influences two generations: Mirko, a participant in the club[1] and a parent, wrote in the feedback form that he filled at the end of the project[2] that the texts "help us to understand ourselves and our children" and explained that he helped his children develop a positive attitude towards extensive reading.

Vaille and QuinnWilliams (2006, p. xiii), in their book *Creating Book Clubs in the English Language Classroom*, list similar advantages of their book clubs:
(1)  Students who are parents can help improve the literacy skills of their children; and,
(2)  Parents are introduced to quality children's literature.

Extensive reading can help improve reading skills in native and foreign languages and can also have a beneficial effect on the development of other language skills. Book clubs, founded on extensive reading, can be an important and useful step towards improving general language ability. The book club sessions I facilitated provided the participants with an opportunity and an excuse for extensive reading, and a motivating environment for speaking. A communicative approach to reading helped the participants, in their opinion, to develop their listening, speaking and writing skills and the language skills of their children. In this paper, I will try to demonstrate how extensive reading in a foreign language (English), turned into a voluntary low-pressure book club group activity, became a useful and motivating way of supplementing language teaching and independent study. I will first do so by contextualising the book club within the national and regional framework and rationalising it by looking at trends in foreign language

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[1]  I have changed the participants' names for privacy's sake.
[2]  All participants' comments have been taken from the feedback forms they filled in at the end of the project.

study. Second, I will try to explain the difference between extensive reading in a foreign language classroom and extensive reading in a foreign language book club. Third, I will look at the operationalisation of extensive reading in a foreign language book club in light of the book club project I ran. Finally, I will present challenges identified in the course of its implementation, namely the suitability of certain methods and the need for foreign language book club facilitators.

## I. Contextualizing the book club project

> If reading is not just a psycholinguistic process but also a socially-and-culturally-embedded practice, it follows that it is learnt through *apprenticeship* within discourse communities whose conventions are shaped by larger societal and historical forces. (Kern, 2000, p. 122, italics as original).

In this section I will try to contextualise my book club experience nationally, regionally and perhaps globally in terms of some educational issues that have arisen. Croatia is a former Yugoslav country in Europe, and the town of Split is on the coast of the Adriatic Sea. In Croatia, there are many foreign language schools and English is the most common foreign language taught as a compulsory language. According to the Croatian National Educational Standard adopted for elementary schools in 2005 and currently being piloted in high schools, the first foreign language (a choice of English, German, French or Italian) is studied from the first year of elementary school, and a second foreign language is studied from the fourth year onwards. The rationale is to help Croatian citizens function in an international and intercultural communication network, especially with respect to education and employment. The following is an explanation from the Croatian National Educational Standard of the linguistic setting that Croatia, as a member of the Council of Europe on the road to accession to the European Union, is a part of:

> Knowledge of one foreign language is not considered enough in the countries that are members of the European Union and of the Council of Europe. At the same time, attempts are being made to preserve the linguistic and cultural diversity of the European continent. European institutions therefore promote the plurilingualism of European citizens, which presupposes that during compulsory education, every student in the EU should be given the possibility to study at least two foreign languages. (Vican and Milanović Litre, 2006, p. 81, translation mine).

Croatian speakers of English are many, but many of them are content with a basic and intermediate level that enables easy access to the contemporary media of communication, which seems to be a global trend to do with juvenilisation and the ensuing instant gratification enabled by the speed of the exchange of information provided by the mass media. Prensky (2004) advises educators and what he calls digital immigrants—newcomers to digital technology—not to fight the trends being set by and for digital natives—people who grow up using the digital language of technology—but to play along, adapt to the situation and try to take advantage of what modern technology has to offer. According to him,

mobile phones represent potentially the most significant educational tool of the future, which can also be used for extensive reading:

> …high-resolution screens allow for meaningful amounts of text to be displayed, either paragraph by paragraph, or flashed one quick word at a time, with the user setting (and generally greatly increasing) his or her own reading speed. In Asia, novels intended to be read on phone screens are already being written. Why not learning texts? (Prensky, 2004, p.5)

While the use of mobile phones for extensive reading may still seem a thing of the future in Croatia, presently learners of English who are digital natives often use a limited set of vocabulary very proficiently, not feeling the need to venture into more complex word choices and sentence structures. In writing, the situation can get more extreme as mobile texting and email writing are reshaping dominant language structures. For example, archaic structures such as the aorist (past perfect) tense have come back into use in Croatian, having shorter forms and being easier to type (Tošović, 2006, pp. 703-710). Learners feel the need to come up with catchy phrases or tricks reminiscent of TV ads, or to emulate the formats used in cyberspace, in which they spend much of their time.

Thus, when asked to describe the view from his window for homework, one of my English language students named Frane wrote in late 2006: "I live in a small town with a beautiful view of Velebit mountain. For more information, go to www.velebit.hr". Another one of my students from the same group, Marin, when asked to produce a recipe in the course of a profuse module on food, came up with: "For pizza, dial 041 357 2905, for sea food, dial 041 772 1058, for barbecue, dial 041 555 709". With the thwarting of speaking and writing skills, reading has become thwarted as well, limited to the exercising of skimming and scanning skills.

In their paper, "Do You Speak Crenglish?", Vilke and Medved Krajnović (2006) discuss the discrepancy or negative correlation between everyday Croatian language saturated with English and the proficiency of Croatian speakers in the English language. They base their findings on the communicatively-oriented English language testing of Croatian high-school graduates conducted by their university as part of a study of the communicative competence of young Croats. They are dissatisfied with the results of the tests which showed that:

> 18-year-old citizens of Croatia, at the onset of their academic education or employment, can coherently (which does not inherently signify well enough) speak English in everyday, relatively predictable communicative situations, but not even in such situations can they create a coherently written text, and they also have problems understanding more challenging spoken or written texts (Vilke and Medved Krajnović, 2006, p. 776, translation mine).

