

“Why Has She Stopped Reading?”

The Case for Supporting Reading for Pleasure in Secondary Schools.

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate why some children, who engage in reading for pleasure at primary school, stop reading once they have transitioned to secondary school. The study followed eight students from their last term of Year 6 primary education (10 to 11 year-olds) through to the end of their first term of Year 8 secondary education (12 to 13 year-olds). In this ethnographic interpretivist study I used a variety of methods including: observation, questionnaires and group conversations to discover the reasons why some students engage in less reading for pleasure once they begin their secondary school education. I employed thematic analysis to allow flexibility to my research and to provide a detailed and rich account. Some of the eight students involved in this study dramatically reduced the amount of reading which they engaged in and some continued to spend a similar amount of time engaging in reading for pleasure. Some students continued with familiar, safe, readerly texts and some students branched out to explore new genres and text types. This study provides insight into how the child as a reader changes once they move to secondary school and identifies what teachers need to know about the child to be able to facilitate reading for pleasure. New Year 7 students are concerned about perceived negative peer perceptions of readers and suggestions are made about the ways in which teachers and librarians can work with students to encourage reading for pleasure. A key finding of this study was that a precise understanding of Year 7 students as readers by secondary school English teachers is required for them to be able to facilitate students' reading for pleasure. Suggestions are offered about how teachers can gain a greater understanding of their students as readers and suggestions are also offered about how to develop the child as a reader.

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Contents

1	Introduction	8
2	The Importance of Reading for Pleasure	12
3	Defining “Reading for Pleasure”	21
4	The National Curriculum 1989 to 2014 and Government Focus on Reading for Pleasure ...	28
5	Reading Surveys Exploring Children’s Reading for Pleasure – A Review	38
6	Research Design	58
7	Selecting the Primary and Secondary Schools and Gaining Access.....	62
8	The Schools Involved in the Research Project.....	68
9	Initial School-Based Observations	72
10	The Observational and Interview Setting	75
11	The Questionnaire - Methodology	86
12	The Research Participants.....	94
13	Group Conversations	107
14	Defining “Readers”	113
15	The Students: Their Reading Story – Summer 2010, The End of Year 6	120
16	The Observational and Interview Setting – Secondary Schools	165
17	The Research Participants: Questionnaire responses at the end of Year 7	173
18	The Conversations in Years 7 and 8.....	183
19	Geeks	315
20	Conclusion.....	336
21	Bibliography	351
22	Appendix 1	362
23	Appendix 2	377
24	Appendix 3	387

Tables and Figures

Table 1: The National Curricula For English	28
Table 2: Government Publications concerning the teaching of English	33
Table 3: National Curriculum Attainment Target 2: Reading.....	35
Table 4: Whitehead’s results for the average number of books read during one month.....	39
Table 5: Whitehead’s results for the number of children choosing not to read	40
Table 6: Cole and Hall’s results for the average number of books read in the previous month	43
Table 7: Coles and Hall’s results for the number of children choosing not to read.....	44
Table 8: Coles and Hall’s results for children’s views of reading by age	44
Table 9: Hopper’s results for children reading a book at home	46
Table 10: Clark and Douglas’ results for reading frequency	50
Table 11: Clark and Douglas children choosing not to read or to rarely read	50
Table 12: Overview of research	59
Table 13: Overview of research participants’ primary and secondary schools	61
Figure 1: Primary School A Library	77
Figure 2: Primary School A Library Stock	77
Figure 3: Primary School B Library	78
Figure 4: Primary School B beanbag area	78
Figure 5: Primary School	79
Figure 6: Primary School C’s book display	79
Figure 7: Primary School C’s Book of the Term display board.	84
Table 14: Completion Rates for My Primary Questionnaires	87
Table 15: Completion Rates for My Secondary Questionnaires	88
Table 16: Average number of books read in the previous month my results	90
Table 17: Number of children reporting no reading in the previous month my results	91
Table 18: Positive attitudes towards reading	91
Table 19: Jamie’s Primary Profile	99
Table 20: Theo’s Primary Profile	100
Table 21: Joe’s Primary Profile.....	101
Table 22: Tom’s Primary Profile	102
Table 23: Gemma’s Primary Profile.....	103
Table 24: Scarlet’s Primary Profile	104
Table 25: Anna’s Primary Profile	105
Table 26: Brandon’s Primary Profile.....	106
Figure 8: An Example of a Primary Word Cloud.....	110

Figure 9: An Example of a Primary Picture Collage	110
Figure 10: Laura E Kelly’s Classification of Book Lovers and Other Readers	114
Table 27: The Booktrust Reading Habits Survey Categories of Readers	115
Table 28: Howard’s Preliminary taxonomy of teen readers	118
Table 29: Howard’s Taxonomy of teen readers	118
Figure 11: Secondary School A cosy corner	166
Figure 12: Secondary School A fiction area	166
Figure 13: Secondary School B fiction	167
Figure 14: Secondary School B comfortable seating	167
Figure 15: Secondary School C comfortable seating area	167
Figure 16: Secondary School C study alcoves and whole class desk provision	167
Figure 17: A display of students’ views about their fiction texts.	169
Figure 18: A display board in the library.....	170
Figure 19: A display of recommended reads by students	172
Figure 20: An Example of a Secondary Word Cloud	174
Figure 21: An Example of a Secondary Picture Collage	174
Table 30: Jamie’s Secondary Profile	175
Table 31: Theo’s Secondary Profile	176
Table 32: Joe’s Secondary Profile	177
Table 33: Tom’s Secondary Profile	178
Table 34: Gemma’s Secondary Profile	179
Table 35: Scarlet’s Secondary Profile	180
Table 36: Anna’s Secondary Profile	181
Table 37: Brandon’s Secondary Profile.....	182
Table 38: Jamie’s Recorded Reading	186
Figure 22: Jamie’s Secondary Questionnaire Image.....	189
Figure 23: Horacek’s ‘The Book, The Child, The Adult’	193
Figure 24: Horacek’s ‘My Brain Needs Sharpening’	194
Table 39: Theo’s Recorded Reading	202
Figure 25: Theo’s Secondary Questionnaire Image.....	210
Table 40: Joe’s Recorded Reading.....	211
Figure 26: Joe’s Recorded Reading.....	217
Figure 27: Secondary School A Bookmarks.....	219
Figure 28: The Reading Circle.....	221
Figure 29: The Reading Tree Display	224
Figure 30: The Reading Tree Reviews.....	224

Figure 31: Adventure Story Suggestions.....	224
Figure 32: What to Read Display.....	224
Table 41: Tom’s Recorded Reading.....	225
Table 42: Secondary School B’s Library Reading List.....	228
Figure 33: Tom’s Secondary Questionnaire Image.....	235
Table 43: Gemma’s Recorded Reading.....	247
Table 44: Secondary School C’s Library Reading Helpsheet.....	250
Figure 34: Secondary School C’s Recommended Reads Display.....	251
Figure 35: Secondary School C Library Display.....	251
Figure 36: Gemma’s Secondary Questionnaire Image.....	252
Table 45: Scarlet’s Recorded Reading.....	257
Figure 37: Scarlet’s Secondary Questionnaire Image.....	261
Table 46: Anna’s Recorded Reading.....	268
Figure 38: Anna’s Secondary Questionnaire Image.....	275
Figure 39: Scarlet and Anna’s Secondary Questionnaire Images.....	278
Table 47: Brandon’s Recorded Reading.....	281
Figure 40: Brandon’s Secondary Questionnaire Image.....	289
Table 48: My definitions and an explanation of their meanings.....	305
Table 49: My Vocabulary Used to Define Readers.....	309
Figure 41: Man, Woman, Geek.....	316
Figure 42: Dweeb, Dork, Nerd and Geek Attributes.....	317
Figure 43: The Evolution of the Geek.....	318
Figure 44: Geek Hierarchy.....	319
Figure 45: Geek and Nerd Traits.....	320
Figure 46: Geeks and Reading Word Cloud.....	331
Figure 47: Children’s Drawings of Geeks.....	332
Table 50: Questionnaire Results for Reading and Geeks.....	333
Table 51: Clark and Osbourne’s Results for Children’s views of Readers.....	334
Table 52: Clark and Osbourne’s Results for Friend’s Views of Readers.....	334
Figure 48: An Example of a Life Map from Secondary School A.....	343
Figure 49: An Example of a ‘River of Reading’.....	344
Figure 50: An Example of a ‘River of Reading’.....	344

1 Introduction

“Why has she stopped reading?”

The impetus for my research came when a parent asked me this question. I’m a secondary school English teacher and the school where I was teaching English had just taken in its first Year 7 cohort and parents of the new Year 7 students were invited into school. A parent approached me and said:

“If my daughter was still at her middle school for Year 7, she would have a reading book that she would be sent home with every night for me to hear her read. Why doesn’t she have a reading book sent home with her at this school? Why has she stopped reading?”

(Year 7 parent)

I could not answer these questions.

As an English teacher, I was aware of the statistics which showed a drop in children’s reading as they got older (Whitehead et al., 1977, Clark and Douglas, 2011, Clark and Osborne, 2008). However, I did not know why individual children changed their reading behaviour: I wanted to find the story behind the statistics.

Thus I embarked on a study to follow a small number of children who held positive views about reading at primary school. I followed these children as they transferred from their primary schools to their secondary schools. I attempted to understand the impact that transferring schools had on their reading and their attitudes to reading. I met with the children regularly whilst they were in their last term of primary school, Year 6, and continued to meet with them throughout their first year of secondary school, Year 7. Finally, I completed the observation at the end of the children’s first term of Year 8.

This study provides insight into why and how some children’s reading habits change when they enter secondary education, why some children continue to read for pleasure and why

some children don't, and therefore it contains some invaluable insights for teachers and parents. This study tells the story of what happened to the specific children involved, and will show how each child's story is different. Pseudonyms have been used for all participants and institutions to allow anonymity.

The study looks at the children themselves through observations, questionnaires and conversations. The role of the children's families is explored. I have observed the ways the schools that the children attend have influenced their reading and I will look at how the National Curriculum has made a difference.

I will draw conclusions about what supported, encouraged and prevented, these students in continuing with their reading, and suggest how other students might be encouraged to read for pleasure. In essence, this study is my attempt to answer that parent's question, "Why has she stopped reading?"

Thus, my research questions are:

Why do some children engage in less reading for pleasure after they transfer from primary to secondary school?

How can secondary schools support and encourage reading for pleasure?

Below is a brief summary of each chapter.

Chapters 2 to 5 are literature reviews of the different areas involved in this research.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the arguments for the importance of reading for pleasure and why I believe that reading for pleasure has a place in our schools. I examine the link between reading frequency and reading attainment, reading attitudes and reading attainments and reading on cognitive development in maths, vocabulary and spelling.

Chapter 3 discusses the various definitions of reading for pleasure and it concludes with my definition. **Chapter 4** summarises the National Curriculum for England and Wales policy documents for the teaching of English for the last twenty five years and discusses the focus

placed on reading for pleasure in the secondary school curriculum. The impact of Ofsted and the Department of Education reports is also examined. **Chapter 5** provides a review of the various surveys which have looked at children's reading for pleasure. The issues regarding transition from primary to secondary school are also discussed with various reports and research presented. The chapter ends with a discussion of what my research adds to this debate.

Chapter 6 outlines my epistemological stance and provides an overview of the research design and the educational paths taken by each student. **Chapter 7** focuses on selecting which primary and secondary schools to include in my research and the process by which I gain access. **Chapter 8** provides a more detailed picture of the three primary and three secondary schools involved in my research and **Chapter 9** looks at the methodology of my school-based observations. In **Chapter 10** I discuss the importance of school libraries and consider the function and culture of the school libraries of the three primary schools involved in my study. I also present a discussion of my primary school classroom observations. In **Chapter 11**, I present the methodology behind my choice to use a questionnaire as a data gathering tool and I focus on the selection process employed for potential research participants.

I present vignettes of the research participants which were created after the initial primary school based observations in **Chapter 12** alongside a reader profile for each research participant based on the child's questionnaire data. **Chapter 13** sees the research project move to small group conversations and the methodology of this research method is discussed. A review of the terminology which is employed to defined readers is presented in **Chapter 14** along with my conclusions about the appropriateness of this terminology for use with my research participants.

Chapter 15 presents the research participants' reading story at the end of their primary school education and discusses their concerns about starting their secondary school education. This section also contains a discussion of audiobooks and reading for pleasure. **Chapter 16** focuses on the secondary schools involved in the research and discusses the

library space in each secondary school and my observations of library lessons. In **Chapter 17** I revisit and update the student profiles using data from the secondary school questionnaire taken at the end of Year 7.

Chapter 18 presents each child's reading story during their first four terms of secondary school and I also discuss:

- Reading in bed and reading aloud;
- 'Good' and 'bad' books;
- Reading journals;
- Talking about books;
- Sustained silent reading;
- Magazines;
- 'Booked Up' and book ownership;
- Computer games and reading;
- Comics.

The chapter ends with a discussion of the types of readers present in secondary schools and I present my precise terminology used for the students involved in this study. I also present a framework for thinking about the child as a reader.

Chapter 19 looks at the importance of status groups in secondary schools with specific focus on 'Geeks' and how this can have a detrimental impact on children's reading for pleasure. And finally, in **Chapter 20** I present my conclusions about children's reading for pleasure and make suggestions about what schools and teachers can do to encourage their students' reading success.

2 The Importance of Reading for Pleasure

“...in here you can just reeeead!” Jamie.

At the heart of this thesis is my belief that children in secondary schools should be encouraged to engage in reading for pleasure. I believe that nurturing reading for pleasure has an important place in the secondary school curriculum, and over the twenty plus years of my teaching career, I have attempted to develop the reading habit in my students.

In education there appears to be an intrinsic belief that children reading for pleasure is a good thing. Research supporting the benefits for reading for pleasure is growing and I suggest that the body of research falls into three broad areas: Emotional Engagement; Cultural Education and Educational Attainment.

2.1 Emotional Engagement

Some writers have expressed – using the greatest superlatives available to them - the importance that reading holds for them. For example, Alberto Manguel states, “...I don’t think I could live without reading” (Manguel, 1996, p. 7), and Sue Townsend says that learning to read, “was the single most important thing that ever happened in my life” (Townsend quoted in Hanks, 2004). Rosenblatt states, “literature makes comprehensible the myriad ways in which human beings meet the infinite possibilities that life offers,” (Rosenblatt, 1970, p. 6). Continuing this theme, Meek writes about the “special kind of pleasure” reading brings for the reader (Meek, 1982, p. 17). These ‘histories’, ‘personal views’ and soft assertions are interesting but they are not enough to argue why children should engage in reading for pleasure, especially when some of the people making these arguments for reading are writers who earn their living by people engaging in reading.

Another argument for reading for pleasure is that readers identify with characters in the text that they are reading. Stan Persky, quoted by Manguel, says "...for readers, there must be a million autobiographies, since we seem to find, in book after book, the traces of our lives" (Manguel, 1996, p. 10). This view is also echoed by Sarland:

"The Russian formalists...have suggested that characters are presented in popular literature in generalized terms, as types, or caricatures, offering readers empty categories into which they are at liberty to inject their own characteristics, their own motives, their own psychologies" (Sarland, 1991, p. 79).

These views link in with arguments about reading in terms of the reader's personal and social development. Appleyard writes that "...Reading is a way of exploring an inner world" (Appleyard, 1990, p. 59). Sainsbury and Schagen develop this concept by discussing the emotional engagement that reading offers:

"...involvement in books allows children to experience through imagination other worlds and other roles, and this involvement contributes to their personal and social development as well as to their reading abilities" (Sainsbury and Schagen, 2004, pp. 374-375).

This argument is not new. In 1939 Rosenblatt wrote:

"Through books, the reader may explore his own nature, become aware of potentialities for thoughts and feelings within himself, acquire clearer perspective, develop aims and a sense of direction" (Rosenblatt, 1970, p. viii).

It is interesting to note that the 1989 version of English in the National Curriculum stated:

“Pupils can be helped emotionally, aesthetically and intellectually by means of the pleasurable activity of reading” (Department for Education and Science, 1989b, Point 16.4).

Benton and Fox refer to the ability to see oneself in a text and to empathise with characters and situations as “interacting” with the text:

“...stories provide the possibility of educating feelings and can offer their readers potential growth points for the development of a more subtle awareness of human behaviour” (Benton and Fox, 1985, pp. 14-15).

2.2 Cultural Education

Manguel has developed this argument by discussing the importance of reading in terms of it being at the heart of a society’s culture and suggests that, without it, we do not learn the rules of our society: “For most literate societies...reading is at the beginning of the social contract; learning how to read was my rite of passage” (Manguel, 1996, p. 7). This view of a reader learning about their culture is also expressed by Crossley-Holland:

“I have come to believe that it is through story...that children can most fruitfully develop a sense of history” (Crossley-Holland, 2009, p. 65).

National identity is, essentially, “a stylistic way of identifying differences between ‘us’ and ‘others’, chiefly in terms of origins, optings and associations” (Meek, 2001, p. ix). Margaret Meek believes that children learn about their national identity early in life from their children’s books:

“If we agree that literature offers and encourages a continuing scrutiny of ‘who we think we are’, we have to emphasise the part that children’s literature plays in the development of children’s understanding of both belonging (being one of us) and differentiation (being other). In the outside world, children adopt adult attitudes that their books either confirm or challenge” (Meek, 2001, p. x).

The importance of learning about cultural heritage and national identity is evident and the role that children’s literature plays in this cannot be underestimated.

2.3 Educational Attainment

The most robust arguments for the importance of reading focus on academic development. Maynard, Mackay and Smyth, in the introduction to their 2008 survey of young peoples’ reading, state that:

“The importance of reading undertaken in childhood cannot be underestimated; it provides a foundation for the acquisition of knowledge as well as a love of reading for pleasure” (Maynard et al., 2008, p. 239).

This survey was carried out online by the National Centre for Research in Children’s Literature at Roehampton University in 2005 and had responses from 4,182 children from ages four to sixteen who were living in England.

Gaiman develops this point in relation to fiction:

“Literate people read fiction... it’s a gateway drug to reading. The drive to know what happens next, to want to turn the page, the need to keep going, even if it’s

hard, because someone's in trouble and you have to know how it's all going to end...that's a very real drive. And it forces you to learn new words, to think new thoughts, to keep going. To discover that reading per se is pleasurable" (Gaiman, 2013).

'Children and their Books' by Whitehead et al., presents research findings about children's reading in England and Wales between the ages of eight to sixteen. Here, Whitehead et al. stress the importance of reading upon a child's writing development:

"...[the]habit of wide independent reading has a massive influence for the good on the child's mastery of the written patterns of his language" (Whitehead et al., 1975, p. 7).

Nearly thirty years later, Stephen Krashen sums this up in more simplistic terms:

"...when children or less literate adults start reading for pleasure...good things happen. Their reading comprehension will improve...their writing style will improve...their vocabulary will improve, and their spelling and control of grammar will improve" (Krashen, 2004, p. x).

Today, there is mounting evidence to suggest that there is a link between reading frequency and reading attainment. The results from the first Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), reported in 'Reading for change: Results from PISA 2000', indicate that:

"All the students who are highly engaged in reading achieve reading literacy scores that are significantly above the international mean, whatever their family background" (Kirsch et al., 2002, p. 121).

The PISA reports are wide ranging international studies which attempt to “measure how well young adults near the end of compulsory schooling are prepared to meet the challenges of today’s knowledge societies” (Kirsch et al., 2002, p. 3). For the 2000 PISA assessment, more than a quarter of a million fifteen-year-olds were assessed in thirty two countries (Kirsch et al., 2002, p. 19). PISA looked at a range of reading situations: “reading for private use; reading for public use; reading for work and reading for education” (Kirsch et al., 2002, p. 26). It also made a distinction between continuous and non-continuous texts – for example, narrative is defined as a continuous text and charts and tables are non-continuous texts. One key finding was that:

“15-year-old students who are highly engaged readers and whose parents have the lowest occupational status achieve significantly higher average reading scores (540) than students whose parents have the highest occupational status but who are poorly engaged in reading (491)” (Kirsch et al., 2002, p. 121). N.B. the OECD average mean reading score is 500.

The report provides evidence that children, who read on a regular basis, are good at reading. A number of reports have had similar findings such as those of Cipielewski and Stanovich (Cipielewski and Stanovich, 1992), Guthrie and Wigfield (Guthrie and Wigfield, 2000) and Clark and Rumbold, who state that “we must see reading for pleasure as an activity that has real educational and social consequences” (Clark and Rumbold, 2006, p. 24).

Research over the last thirty years has shown that reading for pleasure is linked with:

- Reading attainment (Krashen, 2004, Taylor et al., 1990);
- Text comprehension (Cox and Guthrie, 2001);
- Positive attitudes towards reading (Guthrie and Alvermann, 1999).

It must be noted that the majority of these studies looking at children’s reading are based on correlation research and would benefit from a more rigorous approach in terms of

numbers of children studied and the length of the study. For example, Taylor's 1990 study involved "one hundred and ninety-five students in 11 classes in Grades 5 and 6" who "kept daily reading logs from mid-January through mid-May" (Taylor et al., 1990, p. 353). This limited number of students does not allow for generalisations. The short time-frame is also potentially problematic. The international studies, even though they aim to test "at least 95 per cent coverage of the target population" (Twist et al., 2007, p. 3), also exhibit problems with consistency in testing students of a similar age, in a similar manner across numerous countries with educational and cultural differences.

The results of specific tests in England, however, seem to bear out the findings of these more problematic international comparative ones. For instance, the findings of the PIRLS tests since 2000 all make a link between reading frequency and reading attainment. In 2006 the PIRLS 'Readers and Reading National Report for England 2006' (Twist et al., 2007), which tested children in Year 5 in England, reported that:

"Children in England tended to report reading for pleasure less frequently than their peers in many other countries. There is a strong association between the amount of reading for pleasure children reported and their reading achievement" (Twist et al., 2007, p. v).

This correlation between reading for pleasure and reading achievement was also present in the PIRLS 2011 report for reading achievement in England (Twist et al., 2011) which states:

"As with almost all countries, pupils in England who had higher levels of enjoyment in reading had higher average achievement than their peers" (Twist et al., 2011, p. 20).

The existence of a strong relationship between enjoyment, attitudes, frequency and attainment was made by Clark and De Zoysa in 2011 (Clark and De Zoysa, 2011). In their study 'Mapping the interrelationships of reading enjoyment, attitudes, behaviour and

attainment', 4,503 young people's reading habits were studied. The conclusions drawn are unequivocal:

"We found that the model of best fit is one where reading enjoyment is a doubly powerful source of influence, being related to attainment both directly and indirectly through its relationship with reading behaviour, which, in turn, is related to reading attainment. Attitudes towards reading are also indirectly related with reading attainment through their relationship with reading behaviour" (Clark and De Zoysa, 2011, p. 5).

The case for reading frequency and reading enjoyment having a positive impact on reading attainment is clear. In their 2013 study 'Social inequalities in cognitive scores at age 16: The role of reading' (Sullivan and Brown, 2013) Sullivan and Brown explored the effect of reading for pleasure on the cognitive development of 6,000 young people over time, and they found that:

"reading for pleasure at the ages of 10 and 16 had a substantial influence on cognitive progress across the three scores [maths, vocabulary and spelling], but was largest in the case of vocabulary" (Sullivan and Brown, 2013, p. 2).

This important longitudinal study made a link not only between the impact of reading frequency and reading attitudes on reading attainment, but also between reading frequency and cognitive development for maths, vocabulary and spelling. It argues that reading for pleasure is an important factor for broader academic success, a feature which should appeal to any government concerned with raising standards. In fact, the recent Department for Education's report 'Research evidence on reading for pleasure' of 2012 asserts that the benefits of reading for pleasure include:

- educational purposes
- personal development
- higher scores on reading assessments
- reading achievement

- emotional and social consequences
- text comprehension and grammar
- increased general knowledge (Department for Education, 2012).

2.4 Reading for Pleasure...because it is fun!

As an English teacher, I feel that I *should* argue that children who read achieve more academically, however, I believe the emotional engagement and cultural education reasons are even more important to the development of the individual student. In addition, even though I value the educational benefits that reading for pleasure can bring, I consider that the fact that independent reading is entertaining and enjoyable is as weighty and validating a factor for its promotion. If we lose sight of this point then reading is merely reading and it stops being reading for pleasure. Roy Hattersley shares this view, and expresses it clearly when he writes:

“Reading was meant to make us glad...Reading can be a universal joy as long as we remember the basic principle – it was made to make us glad”(Hattersley, 1998, p. 52).

3 Defining “Reading for Pleasure”

“I like reading stories and pretending I’m in it” Anna.

“Reading doesn’t just mean passing our eyes over printed words in order to decipher them. Rather...the reading process comprises a number of activities of which ‘taking the words off the page’ is only one. The trouble is that English doesn’t have a word other than ‘reading’ for the time spent looking at words on a page” (Chambers, 1991, p. 11).

Claire Senior states that independent reading is about gaining “enjoyment and pleasure from texts and improving literacy” (Senior, 2005, p. 9). Educators want their students to be able to read, to decode the symbols on the page and to make sense of what they have read. Reading for pleasure contributes to the capacity for meaning-making, and lifts reading above the merely functional. However, English teachers also want their students to enjoy reading and to engage in private reading as a preferred leisure activity. Krashen explains that, “Free voluntary reading...means reading because you want to” (Krashen, 2004, p. 1).

When new Year 7 students arrive at their English lessons in secondary schools the teacher can be forgiven for assuming that the students can read independently, have appropriate selection strategies for selecting reading material that will interest them, and have the stamina to engage in silent reading for a sustained period of time. When a child is able to manage being an independent reader then it is possible for them, at some point, to take a break from reading and then come back to it at a later date because the reading habit has been caught. Studies suggest that although reading for pleasure decreases with age in the teenage years, it can increase again (Clark and Rumbold, 2006, Clark and Douglas, 2011). However, if the child hasn’t yet developed into an independent reader who reads for pleasure, then upon entering secondary school, they will still require support and guidance, perhaps from a teacher or librarian, perhaps from parents, relatives or friends.

Clark and Rumbold state: “it has become increasingly apparent that purely cognitive accounts of reading are incomplete – just because someone is able to read does not mean that he or she will choose to do so” (Clark and Rumbold, 2006, p. 7). This is where the definition of independent reading stumbles, to actively engage in independent reading for pleasure as a voluntary leisure activity is more than just being able to read, it is wanting to read, and perhaps for some, needing to read, too.

This makes ‘reading for pleasure’ a hard term to define. Benton suggests that independent reading is reading that a child does away from the classroom which is “self-chosen reading” (Benton, 1995b, p. 101); with free choice of books. Nell defines “pleasure reading as the kind we do for fun and relaxation” (Nell, 1988b, p. 11) and Clark and Rumbold state:

“Reading for pleasure refers to reading that we do of our own free will anticipating the satisfaction that we will get from the act of reading...It typically involves materials that reflect our own choice, at a time and place that suits us” (Clark and Rumbold, 2006, p. 6).

Aidan Chambers cautions against ‘own-time reading’ being seen as ‘homework’:

“For most children this means that reading becomes a chore and the pleasure is lessened if not lost...” (Chambers, 1993, p. 73).

I disagree with this, in part because, until the reading habit is firmly established, then setting reading as homework can be an important aspect in helping a child develop into a child who regularly and voluntarily engages in reading for pleasure as a leisure activity. Chambers argues against the class or English teacher prescribing all of the reading material a child reads for homework:

“It is unvarying and regular teacher-choice required to be read for homework that has helped make so many unwilling, disaffected readers” (Chambers, 1993, p. 73).

If the teacher has stated which book needs to be read, how long the child has to read for, and that there will be a test on that reading or the students will have to write a book review, then I agree that this approach can kill any child’s reading enthusiasm. However, if the reading set as homework is free reading, and by this I mean that the student can participate in choosing what they read, where they read and for how long they read, then I see this as an opportunity to engage students in reading for pleasure by providing a time for them to read. In addition, setting private reading for homework tells the students that the teacher expects them to have a reading book. This in turn, stresses to the students that reading is valued by the teacher, and by the school.

Pilgreen writes, “If we are to hook students on reading, then frequent opportunities to read in school are critical,” (Pilgreen, 2000, p. 69) yet for the busy secondary school English classroom, providing time for private reading is not always possible. As Benton and Fox write:

“Even the most avid teacher-reader can be vulnerable to an insidious sense of guilt about surrendering regular class time for private reading: some teachers genuinely feel anxious when children are ‘just reading’ – if we aren’t teaching them, how can they be learning? The fallacy is clear enough from a distance, but it is true that the issue becomes muddied when there is a syllabus to be covered, examinations to be prepared for, administrative papers to be shuffled, and even parental pressures to be considered. Private reading time is always a probable casualty” (Benton and Fox, 1985, p. 97).

This point is echoed in the first secondary National Curriculum back in 1989:

“There is a danger, particularly in the final years of compulsory schooling, that little time is given to promoting reading for fun. Too much concentration on set texts for assessment purposes can turn pupils against reading” (Department for Education and Science, 1989b, Point 16.4).

These comments were written over twenty years ago, and yet I argue that this is even more the case today, with no-notice Ofsted inspections, league tables and performance analysis all producing accountability pressure. In school, private reading will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 18.3, however, it is clear that a common compromise for secondary school English teachers who are reluctant to set regular in-class private reading, but who value independent reading, is to set private reading for homework.

I also want my students to move beyond enjoyment of simple texts and begin to develop as readers through the enjoyment of engaging in more challenging texts. Theo’s words capture, beautifully, his sense of this process:

“I think when I move up to the senior school my reading is really going to develop because in Year 6 my reading has really developed a lot. I started with lots of light story reading and from that I went on to adventure stories, from these I have gone into non-fiction books, and back into fiction books and the books are getting longer and longer and gradually getting harder to read so I’m slowly stepping up” Theo, Year 6 student.

Here, Theo talks of his development as a reader. This is another aspect of reading that English teachers in secondary schools hope that their students will achieve. This concept of more challenging texts and the different levels of pleasure the reader gains from these texts is discussed by Barthes in ‘The Pleasure of the Text’ in which he states, “we do not read everything with the same intensity of reading,” (Barthes, 1975, p. 10). His division of texts into those which allow the reader ‘plaisir’ or ‘pleasure’ and texts which allow the reader

'jouissance' or 'bliss, delight, sexual climax', is linked to his concept of 'texte lisible' (readerly texts) and 'texte scriptible' (writerly texts). 'Readerly texts' allow the passive reader pleasure but do not challenge the reader. Such texts have a narrative which is pre-determined so that the reader passively receives the information or narrative. A great deal of children's fiction can be defined as readerly texts, for example, the first of J.K. Rowling's 'Harry Potter' books - Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone - in which the author does all of the work for the reader.

In contrast to readerly texts, writerly texts allow the active reader 'jouissance' (bliss), which is an action. With writerly texts, the reader has a position of control and this allows them to become active participants who contribute to the writing process. As such, Barthes argued that writerly texts were more important and challenging than readerly texts. I believe that, as students progress through secondary school, their reading should also progress. Students should be encouraged and challenged to move from only finding pleasure in reading readerly texts, to being able to engage with some writerly texts and experiencing bliss. English teachers hope to equip their students with the skills to be able not only to actively engage with writerly texts, but also to do so willingly and to achieve bliss from doing so.

This is not to say that only texts aimed at older readers can be classed as writerly texts. There are some very clever texts produced for all ages which can be classified as writerly texts. For example, Pat Hutchins' 'Rosie's Walk' - an apparently simple picture book - demands more than simply reading the words on the page from the reader. For this text, the reader does not just climb on to the roller coaster and go for a ride. No, for this sort of text the reader has to work with the writer to construct the story and every reader's experience of these more writerly texts are different. For 'Rosie's Walk', the child has to read the whole page for the additional information to make the story make sense. The fox which is following Rosie the hen is never mentioned in the sentence which is the textual story: we read "Rosie the hen went for a walk across the yard around the pond over the haycock past the mill through the fence under the beehives and got back in time for dinner."

(Hutchins, 1968). Yet it is the presence of the fox which makes the story. As Margaret Meek states:

“Thus we can say that a page in a picture book is an icon to be contemplated, narrated, explicated by the viewer. It holds the story until there is a telling. So in the beginning the words are few: the story happenings are in the pictures which form the polysemic text. The reader has to learn which of the pictorial events carries the line of the story, while each rereading shows that other things can also be taken into account. Gradually the reader learns that the narration is made up of words and pictures, together. The essential lesson of *Rosie’s Walk* depends on there being no mention of the fox, but the reader knows that there would be no story without him. Nowhere but in a reader’s interaction with a text can this lesson be learned. It is a lesson we take with us from wherever we first learned it to our understanding of Jane Austen” (Meek, 1988a, pp. 12-13).

There is also an argument for first steps into a new genre demanding more of the reader than simply passively experiencing the text. For example with fantasy fiction, Philip Pullman’s ‘His Dark Materials’ trilogy is a writerly text (Pullman, 1998). There are many layers of meaning and the reader has to work to actively engage with the text. J. K. Rowling’s ‘Harry Potter’ series can seem readerly in comparison. However, when a reader encounters their first ‘Harry Potter’ novel a great deal is demanded of them because everything is new and different. The reader is also experiencing all of this ‘newness’ alongside the central character so they have to engage with the text to make meaning from it. I believe this is true for any first encounter with a new author and that the first book in a series requires more of the reader than subsequent books.

The English teacher’s role is to open up these more challenging texts to readers, to nurture and encourage and develop students’ reading in order to allow them to experience the ‘bliss’ of engaging with a writerly text.

Definition of Reading for Pleasure

My definition of reading for pleasure draws on all of the above. I define independent reading for pleasure as: reading which is self-chosen or directed in which the child has usually had some choice about engaging; which is frequently, but not always, done at a time and place which suits them; and which can become increasingly more challenging. Reading for pleasure can sometimes be an 'easy' reading experience where the pleasure is passive, and sometimes it can be a 'hard' reading experience where the reader is challenged. Both of these reading experiences can bring pleasure to the reader, just different types of pleasure. When engaging in reading for pleasure, the child anticipates that they will enjoy the experience and find it fun.

4 The National Curriculum 1989 to 2014 and Government Focus on Reading for Pleasure

In Year 7, “we do get quite a lot more homework...and we have a lot of tests” Theo.

“For too long, teachers have been at the mercy of government programmes which have emphasized the acquisition of literacy as a set of skills” (Pahl and Rowsell, 2005, p. 1).

When the National Curriculum was first introduced, all state schools had to teach the statutory sections and the non-statutory sections could be used for guidance. Today, the National Curriculum continues to have statutory sections which many, but not all, schools have to follow. It also has non-statutory sections which provide guidance. I believe that, in all of the different versions of the National Curriculum for English, reading for pleasure has not been given the prominence which it deserves. To this end, I’ve revisited the numerous National Curriculum documents and examined the statements made about reading for pleasure. Table 1 contains the publication dates of the many National Curriculum for English documents and presents the statements made about reading for pleasure along with my identification of key words regarding reading.

Table 1: The National Curricula For English

Year	Document	Statements about reading	Key word regarding reading
1988	The Education Reform Act, 1988 and statutory orders		
March 1989	National Curriculum Council Consultation Report English 5-11 (National Curriculum Council, 1989a)	“The programme of study should offer experiences and activities which promote a familiarity with books, both as a source of pleasure and as a means of learning” (National	Pleasure

		Curriculum Council, 1989a, p. 43).	
May 1989	The National Curriculum (Department for Education and Science, 1989a)	“Activities should ensure that pupils: ...develop the habit of silent reading” (Department for Education and Science, 1989a, pp. 15-16).	Habit
June 1989	English for ages 5 to 16 Proposals of the Secretary of State for Education and the Secretary of State for Wales (Department for Education and Science, 1989b)	“Should also be encouraged to develop a personal love of reading” (Department for Education and Science, 1989b, Point 16.12).	Love
November 1989	National Curriculum Council Consultation Report English (National Curriculum Council, 1989b)	“Teachers should encourage pupils to read in their own time, and to discuss their favourite reading” (National Curriculum Council, 1989b, p. 71).	Favourite reading
March 1990	English in the National Curriculum (National Curriculum Council, 1990)	“Teachers should encourage pupils to read in their own time, and to discuss their favourite reading” (National Curriculum Council, 1990, p. 32).	Favourite reading
July 1992	National Curriculum English: The Case For Revising the Order Advice to the Secretary of state for Education, July 1992 (National Curriculum Council, 1992)	“...the programmes of study for literature are not sufficiently explicit about how pupils can best develop the habit of reading widely...” (National Curriculum Council, 1992, p. 9).	Habit
April 1993	English for ages 5 to 16 (1993) Proposals of the Secretary of State for Education and the Secretary of State for Wales (National Curriculum Council, 1993b).	“They [pupils] should also be encouraged to read independently solely for enjoyment...some texts should be studied, but the main emphasis should be the encouragement of wider reading by independent, responsive and enthusiastic readers” (National Curriculum	Enjoyment Enthusiastic

		Council, 1993b, p. 40).	
September 1993	National Curriculum Council Consultation Report English (National Curriculum Council, 1993a).	“They [pupils] should also be encouraged to read independently solely for enjoyment” (National Curriculum Council, 1993a, p. 48).	Enjoyment
January 1995	English in the National Curriculum (Department for Education and Skills, 1995).	“They [pupils] should also be encouraged to read widely and independently solely for enjoyment” (Department for Education and Skills, 1995, p. 19).	Enjoyment
1999	English The National Curriculum for England Key stages 1-4 (Department for Education and Science, 1999)	“Reading: during key stages 3 and 4 pupils read a wide range of texts independently, both for pleasure and for study. They become enthusiastic, discriminating and responsive readers, understanding layers of meaning and appreciating what they read on a critical level” (Department for Education and Science, 1999, p. 34).	Pleasure
2001	National Literacy Strategy Key Stage 3 Literacy across the curriculum (Department for Education and Employment, 2001).	“Ways of reading: continuous reading – usually involves uninterrupted reading of an extended piece of text – eg. reading a chapter in a novel or an article in a newspaper for pleasure or relaxation” (Department for Education and Employment, 2001, p. 47).	Pleasure Relaxation
2007	The National Curriculum 2007 English Programme of study for Key Stage 3 and attainment targets (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2007).	“Pupils learn to become enthusiastic and critical readers of stories, poetry and drama as well as non-fiction and media texts, gaining access to the pleasure and world of knowledge that reading offers.” “The curriculum should provide opportunities for pupils to:	Enthusiastic Pleasure

		...discuss reading interests and preferences, and sustain individual reading for pleasure.(Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2007, pp. 61 & 74).	
February 2010	The National Curriculum Level descriptors for subjects (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2010).		
September 2013	English programmes of study: Key Stage 3 (Department for Education, 2013).	“Pupils should be taught to: develop an appreciation and love of reading, and read increasingly challenging material independently...” (Department for Education, 2013, p. 4).	Love
July 2014	National curriculum in England: English programmes of study (Department for Education, 2014).	“The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils: ...develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information.” “Pupils should be taught to: develop an appreciation and love of reading” (Department for Education, 2014, pp. 1 & 24).	Habit Pleasure Love

In entire versions of the National Curriculum for English and the National Literacy Strategy, these are the only mentions of reading for pleasure which I could find. There is very little mentioned on the subject, which, in itself, is a concern. The words ‘habit’, ‘love’, ‘favourite reading’, ‘enjoyment’, ‘pleasure’, ‘enthusiastic’ and ‘relaxation’ are all positive terms to use in relation to children’s reading. However, there is little guidance to support teachers trying to encourage reading for pleasure. This might be because it is assumed that teachers will encourage reading for pleasure in their classrooms and know how to achieve this. Yet, the rate of change has been so rapid at times that I question whether teachers have been able to provide time in their lessons for reading for pleasure. For example, June 1989 saw the first proposal for change just one month after the initial National Curriculum document had

been published. It might appear that from 1999 to 2007 there was a period of relative stability. However in 2001 the 'Literacy Strategy', which had started with Key Stages 1 and 2, grew to include Key Stage 3 and secondary education and this was the focus of a lot of change. What *is* clear from Table 1 is that there has been frequent change to the English curriculum over the past twenty five years and that reading for pleasure has not been a targeted focus for learning.

Recently the National Curriculum seems to have come full circle with regard to reading for pleasure. The phrase 'love of reading' was used in the June 1989 proposals (Department for Education and Science, 1989b, Point 16.12) and also in the 2013 and 2014 National Curriculum documents (Department for Education, 2013, p. 4, Department for Education, 2014, p. 24). None of the other versions of the National Curriculum use this phrase and perhaps this, in some ways, is indicative of the position reading for pleasure has held over the last twenty five years in the English Key Stage 3 curriculum. There has been so much focus on the skills of reading over the various versions of the National Curriculum and National Literacy Strategy which has, perhaps, resulted in reading for pleasure being regarded as less important.

4.1 Government Publications concerning English and Reading

Since the publication of the 2000 PIRLS (Kirsch et al., 2002) data suggesting that British children were reaching good levels of reading attainment but that a large proportion of them did not enjoy reading and held negative attitudes towards reading, there have been numerous reports examining the teaching of English and the position of reading for pleasure in the curriculum. A summary is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Government Publications concerning the teaching of English

Year	Document	Key point about reading
2004	Ofsted Annual Report 2002 – 2003 (Ofsted, 2004).	<p>“In some schools, the absence of a reading culture means that few pupils read regularly for pleasure” (Ofsted, 2004, p. 10).</p> <p>“In most, [schools] the absence of any external assessment related to wider reading, the pressures on the time of young people and the focus on what can be readily assessed, in all key stages result in a narrow diet of reading for too many pupils” (Ofsted, 2004, p. 5).</p>
2005	English 2000 - 2005 A Review of Inspection Evidence (Ofsted, 2005).	<p>“...Schools were not always successful in helping pupils to read widely for pleasure outside school” (Ofsted, 2005, p. 22).</p>
2006	Taking English Forward: the four C’s (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2006).	<p>“...children are entitled to:</p> <p>“Discover and rediscover the pleasure of reading through responding imaginatively to great books, stories and poems</p> <p>Enter with confidence the world of books and culture, becoming part of the community of active and creative readers” (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2006, p. 8).</p>
2009	English at the Crossroads: an evaluation of English in primary and secondary schools (Ofsted, 2009).	<p>“At secondary level... Some schools persevered with ‘library lessons’ where the students read silently. These sessions rarely included time to discuss or promote books and other written material and therefore did not help to develop a reading community within the school” (Ofsted, 2009, pp. 23 - 24).</p>
March 2012	Moving English Forward (Ofsted, 2012).	<p>“In too many schools there is no coherent policy on reading overall; schools put in place numerous programmes to support reading, especially for weak readers, but do not have an overall conception of what makes a good reader. In recent years the view has developed, especially in secondary schools, that there is not enough curriculum time to focus on wider reading or reading for pleasure” (Ofsted, 2012, p. 29).</p> <p>“Ofsted reports have been consistent in arguing for greater emphasis on reading for pleasure within the taught curriculum in both primary and secondary schools” (Ofsted,</p>

		2012, p. 42).
May 2012	Research evidence on reading for pleasure (Department for Education, 2012).	“Reading for pleasure is an activity that has real emotional and social consequences” (Department for Education, 2012, p. 13).
March 2015	Reading: the next steps. Supporting higher standards in Schools (Department for Education, 2015).	“The best way to promote this development [developing mature readers] is by instilling in children a passion for reading. Children who love reading will read more and, over time, choose literature which is more demanding and suitably stretching. It creates a virtuous circle: as the amount a child reads increases, their reading attainment improves, which in turn encourages them to read more” (Department for Education, 2015, p. 17).

Ofsted publications and DfE reports highlight the importance of encouraging independent reading for pleasure in schools, but also note that in many cases this is not happening. My concern is that if secondary schools are not encouraging and supporting students’ reading for pleasure, then students will struggle to move from readerly to writerly texts, and some students will stop reading for pleasure completely.

In each version of the National Curriculum for English, there has been the same conflict between:

- reading for pleasure;
- reading for analysis;
- reading to broaden awareness of our cultural and literary heritage;
- reading to develop reading skills by seeking ever more demanding and challenging texts;
- reading for assessment alone.

With all of these aspects competing for attention, it is unsurprising that reading for pleasure has perhaps not had the attention it requires.

4.2 National Curriculum Attainment Targets

In 2004 Ofsted noted that:

“In most, [schools] the absence of any external assessment related to wider reading, the pressures on the time of young people and the focus on what can be readily assessed, in all key stages result in a narrow diet of reading for too many pupils” (Ofsted, 2004, p. 5).

The point about “external assessment” is important because in none of the versions of the National Curriculum attainment targets is reading for pleasure mentioned, nor is there guidance towards achieving it, or any indication about how to assess or reward reading for pleasure. Table 3 lists the attainment targets for achieving a level 5 for reading. It is noteworthy that reading for pleasure is not mentioned.

Table 3: National Curriculum Attainment Target 2: Reading

Year	Document	Attainment Target Reading Level 5
June 1989	English for ages 5 to 16 Proposals of the Secretary of State for Education and Science and the Secretary of State for Wales (Department	<p>“i. Read a range of fiction and poetry, explaining their preferences in talk and writing.</p> <p>ii. Demonstrate in talking and writing about fiction and poetry, that they are developing their own views and can support them when appropriate by reference to some details in the text, <i>eg when talking about characters and actions in fiction.</i></p> <p>iii. Recognise, in discussion, whether subject matter in non-literary and media texts is presented as fact or opinion.</p> <p>iv. Select reference books and other information materials...</p> <p>v. Recognise and talk about the use of word play, <i>eg puns, unconventional spellings etc</i>, and some of the effects of the writer’s choice of words in imaginative uses of English”</p>

	for Education and Science, 1989b).	(Department for Education and Science, 1989b, Point 16.21).
January 1995	English in the National Curriculum (Department for Education and Skills, 1995).	“Pupils show understanding of a range of texts, selecting essential points and using inference and deduction where appropriate. In their responses, they identify key features, themes and characters, and select sentences, phrases and relevant information to support their views. They retrieve and collate information from a range of sources” (Department for Education and Skills, 1995, p. 28).
February 2010	The National Curriculum Level descriptions for subjects (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2010).	“Pupils show understanding of a range of texts, selecting essential points and using inference and deduction where appropriate. In their responses, they identify key features, themes and characters and select sentences, phrases and relevant information to support their views. They understand that texts fit into historical and literary traditions. They retrieve and collate information from a range of sources” (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2010, p. 17).

