Reading Engagement: Understanding the Reading Habits in Adolescents.

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Introduction

Over the previous two decades, adolescent reading habits have shifted considerably, with social networking sites, text messages, song lyrics, websites, and fiction novels dominating leisure reading time (Clark & Teravainen, 2017). As a result, adolescents are more likely to read digitally and typically report weaker attitudes towards reading (McGeown, 2020). Therefore, it is crucial to determine how adolescents can be engaged in the twenty-first century as reading habits evolve. Birr Moje et al. (2008) emphasised the importance of acknowledging adolescents' unique reading habits and the diverse experiences they can provide. Research conducted by Clark and Osborne, (2008) highlighted the significance of reading engagement and its association with enhanced reading ability, academic success, and education. However, the primary theoretical assumption appears to be that reading should be done via a book (McGeown, 2020). Although technology is heavily promoted as a means of encouraging adolescents to read more widely, Howard (2006) explained how parents frequently favour print-based reading, particularly novels, over electronic reading and limit their children's access to computers, comic books, and magazines. According to Mansor et al. (2012), while parents can nurture and retain reading passion, shared interests tend to be a stronger motivator.

Positive peer influence may be crucial to overcoming the "reading reluctance" difficulty in adolescents, as the prevailing reading perspective appears to shift dramatically from primary to secondary school students (Mansor et al., 2012). Primary school pupils evaluate readers as "happy" and capable of "doing well," whereas secondary school students describe readers as "geeky" and "boring" (Clark & Osborne, 2008). According to Sellers (2019), an individual's preference for reading is determined by the cultural

norms and customs of their peer groups. Clark and Teravainen (2017) explained how demonstrating a favourable attitude towards reading and participating in reading activities increases the chances of being a "good reader". Kirsch et al. (2002) demonstrated how giving adolescents a choice in what they want to read makes them more likely to read on their own, devote more time to leisure reading, and read a variety of materials, including both print and online sources.

Intervention

To expand our understanding and assess the multiple environmental factors that contribute to addressing low levels of reading engagement in adolescents, Bronfenbrenner's (1975) framework was utilised to identify interventions that can be targeted at different levels of the ecological system. Within the Microsystem (Immediate Environment), teachers require additional support to overcome ICT barriers, which could be included in their own continuing professional development. Staff can build up systems to share knowledge of useful websites, blogs, emails, and articles that students can access in and outside of the classroom. Teachers can create curriculum-related reading lists and design reading assignments based on their students' interests, making reading more accessible and engaging.

Furthermore, within the Microsystem, parents play an important role in fostering a reading-friendly environment, providing a variety of resources, and aiding adolescents in incorporating reading time into their daily routines. In addition, peers should be encouraged to help build a reading culture in their groups, as adolescents are more likely to participate when they witness others doing so. Reading in a group can help adolescents discover shared interests, reduce social isolation, and boost their

motivation to engage in reading activities. Moreover, providing a range of reading materials might help decrease self-image concerns, such as reading on a tablet rather than a book.

A collaboration between parents and teachers within the Mesosystem (interactions between microsystems) must be fostered further to ensure consistency in the development of reading habits. Teachers can reassure parents that the resources their children are utilising are both safe and beneficial to their child's reading development. Within the Exosystem (Indirect Environment), schools must guarantee that they have adequate resources to deliver a well-rounded reading curriculum. The Macrosystem (cultural context) emphasises reading as a key ability for personal and academic success. It is also critical to select reading materials that reflect the cultural backgrounds of adolescents, ensuring that the literature reflects a wide range of perspectives and experiences.

In the Chronosystem (Changes Over Time), technology integration should include digital reading options and interactive platforms for adolescents. Finally, during the Bioecological Transition (Individual Development), it is important to identify and meet the individual's reading needs. Additional assistance should be provided to those facing obstacles, such as resources for those who may not be able to afford them outside of School.

Potential risk factors that may impede or reduce adolescents' reading engagement include lack of access or limited access to resources. Furthermore, the Education System may place much emphasis on standardised testing, therefore contributing to

a decline in adolescents' reading interest. However, to enhance and support reading engagement protective factors include School initiatives that promote a creative culture, providing engaging and diverse reading materials, and implementing reading programs or initiatives can enhance adolescents' interest in reading. Moreover, integration of technology in a positive way such as incorporating interactive e-books or using other digital platforms that encourage reading can align with adolescents' interests and enhance their reading experience.

Conclusion

The intervention to enhance adolescents' reading engagement involves parents, teachers, peers, and the larger community. To make reading more relevant and pleasurable for adolescents, specialised techniques must address their individual needs and interests. Broadening our understanding of reading is a priority, as most research emphasises the value of book reading above other forms of texts for increasing reading skills. Identifying a greater range of techniques to help adolescents identify as readers could be a first step towards increasing book reading. Providing adolescents with a variety of reading options will encourage them to build their own identities as readers, resulting in a reading culture and atmosphere that supports all students' identification as readers. Further research surrounding adolescents' engagement in reading including the use of digital technologies and other digital platforms could lead to a better understanding of how adolescents choose to read and how it makes them feel. Furthermore, it can help raise awareness to support adolescents understand how their reading habits may change over time.

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