

STUDY REPORT

ON

LIBRARY & READING

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Part 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Human society has been seeking for better literacy all the way along its history. It is almost taken for granted that reading, being the main source of information, is extremely important to literacy. Modern researches also provide evidence to support this belief.
- 1.2 As the civilization advances, many other sources of information appear, such as radio, TV and, most recently, computer. Their role played in literacy is controversial, but it is clear-cut that as the strong rivals, they are replacing the role of books.
- 1.3 In the United States, number of literary readers has declined by 10% from 1982 to 2002. To lose such intellectual capability in literature would constitute a vast cultural impoverishment. This social trend pushes reading promotion to the front line.
- 1.4 In this study, we have reviewed reading promotion programs in the U.K, the U.S and Hong Kong which can be categorized into five types:
 - 1.4.1 **Reading Partnership.** Reading partnership concentrates on paired readings. A reading partner who can be their parents, schoolmates, or volunteers will accompany children to read under this program.
 - 1.4.2 **Reading Club.** Reading clubs are formed to provide children with a place to meet new friends and share with them what he/she learned from readings.
 - 1.4.3 **Book Talks.** It stimulates readers' interests by introducing them the merit of reading. Book talks can be conducted in a variety of settings, such as libraries, schools and communities, where guest speakers can be either the authors or popular social figures.
 - 1.4.4 **Best Book List.** Many institutions recommend good books to readers in the form of best books lists. It helps to widen readers' knowledge and interest in reading.
 - 1.4.5 **Reading Championship.** Reading championship promotes reading by holding a competition and rewarding the winners with prizes.
- 1.5 Some relevant researches and reports about literacy were studied. The main findings are:
 - 1.5.1 Boys are born weaker readers than girls and are more attracted by non-fiction books.
 - 1.5.2 Reading is the most effective way to help children of deprived families break out of poverty cycle.
 - 1.5.3 Proper use of the Information and Communication Technology by teacher will raise students' literacy level.
 - 1.5.4 Promoting reading for pleasure is more important than simply promoting reading.
- 1.6 Some recommendations for possible reading promotion programs in China are made:
 - 1.6.1 Local schools could hold reading partnership programs between student and their parents and between juniors and seniors.
 - 1.6.2 Reading Clubs could be held by local libraries, schools and Ju Wei Hui (Community Committee).
 - 1.6.3 Local institutions could hold book talks, inviting book authors to give lectures about their books.
 - 1.6.4 Classroom libraries should be set up properly.
 - 1.6.5 Reading Championship, which is promoted by intermedia such as TV, could be held.
 - 1.6.6 Special reading promotion programs for boys should be designed.

Part 2 Reading Programs

Reading is more important today than it ever was — it is crucial to being an informed citizen, to succeed in one's chosen career, and to personal fulfillment. Children who read well do better in other subjects and in all aspects of schooling and beyond. As the world becomes more complex, reading is increasingly important for children trying to find their place in it. The more students read, the better their vocabulary, their ability to read, and their knowledge of the world. Giving students the opportunity to choose from a wide selection of reading materials in their favorite genres and topics develops the “wonder and joy of reading that can only be derived from reading”. Especially reading for pleasure is key to life-long development (Fletcher & Lyon, 1998).

http://www.scholastic.com/schoolage/experts/learning/9_12_impofreading.htm

<http://www.edupaperback.org/impact.pdf>

<http://www.gateslibrary.org/link02/link%202-27-02.htm>

http://clinton4.nara.gov/WH/EOP/First_Lady/html/generalspeeches/1999/19990318.html

1 Reading Partnership

Introduction

Reading partnership concentrates on paired readings. A reading partner who can be their parents, their schoolmates, or some social volunteers will accompany children under this program.

1.1.1 Case 1a: Reading Program for Children and Youth from Hong Kong Public Library

http://www.hkpl.gov.hk/05activities/5_4reading.html

Introduction:

Conducted by HKPL, the program encourages the children to read by pairing them with their parents. Parents are playing a significant role in the program since they act as both a partner and a monitor.

Objective

This program seeks to stimulate the interest of children and youth in reading, to develop their reading habits, to widen their scope of reading and knowledge, to enhance their ability in language usage and to encourage parents' active participation in paired reading.

Program details

- Member joining the family category is encouraged to read books in paired with the parents.
- Member will be given a record book once he/she joined the program in order to record the books read, book reports submitted and books recommended. All records would be recognized by a stamp from Hong Kong Public Libraries or school libraries.
- At the end of the year, member will be given a merit certificate to certify the number of books read within the period; member will also be awarded a 'gold' certificate if he/she has read 100 books or above; the top 50 members who have read the most number of books will be presented prizes ; the most active participating school / organization (with the accumulated numbers of books read by nominated members) will also be presented a plaque.

1.1.2 Case 1b: Family of Readers from UK

<http://www.rif.org/what/familyofreaders/default.aspx>

Introduction

Family of Readers is a family reading program that currently serves over 75,000 children and their parents across the country, focusing on educationally at-risk children, from birth through elementary school, and their families.

Family of Readers helps parents develop the skills and self-assurance to take a leading role in supporting their children's reading and learning while their children learn to love books.

Objectives

This program improves family reading habits and enhances the time that families spend sharing books with their young children. And specifically, it promotes parents' confidence in themselves as participants in their children's education; and it fosters supportive relationships among parents who face similar challenges.

Program Details

Over the course of the program, parents learn about children's books and participate in skills workshops on such topics as how to read aloud to children. Parents will then be asked to apply these newly acquired skills to the planning and execution of a RIF program. Working on committees, and with limited guidance from a staff advisor, parents select and order children's books for free distribution, recruit other parents, and plan reading motivation activities for their children.

1.1.3 Case 2 Books on the Menu

<http://www.rif.org/what/menu/default.aspx>

Introduction

Books on the Menu presents upbeat, fun activities based on research into what best motivates children to read and to learn in a mentoring relationship with their high grade schoolmates.

Objectives:

This program seeks to increase reading motivation at two critical junctures: at the stage when young children are beginning to read, and when older children are expected to be proficient readers.

Program details

- Organized within the school
- High grade students mentor lower grade students
- High grade students help to select the books, accompany reading and conduct discussion

Impact

- Increase the amount of time children spend reading and talking about books.
- Promote helping relationships between older and younger children.
- Increase the confidence and self-esteem of older children.
- Promote collegiality among upper-grade and primary-grade teachers.
- Make reading a highly visible activity in the school.

1.1.4 Case 3 Volunteer Reading Help

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/socialinclusion/youngpeople/Time>

Introduction

Volunteer Reading Help (VRH) is a national charity which trains and supports volunteers to work one-to-one with children and help them with their self-esteem and confidence through the medium of reading.

Program details

The volunteer works with up to three children in two half-hour sessions per week, which as well as reading involve discussion, games, chatting and other activities. The sessions take place in school but in an area away from the classroom. Each volunteer is provided with a box of specially chosen books and games, which are changed regularly to suit the needs and interests of the child. The children are encouraged to take the lead in choosing the books or activities for the session: there is no set scheme or reading age target, and the child and volunteer work at their own pace. The aim is to improve the child's confidence, social skills and attendance and participation in class, to engender a love of reading and to break down inter-generational barriers. And the volunteers are police checked and their training includes how a child learns to read, motivational techniques, child protection and equal opportunities. They are supported by VRH field workers and other staff, and benefit from ongoing training, book exchange meetings, end of term meetings and other events. Volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds, reflecting the communities and children with whom they work.

Evaluation by empirical evidence

The children's class teacher is asked to complete an annual survey about the pupils on the scheme. According to the 2002 survey, 83% of children supported by VRH showed an improvement in reading performance, 79% showed an improvement in self confidence and 74% showed an improvement in general motivation. Qualitative evidence from teachers and volunteers also points to the children's increased confidence, enthusiasm, attention span and social skills. Additionally, on many occasions parents of children on the scheme have approached the school to ask for help with their own literacy, as their child's growing skills have highlighted their own limitations. They have then gone on to brush up their skills, receive guidance on how to help their child or attend adult literacy classes. Meanwhile, some volunteers have gone on to get involved in wider community activity.

1.2 Reading Clubs

Introduction

Reading clubs are formed to provide children a place to meet new friends and share with them what he/she learned from readings.

1.2.1 Case 1: Teen's Reading Program from Hong Kong Public Library

http://www.hkpl.gov.hk/05activities/5_readingclub_intro.htm

Introduction:

Teen's reading program is co-organized by Hong Kong Public Library and Hong Kong Education City Organization for Web Discussion. It hosts a series of regular meeting, to provide readers a place to share their readings.

Objective

This program seeks to promote reading among youth and encourage them to become lifelong readers and learners as well as to care for their community through reading, thinking, sharing and discussion.

Details

- Through the discussion on a wide spectrum of topics to arouse members' reading interest. Other than books, reading materials may include multi-media materials.
- Members have to attend regular meetings (Each meeting will last for one and a half hour).
- The quota for each reading club is limited to 30 members.
- Organized by Hong Kong Public Library and Hong Kong Education City Organization for Web Discussion.
- Target Audience: Primary 4 to Secondary 4 students who are Hong Kong Public Libraries' registered patrons.

1.2.2 Case 2 Chatterbooks from UK

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/campaign/libraries.html#Chatterbooks>

Introduction

Chatterbooks is the first nationally coordinated reading group scheme for children. Many Library Authorities nationwide have signed up to the scheme, a national network made possible by the partnership of Orange and The Reading Agency.

Objectives

The scheme embraces four to twelve year olds, encouraging them to read adventurously, share their enthusiasm about books and develop the confidence to formulate and express opinions about reading

Program details

The program is conducted as a group bases. Group sessions give children the opportunity to interact positively and develop their confidence as readers, by increasing the time they spend reading and sharing books.

Evaluation by empirical statistics

- 100% of groups said that children were reading more widely, for example after a year in the Brixton Chatterbooks group, the number of children reading 3 books per week had increased from 17% to 49%
- " 91% of the groups said that belonging to Chatterbooks had increased children's confidence and self-esteem
- 3000 children are currently involved in the program

1.2.3 Other related cases

TRG (Teenage Reading Group) Put the letters TRG up around the school to get the students guessing what it means, and invite them along to library for the launch event to find out. Be mysterious, don't explain until they attend the event, and advertise the fact that there will be food and drink. Try to get a local personality to attend if you can. Contact your local public library for help.

Boyzone Close the library to girls one lunchtime a week and have a boys club. Do the same another day for the girls!

Graffix Set up a graphic novels group. Enlist the art department (and the drama department?) to help create a new graphic novel. Make copies (use the IT department?) and put them in the library.

Harry Potter appreciation society/ Lord of the Rings appreciation society/ any other book of the moment appreciation society. Set one up! Theme activities round the book, and try including a 'Loved Harry? Try this!' slot into proceedings.

1.3. Book talks

Introduction:

Book talk is a world widely used reading promoting tool. It stimulates readers' interests by introducing them the merit of reading. Book talks can be conducted by a variety of organizations, such as libraries, schools and communities and the speech given person can be either the authors or popular social figures.

1.3.1 Case 1: Book talks from library of University of Hong Kong

Introduction:

HKU's reading club sponsors a series of book talks featuring leading members of Hong Kong intellectual community. The leading figures from a various background are invited to give a talk features different topics.

Objectives:

HKU's reading club is created with a mission to promote the cultural and intellectual life of Hong Kong and especially the students and faculties in the universities.

Program details:

- The program is held every other Thursday
- Languages varies from Cantonese, English to Mandarin
- Students are encouraged by giving the priority to reserve a seat
- Some sample topics are as following:
 - 1) Feeling the Stones: Reminiscences by David Akers-Jones by
Speaker Sir David Akers-Jones 鍾逸傑爵士
 - 2) Living Islam: from Samarkand to Stornoway / Akbar S. Ahmed by
Speaker: Sir T. L. Yang 楊鐵樑爵士
 - 3) Modern History of Hong Kong; 1841-1997 by Speaker: Dr Steve Tsang 曾銳生博士

(http://lib.hku.hk/friends/reading_club/index.html)

1.4. Best Books list

Introduction:

Various institutions give out the best books lists. And it selects a best books list with the recommendation by certain people under its own procedure. The books on the list are usually the influential ones and reflect various social aspects.

1.4.1 Case 1 Ten recommended books by Hong Kong public library

http://www.hkpl.gov.hk/chi/05activities/5_goodbooks2004.htm

Objective

Ten recommended books aims at promoting reading among the community through celebrities' recommendations. It shares its mission with all the Hong Kong society: "A good book is the best of friends, the same today and forever."

Program details:

- Jointly presented by the Hong Kong public library and the Radio Television Hong Kong
- Held at a yearly bases
- Recommended by distinguished residents and celebrities

1.4.2 Other related cases:

Book of the week Have a recommendation by a tutor group in reception. Make copies of the book available to borrow from reception as well as the library. Get the students to give presentations about the chosen book, video them and show the result on a loop in reception or the library. Display newspaper book reviews as well.

Book lists Get children in each year group to put together a list of their favourite books to give to parents as a guide to help them help their child. In secondaries, every subject area could supplement these book lists with suggestions for books that parents could borrow in order to help their children with their studies

Reading lists Get all departments to create reading lists in conjunction with the librarian to support topics studied in that subject. These could be a mixture of fun books related to the topic (*Horrible Histories* and so on), biographies, reference books and magazines.

1. 5. Reading championship

Introduction:

Reading championship promotes reading by holding a competition and rewarding the winners certain prizes.

1.5.1 Case 1: Running Start from US

<http://www.rif.org/what/runningstart/default.aspx>

Introduction

Running Start is a reading motivation program for first graders and their families. The program builds on the promise of first grade, a special time when children are excited, parents are involved, and hopes and expectations are high for a child's future success.

Objectives:

- Generate excitement about reading by immersing children in books over a concentrated period of time.
- Enhance partnerships among home, school, and community.

- Enlist and encourage parents to play active roles in their children's education, especially reading.
- Create and enrich a climate that supports reading throughout the school.
- Support teachers and offer them opportunities to work together toward shared goals.
- Engage the entire community in a positive upbeat program with demonstrated educational benefits.
- Attract positive media attention to the school and to the importance of children's education and reading.

Program details:

Running Start challenges first graders to read 21 books in eight to ten weeks. The Running Start challenge isn't just for the kids: it also challenges teachers, school volunteers, and especially parents to give children a burst of ambition at a crucial stage in their development as readers. With this challenge, Running Start meets first-graders' needs for tangible signs of achievement and encouragement from their parents, teachers, and communities.

Evaluation

Running Start has now reached more than 400,000 children and their parents, schools, and communities in all 50 states.