The attainment targets have become less verbose over the years but in no version of the National Curriculum for English has reading for pleasure been explicitly linked to the attainment targets and subsequent levels. Guidance that reading for pleasure should be encouraged *is* provided within each National Curriculum, (see Table 1 above), yet there is no mention of it in the assessment criteria. Because of this lack of assessment or reward for reading for pleasure, I believe that this can lead to its devaluation - by senior managers, classroom teachers and pupils - because it carries no weight in terms of assessment, examination or reward. With the focus on the inclusion of the new ‘Grammar and vocabulary’ section in the latest version of The National Curriculum for English (Department

for Education, 2014), and the glossary which accompanies it, I suggest that Key Stage 3 teachers might choose to focus on this new section with its explicit teaching objectives, rather than the implicit reading for pleasure. Inevitably, this will mean that - once again - reading for pleasure will be pushed aside in favour of prioritising skills-based literacy learning.

I believe that schools and teachers need to value reading for pleasure and to do more to encourage it. Over fifteen years ago, Hattersley wrote:

“Future generations must not grow up to believe that reading, like paying taxes, is an unpleasant obligation to be kept to an absolute minimum.” (Hattersley, 1998, p. 50).

If we continue to prioritise literacy skills over the benefits of reading for pleasure then this is what will happen to our children.

5 Reading Surveys Exploring Children's Reading for Pleasure – A Review

“If I read an action book...it makes me imagine that I am there” Tom.

I am concerned that children attending secondary schools are engaging in less independent reading for pleasure than in previous years and that reading for pleasure is in decline. A decade ago, Clark clearly flags up this concern, and summarises it succinctly:

“Recent research shows that while reading skills have improved in the UK, there is some indication that fewer pupils nowadays read for enjoyment” (Clark, 2005, p. 26).

When critically considering the area of children's independent reading for pleasure, it is important to state that concern over children's reading habits is nothing new. In the past there have been numerous studies which have sought to discover what children read, how much they read and their attitudes towards their reading.

5.1 Surveys from 1938 to 2014

‘What do Boys and Girls Read?’ Jenkinson's 1938 study (Jenkinson, 1940) looked at 1,570 boys and 1,330 girls aged between twelve and fifteen in Hull, North Lincolnshire and the East Riding of Yorkshire. The sample of students was weighted to include more able students, with only top ‘A’ stream students in most schools being questioned. This meant that his figures for the average number of books read in a month, out of school, for secondary boys (between 5.0 and 6.0), and senior boys (3.9 to 4.3) and secondary girls (between 5.9 and 6.5) and senior girls (5.1 to 5.3) were unusually high compared to subsequent studies. Jenkinson also found that only a small number of students recorded no reading whatsoever outside of school; for girls this was negligible at both secondary and

senior school and for boys it ranged from 4.0 % for the secondary boys and 5.9% for the senior boys.

Notwithstanding these sample features, a compelling and important finding from Jenkinson’s study was that there was a gulf between what texts were taught in schools and what the children chose to read outside of school. As a result, “more fiction, more books written during the twentieth century, and more books written specifically for children” were included in school English syllabuses (reported in, Whitehead et al., 1977, p. 11). Another positive outcome from Jenkinson’s study was a subsequent move away from English teachers teaching just a few books, towards “the provision of a wider and more varied supply of books” (reported in, Whitehead et al., 1977, p. 11).

‘Children and their Books’, Whitehead et al., 1977, “sought to discover the extent and kind of children’s voluntary reading” (Whitehead et al., 1977, p. xv). This comprehensive survey of 7,839 children looked at the reading habits of children aged 10+, 12+ and 14+ in schools in England and Wales. Its authors found that the average number of books read by each child in a month “ranged from 2.95 at 10+ through to 2.21 at 12+ to 1.95 at 14+” (p. 272). These figures seem to suggest a difference of approximately half a book a month (see Table 4).

Table 4: Whitehead’s results for the average number of books read during one month.

Age group	Boys	Girls	Both sexes
10+	2.68	3.28	2.95
12+	1.99	2.48	2.21
14+	1.78	2.15	1.95
All age groups	2.16	2.66	2.39

(Whitehead et al., 1977, p. 51).

Again, there is a clear pattern emerging; as children get older they engage in reading fewer books. In addition, Whitehead et al. reported a growing number of students in each age group who reported that they had not read a book in the previous month. “Among the girls this percentage was only 9.4% at 10+, but it rose to 23.3% at 12+ and 32.4% at 14+. Among the boys, the situation was even more disturbing, since here, the percentage of non-book readers was 15.8% at 10+, 33.2% at 12+ and at 14+, had actually risen to 40.0%” (Whitehead et al., 1977, p. 272). In terms of the numbers of children choosing not to read, the findings are also quite striking. The figures also show a steady rise in the numbers of students choosing not to read (see Table 5).

Table 5: Whitehead’s results for the number of children choosing not to read

Ages	Boys %	Girls %
10+	15.8	9.4
12+	33.2	23.3
14+	40.0	32.4

(Whitehead et al., 1977, p. 53)

A criticism of this study is that a number of grammar schools were involved in the survey, and their selectivity could have had an impact on the numbers of books recorded. The survey also listed “the 246 widely read books” which counted for just under 31% of all of the books recorded. The list is full of nineteenth century texts and I question if this was because this is what the schools were offering to the students, what the students had access to at home or what the libraries stocked. The survey was also quite judgemental about the children’s self-chosen reading. For instance, the following classifications were applied: juvenile quality narrative; juvenile non-quality narrative; adult quality narrative; adult non-quality narrative; fairy tales, myths and legends; Annuals and non-narrative. Any survey which makes judgements about the quality of texts is inevitably being subjective and judgemental about those texts, and may be introducing bias, and I question the need for this distinction.

However, it is interesting to note that Whitehead et al. highlighted the importance of getting the right books into the right readers' hands at the right time and the role that the teacher plays in this. "It is impossible to overstress the influence of the teacher's own knowledgeability about books. The right book brought forward at the right time can make all the difference to a child's reading development" (Whitehead et al., 1977, p. 291).

'Recipe fictions...literary fast food? Reading interests in year 8' (Benton, 1995b) and 'Conflicting cultures: Reflections on the reading and viewing of secondary-school pupils' (Benton, 1995a) both critiqued the National Curriculum for English of 1995 (Department for Education and Skills, 1995) and focused on the types of texts expected to be taught in schools and the impact of electronic media upon children's reading. In both of these papers data from 729 twelve to thirteen year-olds, and 385 fourteen year-olds, from fourteen comprehensive schools in a shire county in southern central England were used. Unlike the Whitehead et al. study, a percentage of the participating students were not interviewed. These papers focus on the widely held belief that "children become fluent readers by practising the skill and that television takes from time available for mastering it" (Benton, 1995b, p. 99). Benton noted from the survey data that there had been a "virtual disappearance of the old classic canon" for young people's reading, which had been replaced by "the dominance of American teenage horror novels" (Benton, 1995b, p. 99). Benton stresses that the American 'Point Horror' series of books - which the students in his sample recorded in large numbers - are easy to read but do not challenge the student or develop their reading. He also pointed out the importance of peer group pressure for the reading of these horror books in the sample schools.

A major finding of Benton's work was that there was a gulf between what the National Curriculum of 1995 (Department for Education and Skills, 1995) required pupils to read and what the pupils enjoyed reading. In Benton's words,

“it is a National Curriculum which has relatively little time for anything that was not already a part of the established literary canon of over thirty years ago; it celebrates predominantly the world of the dead white male” (Benton, 1995a, p 457).

This gap between what schools had to teach and what children chose to voluntarily read caused a problem for teachers because if they focused on encouraging reading for pleasure then they would have to encourage texts such as the ‘Point Horror’ series which did not develop a child’s British cultural heritage (part of the National Curriculum’s aims) and were not deemed to be of high quality.

Benton’s work continued to report that increasing numbers of children were choosing not to read. This was 30% of Year 8 boys, 36.4% of Year 10 girls and a staggering 53.5% of Year 10 boys. He echoes Whitehead et al., in stating that “The importance of the teacher and of the librarian cannot be stressed too much in helping change these figures” (Benton, 1995a, p. 459).

At the same time as Benton was gathering trend data – the mid- 1990s - ‘Children’s Reading Choices’ (Coles and Hall, 1999) focused on what children choose to read out of school. Children’s Reading Choices’ surveyed children aged ten, twelve and fourteen in October 1994 with approximately 2,900 children in the aged ten cohort and 2,500 in both of the aged twelve and fourteen cohorts. The questionnaire was based on the 1970s work of Whitehead et al. to allow comparisons across time. Interviews were carried out with 87 children which amounted to just over one per cent of the sample (Coles and Hall, 1999, p. 167). These authors reported that their data shows “a clear trend towards fewer books being read as children grow older” (Coles and Hall, 1999, p. 1). For boys, there is a decline from an average number of books read per month at age 10 of 2.98 books to an average of 1.45 books at age 14. For girls, the pattern is similar, showing a decline from an average number of books read per month at age 10 of 3.71 to an average of 2.06 books at age 14. These figures, whilst encouraging because the ten-year-olds appear to be reading slightly more books as compared to Whitehead et al. results of 2.68 books per month for boys and

3.28 books per month for girls aged ten, suggest a difference of approximately one and a half fewer books read a month as students get older. The reported increase in the rate of decline is worrying (see Table 6).

Table 6: Cole and Hall’s results for the average number of books read in the previous month

Age	Boys	Girls
10+	2.98	3.71
12+	1.90	2.93
14+	1.45	2.06

(Coles and Hall, 1999, p. 2)

It is interesting that Coles and Hall write: “The trend towards reading fewer books with age is noteworthy but not new” (Coles and Hall, 1999, p. 3). For example in ‘One Week in March’ it states: “Overall, the amount of wider reading recorded reduced as pupils’ ages increased...” (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 1995). There could be many reasons for this apparent decline. The most obvious reason could be that as children get older they decide to read less. The apparent decline in the numbers of books being read between the ages of 10 and 14 could also simply reflect the students choosing more grown-up or adult books with more pages, and more words per page, or that they become more involved in their studies, which leaves less time for reading. Coles and Hall acknowledge the multiplicity of potential interpretations of the data:

“One way of interpreting these figures would be to suggest that primary schools in England are more successful in promoting reading than they were in the 1970s. It might also be that in reading fewer books as they grow older, children are adopting more ‘adult’ patterns of reading, insofar as most adults probably read fewer than 2.52 books per month” (Coles and Hall, 1999, p. 3).

Coles and Hall also commented on the pattern of the numbers of children not participating in independent reading, which was clearly increasing as they got older (see Table 7).

Table 7: Coles and Hall’s results for the number of children choosing not to read

Age	Reading of any book in the previous month	
	% Yes responses	% No responses
10+	91.3	8.7
12+	80.5	19.5
14+	64.3	35.7

(Coles and Hall, 1999, p. 2).

In terms of attitudes towards reading, Coles and Hall take a markedly different approach to other studies. They categorise students’ responses into seven categories: “positive, neutral, negative, educational, leisure, compared with television, unclassified. Their results show that positive attitudes towards reading declined with age. (See Table 8).

Table 8: Coles and Hall’s results for children’s views of reading by age

Age	Positive %	Neutral %	Negative %	Educational %	Leisure %	Compared to TV and unclassified %	Total
10+	71.1	18.3	4.6	4.6	1.6	0.3	100.2
12+	48.3	28.7	10.7	7.9	4.0	0.5	100.1
14+	37.4	26.9	14.7	12.5	7.2	1.3	100

(Coles and Hall, 1999, p. 12).

In short, Coles and Hall's study continues to show a decline in reading for pleasure and a decline in positive attitudes towards reading as children get older.

'The Nestle Family Monitor, Young People's Attitudes Towards Reading' (Eccleshare, 2003) focused on children's out-of-school reading. The study involved thirty three state and independent schools and sixth form colleges in England and Wales, with 914 students aged between eleven and eighteen completing questionnaires. The data was weighted to reflect the known profile of the sample population by gender, age, school type and area. A sample was also interviewed. One finding of the study was that girls were more likely to read horror stories than boys. This echoes Benton's findings, with girls enjoying the 'Point Horror' series more than boys. The students' favourite authors were mainly contemporary, which also mirrors Benton's findings. The gap between in-school reading requirements and out-of-school pleasure reading was again noted. The study also acknowledged that, because "reading is regarded as 'uncool' in many teenage situations [it] means that readers and reading sometimes have to keep a low profile" (Eccleshare, 2003, p. 4). However, in conflict with this 'uncool' perception of reading is the statement that "the majority of teenagers find reading an enjoyable activity" and that their "attitudes towards reading are surprisingly enthusiastic. They see reading as relaxing and even fun!" (Eccleshare, 2003, p. 3).

In line with previous studies, the Nestle Family Monitor study of 2003 found that girls reported that they were more avid readers than boys, because 16 % of boys reported that they never read compared to just 7% of the girls. Bed was the preferred place to read (70% of the students), and bedtime was the favourite time of day to read. 83% of students reported they read in their spare time and 16% said that they read every day. However, just over a quarter of students reported that they found reading "boring". The report asserts that:

"Life long readers are only made if they can enjoy reading...It is why it is so important that though schools are the place where reading is most actively

promoted, it is through individual experience that real readers are made”
 (Eccleshare, 2003, p. 4).

‘What are teenagers reading? Adolescent fiction reading habits and reading choices’
 Rosemary Hopper (Hopper, 2005). This study focuses on “the potential divergence between
 school students’ reading interests and reading expectations in school” (Hopper, 2005, p.
 113). She focuses on the reading of 707 students aged between eleven and fifteen from
 thirty schools (non-selective state middle schools, single-sex selective grammar schools, and
 mixed non-selective state comprehensive schools) in the south-west of England. The
 majority of the students were in Years 7 to 9 (eleven to fourteen-year-olds) with a smaller
 group of Year 10 students (fifteen-year-olds). The questionnaire was self-assessed and
 introduced by a number of student teachers, which means that there were a number of
 variables in play. However, the results show a stark decline in the number of children who
 stated that they were reading a book at home. Hopper found that the percentage of
 children reading a book at home in Year 10 is markedly less than the rather similar
 percentages for Years 7, 8 and 9 (see Table 9).

Table 9: Hopper’s results for children reading a book at home

Year group	Number reading a book at home	Percentage of year group sample	Sample size
Y7 (11/12-year-olds)	127	64	198
Y8 (12/13-year-olds)	142	61	233
Y9 (13/14-year-olds)	147	64	230
Y10 (14/15-year-olds)	16	36	44

(Hopper, 2005, p. 115)

From this data, it could be concluded that the rate of decline is rapidly increasing, but note
 the potentially statistically significantly smaller sample size for Year 10 students. Hopper’s

study also found that 93% of school students were reading a non-book text, with magazines the internet and newspapers being the most popular forms (Hopper, 2005, p. 118).

The National Literacy Trust (NLT) (National Literacy Trust, 2014) has also undertaken a great deal of research into children's reading. On the NLT's website it states that it "is a national charity dedicated to raising literacy levels in the U.K." and that it "establishes literacy projects in the poorest communities, campaigns to make literacy a priority for politicians and parents and supports schools" (National Literacy Trust, 2014). Christina Clark's research, some of which is explored below, has focused on encouraging literacy and reading for pleasure.

'Children's and young people's reading habits and preferences: The who, what, why, where and when' (Clark and Foster, 2005); Interestingly, this study of 8,206 pupils in 57 primary (2,331 pupils) and 41 secondary (5,875) schools looks at young people's reasons for reading in addition to what they were reading. In line with previous studies, students generally held positive attitudes towards reading (over half) and 40% stated that they enjoyed reading "a bit" (Clark and Foster, 2005, p. 16). However, these high results could be explained because the sample of schools was made up of schools which had already shown an interest in reading because they had all signed up to the 'Reading Connects' initiative (Reading Connects was a NLT national reading campaign initiative, funded by the DfES, which aimed to help schools develop a whole school reading culture. The DfES funding stopped in 2011). Clark and Foster reported that 15.4% of students stated that they never, or almost never, read outside of school (Clark and Foster, 2005, p. 19) and that reading enjoyment declined with age with "primary pupils enjoying reading significantly more than secondary ones" (Clark and Foster, 2005, p. 48). For preferred reading materials, 51.5% said fiction, 50.6% said comics but the most popular reading materials were magazines with 75.5%. (Clark and Foster, 2005, p. 22).

'Young people's self-perceptions as readers: An investigation including family, peer and school influences' (Clark et al., 2008). This study aimed to "explore young people's

perceptions of themselves as readers and aimed to challenge assumptions of what it means to be a reader” (Clark et al., 2008, p. 6). This study of 1,600 Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 pupils found that the majority of young people enjoy reading “very much” or “quite a lot” (58%). Again, it was reported that girls enjoyed reading more than boys and that most young people read on a weekly basis either every day or once or twice a week. That 71% of the young people involved in this study called themselves ‘readers’ is interesting, especially given the Nestle Family Monitor Study 2003 (Eccleshare, 2003), which reported that many teenagers think that reading is ‘uncool’. However, a third of the students involved in the study did say that they saw readers as ‘geeks’ or ‘nerds’ and a quarter found that reading was boring. One recommendation of the study was:

“those who make and implement policy should be cautious about encouraging children and young people to become ‘readers’ and to be known and see themselves as such, when many do not see being a reader as something desirable” (Clark et al., 2008, p. 10).

An interesting feature of the study was that magazines, websites and emails were the most frequently read material outside of school yet this was in conflict with what the students themselves perceived ‘readers’ to read. The majority of young people believed that readers enjoyed fiction books, magazines, poetry and factual books. This provides a contrast between what they enjoyed reading and what they perceived others to be reading. It may also, perhaps, link in with young people’s lack of awareness of their friends’ reading behaviour. Young people were generally uncertain whether their friends are readers or not or whether their friends believe that they are good readers. One concerning finding of this study was that nearly a half of the young people involved in the study did not know whether adults in their school thought that they were good readers (Clark et al., 2008, p. 7). With previous studies stressing the importance of encouraging reading and providing a range of reading materials to interest students, it is a concern that many students think that the adults in their schools do not know about their reading preferences.

The link between fiction and readers in the students' minds is important because many students who do read describe themselves as non-readers just because they do not read fiction.

'Young Peoples' Reading and Writing' (Clark and Douglas, 2011). This survey involved 17,089 children and young people aged between eight to sixteen from 112 schools from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales who participated in an online survey on young people's attitudes towards reading and writing (Clark and Douglas, 2011, p. 11). The key objectives were to explore how much children and young people enjoy reading and writing; how often they read and write; how good a reader and writer they think they are; and what they think about reading and writing. Comparisons were made to their 2005 survey which asked similar questions.

Some key findings of this report for reading were that "51% of young people enjoy reading either very much or quite a lot" and "10% do not enjoy reading at all" (Clark and Douglas, 2011, p. 12). It was also reported that "enjoyment of reading declines with age, with KS2 pupils enjoying reading significantly more than their older counterparts" (Clark and Douglas, 2011, p. 12). Significantly, "levels of enjoyments of reading have remained unchanged since 2005" (Clark and Douglas, 2011, p. 12).

In terms of reading frequency, most young people reported that they read outside of class every day 32% or two or three times a week 29% and only 7% reporting no reading outside of school. In line with previous studies, "reading frequency declines with age" (Clark and Douglas, 2011, p. 13). A worrying finding was that "fewer young people now read outside of class on a daily basis compared with 2005" and "fewer boys and girls were reading at least once a month in 2009 than in 2005, with the drop in reading amount appearing to be greater in boys than in girls" (Clark and Douglas, 2011, p. 13). This is shown in the table below (see Table 10).

Table 10: Clark and Douglas’ results for reading frequency

Key Stage	Every day %	2 to 3 times a week %	2 to 3 times a month %	About once a month %
KS2	44.6	30.9	5.7	2.6
KS3	30.9	29.7	10.3	4.8
KS4	26.3	24.1	11.4	6.4

(Clark and Douglas, 2011, pp. 42-43)

Unlike previous studies, this does not reflect how many fiction books are read in a one month period, but instead looks at how often a child reads. The pattern of children spending less time reading as their age increases is clear. Clark and Douglas also identify that the number of children reporting that they rarely or never read increases with age (see Table 11).

Table 11: Clark and Douglas children choosing not to read or to rarely read

Key Stage	Rarely Read %	Never Read %
KS2	10.6	5.5
KS3	17.6	6.6
KS4	23.8	8.1

(Clark and Douglas, 2011, pp. 42-43)

The most common reading choices for young people were text messages, magazines, websites and emails and fiction was read outside of class by over two-fifths of young people. It is interesting that “young people who read above the expected level for their age

are the most prolific readers of more traditional forms of reading, such as fiction, non-fiction, poems and plays” (Clark and Douglas, 2011, p. 14). As with previous studies, most young people held positive attitudes towards reading, with most agreeing that “reading is important and that they enjoy it” (Clark and Douglas, 2011, p. 15).

‘The Reading Lives of 8 to 11-year-olds 2005 – 2013. An evidence paper for the Read On. Get On. coalition’ (Clark, 2014). This paper looks at children aged between eight to eleven with focus on their “enjoyment of reading, reading behaviour and attitudes towards reading” (Clark, 2014, p. 6). It synthesises information from Clark’s NLT surveys, conducted since 2005, and draws heavily on data from the fourth annual literacy survey conducted in November and December 2013 in which 10,946 children aged eight to eleven were surveyed. Clark reports that 65.8% of 8 to 11-year-olds enjoy reading either “very much” (34.4%) or “quite a lot” (31.4%) and 5.5% said that they don’t enjoy reading at all. 40.7% read daily outside class and 34.7% read a few times a week (p. 6). In addition, Clark reports that “most 8 to 11-year-olds have positive attitudes towards reading”, however, 18.4% said that they “would be embarrassed if their friends saw them read” (Clark, 2014, p. 6). A lot of 8 to 11-year-olds are avid readers and the 42.8% said that they read between one and three books in a typical month and 30.5% read between four and seven books and 22.8% read eight or more books in a typical month.

The most popular reading material outside of school was text messages, followed by magazines and fiction. Clark also reported that “the proportion of 8 to 11-year-olds who read daily outside class has declined quite steadily since 2007, falling to a low of 37.6% in 2012” (Clark, 2014, p. 7).

A strength of this report is that it has data from 2005, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 to compare. As such, it is interesting to note that Clark reports that the proportion of children aged eight to eleven who enjoy reading either ‘very much’ or ‘quite a lot’ has fallen from 67.0% in 2005 to 65.8% in 2013 (Clark, 2014, p. 7). In addition the proportion of

children aged eight to eleven who read outside class daily has fallen from 48.2% in 2005 to 40.7% in 2013.

5.2 Different Approaches

Some of the research into children's reading has attempted to tell the children's reading stories in more detail. Fry, for example, focuses on a small number of children and explores their reading choices, experiences and attitudes with them. Fry aimed to report:

“conversations with six young readers over a period of eight months...it deliberately restricts itself to six young readers in the belief that such case-studies are revealing and helpful because of their particularity” (Fry, 1985, p. 1).

Fry aimed to understand “what it is that engages the reader's interest and gives pleasure,” and “what kind of activity is reading for them, and what is its place in their lives” (Fry, 1985, p. 4). Later, Sarland worked with forty six students and aimed to identify:

“the relationship between meanings young people generate in their reading of fictional texts and the meanings they bring to those texts” (Sarland, 1991, p. 24).

5.3 Transfer from Primary to Secondary School

The subject of student transfer between primary and secondary school has generated much research. For example:

‘The impact of school transitions and transfers on pupil progress and attainment’ (Galton et al., 1999). This research brief number 131 for the DfES looks at “the effects on pupils’ progress and attitudes to learning of two related experiences: the move from one school to another (*transfer*) and the move from one year group to the next within a school

(*transition*)” (Galton et al., 1999, p. 1). It uses existing research mostly from the UK and the United States with additional information being provided by local education authorities (LEAs), OFSTED and QCA. A key finding was that approximately 38% of year 7 pupils:

“failed to achieve a better result on tests of mathematics, language use and reading at the end of transfer when compared to the scores obtained one year previously in the feeder school” with “up to two out of every five pupils fail[ing] to make progress during the year immediately following the change of school” (Galton et al., 1999, p. 2).

Another finding was that there was a decline in motivation in some subjects and “In year 7 there was also a less positive attitude towards school in general” (Galton et al., 1999, p. 2). The report suggests that some reasons for the dip in attainment at transfer were:

“difficulties in adjusting to routine aspects of the new environment such as travelling by bus to school, managing school meals, losing old and making new friends, coping with a variety of teachers and different expectations” (Galton et al., 1999, p. 2).

It suggests that pupil-centred approaches can help prepare students for their new school experience and that curriculum continuity approaches which involve “pupils in projects that start in year 6 and are completed in year 7 in the new school” (Galton et al., 1999, p. 3).

‘Transfer and Transitions in the Middle Years of Schooling (7-14): Continuities and Discontinuities in Learning’ (Galton et al., 2003). This study looks at over a dozen local education authorities (LEAs) and more than fifty schools. More than three hundred primary schools were also represented in the data-bases used to track pupil progress during Key Stage 2 whilst a further five primary head teachers contributed to the study. The study ran from January 2000 to December 2002. Primary school head teachers were drawn randomly from those schools using the QCA’s ‘optional’ tests for at least the last three years. This

meant that the selection pool was immediately bias towards those schools who felt that the optional tests were beneficial. The report states that:

“Schools are paying increasing attention to curriculum and pedagogic issues at transfer. This contrasts with some three years ago when almost all schools concentrated on administrative matters or easing pupils’ social passage from primary to secondary” (Galton et al., 2003, p. ii).

A concern of the report was that students’ enjoyment of school declined at transfer. The report recommends that more emphasis be placed on the “academic rather than the social aspects of transfer” (Galton et al., 2003, p. ii).

In terms of pupils’ friendships at transfer, the study conducted interviews in nine secondary schools and three primary schools. Some findings were that:

“Pupils are discerning about friends whom they do and do not work well with, and which friends are helpful in relation to different subjects and tasks” (Galton et al., 2003, p. ii).

The report also identifies the importance of peer support socially and academically. For pupils “being at school is a social occasion as much as an opportunity for academic learning, and that friends are an important part of the social world of school” (Galton et al., 2003, p. 109). An additional finding was that bridging units which started in the last few weeks of primary school and continued after transfer to secondary school and were “designed to assist continuity” (Galton et al., 2003, p. 108).

‘Sticking with your mates?’ Children’s Friendship Trajectories during the Transition from Primary to Secondary School’ (Weller, 2007). The study uses findings from a three-year

Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) study which explored “children’s and parents’ deployment of social capital during the transition to secondary school” (Weller, 2007, p. 341). Weller acknowledges that the concept of ‘social capital’ is a “highly contested concept” (Weller, 2007, p. 339), but she defines it as “the resources individuals and collectives derive from their social networks” (Weller, 2007, p. 339). The research took place in several areas of high deprivation in the UK and it followed the “a number of families from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds through the move to secondary school” (Weller, 2007, p. 341). 588 children aged between ten and eleven completed questionnaires in their final year of primary school, 76 parents were interviewed about the admissions process and school choice. There was follow-up work with children in the first two years of secondary school which included twelve focus group discussions with 75 participants, 81 surveys and 20 individual interviews (Weller, 2007, p. 341). Weller defined secondary school friendships as ‘enduring’ (friendships continuing), ‘ruptured’ (friendships are broken), ‘transitional’ (frequently short-term bonds used to support children in the early stages of transition) and more ‘lasting friendships’ with new peers. One important finding of the research was that “the opportunities for children to maintain or develop friendships are structured by the decisions of others...most children are resilient, able to adapt and develop friendships in new circumstances” (Weller, 2007, p. 349). Weller also states: “discontinuities in children’s friendships...may have ramifications for the longevity of children’s social capital throughout adolescence and into adulthood” (Weller, 2007, p. 350).

This study focuses on the importance of friendships in supporting a child during the move from primary to secondary school. Weller states: “Above all, settling in is linked with peer acceptance which in turn may be based on having friends alongside you to start with” (Weller, 2007, p. 348). The importance of moving to a new secondary school with or without friends is explored later in this thesis.

5.4 Overview

In all of the figures cited above, girls seem to be engaging in more independent reading than boys. There have been numerous studies looking specifically at this issue, for example, Millard's study (Millard, 1997) and the National Literacy Trust studies including those of Clark, Foster, and Osborne and others (Clark and Foster, 2005); (Clark et al., 2008). The difference between the independent reading for pleasure of boys and girls is not the focus of this study, yet it is noteworthy.

These surveys suggest that children appear to engage in less independent reading as they get older and that the rate of decline seems to have been increasing steadily since the 1970s. They also suggest that there are a number of students who appear to engage in no independent reading at all and that this group of students seems to be increasing. It must be noted that there is some evidence that after this decline in reading in the teenage years and early adulthood, reading for pleasure does increase in popularity again later in life (Clark and Rumbold, 2006, Clark and Douglas, 2011, Eccleshare, 2003).

These figures can also be misleading. Research has shown, (Twist et al., 2007, Clark and Osborne, 2008), that some students who class themselves as non-readers *are* actually engaging in a great deal of reading outside of the classroom. Clark, Osborne and Akerman found that, of the 1,614 pupils surveyed, 71% defined themselves as readers and 29% defined themselves as non-readers (Clark et al., 2008, p. 25). Yet the same research found that some of these self-defined 'non-readers' read the following outside of school more than once a month: magazines for 66.5%; websites for 52.4%; emails for 43.5% and blogs/networking sites for 49.5% (Clark et al., 2008, p. 55). Clark and Osborne state:

“young people who do not describe themselves as readers are still reading a variety of materials...the simple, but crucial difference is that those who do not call themselves readers do not read fiction books” (Clark and Osborne, 2008, p. 4).

A review of this research shows that as children get older and move to secondary school:

- they read fewer books;
- spend less time reading;
- can stop reading altogether;
- rely on friendships to support their transfer.

What the above research lacked was the 'story' of the same students' reading before and after transfer between academic institutions. My research is different because I aim to see if any of the children involved in this study do, in fact, follow this pattern and - if they do - to see if I can discover what happened to affect their reading for pleasure. Again, I look for answers to the question, "Why has she stopped reading?" In addition, I aim to investigate why some children engage in less reading for pleasure after they transfer from primary to secondary school and how secondary schools can support and encourage reading for pleasure.

6 Research Design

‘Why has she stopped reading?’

“The beginnings of an ethnographic study are often rooted in anger, even fury, and, as such, are partisan. A chance encounter with a book, a classroom incident, a teacher, child or parent’s remark will often be enough to spark a deep-seated anger or unanswered question from deep in our own past, which initiates the study” (Gregory, 2005, p. x).

The above question asked by a parent was the trigger for this research and it symbolises and illustrates the central questions of this study:

- Why do some children engage in less reading for pleasure after they transfer from primary to secondary school?
- How can secondary schools support and encourage reading for pleasure?

My research position derives from a constructionist interpretivist view which sees social reality as constructed in different ways in different contexts. As such, I adopted a personal and flexible research structure which was receptive to capturing meanings in human interaction (Black, 2006). I began this research project with some prior insight of reading for pleasure in secondary schools but I remained open to new knowledge throughout the study and allowed the study to develop with the help of the research participants. This interpretivist approach allowed me to focus on understanding the range of subjective experiences which were relevant to secondary school students’ reading for pleasure. As such, I began the research to acquire data without knowing what my specific focus points would be. The flexibility of thematic analysis was essential here because it was only after my initial classroom observations and student completion of the primary questionnaire that I began to identify themes which required more detailed study, as Braun and Clark state:

“A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response to meaning within the data set (Braun and Clark, 2006, p. 10).

My ethnographic approach allowed me to describe the reading experiences of the students involved in my research rather than judging what I observed in the schools and classrooms of these students. Ethnographers make “emic observations – those that attempt to adopt the framework and perspective of the participant studied” (Gregory, 2005, p. xx). However, ethnography as a single methodology “was simply not sufficient to provide a full and trustworthy answer” (Gregory, 2005, p. xxii) to my research questions. Ethnography provided the wider picture within which my study is situated however, in addition to this ethnographic approach, questionnaire data analysis and thematic analysis were also employed. This ‘multilayering’ or ‘multilevel approach’ to my analysis was required to allow the student’s reading stories to be told. Table 12 shows an overview of my research.

Table 12: Overview of research

Date	Academic Year Group	Phase of Research	Number of visits	Focus of Research
April 2009	Year 6	Primary School Observations	Three full days in each primary school	Ethnographic Observation
May 2009	Year 6	Completion of primary questionnaire with primary school students	One lesson with each Year 6 class involved in the project	Questionnaire Analysis
June-July 2009	Year 6	Primary school group conversations	Three thirty minute conversation sessions with each Year 6 group of students	Thematic analysis of conversation transcripts

June-July 2009	Year 6	Researcher focus on definitions of readers		Categories applied deductively to the data
October – July 2009-2010	Year 7	Secondary school group conversations	Three thirty minute conversations with each group of students	Thematic analysis of conversation transcripts
July 2010	Year 7	Completion of secondary questionnaire with secondary students	One lesson with each Year 7 class involved in the project	Questionnaire analysis
July – December 2010	Year 8	Secondary school group conversations – specific focus on ‘Geeks’	Two thirty minute conversations with each group of students	Thematic analysis of conversation transcripts

The educational institutions which the students involved in this research attended are explained below in Table 13.

Table 13: Overview of research participants' primary and secondary schools

Year Group	Primary School A				Primary School B			Primary School C
Year 6	Jamie	Theo	Joe	Tom	Gemma	Scarlet	Anna	Brandon
Years 7 and 8	Secondary School A			Secondary School B	Secondary School C			
	Jamie	Theo	Joe	Tom	Gemma	Scarlet	Anna	Brandon

The different phases of the research and the associated research choices are examined in greater detail in the following chapters.

7 Selecting the Primary and Secondary Schools and Gaining Access

“If you’re like in a classroom and you’re doing silent reading there is always somebody in the classroom who is not reading. And there are naughty children who keep chatting” Tom.

7.1 Access and Gate Keepers

“The notion of ‘gate-keeper’ has frequently been used in sociological and anthropological research to those who are in a position to ‘permit’ access to others...this is important from an ethical perspective because it suggests the potential exercising of power by some individuals over others” (Miller and Bell, 2002, p. 55).

The primary and secondary schools involved in my research were to some extent decided upon by one very large consideration: could I gain access? I specifically targeted two state primary schools where students were due to transfer to the state secondary school in which I taught for their secondary school education. I also targeted a large independent school which had both a primary and secondary school on the same site. My children attended the primary school of this independent school at the time which provided me with a platform from which to negotiate access. This combination of fee-paying and state primary schools allowed me to consider a range of educational establishments.

For access to all of the primary schools I needed to go through a gate-keeper. Tina Miller and Linda Bell have stated that the idea of a ‘gate-keeper’ has been used frequently in sociological and anthropological research to refer to those individuals who are able to facilitate a researcher’s access to a group of people for the purpose of interviewing. They state that this concept of gate-keepers is, “important from an ethical perspective because it suggests the potential exercising of power by some individuals over others” (Miller and Bell, 2002, p. 55).

Fortunately, the headmaster of the fee-paying independent school was supportive of my study and access was granted. For the other two primary schools, I used my contacts with the transfer team in the secondary school in which I taught to identify suitable primary schools which had children transferring to the secondary school I taught in. They put me in contact with the relevant head teachers, and access was granted. One child at the fee-paying primary school did not transfer to the attached secondary school and instead transferred to a local state boarding school as a day pupil. Because I worked for the same education authority, and because the child's parents were keen for their son to continue with the research, access was granted by the head teacher.

It could be argued that I should have aimed to work with more than three primary and three secondary schools, and not specifically have targeted students moving to the school in which I taught. However, the three primary and three secondary schools were all very different and they reflected a range of educational institutions.

I also had to consider the suitability of the students that I had access to in terms of being representative samples. As the independent fee-paying school was selective in terms of academic achievement, any class that I was allowed access to would, by nature of the selective process, be made up of children: who had passed the entrance examination; performed well at their interview with the head teacher; and whose parents or guardians could afford to pay the fees. This raised the issue of comparability between the results produced from the different schools. Should the targeted group of children from the other primary schools consist of similar children in terms of academic ability? If so, then should the children be tested prior to the study?

I felt uncomfortable with the idea of imposing a test on students prior to participation. It could have been seen as placing undue pressure on children for no academic gain. Helen Roberts argued that:

“we cannot take it for granted that participation in research and the development of increasingly sophisticated research methods to facilitate children’s participation are always in their interests” (Roberts, 2008, p. 273).

In addition, any testing could be viewed in a competitive light: children might entertain the thought ‘If you pass this test you are allowed to participate in the research project,’ which could result in them feeling unwilling to say no. Eventually, I decided against trying to target children of similar academic ability. This was because, firstly, I had no right to ask the children’s teachers how academic each child was (due to the Data Protection Act, 1998) and, secondly, because my study required that each child involved should engage in reading for pleasure whilst they were in Year 6 and hold positive attitudes towards reading. Therefore academic achievement was not really relevant.

The relationship with each set of children also had the potential to be different. The children who were due to transfer to the school I taught in could view me as an authority figure who they would be either willing to please by being involved in the research project, or perhaps intimidated by and thus be unwilling to say ‘no’ to the research. Furthermore, there was a power relationship in play. I am an adult and was a teacher at their intended secondary school, so it could be argued that I was in a position of power over the children. There was a danger that the children could have felt forced into participating in the research.

For the children who attend the independent fee-paying school, the relationship with me was different. I did not teach in their school, but they still knew that I was a teacher. They knew that I was a parent of children who attended their school. Again, the fact that I am an adult and they are children could be seen as a power relationship. In addition, the fact that I had been allowed into the school by the head teacher could make the children reluctant to say no to participation – they could view saying no to my research request as saying no to their head teacher, which they have been taught not to do.

7.2 Informed Consent

Miller and Bell argue that “‘consent’ should be ongoing and renegotiated between researcher and researched throughout the research process” (Miller and Bell, 2002, p. 53). I required consent from the children and also their parents. As my study could develop in ways that were not initially expected, potentially as a result of the group conversations, then the issue of informed consent was problematic. For example, if the peer interviews revealed a story of some students being embarrassed by how many, or how few, books they read, or of them not wanting to ‘own up’ to how much reading they actually did for fear of ridicule from their peers, then this could become the story of the case: the individual child and why they see reading in this light. Equally, my observation might reveal something unexpected which could change the focus of the study. Informed consent obtained at the start of the study could not possibly cover all of these eventualities, so I had to build renegotiation into the research process. Helen Roberts wrote:

“However careful we are about informed consent, there are aspects of the adult/child relationship or practical issues concerning research in schools or youth settings, which may make non-participation difficult for a child or young person” (Roberts, 2008, p. 273).

To acknowledge and thus to address this in two constructive ways, I always gave the schools and the children advanced notice of any research visits so that the children could decide if they wanted to attend my sessions. I also started each interview by checking with each child if they were happy to continue with the study.

My overarching ethical responsibility was ultimately to the children. I constantly needed to ask: ‘What benefits are there for the children to be involved in my research?’ I believed that by involving the children in participant research that I could gain additional perspectives. Kirby summarises, very neatly, what I was hoping to achieve:

“Young people can identify research issues and questions that professional researchers may miss or not prioritise...Young people can offer a different perspective on what questions should be asked of respondents...Young interviewees may open up more to their peers” (Kirby, 2004, p. 7).

Yet, what were the benefits to the children taking part? Again, Kirby’s insights capture the essence of enabling children which provides edification for their participation:

“Participating in research is a way of enabling young people to be actively involved in issues affecting their own and their peers’ lives...the experience may be life enhancing” (Kirby, 2004. p. 8).

I believed that it was my duty as a researcher to ensure that students’ participation in my research was a positive experience. I also believed that this study was in the interest of the students taking part because it allowed them to gain a greater awareness of themselves as readers and of their attitudes towards reading for pleasure. However, the person who benefitted the most from the students’ involvement was me because it allowed me to tell the story to others, who in turn could benefit from a greater understanding of children’s reading experiences. I was able to gain a better understanding of them as readers and their participation allowed me to gain some insight into why some children stop engaging in reading for pleasure when they start secondary school. The benefits to the students participating in this research were secondary. My research was not detrimental to any student involved and a positive outcome might be that some of the students developed as readers because I asked them to focus on their reading.

The groups of students who participated in my study fully engaged with the discussions and creative tasks I suggested. Some students enjoyed missing Form Time to talk with me; others enjoyed time with their friends, talking about books away from the rest of the class. Some students felt ‘special’ because they had been asked to participate in my research and

some saw it as an opportunity to get to know unfamiliar students. The students also reflected upon their own reading and enjoyed sharing their latest reading with their peers. My research allowed them to share their views about their reading in a way that was not present in their normal school day. Through their participation in the research, the students reflected upon their reading, shared reading experiences with their peers, received recommendations for books from their peers and gained recognition for their reading.

8 The Schools Involved in the Research Project

“From my point of view reading is just awesome!” Scarlet.

There were six schools involved in this research, three primary and three secondary schools.

8.1 Primary School A

This school is an independent, selective, fee-paying primary school for ages 7 - 11. There were 169 pupils - 119 boys and 50 girls - at the time of my study. The school had become co-educational two years before I began my research. There were no girls in Year 6 when I began my research. Admission is by competitive assessment, usually at age seven. At the time of my research there were no children with a statement of special educational need; however, the school identified four children with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD). Pupils were drawn from a variety of backgrounds, with many coming from professional families. Although a small number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, all pupils speak English as their first language. Almost all pupils transfer to the senior school at the age of eleven. The ability profile of the school is above the national average. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) assessed the school as ‘Good’.

8.2 Primary School B

This school is a large community primary school for ages 3 - 11. There were 422 pupils on roll at the time of my study. The large majority of pupils were White British. A small minority came from many different minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was high. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, was average. Attainment by the end of Year 6 was broadly average

overall and higher in English than in mathematics. This school had been assessed as 'Satisfactory' by Ofsted.

8.3 Primary School C

This school is a mid- to large community primary school for ages 3 – 11. There were 326 pupils attending at the time of my study. The school had a below average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and an average proportion of pupils came from homes where English is not the first language. The proportion of pupils entitled to claim free school meals was well above average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was well above average. Most of these relate to pupils' emotional or social needs or their language development. Standards in Years 5 and 6 remain below national expectations. The school had been assessed as a 'Satisfactory' school by Ofsted.

8.4 Secondary School A

This school is a larger than average, mixed, fee-paying, selective secondary school for ages 11 – 19. There were a total of 820 pupils on roll, with 582 boys and 238 girls (the school had become fully co-educational two years prior to my beginning my research. Previously, girls had been present only in the sixth form). Standardised national assessment shows that the average ability of the pupils was well above the national average of pupils in all maintained schools and in line with the average in maintained selective schools. One pupil had a statement of special educational need (SEN) and was supported within the school. The school recognised a further forty two pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD); these receive specialist guidance within the school but were not withdrawn from regular lessons. No pupil received support on account of English being an additional language to that normally spoken at home. In addition, 101 pupils receive support with fees from the school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) assessed the school as 'Outstanding'.

8.5 Secondary School B

This school is a large, mixed, foundation comprehensive state boarding school, for ages 11 – 19. There were a total of 1,418 students on roll at the time of my study with 1,055 being in the main school and 363 in the sixth form. Approximately half of the students board and lived on site during term time. The school had a below average number of students from minority ethnic groups and the proportion of students eligible for free school meals was low. The proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities was low.

The students achieved standards well above expectations and successfully met challenging targets. Progress was excellent in all Key Stages. All students achieved five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C, and 90% did so, when English and Mathematics are taken into account. The proportion of students achieving the highest grades A* and A was well above the national average for all subjects. The school had been graded 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.

8.6 Secondary School C

This school is an average sized, mixed, foundation secondary school for ages 11 - 19. There were a total of 924 pupils on roll at the time of my study with 158 students being in the sixth form. Most pupils came from White British backgrounds, with small numbers from a range of minority ethnic heritages. The number of students known to be eligible for free school meals was high. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities varied greatly from year to year and was generally well above average nationally. The school serves an area where deprivation is much higher than the national average.

The achievement of students is below the national average. The progress made by students in Key Stage 3 was accelerating but GCSE results had varied greatly between subjects over the last few years, and the proportion of students attaining the very highest grades had

been well below average. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes was low. The school had been graded as 'Satisfactory' by Ofsted.

8.7 Next Steps

The range of schools involved in this study meant that I studied children with very different educational experiences. I hoped to discover similarities in the children's reading experiences and to see how these very different institutions made a difference to each child's reading story.

Having decided upon the schools I wanted to participate in my research project, and negotiated access, I moved on to begin my initial school observations.

9 Initial School-Based Observations

“When I’m in a good mood I read really long books...
when I’m angry I choose funny books” Gemma.

9.1 Methodology of Observation

“An ethnographer enters a field with all of his senses, and takes into account the architecture, the furniture, the special arrangements, [and] the way people work and interact...” (Ebele and Maeder in Silverman, 2011, p. 113).

As shown in Table 12, I completed three days of observation in all three primary schools to allow the children, and their teachers, to get used to my presence in their classroom. I also hoped to gain some understanding of each class, the individuals, the routines and the environments before I moved on to asking the students to complete my questionnaire.

I thought that it was important to focus on the physical nature of the classrooms and libraries. I could not view “events, actions, norms and values, etc. from the perspective of the people being studied” (Bryman, quoted in Silverman, 2011, p. 118) but I *could* attempt to become a temporary part of the classes which would allow for more honest responses to my questionnaire and in the group conversations. In addition, I wanted to begin to understand what was going on in each classroom to look at the ‘mundane details’ of how the classroom and library spaces were laid out, how many children were involved in each setting and how many adults were involved with each group of children, (Silverman, 2011, p. 117).

Observation “entails being present in a situation and making a record of one’s impressions of what takes place” (Somekh and Jones, 2005, p. 138). The records and impressions of the observations are analysed and filed for future use. Yet, as Somekh and Jones point out:

“an obvious problem is the enormous complexity of human behaviour, whether as individuals or in groups, and the impossibility of making a complete record of all the researcher’s impressions” (Somekh and Jones, 2005, p. 138).

