

BOOKS EVERY LANGUAGE TEACHER NEEDS TO READ

LIST #1

Books on this list meet the following criteria:

1. **SLA friendly:** Only books that support SLA research and best practice were considered.
2. **Useful:** Teachers have to be able to apply the concepts in the book readily.
3. **Readable:** They must not be too difficult for the harried teacher to absorb.
4. **Affordable:** There are some college-level texts that are valuable, but too pricey for most of us.
5. **Lasting:** These are not passing fads and have been proven to be valuable.

Great teachers have one thing in common: they read a lot. Some surveys indicate that the average American finishes reading only 1 book a year; others say the average citizen starts to read (but may not finish) at least ten books per year. Teachers undoubtedly read more than that, but we all need to read more and better materials. To think deeply and develop understanding of large movements we need to read books. New York Times bestselling author Grant Cardone claims that, “The average CEO reads 60+ books a year. The average worker reads 1 book a year but finds the time to watch 700 YouTube videos a year.” If teachers want to lead, we need to read; maybe not as much as the CEO’s claim to read, but a book every two weeks is within our grasp.

LIST #1

- *A Frequency Dictionary of Spanish: Core Vocabulary for Learners*, by Mark Davies
- *Social*, by Matthew Lieberman
- *Fluency through TPR Storytelling*, by Blaine Ray and Contee Seely
- *Reading FAQ*, by Frank Smith
- *The Natural Approach*, by Stephen Krashen and Tracey Terrell
- *Readicide*, by Kelly Gallagher
- *Mindset*, by Carol Dweck

LIST #2

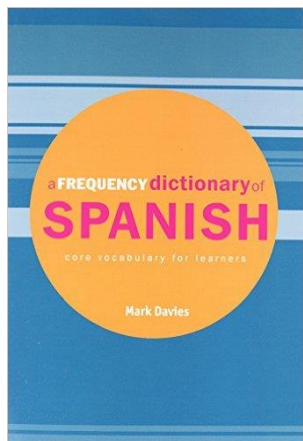
- *The Power of Reading*, by Stephen Krashen
- *Free Voluntary Reading*, by Stephen Krashen
- *Explorations in Language Acquisition and Use*, by Stephen Krashen
- *Fundamentals of Language Education*, by Stephen Krashen
- *The Talent Code*, by Daniel Coyle
- *Brain Rules*, by John Medina
- *Story Proof*, by Kendall Haven
- *The Language Instinct*, by Steven Pinker
- *Words and Rules*, by Steven Pinker

BOOKS ESPECIALLY FOR TEACHER TRAINERS:

- *Crossing the Chasm*, by Geoffrey Moore
- *So Good They Can't Ignore You*, by Cal Newport

BOOKS EVERY LANGUAGE TEACHER NEEDS TO READ #1

A Frequency Dictionary of Spanish: Core Vocabulary for Learners, by Mark Davies



Also editions available in other languages: *A Frequency Dictionary of ... French / German / Arabic / Japanese / Mandarin Chinese / etc.* (Routledge Frequency Dictionaries)

What It's About: The top 5,000 words in the language, based on a corpus of millions of words from many sources. It offers glimpses into how the language is used. It is easily accessible and intuitive to use. We can use it to make sure we are teaching with the high frequency words that students need to communicate.

Quotable Quotes: “There is a growing consensus that frequency information has a role to play in language learning. Data derived from corpora allows the frequency of individual words and phrases in a language to be determined. That information may then be incorporated into language learning.”

“What is the value of a frequency dictionary for language teachers and learners? Why not simply rely on the vocabulary lists in a course textbook? The short answer is that although a typical textbook provides some thematically-related vocabulary in each chapter, there is almost never any indication of which of these words the student is most likely to encounter in actual conversation or texts.”

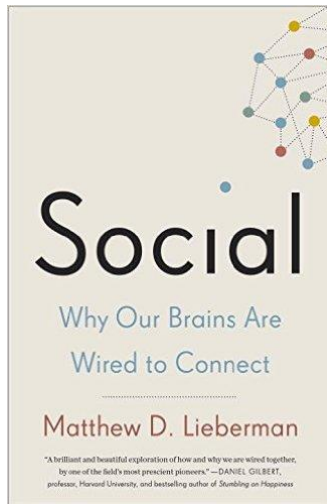
Bonus Points For: Showing us that the nouns associated with the clothing unit are not nearly as valuable for students to acquire as the verbs that are used with clothing. I wasted a lot of time teaching lists of nouns and students couldn't use verbs to explain themselves.

An Image that Could Sum Up This Book Is: A pyramid of words tipped with gold—those are the high-frequency words in the language: the most valuable words for a teacher to use and a learner to acquire.

Read This Book If... You want to help your students by purposefully using the high frequency vocabulary they really need.

