

Understanding why children choose to read different text types

A summary for teachers

Background & Aims

Children engage daily in a wide range of reading activities; yet we have very little understanding, from their perspective, of why they choose to read different text types. Children's reading motivation drives their reading choices (McGeown et al., 2015) therefore understanding more about motivators for reading is important.

Aim: To understand why children choose to read different text types (e.g., books, magazines, comics etc).

Methods

Participants

33 children aged 9-11 and 30 adolescents aged 15-16 from one primary school and one secondary school in the UK.

Procedure

Students were interviewed individually, by an adult researcher or one of their peers, to understand their breadth of reading activities and why they read different text types. A data-driven inductive thematic analysis approach was used to analyse interview content.

Qualitative Insights

Children read books to feel calm, relaxed, entertained, happy and excited. Children also read for immersion and escapism and to spend time with familiar fictional friends/worlds. Less common responses included reading to learn, to challenge themselves, develop their reading skills, because it was social, important to do, a habit/routine or they would read a book to comply or receive a reward.

Children read other text types (magazines, newspapers, comics, audiobooks, etc) primarily for other reasons, for example, to learn, to support their interests, if bored, to stay informed, for fun, because they were more exciting/interesting or easier.

Discussion & Implications for Education

Understanding what and why children choose to read, and the depth and range of experiences children can have when reading is crucial for teachers to create a reading culture and environment that supports all children. Indeed, even within a single classroom, children often have very diverse reading experiences. It is useful for teachers to learn more about children's motivations for reading, to fully understand what may prompt or encourage children to read, and to help children find books to suit them.

To access our website: go to <https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/literacylab/> or scan the QR code



Academic paper

McGeown, S., Bonsall, J., Andries, V., Howarth, D., & Wilkinson, K. (2020). Understanding reading motivation across different text types: Qualitative insights from children. *Journal of Research in Reading*.



**Growing Up
A Reader**

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