I observed the targeted classes and wrote up notes in my field journal at the end of each day. I tried to avoid making notes during my time with the children because I did not want my note-taking to disrupt a lesson: for example, I wanted to avoid children’s questioning, such as “Miss, what are you writing? Is it about me?” I also didn’t want to ‘miss’ any interactions because I was writing a note. In addition, the main focus of my whole class observation was for the children to be comfortable and used to my presence to allow me access to further research data. During the initial observation period, I realised that a necessity of the study was that the research participants felt comfortable with me and able to talk with me. Thematic analysis “can be a constructionist method, which examines the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society” (Braun and Clark, 2006, p. 9). The flexibility of thematic analysis enabled me to identify key aspects whilst observing the classes and to adapt my research in response to events. As a result I became more of a participant in classroom experiences than I had initially planned.

Obviously, subjectivity was considered here in terms of the gathering of sensory data, making sense of impressions, and interpreting events and behaviour. Thus observation was a record of, and the product of, choices made by me the observer. What’s more, my ontological viewpoint – interpretivist - determined what was observed. My observation, and research, was underpinned by an ethnographic interpretivist approach which means that my observation was participatory with me “seeking to observe in an open-ended way, screening nothing out and noting as many details as possible” (Somekh and Jones, 2005, p. 139).

Once the smaller research groups of students had been selected, I conducted a study of the three groups of students over five academic terms. I did not observe the students all of the

time, instead I observed them at targeted points throughout the five terms. I believe that I was present in the schools for a long enough period of time for the students to get used to me and thus for me to observe typical behaviour during class reading and library lessons.

9.2 How I Presented Myself to the Students

Before visiting the classrooms I spent time considering how I wanted to present myself. To a number of the children involved, I was not a stranger. I was either a teacher they had seen on open evenings when they visited potential secondary schools, a teacher that they had seen on their Year 7 transition days or the parent of a child at their school.

Because “observers may change the situation just by their presence and the decision about what role to adopt will be fateful” (Silverman, 2011, p. 134), I decided to present myself as a secondary school English teacher who was also involved in research about reading. I wore smart work clothes but avoided suits because I didn’t want to be seen as a school-based authoritative figure. My reasoning for this was that in every school involved in my research the senior management all wore suits and the classroom teachers tended not to do so.

10 The Observational and Interview Setting

“Everybody reads!” Joe.

“Social scientists are observers both of human activities and of the physical settings in which such activities take place” (Angrosino, 2005, p. 729).

I wanted to observe my targeted Year 6 classes both in their school library during class library lessons and in their usual classroom setting. I also wanted to locate my group conversations with the students in the schools’ libraries. I did this because I did not want to meet with the students in a classroom, due to associations of instruction, and me being seen as a ‘teacher’ rather than a researcher. Sheila Greene and Malcolm Hill suggest that:

“Children behave in different ways in different settings so that the choice of where to carry out research is as important as how to carry it out” (Green and Hill, 2005, p. 9).

I also I wanted to observe the student with books, and to talk to them about books, whilst surrounded by them.

10.1 School Libraries

A school library can say a great deal about how the whole school views reading and independent learning. Margaret Meek writes:

“the state of a school library is often a clear indication of a school’s commitment to effective literacy, independent and collaborative study and the promotion of learning from a variety of sources” (Meek, 1988b, p. 175).

The School Library Association echoes this view that a school library can be a reflection of how a school values independent reading and independent learning. The location of a school library is also important.

“Library location ... speaks volumes about the status given to the library as a whole school resource. If it is one of the first things both visitors and school staff and pupils see on entering the school it can reinforce the message that independent learning and reading are given a high profile”(School Library Association, 2013).

The space devoted to a school library also signals how much value the school places in reading.

“Reading areas...signify value. You don’t devote a place solely to one special activity unless you believe it to be enormously important. Just by being there, used in a certain way and protected by simple, reasonable rules, a reading area announces to children, without the teacher having to say anything about it, that...in this school, this community, reading is understood to be an essential occupation” (Chambers, 1991, p. 30).



Each of the primary schools involved in my research had very different libraries in terms of: location in the school; the age range it was catering for; accessibility; stock and reading displays.

10.2 The Primary School Libraries

10.2.1 Primary School A’s Library

Primary School A had two Year 6 classes. The school was rebuilt in the 1990s and it is a relatively modern building. The school had an ‘L’ shape corridor running through the school

on to which classrooms opened. At the corner of the 'L' were the library and the school hall. The students attended assembly every morning in the school hall and they were therefore in and around the library every day. The library also had an ICT room leading off from it. Each Year 6 classroom also contained a class library of books that were deemed interesting to the Year 6 students, but inappropriate for children lower down the school (see Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1: Primary School A Library	Figure 2: Primary School A Library Stock
	

The library space was used as a thoroughfare, a meeting place and a quiet place to read. Primary School A's library had a number of display carousels as well as more traditional low level shelving. There were some tables and chairs which could be interlocked to make one big table or used separately to allow for small groupings. There were enough tables and chairs to accommodate whole classes. There were also a number of comfortable chairs for the children to sit on. Additionally, the library had small alcoves where small groups of children could sit together.

10.2.2 Primary School B's Library

School B also had two Year 6 classes. The main building was Victorian and there were additional buildings that had been added on to the main building over the years, as well as separate, newer buildings. The library was situated in the main building and it could be accessed, with a staff member's swipe card, from the main school corridor as well as the

playground. The library had two computers and an interactive whiteboard (see Figures 3 and 4).

Figure 3: Primary School B Library



Figure 4: Primary School B beanbag area



Primary School B had a combination of tables and chairs and comfortable seating for the children, as well as alcoves for small groups. It had lots of traditional low level shelving with spaces at the end to display individual books. The main seating was around a main table and there were five big bean bags which were very popular with the children. The library was not big enough to accommodate a whole class sat at desks but a whole class could squeeze in and sit on the floor.

10.2.3 Primary School C's Library

Primary School C had two Year 6 classes. The school was a modern new build, two storey building. The library was the central atrium of the school with classrooms leading off it downstairs and with classrooms upstairs leading off a walkway which overlooked the library. There were a number of tables and chairs in small groupings and there were also a number of comfortable chairs and bean bags for the children to sit on. There were six computers in the library.

Figure 5: Primary School

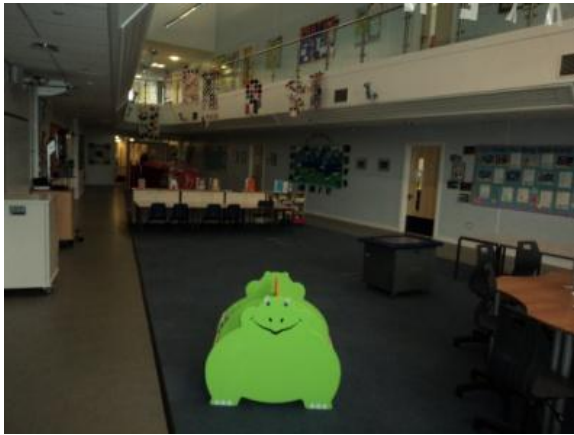


Figure 6: Primary School C's book display



The library at Primary Schools C was big enough to accommodate whole classes sitting at desks (see Figures 5 and 6).

10.3 The Library Space in the Primary Schools - My Observations

The library space in Primary Schools A and C usually had children in them at break and lunch times. Borrowing books was actively encouraged. Primary School B encouraged children to borrow books but, because it was not a central space within the school, children could not be in the library without a member of staff. This meant that at break time and lunch time, School B's library was often locked up and empty.

Michael Lockwood writes:

“The library needs to be the hub of any reading school, the centre to which all reading activities in the school lead. Sadly, this is not always the case and frequently the primary school library finds itself relegated to a corridor or a corner somewhere inaccessible, essentially a storage space rather than the heart of a reading community” (Lockwood, 2008, p. 35).

In Primary Schools A and C the library was certainly the hub of the school, but in school B it was not.

“The siting of a central collection (of books) is important, for this affects its use. Better to be shelved along a main corridor, for instance, where the books can be got at whatever the time, than kept in a room used all day for teaching. And better in a large, conveniently placed entrance hall than tucked away in a room a long way from most of the children (especially the youngest), however pleasant the room itself may be. Accessibility partly depends on location” (Chambers, 1991, p. 19).

Initially I wanted to observe each class using their school library for a library lesson. However, none of the participating schools held regular time tabled lessons in the library. Instead, children were provided with an opportunity to change their reading books during English/Literacy lessons.

As a secondary school English teacher, familiar with library lessons as the norm for Year 7 students, I was quite shocked by what I saw as a serious lack of this provision. There were a number of reasons given by the teachers for the year 6 students not having library lessons. Some reasons stated were:

- the children are so busy in Year 6 with residential trips and the SATs that library lessons could not be fitted in;
- the books in the library are not appropriate for Year 6 students and more appropriate books could not be installed for fear that the younger children would read them;
- the pressures of the curriculum did not allow for private reading lessons.
- the Year 6 children were too mature or old for library lessons - this was something that younger children did (this reason was voiced in all three of the primary schools).

Primary School A set regular reading homework – students were expected to read aloud to a parent or carer for ten minutes at least three times a week in addition to their own private

silent reading. These children were also expected to always have a reading book in their school bag. Primary School A had a strong culture of homework being set from Year 3, with the Year 6 students having, on average, 40 minutes homework a night. Primary School A also set a number of extended projects for the Year 6 children to complete over the year, with the majority of the work being done at home.

Primary School B sometimes set a reading homework of twenty minutes' silent reading, though this was not set regularly. Primary School B did not set children any other homework apart from a project-based unit following a residential trip.

Primary School C did not set reading homework or, in fact, any homework at all.

All three primary schools supported and promoted reading for pleasure. The purpose of this paper is not to critique but rather to focus on the story of the children involved. However, I do find it interesting that none of the schools regularly took the children into their libraries for private extended reading. A recent report by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals states that the school library:

“...can promote and support leisure-time reading, contribute to the social development of the students in the school and provide a place to study and do homework. Importantly, the library can be a learning resource centre to support all the predominant modes of teaching and learning in the school, ranging from teacher-led lessons to independent student learning and e-learning. To do this well, the library needs adequate space and a range of current and appropriate books and other learning resources, backed by ready student access to ICT” (Streatfield et al., 2010, pp. 2-3).

By not having reading lessons in the school library, none of the primary schools involved in my research were using the school library fully to promote and support reading for pleasure.

One primary school used the library as a place to study and do homework, but the other two did not though this could be because only one of the primary schools regularly set homework. Two of the primary school libraries had ready student access to ICT (information communication technology) but one did not. Two of the libraries had enough space for teacher-led lessons.

10.4 Primary School Classroom Observations

Each of the Year 6 classes was interesting for me to observe. Each class had energetic, knowledgeable and passionate teachers. Each class also had challenging students:

- Primary School A had a child who always had his nose in a reading book to the extent that he would be unaware of teacher instructions and had to be frequently told to put his book away.
- Primary School B had a child who could become agitated when asked to sit and write; on one occasion he had to be physically restrained after he had thrown a chair at the teacher.
- Primary School C had a child who liked to wander about during the lessons and who frequently tried to leave the room.

When the children were asked to engage in in-class reading, the overwhelming majority seemed to be happy to do so. There was little off-task behaviour and all of the children had a book that they were interested in. In Primary Schools B and C, teaching assistants took weaker readers aside to listen to them read out loud. Some of these students did not appear to enjoy this and read aloud with reluctance.

In Primary School A, both classes had a group of boys who were all reading the Robert Muchamore 'Cherub' series of books (Muchamore, 2004b). Between lessons, and whilst the class was waiting for their next teacher, these boys would all talk about where each child was up to in the series. Some boys not resist talking about their reading, which was further

ahead in the series than the other boys. Certain other boys would listen intently to these discussions but rarely join in. It was interesting to observe these discussions because many things were happening at once:

- there was a sense of belonging because the boys were all reading the same books;
- a sense of rebellion because the books were not allowed in the school library;
- a sense of anticipation by the children who were not as far through the series as the other boys;
- a sense of superiority from the boys who were further along in their reading;
- a sense of maturity as the content of some of the later books dealt with teenage boys and relationships, homosexuality and boys becoming sexually active.

Primary School A also had far fewer girls in the year than boys – the school had only recently become co-educational. In a similar way to the boys, a group of girls shared the experience of reading a series, in their case the ‘Twilight’ series by Stephanie Meyer (Meyer, 2007).

Again, there were a number of things happening when these girls talked about their books:

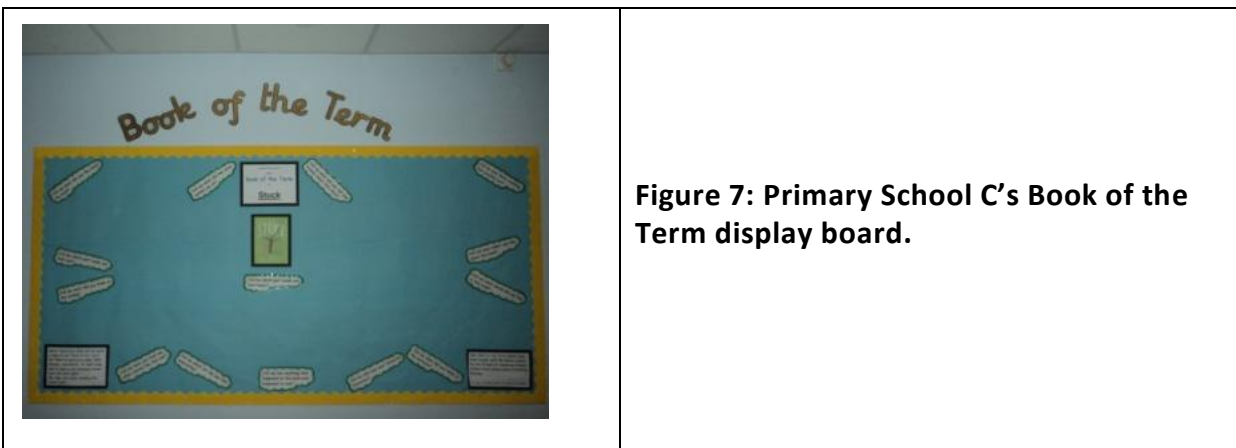
- the girls were essentially reading a romance novel and they were all talking about which character of the two lead males they preferred – Jake or Edward;
- there was a sense of belonging because these girls were reading the same books;
- the girls who were further ahead in the series were held in high esteem by the other girls, but unlike the boys, they did not discuss the content of their books;
- these books were not in the school library so there was also a sense of rebellion;
- these girls talked of their mothers reading the same series of books and of them being able to talk about the books with their mothers;
- there was a feeling of maturity as the books dealt with similar themes to the boys’ books – relationships, sexual awareness, keeping secrets from your family and sexual relationships.

In Primary School B, I did not witness the children openly talking about their reading amongst themselves. However, once they knew that I was researching children’s reading, a number of children wanted to sit near me during my observation sessions and show me the books that they were reading. There were two girls, Gemma and Scarlet, who would always

find a moment to come and talk to me about their books. They were very interested in whether I knew the books or if they were new to me.

There appeared to be less of a group book experience taking place in this school, unlike Primary School A, where groups of pupils shared reading experiences of the same series of books. This did not mean that groups of children were not reading the same books - they were - but they were less likely to be talking about their books with their friends.

In Primary School C, there was a different sort of group experience of books. This was because the school had a policy of all year groups experiencing the same book each term. There was a display board in the library, which was also a central place in the school, where the title was displayed with prompt questions to encourage the children to think about, and talk about, the 'Book of the Term'. As the term progressed, children's work was displayed on the board so that by the end of term the board was full of pictures, written work, and children's thoughts about the book (see Figure 7).



There was some unprompted talk about the Book of the Term, which was 'Wolf Brother' (Paver, 2005) and the children were genuinely interested in the story and in what happened. One group of girls were reading the 'Tracy Beaker' (Wilson, 2006b) series of books, and they would talk about which books they were reading and which books they were planning to read.

In every primary school there were a number of children who were initially very interested in me and who kept trying to engage me in conversation. However, by the end of my third day in the schools (which was spread over a number of weeks) this interest had declined and the children seemed to get used to my presence in the room. The children still chatted to me but I had become the norm, to some extent. It was time to move on to my questionnaire.

11 The Questionnaire - Methodology

“Storybooks you can read over and over again especially if you really like it” Brandon.

My interest lies in why some children, who are positive about reading whilst in primary school, read less or become non-readers during their first year of secondary school. I decided to use a questionnaire to select potential participants for my study. I wanted to identify children who:

- held positive attitudes towards reading for pleasure;
- engaged in regular independent reading for pleasure;
- had books at home.

I also wanted to use student responses on the questionnaire as a stimulus for discussion in the small group conversations. At this point I did not know what themes the data would generate in terms of the actual images drawn by the students or the conversations discussing the images with the research participants. This inductive approach to thematic analysis, with the themes identified being strongly linked to the data which was been produced specifically for this research, allowed me the flexibility to tell the readers’ stories as they emerged.

To use questionnaires with whole classes I needed to be aware that some students, and some parents, might not want to participate. As Heath et al. point out:

“Completion of a questionnaire might, for example, form the centrepiece of a classroom activity, and might be indistinguishable from other routine classroom assignments. All pupils in the group might be expected to participate” (Heath et al., 2007, p. 413).

I needed informed consent for any student to complete the questionnaire and one consideration was how to contact the parents to gain this. I was not allowed access to

parental information which would have enabled me to post these letters out to parents because this would have been a breach of the Data Protection Act (1998). Jones and Stanley write about head teachers being concerned about:

“Breach of the Data Protection Act...by allowing researchers access to the school’s database to facilitate postal distribution of participant information sheets and consent forms;” (Jones and Stanley, 2008, p. 34).

If I asked the primary school secretaries to post these letters out for me, I would have been increasing their workload. Instead, the head teachers and class teachers offered to send these letters home with their pupils and to collect in any reply slips. For this I was hugely grateful. In an attempt to reduce workload for the members of staff involved, the letter home asking for permission to complete my questionnaire contained a reply slip that only needed returning if the parents did not want their child to complete the questionnaire. A consequence of this was that I had a very high completion rate for the questionnaire because it was only given to students whose parents had already agreed for them to participate. Some parents did not wish for their child to complete the questionnaire and these wishes were respected. In addition, because I was in the classroom with the children whilst they completed the questionnaire I immediately received every questionnaire.

See Tables 14 and 15 for completion rates for each school.

Table 14: Completion Rates for My Primary Questionnaires

School	Number of completed questionnaires	Number of children opting out of questionnaire
Primary School A	30	0
Primary School B	48	5
Primary School C	16	3
Primary Total	94	8

Table 15: Completion Rates for My Secondary Questionnaires

School	Number of completed questionnaires	Number of children opting out of questionnaire
Secondary School A	22	0
Secondary School B	21	1
Secondary School C	25	2
Secondary Total	68	3

The head teachers of all three primary schools were involved in the selection process and, because of this, there was a danger that consent could be assumed.

“On occasions when gatekeepers provide researchers with access to their institutions, it is not uncommon for the consent of children and young people to be assumed” (Heath et al., 2007, p. 412).

I decided to use Whitehead’s 1970s (Whitehead et al., 1977) questionnaire as my starting point. One of the reasons for this was that it allowed some comparison between the research cohort and previous studies. I found Whitehead’s original questionnaire a little cumbersome in terms of layout so I looked at Hall and Coles 1999 questionnaire (Coles and Hall, 1999). I needed this numerical data to create a short list of students. Because the questionnaires were only taken by ninety four Year 6 primary school students and sixty eight secondary students, the small scale of the questionnaire did not allow for true positivist data analysis as firm statistical conclusions cannot be reached from such a small number.

Hall and Coles’ questionnaire included an open ended question requiring students to complete the sentence “I think that reading is...” (Coles and Hall, 1999, p. 160). I mirrored this for my primary questionnaire. My questionnaire differed from previous research

because there was a question requiring a pictorial response from the students. For the primary questionnaire, students were asked to “Please draw a picture of someone who is a reader (someone who reads) in the box below”. The responses to the “I think that reading is...” and the pictorial responses formed the basis of my first interviews with each of the groups of students.

When the students had completed their first year of secondary school the questionnaire was repeated with a similar ‘complete the sentence’ question asking “I think *my friends* think that reading is.....” and a pictorial question which asked “Please draw a picture of what *your friends* think a reader looks like”. The distancing device of “my friends” was intended to encourage the students to think about their perceptions of their peers. I hoped that these responses would prompt discussion and allow for some comparison between primary and secondary school views of readers. This is in response to research that has looked at the importance of peer perceptions of reading in secondary school, (Clark and Osborne, 2008).

I piloted the questionnaire with a Year 8 class I taught. We encountered some problems with using Whitehead’s questionnaire, and changes were made. With the problems raised by the pilot, I decided to continue to base my questionnaire upon Whitehead’s and Hall and Coles’ questionnaires but I decided to reduce the number of questions and alter the layout. I also decided to ask for information about ethnic back ground and if any adult read at home. [Please see Appendix 1. for my primary and secondary questionnaires.]

As each of the primary school classrooms had an interactive whiteboard, I decided to model how to complete the questionnaire, question by question to avoid confusion. This was positive because it allowed me to present the questionnaire in the same way to each and every class.

There were a number of issues concerning the primary questionnaire, one of which was it was too long and it involved too much writing by the students. This resulted in my reducing

the number of questions on the secondary questionnaire. However, there were enough questions which remained the same to allow comparison.

11.1 Questionnaire Data

The questionnaires were given to five Year 6 classes. Primary School A's two Year 6 classes were selective. The three state school classes, Primary Schools B and C, were all mixed ability and they covered a full range of ability. For the secondary schools, the questionnaire was given to the classes which study participants were in. This resulted in only higher ability classes responding to the questionnaire. This imbalance of respondents' academic ability could be seen in the secondary questionnaire data (see Table 16).

Table 16: Average number of books read in the previous month my results

Age	Boys	Girls	Boys and Girls
10+ (Year 6) 94 students	2.32	3.22	2.77
12+ (Year 8) 68 students	2.33	3.64	2.98

These results do not reflect the pattern that has been reported in previous surveys with the number of books read per month declining as children get older. (Whitehead et al., 1977, Clark and Douglas, 2011, Coles and Hall, 1999). However, the figure of 2.77, showing how many books were read in the previous month for the Year 6 students (10+) for boys and girls is lower than both Whitehead's figure of 2.98 and Cole's figure of 3.34.

The data for the number of students who reported that they engaged in no reading for pleasure in the month prior to the questionnaires is, however, in line with previous studies (see Table 17).

Table 17: Number of children reporting no reading in the previous month my results

Age	Boys	Girls
10+ (Year 6) 94 students	13.2%	0%
12+ (Year 8) 68 students	14%	12%

The increase in the number of girls reporting no reading raised the most concern for me. Previous studies had shown that girls engage in more reading for pleasure than boys (Clark and Millard, 1998, Millard, 1997), however, I was shocked by how much this figure had increased. This is especially so when the ability of the secondary school respondents is taken into consideration (see Table 18).

Table 18: Positive attitudes towards reading

Age	Boys	Girls
10+ (Year 6) 94 students	78%	78%
12+ (Year 8) 68 students	64%	63%

In regard to the students' attitudes towards reading for pleasure, my data was in line with previous research in that this declines as students get older (Clark and Douglas, 2011, Whitehead et al., 1977, Coles and Hall, 1999).

In hindsight, I asked for too much information from the questionnaires. However, the questionnaire did allow me to make a long list of potential students to participate in the research. The questionnaire also allowed me to create student profiles for the students involved in the study which allowed me to compare their primary and secondary responses.

However, some of my data does suggest that there was an increase in the number of students who reported not reading and there was a decline in positive attitudes towards reading.

The reliability of the data must be questioned. For example, according to some student's data they were engaging in over ten and a half hours of television/reading/computer use after school. Gemma recorded that she watched television for more than three and a half hours, read for between two and a half to three and a half to hours and used a computer or played computer games for more than three and a half hours. This adds up to a minimum of nine and a half hours or a maximum of ten and a half hours of after school activity. This either meant that Gemma was regularly going to bed well past midnight, that she had over-exaggerated the amount of time spent on these activities, she was multi-tasking, or that her perception of time, like many children's, was not realistic.

It must be noted that the eight students who were the focus of this study took both the primary and secondary questionnaires. However, not all of the students who completed the primary questionnaire completed the secondary questionnaire, and not all of the secondary students who completed the secondary questionnaire completed the primary questionnaire. A number of students completed both, but the majority did not.

11.2 Selecting the Students

From the children's responses to the primary questionnaire, I identified a number who were suitable for my study. However, I also had to take into consideration a number of other factors for selection. One factor was: did the parents or carers of the child have a positive relationship with the school? This was important because the informed consent letters were distributed by the school and I needed parents or carers to be positive about the experience. Another factor was attendance. If the child was frequently absent, and had an ongoing pattern of absence, then this would make group conversations problematic. Also, I

needed children who would be prepared to talk about their reading in front of their peers and me with a degree of honesty. I discussed the long list of students with the children's class teachers and also the head teachers of each school.

For Primary School A I had a short list of six students who I wanted to contact to participate in the study. For Primary School B I also had a short list of six students. For Primary School C I had a short list of five students. Letters were sent home via the class teacher explaining the research and informed consent was requested.

12 The Research Participants

“I feel relaxed whenever I’m reading in bed before I go to sleep” Jamie.

Having contacted seventeen parents about their child participating in the research project I had ten positive replies. However, one of these students from Primary School C became ill before the group conversations began and could not participate. Another student, who was also from Primary School C, unexpectedly moved away from the area and did not participate in the research. This left eight students. As I was concerned with the depth of these students’ stories I believe that eight students were sufficient.

There were four boys from Primary School A. These boys had joined the school when it was a boys’ school and then, at the beginning of their Year 5, girls had begun to join the school. Their Year 6 classes did not have any girls and was the last all-boy year group in the primary school. There were three girls from Primary School B. I had sent consent letters to parents of both boys and girls but only the parents of the girls gave consent. There was one boy from Primary School C. As explained above, other students from his school had been targeted but out of the three positive responses, two of these could not participate.

12.1 Research Participants – Post Initial Observation Vignettes

My initial observations of the students who agreed to participate in the research are below:



Jamie caught my attention early during my lesson observations, because his passion for books was striking. He was a student who often engaged me in conversation about his reading. He eagerly participated in class discussions and he was able to articulate

his views clearly. It was obvious from a very early stage that he loved reading and that he enjoyed talking about his reading with his friends. His reading was firmly of the readerly type, with him enjoying the text but not having to work too hard to do so. Jamie had the potential to be negatively targeted in secondary school because of his passion for reading and I was interested in seeing his transition to secondary school.



Theo was 'cool', many of the boys in his class said so and he exuded confidence. He enjoyed reading and I found it interesting that he switched between genres. He frequently sought me out during my lesson observations to chat about the book he was reading. He seemed confident in his opinions but he also listened to his friends' views about their shared reading. Theo's reading interested me because, even at primary school, his reading was beginning to move beyond the readerly texts of Capt.W.E. Johns' 'Biggles' towards the more writerly texts of P.G. Wodehouse. I was interested to see how this popular boy's reading fared after his transition to secondary school.



Joe was the stereotypical sporting star of the school. A number of boys looked up to Joe because of his sporting prowess. During my lesson observations I noticed that it took Joe longer to complete books than his peers, yet he still held very positive attitudes towards reading. Joe would willingly talk to me, but our conversations were usually about sport, especially cricket, as it was the summer term when we met. He was articulate and confident in his opinions about sport, though I noticed that when his friends engaged in discussion about their reading books, Joe tended to listen and agree with others rather than present his own views. Joe's reading was engaging with readerly texts rather than writerly texts. I thought that it would be interesting to follow a 'jock' - to use the American term - and see how his reading fared after his transition to secondary school.



Tom caught my attention because, whenever I observed him in lessons and in group talk about books, he would always be the boy listening or agreeing rather than giving his own opinions. He was reading Muchamore's 'Cherub' series of books and I had observed that it took him longer to complete these books than some of his friends. He was able to talk about his reading to others and he enjoyed the teasing that would result if a boy who had read the next book in the series revealed 'spoilers'. His reading material, like most of his peers, was readerly. What really interested me about Tom was that he was leaving his fee-paying primary school to become a day pupil at a state boarding school. I was interested to see if his reading would survive his transition to a state school where he would have to make new friends.



Gemma was a real chatterbox and she liked to be the centre of attention. She would often ask me questions about my research and she would ask questions about the school I worked in, which she was joining in Year 7. Gemma always had a reading book with her and she was very happy to talk about her reading. She liked joke books and would often try out new jokes from her books on me. Her reading material was firmly readerly, but with her love of jokes, I wondered if it could develop into interest in writerly texts. Gemma could be quite easily distracted and she was not the most well behaved student in class, in fact she was frequently being told to get back on task and to stop talking. I thought that it would be interesting to focus on Gemma to see how she progressed with her reading upon transition. I was interested to see if her enjoyment of reading continued.



Scarlet was good friends with Gemma. However, where Gemma got into trouble in school, Scarlet managed to just avoid it. She would often approach me to talk about her reading and she delighted in trying to find a children's book which I had not read. She enjoyed reading and would relish the times after lunch when her class engaged in silent reading. Whatever disturbances occurred in the classroom (and there were many from very disruptive chair throwing and fights, to less disruptive off-task chatter), Scarlet just kept on reading. She always had a book in her bag and she was comfortable in talking about her reading with me. With Scarlet's interest in horror, I was interested to see if she would move beyond the readerly texts she was reading to more writerly horror texts and to see if she continued reading.



Anna caught my attention during the observation period because her reading was quite different from the other girls in her class. She would either read a Batman comic or a fairy book. This combination of reading materials interested me because I thought that it was quite unusual. Her peers were reading Jacqueline Wilson, Derek Landy, Anthony Horowitz, and Francesca Simon and here was Anna reading a series of books about fairies or Superhero comics. Anna appeared comfortable and confident with her reading choices and she was happy to talk to me when I happened to be near her in a lesson. I was interested to see if Anna would move beyond the simplistic, familiar fairy series of books which were readerly texts and develop different reading choices.



Brandon caught my attention early on because, unlike most of his peers, he preferred reading non-fiction to fiction. When I observed Brandon reading his choice of non-fiction books, he read the books from start to finish, as you would a novel, rather than dipping into the text to extract information. I noticed that Brandon enjoyed sharing what he had found out with his teacher, friends and myself. He was confident when talking about his reading and he mentioned his father's influence upon his reading frequently during reading sessions. I was interested to see if his interest in non-fiction continued into secondary school and to see if his father's influence continued.

12.2 The Research Participants – Post Primary Questionnaire

The following tables contain profiles for each student created from their primary questionnaire responses.

Table 19: Jamie's Primary Profile


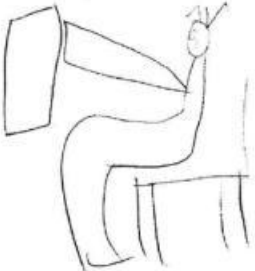
 Jamie	
Primary Questionnaire questions	Responses
Do you regularly read any magazines, comics or newspapers?	Top Gear Turbo The Daily Mail Jaguar World
Which books have you read in the last four weeks?	The Sleeping Sword (Morpurgo 2008) Biggles Learns to Fly (Johns 1992)
Have you read any of the books you've put down more than once?	Biggles Learns to Fly
Do you own any books yourself? How many?	100+
About how many books are there in your home?	Lots
Do you have a favourite writer, or a favourite series of books?	Michael Morpurgo
What first gave you the idea to read this author or series of books?	Jamie's dad suggests these books
How much reading do you think you do?	Quite a lot
Do you think you are good at reading?	Very good
How much television did you watch last night?	Between ½ and 1 ½ hours
How long did you read for last night?	Between 1 ½ and 2 ½ hours
How much time did you spend on a computer last night?	Less than ½ an hour
I think that reading is...	Fun and cool and brilliant
Draw a picture of someone who is a reader (someone who reads)	

Table 20: Theo's Primary Profile


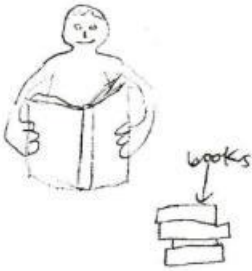
 Theo	
Primary Questionnaire questions	Responses
Do you regularly read any magazines, comics or newspapers?	The Independent Airliner World Country Life
Which books have you read in the last four weeks?	War Horse (Morpurgo 2007) Life at Blandings (Wodehouse 1981) Mating Season (Jeeves and Wooster)(Wodehouse 2008) Biggles Defends the Desert (Johns 1993) Biggles Learns to Fly (Johns 1992)
Have you read any of the books you've put down more than once?	War Horse Biggles Defends the Desert
Do you own any books yourself? How many?	100+
About how many books are there in your home?	Lots
Do you have a favourite writer, or a favourite series of books?	P.G. Wodehouse
What first gave you the idea to read this author or series of books?	Theo's dad had told him these books were funny.
How much reading do you think you do?	Quite a lot
Do you think you are good at reading?	Very good
How much television did you watch last night?	Between ½ hour and 1 ½ hours
How long did you read for last night?	Between 1 ½ hours and 2 ½ hours
How much time did you spend on a computer last night?	None
I think that reading is...	Brilliant
Draw a picture of someone who is a reader (someone who reads)	

Table 21: Joe's Primary Profile


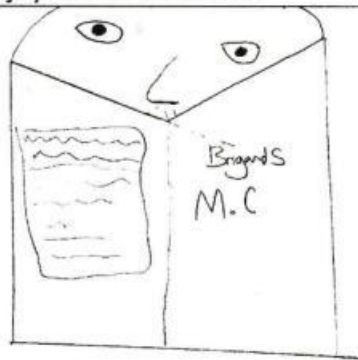
 Joe	
Primary Questionnaire questions	Responses
Do you regularly read any magazines, comics or newspapers?	No
Which books have you read in the last four weeks?	Last of the Sky Pirates (Stewart and Riddell 2006) Brigands M.C. (Muchamore 2010)
Have you read any of the books you've put down more than once?	No
Do you own any books yourself? How many?	51-100
About how many books are there in your home?	Lots
Do you have a favourite writer, or a favourite series of books?	Robert Muchamore
What first gave you the idea to read this author or series of books?	Because someone said it was brilliant
How much reading do you think you do?	Quite a lot
Do you think you are good at reading?	Good
How much television did you watch last night?	Between 1 ½ hours and 2 ½ hours
How long did you read for last night?	Less than ½ an hour
How much time did you spend on a computer last night?	Between 1 ½ hours and 2 ½ hours
I think that reading is...	Enjoyable and a bit fun
Draw a picture of someone who is a reader (someone who reads)	

Table 22: Tom's Primary Profile



 Tom	
Primary Questionnaire questions	Responses
Do you regularly read any magazines, comics or newspapers?	No
Which books have you read in the last four weeks?	Cherub: The Recruit (Muchamore 2004) Cherub: Class A (Muchamore 2004)
Have you read any of the books you've put down more than once?	No
Do you own any books yourself? How many?	26-50
About how many books are there in your home?	Lots
Do you have a favourite writer, or a favourite series of books?	Robert Muchamore
What first gave you the idea to read this author or series of books?	Tom's friends suggested these books.
How much reading do you think you do?	Average
Do you think you are good at reading?	Average
How much television did you watch last night?	More than 3 ½ hours
How long did you read for last night?	Less than ½ hour
How much time did you spend on a computer last night?	More than 3 ½ hours
I think that reading is...	Awesome
Draw a picture of someone who is a reader (someone who reads)	

Table 23: Gemma's Primary Profile



 Gemma	
Primary Questionnaire questions	Responses
Do you regularly read any magazines, comics or newspapers?	No
Which books have you read in the last four weeks?	Cookie (Wilson 2009) Midnight (Wilson 2008) Candyfloss (Wilson 2007) Vicky Angel (Wilson 2007) Bad Girls (Wilson 2006) Dustbin Baby (Wilson 2007)
Have you read any of the books you've put down more than once?	Cookie Midnight Candyfloss Vicky Angel Bad Girls Dustbin Baby
Do you own any books yourself? How many?	51-100
About how many books are there in your home?	Lots
Do you have a favourite writer, or a favourite series of books?	Jacqueline Wilson
What first gave you the idea to read this author or series of books?	The cool front cover
How much reading do you think you do?	A large amount
Do you think you are good at reading?	Average
How much television did you watch last night?	More than 3 ½ hours
How long did you read for last night?	Between 2 ½ and 3 ½ hours
How much time did you spend on a computer last night?	More than 3 ½ hours
I think that reading is...	O.K.
Draw a picture of someone who is a reader (someone who reads)	

Table 24: Scarlet's Primary Profile


 Scarlet	
Primary Questionnaire questions	Responses
Do you regularly read any magazines, comics or newspapers?	Simpsons comics
Which books have you read in the last four weeks?	Skullduggery Pleasant: Skullduggery Pleasant-Book 1 (Landy 2007) Playing with Fire: Skullduggery Pleasant-Book 2 (Landy 2008) The Faceless Ones: Skullduggery Pleasant-Book 3 (Landy 2011) Dark Days: Skullduggery Pleasant-Book 4 (Landy 2010) Granny (Horowitz 2009) Demeter (Fontes and Fontes 2008)
Have you read any of the books you've put down more than once?	Skullduggery Pleasant: Skullduggery Pleasant-Book 1 Playing with Fire: Skullduggery Pleasant-Book 2 The Faceless Ones: Skullduggery Pleasant-Book 3 Dark Days: Skullduggery Pleasant-Book 4 Demeter
Do you own any books yourself? How many?	100+
About how many books are there in your home?	Lots
Do you have a favourite writer, or a favourite series of books?	Derek Landy
What first gave you the idea to read this author or series of books?	The library
How much reading do you think you do?	A large amount
Do you think you are good at reading?	Very good
How much television did you watch last night?	Between ½ hour and 1 ½ hours
How long did you read for last night?	None
How much time did you spend on a computer last night?	None
I think that reading is...	Awesome
Draw a picture of someone who is a reader (someone who reads)	

Table 25: Anna's Primary Profile





 Anna	
Primary Questionnaire questions	Responses
Do you regularly read any magazines, comics or newspapers?	OK, New The Simpsons Batman Spiderman The Sun The Daily Telegraph The Daily Express
Which books have you read in the last four weeks?	Horrid Henry (Simon 1998) A Bad Spell for the Worst Witch (Murphy 2013) Mermaid Magic (Rees 2004) Kylie the Carnival Fairy (Meadows 2012) Alice the Tennis Fairy (Meadows 2008) Danni the Drum Fairy (Meadows 2008) Ruby the Red Fairy (Meadows 2003)
Have you read any of the books you've put down more than once?	No
Do you own any books yourself? How many?	100+
About how many books are there in your home?	Lots
Do you have a favourite writer, or a favourite series of books?	Daisy Meadows and Francesca Simon
What first gave you the idea to read this author or series of books?	My friends said it was really good
How much reading do you think you do?	A large amount
Do you think you are good at reading?	Average
How much television did you watch last night?	Between ½ hour and 1 ½ hours
How long did you read for last night?	Between ½ hour and 1 ½ hours
How much time did you spend on a computer last night?	None
I think that reading is...	Amazing and awesome
Draw a picture of someone who is a reader (someone who reads)	

Table 26: Brandon's Primary Profile

 Brandon	
Primary Questionnaire questions	Responses
Do you regularly read any magazines, comics or newspapers?	No
Which books have you read in the last four weeks?	1001 Horrible Facts (Rooney 2006) A Roald Dahl book
Have you read any of the books you've put down more than once?	No
Do you own any books yourself? How many?	26-50
About how many books are there in your home?	Quite a lot
Do you have a favourite writer, or a favourite series of books?	No
What first gave you the idea to read this author or series of books?	
How much reading do you think you do?	About average
Do you think you are good at reading?	Very good
How much television did you watch last night?	Less than ½ hour
How long did you read for last night?	None
How much time did you spend on a computer last night?	Between 1 ½ and 2 ½ hours
I think that reading is...	Fun and great
Draw a picture of someone who is a reader (someone who reads)	

13 Group Conversations

“I love reading” Anna.

13.1 Methodology

It must be said that I am a teacher, I’ve been a teacher for over twenty years and when I’m with a group of students I talk like a teacher. Over the years I’ve sat and talked with students about many different things, and I’ve developed a style of questioning and prompting and encouraging that feels natural to me. I used a number of open-ended questions to encourage longer and more detailed responses from students and some short, closed-questions which usually required a Yes or No response.

When I began the group conversations with the students involved in this study, I made the choice to always have a focus, or some structure, to the conversations, which would facilitate questions and prompts from myself to the students. These might include, for instance, an image or word cloud or specific question or task. (Word clouds are graphical representations of word frequency. The larger the word in the word cloud the more frequently it was used in the source document – in this case the questionnaire responses to the question “I think that reading is...” and “I think *my friends* think that reading is...” For examples of word clouds see Figure 8 and Appendix 2.) However, I also decided to allow the conversations to flow naturally wherever they took us. This meant that the same conversations did not take place with all three groups of students. The same prompt and stimulus material was used with each group, but each conversation took its own course. I could have tried to impose structure upon the conversations with the students and make them into more formal interviews, but I knew that this approach would not be natural for me, and it would limit the story I heard from the students. The flexibility of thematic analysis allowed me to record, transcribe and analyse data from the initial conversations, then code “interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion” and collate “codes into potential themes” (Braun and Clark, 2006, p. 35). This meant that I could explore these

potential themes with the students in the next conversations. Thus data analysis was ongoing throughout the data collection stages of the research project.

My observation of these conversations was initially recorded both by digital camcorder and on an audio recorder. However, as I became accustomed to the individual voices in the groups, I dispensed with the camcorder as I found that it got in the way of our discussions. After each group conversation I made notes in my research journal. I also transcribed the recordings.

I used a form of group conversation in this study because I believe that the students had a right to be involved in the development of the data (which is ultimately their story).

Nutbrown writes that through Focused Conversations:

“... new ideas can be born, new knowledge can be created, views can be shaped and re-shaped. The richness of the process lies in the openness of those who participate and their willingness to allow their ideas to be shaped by those of others, and to examine their own experiences in the light of what they hear others say” (Clough and Nutbrown, 2007, pp. 92-93).

The students did not see or discuss my writing but they were able to discuss the pictures that they and their peers had drawn (which I had displayed as a collage of each classes pictures in questionnaire numerical order. Please see Figure 8 and Appendix 2 for examples of picture collages), and they were able to discuss their responses to the questionnaire and discuss their peers' responses, too. Furthermore, when I asked the students to explain and interpret their questionnaire picture of a reader or their response to the question posed by it, “I think that reading is...”, then I was precisely focusing in on their voice in this research story. This was their evaluation, their thoughts about the data they had produced, rather than me simply interpreting the data. This allowed the students to challenge the assumptions or conclusions I had drawn and it allowed the students to ‘examine their own



experiences' through their participation in the group conversations. Clough (2007) is clear about the importance of this dynamic:

“Focused conversations are about voices, experiences, stories and their place in research; about finding new words, new expressions and new learning about ourselves in a shared dynamic of communication. What is different in this process is that those who are the data, are those who gather the data, remould and reshape the data, analyse those data, draft and redraft the words which result until the paper is written (and has - in the process - become research)” (Clough and Nutbrown, 2007, p. 93).

The students did not gather the data, but they did analyse the data and discuss the data which allowed me to write about their stories. I believe that the questionnaire, the students' discussion of questionnaire responses, and the wider conversations allowed a broader picture to be painted, and for a more honest representation of the student's story to be told. Clough summarises this process:

“Later examination of the first draft of the transcribed tape can lead to a new composition. People might say things like: ‘I didn't say that...well maybe I said it but I don't mean it like that – I mean...’ And that thought, that idea is reshaped” (Clough and Nutbrown, 2007, pp. 92-93).

Word clouds and a collage of students' images proved very fruitful in this process. For both word clouds and collages, the students identified their own contributions and talked about why they had responded in a certain way. See below (Figures 8 and 9) for examples of word clouds and picture collages. [See Appendix 2. for all of the primary word clouds and picture collages].

<p>Figure 8: An Example of a Primary Word Cloud</p>	<p>Figure 9: An Example of a Primary Picture Collage</p>
	

This added an additional layer of understanding. I never asked the students to read transcripts of previous conversations because, on a practical note, it would have been time consuming. Also, from an ethical point of view, the potential gains to be made from them reading or listening to previous discussions in full would have been of little benefit to them. However, I did use excerpts from previous conversations to prompt discussion and I went back to the students’ primary questionnaires and showed them their earlier responses. I could be questioned for researcher bias, because the students only revisited the sections I decided I wanted them to revisit. However, I was working with children and I echo Roberts when she states:

“I believe that there is an onus on us to make participation in research, at whatever level, an experience, which is at best positive, and at worst, does no harm, to young people” (Roberts, 2008, p. 273).

I used thematic analysis because of its “theoretical freedom” and because “thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data” (Braun and Clark, 2006, p. 5). Braun and Clark define thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun and Clark, 2006, p. 6). In addition, because “thematic analysis involves searching across a data set...to find repeated patterns of meaning” and complete immersion

in the data, it allowed me to seek answers to my research questions and yet have the flexibility to discover other aspects to investigate which my initial research design was not aware of (Braun and Clark, 2006, p. 18). For example, at the start of this research I did not anticipate focussing so closely on 'Geeks' and students' perceptions of image and self-image. However, because of the data, it became clear that this was a theme that required further investigation.

My research utilised a number of research methods to allow:

- a range of perspectives to be viewed;
- the students' voices to be heard;
- my observations to be discussed;
- numerical analysis to compare my results with those of previous studies.

My reasons for using a range of research methods were to allow for: discovery, evidence, triangulation and agreement. I attempted to gain as many perspectives as possible to enable me to understand and tell the story of what happened to these readers after they transferred to secondary education. This range of methods also allowed a range of different types of data to be produced. Thus my data *corpus* includes data *sets* covering: my observations of classrooms and libraries; numerical data from questionnaire responses; pictorial data from questionnaires; responses from questionnaires turned into visuals (word clouds); student visual work produced as a result of me posing a task; and transcripts of conversations. (Braun and Clark, 2006, pp. 5-6).

Denzin and Lincoln discuss a "blurring of disciplinary boundaries" and that the "social sciences and humanities have drawn closer together in a mutual focus on an interpretive, qualitative approach to research and theory" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p. ix). For me, there is the additional blurring of the boundary between me as a teacher and me as a researcher. In regard to my bias, I do want my case to "tell its own story" I approached this research, to use Stake's words "expecting, even knowing, that certain events, problems,

relationships will be important..." yet I also expected to "discover that some actually are of little consequence" (Stake, 2005, p. 456).