The authors stress the need for a change in the educational system that would improve English language study. While the authors do not propose concrete changes in their article, the authors of the Croatian National Educational Standard that was adopted for elementary schools and is piloted in high schools have tried to streamline curricula for the study of foreign languages in a more communicative and learner-friendly way:

The aim of the contemporary teaching of foreign languages is oral and written communication competence in a foreign language enlarged with the elements of sociocultural, intercultural and reading/literary competence. At the same time, in accordance with society's needs, the teaching of foreign languages, along with developing language skills, must also necessarily aim at developing communication skills, teamwork and enabling students to solve problems. In order to implement these goals, contemporary teaching places students and their cognitive-affective social development in the centre of the teaching process, applying student-centred teaching methods. What is characteristic of these methods is encouraging students to think and cognitively organise content and to create situations in which students will be able to apply their existent knowledge. Such an approach to teaching, enriched with the development of learning strategies, enables students for lifelong learning and at the same time fully applies the learning and teaching paradigm that the Croatian National Educational Standard is based upon. (Vican and Milanović Litre, 2006, p. 81, translation mine).

Perhaps book clubs as presented in this paper could contribute to this change in the educational system that would improve English language study in Croatia and possibly in other countries facing similar educational issues. This paper aims to show that book clubs based on extensive reading and leading towards learner independence could be a useful motivational and instructional tool for adults and young learners. The importance of extended reading is best demonstrated by the quote from Bamford and Day (2004, p. 1):

Good things happen to students who read a great deal in the new language. Research studies show they become better and more confident readers, they write better, their listening and speaking abilities improve, and their vocabularies get richer. In addition, they develop positive attitudes towards and increased motivation to study the new language.

This kind of approach to the study of foreign languages, if translated into the national curriculum, could also help promote a more extensive approach to reading in the mother tongue. In my view, methodologies of learning foreign languages in Croatia have often proved to be at the national forefront.

## II. Rationalising the need for book clubs in foreign language learning

In this section, I will talk about the social aspects of book clubs and learner autonomy, and language levels and their significance in the selection of participants. In an attempt to prepare learners who wanted to improve their language skills to become independent learners of English, I started work on the project by taking learner "independence" and "autonomy" to mean, in my words: learners being motivated and taught to recognize their language needs and to fulfil them with materials put at their disposal during unsupervised study. The persons that joined the book club had already recognized their language needs— their motivation, at the moment of joining the club, was intrinsic. As one book club participant put it:

> The Book Club should challenge me to reed different articles on English and
> be able to express my view and thoughts. I expected some improvement of
> my reading and listening skills. I wanted to onderstand my coleques and to
> expres my thoughts in English more clearly than before.

As for the materials put at their disposal for unsupervised study: before the
students who had completed courses at our school joined the book club, they
were comfortable using computer language learning software which they had at
their disposal even before the self-access centre was put in operation. At the same
time, they were dissatisfied with the range of skills practice it provided them
with. Having volunteered for the book club once the option was presented to
them, they showed an awareness of the need to broaden the method of study.
My thought was then to provide them with a) an opportunity and an excuse for
extensive reading and b) a motivating environment for speaking.

At that time, I was not fully aware of the possible ethnocentric nature of
individualisation and autonomy (see Benson and Voller, 1997). What works as
an instructional path in one environment does not necessarily translate well in
another, due to different cultural backgrounds. Some cultures take more easily
to independent study than others. The same could apply to extensive reading.
Book clubs, however, promote a mix of autonomy (silent isolated learning) and
intradependence (discussion during club sessions controlled by the participants)
based on intrinsic motivation and could, as such, find fertile ground in a larger
number of contexts.

In the Croatian national context, the logical link between spoken fluency
necessary for modern communication and extensive reading as its enabling
foundation seems to have broken down and that is why I saw the book club as
an opportunity, but also an "excuse" for extensive reading: my students needed
an excuse to present to their families and social groups for spending their time
on reading. Thus the book club functioned as what I term an *assertive excuse* for
reading: the social role of the book club—the commitment to take part in the
discussions—served as an excuse for spending time on the solitary activity of
silent reading. Book clubs can therefore be seen as playing a role that surpasses
language study, thus displaying  a characteristic typical of the developmental
path of language autonomy and independence:

> …autonomy and independence are beginning to tie into fields more concerned
> with the social and political implications of language education: language
> and culture, critical language pedagogy, language inequalities and rights, world
> Englishes, and so on. (Benson and Voller, 1997, p. 12)

As for providing a motivating environment for learning, I later became aware
that the dissatisfaction of my students with self-study in the form of sitting alone
and using computer software at their disposal, is not an isolated case: describing
some misconceptions regarding autonomous learning, with learning in isolation
being one of them, E. M. Esch (quoted in Benson and Voller, 1997, pp. 167-168)
wrote: "New technologies and possibilities in distance learning have further
popularized the misleading idea that being autonomous was 'the same' as being
isolated." The book club provided my students with a collective dimension that

technology failed to provide in their case, although efforts are currently being put into contemporary online communities and software like Moodle (open source e-learning platform) striving to achieve the collective feel of face-to-face interaction.

I began with a needs analysis prepared on the basis of my insight into the language needs of the students who attend courses at the school. Based on the plans for the self-access centre that was being set up, I established that the learners whose level of English was at an intermediate or upper intermediate level would be its most numerous users, so I aimed the book club at them.

I targeted participants at a minimum B2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001). The framework for learning, teaching and assessment has been developed as part of the Council of Europe Modern Languages Projects to scale language use and describe the types of knowledge and skills required for successful communication in the European context, teaching methods and syllabus and curriculum development. The Framework's common reference levels of proficiency are: Basic User: A1, A2, Independent User: B1, B2 and Proficient User: C1, C2. Table 1 on page 94 illustrates the global scale. It should be kept in mind that while the use of the Framework is often reduced to the description of the six levels, it offers much more in terms of describing all the different facets of communication. It has been the experience of many professionals working in Europe that such a "continental" framework greatly facilitates understanding among teaching professionals from different countries.