BOOKS EVERY LANGUAGE TEACHER NEEDS TO READ #2

Social, by Matthew Lieberman



What It's About: Explains the how our brains are made to connect with one another and some stunning implications of recent brain research, particularly in education. Not about language learning, but has important ideas that apply to teaching language.

Quotable Quotes: “70 percent of the content in our conversations is social in nature.” p. 20

“Food, water and shelter are NOT the most basic needs for an infant. Instead, being socially connected and cared for is paramount... this restructuring of Maslow’s pyramid tells us something critical about ‘who we are’. Love and belonging might seem like a convenience we can live without, but our biology is built to thirst for connection because it is linked

to our most basic survival needs.” p. 43

“I believe the real solution is to stop making the social brain the enemy during class time and figure out how to engage the social brain as part of the learning process.” p. 283

“In study after study, the folks making sense of the information socially have done better on memory tests than the folks intentionally memorizing the material.” p. 284

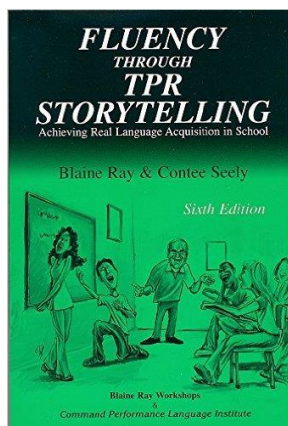
Bonus Points For: Describing how emotional pain shows up just like physical pain in the brain. Emotional pain really does hurt, and all the more so because we can’t point right at it. Our old childhood taunt was wrong; words CAN hurt us.

Two Images That Could Sum Up This Book: 1) A car on a dark road with dim headlights in front, but disco ball energy pulsating behind the windows. 2) A plastic model of the brain that lights up but the prefrontal cortex at the front of the skull, the part we have assumed to be the most important in learning everything, shines less brightly than the wildly active social nodes throughout the brain which are constantly and wildly pulsating with interconnected messages.

Read This Book If... You want to begin to learn how to use the social parts of your students’ brains to get them to earnestly connect with one another, with their learning and with their world.

BOOKS EVERY LANGUAGE TEACHER NEEDS TO READ #3

Fluency through TPR Storytelling, by Blaine Ray and Contee Seely



What It's About: A method to teach language and not kill the teacher in the process. TPRS is thoroughly supported by decades of SLA research and thousands of teachers and their students. Among TPRS practitioners, this book is known as the “Green Bible” because of its authority and ubiquity. Even if you don’t teach with TPRS you need to read this book to see what all the fuss is about—especially the first three chapters.

Quotable Quotes: “Carefully limiting the vocabulary, frequent repetition of it, and quick translations (when needed) are the principal ways we use to keep a class totally comprehensible. In order to provide sufficient repetition of targeted grammatical features while simultaneously maintaining interest, we have all students respond appropriately to varying and repetitive questions about a developing story.” p. 9-10

“TPR Storytelling develops fluency with accuracy. Students acquire that language in a fun way that enables them to speak. In the process they develop an “ear” for what sounds right. As a result, they learn to speak the language so that it sounds right to them. This process closely resembles that of first language acquisition. Few other language-learning methods seem to come so close.” p. 333

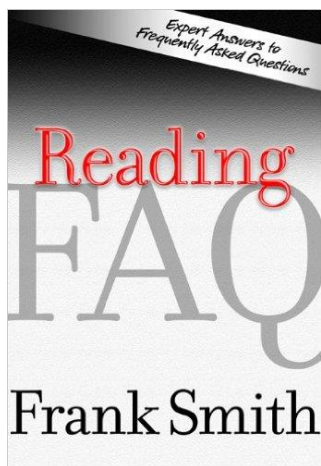
Bonus Points For: Showing how to be master and student at the same time. TPRS is a skills-based approach to teaching, rather than a materials-based approach. No app or textbook can do what this book teaches teachers to do. Blaine Ray and TPRS keep growing, changing and getting better.

An Image that Could Sum Up This Book Is: A tightly packed school of herring swimming in the open ocean—constantly reacting and adapting to the changing environment, but remaining one cohesive entity and constantly moving ahead. TPRS is a fluid method, it changes and adapts, but the essence of it remains the same while its practitioners keep moving forward.

Read This Book If... You want your students to become fluent and you also want to have a life. With TPRS your students will be able to speak the language confidently and you will not have to spend all of your free time grading assignments.

BOOKS EVERY LANGUAGE TEACHER NEEDS TO READ #4

Reading FAQ, by Frank Smith



What It's About: A lifetime of research, thinking and writing about reading distilled into one short book. This book answers the questions we all have about reading and a few that we haven't even thought to ask. This is another book that is not just about language teaching but it gives language teachers the oomph to get their students reading more.