It was important to be aware of my preconceptions of what I thought I might find out from this research. For example:

- I suspected that the students in the selective, independent, fee-paying school would engage in more reading for pleasure than their comprehensive counterparts and that they would have a more positive image of what a reader is.
- I suspected that the students who developed in their reading and who progressed from readerly to writerly texts would be more likely to come from the fee-paying school rather than the state schools.
- I thought that the state boarding school would have a strong reading for pleasure culture because it was a boarding school and that students at this school would borrow books from the school library regularly.

This awareness was vital to avoid my judgement being clouded by preconceptions.

14 Defining “Readers”

“I like ghost stories and really freaky stories” Scarlet.

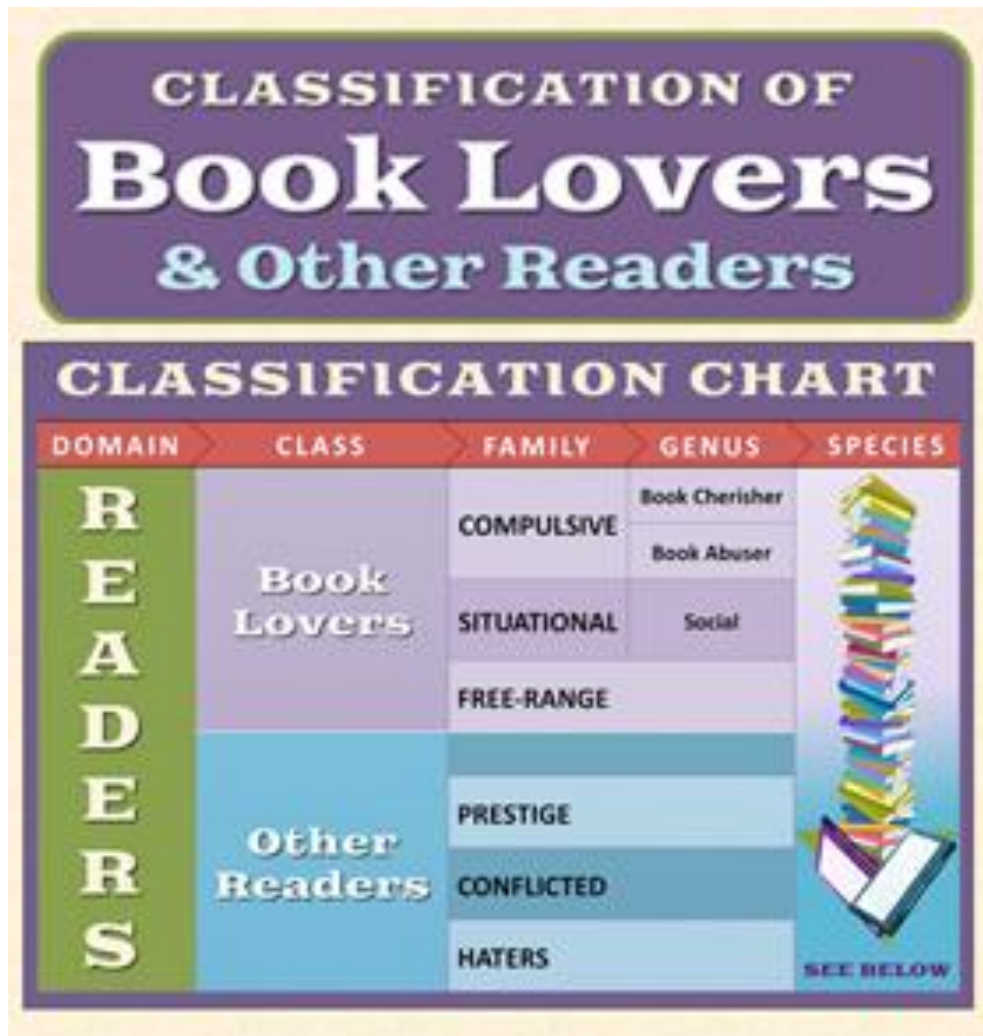
As soon as I began to engage in group conversations with the students, I found that I wanted to categorise each of them, put them in a box and compartmentalise their reading. In short, I wanted to describe them as readers. One of the reasons for this was that I wanted to be able to compare the students to these descriptions an academic year later, once they had completed a year of secondary school education.

However, I realised that I was using terminology to define them as readers which I had utilised over my teaching career and that I was doing this without being conscious and critically aware that I was doing so. For example: I found myself using the term ‘reluctant reader’ to describe one boy, but I then immediately tried to clarify what I meant by the term for that specific child. Thus, I stopped and thought about the terminology: what it meant to me, how others had used it and where was I getting these terms from? I also had to question whether the terminology I had slipped into using was really useful for me in defining the young readers participating in this study.

14.1 A Review of the Terminology

If you type in ‘types of reader’ to Google or any other search engine, you obtain listings of many sites that profess to define you as a reader – some do this by encouraging you to take a quick on-line quiz while others try to define you as a reader by briefly listing the four or so types of reader that their site is interested in; some focus on gender; some look at whether or not you buy books. Others, such as Laura E Kelly’s, try - entertainingly - to define you as a ‘species’ of reader by classing you scientifically in terms of Domain, Class, Family, Genus and Species (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Laura E Kelly’s Classification of Book Lovers and Other Readers



(Kelly, 2013).

[For Kelly’s detailed classifications see Appendix 3]. I found Kelly’s infographic interesting because I started to think about how difficult it is to define a child as a reader and I realised that there are many ‘flavours’ of readers.

The ‘Booktrust Reading Habits Survey 2013’ surveyed adults to discover the reading habits of English adults. Even though this survey focused on adult reading habits, the categories of readers are interesting. It used cluster analysis to group the results of the survey “Investigating reading habits and attitudes of adults in England” (Gleed, 2013, p. 7). Within the nine segments, reading frequency decreases across the segments with number 1.,

'Bookworms' reading the most and number 9., 'Don't read' reading the least. The nine segments were as outlined in Table 27.

Table 27: The Booktrust Reading Habits Survey Categories of Readers

Segment	Percentage of respondents
1. 'Bookworms'	6%
2. 'Love to read'	15%
3. 'The magazine generation'	14%
4. 'Given the chance...'	8%
5. 'Joe average'	17%
6. 'Reluctant readers'	10%
7. 'No time to read'	10%
8. 'Don't like reading'	11%
9. 'Don't read'	10%

(Gleed, 2013, p. 7).

Segments 1 to 5 are either really positive or fairly positive about reading for pleasure. This equates to nearly 60% of the survey respondents having positive views about reading for pleasure and 31 % having more negative views about reading for pleasure. These results are important because they show that adults in our society do engage in reading for pleasure as a chosen leisure activity. The terminology used for adults by these various surveys does not define the respondents' reading ability; instead they define the respondents' attitudes to reading and their frequency of reading (how many books they read a month). This figure of 60% of adults holding positive attitudes towards reading links in with my questionnaire data for the Year 7 students where 64% of the boys and 63% of the girls reported having positive attitudes towards reading.

For an English teacher the terminology is different, and remains problematic for the parameters of this study. Some of the terminology attempts to define the child's reading ability and other terminology attempts to define the child's attitude to reading. Once again, I am faced with the problem of the term 'reading' having two very different meanings: one is to do with the ability, or skill, to decode the symbols on the page and assign meaning. The second is choosing to read.

"... Reading is tricky. Reading isn't merely being able to pronounce the words correctly, a fact that surprises most people. Reading is being able to make *sense* from the marks on the page. Reading is being able to make print *mean* something. Reading is getting the message"(Fox, 2001, p. 75).

Even so, the terms, 'disadvantaged', 'struggling', 'reluctant' and 'avid' readers are all terms that I have worked with on a daily basis for over twenty years. For the purpose of this study I had deliberately selected students who could read and who did read for pleasure, thus terms such as disadvantaged readers or struggling readers were not relevant. I found that I was using the terms 'avid' and 'reluctant' readers. But what did these terms mean in a deeper sense?

14.2 Reluctant Readers

Sadoski, quoted in Pilgreen, wrote, "a reader is not merely a person who can read but a person who does read" (Pilgreen, 2000, p. 68). Harris and Hodges in 'The Literacy Dictionary' define 'aliteracy' as the "lack of the reading habit in capable readers"(Harris and Hodges, 2005, p. 6) and Whitehead - back in the 1970s - pointed out that most of the non-readers in his study could read but chose not to (Whitehead et al., 1977). These students are different from the disadvantaged or the struggling reader because they can read but they choose not to read for pleasure. It is the students who *can* read, who have acquired the skill of

decoding the written word and giving it meaning, but who have not caught the reading habit in terms of a pleasurable leisure activity, who are reluctant readers.

Vivian Howard makes a distinction between reluctant readers and non-readers stating that reluctant readers never read, they don't like reading, don't have time for reading and don't read. Howard used the term 'reluctant readers' rather than non-readers because the teens involved in her survey revealed that:

"despite their self-definition as inactive readers, these teens did read" (Howard, 2008, p. 108 footnote).

John Wilks wrote:

"Poor literacy in secondary schools is just as much about pupils who won't read as about pupils who can't read" (Wilks, 1998, p. 147).

Reluctant readers, it would seem, can read and have an acceptable level of literacy. They have functional literacy and are able to participate in our literate society. However, they choose not to read for pleasure either because they do not enjoy reading for pleasure or because they would rather spend their time doing something else. As Howard states:

"Participants who indicated that they did not like reading, they did not have time for reading, or they simply did not read for pleasure were classified as Reluctant Readers" (Howard, 2008, p. 108).

I expected that some of the students involved in this study might be reluctant readers.

14.3 Avid Readers

Chen and Lu classified ‘avid readers’ as students who “reported reading a lot of extracurricular books during the summer vacation” (Chen and Lu, 2012, p. 156). For these students, reading is an important leisure activity, it is something that they do frequently and which they enjoy. Howard defined readers as Avid Occasional and Reluctant, see Table 28.

Table 28: Howard’s Preliminary taxonomy of teen readers

Type of reader	How often do you read for pleasure?	How do you feel about reading for pleasure?	Number of teens (68 in total involved in study)
Avid	Daily	Preferred leisure activity	38
Occasional	Weekly	Preferred leisure activity	20
Reluctant	Never	Don’t like reading; don’t have time for reading; don’t read	10

(Howard, 2008, p. 108).

Howard additionally identifies the importance of friendship groups for avid readers stating that some avid readers enjoy and want the support and encouragement of their peers, whilst other do not. See Table 29:

Table 29: Howard’s Taxonomy of teen readers

	Avid	Occasional	Reluctant
Social Communal	Avid Social Communal	Occasional Social Communal	Reluctant Social Communal
Detached Communal	Avid Detached Communal	Occasional Detached Communal	Reluctant Detached Communal
Solitary	Avid Solitary	Occasional Solitary	Reluctant Solitary

(Howard, 2008, p. 108).

[For a detailed explanation of Howard's categories of avid readers see Appendix 3.]

Just as Kelly's work made me think about the many different 'flavours' of readers, Howard's work made me think about the many different types of avid readers.

14.4 Conclusions

These definitions of types of readers do cover a range of reading behaviour and they are a useful starting point for my discussions with the students involved in my study. However, just as Howard and Kelly needed to introduce sub-categories of readers to define the type of students that were involved with their studies, I too believed that these definitions would apply to some of my students, but not to all of them, and that I would therefore have to further describe and define them.

15 The Students: Their Reading Story – Summer 2010, The End of Year 6

“I think reading is important and fun” Brandon.

After the first term of group conversations with the Year 6 students I felt that I had begun to gain an insight into each student’s reading habits and their attitudes towards reading for pleasure. At the end of the Year 6 research period, after a term of meeting with the students, I developed the student profiles which had begun after the primary questionnaire responses. I wanted to create a detailed profile which would allow me to compare a Year 8 reader profile to the Year 6 profile and to assess whether there had been any change in reading behaviour and attitudes. I also recorded the students’ concerns about starting secondary school. After analysing the data available, I deduced the terms used to define the students as readers involved in my study.

Each profile states the primary school the student attended and the reading they recorded on their primary questionnaire, which appears in a text box to the side of the page. In addition, I include extracts from the primary school group conversations and discuss the points raised by each student’s contributions. At points in the narrative, I discuss in more detail an issue or point that had arisen during the group conversations with the students. These discussions are placed within a whole page text box and can be read separately from the student’s narrative, or alongside it.

When referencing the books which the children were reading I used the date of the edition they were reading and not the original publication date. Where relevant, I include the original publication date in my discussions.

15.1 Jamie Primary School A



Jamie thinks that reading is “fun and cool and brilliant”. He is proud of his reading, and of being a school library monitor. He sees reading as a pleasurable pastime. He loves to talk about his latest reading exploits and has an opinion on everything! He reads every night before bed and at other times for pleasure. In terms of Howard’s “preliminary taxonomy of teen readers” Jamie is an ‘avid’ reader. He reads on a daily basis and sees reading as a “preferred leisure activity” (Howard, 2008, p. 108). However, Jamie only really enjoys reading when he is alone:

Recent Reading

Top Gear Turbo

Daily Mail

Jaguar World

The Sleeping Sword
(Morpurgo, 2008)

Biggles Learns to Fly
(Johns, 1992)

“[Reading] is only good when you’re on your own you see I read in the car or I have to read in bed on my own...If I am on my own I can read and read and read, but let’s say silent reading [is taking place during a lesson] half the class are [reading] while I can’t do it then. Not sure why I can’t do it. I like to be on my own in my own bed reading...I can’t read with other people around, I am not sure why I just can’t.”

This point was reiterated on my next visit to his school:

“I think reading is sometimes fun when you’re alone, otherwise the noise can disturb you.”

Jamie likes reading in bed at night before he goes to sleep:

“I feel relaxed whenever I’m reading in bed before I go to sleep – even if it’s like 11:30 at night I still feel relaxed. I still feel quite happy reading at that time.”

He likes adventure books and has been reading the ‘Biggles’ books following a recommendation from his father. His mother reads at home and there are “lots” of books

at home. His favourite author is Michael Morpurgo which his father suggested he read. Jamie has high levels of positive parental encouragement to read, he regularly uses his school library for selecting reading books, hanging out with his friends, and in his role as a school librarian. He listens to and acts upon reading recommendations from his father. According to Howard’s taxonomy, Jamie holds many of the attributes of an, “Avid, Social Communal Reader,” (Howard, 2008, p. 108) because “reading exists in a ‘virtuous circle’ in which friends encourage reading for pleasure and shared reading experiences solidify friendships” (Howard, 2008, p. 109). This does not mean that he reads with his friends - he prefers to read alone - instead this means that he reads the same books as his friends and is able to discuss these books with them.

Jamie is not a typical series reader in as much as the ‘series’ of books he was actively reading was ‘Biggles’, written in 1935. However, other boys in his friendship group were reading the same series. Also, he is equally happy to take a friend’s recommendation for a book to listen to and act upon a parental suggestion and to enjoy discovering a new title whilst employing sophisticated selection strategies in the library. Jamie is an active user of the library and stated on his primary questionnaire that he goes “to borrow books about once every two weeks.”

Biggles

I was a little confused by the apparent popularity of the ‘Biggles’ series of books with Jamie and Theo, and a number of other boys at Primary School A. Things became clearer when, during our group conversations, both boys said that they were studying for their PPL – Private Pilot’s License. Also, the boys were learning to fly on a propeller plane and Jamie’s father also owned a small propeller plane.

There were lots of adventure stories involving spies and action, but not many involving the pilot as the action hero. The boys’ interest in the ‘Biggles’ adventures became much more understandable when I visited the airfield where the boys were having their lessons. On display in the



main teaching room was a 'Biggles' poster featuring the book cover of 'Biggles Learns to Fly'.	
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On further discussion with the boys, they revealed that they had learned about the 'Biggles' stories from their flying teacher and their fathers and had started reading the books for this reason.	
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Jamie likes to start a book, read it quite quickly and then start a new one. According to Kelly he could be described as: "Reader; Book Lover; Compulsive; Book Cherisher; the Chronological Reader combined with The Library Lover" (Kelly, 2013).

He does not have a number of books 'on the go' at the same time and is not a frequent re-reader of books – although old favourites are re-read sometimes:

"I have also been reading 'The Hundred Mile An-Hour Dog' (Strong, 2007) for the third time...I don't know...maybe it is because I can't read anything else...No just because I like it and it's easy to read".

Aidan Chambers states:

"Children know the pleasures of rereading; they constantly reread favourite books. Critics know the necessity of rereading; it's the only way to get to know a text well enough to compliment it with more than superficial pastime attention...books that are worth bothering with at all are worth (may demand) rereading" (Chambers, 1993, p. 73).

This is a point that is also present in the 2014 'National Curriculum for England: English Programmes of Study' which states that pupils should be taught to:

"reread books encountered earlier to increase familiarity with them and provide a basis for making comparisons" (Department for Education, 2014).

Jamie could be defined as a “habitual and committed reader.” Gabriella Cliff-Hodges defines these readers as:

“those who consciously include reading amongst the range of activities with which they voluntarily occupy their time” (Cliff-Hodges, 2010, p. 182).

These definitions are close to defining Jamie, but they do not show the range of his reading, especially his non-fiction reading. He will read non-fiction alongside fiction, for example the reading he has to do to obtain his Private Pilot’s Licence, and non-fiction is listed as some of his recent reading material: “Top Gear Turbo, The Daily Mail, Jaguar World.” However, Jamie is certainly an avid reader; he reads books quickly and always has a book ‘on the go’ and he always reads in bed at night.

Jamie’s reading of readerly adventure texts allows him to engage with his peers and talk about his reading in a supportive community of readers. His choice of reading material is not stretching him in terms of moving towards writerly texts however, his reading of topic specific magazines written for adults, especially the aeroplane magazine ‘Jaguar World’, does suggest that he is developing as a reader.



I define Jamie as an **‘avid, habitual, compulsive, committed, sequential, social, environment dependent, and bedtime reader’**.

Jamie likes to start a book and complete it before he starts another book. Jamie looks for, and acts upon, recommendations, but he will equally seek out new reading material for himself. He enjoys reading fiction and non-fiction. I believe that the reading habit is firmly formed; he voluntarily reads novels as a preferred leisure activity and will, I believe, continue to do so.

15.1.1 Concerns about starting Secondary School

Jamie's concerns about starting secondary school were the amount of homework which he would be set and the possible consequence of this - that he will not be able to engage in as much reading for pleasure, as he said "I will probably read but I probably won't be able to read as much." Jamie stated:

"I think my reading will go on I mean I won't read as much but I will still read and I will make time to read because I like it."

Jamie shows some awareness of how reading is viewed by some children in a negative light:

"Most people who read books, there's nothing wrong with them and there is nothing wrong with reading...some people in different schools could get teased about their reading yet I think it's good to say you like reading and that sort of thing because there's nothing wrong with reading."

His repetition of "there's nothing wrong" suggests that he is arguing against an opinion that if you like reading there is something 'wrong' with you.

15.2 Theo Primary School A



Theo thinks that reading is “brilliant”. He is proud of his reading, sees it as a pleasurable past time and a “preferred leisure activity”(Howard, 2008, p. 108). He is happy to talk at length about his reading with others. He reads every night before bed:

“I prefer reading at night in my bed I can forget everything that went wrong during the day and just go inside a different world, or start a new book or something like that. “

Recent Reading

The Independent
Airliner World
Country Life
War Horse, (Morpurgo, 2007)
Life at Blandings (Wodehouse, 1981)
Mating Season – Jeeves and Wooster (Wodehouse, 2008)
Biggles Defends the Desert (Johns, 1993)
Biggles Learns to Fly (Johns, 1992)

Theo does read at other times, such as in school reading lessons and at the weekend, however, he finds it frustrating and prefers to read when he is alone:

“But I do also read books at the weekend by myself and its sort of relaxing, but it can be quite annoying if I’m reading outside I don’t know why but I do it sometimes...I normally get interrupted by the neighbours and then noises and it can get really annoying whereas if I’m in bed it’s all quiet...when you’re reading a book with lots of other people around your brain’s being asked to do two tasks. One is reading and the other is listening to what everybody else is saying. So it’s a bit complicated to concentrate on reading the book. It can also be quite frustrating.”

The above suggests that Theo, like Jamie, is dependent upon his environment for his enjoyment of his reading, with his bed being his preferred reading location.

He likes adventure and funny books such as the ‘Biggles’ series and P.G Wodehouse books. The ‘Biggles’ books were popular with a small group of the boys at Jamie and Theo’s school. The boys would talk about the ‘Biggles’ books at school and in this way both Jamie and Theo

could be seen as “Avid Social Communal Readers” (Howard, 2008, p. 111). However this shared reading did not define either Jamie or Theo and they were both able to step into the discussions about the ‘Biggles’ books and step away from these and read their own choices away from the series.

Theo’s favourite author is P.G. Wodehouse which he started reading because, “My dad told me it was funny”. His parents both read at home and there are “lots” of books there. Theo has positive parental encouragement and he acts upon parental recommendations for reading, which could define him as an “Avid Social Communal Reader” (Howard, 2008, p. 111). I find it interesting that a number of the books Theo is reading at this point are not modern texts, ‘Life at Blandings’ (Wodehouse, 1981) is a compilation of three texts: ‘Something Fresh’ (1915), ‘Summer Lightening’ (1929) and ‘Heavy Weather’ (1933). These texts, combined with the ‘Biggles’ books, suggest a reading profile of pre- Second World War texts. In fact the only modern texts that Theo was reading were the non-fiction and Morpurgo’s ‘War Horse’ (Morpurgo, 2007). ‘Biggles’ and ‘War Horse’ are both written with children as the target audience, however, the P. G. Wodehouse texts are more adult books. This cross-over or “cross-under” - to use Kelly’s vocabulary - into reading adult books perhaps shows that Theo is developing as a reader and in his book choices.

Although Theo is a member of the library, he states that he goes “to borrow books only sometimes.” He does not use the library as a space to socialise or ‘hang out’ with his friends. Theo, like Jamie, likes to read just one book at a time but, unlike Jamie, he does not challenge himself to read the book as quickly as possible. He is not a frequent re-reader of books but old favourites are sometimes revisited, for example, ‘War Horse’ (Morpurgo, 2007) and ‘Biggles Defends the Desert’ (Johns, 1993).

Theo also sees reading as a useful skill or habit to have.

“Reading is great because it is intellectual (pause) because when you get higher in life it’s going to help you...So if you don’t read now and through senior school then you are not going to do well at university.”

According to Kelly, Theo could be described as: “Reader; Book Lover; Compulsive; Book Cherisher; the Chronological Reader combined with The Cross-Under” (Kelly, 2013).

Theo’s reading is divided between easier readerly adventure stories, e.g. ‘Biggles’ and the more challenging writerly texts such as the P. G. Wodehouse novels. His reading of ‘Biggles’ and Morpurgo allows him to be part of a reading community with his peers, although he also likes to engage with texts which his peers are not reading. His non-fiction reading of “The Independent, Airliner World and Country Life,” suggests more challenging reading as these texts are all written for adults.



I define Theo as an **‘avid, rapid, habitual, committed, sequential, environment dependent, bedtime reader of fiction who is beginning to read more adult texts’**.

Theo likes to start a book and complete it before he starts another book. Theo looks for, and acts upon, recommendations, but he will equally seek out new reading material for himself. He likes reading fiction and non-fiction. I believe that the reading habit is firmly formed; he voluntarily reads novels as a preferred leisure activity and will, I believe, continue to do so.

15.2.1 Concerns about starting Secondary School

Theo’s concerns about starting secondary school were the amount of homework which he would be set and he thinks that, as a consequence, he will not be able to engage in as much reading for pleasure:

“Theo: I think that reading is a great thing to do at this stage because later on in life like when we start senior school we are going to have longer nights doing homework and things and not much time to read. So if you read at this stage first you get what reading’s like and decide ‘Oh I like reading’ well that’s good because once you’ve finished in senior school and you are at university you really have got to start reading books”

Theo is also aware that some people link liking reading with 'geekiness': "They don't like reading...so they think reading is for Geeks." This shows that Theo is aware of some negative attitudes from his peers towards reading.

15.3 Joe Primary School A



Joe thinks that reading is “enjoyable and a bit fun”. He enjoys books, saying “I enjoyed this book, I thought it was great and I read it twice”, but is not very comfortable talking about his reading. This may be because Jamie and Theo were very happy to discuss their books and their reading and - at times - they could dominate the conversation. Joe reads most nights before bed. Joe also enjoys audiobooks before bed and on long journeys.

Recent Reading

Last of the Sky
Pirates (Stewart and
Riddell, 2006)

Brigands M.C.
(Muchamore, 2010)

“I like audiotapes...audiobooks can be really good for long books and the really long journeys. Like the ‘Harry Potter’ books (Rowling, 2010) or the ‘Lemony Snicket’ books (Snicket, 2007). And they are easier to understand when someone else reads them.”

This sort of reading is important because it involves the reader in the narrative even though the individual is not actually reading the written word. Aidan Chambers argues that reading aloud is important:

“All writing is a kind of playscript. To enjoy a story or a poem you have to know how to convert print into the movement of action, the sound of characters thinking and talking, while giving every ‘scene’, every sequence, the right pace...that will turn printed information into vivid drama. We discover how to do this when listening to someone bringing print alive by reading aloud...”(Chambers, 1991, p. 54).

Whilst Joe listens to audiobooks on his frequent long journeys (he doesn’t read a book because he gets travel sick) he is “actively reading with his ears, imagining the narrative and developing individual interpretation” (Cliff-Hodges, 2011, p. 21). Joe really enjoys listening to stories,

“We go to Ireland quite a lot and my mum gets loads of audiobooks and I’ve got this big wallet of ‘Alex Rider’ books and I love listening to that.”

Joe has a love of stories, especially adventure stories, and the audiobooks allow him to feed this love of story. He usually reads before bed, but he also loves hearing a good story read well.

Audiobooks

Emma Walton Hamilton writes:

“Research is showing that listening is just as effective as reading with the eyes, and suggests that audiobooks enhance fluency and comprehension...” (Walton Hamilton, 2009, p. 69).

Hamilton also suggests that the benefits of audiobooks include:

- “providing demonstrations of fluent reading as well as phrasing and articulation;
- offering access to books a reader may be unable to read independently;
- creating greater opportunities for discussion and comprehension;
- supporting struggling readers by helping them relax into the story and focus on meaning rather than decoding the text” (Walton Hamilton, 2009, p. 40).

Some validity has been given to audiobooks with ‘The Odyssey Award’ which has been awarded annually since 2008 to “the producer of the best audiobook produced for children and/or young adults, available in English in the United States”

<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/odyssey-award>

Senior writes:

“For students who ‘don’t read books’ we encourage the use of audio tapes,

providing the facilities to listen in the resources centre to get them started” (Senior, 2005, p. 144).

This resource of audiobooks can provide a child with a great story read well and encourage them to actually engage in reading the text themselves.

Byrom argues that:

“Audiobooks not only model reading but they actively engage the reader in the text so that reading is simulated and the reading habit established through the reader being willing to practise reading” (Byrom, 1998, p. 7).

I argue that audiobooks can also provide fluent readers with a ‘taste’ of a book which can engage them in the story, and thus encourage them to read the book. Audiobooks allow a reader to absorb themselves in a text swiftly, hearing it professionally and fluently read, before they actively engage in reading the text themselves – it is almost as if they need someone else to do the hard work of beginning the text, thus allowing them to engage with the text, for them. Just as parents read to a child at bedtime and stop on a cliff-hanger with the hope that their child will continue with the reading, audiobooks can do the same.

Topping et al., write that audiobooks:

“Can serve to develop listening comprehension in children and parents alike. Together with a printed version of the same text, they provide an excellent opportunity for children to rehearse a text through listening before seeking to read the text by themselves – not so much ‘repeated reading’ as ‘repeated listening-with-reading’” (Topping et al., 1997, p. 8).

Others suggest that listening to an audiobook *is* reading, just as decoding the printed text on a page is. Moyer states: “listening is in fact “real” reading and that listeners can engage with

audiobooks in much the same way as they engage with printed or electronic texts” (Moyer, 2011, p. 254).

Whether or not audiobooks are ‘real’ reading (as in reading text off a page), Joe needed to hear stories even when he did not have the time to physically read the words on the page. It could be argued that his use of audiobooks kept his enjoyment of story alive whilst he was busy travelling and participating in sporting events.

His favourite author is Robert Muchamore, and he started to read the Cherub series because “Someone said it was brilliant”. This willingness to try a book because of a recommendation could place Joe into Howard’s “Social Communal Reader” category (Howard, 2008, p. 109). At the time of the primary questionnaire and our primary group conversations, the ‘Cherub’ series of books by Robert Muchamore were not only very popular with the students, as mentioned above, but they were also talked about at length whenever the students got a moment to chat. Joe enjoyed engaging with this social communal reading discussion but his identity as a reader exceeded this. His love of ‘story’ is established because he enjoys hearing audiobooks. In addition, he is reading books other than the core ‘Cherub’ series of his peer group social reading, as shown by his recording ‘The Last of the Sky Pirates’ (Stewart and Riddell, 2006) on his questionnaire.

Joe states that there are “lots” of books at home but he does not say, on his primary questionnaire, with whom he lives, or if they read at home. He states that he goes to “borrow books about once a month” from the library and he displayed good selection strategies when I observed him choosing a book from his school library.

When I first spoke with Joe he appeared to be reluctant about his reading, in the sense that he would rather be doing something else other than the 10 minutes’ reading aloud, at home, to an adult, five times a week that his school expected. This was reflected in his questionnaire response that reading is “enjoyable and a *bit* fun”. In discussions he says that he thinks that reading is “alright” and on his primary questionnaire he stated that he thought that he was “good” at reading.

Actually, he was not reluctant about reading – although he did not enjoy the reading aloud part – he simply found it difficult to fit into his and his parents' very busy lives. He also found it difficult to read on demand, rather he read when he felt like it. Because of this he struggled with his school's reading policy of reading aloud to a parent at least three times a week. He was happy to listen to an audiobook on the bus to sports fixtures but this did not fulfil the requirement to read to an adult out loud. The pressure he felt to complete this reading threatened to ruin his enjoyment of books. Joe said;

“Sometimes it's a bit tedious because I usually read when I have time and [can read] where I want to read but like in the prep diaries you have to write when you've read and it needs to be at least three times a week. So sometimes I do less and sometimes I do more and I feel under pressure to do more reading. So when I feel under pressure it gets a bit boring after a while.”

Joe was on the school cricket team and his club cricket team and he also played for the county. Fitting in all of these very lengthy cricket matches during the summer term and finding time for homework and reading aloud was problematic for him. He explained;

“...because I'm quite sporty I have loads of clubs after school, for instance today I have two cricket matches, one for school and one for my club. This means I won't get any reading done tonight and I won't get any reading done on Saturday because of another match going on. So I find it quite hard to fit reading in.”

Daniel Pennac describes an exaggeration of this problem:

“...no television during the school year...but piano from five to six, guitar from six to seven, dance on Wednesdays, judo, tennis, and fencing on Saturdays...not the slightest chance of a little quarter of an hour to be alone with himself” (Pennac, 1994b, p. 61).

Joe had a number of commitments. His cricket ability and membership of school, club and county cricket teams took up a great deal of his time. According to Kelly, Joe could be described as: “Reader; Book Lover; Situational; The AudioBook Listener combined with The Sleepy Bedtime Reader.” He could also be defined as a “Conflicted, No-Time-To-Read-Reader.” (Kelly, 2013).

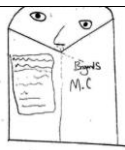
Howard’s taxonomy would suggest that Joe was not yet an avid reader, he was more of an avid reader in training, or - using Eriksson Barajas and Aronsson’s vocabulary - a “potential reader or ‘not yet’ reader” (Eriksson Barajas and Aronsson, 2009, p. 290). Joe enjoyed being able to talk about his reading with his friends, which could class him as a “Social Communal Reader”, but the reading habit was not fully formed.

Joe decided not to come to the last group conversations of his primary school, saying that he didn’t want to talk about his reading that day. Naturally, I said that he didn’t have to attend and that he was free to do whatever he wanted to. At the end of the group conversations with the other students I bumped into Joe and gave him a card I had prepared for all of the students involved in the study congratulating them on finishing primary school and stating that I looked forward to catching up with them when they had settled into their new secondary schools.

I was aware that Joe might not want me to ‘catch up’ with him when he began his new school, so I went out of my way to stress that he need never see me again and that I was thankful for the time he had given me. It was then that Joe told me that he hadn’t wanted to meet with me that day because he had not managed to do much reading since he had last met with me, and his lack of reading aloud to a parent had been pointedly commented on by his teacher. He knew that the other students had read ‘loads’ and he didn’t feel like a ‘good’ reader in front of the other students. I attempted to assure Joe that I had valued his comments just as much as any of the other students and I wished him a fantastic summer holiday. I didn’t think that I would ever work with him again.

However, Joe had provided me with a real insight into the struggle that children have with self worth. He was a brilliant sportsman and he enjoyed that position. He had felt positive enough with his reading to be prepared to talk to me. Yet when he was in a group of students who were, in his eyes, 'better' readers than him, he felt uncomfortable and less sure of himself as a reader. Joe also gave me real insight into his school's policy of reading aloud to a parent or carer three times a week for ten minutes and how this was just not appropriate for all students in the school. Why couldn't his listening to an audio book or his silent independent reading be seen as good enough?

Joe's reading of readerly adventure texts allows him to engage with his peers and talk about his reading in a supportive community of readers. His enjoyment of audiobooks which make little demands on the reader allows for him to be part of the reading community. His choice of reading material is not stretching him in terms of moving towards writerly texts.



I define Joe as a **'developing, social, busy, habitual, committed, avid audio reader'**.

Joe likes stories – sometimes he reads them and sometimes he listens to them. He has a number of sporting commitments which take up a great deal of his time outside of school and he struggles to fit reading into his busy life. He prefers fiction to non-fiction. I do not believe that the reading habit is firmly formed but it is developing and he does voluntarily experience books and he enjoys stories told well.

15.3.1 Concerns about starting Secondary School

Joe's concerns about starting secondary school were the amount of homework which he would be set and that, as a consequence, he will not be able to engage in as much reading for pleasure because of the time pressure from being in many of the senior school's sports teams. Dialogue between some of the boys at Primary School A show that all share this concern:

Joe: "At the senior school there are also lots more clubs and you are more likely to get more involved so instead of finishing school at four o'clock you finish at five and then you have to go home and do your homework which makes a day longer which means there's less time for reading...And there are more sports teams in the senior school so you are more likely to be involved at the weekend which cuts into reading time."

15.4 Tom Primary School A



Tom thinks that reading is “awesome”, and on my second school visit he said, “I think reading is great”. He enjoys books and is happy talking about them. He frequently engages in reading for pleasure and is happy to share his reading with others. He is someone who actively engages in reading as a pleasurable past time. He reads every night before bed and at other times during the day:

“I like reading in bed before I go to sleep because I feel relaxed. But if I read in homework club I feel quite tense, it’s just annoying reading when everyone’s talking.”

Tom likes to read by himself and, just like the other students in this study, is not keen on reading lessons in the classroom at school:

“If you’re like in a classroom and you’re doing silent reading there is always somebody in the classroom who is not reading. And there are naughty children who keep chatting, and then you can’t really concentrate on reading. If you’re on your own you may want to listen to some music whilst you read. You can understand the book more because there is less background noise...sometimes you don’t want to read page after page sometimes you want to stop and think about what you’ve read. You kind of want to think about what’s going on.”

Tom shows that he is a reader and that he likes to read, but it is on his terms. He does not like to read when he is told to and he also likes to be in control of his environment when he reads. He tends not to read for very extended periods because reading “makes me feel relaxed, but also tired because I’m usually in bed about to fall asleep when I’m reading.”

Recent Reading

The Recruit
(Muchamore,
2004b)

Class A
(Muchamore,
2004a)

Tom likes adventure books and his favourite author is Robert Muchamore, which he started reading because friends suggested the Cherub series. However, he only listed two of these books for his reading over the past month. His mother and her boyfriend both read at home and there are “lots” of books at home. Tom likes reading and enjoys being ‘in’ the book:

“[Reading is] fun when you feel like you’re in the book and less enjoyable when you feel that you’re not in the book.”

One element in defining Tom as a reader is the social aspect of his reading – his friends read and discuss book choices with him. Howard states:

“Avid Social Readers experience a clear and mutually reinforcing relationship between friendship and reading... Avid Social Communal Readers want to read the same materials as their friends to reinforce their membership in the group and to avoid the feeling of being left out” (Howard, 2008, p.109).

At the time of the questionnaire the ‘Cherub’ series were a bit of a craze at the school, partly because the books were not permitted in the school library because they were deemed ‘inappropriate’ for the younger children in the school and partly because they included some swearing. The illicit nature of reading these books was appealing. The students who had read some of the books in the series were keen to share this information with their peers and they gained a kind of kudos from having read them. Tom didn’t want to be left out because his friends were talking about the books, so he was encouraged to read them. Howard states:

“Avid Social Communal Readers want to read the same materials as their friends to reinforce their membership in the group and to avoid the feeling of being left out” (Howard, 2008, p. 109).

Tom could be seen as a social reader because he was reading texts to fit in with his friends but perhaps he is not as avid a reader as other avid readers. He had read two books in the

weeks prior to the questionnaire, and both of these books were read because of his friends' recommendations and the social chat around them. Tom also does not borrow books from the library. Because his book selection relies solely upon the recommendations of his friends, I am not sure he has developed useful book selection strategies. Unlike Jamie and Theo, Tom's favourite author came from recommendations from friends rather than a parent. It is unclear if Tom would respond positively to a book recommendation from a parent even though both adults in his household "read a lot at home" according to his questionnaire.

At the end of Year 6, Tom left Primary School A to go to Secondary School B. When he left the school he also left his friendship group who valued reading for pleasure and who used to make reading suggestions to him. Because of this I wondered if Tom would continue to read.

According to Kelly, Tom could be described as: "Reader; Book Lover; Situational; Social; The Easily Influenced Reader combined with The Sleepy Bedtime Reader" (Kelly, 2013). Tom's enjoyment of the readerly 'Cherub' adventure stories allows him to be part of a reading community, however he is not developing as a reader or experiencing any writerly texts.



I define Tom as an '**avid, developing, social, communal, sequential, environment dependent, bedtime reader.**'

Tom likes to start a book and complete it before he starts another book. He does not read any non-fiction. The reading habit is not firmly formed but it is developing and he does voluntarily read novels that his friends read.

15.4.1 Concerns about starting Secondary School

Tom's concerns about starting secondary school were that he was the only student from his primary school going to his secondary school. He expected more work to do and he had concerns about how reading would be viewed in his new school. Group discussion revealed more about this:

Tom: "I think this is quite an open school and reading is just a normal thing to do. At my new school, I'm not sure how reading is going to be seen. I'm confident to read here [at his present school] but I don't want to be teased for reading."

15.5 Gemma Primary School B



Gemma thinks that reading is “OK”. In discussion Gemma appears to enjoy books and she loves to talk about them. She frequently engages in reading for pleasure and likes to read before bed and at other times during the day. Gemma likes reading at home most of all, but also likes reading in school, in the school library and in the city’s central library:

Gemma: “I like reading in both places [school and at home]...

I like going to the [central library] and if they have a book there that I like the look of then I look for it here in the school library. But if I’m in a book shop I just sit and read books in the book shop.”

However, Gemma struggles to find a place at home where she can read uninterrupted, which is why she sometimes prefers reading at school. Her favourite place to read is on her couch in her sleeping bag:

Gemma: [My favourite place to read is]” ...in my sleeping bag on my couch with my torch...I like it because it is dark.”

Me: Are you left alone when you read like that?

Gemma: No! But I wish I was. There’s Callum who is really loud and he keeps turning the telly on and off then there’s Lizzie who keeps moaning and then there’s Sam he’s really annoying because he keeps on hitting you or sitting on you.

Me: So when your family see that you have got your book, your sleeping bag and your torch do they realise that that means ‘Leave me alone I want to read my book!’

Gemma: No they just annoy me anyway. Then I have to go upstairs to avoid them. It’s a shame because I don’t do the sleeping bag thing much anymore because they all annoy me so now I have to read on my bed which isn’t as much fun. And then if

Recent Reading

Cookie
(Wilson, 2009)
Midnight
(Wilson, 2008b)
Candyfloss
(Wilson, 2007a)
Vicky Angel
(Wilson, 2007d)
Bad Girls
(Wilson, 2006a)
Dustbin Baby
(Wilson, 2007b)

I'm upstairs in my room on my bed they still interrupt me because they keep on shouting 'Gemma, where are you?' Really, really annoying. And sometimes I don't answer because I'm reading my book."

Out of all of the students involved in these group conversations, Gemma is the only student whose preferred reading space is somewhere other than her bed. This could be because she shares a room with her younger sister and because she does not consider her bedroom her own space. If she is reading in school during the ten minutes the class has after lunch time she gets,

"...distracted because there's normally somebody calling somebody else's name and Miss Jones is telling people to be quiet and to concentrate on reading."

She also finds it difficult to concentrate at school, "I like reading but I don't like reading in class...everyone else is like talking to me and then I start talking to them and then I only read a page of my book before I put the book down."

There is a pattern here of a frustrated reader. Gemma wants to read her books, and she wants some peace and quiet to do this. She struggles to get this both at home and at school. Emma Walton Hamilton stresses the importance of a book-friendly home and states that parents should:

"provide a warm and inviting reading atmosphere, supported by comfortable seating and good (not harsh!) lighting, and free of noise or virtual distractions," (Walton Hamilton, 2009, p. 92).

Gemma's parents and her siblings are not supporting her reading and she could be regarded as reading in spite of their lack of support. In certain ways, Gemma exhibits some of the characteristics of an "Avid Involuntary Solitary Reader" in terms of the lack of support at home and because she has "weak selection strategies, often choosing books fairly randomly, and having difficulties finding books [she] enjoys" (Howard, 2008, p. 116). However, she

could also be seen as an “Avid Social Communal Reader” because she only gets book recommendations from her friends and she likes to talk about her reading with her friends but she is also more complex than this. She is not just a “Social Communal Reader” because, as well as conforming with her friends’ reading choices, she also makes her own choices, although not always successfully. She often has more than one book ‘on the go’ at a time, but this is not her preferred reading situation. She is proud of her own books and likes to keep them safe. Gemma is clear about how to achieve this:

Gemma: “I like school library books better [than home books] because you can leave them at school and they won’t get damaged at home (especially if you have a brother like mine)...I have books at home that I read at home and I have a big pile of books by my bed and then I have my book for school they keep at school. It’s a bit annoying having to have two books on the go at the same time but I don’t like taking my school books home in case they get damaged.”

Because of her home environment not valuing books as much as Gemma does, she is reluctant to take school library books home in case they get damaged. Her strategy of having home books to read at home and school books to read at school solves her problem of books getting damaged at home but again it serves as another barrier in the way of Gemma’s reading. She is struggling with finding a quiet place to read at home, and she has to juggle two books at a time, one for school and one for home, which is not how she wants to read.

On the primary questionnaire, Gemma states she “borrows books about once a week,” from a library yet during our group conversations it became apparent that Gemma only borrowed books from her school library. This was because she did not want to take public library books home in case they got damaged. Her selection strategy of finding books in the main public library and then seeing if she can find the same book in her school library was interesting because it suggests that she spent time in the main library with her friends.

Gemma is - in some respects - a “Comfort Reader” because she has “a small collection of absolutely favourite books that [she] returns to time and again when in-between new books, or in times of strife when in need of familiar old friends” (Kelly, 2013).

However, Gemma might be returning to these favourite books again and again because these are the only books she has at home. She does go to bookshops, and she says that she likes reading in bookshops, describing “if I’m in a book shop I just sit and read books in the book shop.” Yet it is unclear how frequently she buys books. On her primary questionnaire she states that she bought a Jacqueline Wilson book which would suggest that she buys, or is bought books, yet when I asked her if she bought books, she changed the subject. Using Kelly’s categories of readers, Gemma could be classed as: ‘Reader; Book Lover; Situational; The Comfort Reader, The Re-Reader and The Sleepy Bedtime Reader’ (Kelly, 2013).

Gemma likes adventure books and funny books and books that her friends are reading or have read. However, most of her reading material is mood-dependent:

“When I’m in a good mood I read really long books and when I’m in a bad mood I read books like this (shows me a really small, short book with lots of pictures)...if it’s a really short book it makes me feel better and in a better mood...I’ve got lots of sections in my drawer for my books like funny books and sad books and when I’m angry I choose funny books and sometimes when I’m happy I choose a funny book as well.”

Gemma’s favourite author is Jacqueline Wilson however, unlike some of the other students in the study, she started to read these books because of “the cool front covers”. Sometimes she finds it hard to define her preferred reading. She is very visual and instead of ‘telling’ me she often asks to ‘show’ me instead:

Me: “What sort of books do you like reading?”

Gemma: Can I show you?

(Gemma returns with a pile of books and talks about why she likes them...)

Gemma: That's Jacqueline Wilson...this is easy to read and they're really cool and I just like them."

Gemma likes books that are easy to read which might suggest that she does not like stretching herself in terms of her reading. Gemma also enjoys re-reading her favourite books, "I liked this book a lot that's why I read it three times". Daniel Pennac argues for readers to be allowed to re-read books:

"...we have the right to read a book again just for the sake of it, for the pleasure of experiencing it all over again, the joy of being reunited with it, to test how close to it we really were" (Pennac and Blake, 2006, p. 159).

Pennac also wrote:

"To re-read that which once rejected us, to reread every word, to reread in a different light, to reread to check our first impressions: this is one of our rights. But we can also reread for the hell of it, for the pleasure of repetition, for the happiness of encountering an old friend and putting our friendship to the test once again. 'One more time!' we would say when we were young. As adults, we reread for the same reason. We want the enchantment of an old pleasure that, each time, is rich in new magic" (Pennac, 1994a, p. 187).

There are a number of arguments for why it is important to let children read and re-read books; however, one of Gemma's reasons for re-reading books was that:

"I don't have to concentrate as much so if it is noisy I can still read because I know the story really well already."