The B2 level of overall reading comprehension presupposes that a learner "can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low frequency idioms" (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 68-69). In comparison, a B1 level learner "can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to his/her field and interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension". The tests for Croats leaving high-school mentioned earlier were designed for level B1, and the authors of the study of the tests propose level B2 to be the goal for 18-year olds in terms of their preparedness to interact in English, considering the present status of English as the *lingua franca* (Vilke & Medved Krajnović 2006, p. 777).

Carefully designed book clubs could also cater to learners at a B1 level—younger learners in particular, especially if they have already started reading extensively at school, in their native language. I wanted to play it safe for the first time so I specified on the poster I designed to attract learners that the minimum level of English required was B2, and I was quite happy with the result. Most of the interested learners were at a B2 level. A couple of learners who were at a B1 level were attending the English language course at the time of the book club experiment so I welcomed them, hoping they would be able to cope, which they mainly were. When a text was too difficult, they would not pursue it further, but would sit in and listen to the discussion without taking part.

**Table 1**
Common reference levels: global scale

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Proficient User | C 2 | Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations. |
| | C 1 | Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices. |
| Independent User | B 2 | Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options. |
| | B 1 | Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. |
| Basic User | A 2 | Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need. |
| | A 1 | Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help. |

Adapted from *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, 2001, p. 24

*Sources of motivation*

Motivation proved to be crucial: I started with a small group of interested participants who then attracted others. The level of interest in reading and especially in reading literary works displayed by the participants played as important a role for the success of the book club as did the level of their language competence. The elevated interest in reading perhaps stemmed from the students' recognition of their own reading ability in the mother tongue, which then made it easier for them to develop language ability in the second language, both of which are crucial in second language reading. Brumfit (2000, pp. 188-189) writes about the ability to understand literature which starts to develop through reading in the mother tongue and can be enriched by exposing learners to literature in a foreign language:

Criteria for the selection of teaching materials will have to anticipate a disjuncture between linguistic and literary form. Language level alone is not an appropriate criterion. And furthermore, the work in the foreign language, if it is to be truly literary work, must be regarded as an extension of capacities already developed, at least partially, in mother-tongue literary work, but these capacities will be refined through contact with literature from a foreign culture.

Similarly, in his analysis of reading in a non-native language, Kern (2000, p. 121) compares studies of second language reading and also concludes that "*both* native language reading ability *and* second language proficiency play a significant role in second language reading" (italics as original). In other words, it might be easy to think that a linguistically simple text is easy to understand, were it not for the fact that there is no single agreed understanding of a text, as there is an attempt at an agreed understanding of isolated language elements recognized in the text. That is why the native language reading ability, when stimulated by exposing learners to literature in a foreign language, can in turn stimulate language ability in the second language. Brumfit (2000, p. 189) sees Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, one of the texts that was discussed in my book club, as an example of "linguistically simple texts which pose considerable problems in literary terms". I had an interesting experience with the issue Brumfit indicated when the book club participants read Hemingway's novel. I prepared a series of backup questions about aging and the struggle of life and death, in case they ran out of comments during the session, tailoring them for my adult students who were up to that point inclined to metaphysical questions. What happened was that they got so excited about a school of flying fish that played not-so-inconsiderable a role in the book that we spent an entire session debating on whether flying fish actually exist and if so, how they fly and when they swim. The debate was continued for a week with students exchanging emails with encyclopaedia entries on flying fish (Croatia is a Mediterranean country with a long-standing fishing tradition, which is a heritage I should have taken into account). The participants focused first on understanding the linguistic elements of the novel. Intrigued during their initial reading by the existence of flying fish, they read Hemingway's novel several times, each time understanding more of its literary layers. The interest they displayed in the flying fish contained therein— the curiosity perhaps cultivated through the habit of reading in the native language —enabled them to get a lot more out of the reading by going back to it repeatedly, which can be illustrated by Pero's comments on the novel in the feedback form: "Many time read and again felt excitement of competition", referring to the struggle between the old man and the sea. Here the exposure to literature in a foreign language can be seen as activating the underlying language reading ability, motivating and arousing the intellectual curiosity of students which led to the enhancement of second language proficiency.

### III. Operationalising a book club approach to extensive reading

In this section, I will look at some interpretations of extensive reading and will, with the help of Bamford and Day's (2004) extensive reading principles,

explain how I tried to operationalise them in my book club. The process of extensive reading is referred to differently, and also interpreted differently by various authors. For example, Krashen (1993, p. x) calls it *free voluntary reading* or "reading because you want to". Another interpretation is that of Trelease who popularised the notion as *sustained silent reading* with his book *The Read-Aloud Handbook* which he adapted for the Web. On his website, he explains sustained silent reading as reading for pleasure:

> Take a book, a newspaper, a magazine—enjoy! No interruptions for questions, assessments, or reports; just read for pleasure. The concept operates under a variety of pseudonyms, including DEAR time (Drop Everything And Read); DIRT time (Daily Individual Reading Time); SQUIRT time (Sustained Quiet Un-Interrupted Reading Time); and FVR (Free Voluntary Reading) (Trelease, 2006, n.p.)

I decided to use the term *extensive reading* as used by Bamford and Day for the type of reading exercised in the book club. When I started the book club project I chose to be guided by Bamford and Day's principles for extensive reading in a foreign language. I adapted their list of ten principles (Bamford and Day, 2004, pp. 2-3) to suit my purposes and the context of a book club, a term which was actually popularised by Oprah Winfrey's book club, to which many recent and not so recent books in English owe their current status. Bamford and Day's work is a collection of reading activities compiled for the purpose of integrating extensive reading into the language curriculum whether in a second or foreign language, regardless of the age and language level of the reader. The only prerequisites are a basic knowledge of the foreign or second language and access to reading materials that can be read with ease and confidence. Extensive reading is formulated in ten principles that are to evoke the underlying pleasure principle: the pleasure of reading which leads to language acquisition. The activities in the book are meant to implement them in practice.