A principal investigator from the National Reading Research Center of the University of Maryland concluded that "The Running Start program is an effective model of how to make a positive impact on the literacy of young children. The success of the program in motivating children and their families to engage in reading activities has clear implications for the development of programs that link the school and the home in nurturing literacy development. Running Start has a dramatic effect on family literacy practices."

1.5.2 Case 2: Reading Champions from UK

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/campaign/champions.html>

Introduction:

Reading Champions celebrates the existing work of boys and men who are promoting reading to others.

Objective:

The program promotes the spirit of spreading reading further, and it also gives people instructions on how to do it by setting the role models.

Program details:

A Reading Champion is really any man or boy who has been able to inspire others with their enthusiasm for reading. Below are some examples:

- A male pupil or teacher that helps in the school library

- Prisoners who help their friends with reading and writing
- A co-ordinator or participants in a school reading week
- Dads, grandads, family friends or brothers who help children with their reading.
- Male adult basic skills tutors who encourage other men to learn new skills
- A male teacher who runs a reading club
- Men or boys who participate in a reading buddy scheme
- Male storytellers or performers
- Male reading volunteers working in schools

The winner will be invited to the annual award ceremony celebrating some of the year's outstanding Champions.

1.6 Classroom Library

In one large-scale study (Neuman, 1999), classroom libraries with high-quality books were placed in over 350 schools to enhance the language and literacy environment of 18,000 economically disadvantaged children. Findings revealed that with books in close proximity to classroom activity:

- Time spent reading increased by 60% compared to a control group
- Literacy-related activities more than doubled, from an average of 4 interactions per hour to 8.5 interactions per hour
- Letter knowledge, phonemic awareness, concepts of print and writing, and narrative competence rose 20% more than the control group after a year, followed by continued gains 6 months and 12 months later.

And characteristics of a good classroom library are following:

- 300 to 600 books
- Wide range of reading difficulty
- Variety of genres
- New books with appealing covers
- Attractive, inviting setting
- Permanent “core” collection and regularly replenished “revolving” collection

<http://www.edupaperback.org/impact.pdf>

1.7 Other reading promotion programs

Reading map Put up a map of the world and stick pins in it relating recommended reads to different countries or areas.

Kids Picks Make cards, on the model of the Books etc 'staff picks' cards and stick them under the recommended book in the library. Books need to be face-out of course! Make posters with excerpts of the cards - the quirkier the better.

Get Caught Reading Give students disposable or digital cameras and ask them to photograph staff (teaching and non teaching) reading a book/newspaper/magazine. Blow these up to poster size and put a caption underneath that explains why the person has

chosen that particular read ('I love this book. It...') Put the posters up all over school. Photograph the students too, and allow them to be captured reading magazines or comics, as well as books.

Post-a-read Get students and staff to send a postcard to the school during the summer holidays stating what they are reading. Use these to make a display at the beginning of the autumn term.

Reading Teachers Ask every member of staff to place their current reading material (book, magazine, newspaper) on their desk each day to show students that they are readers. Hopefully, this will generate some discussions about reading choices. If the books or magazines are not suitable for younger readers, staff could always have a favourite children's book or one they are reading to their children.

Treasure Hunt Send groups of students on a treasure hunt to find out the favourite reads (not just books) of ten members of staff (include lunchtime supervisors, school keepers/caretakers and support staff). The first group to gather ten favourite reads wins a prize.

Part 3 Research

2.1. Importance of Reading for Pleasure

Some insights from research are:

- People learn to read by reading. Skill building is important, but without practice putting all the skills together, learning is slowed down. Quantity and intensity matter.
- Frequent practice reading for longer periods of time pays off in fluency and ability to use skills automatically.
- Increasing competence is motivating and increased motivation leads to more reading. When students can see their own progress, they want to read more.
- Pleasure reading has cognitive benefits. It improves skill and strategy use, builds fluency, enlarges vocabulary, and builds a student's knowledge of the world.
- An in-class focus on outside reading can help students to read more outside of class. When tutors and teachers set aside time for pleasure reading as part of their instruction time, students are more likely to read for pleasure on their own.

http://www.scpdcweb.org/news/reading_pleasure.htm

2.2. Sex Differences in Reading and Literacy

Boys lag behind girls in reading and literacy worldwide. The gap is especially obvious in reading fiction. Boys tend to read non-fiction rather than fiction. The myth that teachers are more likely to identify boys as poor readers than girls is not simply discrimination or bias against boys. Researches prove that reading is somehow harder for boys. Meanwhile boys seems to be at stakes to accept the passive judgment towards their reading capability, tries to disguise their low status as readers and as a result they spend less time reading. The above findings from researches suggest that there are some fundamental psychological differences between genders in reading, so we should have separate strategies prepared for boys and girls.

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Research/boysresearch.html#harder>

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Database/Intupdate.html#Girls>

2.3. Children's Attitude towards reading

We could conclude from the researches

- The kids from impoverished background tend to have worse reading attitudes that are likely to involve them into a downward poverty cycle.
- Boys have a worse attitude than girls to reading.

- Boys are attracted more in non-fiction books.
- Peer recommendation is most powerful to motivate kids to read.
- Boys are heavily influenced by film adaptations of books.
- Comedy writing can turn on least-reading kids.

<http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Database/stats/WBD2002.html>

<http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Database/stats/readchild.html#Young>

2.4. Social Inclusion and Reading

Social inclusion and equality is, to some extent, relying on whether we could provide those socially disadvantaged with the opportunities by which they could overcome their favored position. A love of reading is more important for children's academic success than their family's wealth and class. Also as the research revealed, providing access to books is an effective to foster the love of books. So we could say that providing books for the socially disadvantaged kids and helping them cultivate reading habits is the most effective way to help them.

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Research/libresearch3.html>

2.5. TV and Reading

A general that couldn't live without TV has already formed. As the human civilization advances, there are always new generations forming, from the generation of non-books in the pre-Naissance era to the generation of radios in 1930s. We, human society, have experienced both the advance in literacy and the increase of sources of getting literacy. Are TV and books bound to be enemies? They may be of the same importance towards literacy. Culture Secretary of the U.K, Tessa Jowell, pointed out in the January of 2004: "I believe that in the modern world media literacy will become as important a skill as maths or science. Decoding our media will be as important to our lives as citizens as understanding great literature is to our cultural lives." So why not just team up with TV to promote reading and literacy?

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Database/TV.html#constant>

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Database/TV.html#minister>

2.6. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Reading

Researches suggest that integration of ICT into teachers' practices raise students' attainment in almost all subjects, particularly regarding mathematics and English at all key stages. Meanwhile, properly used networked ICT at library also get readers back to libraries. But ICT should be properly used by teachers rather than by students to raise the literacy standard.

When using ICT tools like computer solely alone, kids tend to be addicted and decline in mathematical, reading and language skills and concentration level.

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Research/libresearch3.html>

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/database/ICTpress.html#researchshows>

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Research/ICTreviews.html#education>

2.7. Cultural Trend and Reading

Under the climate of fast-food culture, getting rich or famous over night metamorphoses from a dream into something touchable. It is the case in China, America and Britain. Shows like “Bachelor”, “Swan” or “American Idol” flushed into people’s daily life and seduce kids away from their books. So falling of reading is, in this sense, partially due to a social change. Thus reading promotion should cooperate with other social sectors as a systematic project.

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Database/TV.html#Becks-style>

2.8. Overall Evaluation of Reading Promoting in the U.K

The promoting reading programs in the U.K did improve kids’ literacy ability, but it doesn’t seem to be effective to stimulate kids’ implicit interest, which is key to the life-long learning. It may be due to the fact that the programs are not effective to foster the “reading for pleasure” atmosphere in the society. In contrast, Finland, where the children are ranked No. 1 readers, has a great climate of reading for fun.

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Database/Intupdate.html#Finnish>

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Research/libresearch3.html>

Part 4 Recommendations

3.1. The basic facts about students' life in China

In primary and junior high school, students have some personal spaces to develop their own interests. In this phase, schools usually have a lot of “interest groups” or so-called “interest clubs”. Once they enter senior high schools (except for vocational high schools), they face great pressure from college entrance examinations. Students, together with their teachers and parents, devote most of their energy and time into preparation for the examinations.

Due to the “one family one child” policy, parents tend to invest great a lot in their only child. They tend to guide and influence their child as much as possible. The strategy to influence parents is very effective to influence the child indirectly.

Moreover, as the decentralization of the power and urbanization proceed, the communities in china are forming and so is the community life. There are more and more non-governmental community committees to meet the increasing demand for community activities.

3.2. Recommendations for the appropriate reading promotion programs

3.2.1. Reading Partnership with Parents

This program involves parents, which builds on the high expectations of their children and great enthusiasm for the education radiated from Chinese parents. If such programs could be successful in the U.K and the U.S, I see no doubt that this program is going to be very successful in China. But the program is recommended to be conducted only in primary and junior high schools where the pressure of college entrance examinations is not overwhelming. So far as we know, there are not many such programs in China.

3.2.2. Reading Partnership with Schoolmates

A mentorship between higher-grade students and lower-grade students can be established within school. It is also gauged to be effective in China, because in such an oriental society, where the society has much stricter hierarchies, the higher-grade students have a higher influence over the lower graders and they are also put upon greater expectations from their mentees. So the same rationale as the above, if such programs have been proved effective, I see no doubt that it is going to be successful in China. It is also suggested that the program be promoted only in primary and junior high schools. We have never heard of any schools in China, which is holding such programs.

3.2.3. Reading Clubs

Researches have found peer recommendations are most effective, so reading clubs are recommended. Reading Clubs can be held by a variety of institutions in China, such as public libraries, schools and Ju Wei Hui (Community Committee). If it is held in schools, primary schools and junior high schools are preferable. ICT is advised to be used in the school reading clubs to be more effective as the researches have suggested. Community Committees, both governmental and non-governmental, are good hosts for reading clubs, as there is great demand for spare time activities in the new-built communities. Some schools have already been holding such clubs, but rarely do public libraries and community committees.

3.2.4. Book Talks

Bookstores, public libraries and schools can hold this program. There are always some celebrity writers giving talks at bookstore while promoting their new books. The reaction is usually very good. Schools can try to invite the authors of appropriate books to campus, and if the school doesn't have such resources, a book talks by popular teachers will also be good. My school used to hold such talks quite often and it was always crowded with students.

3.2.5. Classroom Libraries

As the researches revealed that access to abundant books is important to reading, classroom libraries are advised to be set up. Many schools in china lack the resources to provide students with the access and the proximity to books. Setting up classroom libraries is very helpful. The classroom libraries should be set up according to the following principles:

- 300 to 600 books
- Wide range of reading difficulty
- Variety of genres
- New books with appealing covers
- Attractive, inviting setting
- Permanent “core” collection and regularly replenished “revolving” collection

3.2.6. Reading Championship

This program could be held at various scales. It could be held by the local government with a vast involvement by local institutions, or it could be held by and within a school. It is suggested that the winner be made public and promoted.

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<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Database/libraryres.html>

<http://www.openingthebook.com/otb2003.asp>

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/database/Mori.html#choices>

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/database/schoollib.html>

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/campaign/libraries.html#Webstories>

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Readingconnects/libraries.html#northwest>

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/campaign/lordoftherings.html>

http://www.scpdcweb.org/news/reading_pleasure.htm

http://www.scholastic.com/schoolage/experts/learning/9_12_impofreading.htm

<http://www.edupaperback.org/impact.pdf>

<http://www.gateslibrary.org/link02/link%202-27-02.htm>

http://clinton4.nara.gov/WH/EOP/First_Lady/html/generalspeeches/1999/19990318.html

Good practice – schools

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Readingconnects/schools.html#djanogly>

Good practice - public libraries working with secondary schools

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Readingconnects/libraries.html>

Ideas for getting the whole school reading

http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Readingconnects/rc_ideas.html

Projects encouraging reading for pleasure

<http://www.readon.org.uk/campaign/targets1.html>

Reading Initiatives - Young people

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/campaign/youth.html#Leeds>

Reading initiatives - Men and Boys

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/campaign/menandboys.html#walsalllibraries>

Regional reading promotion involving libraries

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/campaign/librariesregional.html#Young>

Reading Promotion in the U.S

<http://www.loc.gov/loc/cfbook/projects.html>

Research on secondary schools and literacy

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Research/secondaryindex.html#Press>

Part 6 Appendices

Appendix 1

Promoting Reading in UK

Ideas for getting the whole school reading

Ideas 1: Raising the profile of reading

Reading map Put up a map of the world and stick pins in it relating recommended reads to different countries or areas.

Kids Picks Make cards, on the model of the Books etc 'staff picks' cards and stick them under the recommended book in the library. Books need to be face-out of course! Make posters with excerpts of the cards - the quirkier the better.

Get Caught Reading Give students disposable or digital cameras and ask them to photograph staff (teaching and non teaching) reading a book/newspaper/magazine. Blow these up to poster size and put a caption underneath that explains why the person has chosen that particular read ('I love this book. It...') Put the posters up all over school. Photograph the students too, and allow them to be captured reading magazines or comics, as well as books.

Screen savers of recommended reads. Recommend comics, graphic novels, magazines and non-fiction as well as fiction - challenge the expectations of students. Enlist the help of IT technicians to tailor the suggestions to the typical users of each computer, by location. Put book reviews or book bites on the school website or use the school intranet to promote good reads. Use websites that promote reading.

Reading Teachers Ask every member of staff to place their current reading material (book, magazine, newspaper) on their desk each day to show students that they are readers. Hopefully, this will generate some discussions about reading choices. If the books or magazines are not suitable for younger readers, staff could always have a favourite children's book or one they are reading to their children.

Post-a-read Get students and staff to send a postcard to the school during the summer holidays stating what they are reading. Use these to make a display at the beginning of the autumn term.

Book of the week Have a recommendation by a tutor group in reception. Make copies of the book available to borrow from reception as well as the library. Get the students to give presentations about the chosen book, video them and show the result on a loop in reception or the library. Display newspaper book reviews as well.

Treasure Hunt Send groups of students on a treasure hunt to find out the favourite reads (not just books) of ten members of staff (include lunchtime supervisors, school keepers/caretakers and support staff). The first group to gather ten favourite reads wins a prize.

Ideas 2: Reading groups

Crafts club Build on the success of the 'free binder with part one' series of craft magazines by setting up a craft/art activity group (based on the interests of the children), using books and magazines from the library.

TRG (Teenage Reading Group) Put the letters TRG up around the school to get the students guessing what it means, and invite them along to library for the launch event to find out. Be mysterious, don't explain until they attend the event, and advertise the fact that there will be food and drink. Try to get a local personality to attend if you can. Contact your local public library for help.

Boyzone Close the library to girls one lunchtime a week and have a boys club. Do the same another day for the girls!

Graffix Set up a graphic novels group. Enlist the art department (and the drama department?) to help create a new graphic novel. Make copies (use the IT department?) and put them in the library.