As we met, and the summer term progressed, Gemma became more attention seeking. She really wanted to talk about her books and her reading but she sometimes talked over her friends, as one note from my research journal pointed out

Anna: "I read 'The Suitcase Kid' (Wilson, 2006c), but I only read it for a while, then 'Pumpkin Pie' (Ure, 2002).

Gemma: I had to read these books all the way through that's not fair!

Gemma pushes some books on to the floor.

I noted in my research log that 'Gemma is becoming a little disruptive and talking over the other children.'

Gemma's reading of readerly Jacqueline Wilson novels allows her to participate in discussion of her reading with her friends. At the moment, there is no progression to more demanding texts or writerly texts. However, Gemma could have stalled at this level of reading. Chambers describes readers who only ever read one style or one author as 'flat-earth' readers. These readers see the reading world as flat not round like a map spread out upon a table:

"Exclusively repetitious reading of any kind of book, of any writer, is flat-earth reading...flat-earthers resist any invitation to explore beyond the boundaries of familiar territory because of the fearsome dangers that they are sure lie in wait at the edge of their world" (Chambers, 1993, p. 13).

Ideally, English teachers want their students to be open-minded "intergalactic readers" rather than narrow-minded flat-earth readers (Chambers, 1993, p. 13).



I define Gemma as an '**avid, habitual, sequential, social, frustrated, environment dependent re-reader**'.

She enjoys reading, the reading habit is firmly formed and she voluntarily reads novels.

However, I question whether she will be able to continue with her reading once she moves to secondary school as she struggles to find somewhere quiet to read at home and she is easily distracted.

15.5.1 Concerns about starting Secondary School

Gemma's concerns about starting secondary school were mainly about the amount of work she would have to do and that she would get homework on a regular basis. She worried that when she began her secondary school that:

Gemma: "We will probably read more because I like big books and I don't like really tiny print like the sort that you need a magnifying glass for. And if the words are too long that I won't look at it a kind of light books with medium-sized words, those are the sort of books that I will read...I'm going to do more [reading next year] obviously because..."

15.6 Scarlet Primary School B



Scarlet thinks that reading is “awesome” and, in discussion, stated that: “I put ‘awesome’ because I love reading”. Scarlet appears to enjoy reading books and she loves to talk about them. She engages in reading for pleasure and likes to read before bed.

“I normally read at home...the only time I read is at bedtime and then I read for hours on end and then when I stop reading it is like oh my god it is three o'clock...I read for about four hours and then I probably go to sleep at about two o'clock in the morning.”

She reinforces the illicit nature of this reading on my next school visit with:

“Oh I know where my favourite place to read is...my favourite place to read is probably at night when I am supposed to be asleep but instead I usually read for hours.”

Scarlet enjoys reading and ‘getting lost in a book’ and she complains that she does not like it when she is engaged in a book in school and she is told that she has to stop reading to move on to something else:

“Oh it is so annoying because I get lost in the book and then I suddenly have to stop...I don't get distracted because I read and get so involved in my book I don't know what's going on around me.”

In some ways, Scarlet could be classed as a “Reader, Book Lover, Compulsive, Immersive Reader” because she feels that she has to read in bed at night and because she gets lost in

Recent Reading

The Simpsons
Skullduggery
Pleasant 1 (Landy, 2007)
Skullduggery
Pleasant 2 (Landy, 2008),
Skullduggery
Pleasant 3 (Landy, 2011a)
Skullduggery
Pleasant 4 (Landy, 2010)
Granny
(Horowitz, 2009)
Demeter (Fontes and Fontes, 2008)

her book when she is reading. She also exhibits aspects of “The Library Lover” as she enjoys getting books out of her school library. (Kelly, 2013).

It is interesting that Scarlet and Gemma are in the same class and Scarlet doesn't get distracted yet Gemma finds it hard to concentrate and does get distracted. Perhaps this is an indicator that they are different in terms of their reading engagement and enjoyments. Instead of the daily ten minutes reading after lunch that she has in school, she would “rather like have an hour because I love reading.” She likes adventure books and funny comics and she does not like fairy books, “I hate fairy books”. Her favourite author is Derek Landy and she has read a number of the ‘Skullduggery’ books.

“I like reading ‘Skullduggery’ I’ve got all his books and in September I’m getting his new book.”

Scarlet started to read these books after seeing them displayed in the school library. Both Gemma and Scarlet have found a favourite author because of the school library rather than from a recommendation from a parent or a friend. Scarlet does have some of the qualities of “Avid Social Communal Readers” (Howard, 2008) because she likes series reading and talking about her reading with her friends, yet because she likes getting recommendations from the school library she does not completely fit in to this category.

She likes owning her own books and she is proud that she has these ‘Skullduggery’ books at home on her own bookcase. She enjoys having her own books, “I prefer my own books because you know they’re there and they’re not going to get damaged”. Like Gemma, Scarlet enjoys re-reading her favourite author’s books.

“I read all my ‘Skullduggery’ books about ten times. But I also have other books because I have to leave it long enough so I don’t remember it. I have a Jacqueline Wilson book called ‘Cookie’ and I’ve read that about fifteen times.”

Scarlet’s reading of the readerly ‘Skullduggery Pleasant’ series allows her ease of choice for her next book, simply the next one in the series. However, it does not provide her with a

community of readers who are all reading the same books because most of her friends are reading Jacqueline Wilson. Scarlet is engaging in text choices outside of the series with the myths and Horowitz stories yet these are also readerly rather than writerly texts.



I define Scarlet as an **'avid, habitual, sequential, committed, compulsive, bedtime, immersive, series re-reader'**.

She enjoys reading both fiction and comics, the reading habit is fully formed and she voluntarily reads novels and I believe that she will continue to do so.

15.6.1 Concerns about starting Secondary School

Scarlet's concerns about starting secondary school were mainly about the amount of work she would have to do and that she would get homework on a regular basis. She worried that when she began her secondary school that:

"It is going to be hard work but good...it is going to be fun...I will probably read about the same amounts...there's a bigger library so there are lots of books to get through."

15.7 Anna Primary School B



Anna thinks that reading is “amazing and awesome” and she said, “I love reading”. She likes “fairy books” and is happy to say this in front of her friends who don’t like fairy books. However, she also reads Jacqueline Wilson and Andrew Hammond, so she and her friends have some common ground in terms of book preferences. She enjoys owning books:

Anna: “My friend has loads [of fairy books] and I’ve got quite a lot.

Gemma: [picking up a book to show me] That’s Jacqueline Wilson.

Anna: Oh I’ve got them...I like the ‘Crypt Collection’ (by Andrew Hammond)...I like them because they make you use your imagination.”

Anna is happy about her reading and sees it as a pleasurable pastime. She reads frequently and is happy to talk at length about her reading with others. However, out of the group of girls, she is the quietest, and she declares herself “shy”. Anna does most of her reading at home and reads most nights before bed and at other times during the day, saying “I’d rather just read at home than having to read at school.” Anna does not enjoy using the school library because:

“some of the books are a bit boring and most of them are fact books not stories...I don’t like coming to this school library because the boys just lie down on the floor or

Recent Reading

OK!

New

The Simpsons

Batman

Spiderman

The Sun

The Daily Telegraph

The Daily Express

Horrid Henry (Simon, 1998)

A Bad Spell for the Worst Witch (Murphy, 2013)

Mermaid Magic (Rees, 2004)

Kylie the Carnival Fairy (Meadows, 2012)

Alice the Tennis Fairy (Meadows, 2008a)

Danni the Drum Fairy (Meadows, 2008b)

Ruby the Red Fairy (Meadows, 2003)

on the beanbags and the girls all just crowd around the same area and there's no room to read or choose a book."

This reveals Anna's preference for fiction rather than non-fiction "fact books" which is common for Howard's "Avid Social Communal Readers" for whom "reading exists within a mutually accepted comfort zone of shared reading choices...no Avid Social Communal readers mentioned reading nonfiction for pleasure" (Howard, 2008, p. 110). These "Avid Social Communal Readers" are "almost exclusively female" and have high levels of positive adult (usually parental) encouragement" (Howard, 2008, p.111).

Anna does not like library sessions in her primary school library and she is not a frequent public library user, which goes against Howard's "Avid Social Communal Reader" classification. In terms of Kelly's analysis, Anna could be classed as: "Reader, Book Lover, Compulsive, Book Cherisher, The Chronological Reader" with aspects of "Situational" and of "The Sleepy Bedtime Reader" (Kelly, 2013).

When Anna has her hair done, which can take up to four hours, she sits and reads a range of books:

Anna: "I read 'The Suitcase Kid' (Wilson, 2006c) but I only read it for a while, then 'Pumpkin Pie' (Ure, 2002) ...well I did get bored every once in a while. I read 'Horrid Henry' (Simon, 1998), books and a cookbook...to make cookies...I read some other books before I went to bed and stuff. I stayed in at the weekend and didn't watch TV because I was fighting with my brother over the remote control...I did more reading than I usually do because I was getting my hair done."

She likes funny stories such as the 'Horrid Henry' books by Francesca Simon and fairy books, such as the Daisy Meadow series. Anna's favourite authors are Francesca Simon and Daisy Meadows, which she started to read because, "My friends said they were really good". Anna likes reading the sections in books which introduce the author:

“I like books that tell you about the author best...because it is still reading but you get to learn about other stuff and all that.”

Her brother and little sister read at home but her mum does not read, “I don’t really see my mum read.” However, there are “lots” of books at home. Anna likes to read just one book at a time and she is not a frequent re-reader of books but old favourites are, at times, re-visited.

Anna’s reading of the quite simple readerly Meadows fairy books sets her apart from her peers. Most of her friends have moved on from these sort of books to other writers such as Wilson, Horowitz and Morpurgo. Anna enjoys the predictability of the series but as none of her school friends have read the Meadows fairy books she lacks discussion about the books. She lacks the inclination to move to less predictable texts and towards more writerly texts.



I define Anna as an **‘avid, confident, habitual, committed, sequential, social, series reader’**.

She likes to start a book and complete it before she starts another book. She prefers fiction to non-fiction yet she engaged in a great deal of magazine reading. I believe that the reading habit is firmly formed, she voluntarily reads quite simplistic books for pleasure and I believe that she will continue to develop as a reader.

15.7.1 Concerns about starting Secondary School

Anna’s concerns about starting secondary school were mainly about the amount of work she would have to do and that she would get homework on a regular basis. She considered that, when she began her secondary school that:

“well in lessons I think you have to do more work in them at secondary school and less reading for pleasure in lessons so I think I’ll do more reading at home.”

She also said that she hoped that the library would be better at her secondary school:

“I don’t like coming to this school library...I hope that Secondary School C’s library is going to be better and have more scary books.”

15.8 Brandon Primary School C



Brandon thinks that reading is “fun and great”.

He is happy to talk about his books and reading with others. He likes factual books such as ‘1001 Horrible Facts’ (Rooney, 2006). He thinks that:

“Educational books are not always books that you like but they teach you stuff that you need like the facts and all that sort of stuff.”

He likes discussing these facts and unusual vocabulary with his father and he asks his father how to pronounce words, or explain what words mean if he is uncertain, “at home I ask my dad how to pronounce it [a word] and if it’s a word I don’t know the meaning of what it means.” Brandon reads frequently before bed - especially if he can’t sleep - but he did not read the night before the questionnaire. He did not write down a favourite author. His dad reads at home and there are “quite a lot” of books at home.

Brandon likes to dip in and out of books and old favourites - like Roald Dahl’s books - get re-visited. Pennac defends this dipping in and out when he writes:

“It is our right, as readers, to grab a book from anywhere on our shelves, open it wherever we like and dive straight in, just for a few minutes...” (Pennac and Blake, 2006, p. 168).

Brandon’s tastes are diverse with Roald Dahl, ‘The Beano’ and ‘1001 Horrible Facts’ (Rooney, 2006) making up his reading. In discussing this diversity Meek states that:

“Round about the age of eleven, children’s reading skills and their tastes in reading matter are at their most diversified and individual” (Meek, 1982, p. 150) .

Recent Reading

1001 Horrible Facts’
(Rooney, 2006)

Roald Dahl book.

Brandon is good at reading. He is quite selective in his reading choices and he likes discussing his reading with his dad. He says that “reading is kind of like the best...reading is a very important thing in my life.” Brandon does not talk about his reading with his friends and he does not look for book recommendations. He shows some of the characteristics of Howard’s “Avid Voluntary Solitary Reader” in that “he does not see any reason to share or discuss their [his] reading with their [his] peers” and because he gets “high levels of positive adult encouragement to read” (Howard, 2008, p. 115).

Brandon likes re-reading books, “story books you can read over and over again especially if you really like it,” although he develops this with, “I never read books over again now because the books I read are really long big books - I mean they’re just massive.” He prefers reading at home by himself, “I prefer to read by myself because then you can choose any book you want to read,” rather than reading at school. He also reads when he can’t get to sleep, “I mostly read when I can’t get to sleep.” In fact, during our conversations, Brandon suggested that he frequently can’t get to sleep, which meant that he was reading most nights. It is interesting that Brandon doesn’t say ‘I read every night before I go to sleep,’ rather it seems that he has to explain or excuse his reading with “when I can’t get to sleep.” This could suggest that he is not completely comfortable with his bedtime reading, and that the reading habit is not fully formed. According to Kelly’s classification, Brandon shows some of the characteristics of, “Reader, Book Lover, Situational, The Sleepy Bedtime Reader” and “Reader, Other Readers, Prestige, The Conscientious Reader” (who only reads nonfiction with a purpose), (Kelly, 2013).

Brandon also likes playing computer games and he states that he reads the messages rather than ignoring them and getting on with the game, saying “when playing games I read all the messages on the screen.” He expands this on my next visit when he states “I do lots of reading when I play computer games on the PC I have to read the story line and the instructions.” Brandon revealed that he has recently been allowed a PC in his bedroom to go with his television, and he stated that he plays games when he can’t sleep now.

Brandon contradicts himself when talking about his reading. On visit one he declared that the books he read were “massive” and yet, during a later visit, he stated that, “even though I’m one of the best readers in the school I don’t read that much”. He adds to the complexity of the picture by saying that “storybooks you can read over and over again especially if you really like it”.

Brandon’s views about reading appear inconsistent; the positive views such as his “massive” books and his re-reading story books when he really likes them seem to conflict with his statement that he does not read much even though he sees himself as a good reader. Whether this change in his perception of himself is an actual change, or a case of Brandon giving me what he thought I wanted to hear at the start of the interview process, remains to be seen. Brandon’s teachers all saw him as a reader and noted that he regularly brought books into school to read and to discuss with his teachers. It is interesting that, when responding to the comments written by students about reading, Brandon noted that two children had written “reading is bad” and Brandon had asked “who would write bad?” as if he couldn’t understand a child thinking that reading was a bad thing.

Brandon differs from the other students in this study because his main reading is non-fiction. Some of his non-fiction reading is challenging but he is not engaging with writerly texts. The fiction Brandon does read is readerly. I wonder if Brandon will be exposed to writerly texts which can extend his reading and perhaps his reading enjoyment.



I define Brandon as an **‘avid, habitual bedtime reader’**.

He likes to dip in and out of books and he reads a range of fiction and non-fiction. I believe that the reading habit is not fully formed although he does voluntarily, and avidly, read non-fiction books. This tends to be dipping into non-fiction rather than sustained reading.

15.8.1 Concerns about starting Secondary School

Like many of the other students, Brandon is concerned about the amount of homework he will have to complete when he joins secondary school. He has not been asked to complete homework at his primary school and is a little confused about what will be required of him. On my last primary school visit Brandon was showing some awareness of being concerned about how he will be perceived by his peers when he joins his secondary school; he pointed out a child's statement "reading is sweet and you don't want to read too much as people might think you're a Geek." Brandon expressed the view that how you are perceived could depend on what you read.

15.9 Summary of Students' Reading

The vocabulary I use to describe these young readers is:

adult text, audiobook, avid, bedtime, busy, committed, communal, compulsive, confident, developing, environment dependent, frustrated, habitual, immersive, rapid, re-reader, sequential, series, and social.

At first, I struggled with defining the students' reading. This was, in part, because there are lots of terms for children who are not good at reading and who don't habitually read. For example: struggling, developing, impoverished, illiterate, functionally literate and reluctant. Yet at the other end of the reading spectrum, there are very few terms, for example: good, able and fluent. This is also the case when writing about readers. There is a great deal of research about children who can't read or who struggle to read and the reasons for this. However, there has not been as much research conducted concerning children who can read and who choose to read. Alberto Manguel, Daniel Pennac, Roland Barthes, Gabrielle Cliff-Hodges and Vivian Howard have all written about the joy and pleasure which reading can bring, but their terminology doesn't fit with the students involved in this study (Manguel, 1996, Pennac and Blake, 2006, Cliff-Hodges, 2010, Howard, 2008, Barthes, 1975). Perhaps this is where the problem of defining readers who can and do read lies. Each reader is different. Each reader will have a different reading history and each reader will have a different reading journey. Those who can't read or who don't read can have similar stories because they have not yet begun to create their own 'Rivers of Reading' as Cliff-Hodges defines it, but of those who have embarked on their reading river journey, all have different experiences.

Howard's definitions of avid readers focus on the influence of peers upon reading habits and book selection (Howard, 2008). Kelly, on the other hand, focuses on near-caricatures of reading behaviours (Kelly, 2013). My definitions, however, aim to embrace a broader spectrum of reading behaviour possibilities in interplay; they try to include a flavour of what

the students read as well as how they read, and how they share or don't share their reading experiences.

My definitions evolved. I found that I defined the student readers in terms of six categories: the involvement of others; regularity of reading; reading ability; type of text; preferred reading environment and emotional engagement.

Involvement of others: social, communal and detached.

Regularity of reading: avid, habitual, committed and busy.

Reading ability: developing, rapid, confident and re-reader.

Type of text: audiobooks, adult/grown up texts, fiction and non-fiction.

Reading environment: In bed at night, environment dependent.

Emotional engagement: compulsive, avid, frustrated and immersive.

Involvement of others: All of the students, to some extent, liked communicating with other people about their reading. Brandon liked to talk with his father about interesting facts that he had discovered in his non-fiction reading. Jamie, Theo, Joe and Tom all engaged in book talk at school, and they all shared recommendations for their reading. Jamie and Theo sought and acted upon reading recommendations from their parents, which suggests that they talked about their reading with their parents. Gemma, Scarlet and Anna talked about their favourite writers and Anna was influenced by her mother in regard to time spent reading.

Regularity of reading: I described Jamie, Theo, Gemma, Scarlet and Anna as avid readers. The Chambers dictionary defines avid as "greedy, eagerly, desirous" (Schwarz, 1994, p. 113), and these students were certainly eager and desirous about their reading. They habitually engaged in reading on a daily basis and they definitely appeared to have caught the reading habit. Joe was very busy and he struggled to fit in his reading but he, like Jamie, Theo, Scarlet and Anna, was committed in making time for reading, though this was often audiobook reading.

Reading ability: I've always linked 'avid' readers with able readers because avid readers seem to enjoy reading so much. However, I noticed other ability-linked traits with these students. Some read rapidly, which suggests reading ability, although this might not always be the case. For example, Anna read six fiction texts and eight non-fiction texts in a four week period. Wow! Yet, some of the novels Anna read were very short and are defined as 'easy reads', so it is not surprising that she completed so many. Theo's reading, and enjoyment, of the more advanced P. G. Wodehouse would suggest that he is a very able reader. Some readers - like Jamie - were very confident in their ability. I classed some readers as developing, which, at first, might seem to define their ability but which was, in fact, intended to describe their developing reading habit. Re-reading could suggest a lack of ability in reading, yet I would argue that the students who engaged in re-reading were good readers who felt comfortable re-reading old favourites and that their decision to re-read did not reflect any lack of ability on their part.

Type of text: Joe was the only reader who 'read' audiobooks but this was mainly due to the time pressures of sporting commitments. These readerly texts allowed him to engage with the story aspects of the novels chosen. English teachers hope that their students will progress towards adult or grown-up texts. This more grown-up reading often involves experiencing writerly rather than readerly texts, although this is not to say that all grown-up texts are writerly. Jamie and Theo were both experiencing grown-up texts via their non-fiction reading material and Theo was beginning to explore writerly texts with his reading of the P. G. Wodehouse novels. All of the students were reading some fiction, with Brandon reading the least, and Gemma, Scarlet, Anna and Theo reading the most. Anna was engaging in the most non-fiction reading and Joe, Tom and Gemma did not engage in any non-fiction reading.

Reading environment: the majority of the students preferred reading in bed at night with Jamie, Theo, Tom, Scarlet and Brandon all saying that they liked reading at bedtime when they were in bed. Scarlet also had a preferred reading place which was curled up under her sleeping bag with her torch. However, all of these readers liked to read when they were

alone; none of them preferred reading when other people were around them. Some, such as Theo and Jamie, were distracted by noise when they tried to read outside and others, such as Gemma, were distracted when she had to read in class or when other members of her family were around.

Emotional engagement: Jamie, Theo, Gemma, Scarlet and Anna had to read on a regular basis. Some of the students, such as Jamie and Scarlet, seemed compelled to read, whilst Gemma could become frustrated if her reading was interrupted. Scarlet could become immersed in her reading and was not easily distracted.

On paper, at the beginning of this study, these readers seemed similar. They all engaged in reading for pleasure, they all held positive views about reading, and their teachers viewed them as being both good and engaged readers. However, from this first term's conversations with the students, it emerged that all were, quite clearly, very different in their reading habits and in their attitudes to reading. Anna is quite dismissive of non-fiction "fact books" which she sees the boys in her class reading during library sessions, but that she is not interested in reading. However, Anna does engage in non-fiction reading with her reading of popular magazines and daily newspapers. Out of all of the students, only Brandon prefers non-fiction books, and even though he does continue to experience fiction books, non-fiction is clearly his reading of choice. Gemma, Scarlet and Anna all share some common ground with their reading and all demonstrate aspects of Howard's "Avid Social Communal Readers" (Howard, 2008, p. 109), and yet none of them completely 'fit' into this category. Anna likes stereotypically 'girly' fairy books which are quite young for her in terms of her chronological age, whilst Scarlet likes adventure books and Gemma likes to rely on old favourites.

Theo and Jamie are quite similar in their reading habits and yet Jamie seems to be the more compulsive reader, he literally 'had' to read before bed, yet Theo recorded more reading on his questionnaire. Joe could easily be seen as a reluctant reader, but his love of stories challenges this classification and instead he could be seen as a frustrated reader who struggles to fit into his school's quite narrow reading requirements. Tom seems to be the

least engaged reader of all of the students. He is reading during his final term of Year 6, but there is the suggestion that this is because of the social aspect of such activity: his friends are reading and so he does, too, in order to be able to be involved in their conversations.

As the study progressed, I expected these definitions to evolve and change to reflect how the students' reading and attitudes to reading evolved and changed upon starting secondary school.

15.10 Summary of Concerns about Starting Secondary School

All eight of these students expressed concerns about starting their new secondary school.

- Half of the students thought that they might not be able to engage in as much reading for pleasure in secondary school because of school work, homework and sporting commitments.
- Seven of the students were concerned about the amount of homework they would get at their new school. This was especially so for the students from Primary Schools B and C as they had never been given much homework before.
- Half of the students were concerned about the amount of school work they would have to do in lessons.
- Half of the students were aware that reading could be viewed negatively by some students and one student was concerned about how reading for pleasure would be viewed at his new school.

15.11 Next Steps

I planned to visit all of the students at their new secondary schools and observe them in their library lessons before continuing with our group conversations.

16 The Observational and Interview Setting – Secondary Schools

“I go to the library after lunch” Gemma.

I wanted to observe the Year 7 students in their school library during their class library lessons. Unlike the Year 6 classes, all of the secondary schools involved in this study timetabled library lessons for all of their Year 7 classes. I met with the students in the schools’ libraries because I aimed to observe the students engaging with books, and I wanted to discuss their reading whilst surrounded by reading material.

16.1 Secondary School A’s Library

Secondary School A had three libraries. School A’s libraries were managed by a graduate Chartered Librarian, supported by three part-time library assistants. The siting of School A’s library was in one of the main buildings in the school. All three libraries were clustered together and students had to walk past the entrances on their way to maths lessons and to an area of lockers. It was also close to the school’s dining hall. Secondary School A’s first library housed the main non-fiction collection and the local history collection. The second library was an academic library intended for independent research and quiet study.

However, the library that I was most interested in, and in which I conducted my conversations with the children, was the fiction library. It:

“houses the fiction collection, journals and newspapers, and is also used for small and large group study...its informal ‘cosy’ ambience, enhanced by the fireplace (with fire) and soft furnishings, makes it an inviting place to relax and read, and for whole-class reading groups. It is a busy, ‘buzzy’ library popular with all pupils.” School documentation.

The library has a glass wall at the front which opens onto the entrance hall of the main maths block so that children walking past can see into the library.

On entering the library, students walk down a short flight of stairs and in to the body of the large room. This room is essentially divided down the middle in to two areas, one which has a number of small alcoves with comfortable seating and a cosy corner by the fireplace; the other has seating grouped around blocks of tables (see Figures 11 and 12).

Figure 11: Secondary School A cosy corner



Figure 12: Secondary School A fiction area



When whole classes used the library, there was usually a rush for the bean bags which were in one alcove seating area, and the sofas by the fire place.

16.2 Secondary School B's Library

Secondary School B's library was situated in a purpose-built building on the far edge of the school site. It housed the fiction downstairs and the more academic support material upstairs on a mezzanine level which looked down on the fiction section of the library. The mezzanine level also housed the careers office. Secondary School B's library was managed by a main library assistant and one other library assistant. Students had to make a specific trip to get to the library as they did not walk past it on the way to any other part of the school. Downstairs also housed a small computer room which was networked. There was some comfortable seating in some of the shelving areas and in the main section there were enough tables and chairs for a class of 34 pupils. Whole class seating was on the ground floor (see Figures 13 and 14).

Figure 13: Secondary School B fiction



Figure 14: Secondary School B comfortable seating



16.3 Secondary School C's Library

Secondary School C had one library with fiction and non-fiction in separate areas. This library was managed by a main library assistant and two other library assistants. Secondary School C's library was located in the central building of the very large site. It was on the top floor of a two storey building near the English teaching rooms. Students had to make a specific trip to get to the library as they did not walk past it on the way to any other part of the school. The library had two alcoves which housed networked computers and one alcove which was set up as a careers information area (see Figures 15 and 16).

Figure 15: Secondary School C comfortable seating area



Figure 16: Secondary School C study alcoves and whole class desk provision



There was a comfortable seating area in one part of the library and in the main section there were enough tables and chairs for a class of 34 pupils. There were also subject alcoves for research and independent academic study.

16.4 The Library Space in the Secondary Schools - My Observations of Library Lessons

The three secondary schools all had very different library provision and the library spaces were used differently by each school. In contrast to the three primary schools involved in my study, all three secondary schools regularly timetabled lessons for their Year 7 students in the library.

16.4.1 Secondary School A

During library sessions I observed in Secondary School A, the students were instructed to read fiction. The English teachers encouraged their students to write comments about their reading in reading journals. This meant that the children had to read a fiction text and then, during the lesson, they were asked to write something about it. This could be, for example, how they felt about the text, about a character that they liked or disliked or a favourite line or chapter ending. One teacher evaluated a selection of reading journals in every reading lesson, alongside individual students, and had conversations about the text. That teacher then wrote a comment in each student's journal at the end of each conversation. The other teacher similarly engaged in conversations about the books being read with the students but then collected in a few reading journals during each lesson to read and write comments in. (There is more information about the use of reading journals in chapter 18.1.3).

During the sessions which I observed, the students settled down quickly and all of the students appeared to be engaged in reading their fiction texts. The library reading lessons were usually quite quiet once the class had settled down. A librarian was always on hand to

help students with book selection. The librarian knew all of the Year 7 children by name because they taught a block of library lessons research skills at the start of the school year. The students were required to produce a project as a result of these lessons which the librarian had marked. The librarians encouraged students to comment about the books they had read and these were displayed to encourage and inform other students (see Figure 17).

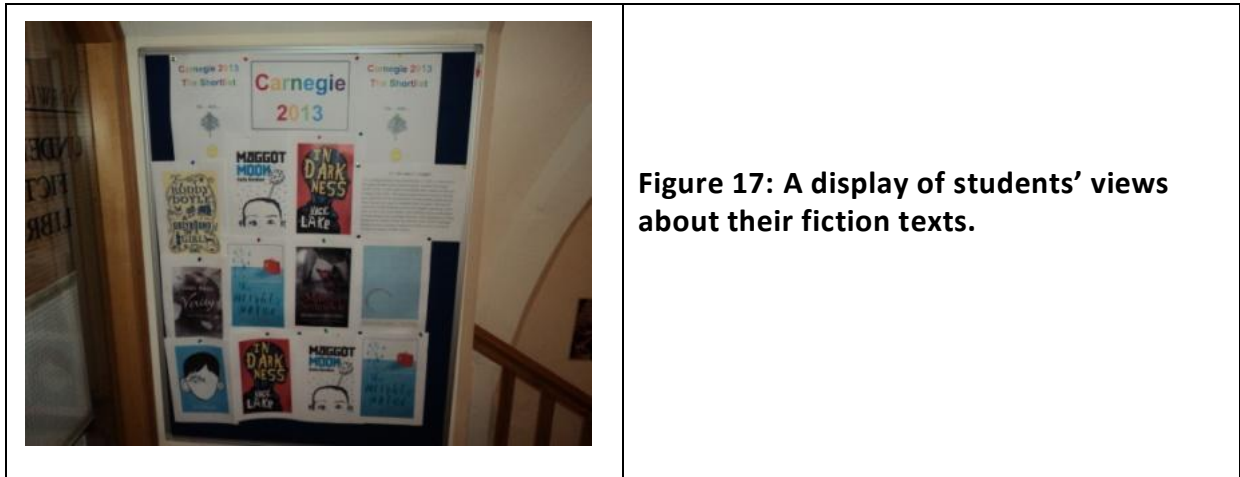


Figure 17: A display of students' views about their fiction texts.

Secondary School A's library was often busy. Groups of friends would use the library as a meeting place and they would sit and chat. The main comfortable seating area was usually full of students reading books and newspapers and chatting. After school, a number of students used the library to complete homework.

16.4.2 Secondary School B

The library lessons which I observed in Secondary School B were slightly different. As this is a boarding school, some of the library lesson was dedicated as a homework help clinic for English homework. Underlying this was an understanding that some homework might cause problems for the boarders who did not have parents or carers to help them in the evenings. The lessons were also divided into two half-hour sections. For half of the lesson, half of the class was taken into the computer room to focus on an English skills computer programme. For the other half of the lesson the students were instructed to read anything they were interested in.

The students had to sit at tables in groups and they were not permitted to use the comfortable chairs. There was a clear distinction between the boys and the girls in this school in terms of the reading they chose to complete during these reading sessions. The girls tended to read fiction, however the boys all chose non-fiction. The boys also talked about their books and engaged in paired reading.

The teachers in charge of the classes that I observed listened to individual children read aloud and helped with homework problems. The English teachers were working with the students but, because of the split in tasks, the teacher was unable effectively to help students select interesting reading material or model reading for pleasure. The children seemed to enjoy these lessons. However, some boys who were avid readers felt that they were not able to read their fiction books (which they had in their school bags) because all of the other boys were looking at non-fiction and they did not want to stand out.

There were few reading recommendations on display in Secondary School B's library. In addition, for the lessons I observed, the librarian did not engage with the students in terms of encouraging them to find interesting reading material. Instead the librarian remained at their desk engaged in administrative tasks (see Figure 18).

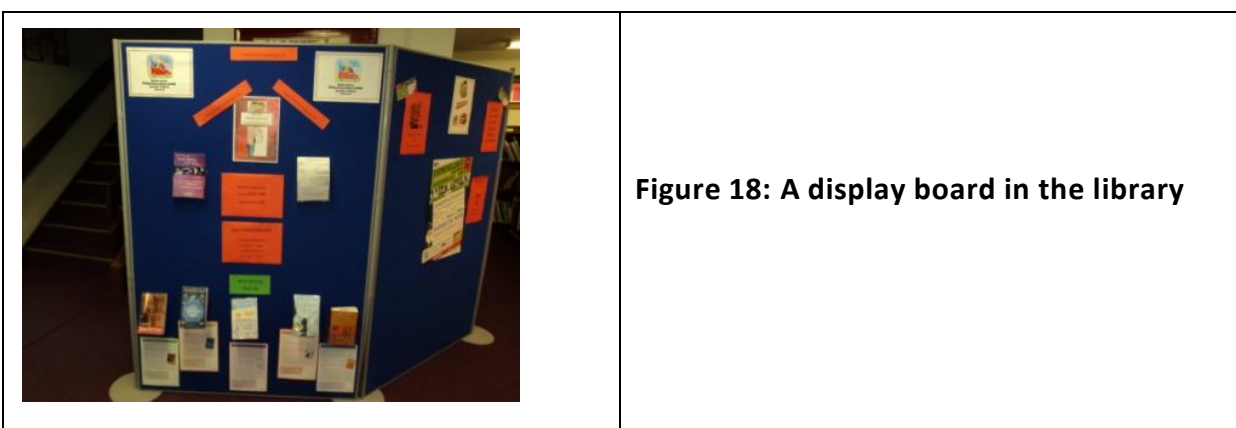


Figure 18: A display board in the library

Secondary School B's library was usually quiet and not very busy. I am sure that subject teachers sometimes brought classes in for lessons but I never saw this happen. Some sixth

form students used the mezzanine level for private study. During non-lesson time, the library was quite quiet. At the end of the school day the library was empty.

16.4.3 Secondary School C

In the library sessions which I observed in Secondary School C, the children were instructed to read anything they were interested in. The children were allowed to 'pair read' texts and they were not restricted to fiction texts. There were usually a number of children who did not have a text to read and these children took quite some time to select a text to read, even with the help of knowledgeable library staff. There was a clear distinction between the boys and the girls in this school in terms of the reading they chose to complete during these reading sessions. The girls were happy, in the main, to read fiction, some read poetry and a small number read non-fiction. The boys, however, all chose non-fiction and most of the boys looked at a text with another boy. The boys also talked about their books – usually 'The Guinness Book of Records' and football team information books. There was a significant amount of noise during these sessions and there was a lot of movement around the library.

The teachers in charge of the classes that I observed spent time settling the class and helped students to select interesting reading material. Then, for the rest of the lesson, they sat and marked exercise books or completed administrative tasks. The individual English teachers all supported reading for pleasure and they all enjoyed reading themselves. However, they felt unable to model reading for pleasure to their classes by sitting and reading themselves for two reasons. The first was that they felt weighed down with their workload and could not spare the time to sit and read; the second was that the library was often used as a thoroughfare from the senior management team's offices to the rest of the school and the English teachers did not want to be seen to be doing, in their words, 'nothing'.

The students didn't seem to enjoy these lessons. Those who liked reading did not like the library lessons because they felt that, in the words of one Year 7 student, "There is too

much noise and stuff going on to concentrate". The librarians worked hard to engage the students in reading and they had worked with the students to create interesting displays to encourage and promote reading for pleasure (see Figure 19).



Figure 19: A display of recommended reads by students

Secondary School C's library was always busy. During lesson time, subject teachers regularly brought classes in for lessons; there were English library lessons timetabled for each Year 7 class, and the sixth form used the library as a study space during free lessons.

During non-lesson time, the library was equally busy. Groups of friends would use it as a meeting place and they would sit and chat. Other groups of friends would congregate around the computers. The main comfortable seating area was usually full of students reading magazines, comics, newspapers and chatting. After school, a number of students used the library to complete homework. There was usually a buzz in this library, it was a very sociable place to be.

16.5 Next Steps

Having visited each group of students in their new secondary school library lessons, I felt able to continue with the group conversations.

17 The Research Participants: Questionnaire responses at the end of Year 7

“I like reading non-fiction books. I like reading biographies, and autobiographies, especially about a famous sports person” Joe.

In this section I update the questionnaire profiles for each student using information from the questionnaire which the students took at the end of Year 7.

17.1 Introduction

The secondary school questionnaire repeated some questions from the primary questionnaire to allow for comparison. The wording of the last two questions from the primary questionnaire was changed to encourage the students to think about their friends' perceptions of readers rather than asking them about their own perceptions of readers.

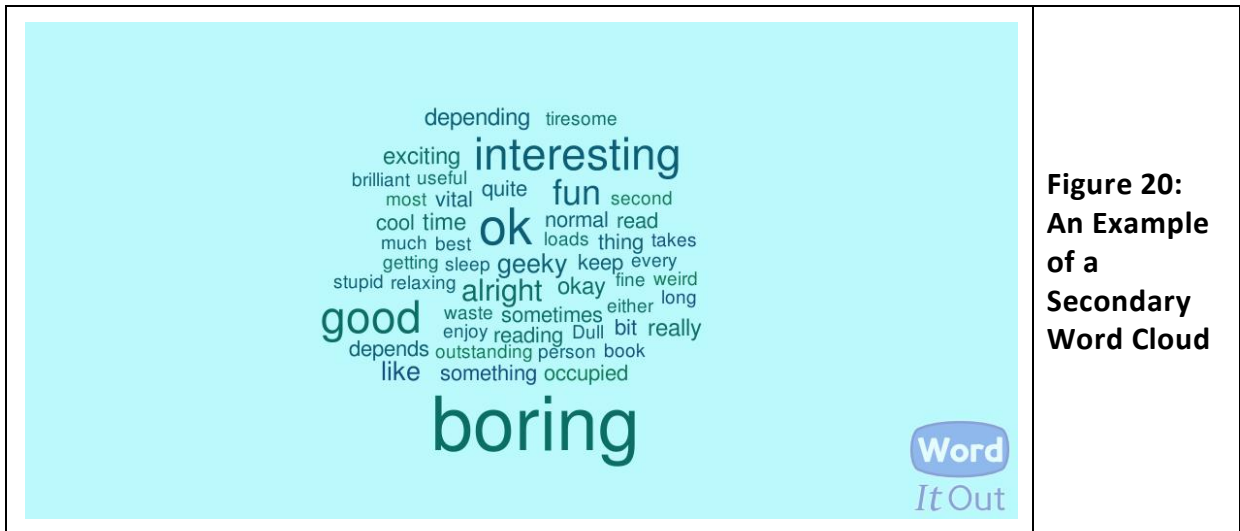
The primary questionnaire questions were:

- Please complete this sentence with one or two words.
I think reading is.....
- Please draw a picture of someone who is a reader (someone who reads) in the box below.

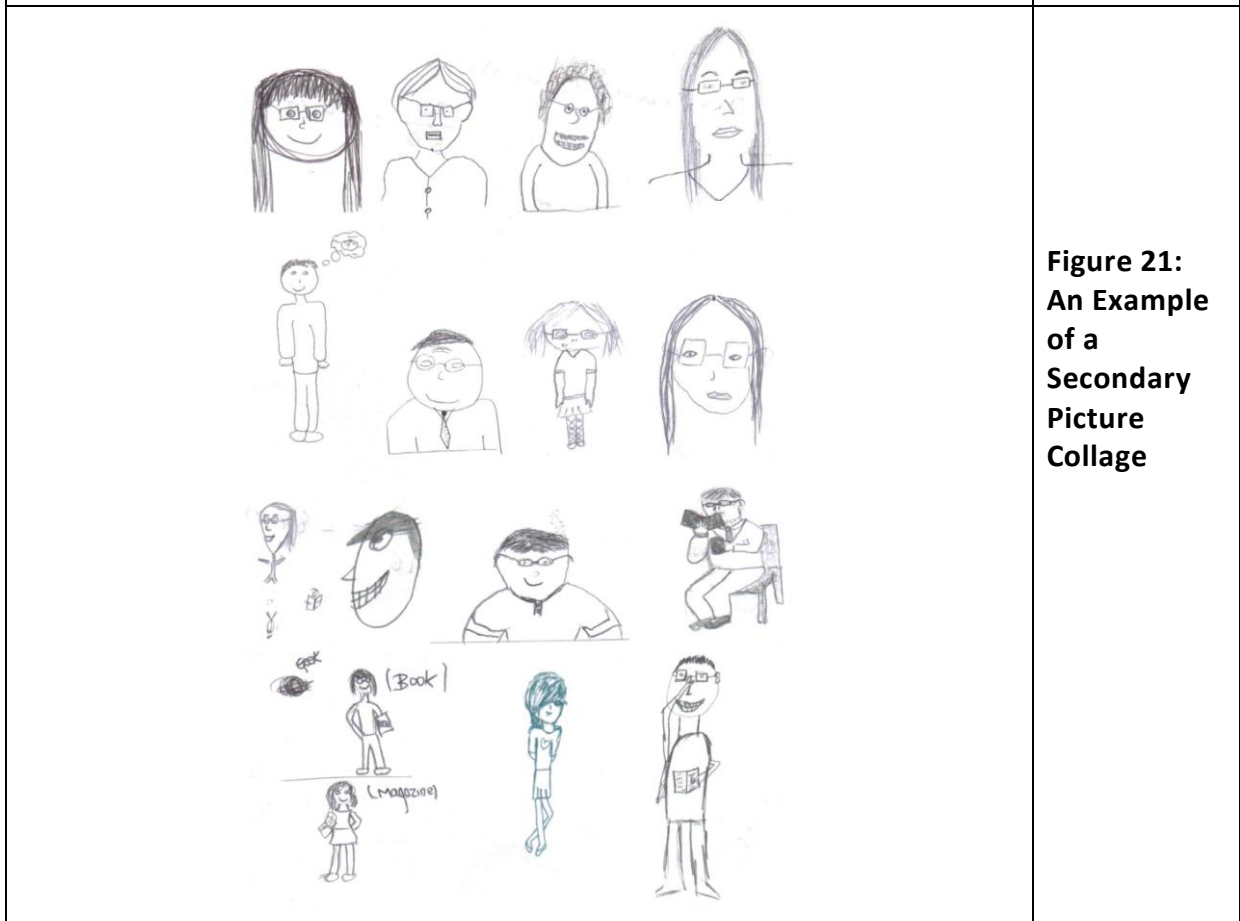
The secondary questionnaire questions were:

- Please complete this sentence with one or two words.
I think my friends think that reading is.....
- Please draw a picture of what your friends think a reader looks like:

From the students’ responses I created word clouds and picture collages to use with the students to prompt discussion. An example of each is included below (see Figures 20 and 21).