Here I have included all ten of Bamford and Day's (2004) principles and have followed each by comments on how I was/was not able to implement them in the book club project (from the choice of texts to the structure of the sessions) and how each individual principle did or did not suit the book club approach to extensive reading.

> 1. *The reading material is easy.* This is the most important principle of extensive reading for language learning because students are unlikely to succeed in reading extensively if they have to struggle with difficult material. Learners read material that contains few or no unfamiliar items of vocabulary and grammar. (There should be no more than one or two unknown vocabulary items per page for beginners and no more than four or five for intermediate learners.) (Bamford and Day, 2004, p.2)

I found their advice on having no more than four or five unknown vocabulary items per page for intermediate learners invaluable in the process of text selection. After my initial selection of possible texts, and after a joint discussion of the first ten pages (as explained under Principle 4), the participants could decide for themselves if a text was worth pursuing. That gave them more independence and a sense of control of the text selection process. I did try to select texts that were

not so easy as to require a minimum of language effort. An example is the autobiography of American basketball player Shaquille O'Neal, *Shaq Talks Back*, which was written in a fairly reader–friendly way. (I enlivened the session by playing his rap song *Biological Didn't Bother*, whose lyrics are also autobiographical. The lyrics, being a sort of summary of a chapter from the book about his relationship with his father, proved, in fact, to be more complex than the language used in the autobiography).

Some participants found the less recent and more demanding authentic texts too daunting, but for some they proved to be motivating as they took pride in being able to read an acclaimed author: Edgar Allan Poe's story "Ligeia" was complex, but it provoked a most powerful response from the participants and an extreme range of emotions. During the session, I also played an audio recording of Poe's "The Raven" and was later told by participants that it stayed with them for a long time, as did the depiction of the odour of dusty curtains in James Joyce's "Eveline", a short story from his *Dubliners*.

> 2. *A variety of reading material on a wide range of topics is available.* Variety means that learners can find things they want to read, whatever their interests. Different kinds of reading material also encourage a flexible approach to reading. Learners are led to read for different reasons (e.g., entertainment, information, passing the time) and in different ways (e.g., skimming, scanning, more careful reading). (Bamford and Day, 2004, p.2)

I tried to include a variety of reading material on a wide range of topics to accommodate the various needs of learners and to keep their interest by making them speculate on what kind of text would come next. I tried to devise my reading list (the list is included in Appendix B) in such a way as to provide encouragement for participants to venture into genres they had not yet considered, both in fiction and non-fiction.

The reading list contained different text types: science books, film scripts, biographies, different literary genres, which, during the sessions, were accompanied by audio clips and samples from video adaptations. The representation of a number of different genres, text types and aural, visual and audio-visual (TV and films) receptive activities proved to be a good idea in this case, catering for a relatively heterogeneous group of adult learners coming from different educational backgrounds, ages, learning styles, interests and language proficiency.

The participants found popular texts motivating. In order to test the suitability of popular fiction for a foreign language book club, I decided to use one of J.K.Rowlings' *Harry Potter* books, about a teenage anti-hero. The book and the film series attracted both young and adult readers world-wide. The participants thoroughly enjoyed reading it. Mirko was able to talk about it with his children, who were such big fans that they even initiated the enactment of a game of quidditch, a sport invented by Rowlings, in their community.

From the area of non-fiction, I selected texts ranging from dietary advice to the nature of left-handedness. Some texts were a bit too difficult to keep the readers' interest, although the sessions were entertaining as I prepared audio/visual illustrations and realia.

Texts translated into English were not my first choice as I assumed the language would not be as natural, but I did have a go at a classic—Saint Exupéry's *The Little Prince*, translated from French into English. The participants found its simple beauty irresistible and extremely motivating, something that they could share with each other and with their families. The benefits of increased motivation for further reading thus outweighed any possible risk of getting "lost in translation", especially since we had a bilingual French/Croatian participant Tereza who was able to "catch" and explain to us some structures in the English translation that to her sounded typically French and contained undertones that had escaped us. Although most often more lexically and structurally demanding, authentic texts proved to be very motivating, especially if they dealt with current matters, such as M. Moore's *Dude, Where's My Country?* Anderson defines authentic texts as "written for native speakers of the language and not for second language readers" (Anderson, 1999, p. 118). Even though the category of "what is real" is elusive, authentic texts are taken to possess "real-world" value and prepare the learner for an autonomous use of the language. On the other hand, texts adapted for language study (readers, short stories with comprehension questions or extracts with audio recordings, popular novels discussed on the web etc.) made my venture easier in terms of preparation time.

> 3. *Learners choose what they want to read.* Self-selection of reading material is the basis of extensive reading, and it puts students in a different role from that in a traditional classroom, where the teacher chooses or the textbook supplies reading material. One reason that many students enjoy extensive reading is that they choose what they want to read. This choice extends beyond selection of reading material. Learners are also free, indeed encouraged, to stop reading anything that is not interesting or that they find too difficult. (Bamford and Day, 2004, p.2)

Other than what was stated for Principle 1, as much as I wanted to implement Principle 3 so students could feel that they "own" the text, I found it hard to do so because they felt more comfortable contributing advice on the choice of videos and power point presentations than reading materials. The years of not reading extensively had taken their toll and all they could think of were Russian classics they had read in high school. Before ending the session though, we would agree on the text for the following session. I always tried to have two texts ready and invite the participants to vote for the text they liked better. That way at least they had more say in the proceedings, which was a positive stimulus for reading, making them feel more personally involved.

> 4. *Learners read as much as possible.* The language learning benefits of extensive reading come from quantity of reading. For the benefits of extensive reading to take effect, a book a week is an appropriate goal. Books written for beginning language learners are very short, so this is normally a realistic target for learners of any ability level. (Bamford and Day, 2004, p.2)

Although Bamford and Day here state that reading a book a week is necessary for the benefits of extensive reading to emerge, it seemed too hard a promise to keep for many of my students, so we agreed to read ten pages each week and if

the students liked the text and had more time, they would finish it at their own pace. Since most of them complained of not having enough time for reading longer texts, we started with short stories, poems and non-fiction. When we read longer works of fiction, they did allow the readers to develop speed and to read more smoothly.