Harry Potter appreciation society/ Lord of the Rings appreciation society/ any other book of the moment appreciation society. Set one up! Theme activities round the book, and try including a 'Loved Harry? Try this!' slot into proceedings.

Challenges Set up an able readers group.

Staff book group Set one up, offer wine or other bribes and get them talking!

Case Studies

12/2003) Malet Lambert School, Hull

Reading Project: Rap Lyrics As part of a Pioneer scheme not related to the curriculum, Tom Palmer worked with a group of ten boys over the course of three sessions. The first session focused on football and reading, with the other two looking at rap lyrics. The sessions had some very good outcomes in terms of encouraging positive contributions from the students and engaging them in the use of the written and spoken word.

To find out more [read Tom Palmer's account of the sessions](#) (pdf).
Click on the icon to get Acrobat Reader to view PDF files.

The Great Tea Race Malet Lambert School also holds the Great Tea Race every year.

(01/2002) Cramlington Community High School, Northumberland

Pupils here can take part in a range of exciting reading-related activities including Games Workshop club sessions, storytelling, Boox and Youthboox activity and proofreading for publishers and authors. The learning resource centre also co-ordinates award shadowing and judging, curriculum support, reading groups and website reviewing. Contact Eileen Armstrong on earmstrong@cchs.northumbria.sch.uk Read an article about the school, written by Eileen Armstrong

(03/2003) The BRIT School, Croydon: The BRIT School, a Performing Arts and Technology School, uses its expertise in drama, dance, music, puppetry and other forms of the performing arts and media to transform literacy and perceptions of reading in the school. As part of a literacy focus, students took part in the Treasure project, based on *Bambert's Book of Missing Stories*, taking stories from around the world and creating performances based on each country. On the day of the Treasure performances over 120 balloons were released with stories written by the students enabling people from around the country to discover new stories; messages were received back from Norfolk, Hertfordshire and Grimsby.

In addition, the performing arts and media departments work closely with the English staff. The school held events over the summer including OPEN BOOK at the Fairfield Halls Croydon and the Queen Elisabeth Hall on the South Bank, and a series of performances at the school based on autobiography to get students interested in reading about the stories of people's lives. The school are very keen to perform for other schools, or to discuss their cross-curricular approach to literacy and reading. For more information contact either Stuart Worden sworden@brit.croydon.sch.uk or Elaine Nelson enelson@brit.croydon.sch.uk or call 020 8665 5242.

(08/2003) Norbury Manor High School for Girls, Norbury

The school has worked hard to promote reading under the direction of the English Department. A book group has been set up with a grant of £500 from the school funds, enabling £200 worth of new teenage fiction to be bought, as well as allowing for refreshments and a budget for events. The book club was launched on World Book Day alongside a visit from a local author and a competition for Year 7s to design a new book. In addition, a 'Get Caught Reading' poster campaign went up around the school to coincide with World Book Day. By holding the book club at lunchtime and keeping the atmosphere informal, there has been a great deal of success in attracting the 'hard-to reach'. For more information contact Margaret Reeve on 020 8679 0062 ext 242.

[Top](#)

Ideas 3: Reading volunteers and role models

Real Men Read Use photographs of men on the staff and from the local community reading, with quotes about what they read and why. Include photographs of boys from the school to create a display for a 'real men read' promotion. Feature books in the library particularly aimed at boys/men, including non-fiction. Titles like *High Fidelity* and *Fever Pitch* are particularly good - ask your local librarian for ideas.

Adult volunteers Bring in people from the local community to help struggling readers - it sends the message that reading is important outside school too, as well as boosting readers' confidence. Contact Volunteer Reading Help on 0207 729 4087 or Reading Matters for Life 01274 692219 for help and advice in going about this. Find out about other organisations that can help with volunteering.

Reading buddies Train older students to become reading buddies for the younger ones. Contact ROWA! on 01629 585603 or visit www.rowa.co.uk See also the Kirklees buddy reading scheme. Read a case study about an extension of the buddying idea.

Babysitting box Put together a range of titles that older students can borrow if they are babysitting - this encourages them to read to babies and toddlers, as well as younger children, and might encourage them to do some nostalgia reading themselves by taking away any potential stigma in borrowing picture books.

Reading Champions Ask local people to come into the school to talk to students about what they read and why. Ask non-teaching staff to do the same. Don't forget to add them to your 'Get Caught Reading' poster collection. Encourage male role models by nominating them as Reading Champions - visit the National Reading Campaign site.

Storytelling Book a storyteller or an author. See the RIF list for ideas. Join forces with another local school, feeder primaries or your local library to cut costs.

Lunchtime reads Why not ask your lunchtime supervisors and cooks to come up with a week of reading-related food and suggestions for things to read while children eat? Storytapes work well and lots of picture books like *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and *Eat Your Peas* focus on foods.

Case Studies

(05/2003) Joseph Rowntree School, York: An 11-18 mixed comprehensive, Joseph Rowntree has had great success with its paired reading scheme, where students in year 12 or 13 become reading mentors or buddies for year 7 students. All students who take part in the summer literacy school get a mentor to whom they are introduced during the summer school; all other year 7 students complete a reading age test and those with a reading age of below 10 are also given a buddy. Sixth form students receive a full day of training including case studies, information about how we learn to read and strategies for supporting struggling readers, using phonic and grammatical clues. On average, the year 7 students gain between 6 months and a year in reading age, and the sixth form are able

to put their voluntary work into their Personal Development Plans. At the end of the year there is a very popular lunch in the Sixth Form Common Room, although this year it will be held in Borders in York. The school has received a New Futures Award from Barclays as a result of the scheme. For more information, contact Cayte Mulhern on 01904 768107 or at catherine.mulhern@josephrowntree.york.sch.uk

(01/2004) Norwood Achievement Partnership, Norwood, London Norwood Achievement Partnership (NAP) is an EAZ centred around Norwood School (a girls' comprehensive). NAP has set up many schemes aimed at developing reading which include:

- **Reading Mentors** - struggling Year 9 readers were trained in the mechanics of teaching a Year 1 pupil to read (sight vocabulary, phonic, choice of picture books and so on). These 'experts' then worked in primary schools to mentor Year 1 pupils. On average, the girls' reading ages increased by 12 months in 20 weeks.
- **Independent Reading Mentors** - as a voluntary follow-up to the Reading Mentors, girls were encouraged to find a mentee from their local community with a lower reading age. The mentors and mentees were then supported through breakfast clubs and after-school clubs as well as through accessible materials, pizza and storytellers. Students made an average reading age gain of 11 months over six months.
- **Reading Buddies** - more able year 10 students supported less able year 7 students.
- **Cross phase reading partnerships** - Norwood School Learning Resource Centre set up a mini SLS to support primaries, including consultation services, topic boxes, visits to the Centre, event coordination and professional development for teachers (including NQTs). In addition a 'Torchlight' club was set up for more able readers from feeder primaries.

Reading partnerships with the local community - two partnerships were set up with Dulwich College (a public school) and Streatham Police Station. Police officers and sixth formers mentored year 5 boys to raise self esteem and raise literacy levels. These were both very successful schemes and helped to develop community relations.

For more information, contact ljshepherd@norwood-secondary.lambeth.sch.uk

Ideas 4: School systems

Induction Invite new pupils and their parents to a welcome reception in the library with food and drink. Negotiate a discount with a local bookshop for parents new to the school. Ask parents what activities they would like to participate in - think creatively about these. Families may come in for fun activities but not for a 'literacy class'.

Reading weblog Set up students' reading records as weblogs instead of paper diaries. See www.blogger.com for how to start using this free software.

'Privilege passes' Offer these to keen readers get in order to allow them to read in any subject area once they've completed their work. This must be approved by all staff.

School librarians Very few primary schools have trained librarians, so why not get Schools Library Services or public librarians to train pupil librarians?

Reading lists Get all departments to create reading lists in conjunction with the librarian to support topics studied in that subject. These could be a mixture of fun books related to the topic (*Horrible Histories* and so on), biographies, reference books and magazines.

Parents' evenings Make books available at parents evenings to encourage book borrowing. Use this as an opportunity to encourage parents to join the library.

Reading room Make a reading room available for whole-school use, separate from the library. Make it comfortable and stylish!

Wider reading Encourage all students to love reading by offering them as wide a selection of reading materials as possible. Make sure that students have access to magazines about topics that interest them, newspapers and comics.

Library hub Make sure that the library is the reading hub of the school. Hold rolling registrations for all year groups in the library, parents' evenings and staff meetings, as a way of encouraging everyone to use the library.

Diaries Include pages for noting down books students like as well as honest responses to other books they have read.

Case Studies

(01/2002) St Ninian's High School in East Renfrewshire's Reading Passport scheme is giving first and second year pupils the chance to travel to new levels of enjoyment through reading. Each year 7 pupil receives a passport which they complete by reading and reviewing a variety of books. On completion they are awarded a book and can start a new passport. In year 8 the scheme evolves slightly to introduce an element of competition between classes and the chance to win prizes such as class karaoke nights and video sessions. Pupils say they find the scheme fun and it has been particularly successful in encouraging reluctant readers. Similar schemes have been adopted by other schools in the area. Contact D Noble on 0141 577 2000 or nobled@stninians.ercsch.org.uk

(11/2000) The Wakeman School, Shropshire: The Wakeman School set up a Reading Across the Curriculum Working Group to raise the profile of reading. The group shares a profound belief in the importance of reading. It has got to be a real choice for every child. The headteacher chairs the group which has representatives from most areas but no area is press ganged into membership; everyone is participating because of their enthusiasm for the initiative.

Work done by the group includes:

- planning in-service training surveying boys' and girls' reading. The results were analysed and, as a result, library lessons became more focused through the introduction of reading diaries. There was a greater emphasis on non-fiction texts as a way of encouraging boys to get into the reading habit.
- surveying the reading demands of each curriculum area
- An example of the type of question posed is: To enjoy science at the highest level what kind of reading skills are necessary to take this interest forward and sustain it?
- Once the group had established what reading skills were needed, the next question was. Where is this taught? This process established that some of what was required was not being taught anywhere.

The school also established a National Year of Reading group to celebrate reading Half the group consisted of teachers the other half being support staff. Involving all staff gave a very clear message about reading to the pupils - and some of the school's most avid readers turned out to be the support staff. One caretaker's enthusiasm for sport led to an excellent input from a local outdoor activity shop.

Other activities included:

- speakers on the literacy of their area
- parents talking about reading
- regular displays including books chosen by pupils
- assemblies when staff have presented books that have been significant to them
- reading days when every lesson starts with a short extract from a book
- every department identifying one unit of work per year in which they promote literacy or teach an aspect of reading; this could include research, note taking, or encouragement to read round the topic
- children being interviewed about their attitudes to reading
- a regular reading time every day to make a public statement about the importance of reading (this provides some boys with an excuse to be seen reading in case they feel it lacks street cred).

(11/2001)St George Community School (Bristol): St George Community School's three-year Literacy Improvement Project started with Year 8 pupils, giving them a new subject called 'achievement'. Teaching groups were small and set according to ability with the least able groups working on phonics and spelling and the more able on more demanding comprehension, grammar and writing tasks. All of the groups read silently every week as part of the programme. The school also aimed to create a reading culture through the use of reading volunteers who heard children read for 10 minutes each week, with support from the Reading Is Fundamental programme which provides books for the pupils to take home and keep. After the first year, test results showed a marked improvement in reading and spelling.

Ideas 5: School library

Library top ten Create a display of the ten most requested books (like the top ten singles in a record store), and read out the weekly 'chart positions' in assembly.

Library 'bookshop' Rearrange the library to make it more like a bookshop - put together themed spinners (for example, chick lit or biographers) or get old dump bins from a local bookshop, create book tables and put signs on them, for example, 'Into magic? Wizard books to cast a spell on you!'

Returns trolley Put a big sign on the returns trolley saying 'Hot titles.' Peer pressure can sometimes be a good thing.

Book buyers Invite students to join a book selection committee for the library. Recruit members by asking students if they want to spend money (put a sum to it).

Media bags Put together bags on various topics such as a local football team or mountain biking, including videos, magazines, newspaper articles, quizzes or word searches and, of course, books.

Marketing campaign Why not take advantage of the post SATs period to encourage Year 6 students to create a poster campaign to advertise the school library? Budding ICT wizards could also create screensavers of Year 6 recommended reads, and persuasive writing techniques could be employed to create a library flier.

Take the library out of the library Take a selection of books to the lunch queue, the playground, the reception area. Get library helpers to record which books are borrowed.

Parent borrowers Extend membership of the school library to include parents. In addition, keep information about how to join the local library and set up a programme of events in the school library

Themed displays Put these up in the library and elsewhere around school and aim them at different years and sexes. For example, do one based on Euro 2004 or the Olympics with competitions running in parallel with displays.

Intercom Have weekly announcements of best book bite and student choices. Link this to the library top ten and read it out once a week with the traditional top forty music in the background (The Top of the Pops music is a riff from Whole Lot of Love by Led Zeppelin).

Magazines Buy magazines for the library, and set up a lending system for them.

The 10% rule CILIP (the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) guidelines suggest that school libraries should replace 10% of their stock annually to make sure texts are up-to-date and in good condition. You could donate the unwanted stock to a local charity shop or combine it with a cake sale and sell it off, or donate it to [Book Aid International](#)

Case Studies

(11/2001) Hillside School, Hertfordshire: Hillside School, Hertfordshire, has a proactive approach to encouraging reluctant readers. Imaginative book displays around a theme, a returns trolley which gives the message 'other people like these books' and a collection on the same trolley of graphic novels to attract the less keen boys, all encourage book borrowings.

(01/2003) Shenfield High School, Essex: Shenfield High School in Essex targeted lower ability year 7 boys with book bags, designed to stimulate their interest in reading. Each bag was themed (for example, football, vampires, skateboarding) and contained a fiction book, a non-fiction book, a magazine and a wordsearch. Support from parents was encouraged and a reading award scheme was included. To back up the use of the bags, the school site manager gave a talk to the boys about his favourite hobby - reading. For more information contact amanda.rosewell@btinternet.com

(03/2003) The Romsey School, Hampshire: The Romsey School encourages use of the library by setting book quizzes with prizes, collecting recommended reads from library users and creating displays with these, as well as using this information to inform stock buying. The library uses bookshop display techniques with themed tables of books and book reviews from magazines and newspapers displayed alongside recently published books. Having surveyed students the school has updated its magazine subscriptions, and stocks newspapers in the library. The school has also used photos of members of staff, such as the PE Department, with their favourite books and a caption explaining why they chose it, as a poster campaign to encourage everyone in the school to get reading. Contact Fiona Hardy or Fiona Crowther on 01794 512334 for more details.