**Figure 20:
An Example
of a
Secondary
Word Cloud**



**Figure 21:
An Example
of a
Secondary
Picture
Collage**

[See Appendix 2. for other Word Clouds and Picture Collages]

17.2 Student Profiles

Table 30: Jamie's Secondary Profile


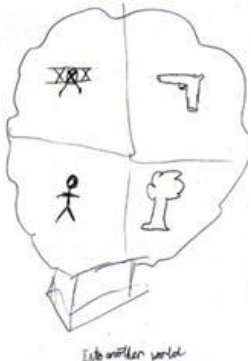
Jamie 	
Secondary Questionnaire questions	Responses
Do you regularly read any magazines, comics or newspapers?	The Eastern Daily Press The Daily Mail Top Gear Hornby
Which books have you read in the last four weeks?	Cherub: Class A (Muchamore 2004) Cherub: Man vs Beast (Muchamore 2006) Cherub: The Fall (Muchamore 2007) Cherub: Brigands M.C. (Muchamore 2010) Cherub: Shadow Wave (Muchamore 2011) Jonathan Livingston Seagull (Bach 1970)
Have you read any of the books you've put down more than once?	
Do you own any books yourself? How many?	100+
About how many books are there in your home?	Lots
Do you have a favourite writer, or a favourite series of books?	Robert Muchamore
What first gave you the idea to read this author or series of books?	Jamie's friends suggested these books.
How much reading do you think you do?	A large amount
Do you think you are good at reading?	Very good
How much television did you watch last night?	Between ½ an hour and 1 ½ hours
How long did you read for last night?	Between 1 ½ hours and 2 ½ hours
How much time did you spend on a computer last night?	Between ½ an hour and 1 ½ hours
I think my friends think that reading is...	boring, geeky
Draw a picture of what your friends think a reader looks like	

Table 31: Theo's Secondary Profile



 Theo	
Secondary Questionnaire questions	Responses
Do you regularly read any magazines, comics or newspapers?	No
Which books have you read in the last four weeks?	Lake of Souls: The Darren Shan Saga, Book 10 (Shan 2009) Lord of the Shadows: The Darren Shan Saga, Book 11 (Shan 2009) Sons of Destiny: The Darren Shan Saga, Book 12 (Shan 2009)
Have you read any of the books you've put down more than once?	No
Do you own any books yourself? How many?	51 -100
About how many books are there in your home?	Quite a lot
Do you have a favourite writer, or a favourite series of books?	Darren Shan
What first gave you the idea to read this author or series of books?	Theo's Nan who was a librarian had recommended them
How much reading do you think you do?	About Average
Do you think you are good at reading?	Good
How much television did you watch last night?	Between ½ an hour and 1 ½ hours
How long did you read for last night?	Less than ½ an hour
How much time did you spend on a computer last night?	Between ½ an hour and 1 ½ hours
I think my friends think that reading is...	Normal
Draw a picture of what your friends think a reader looks like	

Table 32: Joe's Secondary Profile



 Joe	
Secondary Questionnaire questions	Responses
Do you regularly read any magazines, comics or newspapers?	The Times Sport section The Simpsons
Which books have you read in the last four weeks?	Cherub Maximum Security (Muchamore 2005) Cherub Class A (Muchamore 2004)
Have you read any of the books you've put down more than once?	No
Do you own any books yourself? How many?	51-100
About how many books are there in your home?	Lots
Do you have a favourite writer, or a favourite series of books?	Robert Muchamore
What first gave you the idea to read this author or series of books?	Friends suggested the books
How much reading do you think you do?	Quite a lot
Do you think you are good at reading?	Good
How much television did you watch last night?	Between ½ an hour and 1 ½ hours
How long did you read for last night?	More than 3 ½ hours
How much time did you spend on a computer last night?	Between 1 ½ hours and 2 ½ hours
I think my friends think that reading is...	Alright
Draw a picture of what your friends think a reader looks like	

Table 33: Tom's Secondary Profile



 Tom	
Secondary Questionnaire questions	Responses
Do you regularly read any magazines, comics or newspapers?	Top Gear
Which books have you read in the last four weeks?	None
Have you read any of the books you've put down more than once?	No
Do you own any books yourself? How many?	26-50
About how many books are there in your home?	A few
Do you have a favourite writer, or a favourite series of books?	Anthony Horowitz
What first gave you the idea to read this author or series of books?	Tom's friends suggested these books.
How much reading do you think you do?	Only a little
Do you think you are good at reading?	Not very good
How much television did you watch last night?	Less than ½ an hour
How long did you read for last night?	No
How much time did you spend on a computer last night?	Less than ½ an hour
I think my friends think that reading is...	Boring
Draw a picture of what your friends think a reader looks like	

Table 34: Gemma's Secondary Profile



 Gemma	
Secondary Questionnaire questions	Responses
Do you regularly read any magazines, comics or newspapers?	OK Hello The Simpsons Jacqueline Wilson magazine
Which books have you read in the last four weeks?	Vicky Angel (Wilson 2007) Diary of a Wimpy Kid (Kinney 2008) Bad Girls (Wilson 2006)
Have you read any of the books you've put down more than once?	Vicky Angel Diary of a Wimpy Kid Bad Girls
Do you own any books yourself? How many?	51-100
About how many books are there in your home?	Lots
Do you have a favourite writer, or a favourite series of books?	Jacqueline Wilson
What first gave you the idea to read this author or series of books?	Big pictures and writing
How much reading do you think you do?	Quite a lot
Do you think you are good at reading?	Good
How much television did you watch last night?	More than 3 ½ hours
How long did you read for last night?	Between 1 ½ hours and 2 ½ hours
How much time did you spend on a computer last night?	Between 2 ½ hours and 3 ½ hours
I think my friends think that reading is...	O.K. depending what you read!
Draw a picture of what your friends think a reader looks like	

Table 35: Scarlet's Secondary Profile



 Scarlet	
Secondary Questionnaire questions	Responses
Do you regularly read any magazines, comics or newspapers?	The Simpsons The Beano The Dandy
Which books have you read in the last four weeks?	Dark Days: Skullduggery Pleasant Book 4 (Landy 2010) Bone Magician (Higgins 2010)
Have you read any of the books you've put down more than once?	Dark Days: Skullduggery Pleasant Book 4
Do you own any books yourself? How many?	100+
About how many books are there in your home?	Lots
Do you have a favourite writer, or a favourite series of books?	Derek Landy
What first gave you the idea to read this author or series of books?	Scarlet saw it in the library
How much reading do you think you do?	A large amount
Do you think you are good at reading?	Very good
How much television did you watch last night?	Between 1 ½ hours and 2 ½ hours
How long did you read for last night?	More than 3 ½ hours
How much time did you spend on a computer last night?	No
I think my friends think that reading is...	dull boring geeky, sometimes alright
Draw a picture of what your friends think a reader looks like	

Table 36: Anna's Secondary Profile





 Anna	
Secondary Questionnaire questions	Responses
Do you regularly read any magazines, comics or newspapers?	OK Heat New TV guides The Eastern Daily Press
Which books have you read in the last four weeks?	The Wonder Spot (Bank 2006) Secrets (Wilson 2007) Candy Floss (Wilson 2007) Best Friends (Wilson 2008) Secret Seven (Blyton 2012)
Have you read any of the books you've put down more than once?	No
Do you own any books yourself? How many?	51-100
About how many books are there in your home?	Lots
Do you have a favourite writer, or a favourite series of books?	Jacqueline Wilson
What first gave you the idea to read this author or series of books?	Anna's friends suggested reading these books
How much reading do you think you do?	A large amount
Do you think you are good at reading?	Average
How much television did you watch last night?	Between 1 ½ hours and 2 ½ hours
How long did you read for last night?	
How much time did you spend on a computer last night?	No
I think my friends think that reading is...	Cool, weird, boring, O.K., geeky
Draw a picture of what your friends think a reader looks like	

Table 37: Brandon's Secondary Profile

 Brandon	
Secondary Questionnaire questions	Responses
Do you regularly read any magazines, comics or newspapers?	No
Which books have you read in the last four weeks?	A horror book
Have you read any of the books you've put down more than once?	No
Do you own any books yourself? How many?	11-25
About how many books are there in your home?	Hardly any
Do you have a favourite writer, or a favourite series of books?	No
What first gave you the idea to read this author or series of books?	
How much reading do you think you do?	Not very much
Do you think you are good at reading?	Very good
How much television did you watch last night?	Less than ½ an hour
How long did you read for last night?	No
How much time did you spend on a computer last night?	Between ½ an hour and 1 ½ hours
I think my friends think that reading is...	Alright
Draw a picture of what your friends think a reader looks like	

18 The Conversations in Years 7 and 8

“I discovered a new type of reading book...” Theo.

Throughout the narrative of the students’ stories, I will also discuss:

- Reading in bed and reading aloud;
- ‘Good’ and ‘bad’ books;
- Reading journals;
- Talking about books;
- Sustained silent reading;
- Magazines;
- ‘Booked Up’ and book ownership;
- Computer games and reading;
- Comics.

These discussions appear in whole page text boxes and occur when the student’s story raises the topic. These sections can be read separately or chronologically.

18.1 Secondary School A

Reading for pleasure at Secondary School A is a highly valued activity. One thirty-minute lesson a week was dedicated to reading. These lessons usually took place in the fiction library, though sometimes they had to take place in the normal English teaching room. One feature that set Secondary School A apart from the other secondary schools in this study was that the teachers insisted that the reading that was done in these sessions was fiction and only fiction. Jamie explained this:

Jamie: “In these library lessons it has to be fiction books. The whole point of these lessons is to read fiction.

Me: Are you okay with that?

Joe: Not really. I like reading non-fiction books. I like reading biographies, and autobiographies, especially about a famous sports person.

Me: Are you allowed to read autobiographies?

[The boys have a general discussion about this. There is a level of confusion, with the boys agreeing that some autobiographies were permitted, but that biographies are not. The discussion ended with Jamie stating:]

Jamie: It tends to have to be fiction in the library lessons.”

The school also reinforced the English department’s value of reading for pleasure by stating that all students should have a reading book in their school bag at all times. If a teacher was absent, if work had been completed early, if a student had to miss games, then they were expected to read:

Me: “Do you have to have a reading book in your bag in every lesson just in case?

Boys: Yes!

Me: What have you got in your bag at the moment?

Jamie: Cherub: *Shadow Wave* (Muchamore, 2011)

Theo: *Sons of Destiny: The Saga of Darren Shan, Book 12* (Shan, 2009c)

Joe: Cherub: *Class A*” (Muchamore, 2004a).

Jamie thinks that the school insisting that students have a book in their bag at all times is a good idea because it means that he always has something to read with him and it is not unusual to see children reading when they have time on their hands. He is unsure if so many students would openly read if the school did not expect students always to have a book with them. Jamie sees reading as a positive pastime and something that is ‘normal’ to engage in:

“I think that most people get that if you have a time and you’re not sure what to fill it with, you just read.”

That reading is seen as a priority at Secondary School A allows reading to be seen as sociable and the norm:

“People develop a passion for reading in contexts where reading is social, enjoyable, and meaningful to the reader” (Tonne and Pihl, 2012, p. 185).

At the end of Year 8, all three of the students from Secondary School A:

- continued to read fiction for pleasure both in and out of school;
- saw reading for pleasure as something ‘normal’ and enjoyable;
- continued to have a favourite author and had read at least one of this author’s books during the previous four week period;
- recorded that they were reading fiction regularly;
- had read a number of books during the four weeks prior to the secondary questionnaire.

One area where the students differed was in their reading of non-fiction. Theo, who in primary school had read quite a lot of non-fiction, reported that he had not read any non-fiction during the four weeks prior to the secondary questionnaire.

18.1.1 Jamie



Table 38: Jamie's Recorded Reading

Jamie	Primary Questionnaire	Secondary Questionnaire
Non-fiction	<p>Top Gear</p> <p>Turbo</p> <p>Daily Mail</p> <p>Jaguar World</p>	<p>Eastern Daily Press</p> <p>Daily Mail</p> <p>Top Gear</p> <p>Hornby</p>
Fiction	<p>The Sleeping Sword (Morpurgo, 2008)</p> <p>Biggles Learns to Fly (Johns, 1992)</p>	<p>Cherub: Class A (Muchamore, 2004a)</p> <p>Cherub: Man vs Beast (Muchamore, 2006)</p> <p>Cherub: The Fall (Muchamore, 2007)</p> <p>Cherub: Brigands MC (Muchamore, 2010)</p> <p>Cherub: Shadow Wave (Muchamore, 2011)</p> <p>Jonathan Livingston Seagull (Bach, 1970)</p>

It appears, at first glance in Table 38, that Jamie must be spending a great deal more time reading in Year 8 than in Year 6 simply by virtue of the number of texts in his reading log.

The Cherub books, by Robert Muchamore, are classed as 'juvenile fiction' and published by

Hodder Childrens' Books. They have, on average, 360 pages, and are longer than the books Jamie was reading in primary school ('The Sleeping Sword', 128 pages (Morpurgo, 2008) and 'Biggles Learns to Fly', 96 pages (Johns, 1992)). However, it must be taken into consideration that Jamie was two years older and his reading ability had improved. He was more fluent in his reading and could read a whole book far quicker than he had in primary school. The reading of 'Jonathan Livingston Seagull' (Bach, 1970) could be seen as Jamie crossing over to more writerly adult texts and it is interesting to see a combination of more adult texts, combined with the popular 'Cherub' series, amongst his choices.

Jamie was very enthusiastic about reading. His school librarian had been concerned that parental pressure was forcing him to read at such a rate, but she soon discovered that Jamie, in her words, "consumed books". Eriksson Barajas and Aronsson write about reading in terms of eating-related metaphors. In their study, one of their primary aims for booktalk activities was to:

"turn as many pupils as possible into '*bokslukare*', that is, readers who revel in reading, devouring books in large numbers...someone who is a book devourer is also bound to feel hunger for books" (Eriksson Barajas and Aronsson, 2009, pp. 284-285).

Jamie's reading was similar to the physical need of hunger; he had to read just as he had to eat. For Jamie, reading was such an ingrained habit that to not read would seem unnatural. Laura Kelly defines this as "The Omnireader; you'll read anything you can get your hands on. Back of boxes, instructions, terms of service, whatever is around" (Kelly, 2013). When Jamie went on holiday he ran out of reading material and went to quite extreme lengths to read:

Jamie: "When we went to Dubai at Easter I read my book, my dad's book, my mum's book, my sister's book about hamsters and then I got a book at the airport in Arabic which I tried to translate."

Jamie is also a rapid reader, as can be seen from how many of the 'Cherub' books he had read in the four weeks prior to the questionnaire. Jamie also saw reading as social in terms

of the conversations stemming from reading choices. He read the 'Cherub' series of books by Robert Muchamore (Muchamore, 2004b) when his friends were reading them, then he moved onto the 'Alpha Force' series by Chris Ryan (Ryan, 2002) and he had read the 'Alex Rider' series by Anthony Horowitz (Horowitz, 2005) during primary school. Theo and Jamie debated their relative merits:

Theo: "I discovered a new type of reading, a new book by Chris Ryan. I was reading 'The 39 Steps' (Buchan, 2011) and I think it was my friend who told me to read it.

Jamie: Yes, he was reading 'Desert Pursuit' (Ryan, 2003) at the time. I've read most of Chris Ryan now, I've just read the 'Alpha Force' (Ryan, 2002) series but I didn't really like it, it isn't as good and it was kind of trying to copy the 'Cherub' series, but I prefer the 'Cherub' series, I'm really into those.

Theo: I've read the 'Cherub' series now and I'm kind of over them now. I think they're stupid now and I don't like them at all."

This exchange shows the social nature of series reading and also how rapidly children's views about what they have read change. The boys express their disappointment in what they perceive as the predictable nature of series books. They also lose their allegiance to, or appetite for, a series once they have finished all of the books in that series, and have moved on to another series. They can look back at a series and see some negative aspects:

Joe: "I just finished the last Alex Rider book (Horowitz, 2011) and at the end is a bit by the author saying that there is a danger to write another book because everyone knows what Alex Rider is now and there is a danger that it will all just become the same with nothing new.

Theo: I was about halfway through the book and then I knew what was going to happen.

Joe: And his catchphrase 'you're never too young to die', 'you're never too young to die', and he never dies."

Whilst the boys were reading the Alex Rider series of books, they enjoyed them, and Jamie definitely 'consumed' them, but once they had been read, the boys became critical of the very things that kept them reading the books in the first place. In terms of Howard's taxonomy of teen readers, Jamie could be defined as an "Avid Social Communal Reader" because he likes reading the same series of books as his peers and he enjoys discussing these books with friends. However, he could also be described as an "Avid Detached Communal Reader" because he dislikes some of the predictability of series fiction and because he likes more 'serious' reading (Howard, 2008).

Jamie's primary school views - that reading was positive, "fun, cool and brilliant," - are in conflict with his views about what he thinks his friends feel about reading, which are that it is perceived as "boring and geeky". However, his drawing in response to: 'Please draw a picture of what your friends think a reader looks like' was positive, and was accompanied by the liberating words "Into another world" (see Figure 22).

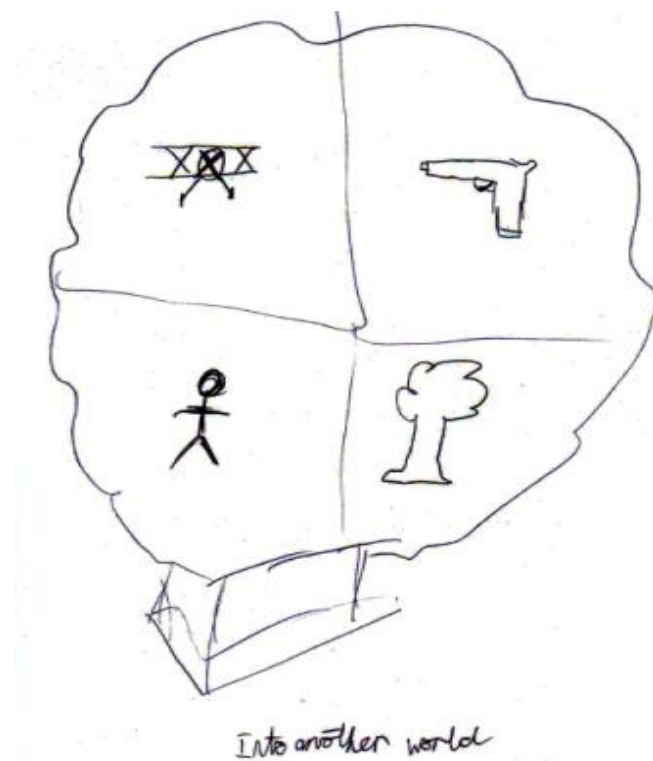


Figure 22: Jamie's Secondary Questionnaire Image

Jamie is passionate about his reading and he reads every day, especially at night. He 'confesses' to this habit:

"It is vital for me to read to get to sleep...I like reading as a whole but I do it to get the story mostly but if I do stuff like an audio book I get the story but I can't get to sleep because I have not read anything. So even if I read 'The Guinness Book of World Records' (Glenday, 2010) for ten minutes then that is enough for me to get to sleep. I need to read something to get to sleep."

Being able to read in bed at night is very important to Jamie, he says he 'needs' to read to get to sleep. Part of this reading in bed for Jamie is because he is in a comfortable space where he can relax and part of it is that he can unwind and relax and go to sleep. In Laura Kelly's terms, Jamie could be categorised as: Book Lover; Compulsive; Book Cherisher; The Chronological Reader; The Library Lover; The Sleepy Bedtime Reader; The Omnireader and The Cross-Under' (Kelly, 2013).

Reading in Bed and Reading Aloud

Each of the students involved in the detailed group conversations for this study stated that they liked to read in bed:

Brandon: "Mostly I read when I can't get to sleep."

Anna: "It's a way of shutting down your body, of relaxing you."

Scarlet: "I do that, [read] to get to sleep."

Tom: "I like reading in bed because I feel relaxed."

Jamie: "I feel relaxed whenever I'm reading in bed before I go to sleep."

Theo: "I prefer reading at night in my bed I can forget everything that went wrong during the day and just go inside a different world, or start a new book or something like that."

Gemma: "I have books at home that I read and I have a big pile of books by my bed..."

Joe: "I don't want to read until bedtime..."

These students like reading in bed because it is quiet and away from distractions. Reading in bed also helps them to relax and go to sleep. Hamilton argues that children should read in bed:

"Allow – make that encourage – reading in bed. Allow kids to stay up late, as long as they're reading in bed...Help them to discover the singular, sensual pleasure of reading in bed...and you will soon be hard-pressed to keep them from it" (Walton Hamilton, 2009, p. 60).

Manguel writes about his childhood when he used to enjoy reading in bed:

"I too read in bed...I don't think I can remember a greater *comprehensive* joy than that of coming to the last few pages and setting the book down, so that the end would not take place until at least tomorrow, and sinking back into my pillow with the sense of having actually stopped time" (Manguel, 1996, pp. 150-151).

When children are young and have not become independent readers, a parent or carer reading to that child at night before sleep is seen as a good thing. Bedtime stories are just that, stories which are told or read at bedtime. Appleyard states that young children:

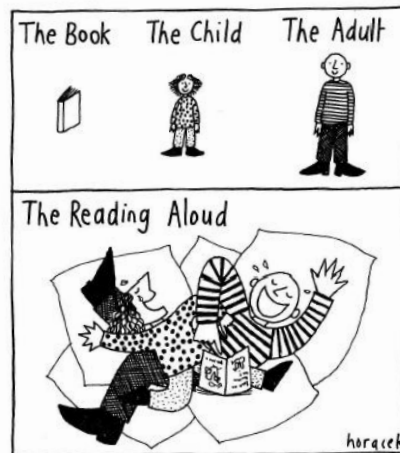
“...do not read; they are read to. Consider what we tend to think of as the archetypal bedtime story-listening situation. The child is nestled in the arms of an adult, who reads in the special voice of storytelling and in the rhythms that make even the least formal written prose different from spoken language. Pages are turned over, pictures and words pointed to, and the details of the story are dramatized by inflection and gesture” (Appleyard, 1990, p. 21).

Hamilton describes a similar scenario:

“Ideally, our early associations with reading are warm and fuzzy. We snuggle up with our parents or loved ones – in their arms, on their laps, in our beds. We nurse, suck our thumbs, guzzle a bottle, or nibble a snack whilst we listen to our favourite voices telling us enchanted tales, written with the intent to delight and inspire young hearts and minds. We nod off to dreamland with “visions of sugarplums dancing in our heads”. It’s heady stuff – who wouldn’t love it? Reading = JOY” (Walton Hamilton, 2009, p. 12).

The joy of reading with a child is visually represented by the Horacek illustration below (see Figure 23

Figure 23: Horacek's 'The Book, The Child, The Adult'



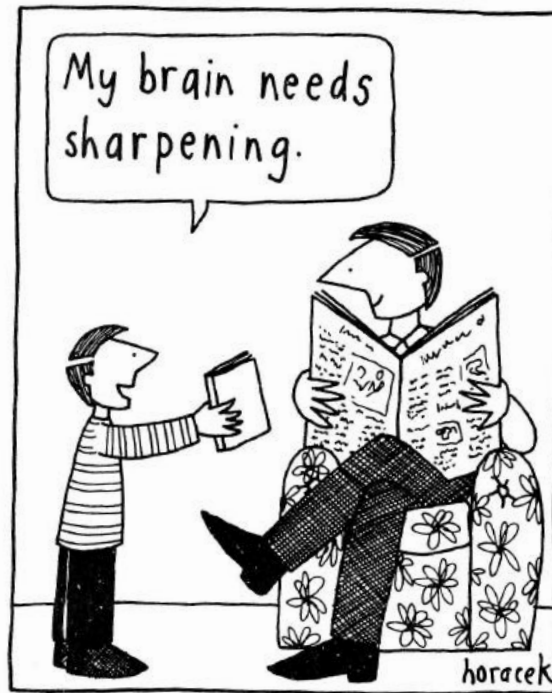
(Horacek in, Fox, 2001, p. 9).

This idea of nodding off to sleep with the story in our heads is at the heart of reading in bed before we go to sleep. This is what the students in this study enjoyed. The relaxation, the escapism, the help to get to sleep. I read to each of my children at night from a very early age, and I still read to them if they want me to, as I believe that there is something special in sharing a story together, or they curl up in bed and read to themselves. Aidan Chambers wrote that:

“One of the most obvious but most notable aspects of reading aloud is its socially binding effect. Those who read together feel they belong together as a community, for nothing unites more than the sharing of their imaginary experiences; and they feel together physically, for reading aloud is essentially a domestic, a family-sized activity” (Chambers, 1991, p. 57).

Reading aloud and talking about what you're reading with a child can, according to Mem Fox, “sharpen children's brains” (Fox, 2001, p. 15). This concept is brilliantly illustrated below (see Figure 24):

Figure 24: Horacek's 'My Brain Needs Sharpening'



(Horacek in, Fox, 2001, p. 16)

Whether or not a parent or carer reads to a child, and at whatever age, I believe that children, and adults, benefit from reading in bed at the end of their day before they go to sleep.

Greaney and Hegarty (1987), quoted in Krashen, found a link between heavy readers and whether or not they were allowed to read in bed at bedtime:

“Parents of fifth graders classified as heavy readers allowed their children to read in bed more than parents of fifth graders classified as non-readers. Of the heavy readers, 72.2 percent of their parents allowed reading in bed, compared to only 44.4 percent of the non-readers’ parents” (Krashen, 2004, p. 63).

I find it difficult to think of a reason not to let a child read in bed at night. Some children do not like reading in a classroom, library, bus, or up a tree. Then again, some do. “Not everyone is capable of reading under an open sky.” Manguel reported that Duras didn’t read outside,

'I seldom read on beaches or in gardens,' confessed Marguerite Duras. 'You can't read by two lights at once, the light of day and the light of the book. You should read by electric light, the room in shadow, and only the page lit up'" (Manguel, 1996, p. 152).

It is important for children to be allowed to decide where they want to read, just as much as deciding what they want to read. Griselda Barton wrote that: "the individual needs to be able to choose when and where he wants to read"(Barton, 1977, p. 359). In the 'Booktrust Reading Habits Survey 2013' the most common response to the question "Where do you tend to read books for pleasure?" was 'in bed' with 51% of respondents saying this was their preferred reading place (Gleed, 2013, p. 31).

Reading in bed has,

"a particular quality of privacy...because it takes place between the sheets, in the realm of lust and sinful idleness, [it] has something of the thrill of things forbidden"(Manguel, 1996, p. 153).

Mem Fox tells the story of a girl who loved watching television and who wasn't engaging in any leisure reading. The mother was worried because the girl was falling behind at school. The first thing that Fox discovered was that, "she wasn't allowed to read in bed!" in fact there was no space in her house that was good for reading. The solution? When the girl was given:

"encouragement, time, books, magazines, light, silence, warmth in winter and coolness in summer, and the comfort of being allowed to read in bed every night, the problem was solved" (Fox, 2001, p. 141).

One pitfall of parental reading aloud is to stop once a child is able to read for themselves. Hamilton argues that there are many reasons to continue:

"It is absolutely *essential* that we, the proud parents, don't give ourselves a big pat

on the back and stop reading to our children just because they're now able to read for themselves...No matter how easy our children's transition to independent reading is (but especially if it proves to be a challenge for them), it's vitally important that we continue to read to our children right through the elementary years – and beyond – in order to preserve and cement the association between reading and pleasure” (Walton Hamilton, 2009, pp. 57-58).

One of my children reads anything and everything. They always have a reading book and are quite lost if they do not have a book to read. This child made the transition to independent reading rapidly, though phonics was not their preferred method. At about eight years old they didn't like reading aloud to me or my husband because reading aloud slowed the story down, and they didn't want anything 'getting in the way of' the story. However, we still read together, especially when they are ill, and we talk about the books they are reading. Going to bed without thirty minutes' reading for this child is unheard of.

My other child again made the transition to independent reading rapidly. This child is not such a voracious reader. It is always a case of finding the 'right' book and when that book is read, finding the 'next' book. Reading aloud to this child engages them with the story - perhaps the most important part of reading for most people - and once the story is started, then they will read to themselves, happily tucked up in bed. However, they often want us to read to them at night. Part of it is hearing a story read aloud by someone who loves them, part of it is perhaps extending bedtime, and part of it is sharing a story, just you and them together. Reading aloud at bedtime snuggled up in bed (the nightmare that was the cabin bed experiment is behind us) is a special time, to relax, to share recollections about your day, and to experience a story together. It has certainly helped in turning one of my children on to books and this is a child who often would engage in some other leisure activity (X box, Pokémon cards, television, computer games, YouTube) rather than reading. Hamilton states:

“As kids get older, they are less likely to be read to, both at home and at school, and their own reading time is more likely to be associated with homework and pressure.

Here's where the subtle balance shifts, and reading begins to be associated with "chore." In the words of the great "radiologist" Esmé Raji Codell, "Read-aloud has the power not only to sustain but also to resuscitate an interest in and affection for the printed word for children of all ages" (Walton Hamilton, 2009, p. 127).

When children move from primary to secondary school, reading can be seen as 'work' and so reading aloud to an older child in bed at night can help keep a child 'hooked on books'.

Jane Davis of 'The Reader Organisation' is passionate about reading texts aloud, or as she calls it, 'shared reading', where a text is read aloud in a group and then discussed whilst it is being read. The Reader Organisation works with many different groups of people within society and its activities with young people "focus entirely on reading for pleasure." One child is quoted on their website saying:

"I didn't do reading before, but it's fun and I love it now. Reading aloud is better than in your head. It's like you're on an adventure, you can understand more aloud." (A looked-after child quoted in, The Reader Organisation, 2013).

For some children, the impact of reading aloud, whether it is them reading aloud or others reading to them, can open doors to the pleasure of reading which - without the experience of reading aloud - might remain closed. In the first version of the National Curriculum the value of reading aloud was stressed:

"...teachers should continue the practice of reading aloud in class; there is plenty of evidence that this simple activity can interest and enthuse. It is a valuable means of conveying the pleasure of reading, and as valid at secondary as at primary level" (Department for Education and Science, 1989b, Point 16.6).

Reading in bed is one of the safest places to experience terrifying tales. Some would argue that children should not read in bed because what they read could cause them to have nightmares. Yet I argue that a child's bed is probably the safest place in the whole world for

a child to experience these sorts of stories, either with a parent or carer reading with them, or just nearby, in another room.

“Whilst children are listening to these often horrifying fairy tales, they will become silent, fascinated, upset, appalled, aghast, and may even cry. But if they feel deliciously safe with us while the story is being read – and indeed this is essential – the more often they will want to relive the drama. In frightening stories, it’s someone else’s drama, which is why frightening stories are so appealing” (Fox, 2001, pp. 135-136).

One of my children was reading ‘War Horse’ (Morpurgo, 2007) in bed one night. We had tucked them in, read a little with them and then kissed them goodnight, turned out the light and left. Approximately an hour later, said child came downstairs in floods of tears in search of a cuddle. Why? Because the light had been turned back on and the rest of the book had been read. They couldn’t bear not to find out what happened. Morpurgo has a wonderful way of writing about sad things and not sugar coating them, but still making them accessible and appropriate for children. My child connected with this story and had experienced a very emotional reaction to the end of the text. How did they deal with this? They felt sad and came and found the parents for a cuddle, a chat, a cube of chocolate and another tuck in.

My child was able to read this emotional text because they knew my husband and I were there to give them a cuddle if they needed it. I was delighted that they had felt compelled to complete the book (even though we were all a little bleary-eyed the next day from the extended evening), and delighted that they had connected so strongly with the text, but most of all, I was delighted that they had felt able to curl up in bed at night and read a challenging text safe in the knowledge that their parents were nearby. Fox says:

“The whole point of books is to allow us to experience troubled realities that are different from our own, to feel the appropriate emotions, to empathize, to make judgements, and to have our interest held” (Fox, 2001, p. 138).

Another element of the appeal could be the idea that you can be lying in bed and be transported anywhere in the world and Tom comments on this feature:

Tom: "When you read a book and it seems real and I don't want to put it down I want to carry on reading...you can kind of leave everything else behind and just go there."

This idea is echoed by Winterson:

"The book was sent to me and because books and doors both need to be opened, I opened it. A book is a door; on the other side is somewhere else."

This 'otherness' is demonstrated when Winterson continues:

"...I am lying in bed reading Nan Shepherd's 'The Living Mountain'...I found myself wandering the mountain range in the company of Nan Shepherd...I like it that I can lie in bed and read a book about mountain climbing " Jeanette Winterson in 'Stop What You're doing and Read This!' (Winterson, 2011, pp. 139-140).

Books can transport you to the far corners of the globe, from the comfort and safety of your bed. What better way is there for a child to fall asleep?

Jamie enjoys the 'story' aspect of reading fiction novels and he is quite clear that sometimes he chooses an 'easy' or quick' book to get his story 'fix'. This easy reading experience of a readerly text, which demands nothing from the reader, allows them to find pleasure in devouring a well-crafted story.

Jamie does sometimes see the text from a writerly point of view, where the text demands that the reader is no longer a passive consumer of the text. Instead, they are a producer of the text:

“Some Harry Potter books are like that, for example, the beginnings go on quite a bit...It’s the adults, I mean it’s like a teenagers’ book fitted to below that...I started reading mine at eight and I really didn’t get it at all.”

This awareness of what different texts require of the reader is a step towards writerly texts and reading development. Sometimes, Jamie wants to read ‘readerly’ texts, where he can access the story passively. There is nothing wrong with this, in fact Barthes argues that a reader may gain pleasure in reading a ‘readerly’ text, yet it is only when they have seen the text from the ‘writerly’ point of view that they experience the bliss of the text (Barthes, 1975).

Jamie still likes adventure stories, but he also engages in non-fiction reading:

“I don’t just read fiction books. I’m getting my private pilot’s licence so I’m having to read all of those books...If I am going to become a pilot I am going to have to read all the books so I might as well read them all now...”



I define Jamie as: an **‘avid, rapid, habitual, devourer; committed, sequential, social, environment dependent, bedtime reader’** of fiction and non-fiction.

Jamie enjoys stories and he reads a range of fiction from quite challenging writerly texts to quite simple readerly texts, depending on how much work he wants to put into his reading. Jamie sees reading as a relaxing leisure pastime, and as a means of learning e.g. for his Private Pilot’s License. He enjoys accessing stories in a variety of formats: printed text, e-books and audiobooks, however, for bedtime, Jamie must actively read a book to help him to fall asleep. Jamie likes to start a novel and complete it before he starts another novel although he will intersperse his fiction reading with non-fiction reading and have a fiction

and non-fiction text running concurrently. Jamie looks for, and acts upon, recommendations, but he will equally seek out new reading material for himself. Jamie is aware of some people's negative views of people who enjoy reading but this does not stop him from enjoying his own reading.

I believe that the reading habit is firmly formed; he voluntarily reads as a preferred leisure activity and will, I believe, continue to do so throughout his life. His transition from primary to secondary school has seen a positive development in terms of the amount that he is reading and the range of his reading. His inclusion of a combination of readerly and writerly texts, and his awareness of the demands different texts place upon the reader, reflects his reading development. His attitude to reading continues to be very positive.

18.1.2 Theo



Table 39: Theo’s Recorded Reading

Theo	Primary Questionnaire	Secondary Questionnaire
Non-fiction	The Independent Airliner World Country Life	
Fiction	War Horse (Morpurgo, 2007) Life at Blandings (Wodehouse, 1981) Mating Season – Jeeves and Wooster (Wodehouse, 2008) Biggles Defends the Desert (Johns, 1993) Biggles Learns to Fly (Johns, 1992)	Lake of Souls: The Saga of Darren Shan, Book 10 (Shan, 2009a) Lord of the Shadows: The Saga of Darren Shan, Book 11 (Shan, 2009b) Sons of Destiny: The Saga of Darren Shan, Book 12 (Shan, 2009c)

Two things strike me about Theo’s reading contained in Table 39: the first is that he has not recorded any non-fiction; the second is that there are far fewer books recorded, three compared to five. This supports Theo’s view that he was spending less time in the evening engaged in reading for pleasure. Theo remained positive about his reading and he was thoroughly enjoying reading the Darren Shan series of books. However, he was conflicted about his enjoyment of these books because there was some censorship occurring with Theo’s class in the school library lessons, which did not happen with Jamie or Joe’s class.

Theo had been told by his English teacher that his choice of Darren Shan books was not appropriate and that he needed to be reading something more challenging in library lessons. Theo reported that the teacher has said that they did not like Darren Shan's use of punctuation, they thought that the books were not very good and that Darren Shan over used exclamation marks. This annoyed Theo because he really enjoyed reading the Darren Shan Saga books. He did not like having to read one book in his English library lessons and the Darren Shan books at home. He was also confused because the person who recommended the Darren Shan books to him was his grandmother, who was a librarian. Theo thought that he was complying with the policy of only reading fiction in his school library lessons, but the fiction that he wanted to read was not regarded in a positive light and he was slightly embarrassed and concerned about his enjoyment of his chosen reading material.

'Good' and 'Bad' Books

If you look through the literature, there is a clear sense that some books are good for children to read, and some are bad. However, the crucial difference, in quality child-reader support, is in *how* a nurturing adult deals with the bad. The concept of 'good' and 'bad' books for children is nothing new. Whitehead, in 1977, classified children's reading into seven categories, two of which were, 'quality' and 'non-quality' narrative. The justification for this distinction was:

“Our decision to incorporate a discrimination of this kind followed careful study of a large number of juvenile narrative books, as a result of which it became evident that such books polarize themselves into two fairly distinct groups – on the one hand those whose production has been essentially a commercial operation, a matter of catering for a market; and on the other hand those in which the involvement of the writer with his subject matter and his audience has been such as to generate a texture of imaginative experience which rises above the merely routine and derivative” (Whitehead et al., 1977, p. 112).

There are those who argue that children should be encouraged to read anything because this is beneficial, for example, Anne Fine writes that we should: "Read. Read more. Read everything...after all, reading is a treat...Books furnish minds..." (Ashley, 2005, p. 22).

Whereas Nell states that it is a "fallacy" to think that readers who begin with "trash" will eventually move onto better or more sophisticated literature (Nell, 1988a, p. 4). Daniel Pennac, however, agrees with this concept of good and bad literature:

"It's none the less the case that there are good novels and bad novels...let's say there exists what I call 'industrial literature'...They're bad because they're not the fruit of creativity, but the reproduction of pre-established 'forms'...they're bad because in them the author is not to be found, any more than is the reality which he's claiming to represent to us" (Pennac, 1994b, p. 162).

Pennac's view, nevertheless, is not to be judgemental about what he calls these 'bad' books. Some believe that adults involved with children's reading should censor and select 'appropriate' books for children to read. Instead, Pennac suggests that adults should allow the reading of these so-called 'bad' books:

"There are, then, both 'good' and 'bad' novels. And it's usually the latter which cross our paths first. And to tell the truth, when it was my turn on that path, I recall finding such novels 'really fabulous'. I was extremely lucky: no one made fun of me, no one raised his eyes to heaven, or treated me like a cretin. A few 'good' novels were merely left in my path, while I was certainly not forbidden others...this was a wise course. For a while, we read them both together, the good along with the bad, in much the way that we don't, from one day to the next, give up our childhood books...And then, at some point...our desires move us to spend time with the 'good'" (Pennac, 1994b, pp. 163-164).

Here, Pennac agrees with Whitehead in terms of these 'good' and 'bad' books but Pennac's argument extends to the idea that we all need to read 'bad' books and maybe a child who does will - at some point - develop their taste and choose to read 'good' books.

Alan Jacobs also thinks that there are 'good' and 'bad' books, and comments on Harrold Bloom's critical position on the 'Harry Potter books:

"Harry Potter will not lead our children on to Kipling's 'Just So Stories' or his 'Jungle Book'. It will not lead them to Thurber's 'Thirteen clocks' or Kenneth Grahame's 'Wind in the Willows' or Lewis Carroll's 'Alice'...I know of no larger indictment of the world's descent into sub literacy" (Jacobs, 2011, p. 19).

The idea that if a child reads the Harry Potter series, that they are not really reading, is, to me, laughable. My children delighted in the stories and they consumed these books of childhood adventure. Are they the best examples of children's fiction ever? Probably not, but did they get a whole generation of children reading? Yes they did. Bloom is criticised by Jacobs for his statement that:

"Rowling's readers are "non-readers", and the primary benefit they derive from her books is to be "momentarily emancipated from their screens," so that they "may not forget wholly the sensation of turning the pages of a book, any book" (Jacobs, 2011, p. 20).

Jacob counters Bloom's views with the statement: "Read whatever gives you delight – at least most of the time – and do so without shame" (Jacobs, 2011, p. 23).

Neil Gaiman, however, disagrees with Jacobs' emancipated sentiments. He states that:

"I don't think there is such a thing as a bad book for children. Every now and again it becomes fashionable among some adults to point to a subset of children's books, a genre, perhaps, or an author, and to declare them bad books, books that children should be stopped from reading. I've seen it happen over and over; Enid Blyton was declared a bad author, so was R.L. Stine, so were dozens of others. Comics have been decried as fostering illiteracy.

It's tosh. It's snobbery and it's foolishness.

There are no bad authors for children, that children like and want to read and seek out, because every child is different...Do not discourage children from reading because you feel they are reading the wrong thing...Well-meaning adults can easily destroy a child's love of reading: stop them reading what they enjoy, or give them worthy-but-dull books that you like, the 21st century equivalents of Victorian "improving" literature" (Gaiman, 2013).

It is clear that the reading Theo was engaged in during the four weeks prior to the secondary questionnaire was not as challenging and mixed as the reading reported on his primary questionnaire: P.G. Wodehouse suggested a move towards more adult and sophisticated writerly text reading. This decline could be partly because of the amount of homework and tests being set in Year 7, as evidenced by three boys' discussion on the subject:

Theo: "We do get quite a lot more homework, we have more set every night.

Jamie: Yes, we have more set every night but we have less homework technically.

Joe: Yes, we have more set every night but we have more time to do it and less actual work but we have to remember to hand it in. There is less in Lower 4 (Year 7) and lots more in Middle 4 (Year 8).

Theo: We have lots of tests in Lower 4."

The tiredness at the end of the school day could also explain why Theo was reading less challenging texts than his primary choices:

Joe: "I'm doing something after school every night which is more than last year but the thing is I'm reading later at night.

Theo: Yes, me too.

Joe; I'm reading like when I should be going to bed like...

Jamie: Yes I 'm reading really late...

Me: Do you find that it takes longer to feel sleepy because your brain has been working on all of this other stuff?

Boys: Yes!

Theo: I find that I usually read after I've played on my PlayStation or watched TV and then I want to read which is usually pretty late at night because I've done my homework and then I want to do something which is, I don't know, like watching TV and then I want to read.

Joe: After I have done all of my homework I just want to veg out and I don't want to read until bedtime but I'm reading more at bedtime than I used to."

This need to 'veg out' after school and homework is a common theme for all of the boys from Secondary School A. Theo kept expressing his tiredness at the end of the school day and he was quite shocked by how physically and mentally tired he felt. Students making the transition from primary to secondary school often feel physically tired just because they are moving around a much larger site. For example, one of the school sites involved in this study covered well over fifty acres and some transfers between lessons could take up to ten minutes of continuous walking.

Theo still enjoyed reading but his fiction reading had become less demanding. I understand the desire to read less challenging books when one is faced with more challenges in daily life – such as having to adapt to a new school, several new teachers and new subjects, and making new friends – and taking an easy reading option when you are tired. As adults, this downgrading of reading difficulty due to circumstances is normal, for example, everyone who knows me, knows that I will not be reading a challenging writerly text at the end of the academic year. My brain is tired at the end of exam season and all I want to do is let my eyes roll over a page of easy reading. I still need a story, but 'War and Peace' (Tolstoy, 1982) (original publication date, 1869) will not be on the agenda!

Theo's reading was also branching out. He had expressed his dissatisfaction with action hero adventure series such as Horowitz's 'Alex Rider', Muchamore's 'Cherub' and Chris Ryan's 'Alpha Force':

Theo: "I was about halfway through the book ['Scorpia Rising: Alex Rider' (Horowitz, 2011)] and then I knew what was going to happen."

Theo could be described in terms of Howard's taxonomy as an "Avid Social Communal Reader" because he was reading the same books and series of books as his friends. However, with his developing interest in the Darren Shan books, he was breaking away from his friends' reading preferences and he was the only one from his immediate groups of friends who was reading these books. This could categorise him as an "Avid Detached Communal Reader" because he was reading outside of his group of friends (Howard, 2008, p. 111). However, because his reading was not more 'serious', in fact, it could be seen as far less 'serious' and because he was still looking to adults for reading recommendations he does not fully meet the criteria for this category.

The Darren Shan series of books were, perhaps, predictable but the genre of horror was new for Theo. When a reader first encounters a new genre of fiction they have to work hard to learn its rules. In some ways, it could be argued that Theo's first encounters with Darren Shan's horror were making almost writerly demands upon him as a reader. This could be true whenever readers encounter a new genre, or even a new writer, because the reader has to work to engage with the author to make sense of the text.

Theo was beginning to experiment with different genres but with the negative attention his choice of books received from his English teacher I am unsure if his exploration of horror stories will continue. Theo's experience of his horror stories not being acceptable to his English teacher reminded me of an experience Charles Sarland reported:

“...a top-stream 12-year-old boy offered me James Herbert’s *The Fog* to read. It would be accurate to say that I was appalled by the book (though not by the fact that a 12-year-old was reading it, given that such a book existed). I thought it was exploitative and degrading, that it was ‘trash’. I was also totally gripped by it and read it from cover to cover at a sitting!” (Sarland, 1991, p. 3).

There is something indulgent, even forbidden, in reading a text that is not considered appropriate. Sometimes, even the most accomplished reader of writerly texts wants to read something more simplistic, more readerly, and more rollercoaster-like, where the reader climbs on board and experiences the ride. I can remember the sheer terror of reading Stephen King’s ‘*The Shining*’ (King, 1977) when I was a teenager. The text utterly terrified me, and yet I had to read on, I had to finish the novel, I had to finish the rollercoaster ride. As a teenager I would switch between Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Oscar Wilde, Ursula Le Guin, and Isaac Asimov, to Stephen King, Anne McCaffrey and Terry Pratchett (I am secretly a bit of a science fiction fan). Sometimes, a good story can be a simplistic readerly text which makes few demands upon the reader but which can still absorb the reader completely.

In terms of Kelly’s categories of book reader, Theo could be classed as “Reader; Book Lover; Situational; The Sleepy Bedtime Reader and Chronological Reader” (Kelly, 2013).

Theo also was divided about how his friends viewed reading. On his secondary questionnaire he wrote that “I think my friends think reading is: Normal” and yet his picture of what his friends think a reader looks like is not at all positive (see Figure 25).

Figure 25: Theo's Secondary Questionnaire Image



The rectangular glasses, big head and jumper with 'Book Fan' emblazoned on it all suggest a negative impression of a book reader. This, like Jamie, shows awareness of the negative associations that enjoying reading can have, but also shows a very rational interpretation of reading for enjoyment, in that it is 'Normal' to enjoy reading at their school.



I define Theo as an **'avid, habitual, sequential, environment dependent, bedtime reader of fiction'**.

In primary school, Theo was reading a lot of fiction as well as non-fiction and this had changed during secondary school to just reading fiction. Theo still enjoys reading series but he has become a little bored with action hero adventure stories. He is beginning to explore horror writing and he still acts upon recommendations from trusted adults.

I believe that the reading habit is firmly formed; he voluntarily reads books as a preferred leisure activity and will, I believe, continue to do so if he can access the 'right' books to keep him interested. His transition from primary to secondary school has seen a slight decline in the number and breadth of his reading but it has also seen him beginning to try new genres. He has already experienced some writerly texts and I believe that he will continue to do so. His attitude to reading has remained positive.

18.1.3 Joe



Joe surprised me on my first visit to his secondary school. When I asked for the students participating in the study to come and talk with me during their library lesson, he asked if he could re-join the group to talk about his reading. This was a real turn around for Joe because, at the end of his primary education, he did not want to participate in the discussions about his reading. I was delighted that he wanted to talk about his reading again but I was also very cautious because I did not want our discussions to have a detrimental impact upon his reading and his attitudes towards his reading.

Table 40: Joe’s Recorded Reading

Joe	Primary Questionnaire	Secondary Questionnaire
Non-fiction		The Times Sport Section
Fiction	Last of the Sky Pirates (Stewart and Riddell, 2006) Cherub: Brigands M.C.(Muchamore, 2010)	The Simpsons Comic Cherub: Maximum Security (Muchamore, 2005) Cherub: Class A (Muchamore, 2004a)

Two things struck me about Joe’s reading contained in table 40: the first is that on his secondary questionnaire, he recorded that he had read some non-fiction. This is in contrast to his primary questionnaire where he recorded reading no non-fiction. The second is that there are more texts recorded, four on his secondary questionnaire compared to two on his primary questionnaire, information which corresponded with him saying that he was spending more time reading. Joe was reading a wider range of texts in secondary school compared to his primary school reading, and was now including newspapers, comics and fiction texts. Nevertheless, he was continuing to enjoy reading the Cherub series of books and Robert Muchamore had become one of his favourite authors.

In his secondary questionnaire, Joe ticked two boxes in answer to the question “How much reading do you think you do?” He ticked “A large amount,” and wrote next to it, “When I have started a book,” and “Only a little,” with, “When I have finished a book and sport”. This is not an unusual pattern for children’s reading. Some children make easy transitions from the end of one book to the start of the next. For these children, the reading habit is firmly formed and they can independently navigate their way through their reading choices. On the other hand, some children read a book, or a series of books, and it can appear that the reading habit is formed, however, they are then at a loss about choosing their next book. For these children, there is always the sense of finding the ‘right’ book over and over again. This practice is intimately bound up with catching the reading bug over and over again. The ‘wrong’ book for these children can quite easily break the reading habit. This is where a knowledgeable adult - be this a parent, teacher, librarian, relative or friend - is vital to facilitate the search for the next book.

One English teacher whose lessons I observed introduced individual reading journals for library lessons. She encouraged students to bring in their own choice of note book and asked them to enter into a two-way conversation with her about their reading. The comments that she wrote were always positive and non-judgemental and she did not mark or correct each student’s writing. In library lessons she would encourage her students to try and write something reflective in their journals.

