

Adolescents' reading skills, motivation and reading habits

A summary for teachers

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Background: Adolescents' reading skills play a crucial role in their educational success as most curriculum subjects use text based materials for study. Understanding the relative importance of their reading motivation and reading habits on their reading skills is therefore important.

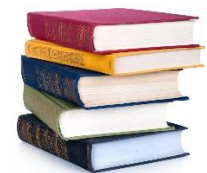
Aim: The study examined the extent to which adolescents' reading affect (reading motivation) and behaviour (reading habits) predict different aspects of reading (word reading, comprehension, summarisation and text reading speed). Sex, age and reading skill differences were also examined

Participants and details of study: 312 adolescents (aged 11-16) from 31 schools across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland participated in this study. Adolescents all completed the York Assessment for Reading Comprehension (YARC) which assesses word reading, comprehension, summarisation skills and reading speed. Following this, they completed a questionnaire to assess their reading motivation (confidence and value) and reading habits (time spent reading extended traditional texts (fiction books, factual books and school textbook), short traditional texts (magazine, comic, newspaper, song lyrics, instructions/manual, poetry) and short digital texts (text messages/email, social networking site, computer game, factual website, Twitter).

Main results:

Reading motivation and fiction book reading were significant predictors of adolescents' reading comprehension and summarisation skills (after accounting for word reading and text reading speed). Other text types were not.

Girls and good readers reported greater reading motivation and more fiction book reading compared to boys and poor readers. In addition, older readers reported spending more time reading school books, short traditional texts and short digital texts.



Discussion and educational implications:

These research results suggest it is worthwhile identifying ways to boost adolescents' reading motivation and engagement in fiction book reading, as a route towards improving reading attainment.

Not all forms of print exposure were equally associated with reading skill; while fiction book reading was associated with reading abilities, other text types were not. It would be interesting to examine the skills that are being developed by different texts, as adolescents' reading habits reflected a shift towards more time spent engaging in digital texts than more traditional texts.

Academic paper: McGeown, S. P., Duncan, L. G., Griffiths, Y., & Stothard, S. E. (2015). Exploring the relationship between adolescents' reading skills, reading motivation and reading habits. *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 28, 545-569.