> 5. *Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower.* Because learners read material that they can easily understand, it encourages fluent reading. Dictionary use is normally discouraged because it interrupts reading, making fluent reading impossible. Instead, learners are encouraged to ignore or guess at the few unknown language items they may meet. (Bamford and Day, 2004, p.2)

During our sessions, dictionary use was discouraged and guessing was encouraged in order to enhance fluency, since accuracy as the purpose for reading came second. Some intensive reading of short passages was occasionally done during sessions to demonstrate a more thorough approach to the text, should the participants wish to pursue the text further on their own. The reading of excerpts, short stories or non-fiction broken into sections may require a more intensive approach to reading, which is as beneficial as the fact that it helps create a reading habit. The participants were gradually guided towards various reading strategies such as using a dictionary, but also freeing themselves of the dictionary, guessing and chunking, which then improved their reading speed and helped them get even more out of extensive reading.

> 6. *The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information, and general understanding.* In contrast to academic reading and intensive reading, and the detailed understanding they require, extensive reading encourages reading for pleasure and information. Rather than 100 percent comprehension, learners aim only for sufficient understanding to achieve their reading purpose. (Bamford and Day, 2004, pp.2-3)

As Bamford and Day point out, follow-up activities should be aimed at encouraging further reading and keeping a learner's own experience as the goal. The previously mentioned issues that arose from reading and discussing Hemingway's *The Old Man and The Sea* illustrate my adherence to this principle. I tried to start each session by encouraging the participants to express their likes and dislikes: assuming that they have read the pre-assigned text, I would allow them time to say whether they enjoyed the process of reading (if they had enough time or adequate space, if the availability/quality of original/photocopy was satisfactory, etc.), whether they could cope with the language, whether the choice of text was adequate for their interests, whether they liked the style, etc. I used comprehension questions to check how the participants experienced the reading and what they understood. During sessions we would also have a look at the language of the text. I provided help with passages that were not easy to understand from the language point-of-view, encouraging the participants to help each other and assisting myself only when necessary, pointing out useful structures or vocabulary. When I used books or short stories that have been specifically designed for language study and were accompanied by a range of activities, I either took some time to go through the activities or simply offered the key along with the text before the session.

7. *Reading is individual and silent.* Learners read at their own pace. In some schools, there are silent reading periods when students read their self-selected books in the classroom. Most extensive reading, however, is homework. It is done out of the classroom in the student's own time, when and where the student chooses. (Bamford and Day, 2004, p.3)

Reading is individual and silent, but the book club discussions are definitely not. This is where I started realising that a modified version of the principles for extensive reading will be necessary in order to explain or fit the book club approach to reading. The modified version should take into account the previously discussed mix of autonomy and intradependence.

8. *Reading is its own reward.* Because a learner's own experience is the goal, extensive reading is not usually followed by comprehension questions. At the same time, teachers may ask students to complete some kind of follow-up activity after reading. There are a variety of reasons for this: to discover what the students understood and experienced from the reading; to keep track of what students read; to check student attitude toward reading; and to link reading with other parts of the curriculum. What is important is that any follow-up activity respect the integrity of the reading experience and that it encourage rather than discourage further reading. (Bamford and Day, 2004, p.3)

Alderson (2000, p. 54) writes that "it is very difficult to induce intrinsic motivation—it has to come from the readers, undisturbed by an externally imposed task, who are reading for their own enjoyment or satisfaction". It would then be safe to say that extensive reading, as defined by Bamford and Day in their ten principles, relies on readers' intrinsic motivation. It is the learners' intrinsic motivation that helps them achieve higher levels of understanding (Alderson, 2000, pp. 53-54). Comprehension tests or any kind of assessment can, for example, create extrinsic motivation which is not as effective, as it motivates readers to read at a surface level, focusing on facts and figures.

However, Anderson (1999) also presents research conducted on top-down (lower-level reading processes) and bottom-up (higher-level reading processes) models of how the printed word is understood. The research shows that "the best second language readers are those who can 'effectively integrate' both bottom-up and top-down processes" in an interactive model that combines elements of both processes (p. 3). That would explain why the participants of the book club eagerly awaited the sessions as the chance to discuss what they had read and to show their comprehension by answering wh-questions about the plot, attitude and character analysis and why they welcomed occasional accuracy practice and guidance. They commented on how using accompanying glossaries or other comprehension aids during solitary reading made them feel as if they were cheating during the reading process, although they had no problem doing it in a group during the session.

It is in that respect that reading as part of a book club, in my opinion, differs from extensive reading as postulated on the principles of Bamford and Day: the book club approach to reading makes more use of both bottom-up and top-down processing by exploiting both the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of the

readers by participants using their intrinsic motivation to achieve what would otherwise be only extrinsically motivating.

In the above principle *Reading is its own reward*, Bamford and Day (2004, p. 3) state that "Because a learner's own experience is the goal, extensive reading is not usually followed by comprehension questions" and then they add that some follow-up activities may be included in order "to discover what the students understood and experienced from the reading; to keep track of what students read; to check student attitude toward reading; and to link reading with other parts of the curriculum.". Their book puts together activities which are meant to implement the ten principles of extensive reading and yet the sections include monitoring reading, evaluating reading, oral reading reports and written reading reports, making the effort thus hardly seem like reading for pleasure, information, and general understanding, as it ought to be according to their sixth principle. Vaille and QuinnWilliams' (2006) approach in *Creating Book Clubs in the English Language Classroom* is such that no evaluation is necessary, but their firmly structured book club format requires the participants to pick a comprehension strategy, read the selection, "Discuss the selections and your reactions and connections. Remember to follow up!" and also to "Record/write in the Book Log. Summarize your selection for the other group(s)" (p. 115). In my experience, this kind of approach is too structured and evaluative, relying too heavily on extrinsic motivation for the joy of reading and the intrinsic motivation to kick in fully.