Reading Journals

Aidan Chambers states that:

“Readers themselves frequently need time to digest a book they’ve just finished. They want to savour the pleasure, explore their understanding of what it has said to them, share their enjoyment and their understanding with others – usually...with their friends...Reading is a social activity. And it is at its most social when we share our reading by talking about it, in a kind of profoundly important gossip. Children should be encouraged in this, which means giving them time to chat informally

together without teacherly impositions. And it means chatting with them ourselves so that they hear how we gossip – the language we use – the topics we talk about, the way we listen to others – and witness our enthusiasm for print” (Chambers, 1991, p. 83).

Teachers are not always able, due to pressures of time, to engage in this book talk, which is why a reading journal, which enables two-way informal conversations about books, can be a useful tool. Chambers also states:

“But if we are to help children become thoughtful readers, informal gossip isn’t enough. We must help them develop their inborn facility to question, report, compare, discriminate” (Chambers, 1991, p. 83).

Reading journals can help teachers facilitate reader development by enabling students to think about and discuss their reading. Reading journals aim to allow students to write down and record their ideas, thoughts, and feelings about the books they are reading. Some students like to see a portfolio of their reading develop throughout the year and some teachers like to see a record of what the student has read. David Booth states that:

“By keeping a journal during the reading of the texts, students can engage in a conversation with the author, record critical interpretations, monitor their own progress and record observations for later use in their writing projects or in a dialogue with the teacher” (Booth, 2001, p. 53).

When students write in their journals, whether it be as ideas occur whilst they are reading or during a dedicated part of a reading lesson, really depends on the teacher and the students. However, perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of a teacher using reading journals is that it “allows you [the teacher] to have a literary conversation, often a private

one, with each student several times throughout the year” (Booth, 2001, p. 53). These written literary conversations allow the teacher to be an enabling teacher who is interested in and encourages the student’s reading. The teacher responses can:

- Guide students towards a deeper consideration of what their reading has meant to them;
- Offer genuine comments and opinions and authentic questions which can connect with the students in certain-ways, and extend their thinking;
- Allow you to recommend other authors;
- Allow the teacher to know their students better;
- Encourage rethinking and revisiting to allow students to consider what they have read in a different light.

(Booth, 2001, pp. 53-54).

Reading journals are common in primary schools however, they appear to be less common in secondary schools. Reading journals were popular in secondary school English classrooms in the 1980s and 1990s, but, since the introduction of the National Curriculum and the National Literacy Strategy, they seem to be less common. Inevitably, it is challenging for secondary school English teachers to find time to fit in reading lessons and reading journals, and the time that a written conversation with each student takes.

Lockwood quotes Barrs and Pidgeon who write:

“Reading journals can be an important way of establishing the kind of discussion of books which boys find difficult to contribute to orally. They provide a space to explore experiences of books and stories. They can become real relationships on paper, where teacher and pupil establish a genuine dialogue about reading” Barr and Pidgeon, referenced in (Lockwood, 2008, p. 107).

The availability of online forums discussing books can allow students to express their ideas about books without revealing their identity. Blogs allow the “boy readers [to] express their emotional reactions to books privately in a way that does not compromise their socially

constructed masculine identity. When teachers are able to respond to pupils' comments in these journals, a two-way conversation about reading can develop." Thus blogs allow the "same interactive potential for boys and their teachers as the traditional reading journal but also offer the opportunity for sharing responses with a wider audience of peers" (Lockwood, 2008, p. 107).

Benton and Fox stress the flexibility offered by reading journals, stating that:

"Readers are provided with notebooks in which they respond in any way they choose to a novel including speculations about the story will develop, judgements, comparisons with their own experience, illustrations of characters, reflections on moments or theses from the book, comments on how the author is telling the story and notes about their own experiences prompted by the book...comments by the teacher, made at regular intervals, are necessarily conversational rather than evaluative, and this seems a clear case of not correcting mechanical errors" (Benton and Fox, 1985, p. 121).

Guppy and Hughes suggest that one indication that a reading record is working is that it "adds to the teacher's knowledge of the child" (Guppy and Hughes, 1999, p. 158). Perhaps this knowledge of the child, and an enabling adult who encourages and develops a child's reading, is what reading journals are essentially aiming to achieve.

Joe had developed as a reader from primary to secondary school. In his primary conversations about his reading he could - at times - seem verbally overshadowed by the other students in the group. This did not happen during our secondary school conversations. His opinion about his reading ability had not changed between the primary and secondary questionnaires, however, he seemed much more confident in his reading preferences and choices. Part of this change for Joe was because of the knowledgeable school librarian, his conversations with his English teacher via his reading journal and due to the removal of the

pressure to read for ten minutes out loud to an adult three times a week which had been his primary school policy.

The effect that the school library had upon the students at Secondary school A was marked. The students enjoyed being in the library for their reading lessons:

Jamie: “When we came in here and we saw the fireplace we said We will sit in a semi-circle around the fireplace and that is where we will be reading, and also, maybe, on the bean bags.

Theo: When people come in they fight their way to the sofa, that is where everyone wants to sit.”

The atmosphere that the librarian has created is one of cosiness. The focal point of the room is a fireplace with a stove in it with a fake flame (for health and safety reasons) with a semi-circle of sofas around it. The students squash on to the sofa, as many as can possibly fit on, and then settle down to read. Some students sit at tables during the lessons to complete reading journals and to engage in one-to-one work with the teacher, who would discuss the student’s reading, and reading journal with them.

Joe’s attitude to reading seems much more positive during our secondary school conversations. His secondary questionnaire responses to what he thinks his friends think about reading also reinforce this view. He wrote that “I think my friends think reading is: alright” and his accompanying picture is positive (see Figure 26).

Figure 26: Joe's Recorded Reading



His illustration was divided into two pictures. One showed a person relaxing in a semi-reclined position and the other showed someone reading for thirty minutes in a library whilst sitting at a desk. From his comments about the impact the library has had on his reading, I believe that these pictures reveal that Joe is much more positive about his reading and that, because of the school's positive reading ethos, he thinks that his friends are positive about reading too.

Joe also valued the knowledgeable librarians at his secondary school and he thinks that this has played a part in him reading more:

Me: "Do you think you are doing more or less reading than you were this time last year?"

Joe: More certainly more, a lot more.

Me: Why do you think that is, Joe?

Joe: It is kind of the library because it becomes more sociable and we have to read and it's because of the teacher because in [Primary School A] they didn't really give

you any advice about what to read whereas here if you don't know what to read then there is the librarian and the librarian knows every book in the library, every single book on the shelf. Whereas in [Primary School A] if we didn't know what to read they would just pull a book down off the shelf in a couple of minutes whereas in here they get you a good book that you enjoy."

It is also evident that the students are aware that the librarians know what is in the library and that they can match the right book to the right student. Senior would certainly approve:

"The staff in a good library are also highly skilled in active encouragement of young people's reading. There will always be someone in a public library, who specializes in young people's literature and can recommend alternative texts if they are told which genre is preferred" (Senior, 2005).

Joe needs the 'right' book and help selecting the 'next' book for him to continue with his reading for pleasure. The weekly library lessons provide the support he requires in helping him sustain his reading habit, which, without this support, he could easily lose. The librarian had also produced a number of bookmarks which the students could take away with them. Some had suggestions for reading according to subject, for example, the one pictured below has: "Action and Adventure", "Cheerful reads", "See the world", "Whodunit", "Issues and problems" and "Past and Future". These bookmarks allowed students to think about what sort of books they enjoyed and gave them some ideas of what they might like to read without having to speak to an adult. Some students prefer to find their own way with book selection whereas others like to be guided by a knowledgeable adult.

Figure 27: Secondary School A Bookmarks

Reading is Brain-Food

Action and Adventure
Tim Bowler
Anthony Horowitz
Kevin Brooks
John Marsden
Philip Reeve

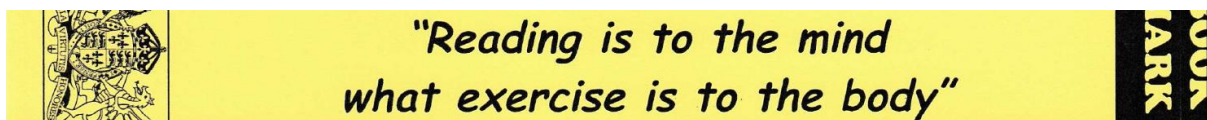
Cheerful reads: authors
Sue Townsend
Terry Pratchett
Roddy Doyle
Louise Rennison
Terrence Blacker

See the world: authors and selected titles
N&R Crane *Kilimanjaro*
Mark Cocker *Crow Country*
Jill Dudley *Holy Smoke*
Colin Thubron
Keenan & McCartney *Behind extremes*

Whodunit: Selected authors
Agatha Christie
Arthur Conan Doyle

Issues & problems: authors & selected titles
Celia Rees *The Bailey Game*
Ann Kelley *The Burying Beetle*
Lionel Shriver *We need to talk about Kevin*
Sue Maysfield
Sandra Glover

Past & Future: authors and selected titles
Russell Gascoigne *Rebels*
Sally Gardner *The Red Necklace*
Robert Graves
Rosemary Sutcliff
Arthur C Clarke
Eoin Colfer *Airman*
Michael Crichton
Saci Lloyd
Isaac Asimov



The other bookmarks had inspirational quotations on them which aimed to encourage reading, as did the “Reading is Brain-Food” statement on the suggested reading bookmark (see Figure 27). The librarian was passionate about encouraging students to read and was constantly aiming to make connections with the students. For example, one student was struggling to find a new book after his English teacher had banned Darren Shan from their lessons. They had stumbled upon a novel, Steven Brust’s ‘Jherag’ (Brust, 1983) on their parents’ bookcase at home. The librarian saw that the student was really enjoying the novel

and she talked to him about it. She also bought the next books in the series for the library. Lockwood reports one teacher describing a reading school as:

“It’s about catching children reading and thoroughly enjoying reading and then discussing those books they’re enjoying, especially those brought in from home...”
(Lockwood, 2008, p. 21).

The student was so proud that something he found interesting was valued by the librarian, especially after the - perhaps unintentionally - negative experience of his English teacher showing that they did not value the Darren Shan books he had enjoyed.

Joe valued the fact that he had more time to read out of school, apart from when he had sport fixtures to play as he was still a school, club and county player for two sports. Joe noted that, for some of the school sport fixtures, there was quite a long coach trip and that a number of boys pulled out books to read on the long journeys or read on iPads, Kindles or iPad minis. This was something that had not happened in primary school. He also appreciated a later bed time, as it meant that he could read before bed:

Joe: “I’m doing something after school every night which is more than last year but the thing is that I’m reading later at night.

Theo: Yes me too.

Joe: Yes I’m reading like when I should be going to bed like.

Jamie: Yes and I’m reading really late.

Theo: I find that I usually read after I’ve played in my PlayStation or watched TV and then I want to read which is usually pretty late at night because I’ve done my homework and then I want to do something which is where I don’t have to think like watching TV and then I want to read.

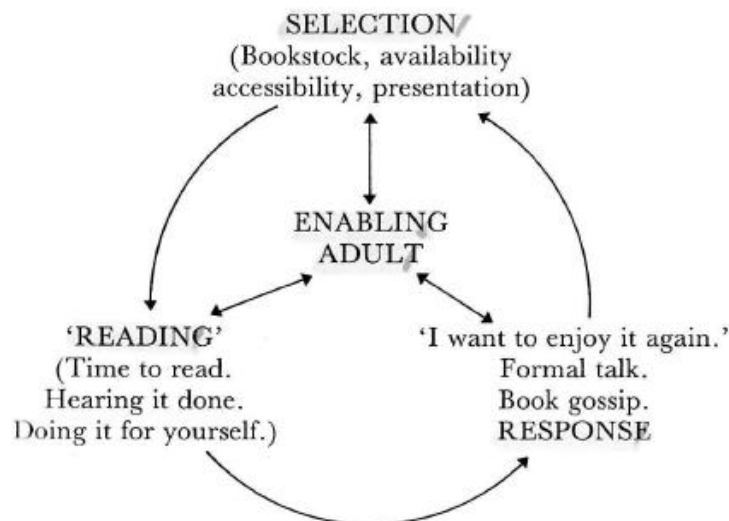
Joe: After I have done all of my homework I just want to veg out and I don't want to read until bedtime but I am reading more at bedtime than I used to."

In terms of Kelly's categorisation of readers, Joe could be seen as: Reader; Book Lover; Situational; The Library Lover; the Sleepy Bedtime Reader and The Audiobook Listener (Kelly, 2013). Joe enjoys a range of reading and experiences reading via a range of formats: paper text based, e-books and audiobooks.

Secondary School A encourages reading for pleasure and sees reading as more than;

"passing our eyes over printed words in order to decipher them. Rather...the reading process comprises a number of activities of which 'taking the words off the page' is only one" (Chambers, 1991, p. 11).

Figure 28: The Reading Circle



(Chambers, 1991, p. 9)

In a wider sense, Joe's school takes on the role of the 'enabling adult' (see Figure 28) as the school ethos encourages reading. The fact that the school employs qualified librarians also shows students that the school recognises the importance of reading and is prepared to employ qualified and knowledgeable staff who can 'enable' students to find the 'right' text for them.

"Children benefit from good libraries staffed by qualified librarians working in partnership with teaching colleagues" (Gildersleeves, 2012, p. 404).

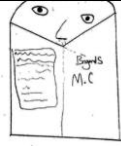
The school fiction library played an important role in encouraging students to read by being open before school, at break times, at lunch time and for an hour after school. This meant that students had access to a comfortable, warm space with knowledgeable staff where they could simply read. As Jamie put it:

Jamie: "Here after school we can go to the library and you can just reeeeeeeeeaaaaaad, you don't have to do your homework first like in Lower School. And you can go straight on to the computers in the library or in the ICT suite but in Lower School you had to go to homework club and you couldn't go on the computers unless you had to as part of your homework."

It is also interesting that reading was seen as a whole school issue in terms of the students seeing the teachers reading. In assemblies, teachers regularly shared their reading with the students and on school trips, the kit list always included the request for students to bring a book. Gaiman states:

"I believe we have an obligation to read for pleasure, in private and in public places. If we read for pleasure, if others see us reading, then we learn, we exercise our imaginations. We show others that reading is a good thing" (Gaiman, 2013).

Secondary School A clearly had a pro-active policy about making reading visible. It was not unusual to see students of all ages reading during breaks and at lunch time. Teachers - and not just exclusively English teachers - also read to their classes, and to their forms, thus encouraging a love of story and reading.



I define Joe as an **'avid, social, busy, habitual, environment dependent, sometimes audio reader, series and biography reader'**.

Joe continues to enjoy adventure stories but he has also developed his biography reading to include his sporting heroes. Joe has developed into an avid reader but he is aware that his enjoyment of books is dependent upon getting the 'right' book for him. For this he seeks, and acts upon, recommendations from friends and trusted enabling adults.

The reading habit is firmly formed for Joe although it keeps requiring 'maintenance' in the form of encouragement and recommendations for the habit to run smoothly. Joe is enjoying reading readerly texts and, with guidance, he might begin to enjoy writerly texts. His transition from primary to secondary school has seen a positive change in terms of the amount that he is reading and his attitude to reading.

18.2 Secondary School B.

Reading for pleasure at Secondary School B is presented as a valued activity. One sixty minute lesson every fortnight was dedicated to private reading. These lessons usually took place in the school library, although sometimes they had to take place in the normal English teaching rooms.

The English corridor at Secondary School B had a number of eye-catching displays to support and encourage reading for pleasure, as can be seen from the photographs below (see Figures 29 to 32):

Figure 29: The Reading Tree Display



Figure 30: The Reading Tree Reviews



Figure 31: Adventure Story Suggestions

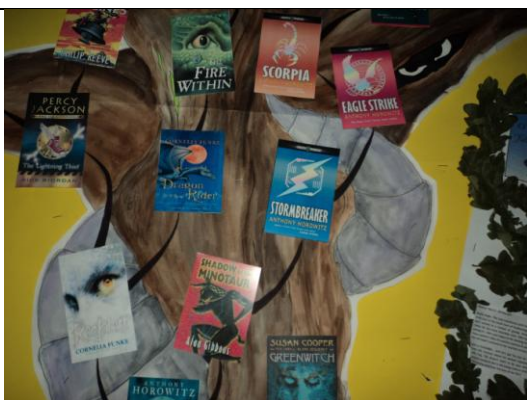


Figure 32: What to Read Display



The students would walk past these displays frequently and on a number of occasions I observed students looking at these displays. They were updated throughout the year by the English department with the aim of encouraging reading for pleasure.

18.2.1 Tom



Tom was not very positive about reading fiction on the secondary school questionnaire but he was positive about reading non-fiction. He recorded that he was not reading regularly and during the four weeks prior to the secondary questionnaire he recorded that he had only read one Top Gear magazine. Tom states that he has a favourite author but he is not sure of the name, writing Anthony Horowitz as 'Andy Horwitch,' and he had not read any of his books in the four weeks prior to the questionnaire. On his primary questionnaire Tom recorded just fiction reading but on his secondary questionnaire, he recorded just non-fiction (see Table 41).

Table 41: Tom's Recorded Reading

Tom	Primary Questionnaire	Secondary Questionnaire
Non-fiction		Top Gear
Fiction	Cherub: The Recruit (Muchamore, 2004b) Cherub: Class A (Muchamore, 2004a)	

The data Tom recorded supports his statement that he is spending less time reading than he had been doing in primary school. He is not engaging in reading fiction, and had read one magazine in the four weeks prior to his secondary questionnaire as compared to two Cherub books in the four weeks prior to the primary questionnaire. Tom also thinks that he is reading less. For the question which asked how much reading he thought he did, he recorded "Only a little," and he now thinks that he is "Not very good," at reading. This is in contrast to his primary school questionnaire where he recorded "Average" for both questions. Tom offers his own reasons for this decline:

Tom: "I was reading quite a lot at Primary School A...it's like harder to read here because you get a lot of prep a night and then once you have done your prep you've got to have a shower and get ready for bed.

Me: Do you still read at bedtime?

Tom: Now not really I tend to watch TV and chill out.

Me: Did you do much reading over the summer?

Tom: No, I was getting tired."

In the library lessons I observed, the students had to sit at tables on hard chairs. The tables were grouped in blocks of six – so six students sat at one desk. The students were not allowed to sit on the comfortable chairs which were dotted around the library in alcoves and in corners. Students were also not allowed upstairs to the mezzanine level which ran around the top floor like a balcony.

The library also had a computer room attached to it. For every library lesson which I observed, students were instructed at the beginning of the lesson to:

- complete any English homework;
- complete computer grammar lessons;
- then read whatever they wanted to.

Very few students took a book from their school bag, most went and selected a book from the library shelves. These books were usually returned at the end of the lessons, with a few students deciding to withdraw a book to take away with them. In every lesson I observed, the librarian completed paper work and did not interact with the students at all, not even when they were trying to find a book to read at the start of the lesson. In fact, Tom stated that if he wanted advice about what to read he would ask his friend:

Tom: "I'd go and see my friend Luke because he reads a lot, he's reading a book that's really big at the moment and he is a really keen reader.

Me: If you wanted a book would you ask your English teacher or the school librarian?

Tom: No way, they don't know what I like to read."

For Tom, there was no knowledgeable adult who could assist with his reading journey in the library. There was no one who could help him find his 'next book'. The reading list provided by the library was not much help for Tom as it didn't really give him any ideas about where to go next in terms of his reading. The books on the list below (see Table 42) cover a wide selection of genres and span a vast range in terms of publication date. However, it does not offer any way for Tom to distinguish between 'Goodnight Mr Tom' by Michelle Magorian, original publication date 1982 (Magorian, 2014), 'Tom's Midnight Garden' by Phillippa Pearce, original publication date 1958 (Pearce, 2008), Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain, original publication date 1884 (Twain, 2010) and 'Kensuke's Kingdom' by Michael Morpurgo, original publication date 1999 (Morpurgo, 2010). The publication dates on this list range the nineteenth and twentieth centuries but there are very few books on the list with post-2000 publication dates. Unlike the eye-catching and informative book displays on the English corridor, these library reading lists were quite dull and unhelpful.

The school did not expect the students to have a book in their bag to read at all times, and the English department did not insist upon the students reading fiction in their library lessons. In fact, a number of students simply completed English homework or grammar modules on the computers and never even opened a book to read in the library lessons I observed. Even though the school appeared to place importance on reading for pleasure by timetabling one sixty minute lesson a fortnight in the library, in fact, with the lessons I observed, very little emphasis was placed on reading for pleasure.

Table 42: Secondary School B's Library Reading List

KEY STAGE 3 (YEARS 7-9) READING LIST

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>
Little Women	Louisa M. Alcott
Kit's Wilderness	David Almond
Carrie's War	Nina Bawden
Noughts And Crosses	Malorie Blackman
Alice In Wonderland	Lewis Carroll
Artemis Fowl	Eion Colfer
Zlata's Diary	Zlata Filipovic
Flour Babies/The Tulip Touch	Anne Fine
Anne Frank's Story/The Diary Of Anne Frank	Anne Frank
Coraline	Neil Gaiman
Two Weeks With The Queen/Bumface	Morris Gleitzman
Deadly	Morris Gleitzman and Paul Jennings
The Secret Garden/A Little Princess	Frances Hodgson-Burnett
Stormbreaker	Anthony Horowitz
Journey To The River Sea	Eva Ibbotson
When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit	Judith Kerr
Goodnight, Mr. Tom	Michelle Magorian

TITLE**AUTHOR**

Saffy's Angel	Hilary McKay
Kensuke's Kingdom/	
Private Peaceful/Out Of The Ashes	Michael Morpurgo
The Recruit	Robert Muchamore
The Wind Singer	William Nicolson
Tom's Midnight Garden	Philippa Pearce
Friedrich	Hans Peter Richter
Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone	J. K. Rowling
The Silver Sword	Ian Serraillier
Black Beauty	Anna Sewell
A Series Of Unfortunate Events	Lemony Snicket
The Hobbit	J. R. R. Tolkien
Tom Sawyer/Huckleberry Finn	Mark Twain
The Machine Gunners	Robert Westall
The Lottie Project/Vicky Angel/or anything!	Jacqueline Wilson
Chinese Cinderella	Adeline Yen Mah
Face/Refugee Boy	Benjamin Zephaniah

Day students could not effectively use the school library after school hours as their buses left fifteen minutes after school ended for the day. As the library was situated on the edge of the school site on the opposite side of the bus stops, students did not have the time to get to the library, select a book, withdraw it and get back to the other side of the site to

catch their bus home. This was also an issue at break times as most students did not have the time to visit the library and then get to their next lesson.

Many of the boys engaged in paired or group reading, typically with one boy discovering interesting facts and sharing these with the other boys. The other boys would then swarm around this non-fiction book and read the interesting fact. I have no issue with this sort of social reading; it is, after all, what many adults do when reading a newspaper, however, this sort of reading does not allow for sustained reading or independent reading. Tom explained the appeal of just such social reading:

“I like ‘The Guinness Book of World Records’ (Glenday, 2010) because you can generally get into stuff that is just bigger and that kind of interests you a bit more and you feel like you have grown up a bit more. You feel like you want to read something that is more real life than just fiction...I like the game console world records because I’m a bit of a gamer myself... I like sociable reading because then you can talk to friends it’s not just like keeping your head down and reading a book on your own. Instead you can chat about the book.”

Talking About Books

There are many different types of talk concerning books. Some is social and is all about telling others about your recent reading. An extreme manifestation of this is Kelly’s exuberant “The Sharer Screamer: You love to share your recent reading experience – loudly” (Kelly, 2013).

Chambers describes this talk as “Sharing enthusiasms”:

“When friends start talking about a book it’s usually because one of them wants to share her enthusiasm. ‘I’ve just read this amazing book,’ she says. ‘Have you read it?’” (Chambers, 1993, p. 16).

In this sort of book talk people tend to discuss their likes and dislikes rather than analysing meanings, plot and character. For a number of children, this book gossip allows them to

participate in a shared experience with their peers, it allows them to feel connected to their friends and it allows them to have a common interest. In short, the book talk allows them to feel included and part of a group and not excluded and left out. Chambers goes as far as to say that this is an 'instinctive' social feature of reading:

“When most people have enjoyed a piece of literature, their instinct is to talk about it with a friend. We like to explore what has happened to us by talking it through” (Chambers, 1985, p. 11).

There is also the talk that occurs between teacher and student about books and the talk which occurs between parent and child. These two types of talk can be very different, yet they can be seen to stem from Chamber's 'Enabling Adult' aspect of 'The Reading Circle'. In the diagram, it states, under the RESPONSE section, 'I want to enjoy it again'; 'Formal talk'; Book gossip'. This is the very essence of why some students, and adults, engage in book talk; they want to savour the book all over again, they want to revisit favourite moments, they want to “enjoy it again” (Chambers, 1993, p. 12).

Teachers need time to talk with students about their independent reading, they need “a chance to respond to what has been read in company with other children and in various ways, but especially by talking with adults [they need] a chance to consult with a trusted adult about what might be read [next]” (Chambers, 1985, p. 12). This talk with an enabling adult allows for readers to become more thoughtful in their book choices and allows reading to be “a means of thought” (Chambers, 1991, p. 14). Chambers enlarges on what he means by this:

“Some kinds of talk...have the effect of making us more aware of what is happening to us” it allows us to spiral “up into a galaxy of other worlds, until eventually we can roam through the entire universe of literature, stopping wherever we want and exploring whichever strange planet takes our fancy” (Chambers, 1991, pp. 14-15).

Pennac identifies another aspect of why book talk is important:

“I believe that reading as a whole...is a far more productive, far more valuable activity than is talk for its own sake...but talking well about books is also the best rehearsal there is for talking well about other things” (Pennac and Blake, 2006, pp. 9-10).

Some book talk is about shared reading experiences, whether this is reading the same books at the same time as your friends, reading the same series of books at a similar time, or reading the same book aloud at the same time. This talk about the books read can create social talk which peers either feel part of or not, according to their reading involvement.

Howard quotes Kate, one student from her study:

“I like reading books my friends have recommended or read so that if they’re talking about the book I can get in on the conversation rather than sitting there and not saying anything” (Howard, 2008, p. 109).

Howard writes:

“...For many young teen readers, reading takes place almost exclusively in a social context and is seen as an effective way to cement peer friendships. These teens actively seek to read the same materials as their closest friends and use reading (talking about reading, exchanging reading material, following the same series) as a form of social bonding” (Howard, 2008, pp. 107-108).

David Booth also sheds light on this feature:

“What seems to help readers in developing a deeper, more fully realized understanding of a text is to share personal meanings and responses with others, participating in discussions with classmates in literature circles, book clubs or reading groups” (Booth, 2001, p. 57).

All of the students in this study engaged in book talk with their friends, parents, teachers or librarians. This talk allowed the students to prolong the pleasure of the text; allowed them to feel part of a group; encouraged conversation between parent and child and allowed enabling adults to encourage and develop students’ reading.

During a visit when Tom was in Year 8 he suggested that he was reading out of school.

Tom: “When we are set spelling homework it is meant to take thirty minutes but if you finish early you can read.

Me: Do you tend to use school library books for this reading or do you use books from home?

Tom: I use books from home but I sometimes come into the library...I’ve just given back a library book but I’ve lost my card so I have to use my friend’s one when I want to take a book out. I don’t want to ask for a new one because I’ll be told off for losing my library card. I’m reading the Cherub series at the moment. I want to read them in order. I don’t want to have two books on the go at the same time because then I could get muddled up. But I have to wait for the next one to be back in the library, and then I have to get my friend’s card. It’s a bit of a hassle.”

This would suggest that Tom actually still likes reading. He is clear that he only wants to read one book at a time and he is clear about what sort of books he likes. However, it is also

clear that there are a number of barriers that are blocking his reading for pleasure at his secondary school:

- he has lost his library card and is afraid to ask the librarian for a new one in case he gets 'told off';
- he does not feel that he has an enabling adult who can support his book choices and encourage his reading;
- his school library lessons don't actively encourage independent reading of fiction for pleasure;
- he feels that he can't read a fiction book during his school library lesson because all of the other boys read non-fiction.

I asked him about his perception of what the other boys do:

Me: "Would you read a 'Cherub' book during a school library lesson?"

Tom: No way! I would stand out and my friends would be like 'Why are you reading that?' Besides, it's more sociable reading 'The Guinness Book of World Records' (Glenday, 2010).

Me: Do you think that you might be teased if you read a fiction book?"

Tom: Yes, you don't want to stand out and be different."

Tom started his secondary school concerned about making new friends as he knew nobody else at his new school. He worked hard to make friends and fit in and he was not prepared to risk his new friends' perception of him by reading, as he sees it, unacceptable fiction. Rather, he chose to read the more socially acceptable non-fiction. Tom's perception of his friends' view of readers is interesting; he wrote "I think my friends think reading is boring." When I showed Tom the word cloud of his class's responses to this question he was surprised that the word 'interesting' had been used a lot.

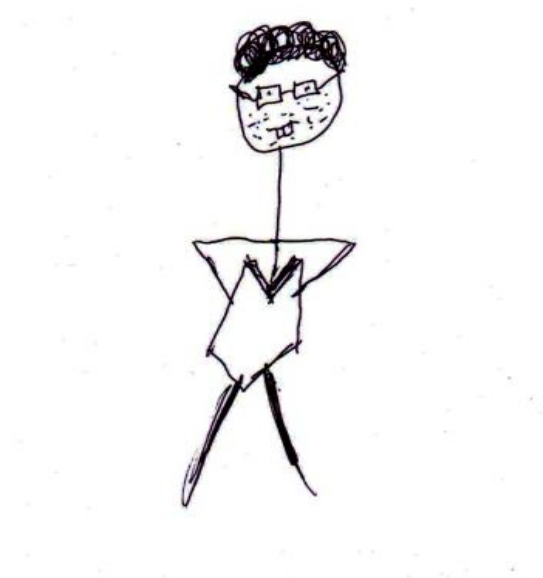
Tom: "I'm quite surprised that 'interesting' is so big, I would have thought more people would have said 'okay' rather than 'interesting'.

Me: So you're not surprised by the word 'boring' and that it's quite big?

Tom: No not really. I'm surprised that 'interesting' is quite big."

It is also noteworthy that his picture of what his friends think a reader looks like provides another negative message, showing prominent front teeth, spots and glasses (see Figure 33).

Figure 33: Tom's Secondary Questionnaire Image



Tom explains what happened to his reading when he joined his secondary school;

Tom: "When I started here I wasn't reading that many books and I started socialising with Michael and his friend Paul and I started talking to them about some stuff and then we became good mates but with Will he was reading a lot and no one approached him to be friends but then Sam approached him and spoke to him and then one of my friends is one of Sam's friends and that's how I got talking to Will.

Me: Do you think you would have talked to Will if Sam hadn't have known him?

Tom: No because I was put off by the reading because he didn't seem very sociable or someone to talk to but once I got to know him he's very talkative...On my first day here I decided not to bring my reading book because I wanted to be able to make

eye contact and make friends and seem sociable rather than being unapproachable because I had my head in a book...you can't really socialise if you have your head in a book all the time..."

Tom also likes to relax during library lessons and have a rest from school:

Tom: "I like library lessons because this morning I had maths first lesson and it was hard and it is nice to have a rest. The library lesson makes me chill out a little bit before you go onto your next subject."

Tom does still read and he makes a number of positive comments about reading, but he is certainly engaging in less reading and he does not regularly read at bedtime any more. However, he is quite contradictory about his views of reading. For instance, he makes a number of positive comments about reading for pleasure:

Tom: "I do it [read] when I have to do it in library lessons and that is sometimes the only time I read..."

Tom: "You can kind of leave everything else behind you and just go there...If I read like an action book I imagine, it makes me imagine that I am there. If I get one of the long books, I get through them really quickly and notice that the holidays have just gone."

Tom: "I like reading itself it is kind of crystal clear when you read a book and it seems real and I don't want to put it down I want to carry on reading."

Tom: "Whenever I go to bed I just read to make myself feel sleepy so that I can get to sleep...If I go to bed at nine o'clock I get half an hour of reading and then my mum comes up and turns my light out."

These comments reveal that Tom gains a great deal of enjoyment when he is reading a book that he enjoys. He also reveals that he is a habitual bedtime reader and that he needs to read to get to sleep. However, there are also some quite negative comments about reading for pleasure:

Tom: [In library lessons] "I usually don't read I just make it look like reading."

Tom: "I think that most of my friends think that reading is boring."

There is, perhaps, conflict over his enjoyment of reading and how he thinks others view him. The comments about reading being boring and his pretending to read in library lessons were all made in front of friends at school, therefore it could be argued that he was not being honest about his reading because he was seeking the approval of his friends. When his friend said "[Reading] puts me in a different world," Tom jumped in and said, "You can kind of leave everything else behind you and just go there." This may suggest that he was concerned about expressing his true feelings about his reading in front of new friends. This possibility was brought into even sharper focus when I asked:

Me: "Do you think that the whole image thing is important, how people perceive you as a person when they look at you and go, 'That person is like this...'?"

Tom: I think maybe not so much these days, it is not so much of an issue now because lots of boys in our class actually read and you wouldn't think they read but yeah so I don't think it is much of an issue anymore.

Me: What about last year [Year 7] when you were just joining the school? Were you concerned about how you came across to people?

Tom: It might have been a little bit more, quite a bit more, of an issue because you have to make your own impression on the people you meet because it will stay with them like for the rest of the time here. I was much more concerned about it then than I am now."

When Tom started the school he was very concerned about making new friends as he knew no one who was joining Year 7. He was concerned about what sort of first impression he made and he wanted to make a good first impression:

Tom: "The first impression is really important, you don't want people to think you are a Geek. You don't want people to get the wrong idea."

Tom still enjoys reading and the fact that his fiction reading engages his imagination. In terms of Howard's taxonomy, Tom is not an 'Avid' reader (Howard, 2008). He enjoys the social side of reading the same things as his friends but this is outweighed by his opinion that most of his peers think that reading is boring. He was surprised when he saw boys reading on the coach journey to a rugby match:

Tom: "I saw people on the coach reading and they weren't the sort of people that I thought would read, and like [name of town] was over 3 hours to get there...that happens quite a lot, people who I don't really expect, people on the rugby team, to be reading but I think it might be a bit more popular."

Me: Why do you think that you wouldn't expect them to be reading?

Tom: Because these are the big rugby players and boys like that I wouldn't really expect to read...I was surprised quite a lot by that."

I think that Tom is confused here about his attitudes to reading. On the one hand he enjoys reading fiction and non-fiction, and on the other he is very aware of how he wants people to see him.

In terms of Kelly's categories of readers, Tom could be seen as: 'Reader; Conflicted; Situational, Social, Sleepy Bedtime Reader' (Kelly, 2013). However, from his negative

comments about reading he could also be classed as a 'Hater', though I don't actually believe that he hates reading. Instead, I believe that Tom frequently reads at bedtime but he is confused about whether or not he should admit to this in front of his new friends.



I define Tom as a **'social, communal, sequential, environment dependent, infrequent, bedtime reader.'**

Tom likes to start a book and complete it before he starts another book. The reading habit is still not firmly formed but he does voluntarily read both readerly fiction texts and non-fiction.

I believe that the development of the reading habit will be dependent upon the presence of an enabling adult who can support and encourage Tom's reading, and Tom feeling that he is with friends who feel that they can talk about their reading. If these things do not happen, I fear that Tom will stop reading for pleasure.

18.3 Secondary School C

Reading for pleasure at Secondary School C is presented as a highly valued activity.

The English department dedicated one fifty-five minute lesson a fortnight to reading. These lessons usually took place in the library, although sometimes these lessons had to take place in the normal English teaching room. Students were encouraged to read fiction and non-fiction in these sessions. For the library lessons I observed, the students had to sit at desks which were grouped in two big blocks each seating twelve students. The library did have a comfortable seating area where children could sit and read, however, this was situated at the opposite end of the library and, according to the English teacher, it made classroom management difficult if the class was split into two groups. The library also had alcoves where there were comfortable chairs. Again, the students were not allowed to sit in these alcoves due to the difficulty of classroom management.

Students were expected to sit in silence and read for the first two thirds of the lesson (approximately forty minutes) and then they were allowed to talk about their book with their friends and share their reading. For some students, who took a very long time to select a book, the time spent engaged in silent reading could be as little as ten minutes before the discussions could start. Whilst the students were engaged in silent reading, for the lessons I observed, the English teacher sat and completed marking or administrative tasks. As Lockwood points out, this is concerning:

“The personal interest and enthusiasm of the teacher manifested in many small ways every school day is clearly a key factor in creating a reading environment that promotes enjoyment...Children need to see in their teacher a role model of a keen reader. As one teacher...insisted ‘You have to enjoy reading yourself and show it!’ the kiss of death for promoting reading enjoyment is the teacher who says, ‘I’m not a great reader myself, but...’ “ (Lockwood, 2008, p. 21).

The librarian was very knowledgeable about the books in the library and there were numerous help sheets which were on display and which students could have a copy of to

help them find 'the right book'. For the lessons I observed, approximately a third of the students took a book out of the library to continue reading at home.

At the end of Year 8, the three girls were positive about reading for pleasure. All three girls recorded that they were reading fiction regularly and all three had read a number of books during the four weeks prior to the secondary questionnaire. All three girls were also regularly reading non-fiction. All three girls had a favourite author and all three had read at least one of this author's books during the previous four-week period. However, Brandon's reading was different. He engaged in no non-fiction reading, he did not have a favourite author and even though he recorded that he had had read a book during the four weeks prior to the questionnaire, he could not remember the title, writing that, "it was a horror book".

What is also interesting is that all three girls differed in how much reading they had done on the night prior to the secondary questionnaire in comparison to how much reading they did on the night before the primary questionnaire. Gemma recorded that the amount of time spent reading the night prior to the secondary questionnaire was less than the amount of time recorded for the night prior to the primary questionnaire. Scarlet and Anna reported that they had engaged in more reading for the night prior to the secondary questionnaire and Brandon reported that he had engaged in no reading on the night prior to the secondary questionnaire, which was the same as his primary questionnaire.

On a whole school level, reading for pleasure was encouraged with ERIC (Everyone Read In Class). Form tutors were expected to spend at least one ten-minute form period a week with the students engaged in ERIC.

Sustained Silent Reading

Improving students' attitudes towards reading and books is something that lies at the heart of ERIC and other such programmes. Lyman Hunt at the University of Vermont is credited with proposing the first of the Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) programmes in the 1960s.

"The basic premise of allowing SSR time is that students who read often will read better"

(Jensen, 2002, p. 58). Also, the reading initiatives such as ERIC (Everyone Reading In Class), DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) and USSR (Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading) aimed to encourage children to read by providing whole school time to read during the school day. Lockwood suggests:

“This time works best when it is seen as a positive part of the reading curriculum rather than...just a ‘holding’ strategy whilst the teacher is doing things such as taking the register or other administrative tasks” (Lockwood, 2008, p. 22).

Siah and Kwok suggest that there is debate about the effectiveness of SSR:

“A review conducted by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000) ...concluded that there was no clear evidence to support the claim that encouraging students to read more would improve their reading achievement” (Siah and Kwok, 2010, p. 169).

Krashen counters criticism of SSR and states that: “Simply providing time to read results in more reading” (Krashen, 2004, p. 85). Hamilton states Sustained Silent Reading is:

“...an opportunity to experience the joy of reading for reading’s sake...no interruptions, assignments, grades, or pressures. It therefore connects reading with the concept of recreation. It enables kids to see their peers and teacher reading (positive role modelling), and for some it may be the only opportunity they have for quiet reading time” (Walton Hamilton, 2009, p. 127).

Janice Pilgreen agrees with this point:

“We do a good job of making sure that children learn to read in school, but oftentimes the love of reading is not instilled in some of them...In-school free reading offers them opportunities to regain the thrill of reading something for pure enjoyment and, more important, leads the way to more reading outside of

school..."(Pilgreen, 2000, p. 68).

My Observations of ERIC in Secondary School C

At Secondary School C each class was allocated a book box from the library and the students were expected to either read a book from the box or bring a book in from home. The students were not allowed to take a book box book home but there were some duplicates in the school library which students could take out. There was potential for promoting reading through this, as explained by Pilgreen:

"The act of reading in school and then reading at home has a spiralling effect. Reading in class promotes reading at home, and as students read more, they become better readers. Better readers enjoy reading more and therefore do more of it"
(Pilgreen, 2000, p. 69).

I believe that this positive effect of class reading did not have the chance to evolve at this school, however, because of two barriers presented by the library management method; the books were shut away after every ERIC session and if students wanted to take a book home they had to go and search for it in the school library.

Gemma did not enjoy ERIC sessions:

Gemma: "I don't like it when we have to pick a book out of the ERIC book box and I don't like any of those books..."

Scarlet: I bring my own book.

Anna: Me too.

Scarlet: It's really annoying when you are reading your book in ERIC and then you only have ten minutes and then you have to pack away before you are ready or when it's getting exciting – I don't like that."

For all of the form time ERIC sessions I observed, only one teacher actually read a book

whilst the students were reading. Every form teacher had to complete an electronic register, make class announcements and give out detention slips to members of the form. Some students arrived late to school and the teachers had to deal with these students. At no time did I see the form teachers engaged in just reading whilst the students were. This was, in part, due to ERIC being scheduled into form period, which was ten minutes long. During this time the form teacher had to, by law, take the register, so from the very start, it was impossible for them fully to engage in the sustained silent reading that ERIC required. It was not long enough to get all of the students into the classroom, get out the book box, allow the students to select a book and then settle down to uninterrupted sustained silent reading. As Anna said of her peer group:

Anna: "They need library sessions not ten minutes of ERIC."

Only one teacher actually read at all during the form periods I observed. She had supplemented her book box with some comics, graphic novels, and recipe books. I was surprised to see the members of her form really engage in reading these supplementary resources, especially the cookery books. I understood the interest in the cook books when I discovered that, once a month, the teacher would ask for suggestions for a cake for the form. There was ownership in the decision and the recipe had to come from the book box books. Every other form teacher seemed to pay lip service to ERIC or, in some cases, not bother with it at all, whereas this teacher had made the reading relevant to her form and connected their love of eating cake with reading. Brilliant! Other ways of generalising reading are also advocated by Lockwood:

"Independent reading works best when the teacher reads for pleasure too, as far as that is possible. This model of adult reading can be very effective, as one teacher commented: 'They'll just suddenly look up and see that you're reading, you're concentrating and they don't talk, they just get on with it'" (Lockwood, 2008, p. 23).

This modelling of reading by an adult is important, especially as many children do not see

their parents read at home. This might be because the parents don't read, or that they read but away from the children, for example, in bed at night once the children are asleep. This was the case with Anna:

Me: "Does anyone read at home?"

Anna: That's funny!

Me: Why?

Anna: Well for ages I thought that my mum didn't read, I mean I never saw her read and when I was younger I used to get a bit mad at her for just letting me read when I got my braids done (this takes at least three hours) but I never saw her read, ever.

Me: And...

Anna: Well, it turns out that she does read, just, I mean, only after we've gone to bed and when she is in bed.

Me: How do you know this?

Anna: I felt really ill the other night so I got up and went into her room and there she was sat up in bed, with her glasses on, reading.

Me: Do you talk to her about what you're reading now?

Anna: A little."

Clark and Hawkins write:

"Parents being seen reading is related to their children's enjoyment of reading, reading attitudes and reading frequency. Young people who see their mother and father read a lot are more likely to enjoy reading, to have positive attitudes towards reading and to believe that reading is important to succeed in life than young people who do not see their mother or father read." (Clark and Hawkins, 2010, p. 6).

The idea of the importance of children seeing adults read is developed by Stephen Krashen who wrote that when children see their teacher engaged in silent uninterrupted reading it encourages them to read, without teachers having to say anything (Krashen, 2004, p. 85). This was not happening very much at Secondary School C. The form teachers were either

too busy or had not fully seen the purpose and value of ERIC. One member of staff suggested that it was not their job to encourage reading because they were a Physical Education teacher; instead, he saw it as the exclusive preserve of the English department. Lockwood suggests that ERIC, or other such programmes, work “best of all when everyone in the school reads during this time, including non-teaching staff” (Lockwood, 2008, p. 23).

These programmes were present in many primary classrooms in the UK until the mid-1990s, when some believe that they fell victim to the National Literacy Strategy (Elkin et al., 2003, p. 76). However, Secondary School C was a large *secondary* school. Even though, on paper, the school seemed to encourage reading for pleasure, the way that ERIC was set up meant that it was difficult for the form tutors to manage and there was some resentment from staff because they did not see promoting reading as part of their job. Lockwood emphasises the need for whole-school reading purpose:

“There is no single way to develop the reading culture of a whole school. However, what schools do need, before they begin, is an agreement amongst all the staff and the wider school community that reading, and reading for pleasure in particular, is a priority for development...By its very nature, promoting reading for pleasure in the primary school, whatever form it takes to begin with, needs to have everyone on board: it will not work simply as a directive from above by school management” (Lockwood, 2008, p. 14).

18.3.1 Gemma



Table 43: Gemma’s Recorded Reading

Gemma	Primary Questionnaire	Secondary Questionnaire
Non-fiction		OK! Hello
Fiction	Cookie (Wilson, 2009) Midnight (Wilson, 2008b) Candy Floss (Wilson, 2007a) Vicky Angel (Wilson, 2007d) Bad Girls (Wilson, 2006a) Dustbin Baby (Wilson, 2007b)	The Simpsons Vicky Angel (Wilson, 2007d) Bad Girls (Wilson, 2006a) Diary of a Wimpy Kid (Kinney, 2008)

One way of interpreting these differences is to note that Gemma was engaging in more non-fiction reading with three publications listed on the secondary questionnaire, compared to none for the primary questionnaire. She was, however, engaging in less fiction reading, declaring three books and one comic on the secondary questionnaire and six books on the primary questionnaire. In terms of the time she stated that she spent reading for the secondary questionnaire, 1.5-2.5 hours would certainly fit in with her reading fewer books. However, this contradicts what Gemma actually says she does in terms of her reading for pleasure:

Gemma: “To be honest, I actually read more now...I go to the library after lunch.”

Gemma reinforced this idea that she was spending more time reading in secondary school than she had in primary school on one of my subsequent visits:

Gemma: "I'm doing a bit more reading but some of that is because my mum has taken away my phone, my laptop, my iPod, TV, Playstation..."

Me: You used to read lots of books all at the same time, do you still do that?

Gemma: I'll still pick a book according to my mood but when I get bored of it I'll look for something else. But sometimes I just like to read the whole book and find out what's going on.

Me: Do you get bored of books quickly?