Quotable Quotes: "We remember things best when they are organized with everything else we know, when they come with stories attached, rather than as isolated bits of information." p. 45

"First someone reads to us, then with us, then we take off on our own." p. 66

"So how can anyone help you read before you can read for yourself? By reading with you. That is how learning to read begins—first people read to you, then they read with you, and finally they give up because you have taken control of your own reading. And don't want anyone else to interfere." p. 40

"New words are learned with remarkable facility, especially in stories, when you are reading something that makes sense to you." p. 40

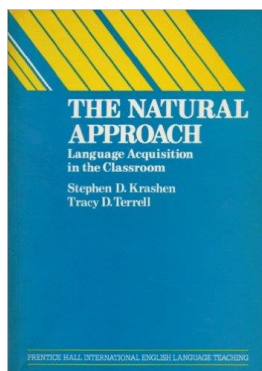
Bonus Points For: Reminding us to read TO our students and WITH our students, as well as letting them read on their own.

An Image That Could Sum Up This Book Is: Your favorite niece at age four sitting on your lap asking you to read her that picture book for the fifth time in a row, because reading is a satisfying and pleasant activity that binds us together emotionally and intellectually like nothing else can.

Read This Book If... You want succinct answers to the questions about reading that always come up. And it is written by one of the essential contributors to research on the nature of the reading process, the guy that Stephen Krashen says he goes to learn about reading.

BOOKS EVERY LANGUAGE TEACHER NEEDS TO READ #5

The Natural Approach, by Stephen Krashen and Tracey Terrell



http://www.amazon.com/The-Natural-Approach-Tracy-Terrell/dp/0136099343/ref=dp_ob_image_bk

What It's About: Solid second language acquisition theory that has stood the test of time. There are newer methods that have been developed since this book was published but no better theoretical models—you can use the 5 hypotheses every day to guide quality teaching in your classroom.

Quotable Quotes: “The Great Paradox of Language Teaching: Language is best taught when it is being used to transmit messages, not when it is explicitly taught for conscious learning.” p. 55

“[The input] hypothesis states simply that we acquire (not learn) language by understanding input that is a little beyond our current level of (acquired) competence.” p. 32

“Listening comprehension and reading are of primary importance in the language program, and the ability to speak (or write) fluently in a second language will come with time.” p. 32

“Conscious learning has an extremely limited function... it can only be used as a Monitor, or an editor... in order to use the Monitor successfully: 1. The performer has to have enough time, 2. The performer has to be thinking about correctness, or be focused on form, 3. The performer has to know the rule.” p. 30

“Overt error correction of speech even in the best of circumstances is likely to have a negative effect on the students’ willingness to try to express themselves.” p.177

“The result of language acquisition is a ‘feel’ for grammaticality and an ability to use a rule in real communication.” p. 40

Bonus Points For: Developing the five hypotheses of language acquisition: the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, the Natural Order Hypothesis, the Monitor Hypothesis, the Input Hypothesis and the Affective Filter Hypothesis. The first initial of the five hypotheses, plus Krashen’s more recent Compelling Input Hypothesis (http://www.sdkrashen.com/content/articles/the_compelling_input_hypothesis.pdf) can be rearranged to create the mnemonic M.A.N.I.A.C. — because you must become focused and almost maniacal about sticking with these six hypotheses in the face of pressures in education today. People used to think Krashen was nuts, but studies over the past 40 years indicate there is something to this line of thinking. Use the acronym MANIAC to remember what you are trying to do in language teaching when you are talking with students, parents, colleagues, administrators and student teachers.

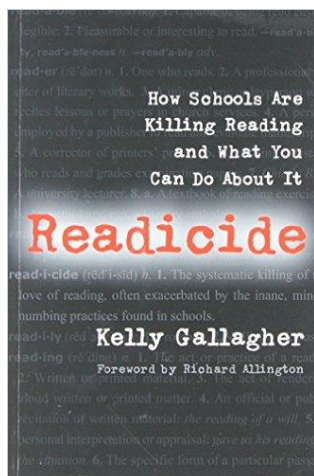
Mike Tyson said, “Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the mouth.” Krashen’s hypotheses will help you to stick with your long range plan when the realities of classroom teaching punch you in the face.

An Image That Could Sum Up This Book Is: A compass on the bridge of a sailing ship in a storm—it can show us the way when we get blown off course. In the classroom we deal with the unrelenting demands of student personalities, parental concerns, administrative expectations, yearly fads, governmental testing and our own distractibility and exhaustion, all of which blow us off of our heading from time to time. Reviewing the precepts in this book will keep your heading true.

Read This Book If... You want to understand *how* and *why* language acquisition works. Solid theoretical models like this keep us on course in the face of the continually capricious gales that sweep through education.