Vaille and QuinnWilliams' (2006) book is a sample work of how extensive reading can be operationalised through different reading strategies, but, in my opinion, it does not exploit the full potential of the book club approach. It was written with immigrants/learners of English in an English-speaking country, the United States, in mind. The authors present a structured way of introducing different reading strategies. Although the book provides some interesting insights, the selection and treatment of texts in the context of their book club seems surprisingly foreign to my approach, which will be demonstrated in the comments on the next principle.

> 9. *The teacher orients and guides the students.* Extensive reading is different in many ways from traditional classroom practice, and teachers need to explain to students what it is, why they are doing it, and how to go about it. The teacher will also want to keep track of what and how much students read and their reactions to what was read in order to guide them in getting the most out of their reading. (Bamford and Day, 2004, p.3)

Vaille and QuinnWilliams (2006) follow this principle in *Creating Book Clubs in the English Language Classroom*. It is a principle I found unsuitable for a foreign language book club. Some guidance and orientation is highly desirable, but even Bamford and Day in the explanation of the principle, in my opinion, introduce too many possibilities for guidance. This principle seems to have been operationalised to an extreme in Vaille and QuinnWilliams' book. To illustrate: in order to improve the acquisition of English and the reading skills of their students who are "literate in their own languages and can use the Roman alphabet, although education levels vary widely" (Vaille and QuinnWilliams, 2006, p ix),

the authors explain that they have written a story called *Flor's Journey to Independence* about a young Mexican immigrant with a child, abandoned by her husband, who makes it in the USA. The authors use the story as the foundation for the examples and explanations of their approach to reading and suggest the purchase of their story for a better understanding of their approach. In their introduction, the authors state that, with their EFL students, they use somewhat modified comprehension strategies that they used with children's book clubs. They first try to teach comprehension strategies to adults using children's books and then to develop their independence in selecting previously taught comprehension strategies from a list, as they read *Flor*. After that, they move to other more complex texts.

What seems to have worked with my book club and what I would propose as a starting point of a book club is first to exploit the intrinsic motivation the participants bring in when they join the club through a less structured, more participant-guided approach to discussion. Facilitators should use carefully selected elicitation techniques and let the participants expand their range of comprehension strategies by imitating the facilitator, using their intrinsic motivation to achieve what would otherwise be only extrinsically motivating.

> 10. *The teacher is a role model of a reader*. Example is the most powerful instructor. If the teacher reads some of the same material that the students are reading and talks to them about it, this gives the students a model of what it is to be a reader. It also makes it possible for the teacher to recommend reading material to individual students. In this way, teacher and students can become an informal reading community, experiencing together the value and pleasure to be found in the written word. (Bamford and Day, 2004, p.3)

I read all the texts before offering them to the participants in order to be able to prepare and adapt them to their needs, and to stimulate their interest by offering a personal example of reading for pleasure. I could thus take part in the discussion as a facilitator rather than a dictator or a didact. I facilitated the discussion arising from ideas recognised by participants as expressed in the text, making sure that all the participants were given a chance to express their views. I sometimes drew attention to the features of the text as written discourse and discussed different styles, register, text formats, literary periods, writers' biographies, social trends, etc. A little research always made sessions more interesting, as it is often bits of trivia that stay in one's mind, such as: (when we read Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Tarzan* series) "the town of Tarzana, California was named after Tarzan", "the Burroughs crater on Mars is named in Burroughs' honour" or "Burroughs was working as a pencil sharpener wholesaler when he began to write fiction". I found Wikipedia, the free online encyclopaedia, to be a good source of background information. Some readers kept a reading log (see appendix A for a template), the structure of which encouraged them to find information about the author, the text and the period. The participants started imitating the facilitator: following my example and, wanting to show their enthusiasm and preparation, they accumulated a mass of information that they then had the opportunity to share during the session. The lack of time for reading that they initially complained about proved no longer to be an issue after a couple of sessions.

Before ending the session, when the participants had chosen one of the two texts offered, I would introduce the text by establishing connections between the text and the readers (e.g., commenting on the author, the period, any adaptations they might be familiar with). Based on my classroom experience, it helps to finish the day reviewing the goals set for the day and how they were accomplished. Since the goal of the book club was to spread the joy of extensive reading in order to enhance foreign language study, I found it important to finish the session "with a bang" rather than "a whimper" by making the participants put aside their frustrations and be aware of the pleasure they felt and shared in the process of reading and discussion, going back to the initial set of questions or asking them to select the highlights of the session.

To sum up the analysis of the ten principles for extensive reading by Bamford and Day which served as a starting point for this book club project: the book club I set up had a less structured but highly motivating atmosphere for a low-pressure exchange of ideas and language practice because no scores whatsoever needed to be recorded or reported. The participants' intrinsic motivation was activated to achieve what would otherwise be only achievable through extrinsic motivation. The only progress that needed to be charted was the one in the pleasure felt by participants during the session. The participants experienced the pleasure of reading, and when there is the pleasure of reading, results will follow, as can be seen in a comment from Pero, who wrote in the feedback form that thanks to the book club, he read "various stories and some fairy tales what gave me enjoy and I tried to involve myself in each issue as much as possible."

## IV. Identifying challenges

### Challenges in facilitating book club sessions

In this section, I will state my views on what I perceive as challenges for my next book club venture. I will first discuss the facilitation of book club sessions, then team-teaching, peer observation and some methods that can be used in the sessions. While I was looking for books and web materials on book clubs in general, I realised that it was much easier to find multi-course menus that go with book club sessions, wine lists, even book club cookbooks and meal planners than it was to find studies of book clubs in foreign language learning. Thus, the source of information that helped me the most along with Bamford and Day's principles for extensive reading was Rachel Jacobsohn's list of tips for running book clubs. Jacobsohn, author of *The Reading Group Handbook: Everything You Need to Know, from Choosing Members to Leading Discussions* (2006a), a book on book clubs for native speakers of English and founder of the Association of Professional Book Club Facilitators, has adapted her suggestions for the Internet where they can be found in the form of "Ten Tips for Starting and Running A Successful Book Club" (Jacobsohn, 2006b). I found tip no. 9 very useful in terms of elicitation techniques, as it saved me a lot of trial-and-error in keeping the conversation flowing.