Ideas 6: Involving parents

Pamper evening Hold a pamper evening for parents in the library, with the help of trainees from a local beauty college, have a book reading, and show parents around the library. Get them to join the library too. For the dads, ask a local sports person to attend the event and do a sport-related reading. Football clubs are particularly good at supporting the work of the local community.

Parents' room Set up a parents' room in the school where there is always a member of staff at a particular time and day available to talk to parents informally - you could use this as a basis for setting up family learning workshops where parents can make books and other resources to use with their child.

Dads' day Recent DfES research suggests that dads see the word 'parent' as referring to mothers in a school context, so they need to be invited in specially. Hold a Dads' fun day and get the children to invite in Dads and other male relatives /carers. Children could write invitations and make a book about their 'dads in school' day.

Book lists Get children in each year group to put together a list of their favourite books to give to parents as a guide to help them help their child. In secondaries, every subject area could supplement these book lists with suggestions for books that parents could borrow in order to help their children with their studies

Newspaper club Ask dads to run a Friday morning breakfast club with plenty of tabloids available. Open the canteen and offer free breakfasts for attending dads

Case Studies

(05/2004) Charles Dickens Primary School, Borough Charles Dickens places parental involvement at the heart of its work to create a learning community. This work begins at the induction meeting where parents are made aware of the value the school places on their involvement in their child's education. At these meetings, dual language materials are passed on where necessary and parents are invited to workshops. The workshops are held at a regular time each week and focus on literacy skills to help parents access their child's learning through resources which are made and shared. Resources the parents make include puppets, story props, counting resources and story tapes. The coordinators believe that the success of the workshops lies in the consultation process which was used to decide what activities to set up, and the fact that this two-way interaction with the parents is on-going. The workshops offer parents regular, informal contact with teachers and allow them to develop a relationship with the school and a role in their child's learning. In addition to the parents' workshops, the school has a Timebank for parents, holds coffee mornings and an annual 'Asian Day' to encourage participation from Asian families. They hope to host a 'Dads in School' day soon.

To find out more contact Florence Bankole or Helen Groothues at the school on 020 7407 1769. View a PowerPoint presentation about Charles Dickens's family literacy work. (pdf)

(01/2003) The City School, Sheffield: City School is an 11-16 mixed community school with 1290 pupils. The school has been running their own parent literacy support classes for several years, as well as working with Reading Matters for Life volunteers. Parents are recruited to the courses in a number of ways - through year 7 parents evenings, where names, numbers and signatures are sought and later followed up with telephone calls, and through Learn Direct and other IT course for parents, utilising City School's CTC status. Money to fund the Reading Matters parents' course has been found from the Basic Skills Agency's Keeping Up with the Children family literacy budget. Parents who attend the courses are offered places at a crèche, run by year 11 key skills students.

In addition, the school has a Harry Potter club, holds debates about books, offers creative writing prizes, participates in Carnegie showing and has newspapers delivered to classrooms. [Reading Matters for Life in Sheffield](#) - a longer case study.

(08/2003) Summerville Primary School, Salford: As part of a BUPA funded project, BUPA staff came to the school to perform a 'makeover' on an underused and tatty classroom in the school, transforming it into a library. It was decided that the new library

would have a parents' corner, and the [First Choice](#) collection of books was purchased as stock for parents. (See [ideas section 6](#)). The school is a '[SHARE](#)' school (a [CEDC](#) sponsored family learning project) and the SHARE parents take responsibility for cataloguing the books, maintaining them and monitoring their use as well as compiling their own top ten list. In addition, school staff are being encouraged to donate unwanted books to the library. Each week a book of the week is recommended by parents or staff and the books read are discussed at the SHARE group. For Family Learning Weekend in October the school plans to hold a 'Design a Smoothie' event where parents and children will be given fruit and vegetables to design their own smoothie. All participants will receive a book token, and the recipes will be compiled into a book to be sold to raise funds for the library.

(07/2004) Four Dwellings High School: Family learning at Four Dwellings High School has grown from one literacy programme in 2001 to two family literacy programmes, two family numeracy programmes and one family ICT programme. One member of staff from each department is involved in family learning and departments have now time-tabled five lessons a week for family literacy. The team works hard to get parents into the school, making sure they have answers for problems that may occur such as transport or childcare (funding allows them to provide taxis and a crèche). Phonecalls or visits offer effective ways of encouraging parents to attend an initial meeting about support, and this meeting is usually successful in persuading parents to return. The school has a dedicated area which parents can make use of at anytime during the day. In addition, parents can gain nationally recognised qualifications in areas such as construction and hair and beauty, due to on-site facilities.

Since the programme's inception parents have set up a magazine which they run themselves and which is distributed through the school. Parents and children go on a number of visits, including a visit to a bookshop where they receive book tokens to spend. The coordinators believe the scheme is one of the most sustainable things the school has done. It achieves visible results amongst the children: often there is a rise in reading age, and even if children do not make big gains in reading, the programme effects a positive change to their family situation.

For more information contact Christine Smith, Zone Family Learning Co-ordinator smithc@fourdwellings.bham.sch.uk or call 0121 422 0131

Ideas 7: Primary/secondary transfer activities

Reading legacy

Get years 7 and 8 to put together a list of books they would recommend for students coming into the year they are just leaving. Year 8 could come to year 7 lessons to present their book lists (they could be detailed with reviews, illustrations and comments, or simple using just titles and a star rating), while year 7 could send their lists to feeder primaries or go on visits.

Postcards from the gap (between primary and secondary)

Visit feeder primaries and hand out postcards addressed to the secondary school for students to fill in and send to school over the summer, telling their new form teacher what they are reading. Maximise success by putting second class stamps on them if the budget will allow. Form teachers can then use these to create a display as a quick way of 'personalising' the classroom to make nervous new year 7s feel at home.

Parent Power

Parents are more likely to be interested in the school when their child is just moving into secondary. Use this interest to enrol parents on 'Keeping up with the Kids' literacy classes, computer literacy classes or encourage them to volunteer to get involved in the life of the school.

Visits

Plan a series of visits to feeder primaries to promote reading

Reading Buddies

Train older pupils to support students who need extra help to reach level four in their reading.

Reading personalities

Create a template for pupils from feeder primaries to write about the type of readers they are. A grid listing different types of fiction and non-fiction with space for examples could be used. Once collated by the secondary school into form groups, new year 8 students could work alongside the librarian to put together book boxes for the new year 7s based on their reading preferences.

Pub quiz

Hold a pub style quiz about books and reading (or have a section in the quiz on books) in the library, and invite parents of new/prospective parents. You could charge a nominal fee for entry and raise funds for the library. Persuade local businesses to donate prizes such as a pair of cinema tickets.

Good practice - public libraries working with secondary schools

Collaboration between the Newcastle Eagles basketball team and Gateshead LEA

Collaboration between the Newcastle Eagles basketball team and Gateshead LEA was repeated for a second year in 2000 thanks to the enthusiasm of everyone involved. The National Year of Reading-funded Get Reading project brought together players and children from eight secondary schools in Gateshead in a series of visits to school assemblies, a passport scheme of activities and a celebration event at the last game of the Eagles' season in front of a crowd of 6,500. Posters were distributed throughout the

borough and children were invited to bring their parents to matches on discounted tickets.

The Youthbox programme

Youthbox, the pioneering partnership between library development agency Well Worth Reading (now The Reading Agency) and the National Youth Agency, received further funding to develop its programme. Aimed at disaffected groups of young people aged 13 - 19, the initiative brings together librarians and youth workers in order to explore what 'hooks' teenagers into reading. Good practice has been disseminated through resource packs called The Reading Kit, which are useful for work in schools. New funding from the DCMS/Wolfson Public Libraries Challenge Fund allowed Youthbox to pursue three main objectives: to embed at policy level the benefits of this collaboration; to disseminate best practice regionally and nationally through further publications and training; and to develop further models of innovative reader development work in partnership with libraries in Sheffield, Norfolk, North Lincolnshire and Coventry. Contact 0116 285 3787. For copies of The Reading Kit, contact sales on 0116 285 3704.

Background on the Boox for Us project and its development as Youthbox

Providing starter libraries in residential homes for looked-after children

Several local authorities are hoping to take forward work with reading promotion for children in care initiated through Right to Read, a collaboration between the Who Cares? Trust and the National Literacy Association. Funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, this worked with five local authorities to ensure that teenagers in residential care had better access to books and an appealing space in which to read them. Foster carers and residential workers were offered advice on how to choose and use books with children to maximise their enjoyment and the teenagers were encouraged to celebrate their reading achievements. The NLA is building on this work through initiatives in Kent and Hounslow as well as running roadshows for care professionals around the country. The Right to Read report (downloadable free) and Breaking their fall: the video (£35, with comprehensive notes and ten copies of Breaking their fall: the magazine) provide practical advice on supporting the literacy development of looked after children. Contact 020 7251 3117 or sales@thewhocarestrust.org.uk.

Bury's Curriculum and Language Access Service (CLAS) supports Year 9 pupils in storywriting in their mother tongues The Curriculum and Language Access Service in Bury ran a NYR-funded Community Book Project involving Year 9 Students. Pupils in two secondary schools were encouraged to work with their families to produce stories reflecting their cultures and home experiences. These were then translated and produced

as attractive dual-language publications to be shared with primary school children. This provides an effective model for sharing stories between cultures and generations.

North West Surrey Libraries encourage teenagers to use libraries with their Teenage Toolkit

In 2000, North West Surrey Libraries produced a Teenage Toolkit as a way of focusing attention on ways to encourage teenagers to use libraries. Based on experience gained from putting together teenage collections in Woking and Frimley Green libraries, including tips on siting, stock and promotions.

London library services launch Reading Remix Teenage Reading Project

The library services of the London boroughs of Bexley, Bromley, Croydon, Greenwich, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark, in cooperation with the London Libraries Development Agency, were awarded DCMS/Wolfson 2001 funding (£133,883) to run the Reading Remix Teenage Reading Project. Between September 2001 and September 2002, teenagers in all seven boroughs helped to create new teenage reading groups which will meet monthly and share the newest and best books and magazines for (and chosen by) 11 to 15-year-olds. There was also the opportunity to meet authors, illustrators and poets, contribute to a website for teenage reviewers and guide the development of library services for their peers.

St Ninian's High School in East Renfrewshire's Reading Passport scheme, started in 2002, gives first and second year pupils the chance to travel to new levels of enjoyment through reading. Each year 7 pupil receives a passport which they complete by reading and reviewing a variety of books. On completion they are awarded a book and can start a new passport. In year 8 the scheme evolves slightly to introduce an element of competition between classes and the chance to win prizes such as class karaoke nights and video sessions. Pupils say they find the scheme fun and it has been particularly successful in encouraging reluctant readers. Similar schemes have been adopted by other schools in the area.

Kent & Medway County Councils's Moving Words - it's a Reading Thing! a scheme started in 2002 which aimed to promote live literature with the long-term aim of changing - or even creating - reading habits. Funded by the Arts Council's New Audiences Fund, the project took 15-20 year olds as one of their major target groups, staging workshops in four very different youth centres. These involved writers Victoria Worsley, Ros Barber and Nick Toczec talking to the young people and 'hooking' them into discussions about reading through a range of methods such as magic tricks, storytelling or simply asking questions about their reading habits. An evaluation report on the project is available. Contact the Arts Team at Medway Council on 01634 332871. Medway public libraries also support

secondary schools by working with the education department, giving talks, helping with book weeks, and doing multicultural storytelling.

Norfolk Library and Information Service and Schools Library Service in 2002 worked with year 8 classes in ten local secondary schools to come up with a Top Twenty collection of titles. Ranging from contemporary novels and Horrible Histories titles to poetry and graphic novels, the Lightning Strikes collection was purchased and displayed in the schools involved and on the teenage shelves of every library in the country. Consultation revealed that teenagers were quite prepared to pick up titles for younger age groups as 'comfort reading' and that libraries needed to be flexible in their expectations.

Word on the Street run by East Riding of Yorkshire Libraries, which began as a DCMS/Wolfson project in 2000, was extended in 2002 to target 11- 16 year olds with the aim of challenging their stereotypical view of libraries and books. Effective partnerships were made with local secondary schools and youth centres in Beverley and Hessle in order to consult with young people and involve them in stock selection, creation of a website (www.wordontheweb.org.uk) and library-based activities. These have included rap workshops, a Point Horror Drama Day, creative songwriting, model making and graphic novels sessions. Library membership among this age group has increased by 12.2% and anecdotal evidence suggests that attitudes are changing, with previously committed non-library users regularly attending homework club sessions and even working on the counter.

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Readingconnects/libraries.html>

Other Reading Promotion by Libraries

Reading Partners: Linking publishers and libraries, Reading Partners, is a Reading Agency initiative, seeking to build stronger links between publishers and libraries. Tom Palmer, who has worked in both sectors, is coordinating the initiative. Tom will be working closely with libraries and the publishers in the Reading Partners Consortium - Faber, Harlequin, HarperCollins, Penguin and Random House. For more information contact tom.palmer@readingagency.org.uk

Their Reading Futures is a three year programme which aims to take public libraries' work with children to a new level. It will redefine, support and refresh reader development work with young people, strengthening and enhancing children's services and improving equality of access.

The project is co-ordinated by The Reading Agency in partnership with the Association of Schools, Children's and Education Librarians, The Society of Chief Librarians, The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, the Youth Libraries Group, Books for Students & The Arts Council of England, Literature Department. During its first

year from 2001-02, Their Reading Futures was funded by the DCMS/Wolfson Public Libraries Challenge Fund.

There are several strands to the initiative:

- A national advocacy campaign which will celebrate existing strengths, highlighting and promoting the unique way that public libraries work to create the best possible reading experience for everyone. It will emphasise to policy makers and potential partners and funders the value and importance of children's libraries.
- A practical audit framework, available on a new Reading Futures website, will help library managers and practitioners to plan reader development activities with children and to measure how successful these are.
- Practical support will be provided through a series of training days to cover advocacy, the audit framework and practical reader development. Additionally, there will be on-line training for all front-line library staff working with children.
- Practical tools will be provided through the new website, alongside information on and materials for related projects such as Chatterbooks and the Summer Reading Challenge.

Contact Tricia Kings on 01736 332228 or tricia.kings@readingagency.org.uk or see www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk

Stories from the Web

DCMS/Wolfson funding in 2000 enabled a library partnership of Birmingham, Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, Croydon, Essex, Kent, Leeds, Norfolk, Suffolk, UKOLN, University of Bath, Walsall to launch Stories from the Web. This is a website designed to stimulate the imagination and reading development of children and young people, encouraging them to explore, read and enjoy stories in a national geographically distributed, collaborative public library, networked environment. The website provides a rich environment, accessible to all, in which children can interact with stories, in libraries, at home and at school. Through weekly clubs held in each partner authority, children were guided through learning programmes, giving them the opportunity to meet & interact with authors and publishers, develop reading, writing & computer literacy skills, communicate with each other using a range of web technologies and take part in reading events e.g. 'Reading Razzamatazz'. The project aimed to encourage their development as readers, increase their own skills and confidence and enhance children and parents use of their library services. Library Staff were trained to support reader development using ICT & conventional literature promotion methods.

