AUTHENTICITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN EXTENSIVE READING PROGRAMS IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Challenges and Practical Solutions for EFL Teachers

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Abstract

Extensive Reading (ER) has long been recognized as one of the most effective approaches for improving learners' reading fluency, vocabulary acquisition, motivation, and overall language proficiency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. During a two-month ER project conducted with university students, learners demonstrated significant progress by reading stories, novellas, and even full novels according to their language proficiency levels. Students actively participated in book review activities and discussions, showing improved confidence and reading engagement. However, the rapid growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies such as ChatGPT has created new challenges for teachers attempting to evaluate whether students genuinely read the assigned texts or simply relied on AI-generated summaries and online reviews. This article explores the tension between authentic extensive reading practices and AI-assisted academic dishonesty. It discusses practical classroom observations, common indicators of genuine reading behavior, limitations of traditional assessment methods, and pedagogical solutions that encourage authentic learner engagement. The article also proposes a set of teacher-friendly strategies including physical book verification, spontaneous questioning, reflective reading journals, oral interaction, vocabulary tracking, and process-based assessment. The study argues that instead of rejecting technology

completely, educators should redesign ER assessment systems to prioritize reading processes, personal responses, and critical engagement.

Keywords: extensive reading, AI, academic integrity, EFL, book review, authentic assessment, reading motivation

Introduction

Extensive Reading (ER) is considered one of the most influential methods for improving language acquisition in EFL contexts. Unlike intensive reading, which focuses on close analysis of short texts, ER encourages learners to read large amounts of material for pleasure, general understanding, and fluency development. Scholars such as Day and Bamford (1998) emphasize that students benefit most when they read texts appropriate to their proficiency levels and when reading becomes an enjoyable habit rather than a compulsory classroom task.

Recent studies demonstrate that ER positively affects vocabulary growth, reading comprehension, reading speed, learner autonomy, and motivation. In Uzbekistan and other EFL contexts, teachers increasingly integrate book review activities into language programs to develop reading culture among students. Khasanova's studies on extensive reading also highlight that reading-driven tasks can improve learner engagement and communicative competence by encouraging students to interact meaningfully with literary texts.

During a two-month ER project conducted with university students, learners selected reading materials according to their English proficiency levels. Some students read short stories, others chose novellas, while advanced learners attempted full novels. Weekly book review sessions were organized to encourage discussion, accountability, and reflection. The classroom atmosphere gradually changed: students became more confident discussing plots, characters, and personal reactions. Many learners expanded their vocabulary and demonstrated stronger speaking fluency during discussions.

However, a major challenge emerged during the assessment process. The growing accessibility of AI tools made it increasingly difficult to determine whether students had genuinely read the books. Some learners appeared capable of producing polished summaries despite limited understanding of specific events, character motivations, or textual details. Because AI platforms can instantly generate chapter summaries, character analyses, and thematic explanations, traditional book review assignments became vulnerable to superficial participation.

This issue raises important questions for modern EFL pedagogy:

1. How can teachers verify authentic student reading in the AI era?
2. What signs indicate genuine engagement with a physical text?
3. How should ER assessment methods evolve to maintain academic integrity?
4. Can AI be integrated ethically without destroying the pedagogical value of reading?

This article examines these questions by analyzing practical classroom experiences and proposing realistic solutions for EFL educators.

Literature Review

Extensive Reading and Language Development

Extensive Reading has consistently been associated with positive language learning outcomes. Day and Bamford (1998) argue that learners acquire language naturally when they engage with large quantities of understandable and enjoyable texts. Similarly, Nation (2009) states that repeated exposure to vocabulary through meaningful reading strengthens retention and improves fluency.

Suk (2016) found that Korean university students participating in a 15-week ER program improved reading comprehension, reading speed, and vocabulary acquisition significantly more than control groups. Chen, Chen, Chen, and Wey

(2013) also reported that extensive reading through e-books positively influenced students' reading attitudes and vocabulary growth.

Research in Central Asian and Uzbek EFL contexts similarly emphasizes the importance of ER for building independent reading habits. Khasanova's work on extensive reading and reading-driven tasks demonstrates that students become more motivated when reading activities include discussion, interpretation, and personal reflection rather than memorization.

ER is especially valuable because it encourages learner autonomy. Students choose texts according to their interests and language levels, reducing anxiety and increasing intrinsic motivation. This process transforms reading from a purely academic task into a meaningful personal activity.

Artificial Intelligence and Academic Integrity

The emergence of generative AI technologies has significantly affected higher education. Tools such as ChatGPT can produce summaries, essays, analyses, and discussion responses within seconds. While these technologies offer educational support, they also create new forms of academic dishonesty.

Recent studies indicate growing concern regarding AI-generated assignments in higher education. Bittle (2025) explains that generative AI complicates traditional understandings of plagiarism and authorship because students can submit polished content without engaging cognitively with the material. Similarly, Balalle et al. (2025) argue that educational institutions are struggling to adapt assessment systems to the realities of AI-assisted learning.