9. Do avoid a collapse or lapse in discussion. Suggestions:
– Each person formulate three questions and/or three specific passages to discuss.
– Do not ask, "So, did you like the book?" Do ask, "What was your reading experience?"
– Turn statements into provocative questions that probe and stimulate discussion.
– Differentiate intellectual from emotional responses. (I call it The NECK Syndrome. Is the author evoking a cerebral response, making you think, or is she/he evoking a visceral response in which your heart pounds, adrenalin soars, and you swoon or weep or gasp for air? Does your response emanate from above, or below, the neck?)
– Discuss (among the many things that there are to discuss) language, narrative voice, character development, plot development, author's vision/intent, mood and setting.
– Read passages out loud to hear the voices and the language. This can be illuminating.
– Formulate questions that do not have "yes" or "no" answers. Accumulate possible answers to questions concerning characters' behavior motivation. If the book is a work of quality fiction, or literature, in which a skilled author "walks around" a character, you may collect a sizeable list of possibilities. Artful writing provides a search for simultaneous and contradictory truths within the mysterious and complex human experience. (Jacobsohn, 2006b, n.p.)

I do believe that this kind of information elicitation which is closer to everyday conversations can be more beneficial to the development and maintaining of the desire of adults and those about to become ones to read extensively than a series of school-like structured series of comprehension strategies as presented by Vaille and QuinnWilliams. Based on my experience, book clubs for learners of foreign languages are sociologically more similar to book clubs for native speakers than to a school-like environment and approach, a statement which would, of course, merit a thorough study. Jacobsohn's book emphasises the social role of book clubs as offshoots of the past (not its relics) in the changing technologically-laden social communities in the USA, for which her book is primarily tailored.

Book groups are the evolutionary advancement of sewing bees, "meetings" at the corner tavern, or neighborhood gatherings on the front stoop. In this age of fast-paced lives driven into frenzy by "surround sound" and ubiquitous telecommunications, the presence of book groups provides positive reassurance of the value of human discourse and affords a place where the imagination is free to explore (Jacobsohn, 2006a, p. 5)

This widely referenced book makes sense in the Croatian context. It also provided me with a solid general framework on how to handle the logistics (including food). Recently, I came across a more extreme example of running a book club while watching the French TV channel TV5 Monde. The documentary I saw was on how a community of squatters in Sao Paulo set up a library of

10,000 books and a book club with nothing more than discarded books found in garbage containers (the documentary "Sao Paulo: la bibliothèque du squat" is available on the Internet (Arte.tv, 2006). The video features a squatter who explains how reading makes him feel better. A volunteer is shown facilitating book club-like sessions with the squatters of different generations in their makeshift library that functioned as a community room.

In the United States, there is the U.S. Association of Professional Book Club Facilitators founded by Jacobsohn: a group of professionals who are contracted for money to facilitate book club sessions. The book club in the Sao Paulo squat, in contrast, was facilitated by a volunteer. In my opinion, these two very different situations can both be translated into the foreign language teaching situation, where there is a need for both professionals who can help improve language learning abilities and develop new learning strategies to fit the needs of 21st century readers *and* volunteers who can help out various communities of interest along the path of achieving the same goal.

A volunteer facilitator might approach a book club with more intrinsic motivation and is perhaps able to inspire or recognise and encourage the intrinsic motivation of the participants, whereas a professional facilitator might have to undergo training as to how to reach the same goal. I started the book club project as a volunteer, trying to learn more about reading in a foreign language. All of the above has been a description of some aspects of the challenges on that trial-and-error path. What follows is an account of what may lie ahead should I have another opportunity to start a book club.

*Challenges in team-teaching*

Since in the classroom I enjoy team-teaching, especially with colleagues that I can relate to, I wanted the book club sessions to be facilitated by two teachers. That did not happen for several reasons: the colleagues that I would have enjoyed sharing the project with did not have the time, others were very sceptical of a volunteer effort on that scale, and some were worried that even my being involved would cause them extra work in the future (if it proved to be a useful idea—so far it seems that the project was a bit ahead of its time in my working environment). I have enjoyed team-teaching with more experienced teachers as I can learn from their experience, and I have found teaching with younger teachers refreshing as their outlook on teaching can be rejuvenating. However, I prefer team-teaching with colleagues who have crossed the same paths of teacher development as myself, as we can complement each other and build on our ideas. Having had no opportunity to test team-teaching in practice in the book club, I can only assume that the same would apply to joint facilitation in the book club setting.

Team-teaching could also have provided an excellent basis for peer observation, as observation can be done unobtrusively once the participants get used to having two facilitators. If I had had the opportunity to be observed by a colleague, we would have had to decide whether both of us would be actively involved or one would assume the role of observer, making notes on group atmosphere and things to avoid or change in future sessions—unobtrusively, as

it is important to create a relaxed and trusting atmosphere which will motivate the participants to interact, to take an active part in discussions and to use their language potential to the maximum.

In the course of my book club venture, I invited a guest speaker who talked about his travels. A field trip did not happen, but the options were visiting the birthplace of a writer and a landscape described in a literary work. Adapting to the era of the visual, I debated on whether to include film adaptations of literary works or documentaries on writers' lives, history and science, as short illustrations (short because I would not have wanted viewing, as a silent, solitary activity to take up too much time in the session), but the technicalities of finding and setting up equipment were too complex for an extracurricular project. I did use a film script, as I thought it would be a good way of activating schemata.