Their reading futures - mapping reader development activities

LaunchPad, the reader development agency for children, was awarded DCMS/Wolfson 2001 funds (£137,100) to run Their Reading Futures, a programme that mapped and shared good practice in public libraries' reader development work with children. The programme aimed to avoid duplication in the research, planning and development of projects, as well as training front-line staff in working with children and their families

and constructing a framework for self-evaluation.
Contact 01604 236236.

Branching Out's 'Mind's Eye' promotion

Supported by the DCMS/Wolfson Public Libraries Challenge Fund in 2000/01, 'Mind's Eye' was the first national reader-centred promotion for non-fiction. It used approaches developed from fiction promotion in libraries which start from the reader and the experience of reading, rather than the author, genre or title. The goal was to explode the image of non-fiction readers as 'narrowly focused' and 'traditional' and redefine them as adventurous, demanding and up for a challenge. 'Mind's Eye' aimed to provide the ideal books and tools for meeting that challenge. Five pilot authorities used the Mind's Eye books and displays as a focus for widening their contact with non-fiction readers. The authorities are Blackburn, Bristol, Portsmouth, Staffordshire and Southwark. Reader development agency Opening the Book Ltd managed 'Mind's Eye' for the Public Libraries Group. For more information see www.reader-development.com/mindseye/

Branching Out

Branching Out is an initiative to reach readers through libraries, now in its sixth year. It is managed by the Society of Chief Librarians in partnership with Opening the Book and funded by Arts Council England. The 2003-2006 programme offers the opportunity to participate to all English authorities and to cascade the benefits of the first three-year programme from the original 33 to the other 116 authorities. More information on www.branching-out.net, the website for everyone involved in reader development. Estyn Allan is the parallel programme involving all 22 authorities in Wales and supported by an Arts for All grant from the Arts Council in Wales.

Lending Time libraries and volunteering pilot project

Lending Time is a project developed by Community Service Volunteers in partnership with six library authorities - Bournemouth, Gateshead, Kent, Knowsley, Merton and Staffordshire. Over three years from early in 2002 - and with funding from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Home Office Active Community Unit - the pilot schemes will aim to demonstrate how volunteers can strengthen and enrich library services for library staff, users and local communities. The project is being managed by CSV Consulting.

The key objectives of the project are to help public libraries to create new volunteering objectives, particularly for older volunteers, to develop and sustain levels of involvement in public libraries, and to build the capacity of libraries to involve volunteers. Project manager have been appointed in each of the participating areas to work alongside existing library staff to develop and expand volunteer programmes, as appropriate to each location to extend and augment services. It is intended that the projects are sustainable and that they develop the capacity to continue beyond the initial funding period of the pilot project.

For more information, contact Lending Time project director, CSV on 020 7643 1351.

Asda's The Big Read (National Year of Reading 1998 - 1999)

The Big Read, an initiative from LaunchPad, a libraries promotion agency, involved 227 Asda supermarkets. Storytellers, librarians and specially trained check out workers attracted small children as part of a promotion to change the image of libraries and promote reading. This idea is catching on. Tower Hamlets Borough Council, for instance, is replacing its public libraries with 'idea stores'. Not centres, but stores. As well as traditional library facilities, there will be creches, cafes and further education facilities, all under the same roof and all sited next to big supermarkets. 'We have to expect to go out and find the next generation of library users rather than expecting them to come to us' said a council spokesman. And of course, regular users of libraries will find their way into adjoining branches of Sainsbury, Safeway, Tesco and Asda. 'The supermarkets are quite canny' says Guy Daines. 'They know that having these idea stores adjacent will bring in more customers. In these matters, there's always a certain amount of commercial self-interest as well as good PR.'

Find out more about the Big Read: An unusual partnership, Asda and libraries promoting reading together, by Colette Blanchfield, Asda PR manager.

Summer Reading Challenge - now in its 6th year

The Summer Reading Challenge, now in its sixth year, was initiated by library development agency LaunchPad (since incorporated into The Reading Agency - TRA). Based in public libraries, it offers incentives for children to read six books in six weeks to hook children into books and libraries. For each book they read, participants receive a scratchcard with a quiz and a message from a celebrity. They can choose their own reading material and progress at their own pace, often with the added encouragement of local schemes to target particular groups.

Summer reading challenge - some statistics:

The Summer Reading Challenge is the country's biggest annual promotion of children's reading. Each year 600,000 children aged 11-14 take part, 3,500 community libraries are involved, 91% of UK library authorities participate in the challenge, as a result of which some 35,000 children become new library members.

Taking part increases confidence, skill, enjoyment and motivation:

- 95% want to read more books
- 92% of Summer Reading Challenge books were new to the reader
- 77% taking part felt they were "better readers" after the challenge. 40% felt they were "a lot better"
- 66% said they read more books than if they had not done the Summer Reading Challenge

"I never used to understand books or ever liked to read them, but I like them now and I understand them and I'm even reading a big long book" *Summer Reading Challenge*

participant

Earlier Summer Reading Challenges

The theme for summer 2003's Summer Reading Challenge was the Reading Maze, which allowed readers track down authors on a website.

Summer 2002's science-related challenge, Reading Planet, involved 3,500 libraries and led to 30,000 new child members signing up. Around half a million four to 11-year-olds took part.

In summer 2001, more than 600,000 children signed up for the Reading Carnival, 520,000 of whom were primary-school aged children. 120,000 11 to 13 year olds got involved through Reading Challenge Plus, an extension to the scheme developed with DCMS/Wolfson funding. This included an outreach programme targeted at disaffected young people. Ten library authorities piloted ways of using the challenge to develop new partnerships and to reach new audiences.

Evaluation

An evaluation on the 2003 Summer Reading Challenge found that 95% of the children involved wanted to read lots more books; 45% read a book they wouldn't have wanted to before; 65% would tell their friends to read a book they had enjoyed and 92% of the books were new to the children.

An independent analysis of the challenge in summer 2000 showed that at least eight out of ten young children considered themselves better readers after taking part and they chose a wide variety of books. Although most of the children who completed the challenge were good readers, a significant proportion was not. Older boys were reluctant to get involved but there was a 50/50 split in the younger age group.

Other Promoting Reading Programs in the U.K

Reading Champions celebrates the existing work of boys and men who are promoting reading to others. Nominations tripled in the past year and we hope in the coming year that even more of you will take the opportunity to [nominate](#) more men and boys to join our existing Champions who appear on this website talking about their enjoyment of reading. They may even be invited to our annual award ceremony celebrating some of the year's outstanding Champions.

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/campaign/champions.html>

Reading The Game was launched on September 24th 2002, and is supported by the [Football Foundation](#) and other partners (see [RTG Partners](#)). The initiative is established to run for three years and has several [main aims](#), but will essentially work through football clubs to promote literacy and lifelong learning. The NLT is building on its already established relationships with the Professional Footballers' Association, The Football Association and Football in the Community. Whilst we know that football is not

in itself the answer to literacy problems in England, we are confident that by promoting literacy through the medium of football, these skills can be improved amongst those who might be reluctant to learn through conventional channels. This initiative could have a significant impact on literacy levels, particularly for boys and young men who are traditionally seen as low achievers.

Volunteer Reading Help

Background

Volunteer Reading Help (VRH) is a national charity which trains and supports volunteers to work one-to-one with children and help them with their self-esteem and confidence through the medium of reading. Children (usually in primary schools) are referred by their class teacher as being likely to benefit from the scheme; many of the children VRH helps never or rarely have the undivided attention of an adult.

What goes on

The volunteer works with up to three children in two half-hour sessions per week, which as well as reading involve discussion, games, chatting and other activities. The sessions take place in school but in an area away from the classroom. Each volunteer is provided with a box of specially chosen books and games, which are changed regularly to suit the needs and interests of the child. The children are encouraged to take the lead in choosing the books or activities for the session: there is no set scheme or reading age target, and the child and volunteer work at their own pace. The aim is to improve the child's confidence, social skills and attendance and participation in class, to engender a love of reading and to break down inter-generational barriers.

The volunteers

The volunteers are police checked and their training includes how a child learns to read, motivational techniques, child protection and equal opportunities. They are supported by VRH field workers and other staff, and benefit from ongoing training, book exchange meetings, end of term meetings and other events. Volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds, reflecting the communities and children with whom they work.

Results

The children's class teacher is asked to complete an annual survey about the pupils on the scheme. According to the 2002 survey, 83% of children supported by VRH showed an improvement in reading performance, 79% showed an improvement in self confidence and 74% showed an improvement in general motivation. Qualitative evidence from teachers and volunteers also points to the children's increased confidence, enthusiasm, attention span and social skills.

Additionally, on many occasions parents of children on the scheme have approached the school to ask for help with their own literacy, as their child's growing skills have highlighted their own limitations. They have then gone on to brush up their skills, receive guidance on how to help their child or attend adult literacy classes. Meanwhile, some volunteers have gone on to get involved in wider community activity.

Funding and pilot projects

VRH is funded from a variety of statutory and private sources, and each of the 32 branches undertakes fundraising. VRH engages in partnership with the schools involved and also with LEAs, businesses and other voluntary organisations. It has also taken part in a number of pilot projects to find innovative ways of working, which are variations on its theme of one-to-one activity: for example, it is investigating the use of libraries, and is involved in pilot projects with children in the transition to year 7, with homework clubs for older children, with children at risk of crime and with those in public care.

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/socialinclusion/youngpeople/Time>

Chatterbooks

Chatterbooks is the first nationally coordinated reading group scheme for children. Many Library Authorities nationwide have signed up to the scheme, a national network made possible by the partnership of Orange and The Reading Agency.

Author Jacqueline Wilson is the project's Patron. The scheme embraces four to twelve year olds, encouraging them to read adventurously, share their enthusiasm about books and develop the confidence to formulate and express opinions about reading. It reaches over 3000 children, many of them from excluded groups.

Group sessions give children the opportunity to interact positively and develop their confidence as readers, by increasing the time they spend reading and sharing books. The scheme aims to encourage families to visit their public library and enjoy all it has to offer through special events, such as meeting authors and illustrators.

Reports from the Reading Agency have been very positive:

- 100% of groups said that children were reading more widely, for example after a year in the Brixton Chatterbooks group, the number of children reading 3 books per week had increased from 17% to 49%
- " 91% of the groups said that belonging to Chatterbooks had increased children's confidence and self-esteem

Contact Tricia Kings on 01736 332228 or tk113@hotmail.com, or Jerry Hurst on 020 8364 6166 or jerry.hurst@tesco.net

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/campaign/libraries.html#Chatterbooks>

Games Workshop events in school and public libraries

The Lord of the Rings in Libraries is a partnership between the National Reading Campaign, CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals), CollinsChildren'sBooks and Games Workshop plc. Launched in January 2001, it has given public and school libraries the opportunity to host Lord of the Rings themed workshops. These have attracted large numbers of boys and young men who otherwise

would not consider entering a library. Games Workshop staff use sessions throughout the country to talk teenagers through the rules, play the game alongside them and encourage them to make their own epic journey into the unknown - by suggesting some related reading material such as fantasy and adventure books.

References for Further Study over the U.K

Projects encouraging reading for pleasure

<http://www.readon.org.uk/campaign/targets1.html>

Reading Initiatives - Young people

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/campaign/youth.html#Leeds>

Reading initiatives - Men and Boys

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/campaign/menandboys.html#walsalllibraries>

Regional reading promotion involving libraries

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/campaign/librariesregional.html#Young>

Tips for Promoting Reading and Literacy

<http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/filemanager/download/561/promoting.pdf>

Promoting Reading in the U.S

Reading is Fundamental's Programs

Family of Readers

Family of Readers is a family reading program that currently serves over 75,000 children and their parents across the country, focusing on educationally at-risk children, from birth through elementary school, and their families.

Family of Readers helps parents develop the skills and self-assurance to take a leading role in supporting their children's reading and learning while their children learn to love books.

Program Goals:

- Improve family reading habits and enhance the time that families spend sharing books with their young children.
- Promote parents' confidence in themselves as participants in their children's education.
- Foster supportive relationships among parents who face similar challenges.
- Encourage Family of Readers' advisors to become effective facilitators for the parents they serve.

Over the course of the program, parents learn about children's books and participate in skills workshops on such topics as how to read aloud to children. Parents will then be asked to apply these newly acquired skills to the planning and execution of a RIF program. Working on committees, and with limited guidance from a staff advisor, parents select and order children's books for free distribution, recruit other parents, and plan reading motivation activities for their children.

The program is used effectively in ABE, GED, and parenting programs that are seeking to reach children as well. Family of Readers adds value to Head Start and other child-serving programs interested in increasing parental involvement, while also reinforcing the goals of intergenerational programs such as Even Start.

<http://www.rif.org/what/familyofreaders/default.msp>

National Book Program

RIF's National Book Program (NBP) motivates children, families, and community members to read together through a triad of principles basic to the entire RIF organization: book ownership, motivational activities, and family involvement in children's reading.

Program Goals:

- Provide new, free books and literacy resources to children and their families.
- Motivate children to read.
- Generate community support for literacy.

Program Components:

- **Books for ownership:** Children have the opportunity to choose and keep two to five books per year at no cost to the children or their families.
- **Fun literacy-related activities:** Reading really is FUNdamental in the RIF National Book Program. Volunteers motivate children to read with a myriad of festive book activities that accompany each book event.
- **Family and community involvement:** RIF headquarters provides training and technical assistance to enable volunteer program coordinators at each site to recruit and train additional volunteers, who help run their NBP.

The NBP reaches young people of all ages in a variety of settings, including schools, community centers, Boys & Girls Clubs, migrant labor camps, churches, hospitals, and health clinics. The program operates in 25,000 sites in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories, and has been licensed in countries such as the United Kingdom and Argentina.

<http://www.rif.org/what/nationalbook/default.msp>

Shared Beginnings

Shared Beginnings helps young parents develop their children's early language and literacy skills.

A series of activities gives parents practice in reading aloud to their children and planning early learning experiences that stimulate language development in infants and toddlers. Parents also learn how to choose picture books that their children will enjoy.

Program Goals:

- Convey to young parents the importance of nurturing emergent literacy in their young children.
- Give young parents practice in a broad range of activities designed to foster early reading.
- Enable young parents to acquire the skills and confidence to teach their own children.
- Foster supportive relationships among young parents.
- Support young parents' own continuing education through special literacy activities designed for them.