BOOKS EVERY LANGUAGE TEACHER NEEDS TO READ #6

Readicide, by Kelly Gallagher



What It's About: Explains how our teaching habits are killing our students' desire to read and how we can fix it with better methods.

Quotable Quotes: "The most powerful motivator that schools can offer to build lifelong readers is to provide students with time in the school day for free voluntary reading (FVR)." p. 75

"Making sure every student has a book to take home to read is the single most important issue in our quest to develop young readers. If students don't have books, they will never develop into readers. If students only read in school, they will never become lifelong readers." p. 46

"Shouldn't schools be the place where students interact with interesting books? Shouldn't the faculty have an ongoing laser-like commitment to put good books in our students' hands? Shouldn't this be a front-burner issue at all times?"

"A look at the practice of most schools suggests that when a school 'values' reading what it really means is that the school intensely focuses on raising state-mandated reading test scores- the kind of reading our students will rarely, if ever, do in adulthood."

Bonus Points For: Showing us how teachers and school administrators can solve many of the problems with kids that hate reading. Kelly Gallagher shows us that we don't have to wait for the district, the state or the federal government to give us permission or to do it for us. We can do it now.

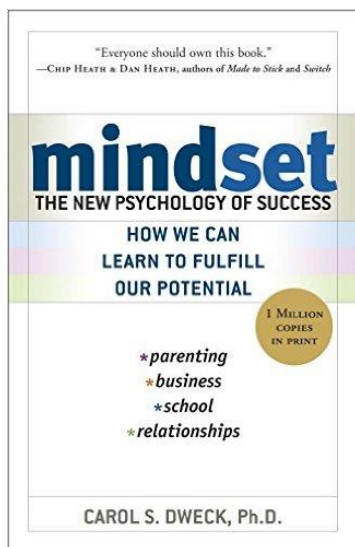
An Image That Could Sum Up This Book Is: A group of freedom fighters liberating prisoners and demolishing a guillotine. The guillotine is low expectations, not enough time, and a lack of interesting books. The prisoners are the students. The freedom fighters are informed and motivated teachers.

Read This Book If... You want to know how to get kids reading. On their own. For fun. Again.

Keep in mind WYTIWYG (pronounced "witty-wig": What You Test Is What You Get). There are alternate assessments for light reading book reports for world language classes available on the Free Stuff page of brycedstrom.com: <http://www.brycedstrom.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/LIGHT-READING-BOOK-REPORTS3.pdf>

BOOKS EVERY LANGUAGE TEACHER NEEDS TO READ #7

Mindset, by Carol Dweck



What It's About: Fixed mindset (judging that innate talent is paramount) versus growth mindset (acceptance that effort is the game changer). This is another book that is not about language teaching per se, but applies to so many pieces of what we are trying to do that it deserves attention). Carl Dweck shows us that no one is doomed by heredity or experience and that everyone can improve. Too many of us do not believe in growth at a core level—too many think they are stuck: “That’s just the way I am” is their cry. Dr. Dweck, by focusing on the process and not the product, shows us how to encourage growth and change. 30 years of research indicate she is on to something.

Quotable Quotes: “The fixed mindset does not allow people the luxury of becoming. They have to be.” p. 25

“Telling children they’re smart, in the end, made them feel dumber and act dumber, but claim they were smarter.” p. 74

“Just because some people can do something with little or no training, it doesn’t mean that others can’t do it (and sometimes do it even better) with training. This is so important, because many, many people with the fixed mindset think that someone’s early performance tells you all you need to know about their talent and their future.” p. 70

“In the fixed mindset, adolescence is one big test. Am I smart or dumb? Am I good-looking or ugly? Am I cool or nerdy? Am I a winner or a loser? And in the fixed mindset, a loser is forever.” p. 58

“In the fixed mindset, athletes want to validate their talent. This means acting like a superstar, not ‘just’ a team member. But... this mindset works against the important victories they want to achieve. p. 103

“How do you praise? Remember that praising children’s intelligence or talent, tempting as it is, sends a fixed-mindset message. It makes their confidence and motivation more fragile. Instead, try to focus on the *process* they used—their strategies, effort, or choices.” p. 211

“When teachers are judging them, students will sabotage the teacher by not trying.” p. 201

Bonus Points For: Helping us to focus on the process and not the product and letting us know it is applied with our praise. We can now tell students, “I noticed how much you have been working on that,” instead of, “You are so good at that.” We can give them a nutritious snack versus the sugar rush of cotton candy.

An Image That Could Sum Up This Book Is: Two kids: one sadly saying, “I guess I’m just no good at this,” and another confidently saying, “Give me another harder one. I love a challenge!” ... And they were each placed into those different mindsets by the type of praise given by an authority figure (!?). Sobering stuff.

Read This Book If... You are willing to confront the fixed mindset areas in your own life and want to learn how to encourage a growth mindset in yourself and others.