Research also demonstrates that AI detection tools remain unreliable. Mahmud et al. (2024) note that AI detectors frequently produce false positives and false negatives, making it risky to accuse students based solely on automated detection

systems. Consequently, many educators are shifting attention from product-based assessment toward process-based evaluation.

Within reading instruction, AI introduces a particularly complex challenge. Students may rely on summaries instead of reading complete texts, reducing opportunities for vocabulary exposure, emotional engagement, inferential thinking, and long-term comprehension development. Although AI can provide efficient overviews, it cannot replace the cognitive and emotional processes involved in authentic reading.

Classroom Experience and Emerging Challenges

The ER project discussed in this article lasted approximately two months and involved university students with mixed English proficiency levels. Learners were encouraged to select books suitable for their reading abilities. Beginning students mainly chose simplified stories and graded readers, while intermediate and advanced students selected novellas and novels.

The primary objective was not merely to complete books, but to develop a sustainable reading habit. Weekly book review activities required students to summarize events, discuss characters, identify unfamiliar vocabulary, and explain personal reactions.

Initially, the project appeared highly successful. Students participated enthusiastically during discussions, and many claimed to have completed significant portions of their books. However, several inconsistencies became noticeable during oral interaction.

Some students produced highly organized summaries yet struggled to answer spontaneous questions about specific scenes. Others could discuss general themes but failed to remember important details that genuine readers would typically recall.

Certain responses sounded overly formal and unnatural for the students' actual language proficiency levels.

These observations raised suspicion that some learners may have relied heavily on AI-generated summaries rather than authentic reading.

As a result, additional verification strategies were introduced. Students were asked to bring physical copies of their books to class. The teacher attempted to observe signs of genuine interaction with the text, including:

- highlighted unfamiliar vocabulary;
- underlined passages;
- folded page corners;
- sticky notes;
- handwritten comments;
- evidence of repeated reading.

Students were also asked spontaneous comprehension questions based on random sections of the book. For example:

- Which scene surprised you most?
- Which character annoyed you and why?
- What happened immediately before a certain event?
- Which sentence did you highlight?
- Which new word did you encounter repeatedly?

These questions often revealed differences between authentic readers and students who depended primarily on summaries.

Authentic readers typically demonstrated emotional reactions, partial memory, and personalized interpretations. In contrast, students relying mainly on AI summaries often produced generalized responses lacking textual specificity.

Nevertheless, this process also revealed important limitations. Some genuine readers naturally forgot details. Others read digitally rather than using physical

books, making visual verification difficult. Therefore, relying solely on physical evidence was insufficient and potentially unfair.

Problems Caused by AI-Generated Summaries

Superficial Reading Culture

One major problem associated with AI summaries is the development of superficial reading habits. Students may prioritize assignment completion rather than genuine intellectual engagement. Instead of experiencing the narrative gradually, learners consume condensed information without emotional or linguistic immersion.

Extensive Reading aims to expose learners to repeated vocabulary patterns, grammatical structures, and contextual meaning. AI summaries eliminate much of this exposure because they compress hundreds of pages into a few paragraphs. In the table below the problems and possible solutions are given with descriptions.

Table 1

Problems Caused by AI-Generated Summaries	**Possible Solutions**
Superficial Reading Culture	**Process-Based Assessment**
Reduced Vocabulary Acquisition	**Spontaneous Oral Interaction**
Weak Emotional Engagement	**Annotated Reading**
Difficulty Assessing Authentic Learning	• **Reading Conferences** • **Personalized Response Tasks**
Ethical Ambiguity	• **Combining Written and Oral Assessment** • **Teaching Ethical AI Use**

Reduced Vocabulary Acquisition

Vocabulary development occurs through repeated encounters with words in meaningful contexts. When students depend on summaries, they lose opportunities to observe how words function naturally within dialogues, descriptions, and narration.

As Nation (2009) explains, incidental vocabulary acquisition requires large quantities of comprehensible input. Summaries cannot replicate this process effectively.

Weak Emotional Engagement

Reading literature involves emotional interaction with characters and events. Students develop empathy, imagination, and interpretive thinking through sustained reading experiences. AI summaries provide information but rarely reproduce emotional depth.

Students who genuinely read novels often discuss personal frustrations, excitement, sadness, or attachment toward characters. Those relying solely on summaries frequently demonstrate limited emotional investment.

Difficulty Assessing Authentic Learning

Teachers face increasing uncertainty regarding assessment reliability. Traditional book reports and summaries no longer guarantee authentic reading behavior. Since AI can produce coherent responses instantly, product-based assignments alone become inadequate.

Ethical Ambiguity

Another challenge concerns the ethical boundaries of AI use. Some students do not perceive AI assistance as cheating. They view AI as a learning support tool

similar to dictionaries or translation software. Consequently, teachers must establish clearer expectations regarding acceptable and unacceptable AI use.