The Shared Beginnings activity curriculum focuses on a variety of topics chosen based upon recent brain research. These topics include: talking, singing, rhyming and rocking, playing, going places, storytelling, choosing books, reading aloud, and writing and drawing.

At the start of a Shared Beginnings program, many young parent participants say they have few or no memories of being read to while growing up, and that books and other reading materials were not available in their homes. Their attitudes toward books and reading often range from awkward or detached to negative.

Yet when these parents begin seeing the results of reading with their children — "She wants to hear this story over and over," "He's trying to turn the pages," "She's taking books and pretending to read" — they are excited by their children's learning and proud of their own achievement in developing their children's language skills and readiness to read.

Shared Beginnings currently operates in the following settings:

- Schools
- Home-Based Programs
- Childcare Clinics
- Residential Facilities

<http://www.rif.org/what/sharedbeginnings/default.msp>

Running Start

Running Start is a reading motivation program for first graders and their families. The program builds on the promise of first grade, a special time when children are excited, parents are involved, and hopes and expectations are high for a child's future success.

The Challenge

Running Start challenges first graders to read 21 books in eight to ten weeks. The Running Start challenge isn't just for the kids: it also challenges teachers, school volunteers, and especially parents to give children a burst of ambition at a crucial stage in their development as readers. With this challenge, Running Start meets first-graders' needs for tangible signs of achievement and encouragement from their parents, teachers, and communities.

Program Goals:

- Generate excitement about reading by immersing children in books over a concentrated period of time.
- Enhance partnerships among home, school, and community.
- Enlist and encourage parents to play active roles in their children's education, especially reading.
- Create and enrich a climate that supports reading throughout the school.
- Support teachers and offer them opportunities to work together toward shared goals.
- Engage the entire community in a positive upbeat program with demonstrated educational benefits.
- Attract positive media attention to the school and to the importance of children's education and reading.

The Rewards

Anecdotal and research evidence touts the positive effects of Running Start. Parents talk about the encouragement they felt, teachers emphasize the sense of community, and children remark on the fun and free books.

A principal investigator from the National Reading Research Center of the University of Maryland concluded that "The Running Start program is an effective model of how to make a positive impact on the literacy of young children. The success of the program in motivating children and their families to engage in reading activities has clear implications for the development of programs that link the school and the home in nurturing literacy development. Running Start has a dramatic effect on family literacy practices."

Running Start provides books for classroom collections, a guide for coordinators, and a handbook for teachers, as well as program materials, including bookmarks, posters, stickers, and recognition items for children, parents, and volunteers who meet the challenge.

The Impact

Running Start has now reached more than 400,000 children and their parents, schools, and communities in all 50 states. Since its inception, supporters of the program have included the Chrysler Corporation Fund, S.C. Johnson Wax Fund, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Mobil Foundation, Shell Oil Company Foundation, and Reader's Digest Foundation.

<http://www.rif.org/what/runningstart/default.msp>

Books on the Menu

Books on the Menu is a cross-age literacy program in which the oldest students in an elementary school mentor the youngest students — their "bookmates" — in reading. Through this food-themed initiative, children satisfy their craving for good books and stories while building new friendships.

Program Goals:

Increase the amount of time children spend reading and talking about books.

Promote helping relationships between older and younger children.

Increase the confidence and self-esteem of older children.

Promote collegiality among upper-grade and primary-grade teachers.

Make reading a highly visible activity in the school.

Books on the Menu seeks to increase reading motivation at two critical junctures: at the stage when young children are beginning to read, and when older children are expected to be proficient readers.

The program presents upbeat, fun activities based on research into what best motivates children to read and to learn in a mentoring relationship.

<http://www.rif.org/what/menu/default.msp>

The RIF Community Reading Challenge

The RIF Community Reading Challenge is a mid-winter reading challenge that fosters a new generation of lifelong readers by having children read for fun and involving families and community members in motivating children to read regularly. The contest is made possible by MetLife Foundation, which has supported Reading Is Fundamental's national reading challenges for the past 19 years.

More than 1,100 RIF sites serving nearly 360,000 children across the country will select two weeks between January 2nd and March 2nd to conduct their Community Reading Challenges. During their Challenge, RIF coordinators, or "challenge leaders," organize myriad of literacy activities to motivate children to read and to engage community members in, with the desire of winning a state or national award.

These fun and meaningful events include family literacy nights, group read-aloud sessions, RIF book distributions, and reading rallies. The children in the RIF program have the special role of helping to create invitations to community members to participate in Challenge events, and of designing tokens of appreciation to guest readers who volunteered at their RIF site. During the Challenge, the children are also encouraged to participate in reading activities with a Book Buddy.

If you are a current RIF site interested in participating in the **2005 RIF Community Reading Challenge**, visit the Coordinators' section to [learn more](#).

<http://www.rif.org/what/eventscontests/readingchallenge/default.msp>

Volunteer of the Year Awards

Over 450,000 RIF volunteers donate their time, talents, and energy to motivate children to read at 25,000 RIF sites across the country. These individuals share a common goal of fostering children's literacy by helping to distribute free books to those children who need them most.

The Anne Richardson RIF Volunteer of the Year Awards program presented by Nestlé USA recognizes the inspiring work of RIF volunteers and volunteer coordinators nationwide. The awards program celebrates the dedication and service of truly outstanding volunteers and recognizes the contributions these individuals have made to their communities. Everyone benefits from the awards — the children, the volunteers, and their communities.

By offering recognition for the extraordinary contributions of volunteers, RIF seeks to inspire others to excel in their service to children's and family literacy. RIF also seeks to engage children's literacy volunteers and advocates in celebrating the spirit and practice of volunteerism and in honoring the accomplishments of RIF volunteers who encourage and nurture young readers. This prestigious award is named for, and is a tribute to, RIF's former chairman emerita, the late [Anne Hazard Richardson](#).

<http://www.rif.org/what/eventscontests/volunteer/default.msp>

Case Studies

FLORIDA

Daytona Beach

As part of the "Read Across America" program, a volunteer from the **Bureau of Braille and Talking Book Library Services**, read out loud to students of Indian Trails Elementary School (Palm Coast, Florida) from the braille pages of the print braille edition of *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss. The students enjoyed the print pages of the same edition. Plans are being made to continue this outreach effort to acquaint elementary school students with braille as an alternative method of reading.

Pasco County

Pasco County Reading Council volunteers work with pregnant high school students to help them understand both the importance of as well as how to read to their babies. Each student is given a book suitable for a very young child.

Tampa

"Celebrate National Library Week with Adam T. Riffick" is a project of **Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System**. An eight-week, half-page newspaper series featuring a young boy, Adam T. Riffick, who rescues endangered turtle hatchlings, was designed to encourage families and classrooms to read together and answer story questions on the library's Web site at: <http://thpl.org/>.

Vero Beach

During National Teen Read Week, the **Indian River County Main Library** held a Teen Beanbag Read-A-Thon. Beanbag chairs were scattered around the story pit, refreshments were handed out, and 65 teens, in three two-hour sessions, read for fun. At the end of each session, names were drawn for prizes.

INDIANA

Auburn

The **Eckhart Public Library** and a local public access TV station, JBE TV, promote reading by hosting a read-a-thon during National Library Week. Community leaders are invited to read favorite picture books to their children. These readings are taped with an introductory reading promo and broadcast during the month of April. This project has been very effective in promoting the importance of families reading together.

Bloomington

Fairview Elementary School already has QBT(Quiet Book Time) every day. They also have monthly themes. For October, they used the theme EFFORT and decided to concentrate their effort on QBT reading. They chose football for a theme to tie it all together. They held an assembly and invited high school cheerleaders and football players to talk to the kids about effort and to share their favorite books. Throughout the month each class is setting QBT goals of how much time they will spend reading. Classes that reach their weekly goals will make a first down, second down, third down, and at the end of the month a touchdown. On the last day of October, they will celebrate with a victory party. They are hoping to have Indiana University football mascots come celebrate with them.

Butler

Eastside Jr/Sr High School students participate in two reading programs from September to April 12th of every school year--the Young Hoosier Book Award for grades 7-8; and the Eliot Rosewater Indiana High School Book Award for grades 9-12. These are voluntary. Also, teachers may read to their class during the 15-minute activity period on March 2 of each year to celebrate reading on the birthday of Dr. Seuss.

Crawfordsville

The **Joseph F. Tuttle Middle School** has presented two "Read and Feed" celebrations for their students. This is a voluntary reading program in which students read a common book, take a quiz when they finish the book and if they pass, receive an invitation to a special lunch. Adults from the community also read the book and at the lunch, serve as discussion leaders with about six students. In addition to parents and retired teachers, other adult readers participating include college professors, librarians, the city's mayor, school board members and the superintendent. The lunch menu comes from food mentioned in the book and is decorated as a setting in the book. They have used Margaret Peterson Haddix's books (*Running Out of Time* and *Don't You Dare Read This, Mrs. Duphy*) and the author joined them last spring for their celebration.

Evansville

The **Helfrich Park School** community has made a three-year commitment beginning in 1999-2000 to provide students with sixty minutes of recreational reading per week. During the twenty-minute periods three days a week at the beginning of the instructional day, students engage in reading books of their choice from newly established classroom libraries and from the school media center. Each classroom is provided with a daily newspaper and a classroom set of weekly news magazines. The staff models leisure reading.

Gaston

The Gaston Elementary School conducts classroom door decorating contests in which each door becomes a scene from a favorite book.

At **Harrison Elementary School** the "Reader of the Week" program involves students and the high school basketball team. During home games throughout basketball season, the selected reader will be recognized, sit with the team during the game, and receive an autographed basketball.

At the **Harrison-Washington Community Schools**, a book reading and discussion group has been organized where a book is chosen, read, and discussed. Parents, faculty, and staff are invited to attend the group's monthly meeting. The first book chosen was *At Home in Mitford*. This group is sponsored in part by the Community Foundation of Muncie.

Students at **Wes-Del Middle School** participate in Reading Olympics in which they read books and then take tests on their books on the Reading Counts! computer program. Students are awarded prizes once they reach selected goals.

Indianapolis

Every January-March since 1994, the **Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation Religious School and Library** has cosponsored a popular reading incentive program for students, grades K-7. Hundreds of children have read thousands of books. Most children earn prizes. Families often read together, inspired by annual themes, such as "JUDAIC PARK: Where Jewish Books Are Not Extinct!"

The **Theodore Potter Elementary School #74 Media Center** is using as its theme the phrase: "Reading is a Piece of Cake." Students are invited to read for pleasure during recess in the "Sweet Shoppe" adjacent to the Media Center.

Throughout the school year, students utilize the Electronic Bookshelf quiz program. At the end of the year, students are invited to the "Sweet Shoppe Market."

Jeffersonville

Reading aloud is celebrated monthly at **River Valley Middle School**. Different themes are chosen each month and all participants in the READ ALOUD CHALLENGE share selections with students based on the theme. Theme for 1999-2000 include Heroes, the Future, and Celebrate Indiana. Participants are eligible for classroom prizes.

Lafayette

TELL (Teachers Encouraging a Love for Literature) are sponsors of a 1999-2000 author/conference series "Get Connected Through Children's Literature: Honoring the Past, Imagining the Future." Well known children's authors are brought to the West Lafayette area for two-day sessions in this four-part series (October and November 1999; February and April 2000). On Fridays of the program, authors visit the children in area schools (schools are invited to "purchase" a half-day with an author). On Saturdays, authors address TELL members in a Saturday morning workshop.

Marengo

Crawford County Jr./Sr. High School's reading incentive program is tied to the school's grade incentive program. Students read books and pass quizzes over what they have read. Three points are then added to the student's grade incentive point total. Two times during the year, students trade their points for prizes in a student council sponsored store.

Mishawaka

Every week, at **Byrkit High School**, all the students and the teachers (principal, too) sit down and read for 30 minutes. In one classroom, the class is reading aloud an adventure story, and then the students read silently for the next 20 minutes. Students are allowed to pick a book of their choice.

New Middletown

Fourth, fifth, and sixth graders at **New Middletown Elementary School** belong to a school book club. Students are divided by grade/reading levels. Each group reads a novel on their own time (three to five chapters a week). Each group meets one day a week and discusses the novel over doughnuts and orange juice. There is 63% participation of the students in the three grade levels.

Osgood

Jac-Cen-Del Elementary School's Eagle Reader Program was initiated by the high school basketball coach. The objective was to encourage reading by awarding basketball incentives to all students in grades one through six. Every book was initialized by a parent to verify that it had been read by the child. For

every five books read, prizes were awarded. Prizes included bookmarks, free game tickets, drawings for bench seats, and team basketball cards. The top reader at each grade level received a shirt and a basketball autographed by the team.

Pendleton

At the **East Elementary School Media Center** a book is purchased in honor of a student's birthday. A photo is taken of the honoree holding the book and placed inside it along with a bookplate stating the buddy's name and birth date. The birthday buddy is first to check out the book.

Terre Haute

The **Vigo County Schools, Vigo County Teachers Association, and Vigo County Public Libraries** cosponsor a program on Monday evenings called "Monday Night Stop and Read." A local radio station has a weekly drawing. If a student is "caught reading," he/she wins a \$25 gift certificate compliments of the teachers association. Students register in school and public libraries.

Thorntown

To keep the students reading during the long weeks before spring vacation, **Thorntown Elementary School** has planned a "Clowing Around With Reading" party, which will take place at the school just before spring break. To attend, students need to meet their reading goal, which is a certain number of points in Accelerated Reader. The school expects upwards of 200 students (from a K-6 building of 500) and they have many activities planned---pizza, clowns, Rock N'Read, ice cream, face painting, making bookmarks, storytelling, etc. This is said to be a real motivator for the students.

Union Mills

South Central Elementary School is offering a reading and math incentive program called RAMP (Reading and Math Passport to Success). Students are encouraged to read 250 minutes per month and work on math activities 250 minutes per month outside of school. In two months, 70% of the 450 students have met the monthly goals.

Zionsville

For five years, the **Zionsville Lower Middle School** participated in Electronic Bookshelf Reading Incentive. Their numbers increased from 76 winners to 314. Due to technical difficulties, they stopped for one year. Their book circulation was drastically reduced and students were not reading as much. Consequently, Reading Counts was recently reinstated and the school looks forward to building their reading population back up.

<http://www.loc.gov/loc/cfbook/projects.html#District%20of%20Columbia>

Part 7 Raw Material of Researches and Reports

Children more confident readers, but enjoy it less

Children have become more confident readers, following the government's emphasis on improving literacy. But research also suggests that children are enjoying reading less than they did five years ago when the literacy strategy was introduced. The findings are from the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) which has examined attitudes to reading among primary pupils. Boys in particular have shown a decline in interest in reading for pleasure.

