Social Influences on West Australian Adolescents’ Recreational Book Reading

Margaret Merga under supervision of Dr Brian Moon, Mrs Barbara Harris and Dr Jan Gray
National Year of Reading

• “…outside health and housing, encouraging a child to read and keeping them reading is arguably the single most important thing that can be done to influence positive outcomes in young people’s lives – socially, culturally, educationally and economically (ABS, 2012)”
Why Recreational Book Reading is Important

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Reading Minutes Per Day</th>
<th>Words read per year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>4,358,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>1,823,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>282,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>8,000</td>
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</tbody>
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(Cunningham and Stanovich, 2001)
Australia

• Enjoyment of recreational reading
• 45% of primary students
• 24% of secondary school students
• No other pleasure activity registered such a decrease in enjoyment post-puberty (*Nieuwenhuizen, 2001*)

• Aliteracy
Symbolic Interactionism

Family

Teachers

Adolescents’
Attitudes toward
RBR

Friends and Peer Group

Media and Popular Culture

Social Model- Attitudes arising from social experiences and interactions
Baumrind’s Configural Approach to Parental Authority (CAPA)

Styles: Authoritarian, Authoritative, Permissive, Rejecting/Neglecting

- **Demandingness** + **Responsiveness** = **Authoritative Parent and Teacher**
Optimal conditions for fostering avid readers?

- Encouragement/Support (Responsiveness)
- Expectations/Surveillance (Demandingness)
- Access
- Modelling
Research seeks to explore...

- Frequency and volume
- Current attitudes
- Impact of parents, English teachers, friends and peer group
- Changes in school policy and practice implied by the findings?
Methodology

• Mixed method- Explanatory Design (Creswell and Clark, 2007).
• Primarily quantitative survey
• Qualitative semi-structured interviews
• Differences important
• Currently in data collection phase
Feedback or questions?

Interested in your school participating?

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