The film script I chose was *Casablanca* and Stipe, who saw *Casablanca* when he was very young, said: "All I remembered from then was Humphrey Bogart wearing a white suit that was somehow whiter than white". After having read the script, Stipe was delighted that he was able to piece together the elements that made Bogart's role so striking in his memories. If the book club project had lasted longer, the next film script would have been *Braveheart*, at the request of the participants. I do believe that the language of film scripts should be examined from the foreign language learning point of view, as it offers a good insight into pragmatic competences that can correspond with the present times, such as spoken grammar.

## Conclusion

The social and psychological aspects of book clubs can be powerful elements in language apprehension, as collaborative learning and a communicative approach build learners' confidence in their ability to say or write the right thing at the right time:

> A well-known description of communicative competence has been that it includes knowledge of what to say, when, how, where, and to whom (Dubin and Olshtain, 2002, p. 70)

The participants of the book club were encouraged to keep reading logs. They were provided with a model and were given complete freedom as to whether to keep them or not. Some started writing and would occasionally read them to other participants. Some participants, if they missed a session, would read someone's log to decide whether they wanted to read the text. I did not read or collect the reading logs so as to keep the low-pressure atmosphere, unless a student specifically requested me to do so. Towards the end of the project, I had to be out of town for a week so the participants decided to hold a session on their own, showing a great deal of independence. Once the self-access centre became operational, they became its core users. Many of them passed a C1-equivalent test or moved on to a higher-level course, which might have happened even without the book club, although a number of students told me that being in the book club raised their level of confidence before taking the exams.

The outcomes of this book club experiment seem to me important and useful for improving reading in a foreign language. Turned into a group activity, extensive reading became a useful and motivating way of supplementing language teaching and independent study. It provided an opportunity and an excuse for extensive reading, and a motivating environment for speaking. In my opinion, it contributed to the development of confidence and a general language learning ability of the participants. Book clubs, as sheltered and well-structured interactive pockets in global, visually aggressive and isolating surroundings, can thus offer a way of motivating learners to develop their listening, speaking and writing skills through a communicative approach to reading.

The speed of modern living has made contemporary culture predominantly visual, reliant on moving images and pictorial instructions understandable to all dwellers of the new Babel that is the modern high-tech city. Readers from such countries and cities, as well as readers in developing areas of the world, could perhaps benefit from the same concept of a book club as developed here, facilitated by a professional or a volunteer who could encourage the participants first to read extensively in solitude and then to come together and share their views and the joys and frustrations experienced in reading. I would encourage teachers to give book clubs a try, whether as part of their regular workload or as a gift to their community. Both can be gratifying for generations to come.

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## Appendix A: Reading log as a reflective technique to help with discussion

Date _____

Reading Log _____

_____

Title _____
(state also if the text is a part of a larger text)

_____

Author _____
(include any info on the author you have)

_____

Period _____
(find out about the period in which the text was written)

_____

General Feeling _____
(describe how reflecting on this text makes you feel and why)

_____

Interesting Expressions _____
(list some new and interesting words and expressions from this text)

_____

Food for Thought _____
(analyse some of the ideas from the text that you agree/disagree with)

_____

Favourite Quote _____
(write your favourite quote and memorize it)

_____

Time _____
(how long it took you to read it)

Level of Difficulty _____
(1 = easy, 10 = difficult)

**Appendix B: Feedback Form**

*Book club feedback form*

Please fill in the attached questionnaire—your feedback will provide guidance as to whether this type of extracurricular activity has been useful/would be useful in the future.

1. How did you find out about the Book Club meetings?
   _____
   _____
   _____

2. What were your expectations of the Book Club?
   _____
   _____
   _____

3. What part of your expectations did the Book Club meet?
   _____
   _____
   _____

4. Please look at the table. Tick the texts you found most interesting and write the reason in the right column.

| | Author | Text | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I. Asimov | "True Love" | _____ _____ _____ _____ |
| 2. | J. Joyce | "Eveline" | _____ _____ _____ _____ |
| 3. | M. Moore | from *Dude, Where's My Country?* | _____ _____ _____ _____ |
| 4. | S. Rushdie | "The Prophet's Hair" | _____ _____ _____ _____ |
| 5. | S. King | "Word Processor of the Gods" | _____ _____ _____ _____ |

| | **Author** | **Text** | **Comments** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6. | R. Carver | "Cathedral" | _____ |
| 7. | C. Fisher | from *Postcards from the Edge* | _____ |
| 8. | S. O'Neal | *Shaq Talks Back* | _____ |
| 9. | E. R. Burroughs | from *Tarzan of the Apes* | _____ |
| 10. | C. Sagan | from *Broca's Brain* | _____ |
| 11. | C. McManus | from *Right Hand, Left Hand* | _____ |
| 12. | R. West | from *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* | _____ |
| 13. | E. A. Poe | "Ligeia", "The Raven" | _____ |
| 14. | J. Epstein, P. Epstein, H. Koch | from *Casablanca* | _____ |
| 15. | A. de Saint-Exupery | *The Little Prince* | _____ |

| Author | Text | Comments |
|---|---|---|
| 16. E. Hemingway | *The Old Man and the Sea* | _____ |
|  |  | _____ |
|  |  | _____ |
|  |  | _____ |
| 17. H. and M. Diamond | from *Fit for Life* | _____ |
|  |  | _____ |
|  |  | _____ |
|  |  | _____ |
| 18. J. K. Rowling | from *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* | _____ |
|  |  | _____ |
|  |  | _____ |
|  |  | _____ |
| 19. S. Tzu | *The Art of War* | _____ |
|  |  | _____ |
|  |  | _____ |
|  |  | _____ |

5.  How could you benefit from attending Book Club meetings in the future?
    _____
    _____
    _____

6.  Please use this space to write any additional comments you might have.
    _____
    _____
    _____

Thank you!

*Note: It is important that the actual handouts of the Reading Log and the Feedback Form look inviting to the readers: please provide enough space for them to be able to note down as many comments as they wish.*