The survey looked at how nine and 11 year olds felt about reading - and compared this to similar questions asked at the outset of the literacy strategy in 1998. In response to concerns about declining standards of literacy among pupils, the Government made an improvement in reading and writing a centrepiece of its efforts in primary schools. This has now been running for five years - and the NFER's research suggests there has been a "significant improvement" in children's confidence and independence as readers. It observes that primary pupils in England now have reading skills which compare well with pupils in other developed countries.

But there have been complaints from teachers who have claimed that the focus on literacy has been at the expense of creativity and more imaginative learning. And the research says that there has been a decline in the number of children enjoying reading - with boys showing the sharpest drop in interest. Fewer children read at home to an adult than five years ago, there are fewer trips to the library and more watching of television. Although putting the "decline" in interest into context, the research says there is still a substantial majority of pupils who like to read stories.

The NFER's principal researcher, Marian Sainsbury, says that the survey gives a chance to look at the changes in pupils' attitudes since the introduction of the literacy strategy. And although it was not possible to make direct connections, there had been a contrasting picture of increased ability and reduced enthusiasm. "We know from national results and international studies that primary school children in England are good at reading, and their increased levels of confidence and independence are probably a direct reflection of this," said Dr Sainsbury.

"On the other hand, enjoyment levels have declined. We have no direct evidence from this survey of the reasons for the change, and they may relate to broader shifts in children's interest over the last five years. But it is possible that this is also related to the drive to improve standards. Children are learning skills, reading material that has usually been chosen by the teacher rather than the children themselves. There may have been less

emphasis on the on the sheer pleasure to be gained from books. Current guidance to teachers places great stress on fostering this enthusiasm and enjoyment and we are planning to repeat this survey every two years from now on, to track any changes in the future."

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Research/libresearch3.html>

Remarks by George:

According to the research conducted in the UK, the promoting reading programs did improve kids' literacy ability, but it was not effective to stimulate kids' implicit interest, which is key to the life-long learning.

Net begins to spark library revival

A "quiet revolution" is gathering momentum in public libraries as free internet access opens up lifelong learning opportunities, a report published in January 2003 shows. It reveals that about 40% of people who visited libraries for the first time to use information technology went on to join the library.

Peter Brophy, professor of information management at Manchester University, studied the first six months of the People's Network, set up in public libraries by the New Opportunities Fund. He concluded, "lives are being changed for the better in many different ways ... ordinary people are being given the opportunity to participate in the information society."

Some library authorities reported "a modest increase" in book loans though not yet enough to turn around the longstanding decline in book borrowing. More than 4,000 of the 4,488 branch libraries in the UK were connected to the People's Network by the end of 2002, around half with broadband.

To launch the almost completed network, library users can vote online in the WH Smith People's Choice Book Awards until February 11.

More information about the People's Network is available at www.peoplesnetwork.gov.uk

The People's Network: a turning point for libraries is available free from Resource Publications on 020 7273 1458 or email info@resource.gov.uk.

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Research/libresearch3.html>

Remarks by George:

Networked ICT is positive to seduce people into libraries.

Research shows a house full of books gives youngsters the richest start of all

A love of reading is more important for children's academic success than their family's wealth and class according to research carried out by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Children from deprived backgrounds performed better in tests than those from more affluent homes if they enjoyed reading books, newspapers and comics in their spare time. The study, which covered 31 countries, found encouraging children to read for pleasure could compensate for social problems that would usually affect their academic performance.

“Being more enthusiastic about reading and a frequent reader was more of an advantage, on its own, than having well-educated parents in good jobs,” the study's report said. The researchers analysed the results of an international study in 2001 which ranked industrialised nations according to the performance of 15-year-olds in tests. Britain emerged as one of the best performing countries in reading, coming seventh out of 31.

The OECD study found that 15-year-olds from impoverished backgrounds who enjoyed reading scored higher in literacy tests than those of well-off professionals who had little interest in reading. The poorer youngsters attained 540 points in the tests compared with 491 for the affluent children.

“Fifteen-year-old students who are highly engaged readers and whose parents have the lowest occupational status achieve significantly higher average reading scores than students whose parents have the highest occupational status but who are poorly engaged in reading,” the report said.

“All the students who are highly engaged in reading achieve reading literacy scores that are significantly above the international mean, whatever their family background. Conversely, students who are poorly engaged in reading achieve scores below the international mean, regardless of their parents' occupational status.

“These findings are of paramount importance from an educational perspective... It is reassuring to know that while socio-economic background plays a role, it is not a dominant factor.” The study found that availability of books in the home also played a key role. “Students who have access to a larger number of books have a tendency to be more interested in reading a broader range of materials.”

There was also some evidence that reading newspapers, magazines and comics could be just as effective as reading books. Parents who discussed books, magazine articles, politics and current affairs with their children also helped boost their literacy skills.

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Research/libresearch3.html>

Remarks by George:

Social inclusion and equality is, to some extent, relying on whether we could provide those socially disadvantaged with the opportunities by which they could overcome their unfavored position. As the research revealed, providing access to books and promoting reading among them is an effective and efficient way.

Young People's Attitudes towards Reading

Below are the results of Nestle Family Monitor: Young People's Attitudes towards Reading conducted by Mori. The results are based on questionnaires completed by over 900 11 to 18-year-olds at 33 state and independent schools and sixth form colleges between March and May 2003.

Do teenagers read?

- 83% read in spare time
- 11% never read outside of school hours (these students were more likely to come from a home where neither parent or guardian worked)
- 16% boys never read in their spare time compared to only 7% girls
- those who didn't read at all in their spare time were much less likely to email
- 26% described reading as boring
- boys and those at state school were significantly more likely to say that they didn't enjoy reading.

What makes young people want to read?

- 43% will read something as a result of a peer recommendation
- 10% will read something if it is recommended by a teacher, whereas a quarter of students were keen to read a book about a film they enjoyed
- 23% said they would read a book about a famous person they were interested in or a hobby (this figure was higher for boys)
- time was reported as the biggest barrier to reading, and 1 in 5 said they would read more if they knew what to read
- age 13/14 was the key age where an interest in reading dwindled
- 70% said they would prefer to watch TV or a DVD than read a book
- girls were more enthusiastic on the whole about reading than boys
- boys were "significantly more likely than girls to say that they are encouraged to read if the book is about a place, subject or hobby in which they are interested."

To find out more, visit www.nestle.co.uk/about/familymonitor

<http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Database/stats/readchild.html#Young>

World Book Day survey finds teenagers still get some of their kicks from reading, but boys lag behind

Research published to coincide with World Book Day 2002 (Thursday 14 March) found that teenage boys still lag well behind girls in the amount of leisure time they spend reading books. The World Book Day survey was conducted amongst two crucial adolescent age groups – those who have just entered the secondary school system at age 11, and those in years 10-11, aged 14-16.

The vast majority of teenagers do read books for pleasure. Eighty one per cent of 11-12 year olds (boys and girls) surveyed read books for pleasure and 76% of all 14-16 year olds.

Boys in Year 7 (aged 11-12) spend about one hour a week less than girls reading books for enjoyment. But by the time they reach Year 11 (aged 15-16), boys read, on average, almost two hours less than girls a week.

The key findings of the World Book Day teenage reading survey reveal that

11-12 year old girls spend an average of 5 hours a week reading books for enjoyment

11-12 year old boys spend an average of 3.9 hours a week reading books for enjoyment

15-16 year old girls spend an average of 4.5 hours a week reading for enjoyment

15-16 year old boys spend an average of 2.3 hours a week reading for enjoyment.

Contrary to popular belief, it is not computer games that are taking boys away from books – boys aged 15-16 spend far more time (11.1 hours a week) watching TV and videos, and just over 9 hours a week on the computer. This is nearly one and a half hours less than they spend at the age of 11. Girls of all ages, however, do spend a lot less time on the computer. (See Table 1)

Girls aged 11 and 16 are much more likely to read a book on the recommendation of a friend. Boys of both ages are influenced in their choice of reading matter mainly by school – the books they read have either been recommended by their teacher or found in the school library.

Boys of both ages are also heavily influenced by film adaptations of books. Of those reading Tolkien, 26% say they are reading him because they have seen *The Lord of the Rings* on screen. And Tolkien is currently 14-16 year old boys' favourite author.

Teenagers who read the least are turned on by comedy writing – a book mentioned by 14-16 year olds, for example, was *Da Gospel According to Ali G*. Comedy is an enduringly popular genre amongst all respondents but the most avid readers – those who read for more than 14 hours a week - are heavily into fantasy.

By their late teens, both boys and girls are still reading Rowling and Tolkien, but more adult tastes are starting to develop. Girls appear to be more influenced by the current

bestseller lists – with Bridget Jones and Dave Pelzer in the top ten, whilst boys are reading Steinbeck and Orwell.

This survey was commissioned by World Book Day in association with the National Reading Campaign and Book Marketing Ltd. Over eight hundred schoolchildren in Years 7, 10 and 11 in a representative sample of schools throughout the country were surveyed.

For more information see www.worldbookday.com

<http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Database/stats/WBD2002.html>

Remarks by George:

If the difference between genders is rooted more in gene than in culture, which is highly likely to be so, the referability of researches over the common-featured reading-attitude difference between boys and girls should be universal. So we could conclude from the British research that

1. The kids from impoverished background tend to have worse reading attitudes that are likely to involve them into a downward poverty cycle.
2. Boys have a worse attitude than girls to reading.
3. Boys are attracted more in non-fiction books.
4. Peer recommendation is most powerful to motivate kids to read.
5. Boys are heavily influenced by film adaptations of books.
6. Comedy writing can turn on least-reading kids.

Learning to watch TV 'as important as mathematics' minister says

Learning how to watch television is as important a discipline as maths and science, the Culture Secretary said in January 2004. Tessa Jowell angered academics when she said: "I believe that in the modern world media literacy will become as important a skill as maths or science. Decoding our media will be as important to our lives as citizens as understanding great literature is to our cultural lives."

Ms Jowell wants a "nation of active and informed consumers" who are taught to discriminate between "opinion and fact" and to "question and challenge" the programmes they see. The Culture Secretary was speaking in advance of a Bafta conference on "media literacy", organised by the BBC, Channel 4 and the UK Film Council, at which she was to speak.

Ms Jowell has given Ofcom, the communications industries watchdog, a duty to promote "media literacy" and is asking broadcasters to help to educate viewers. University media studies courses - dismissed as "vacuous" by Chris Woodhead, the former Chief Inspector of Schools - could play a vital role.

Spotting bias in television shows will be a key test. Ms Jowell said that viewers should be able to understand "when we are watching 'accurate and impartial' news coverage and when we are not".

"If people can take greater personal responsibility for what they watch and listen to, that will itself lessen the need for regulatory intervention," Ms Jowell said. "With so many ways to get information - not just through television and radio but also internet and mobile phone - it becomes increasingly hard to know where what we see or hear is coming from, who has made it and why. Everyone needs to be able to decode the way the media works, questioning everything in order to understand everything."

Ms Jowell believes that a healthy democracy requires citizens to "differentiate between opinion and fact; to make sense of what they see and hear, and to challenge it." But academics were not convinced that "media literacy" should be given equal weight to maths and science.

Professor Alan Smithers, director of the Centre for Education and Employment Research, said: "Studying the means of communication can be fun but it does not push back the barriers of ignorance. It is far less important than establishing whether something is true, which only a study of sciences can hope to achieve."

Peter Bazalgette, the television producer behind Big Brother, said: "Media literacy is crucial. But the media is merely a conduit. The key question is not 'what is the technology' but 'what is the message?'"

(The Times, 21 January 2004)

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Database/TV.html#minister>

Remarks by George:

From the above information, we could see that the U.K government adapts their literacy strategy to the inevitable informatization trend rather than fights against it.

This makes us rethink the necessity to fight against reading decline. Or we are simply worried too much as the reading decline is simply the shift of literacy from one means to another.

Teens wait for Becks-style break

Teenagers increasingly believe there is no link between their achievements in school and their potential to succeed because of the careers of football stars and reality TV celebrities. The problem, dubbed "realism deficiency" or "Beckham syndrome", was noted by researchers acting on behalf of the South West Learning and Skills Council.

They interviewed dozens of 13 to 19-year-olds in Bristol before carrying out intensive focus sessions with 24 teenagers. The researchers found that around 40% of the teenagers were "realism deficient". "These young people are convinced that life will present them with a lucky break and that they simply have to sit tight and wait for their moment," the researchers said.

The remaining teenagers were divided between the "permission deficient" (20%) who understood that success required hard work but did not think they had what it takes; the "perceived luck deficient" (10%) who think success requires a lucky break but they did not have a chance of getting one; and the "realistic with permission" who were convinced of the value of education to succeed.

Jane Samuel, a spokeswoman for the South West LSC, said: "The biggest group did not see the link between education and success. It could be seen as Fame Academy or Pop Idol syndrome because there was an expectation that you would become a winner overnight, the idea that you would be walking along the street and someone would decide that you should be a model."

The Commons education select committee has launched an investigation into how schools and colleges are providing 14 to 19-year-olds with skills. It heard from Chris Humphries, director general of the City and Guilds qualification board, and Alison Wolf, professor of management and professional development at King's College, London. Mr Humphries said that a key problem with teenagers' skills was that many found the secondary curriculum inappropriate and irrelevant. "It is worse than pupils leaving without qualifications at 16," he said. "A lot are dropping out of education at 13 or 14. They may physically be in the classes but they are not really there because they are uninterested." An independent group led by Mike Tomlinson is developing changes to the 14 to 19 curriculum and will be publishing its latest proposals.

However, Mr Humphries and Professor Wolf said that structural changes to qualifications might not be enough and that changes were also needed to teaching styles. Professor Wolf said: "We have been seduced by qualification structures rather than the content inside them."

(TES, 16 January 2004)

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Database/TV.html#Becks-style>

Remarks by George:

Under the climate of fast-food culture, getting rich or famous over night metamorphoses from a dream into something touchable. It is the case in China, America and Britain. Shows like "Bachelor", "Swan" or "American Idol" flushed into people's daily life. So falling of reading is, in this sense, due to a social change. Thus reading promotion should cooperate with other social sectors as a systematic project.

Study finds telly addicts do poorer homework

Educational psychologists have proved what parents and teachers have known all along - that doing homework in front of EastEnders or Neighbours is not a good idea.

Researchers investigated whether students produce poorer homework if they are watching a soap opera. They took 192 14-year-olds, divided them into three groups and gave them the same reading and comprehension exercises to perform.

The first group did the homework in front of the soap opera, while the second group simply listened to the programme's soundtrack. The third group were set to work with no distractions at all. They had as much time as they required to complete their homework.