Possible Solutions

Process-Based Assessment

One of the most effective solutions is shifting from product-based assessment to process-based assessment. Instead of evaluating only final summaries, teachers should observe reading behavior throughout the entire project.

Possible methods include:

- weekly reading logs;
- vocabulary journals;
- personal reflection diaries;
- chapter reaction notes;
- reading timelines;
- teacher-student conferences.

These activities make it more difficult to fabricate participation retroactively.

Spontaneous Oral Interaction

Unprepared oral discussion remains one of the strongest indicators of authentic reading. Teachers can ask individualized and unpredictable questions requiring personal interpretation rather than memorized summaries.

For example:

- Which character resembles someone you know?
- Which event felt unrealistic?
- What would you change in the ending?
- Which chapter was hardest to understand?
- Which quotation stayed in your memory?

Students who genuinely read texts usually respond with hesitation, emotion, and specificity. AI-dependent learners often provide abstract or overly generalized answers.

Annotated Reading

Encouraging students to annotate texts can strengthen accountability and engagement. Teachers may ask learners to:

- highlight unfamiliar vocabulary;
- mark favorite quotations;
- write reactions in margins;
- identify confusing passages;
- record emotional responses.

Annotations provide evidence of active reading and support deeper comprehension.

Reading Conferences

Short individual conferences between teachers and students can improve assessment validity significantly. During these meetings, teachers discuss reading experiences informally rather than conducting formal examinations.

This approach reduces anxiety while allowing teachers to observe authenticity through natural conversation.

Combining Written and Oral Assessment

Relying on only one assessment format increases vulnerability to AI misuse. A balanced system integrating written reflection, oral discussion, and classroom participation offers a more accurate picture of student engagement.

Teaching Ethical AI Use

Completely banning AI may be unrealistic. Instead, educators should teach responsible AI usage. Students can learn that AI may support comprehension, vocabulary clarification, or discussion preparation, but it should not replace the reading process itself.

Teachers may establish policies such as:

- AI can assist vocabulary explanation;
- AI may summarize difficult chapters after reading;
- AI-generated text must be acknowledged;
- personal interpretation remains mandatory.

This approach promotes digital literacy while protecting academic integrity.

Personalized Response Tasks

Assignments requiring personal experience and emotional reflection are harder to fabricate convincingly.

Examples include:

- writing letters to characters;
- comparing events to personal experiences;
- discussing favorite scenes;
- describing reading difficulties;
- creating alternative endings.

Because these tasks emphasize individuality, they reduce dependence on generic AI summaries.

Discussion

The integration of AI into educational environments requires a fundamental reconsideration of assessment practices. Extensive Reading remains highly valuable for EFL learners despite emerging technological challenges. However, teachers can no longer assume that completed summaries represent authentic reading.

The classroom experience described in this article demonstrates that traditional verification methods are increasingly insufficient. At the same time, purely punitive approaches may damage student motivation and trust.

Instead of focusing exclusively on detecting dishonesty, educators should design learning environments where authentic participation becomes more meaningful and rewarding than shortcut solutions.

The shift toward process-based assessment aligns naturally with the philosophy of Extensive Reading itself. ER is not intended to produce perfect memorization. Its primary purpose is long-term language exposure, reading enjoyment, and learner autonomy.

Therefore, assessment should prioritize:

- engagement;
- reflection;
- interaction;
- consistency;
- personal growth.

Importantly, educators must also acknowledge that AI is becoming an unavoidable part of academic life. Students will continue using digital tools regardless of institutional resistance. Consequently, language teachers should focus on helping learners use technology ethically and critically.

Rather than asking, “How can we completely prevent AI use?” a more productive question may be, “How can we design reading activities that still require authentic human engagement?”

Conclusion

Extensive Reading continues to play an essential role in EFL education by improving vocabulary acquisition, reading fluency, motivation, and learner autonomy. The two-month ER project described in this article demonstrated clear

positive outcomes, as students successfully engaged with stories, novellas, and novels according to their proficiency levels.

Nevertheless, the rise of AI-generated summaries introduced significant challenges regarding academic integrity and authentic assessment. Teachers increasingly struggle to determine whether students genuinely read assigned texts or relied primarily on AI tools.

Classroom observations revealed that physical interaction with books, spontaneous oral questioning, annotations, and personalized discussion can help identify authentic reading behavior. However, no single method guarantees perfect verification.

The article argues that educators should move toward process-based assessment systems combining oral interaction, reflective tasks, annotation practices, and individualized feedback. At the same time, students should receive guidance regarding ethical AI use rather than simplistic prohibition.

Ultimately, the future of Extensive Reading depends not on rejecting technology, but on preserving meaningful human engagement with literature. Reading is more than information retrieval; it is a cognitive, emotional, and linguistic experience that cannot be fully replaced by artificial summaries.

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