The group doing their homework with the TV on took longer and produced work of a poorer quality.

The performance of those working with just the soundtrack was not significantly worse than that of those who had no distraction.

The researchers concluded that the major distraction was looking up to watch the screen. One of the researchers, Marina Pool said: "Students did not use the television as a background radio, but very regularly shifted their attention from their homework to the television screen - on average no less than 2.5 times per minute."

Other factors that affect homework performance include the way teachers communicate assignments to their students and the attitude of their pupils. Factors in pupils' home environment, including levels of parental interest, were also found to be significant.

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Update/homework.html#addicts>

Children who 'can't live without' constant TV

Television has become the "background noise" for a generation of children who no longer regard radio as required listening.

The squawk-box in the corner - increasingly a box in every bedroom - is like a "noisy lightbulb" that is never switched off. Some children, according to research released by the television regulators in June 2003, cannot imagine life without it.

"The television is almost like a member of the family in its own right," the report said.

The advent of multi-channel TV means children are watching more cartoons, yet decades-old programmes such as Newsround, Blue Peter, and Grange Hill are still in the top 10.

The research, carried out from 1996 to 2001 and published by the broadcasting standards commission and the independent television commission, found that most children kept the TV on while doing their homework. Most parents said they were unwilling to cause trouble by turning it off.

"Just like a lightbulb, the television is always on. It tends to be put on first thing in the morning when the household wakes up, and it is often on last thing at night," the report said.

Kam Atwal, the research manager, said: "It's the medium they spend the most time with by far. It's the one thing they can't live without. The children in our study couldn't imagine life without it. Some were amazed that turning off the television might be a consideration."

An 11-year-old from London said: "I wouldn't be able to live without my TV." A 12-year-old boy from Birmingham said: "You might not be really watching and listening, but it's always on in the background."

Parents said they gave way easily to pressure. "They're always, like, Please please please I have to watch it," said a father from London.

Lord Dubs, chairman of the standards commission, said he was surprised by the comments. "I'm a bit stunned that they say life without TV - no way. I am taken aback. That's my personal view, not the view of the commission. There was a generation where they didn't have television and they read books and did other things. It's a comment on what a change there has been."

Children in homes with multi-channel TV watch more hours a week than those who only have the five terrestrial channels. They tend to have a narrower range of viewing, since digital channels such as Nickelodeon and Disney rely more on animation than drama and factual programmes.

The research does not, however, cover the period since the BBC launched two digital children's channels in 2001.

On average, children (defined as between four and 15) spend two hours and 23 minutes a day watching TV, an hour and 11 minutes less than adults. Half an hour is spent on programmes produced for children; the rest is concentrated on soaps and entertainment programmes with a youthful slant.

Andrea Milwood-Hargrave, research director at the standards commission, said children were "multi-tasking": treating the TV as background noise in the same way that previous generations used radio.

A separate analysis of viewing figures for 2002 shows that the BBC1 soap East Enders was the most popular; the top rated children's programme was Newsround.

One in five children still watches after the 9pm watershed, although this falls to one in 10 by 10pm. Most children stop watching by 11.30pm.

(Guardian, 10 June 2003 - article by Matt Wells)

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Database/TV.html#constant>

Remarks by George:

A new generation is forming-the generation of TV. As the human civilization advances, there are always new generations forming, from the generation of non-books in the pre-Naissance era to the generation of radios in 1930s. We, human society, have experienced both the advance in literacy and the increase of sources of getting literacy. Are TV and books bound to be enemies? Or we may even consider using TV to promote books reading.

School holidays spent in front of computer screens cause problems

A study involving 1000 students over the summer of 2001 found that around half of the pupils questioned spent most of their summer holiday time surfing the internet or playing computer games. Hours spent away from other children would make socializing with other pupils when they returned to school problematic according to the report commissioned by Powergen.

Dr Aric Sigman, a psychologist who analysed the results, said a rise in the number of children with televisions in their bedrooms could be to blame for their solitary lifestyles.

The report said: “Children’s mathematical, reading and language skills all begin to decline after three weeks, and concentration levels also decrease after this time. The report said parents should nurture their children’s language skills during the summer break. To do this they should engage children in a game or structured play activity in which they were encouraged to talk. It also recommended daily reading sessions.

(Telegraph, 3 September 2001)

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Database/TV.html#screens>

Remarks by George:

Sitting before computer for too long a time might cause the following problems:

1. Social isolation
2. Decline in mathematical, reading and language skills and concentration level.

The Fact and Fiction Research Project, funded by the ESRC and based at the University of Southampton, observed and documented seven to nine-year-old boys' reading in and out of school. The study showed boys' preference for non-fiction does not prevent them from 'getting on the literacy bus' as some have argued, citing the absence of non-fiction from the early years reading curriculum as failing to satisfy boys' interests. Rather the project found that boys gravitate towards visually based non-fiction to mask their poor reading skills.

Examine the range of non-fiction they favour, from football sticker albums to Dorling Kindersley's Eyewitness series and what you find are a range of texts where the visual, rather than the written text, dominates. Two boys working their way through a sticker album will concentrate on the number of pages the owner has filled; compare collections in terms of who has the most or the best stickers; or compare views on the relative merits of teams or players. This is boys doing friendship, and friendship in this case involves sorting out a hierarchy of knowledge and expertise, or who can tell good jokes, or deliver the best insults. The expertise displayed seldom draws directly on the immediate written text. Indeed in the kind of session outlined above, the writing in the sticker albums – about players' footballing histories, or the clubs' previous performance – goes largely unread. In this kind of encounter, who knows the most is often not directly related to, and doesn't depend upon, who can read the text the best. In these respects, weak readers can meet their peers on an equal level.

It is the potential for equal social status that seems to draw weaker boy readers towards visually based non-fiction, and away from fiction texts. Fiction reading in the classroom constructs a different kind of hierarchy. Close monitoring of children's progress in reading (largely fiction) texts is used by adults to carefully grade and sort children's competence as readers to determine the kinds of text children will have access to. The fiction books children get to read, in their layout and point size of typeface, make public children's relative standing in the reading stakes, both to the child themselves and to their peers. The project data shows boys and girls respond differently to this [exposure].

For weak girl readers, less seems to be at stake socially in accepting teacher judgements about their relative competence at reading. In paired reading, weaker girl readers find few difficulties in accepting help from more experienced readers, whilst groups of girls can often be observed reading well below their competence level, turning the reading of "easy" texts into a kind of play. Weaker boy readers find it harder to reconcile the social standing they are being offered in class to the social standing they aspire to in their relations with peers. One consequence is that early on many boys begin to evolve, often elaborate, strategies for disguising their low status as readers and as a result they spend less time reading.

The project data suggests different areas for intervention. For weaker girl readers, that they be encouraged to read at, or above, their current levels of competence, rather than within and below. For weaker boy readers, that more opportunities be created for keeping them on task, coupled with ways of raising their self-esteem. It is a mistake to think that nothing can be done about boys. Indeed, the Department for Education and

Employment's own figures show that in 20 per cent of primary schools boys outperform girls and in 30 to 40 per cent of schools they lag behind significantly.

It may be that shifts of emphasis in the teaching format now in place within the structure of the Literacy Hour are already effecting changes in line with the project's findings: making the focus for literacy instruction the group rather than the individual and by always insisting on work that encompasses text, sentence, and word levels with explicit attention paid to supporting wider reading.

Whilst teachers continue to struggle to meet targets and deliver a worthwhile curriculum in the new climate of quality control, there is much to play for and plenty of reasons for feeling optimistic about the future.

Remarks by George:

Interestingly, the article gives an explanation to boys' preference to non-fictions. Regardless of the validity of the given conclusion, it implied that boys

Research shows ICT boosts literacy

Computers can boost primary pupil's reading and writing even more than their numeracy skills, research published by the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne in January 2000 reveals.

The key to raising standards seems to be the effective use of information and communication systems by teachers, rather than pupils. Literacy skills improved five times more quickly than average among primary schools where teachers made good use of computers.

For more information visit the University of Newcastle site at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ecls/research/education/li/research/project_04.htm

(TES, 14 January 2000)

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/database/ICTpress.html#researchshows>

Evaluation of Integrated Learning Systems (ILS)

An ILS system is a computer-based system that presents pupils with individual programmes of work over a number of weeks or months. The system can provide immediate feedback to pupils as they work as well as detailed records on pupils' progress for teachers. Since 1993 BECTa (the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency) has evaluated the use of ILS in schools in the UK on behalf of the DfEE. The UK ILS Evaluations – Final Report, £7.50, is available from Becta (01203 416669).

The key conclusions of this research are:

- There is considerable evidence that pupils do learn from integrated learning systems. The main issue is not if pupils learn but what and how they learn.
- The use of ILS has a marked positive effect on pupils' attitudes, motivation and behaviour. As yet evidence is inconclusive as to whether these positive impacts generalise beyond experience with ILS to influence more general attitudes towards schooling or school subjects.
- Where the use of ILS at least matches what can be achieved with conventional teaching, these systems offer a stimulating means of extending the range of learning opportunities open to pupils. However, the results suggest that exclusive reliance on ILS for preparation for Key Stage 3 tests and GCSE exams may have a negative impact, and imply that teaching by other methods is pedagogically necessary during the period of immediate preparation for these examinations.
- Although teachers and headteachers were generally positive in their attitudes towards ILS and their educational impact, there are issues to address concerning the apparent gap between the acquisition and evaluation of core skills and the wider knowledge and skills tested in examination performance.
- There was evidence from all three phases of evaluation that ILS can help to enhance teachers' confidence in IT and contribute to the development of their knowledge and skills in management and the use of educational technology.

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Research/ITresearch.html#evaluationof>

Girls beat boys at reading - worldwide

The underachievement of boys in reading at British schools is part of an international malaise, according to a report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and Unesco. Far from being confined to the UK, the gender gap in reading scores seems to be universal. Girls had higher reading ages at 15 in every one of the 43 countries surveyed in the report.

The difference in scores, based on the results of tests carried out by the OECD on between 4,500 and 10,000 students in each country, is significant in all countries except Peru and Israel, and remarkable in Albania, Finland, Latvia and Macedonia.

The report, Literacy Skills for the World of Tomorrow, says underachievement by boys in reading is closely linked to a "lack of engagement". Some 56% of boys, compared to 33% of girls, said they read only to get information. Nearly half of the girls but less than a third of the boys said they read for at least 30 minutes a day.

British students have a marginally higher interest in using email and the internet than the OECD average. Mr Schleicher, the lead author of the report, said countries which did well at reading had students who experience a wide diversity of reading matter. "Email can be as important as reading book in this context," he said.

On two measures the UK stands out. It is the only country where rural schools do better than those in the cities. And students rate the support they get from teachers more highly in the UK than anywhere else.

Britain is one of the countries which performs significantly above the OECD average in all three domains - reading, maths and science - covered by the report. The others are Australia, Austria, Canada, Finland, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Sweden and Hong Kong.

Unsurprisingly, countries with a higher national income tend to perform better in education terms, but Hong Kong, Russia and Latvia "outperform" in relation to their relative wealth.

Britain is also one of the countries with a strong relationship between class and educational performance, along with Germany, Switzerland, and the US. Canada, Finland, Hong Kong, Iceland, Japan, South Korea and Sweden "demonstrate that high average quality and equality of educational outcomes can go together".

Finland has the best reading scores of all the countries surveyed. Half the population is capable of difficult reading tasks and only 2% are unable to achieve the simplest OECD tests. It has one of the smallest gaps in performance between the best and the worst performers. It was also evidence of one of the common themes of the report, that systems which gave schools a high degree of autonomy did better.

(Guardian, 2 July 2003)

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Database/Intupdate.html#Girls>

Why Finnish children are so good at reading

Finnish children are the best readers in the world according to the OECD survey. Finnish children are encouraged to read from an early age, not only to get information but for pleasure. Even under-12s regularly read a quality newspaper, and schools hold a dedicated newspaper week every year during which students find out how a newspaper is put together and what is involved in newsgathering, writing and editing.

Pupils are highly motivated to read and discuss books - there are even two literacy magazines aimed at children. The results in the OECD report show that those students who read for pleasure tend to read a more varied range of materials overall.

In Finland, libraries have always been seen as the key to giving everyone the opportunity to enjoy reading, but parents' attitudes are equally significant.

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Database/Intupdate.html#Finnish>

A review of the research literature relating to ICT and attainment

A recent research project conducted by Becta on behalf of the DfES investigated the effects of ICT on educational attainment, based on evidence from the published research literature. This study found positive effects of ICT on pupils' attainment in almost all the National Curriculum subjects, particularly regarding mathematics and English at all key stages. This review further suggests that a crucial component in the use of ICT within education is the teacher and their pedagogical approaches. The impact on attainment is greatest for those ICT resources that have been integrated in teachers' practices for a long time. The authors concluded that ICT has a positive impact on pupils' learning when the use of ICT is closely related to learning objectives and when the choice of how to use ICT is relevant to the teaching and learning purposes.

Cox, M., Abbott, C., Webb, M., Blakeley, B., Beauchamp, T. and Rhodes, V. (2004). A review of the research literature relating to ICT and attainment. Coventry: Becta

This report is available from www.becta.org.uk

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Research/ICTreviews.html#education>

Reading proves harder for boys

Boys really do find it harder to learn to read than girls according to a study involving more than 10,000 pupils. They are twice as likely to be poor readers, says a paper from the Institute of Psychiatry at King's College, London, Christchurch School of Medicine, New Zealand, and Warwick university, although the paper said more research was needed into the possible cause of the gender gap.

The research refutes the myth that teachers are more likely to identify boys as poor readers than girls. A 1990 study in the United States led by Professor Sally Shaywitz of Yale university, said that although research identified no significant differences in reading ability between 400 seven or eight-year-old boys and girls, schools were referring between two and four times as many boys as girls - suggesting teachers were biased against boys.

The latest research cites four large-scale studies. It also analyses data previously collected on children in New Zealand and the UK. It points out that a Programme for International Student Assessment (Pisa) study - which compares the achievements of 15-year-olds in 32 countries - found that in all countries girls are more literate than boys, although the size of the gender gap varies.

Professor Robert Goodman of the Institute of Psychiatry and co-author of the research, said: "The Shaywitz study has been very influential in making people feel that it is due to gender bias that teachers, schools and clinics find more boys than girls with reading difficulties. Our study has found teachers have been right all along and that there are more boys with difficulties."

Co-author Dr Julia Carroll of Warwick university said: "As reading disability in childhood is associated with adjustment problems in later life, there is a definite need to recognise sex differences."

Sex differences in developmental reading disability: new findings from four epidemiological studies, Journal of the American Medical Association, vol. 291, no. 16.

(TES, 21 May 2004)

<http://www.yearofreading.org.uk/Research/boysresearch.html#harder>