Gemma: It depends what they are. It's hard to find new ones to read...

Me: In this school, do you find it easy to get hold of something you want to read?

Gemma: I tend to just go and pick up a comic...we haven't had our library lessons yet, we were meant to but they didn't happen...

Me: Could you ask the librarian to help you pick a book to read?

Gemma: No way, I'm not sad!"

I found it interesting that when Gemma was in primary school she said "I go to borrow books [from the library] about once a week" but her use of the library for borrowing books had dropped once she was in secondary school; she said "I go to borrow books only sometimes". In primary school, she would often take library books home and she enjoyed discovering new stories as well as rereading old favourites. However, her use of her school library in secondary school had changed. It was no longer a place where she could find new books. When she was in the library, she kept to what could be viewed as the 'safe' option of just picking up a comic.

Gemma seemed to have stalled in her reading. She found it difficult to select books and she felt uncomfortable asking the secondary school librarians for help. Two years after I first

interviewed Gemma, she was reading the same books and getting a little bored of them. In terms of Kelly's categories, Gemma could be viewed as 'Reader, Situational, Social, Re-Reader' (Kelly, 2013), which is very similar to her primary school categorisation. Gemma has not developed as a reader and there is a real danger of her losing the reading habit which she started secondary school with. She continues to be a "flat-earth" reader who has not reached out to explore other literature (Chambers, 1993, p. 13).

The school librarian was aware of the issue that some students would not ask for help, either because they were embarrassed to in front of their friends, or she said they just felt uncomfortable asking for help. In response to this, she had created "I like..." sheets, an example of which is below (see Table 44). The full list included:

- "I like books that make me cry"
- "I like reading top-quality award-winning modern fiction"
- "I like reading adventure stories"
- "I like books about different cultures"
- "I like books about friends and family"

These "I like..." sheets were displayed in the library and laminated sheets were dotted around the library for students to dip into without having to ask for them. The "I like..." sheets also contained lots of modern fiction written specifically for teenagers. In the lessons I observed, a number of students used these sheets to try and find an interesting book to read. The librarian stated that:

"I'm aware that when the children move up to high school that there is an assumption that they know how to select a reading book. But for many children this is just not the case, especially when this library is so much bigger and it has a large reference section for the GCSE and Sixth Form students. Some teachers assume that the younger children can just be told to go and pick a book to read but this is where lots of children struggle, they are just overwhelmed by the choice and how to find books on the shelves."

Secondary School C Librarian.

For the English library lessons which I observed, Gemma’s teacher did not model reading for pleasure and did not make any suggestions in terms of book selection to help Gemma find a book that she wanted to read. Instead, the teacher completed administration tasks and marked students’ work.

Table 44: Secondary School C’s Library Reading Helpsheet

“I like books that make me laugh”

You might enjoy:

The Adventures of Captain Underpants	Dav Pilkey
anything by Roald Dahl	
Big Nate	Lincoln Peirce
Bumface	Morris Gleitzman
Diamond Brothers series	Anthony Horowitz
Diary of Wimpy Kid series	Jeff Kinney
Dogs Don’t Tell Jokes	Louis Sachar
Fungus the Bogeyman	Raymond Briggs
Henry Tumour	Anthony McGowan
Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy	Douglas Adams
Jiggy McCue series	Michael Lawrence
Just William	Richmal Crompton
The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole aged 13½	Sue Townsend
A Series of Unfortunate Events	Lemony Snicket
Mr Stink	David Walliams
My Sister’s Got a Spoon up her nose	Jeremy Strong
Unbelievable	Paul Jennings

And don’t forget Humour / Jokes at 827

Gemma liked her secondary school library and she said that it had “better displays” than her primary school library. The library had a ‘Recommended Reads’ board and informative displays to encourage reading for pleasure, see Figures 34 and 35 below:

Figure 34: Secondary School C's Recommended Reads Display



Figure 35: Secondary School C Library Display



She said that "I go to the library after lunch" but added that she never went to the library with her friends:

Me: "In your old school someone said 'You don't want to read too much or else someone might think you're a Geek.' What do you think about that now you've been here for a while?"

Brandon: I don't care.

Gemma: It doesn't matter because if I'm in the library I never bring any of my friends so there's no point in caring no more...

Me: So you don't tend to go to the library with your friends?

Gemma: No.

Me: Why not?

Gemma: I don't want them to judge me.

Scarlet: You have to be careful about revealing that you like reading to new friends. Old friends from your primary school are safe to talk to about books, but you wouldn't want to risk it with a new friend, not until you were sure that they wouldn't get the wrong idea about you."

This suggests that Gemma, like Tom, is quite concerned about how her new Year 7 friends perceive her. She is careful to keep her reading 'hidden' from her new friends by visiting the school library without them. By doing this, she has lost the support that her friends could provide in terms of talking about what she has read, getting recommendations for books and being able to spend time in the library without having to worry about her new friends seeing her in the library. As I have previously stated, Gemma's secondary school library was situated at the end of a corridor and it was not on the way to anywhere. This meant that if one of Gemma's new friends discovered Gemma in the library, they could assume it was because she wanted to be there. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that Gemma did not think that her friends viewed reading for pleasure in a negative light. On her secondary questionnaire Gemma wrote, "I think that my friends think reading is: OK, depending what you read!" and her picture of what she thinks her friends think a reader looks like was, once again, quite positive. The girl she drew was wearing glasses, her face was partially covered by her hair and the crossed legs and hidden arms could all suggest nervousness and be viewed as negative. However, the drawing of the girl (see Figure 36) shows her wearing fashionable clothes and she is smiling, all of which could be viewed positively.

Figure 36: Gemma's Secondary Questionnaire Image



Gemma became quite negative about reading for pleasure in general during our conversations. For example:

Me: "Would any of you ever sit down and read a book?"

Gemma: Yes.

Me: Why do you read Gemma?

Gemma: Well I'm not allowed to watch TV and my phone's been taken away from me so there's nothing else to do.

Me: Would you say that you like reading?

Gemma: Yes, but the type of book is important...I read because it is the only option.

Me: And when you read like that do you enjoy it?

Gemma: It's alright, depends on the book. I read when I have to and when there's nothing else to do, when everyone else is out and I'm not allowed on the laptop."

Gemma seems to still be reading but whether or not it is a leisure activity that she voluntarily engages in is debatable. Reading for Gemma seems to have moved from something that she wanted to actively engage in when she was in primary school, snuggled up in her sleeping bag with her torch, to almost a form of punishment - she says "I read because it is the only option." Using Howard's taxonomy, Gemma has moved from having elements of both 'Avid Social Communal Reader' and 'Avid Involuntary Solitary Reader' to no longer being an avid reader and becoming even more solitary about any reading that she did engage in (Howard, 2008, pp. 109-115).

Gemma has become more isolated with her reading and she no longer has the support she needs from her friends and school to help the momentum of her reading. She has never had strong support for her reading at home, and during the first two years of her secondary school, having electronic media taken away at home as a punishment and leaving reading could suggest to Gemma that reading is the punishment. When a link between punishment

and reading is made, then it is difficult for a child to view reading for pleasure as a positive pastime. Also - as with many children in the first years of secondary school - Gemma had discovered Facebook and other social media sites and she enjoyed spending time communicating with her friends on these sites in the evenings. I asked the group about any activities they frequently engage in now that they are in secondary school that they didn't engage in when they were in primary school:

Gemma: "Homework...some of it takes a really long time because they make it so long.

Anna: Friends.

Me: Do any of you spend time in the evenings seeing your friends?

Gemma: We go into the city.

Brandon: Facebook.

Girls: Me too!

Gemma: It's still reading on Facebook.

Anna: I watch films and clips on Facebook."

Gemma was also reading far more magazines than she had in primary school. She listed Hello and OK! magazines in her non-fiction reading and stated that she felt that, at secondary school, girls were expected to read magazines:

Me: "What if you're a girl and you're reading lots of 'Hello' magazines?"

Anna: That's just normal.

Gemma: That's expected.

Scarlet: That's normal.

Brandon: They all do!"

This expectation for young, pre-teenage girls to read magazines aimed at adult females shocked me. Experimenting with more writerly fiction texts with a more grown-up subject matter could have been a way for Gemma to read and learn about adolescence and the world of adulthood. However, Gemma chose to engage with women's gossip magazines as a way to experience different levels of maturity and more grown up subject matter. Magazines aimed at women allowed Gemma to learn about adulthood and adolescence at the same time as her move to secondary school, and with the acceptance of her peer group, who were also reading the same magazines. Howard's communal aspect of reading could apply (Howard, 2008).

Gemma was also not enjoying reading in her English lessons:

“In English we're reading 'Holes' and it is every lesson, it's all we ever do, read 'Holes'” (Sachar, 2000).

This meant that her library lessons, ERIC sessions, English lessons and home environment were all negatively impacting on how much Gemma was reading, what she was reading and her attitudes towards reading for pleasure:

Me: “Do you think your attitude to reading has changed? Do you think you're more negative about reading, or just as positive as you were in primary school?”

Scarlet: Reading's great!

Anna: Reading's good.

Gemma: Argghhhhhh I don't know!

Brandon: I don't read.”

That Gemma was unable to answer this question speaks volumes. I think that this sums up her confusion about her reading for pleasure. She still enjoys reading sometimes, but her

reading for pleasure at home has become linked to a removal of electronic media sources and punishment for poor behaviour. In school, she is struggling to access books that she wants to read and she is not able to use the librarian as an enabling adult.



I define Gemma as: a **'frustrated, confused, conflicted, stalled, environment dependent, bedtime reader of fiction and non-fiction.'**

Gemma still enjoys stories but she has become conflicted about her reading for pleasure. She finds pleasure in re-reading readerly old favourites but she is struggling to find interesting new books to read. Instead she is spending more time on social media sites and reading gossip magazines, which is having a detrimental impact on the amount of fiction reading for pleasure that she is engaged in.

Gemma is aware of some people's negative views of people who enjoy reading and this does appear to stop her from enjoying her own reading and accessing interesting reading material. I believe that the reading habit is no longer firmly formed and I suspect that she will become a "Magazine generation" reader (Gleed, 2013, p. 7). Gemma's transition from primary to secondary school has been detrimental in terms of the amount that she is reading and the range of her reading. Her attitude to reading has become quite negative. I am uncertain if her reading for pleasure will continue.

18.3.2 Scarlet



Table 45: Scarlet’s Recorded Reading

Scarlet	Primary Questionnaire	Secondary Questionnaire
Non-fiction		
Fiction	<p>Simpsons Comics</p> <p>Skulduggery Pleasant: Skulduggery Pleasant - Book 1 (Landy, 2007)</p> <p>Playing with Fire: Skulduggery Pleasant – Book 2 (Landy, 2008)</p> <p>The Faceless Ones: Skulduggery Pleasant - Book 3 (Landy, 2011a)</p> <p>Dark Days: Skulduggery Pleasant - Book 4 (Landy, 2010)</p> <p>Granny (Horowitz, 2009)</p> <p>Demeter (Fontes and Fontes, 2008)</p>	<p>Simpsons Comic</p> <p>Beano</p> <p>Dandy</p> <p>Bone Magician (Tales from the Sinister City) (Higgins, 2010)</p> <p>Mortal Coil: Skulduggery Pleasant – Book 5 (Landy, 2011b)</p>

Scarlet’s data outlined in Table 45 seems unusual. She recorded more fiction on the primary questionnaire than she had on the secondary questionnaire, however, she stated that she

had read for longer on the night prior to the secondary questionnaire. She stated that she was continuing with her reading:

Me: "Are you carrying on with your reading?"

Anna and Scarlet: Yeah

Scarlet: Lots of reading, lots of reading, lots of reading...I like reading."

She also said that she went to the library in school with her friends:

Me: "So you don't tend to go to the library with your friends?"

Scarlet: I do and my friends think I'm weird because I sit on the floor...I don't like sitting on the chairs... giggles."

Scarlet was really positive about her reading. She saw it as a sociable activity and one that she shared with her friends at school. When I asked:

Me: "Would you ever sit down and read a book?"

Scarlet: Yes, I do that all the time."

Scarlet was really open about her enjoyment of reading in front of me and her peers, even those who were perhaps not as positive about reading as she was, for instance Brandon said "I don't read."

Me: "Would any of you ever sit down and read a book?"

Brandon: Yeah, I've done that once.

Scarlet: Yes I do that all the time.

Anna and Gemma: Yes.

Me: Why do you do that?

Anna: To go to sleep.

Scarlet: I do that, to get to sleep.

Me: And does that help you get to sleep?

Anna: It's a way of shutting down your body, of relaxing you.

Scarlet: But sometimes it doesn't because it makes me think about things more."

Scarlet was unable to say *why* she reads. When I asked if she liked reading her immediate reply was a positive "Yes", but then she went on to say that she liked reading a good book "because it's good". She went on to state:

Scarlet: "I like reading books that are made into films and stuff like that.

Me: Why?

Scarlet: Because I can imagine myself in the story.

Me: Do you read the book and then see the film, or see the film and then read the book?

Scarlet: It depends.

Me: Have you ever been disappointed?

Scarlet: No but, after I'd seen the first Harry Potter film I found it hard not to picture those actors" (Columbus, 2002).

Scarlet was open about enjoying reading:

Me: "Do any of you talk about your reading with your friends?

Brandon and Gemma: NO!

Anna and Scarlet: Yes

Scarlet: Sometimes.”

She was also happy to talk about her reading with new and old friends, but she was aware that some people in her year group thought that reading was boring:

Me: “Do you think that most people in your year group think that reading is okay or do you think most people in your year group think that reading is boring?”

Brandon: Probably both.

Gemma: Boring.

Anna: Boring.

Scarlet: A bit of both but the majority think it’s boring.

Me: Do you think reading is boring?

Brandon: More boring than not boring – say about three quarters boring but one quarter interesting.

Gemma: More boring than not.

Scarlet: I don’t read boring books.

Anna: It depends on the book.”

I found it interesting that both Scarlet and Brandon thought that other people in their year group would be mixed in their regard for reading as boring or not. It is also interesting that Scarlet turned the question into one relating to interesting or boring books as opposed to what was actually being asked, ‘Is reading boring?’ This might be because she does not see reading as boring unless she doesn’t find the book interesting. In fact, when I asked her about how she felt about reading whilst she was in secondary school she repeatedly stated positive views: “Reading’s great!” and “I like books and I like reading!”

However, Scarlet was also aware that some of her peers might hold negative views about reading, and, correspondingly, about people who like reading. She did not think that

everyone in her year group held negative views about reading because she noted that some people thought that reading was okay but that “the majority think it’s [reading] boring”. Scarlet wrote, “I think my friends think that reading is: dull, boring, geeky, sometimes alright.” Her pictures of what she thinks her friends think a reader looks like was interesting because she had divided the page into two sections. One picture was for someone who read books and the other was for a female magazine reader. The image for the book reader was negative, showing a girl wearing glasses, having braces on her teeth and having scruffy short hair whilst also holding a calculator and a book. The image of the magazine reader was much more positive. It was of a stylish girl with long hair holding a mobile phone and a magazine (see Figure 37).

Figure 37: Scarlet’s Secondary Questionnaire Image



Out of all of the students involved in this study at her secondary school, Scarlet was the most open about her reading, her enjoyment of reading and her willingness to talk about her reading not just with ‘safe’ old friends but with new friends too. The concept that people might not like her because of her reading did, however, concern her:

Me: "Why is reading in front of people an issue?"

Scarlet: "Because if you get labelled, but not by your friends, then your friends might desert you, they might not like you anymore."

This meant that she was careful about where and when she read. Reading at home in bed was fine; Scarlet admitted "I like to curl up in bed [to read]" and in "bed I normally read for about three or four hours". Reading in the school library in front of her friends was acceptable too. Scarlet said "I do [go to the library] and my friends think I'm weird because I sit on the floor...I don't like sitting on the chairs, [giggles]." Scarlet exhibits many of Howard's characteristics of an "Avid Social Communal Reader" in that she reads similar material to her friends. For Scarlet, "reading exists in a 'virtuous circle' in which friends encourage reading for pleasure and shared reading experiences solidify friendships". Scarlet's reading has not developed a great deal from her primary school choices and she had exhibited "little risk-taking or experimentation in their [her] reading selections" (Howard, 2008, pp. 109-110). Scarlet's "repetitious reading of...any one writer" could place her in Chamber's "flat-earth" (Chambers, 1993, p. 13) category because she is not exploring a range of writers. Because of this, Scarlet was not experiencing writerly texts, either from new authors or new genres. Scarlet continues to get encouragement for her reading from home and she continues to read a lot at home.

However, Scarlet did not think that she was engaging in reading in secondary school during the school day as much as she had done in primary school, saying that she was doing "less reading in school." This was because she was careful, not to read in front of people who might tease her. She related this to whether or not a person was popular, suggesting that "It depends if you're popular or not," and Gemma added that, "image is really important here." She was also aware of what sort of reading material was deemed 'acceptable' by her peers, and, conversely, what was deemed 'unacceptable':

Scarlet: “Well it also depends on gender because if you were a boy and good at sports and reading lots of football magazines they’ll let you off...but if you’re a girl it might be different.

Me: Well what if you’re a girl and you’re reading lots of ‘Hello’ magazines?

Anna: That’s just normal.

Gemma: That’s expected.

Scarlet: That’s normal.

Brandon: They all do!”

Even though Scarlet thought that reading magazines like ‘Hello’ was ‘normal’, she did not report any such magazine reading on her secondary questionnaire. Instead, she reported reading comics such as: ‘The Simpsons’, ‘The Dandy’ and ‘The Beano’.

Scarlet was uncomfortable reading books in front of people who were not her friends. She did not want to be socially rejected in any way or labelled a ‘Geek’. This perceived connection between reading and Geeks is explored in more detail in a later chapter, however, it is important to note that Scarlet, who was very positive and quite open about her love of reading, was also very aware of where and when it was okay for her to read in school. For example, it was accepted, if not expected, that the girls in secondary school would be reading popular women’s magazines such as ‘OK!’, ‘Hello’ and ‘Heat’. Engaging in this sort of reading in front of people was acceptable and not ‘social suicide’, but reading a fiction novel, or even worse, a fact book, *was* social suicide, As Gemma and Brandon explained:

Gemma: “If you read a book in front of people then it’s like social suicide.

Brandon: Yeah, you’re going down!

Me: Brandon you liked reading fact books in Year 6. Has that changed?

Gemma: Oh shame Brandon, fact books.

Brandon: Yeah shame – (laughs)...But it's weird because if they [other people] were reading then they would think that it was okay but if they came across someone else reading then they would think that was not okay – its double standards.”

It was interesting that Brandon, who, out of this group of students had reduced the amount he read the most significantly, was aware of the double standards involved, but at the same time he was also not prepared to engage in reading behaviour that would leave him open to ridicule.

Scarlet liked the Booked Up initiative, and she liked getting her 'free' book in Year 7. She wanted to get a 'free' book every year, and to get more book vouchers to spend in book stores:

Me: “Did you like getting your free book?”

Gemma, Anna, Scarlet: Yes!

Brandon: I haven't even read one page of it.

Scarlet: I think that we should get one free book every year. I should have picked a bigger book, I read it as soon as I got home and finished it really quickly, I finished it on the day.”

Booked Up and Book Ownership

In 2010 the National Literacy Trust (NLT) reported that 86% of young people in the UK owned a mobile phone and only 73% of young people had books of their own. NTL also reported that 80% of children who read above the expected level for their age have books of their own. (National Literacy Trust, 2010).

Book ownership is important and Booked Up was a book gifting programme which the Booktrust ran with funding from the Arts Council. It aimed to put a new book

into the hands of Year 7 students in England from a range of titles specially selected for the pre-teen market. Booktrust believes that:

“Reading independently for pleasure adds immeasurably to a child’s self awareness, general knowledge and education and is every bit as important as reading in the classroom” (Booktrust, 2014, p. 6).

Clark and Hawkins stress the impact which book ownership can have and reported that:

“Book ownership in particular is related to enjoyment of reading, attitudes towards reading and reading frequency. Twice as many young people who have books of their own compared with those who do not have their own books enjoy reading either very much or quite a lot. Twice as many young people who have their own books also said that they read every day compared with young people who do not have their own books”(Clark and Hawkins, 2010, p. 5).

Clark and Poulton state this more simply as:

“Young people who have books of their own enjoy reading more than young people who don’t own books” (Clark and Poulton, 2011, p. 8).

Guy Merchant, in an evaluation of Booked Up, stated:

“Schools are encouraged to use Booked Up as:

- an opportunity to focus on reading for pleasure;
- an opportunity to develop students’ abilities to choose books;

- a way of promoting the school library and encouraging book discussion”
(Merchant et al., 2012, p. 3).

Booked Up is no longer funded by the Arts Council England and a range of sponsors. Today, instead of Booked Up, there is Book Buzz which aims to “help every 11-year-old find a book they can own and enjoy.” Book Buzz works with authors and publishers to put, in the words of Viv Bird, Booktrust’s CEO, “an interesting and relevant book into the hands of eleven-year-olds for a reduced price of £2.50” (Bird, 2012).

Book purchasing, allows children to select a book from a comprehensive list and own their own book. Once they have read their book, they can then swap it with a friend, and because of this, they can have access to a number of books which they might not normally read. Some children use the list of selected titles as a reading list and read all of the books on it. Because this takes place in school, children can be encouraged to think about reading and to talk about books, and then take one home.

The evaluation of Booked Up reported one librarian stating: “You get an enthusiasm for it [Booked Up]...it’s not something a minority of nerdy kids do, it’s something that they’ll all get involved with” (Merchant et al., 2012).

Hopefully, schools will participate in Book Buzz as much as they did with Booked Up, but the financial implication, even at the reduced price, could prevent a number of students getting a book of their own.

In terms of Kelly’s categories of readers Scarlet could be seen as: Reader; Book Lover, Compulsive; Book Cherisher; The Library Lover; The Chronological Reader; The Immersive

Reader and The Sleepy Bedtime Reader (Kelly, 2013). Scarlet is not a real 'Bookworm' in terms of the Booktrust's Reading Habits Survey 2013 (Gleed, 2013, pp. 43-44), because she is not rapidly devouring books, however she does love to read.



I define Scarlet as: an **'avid habitual, sequential, compulsive, social, immersive, series bedtime reader who enjoys fiction and comics.'**

Scarlet is very positive about her enjoyment of reading and she enjoys stories.

She is aware of some people's negative views of people who enjoy reading but this does not appear to stop her from enjoying her own reading and accessing interesting reading material. I believe that the reading habit is firmly formed and I suspect that she will continue to read for the rest of her life.

Scarlet's transition from primary to secondary school has been positive in terms of the amount that she is reading but not in terms of the range of her reading as her readerly reading material during Year 8 is very similar to her Year 6 reading. Her attitude to reading is, however, very positive.

18.3.3 Anna



Anna reported that she was engaging in more reading for pleasure on her secondary questionnaire, compared to her primary questionnaire.

Table 46: Anna's Recorded Reading

Anna	Primary Questionnaire	Secondary Questionnaire
Non-fiction	<p>New</p> <p>OK!</p> <p>The Sun</p> <p>The Daily Telegraph</p> <p>The Daily Express</p> <p>The Times</p>	<p>New</p> <p>OK!</p> <p>Heat</p> <p>TV Guide</p> <p>The Evening News</p> <p>Local paper</p>
Fiction	<p>The Simpsons</p> <p>Batman</p> <p>Spiderman</p> <p>Horrid Henry (Simon, 1998)</p> <p>Bad Spell for Worst Witch (Murphy, 2013)</p> <p>Mermaid Magic (Rees, 2004)</p> <p>Kylie the Carnival Fairy (Meadows, 2012)</p> <p>Alice the Tennis Fairy (Meadows, 2008a)</p>	<p>The Wonder Spot (Bank, 2006)</p> <p>Secrets (Wilson, 2007c)</p> <p>Candyfloss (Wilson, 2007a)</p> <p>Best Friends (Wilson, 2008a)</p> <p>Secret Seven (Blyton, 2012)</p>

	Dani the Drum Fairy (Meadows, 2008b) Ruby the Red Fairy (Meadows, 2003)	
--	--	--

Two things strike me about Anna's reading: the first is that she has recorded less non-fiction with more adult magazines and no comics; the second is that there are fewer books recorded, five compared to seven but that these five books are longer and more challenging than the primary books. This supports Anna's view that she was spending more time in the evening engaged in reading for pleasure. Anna remained positive about her reading and she was enjoying reading a greater range of books.

When I made my first visit to see Anna at her new secondary school, she was positive about her continued reading, and she said that she liked the school library because of "the range of fiction and non-fiction". This suggests that she enjoyed reading a combination of fiction and non-fiction, a feature which was apparent from her secondary questionnaire.

Anna enjoyed reading at night before bed:

Me: "Would any of you sit down and read a book?"

Brandon: Yeah, I've done that once.

Scarlet: Yes I do that all the time.

Anna and Gemma: Yes.

Me: Why do you do that?

Anna: To go to sleep.

Scarlet: I do that, to go to sleep.

Me: And does that help you to get to sleep?

Anna: It's a way of shutting down your body, of relaxing you."

Anna regards reading as relaxing and a way of preparing her body for sleep. She also sees reading as an enjoyable pastime:

Me: "Would any of you say that you like reading?"

Anna: Yes....I like reading stories and pretending I'm in it."

Anna could be described in terms of Howard's taxonomy as an "Avid Social Detached Reader" because she was not reading the same books and series of books as her friends. However, because Anna was reading quite a few newspapers, she did not completely fit into this category.

When I asked if any of the group liked reading in school Anna and Scarlet both said yes. However, Anna was quite scathing about some of the reading that she was asked to participate in at school:

Me: "Do any of you like reading a book in school?"

Brandon and Gemma: No.

Anna and Scarlet: Yes

Gemma: I don't like it when we have to pick a book out of the ERIC book box and I don't like any of those books...

Scarlet: I bring my own.

Anna: Me too.

Scarlet: It's really annoying when you are reading your book in ERIC and then you only have 10 minutes and then you have to pack away before you're ready to or when it's getting exciting – I don't like that.

Anna: They need library sessions not 10 minutes of ERIC."

Anna was rarely the most vocal person in the group and to hear her criticise a school policy was something new. Often she would agree or disagree with points that the other participants made. She was never a silent member of the group and she expressed her opinions clearly, however, sometimes other participants could dominate the conversations.

One of the longest contributions Anna ever made occurred during a conversation when she was in Year 8. In it she was critical of a reading programme which she had recently been placed on. On her primary questionnaire, Anna stated that she spoke a language other than English at home but that she could not read or write in this language. Her spoken home languages were Portuguese and English. At the beginning of Year 8, after a whole academic year at the school, Anna was informed that she had to participate in an EAL (English as an additional language) reading scheme. She did not enjoy participating in this reading scheme and she became quite agitated when she talked about it:

Me: "So what have you been reading recently?"

Brandon: (as quick as a flash) Nothing!

Anna: This book on the EAL reading scheme because I have to and it is *really* boring...English as an additional language, I think it is a pile of rubbish but what can I say? (Her emphasis)

Me: In your old school you were reading lots and lots of books and you were really enjoying them. Do you enjoy these EAL books?

Anna: NO! And you get quizzed on them afterwards. I just want to read my normal books and it's really annoying because I'm fast, I'm fast at reading, don't mean I didn't read it...

Me: What are the EAL books about?

Anna: Really, really boring predictable stuff. They are so easy to read. But if I read them at my normal speed (really fast) then they don't think I've read them and they make me go back and read them out loud. It is so embarrassing and annoying, it's like they don't think I can read. I'm in the top English set, I like reading, I get good

grades but just because I speak Portuguese as well as English I have to do these rubbish tasks.

Me: Do you still get to read the books that you want to?

Anna: Yes, I do and I like them but I don't get as much time because I have to read these stupid EAL books."

The resentment Anna had for two school initiatives, ERIC and the EAL programme, was very clear. She resented the time the EAL reading that she was being asked to do took out of her day and she saw this reading as stopping her reading what she wanted to read. The fact that Anna doesn't remember the title of the EAL book which she had recently read indicates its lack of importance to her. For the reading that she has chosen to engage in, she remembers each and every title, but for this EAL reading she does not. She also resents being made to read some of the EAL books out loud. She assumed that this was because the EAL teacher didn't think that she had read the book because she completed it so rapidly. It does not occur to Anna that the teacher wants to hear her read the EAL text to check her progress and her ability to read the text. The words of Daniel Pennac spring to mind here:

"He who reads aloud exposes himself absolutely. If he doesn't understand what he's reading, he betrays himself out loud. It's a shame, and you can hear it. If he's not as one with his book, the words will die on his tongue and leave a taste. If he bullies the book with his voice, the author retreats; the performance becomes a pantomime, and you can see it. He who reads aloud exposes himself to whoever hears him"
(Pennac, 1994a, p. 204).

Anna had not selected her reading material, she had not fully engaged with it, and she was resentful about having to read the text. I did not hear her read her EAL text out loud so I can only assume that she did not read the text with her usual passion and fluency because she did not care about what she was reading. I had observed Anna in her primary and secondary English lessons and I had heard her read out loud with passion, fluency and enjoyment.

“If he *really* reads, if he adds all his understanding to the act and masters his pleasure, if his reading becomes an act of empathy with the audience and the book and its author, if he can communicate the necessity of writing by touching our deepest need for stories, then books will open their doors, and those who felt excluded from reading will follow him inside” (Pennac, 1994a, pp. 204-205).

This is the difference - in my opinion - between being forced to read something as a skills-based exercise and choosing to read something for pleasure. One is work, the other is enjoyment. In some ways Anna did not view her EAL reading as real reading. She didn't record the titles of these books on her questionnaire, indeed, she couldn't remember the titles of the books and she only spoke of them as “boring, predictable and easy”.

She also wanted to be able to engage in sustained reading at school for longer than the ten minutes which ERIC offered. Here was a student who liked reading, whose reading between primary and secondary school had developed in terms of complexity, who was happy to talk about her reading with a researcher and who was good at reading. It was ironic, then, that her secondary school was in danger of turning Anna off reading for pleasure by making her participate in initiatives which aimed to encourage and develop her reading.

During our secondary school conversations Anna revealed that she had never thought of her mother as a person who reads. On both the primary and secondary questionnaires, Anna had recorded that her mother did not read at home. Recently Anna had woken up late at night not feeling well. She didn't call out to her mother because she didn't want to wake any of her brothers and sisters up (brothers aged 15 and 8, sisters aged 10 and 4) so, instead, she got up and went to her mother's room. She was shocked to see her mother sitting up in bed reading. Anna had never seen her mother engaged in independent reading for pleasure. She had seen her reading to and with her siblings and she was aware that her mother always encouraged her to read, but she had always assumed that her mother did not read for herself. This made me think about the perceptions our children have of their parents' reading habits. Apparently, Anna's mother had always read in bed at night. It was

her way of relaxing after a hard day and she could not imagine going to sleep without having read. It was just that this reading was hidden from Anna.

Educators frequently talk about the home-school partnership in encouraging children's steps on their reading journeys. "The importance of the parental role in children's reading is undeniable" (Guppy and Hughes, 1999, p. 157). However, I argue that the apparent simplicity of this statement may mask a more complex set of processes. Significantly, as children become more independent in their reading, and they move beyond wanting to read with a parent, then discussion of what each person is reading becomes important, both for the parent to learn about what their child is reading and interested in, and for the child to hear about what their parent is reading and interested in. In today's world, it is so easy for parents who regularly read not to do so in front of their children and I feel that this is dangerous. As parents, we spend so much time, energy and pleasure teaching and encouraging our children to love books and reading, but once children *can* read independently we then sometimes fail to model reading for pleasure by not reading in front of them.

In terms of Kelly's categories of book reader, Anna could be classed as "Reader; Book Lover; Compulsive, Book Cherisher, Chronological, Situational; The Sleepy Bedtime Reader." Anna enjoys reading, she likes owning her own books and she actively chooses to participate in reading for pleasure as a preferred leisure activity (Kelly, 2013).

Anna was divided about how her friends viewed reading. On her secondary questionnaire she wrote, "I think my friends think reading is: cool, weird, boring, O.K., geeky." Like Scarlet, Anna had chosen to draw two images in response to the instruction: "Please draw a picture of what your friends think a reader looks like." (See Figure 38).

Figure 38: Anna's Secondary Questionnaire Image



Anna's first image was of an androgynous individual with barely-defined clothing and body shape. The book reader is scruffy, wearing glasses, holding a book with the word 'Geek' next to them. Little care has been taken to produce this image. The second picture is more flattering with a shapely female with long wavy hair wearing a fitted outfit with a short skirt. She was holding a magazine. This seems to suggest that Anna thinks that her friends think reading magazines is acceptable and that reading books, whether fiction or non-fiction, projects and accompanies a geeky and deeply undesirable image.

Magazines

According to Clark and Osborne's 2008 study, 72.2% of secondary school students read magazines more than once a month. This was the most popular type of reading recorded by Clark and Osborne, with websites in second place, with 61.4% of secondary pupils. More interestingly, in response to the question "Which of the following do you read outside of school more than once a month?", 75.9% of secondary readers and 66.2% of secondary non-

readers regularly read magazines (Clark and Osborne, 2008, pp. 2-3).

There are a number of commentators who suggest that teachers can utilise the popularity of magazines to encourage reluctant readers, and Pilgreen is one who exemplifies their view:

“...some periodicals are the only material that will engage reluctant readers at first. Students often associate ‘books’ with school – and magazines and newspapers with real life...” (Pilgreen, 2000, p. 73).

This supports the notion that engaging children in reading magazines that they find interesting will, hopefully, serve as a stepping stone towards reading books. Fran Lebowitz emphasises this link in colourful, even visceral, language: “Magazines all too frequently lead to books and should be regarded by the prudent as the heavy petting of literature” (Lebowitz in, Walton Hamilton, 2009, p. 103).

There are other writers who comment on the popularity of magazines for girls aged eleven upwards who no longer want to read comics. For example, Millard reported, in her 1997 study, that in the case of eleven year olds:

“...girls overwhelmingly opt for the wide range of teenage magazines currently on the market which mix information about pop stars, fashion and personal relationships, with pictures and stories and make-up tips” (Millard, 1997, p. 62).

Some writers have looked at the content of these magazines in terms of pre-teenager and teenager body image and early sexualisation. (Dohnt and Tiggemann, 2006, Tiggemann and Miller, 2010, Vandenbosch and Eggermont, 2012, Botta, 2003). However, my interest in magazines centres around the view that the girls were ‘expected’ to read popular women’s magazines such as ‘OK!’, ‘Hello’ and ‘Heat’. I am concerned by this because all of the girls involved in my study were engaged in reading for pleasure when they entered secondary

school. They were not Pilgreen's or Hamilton's 'reluctant readers', they were avid readers, and yet, by entering secondary school, they were met with the unspoken expectation from peers that they 'should' be reading magazines written for adults.

Sue Palmer raises the issue of sustained reading and states:

"The trouble with reading magazines and reading online is that you don't get the narrative thread of a story in the same way. By reading a book you are building up the stamina to absorb words for a longer period of time. What you are doing is gradually locking brains with the author, which you do not really do in quite the same way when you read chunks of a magazine or chunks of text on a screen. This personal interaction going on in your head is the thing that's special about reading a book and the pleasure of that is what, in the end, turns someone into a reader" (Palmer quoted in Gammell, 2008).

Gemma, Scarlet and Anna were all used to reading fiction books for sustained periods of time when they entered secondary school and I was concerned that their reading of gossip magazines would have a detrimental impact upon their reading choices and their reading stamina.

The comments about girls reading magazines such as 'OK!' 'Hello' and 'Heat' by Anna, Gemma and Scarlet also interested me because it focused on peer expectations:

Anna: "That's just normal.

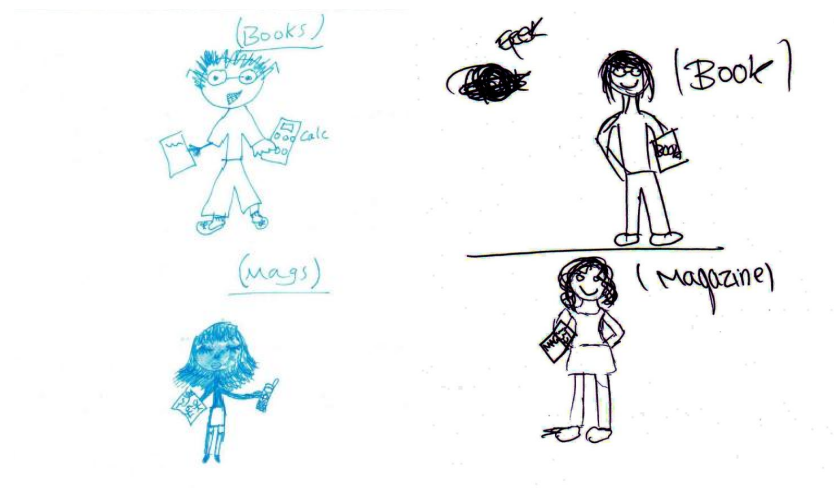
Gemma: That's expected.

Scarlet: That's normal."

There was also the view that reading magazines was considered 'acceptable' reading for girls. This is most explicitly shown in Scarlet and Anna's drawings of what they think their

friends think a reader looks like (see Figure 39). The girls completed these drawings separately, yet I am struck by how similar they are. Here, there is a singular and emphatic demarcation between 'acceptable' magazine reading and 'unacceptable' book reading.

Figure 39: Scarlet and Anna's Secondary Questionnaire Images



The incontrovertible message that magazine reading was 'expected' and 'normal' was interesting. This was especially true when I looked at the magazine reading the three girls were doing in secondary school compared to their primary school. Gemma had recorded no magazines on her primary school questionnaire and two - 'OK!' and 'Hello' - on her secondary school questionnaire. Scarlet recorded no magazines on either of her questionnaires. Anna recorded 'OK!' and 'Heat' on her primary questionnaire and 'OK!' 'Heat' and 'New' on her secondary questionnaire. Thus, Gemma had altered her reading and was now reading these popular women's magazines; Scarlet continued not to read these magazines and Anna had continued to read these magazines, and had increased her range of them. Scarlet's reading behaviour drew my particular attention. Even though Scarlet had said that reading these magazines was 'normal' she herself was not engaging in this reading. She was aware of the expectation to read the magazines, and the wide social acceptance of reading these magazines, but she was not following this path herself. By way of contrast, Gemma had extended her reading to include such magazines and she was doing what she herself said was 'expected'.

Anna was also reading these magazines, and she was reading more than she had been in

primary school. Her picture, and her stating that this was 'normal', revealed that she was aware of the expectation to read these magazines and she had slightly changed her reading behaviour.

The impact that perceived peer expectations had upon the girls' reading choices was clear. It was also clear that Brandon was also aware of this expectation: during our group discussion, he confidently asserted the fact that he knew about the extent of girls' magazine reading, saying "They all do!" However, there was no expectation for the boys to read magazines, but there was one that during library lessons in some schools, for boys to read non-fiction.

This expectation to read women's gossip magazines put pressure on the girls and some of them changed their reading behaviour in order to fit in. That this reading was seen as acceptable and other types of reading were unacceptable was also noteworthy. The awareness of peer expectations and values did have an impact on these girls and their reading.



I define Anna as an '**avid, habitual, sequential, environment dependent, bedtime reader of fiction and non-fiction**'.

In primary school Anna was reading a lot of fiction as well as non-fiction and this had continued into her secondary school. Anna still enjoyed reading series, but she had become a little more sophisticated in her choices moving from Meadows' fairy series to Jacqueline Wilson. This move to Jacqueline Wilson could be seen in terms of Anna experiencing more writerly texts, as she learns of this new author's style and of the new genre.

I believe that the reading habit is firmly formed; she voluntarily reads books as a preferred leisure activity and will, I believe, continue to do so if she can access the 'right' books to keep her interested. Her transition from primary to secondary school has seen a slight decline in the number of books being read, but this could be because she did not record the EAL books she was forced to read and the fact that the Wilson novels were longer than the Meadows' novels. Her attitude to reading has remained positive, however, her dissatisfaction with ERIC and the EAL reading could kill her enthusiasm.

18.3.4 Brandon



Brandon recorded that he didn't read on either of the nights prior to the primary school or the secondary school questionnaire (see Table 47).

Table 47: Brandon's Recorded Reading

Brandon	Primary Questionnaire	Secondary Questionnaire
Non-fiction	1001 Horrible Facts (Rooney, 2006)	
Fiction	A Roald Dahl book – can't remember the title	It was a horror book – I can't remember the title

On both questionnaires, primary and secondary, Brandon had struggled to remember what reading he had done, but he had read at least one book. He also stated that his ownership of his own books had reduced from between twenty-six and fifty books on the primary questionnaire, to between eleven and twenty-six books on the secondary school questionnaire. There was also a discrepancy between the number of books that he recorded being in his home for the primary questionnaire, "quite a lot" of books, and his estimate, on the secondary questionnaire, of "hardly any" books.

It could be debated that Brandon was two years older than he was during his initial primary school evaluations, and, as a result, he was more realistic about the numbers of home books recorded. However, Brandon was generally much more negative about books and reading when I spoke with him in secondary school and I am inclined to think that his responses mirrored his attitude rather than absolute numerical accuracy. He recorded on both questionnaires, that his father, with whom he lived, read regularly and during our primary school conversations he stated that he liked talking to his father about his reading:

Brandon: "At home I ask my dad how to pronounce it [a word] and if it's a word I don't know the meaning of, what it means.

Me: Do you talk about the books you read with your dad?

Brandon: I like talking to my dad about the weird facts I find out in 'The Guinness Book of Records' (Glenday, 2010). I also like talking to him about adventure books..."

Brandon was also quite positive and proud about his reading in primary school:

"I think reading is important and fun because sometimes you get like the educational books and sometimes you get like the adventure book or all the books that are life-like."

"Reading is a very important thing in my life."

"When I was about five years old I was reading like chapter books – which is kind of weird...I read really big books. I mean they're just massive...I'm one of the best readers in the school."

Brandon was confused by children who wrote that they thought that reading was bad:

Brandon: "Yes, two people wrote 'bad', who would write 'bad'? That's crazy!"

From this I suggest that Brandon did not think that reading was bad, in fact, I believe that he enjoyed reading.

His opinion about his reading ability had not changed, with both his primary and secondary school questionnaires recording the comment of "Very good". However, once in secondary school, his views on how much reading he did had declined. On the primary questionnaire

he had recorded that he did “about [an] average” amount of reading, whereas, on his secondary school questionnaire, this had changed to “not very much” reading.

In primary school, Brandon contradicted himself with regards to his reading. For example, at one point he said that he liked rereading books: “a storybook you can read over and over again especially if you really like it.” And yet, in the same conversation he stated that he didn’t reread books insisting, “I never read books over again now.”

In secondary school Brandon was generally less positive about reading but he was still reading, although not really admitting to his reading. For example, he stated in his first secondary school interview:

“I don’t read anymore...I haven’t since I was about six years old. I used to read big books but now I don’t.” Also, “I only ever read one book.”

Then, during the same conversation he stated:

Brandon: “I don’t tend to read much, only when you know I can’t get to sleep then I read.

Me: If you got a book for your Christmas present would that be a good present or a bad present?

Gemma: It depends what type of book it is.

Anna and Scarlet: Good

Anna: But not if it was a factual book.

Brandon: Bad.

Me: So if it was ‘The Guinness Book of Records’?

Brandon: I’ve read all of them, they’re good...”

This shows that either Brandon was confused about his enjoyment of reading or that he was unwilling to admit to his enjoyment of reading to others and himself. It might also suggest that he didn't regard reading 'The Guinness Book of Records' (Glenday, 2010) as reading. This could be because Brandon might have viewed reading for pleasure as fiction, or - as he puts it - "storybook "reading.

I had set up the group conversations with the students at Secondary School C to include one group of four students. The three girls came from Primary School B and Brandon came from Primary School C. Brandon had met the three girls prior to our first group conversations because he was in at least one lesson a week with each one of the girls. However, none of them had known him when he was in primary school. It was difficult to judge if he was saying that he didn't read because he was defensive in front of the girls or if it was because his reading patterns were changing. It was confusing because if he had made only negative statements in front of the three girls then it could have been because he was concerned about his image. However, because he made contradictory statements in front of the girls I believe that there was more than just image involved.

When I spoke with Brandon one-to-one the pattern was similar. He was quite negative about reading at the beginning of our conversation and yet, by the end he was more positive:

Me: "Last time I saw you said that you never read and on the 'Booked Up' day I saw you sit and read and read and read. I was just wondering what was going on...

Brandon; I'm just good at reading and I'm really fast at it but it's just something that I don't really do.

Me: Do you think that your reading has maybe stopped because you're at secondary school?

Brandon: Possibly.

Me: Do you think the reading might have stopped because you have more things to do now, like homework?

Brandon: Perhaps, maybe it's just something I don't do any more.

Me: Okay, so when you are in here for a library lesson, what sort of books do you grab hold of?

Brandon: I don't know, I just grab anything...and then put it back at the end of the lesson man! [Brandon is getting a bit grumpy now. I decide to change tack and talk about his relationship with his father which I know is still a positive one.]

Me: Do you still talk to your dad about the stuff you're doing in school?

Brandon: Yeah, I like that."

I think that this exchange reveals that Brandon has become quite negative about reading. However, I also think that this was partially explicable by the way that he had chosen to present himself at secondary school. I believe this because of what transpired later in our conversation:

Me: "At primary school some of the people were saying that they didn't want to be seen as a reader when they got to secondary school.

Brandon: I didn't say that!

Me: Yes, I know you didn't, look here is your form...

Brandon: Oh, yeah, alright.

Me: Why do you think some people would say that or be worried about that?

Brandon: Well I guess it's one of those things where they don't want to be thought of as a nerd probably...

Me: Do you think it is bad for people to be seen as a nerd or a Geek or someone who likes reading or someone who is good at school?

Brandon: I don't know because I'm good at school, but I wouldn't be called a Geek, it kind of makes sense..."

Brandon, one-to-one.

I believe that Brandon was very aware of his image in school. This might explain his very negative and often contradictory initial statements about reading either when he was with a group of students or when he was just talking with me. Brandon still read, and still enjoyed reading:

Me: "Do you still read when you can't get to sleep?"

Brandon: Oh yes, when I can't get to sleep.

Me: What do you read? I mean, do you have books in your room ready for when you can't sleep?

Brandon: Yes, I liked the 'Booked Up' one, I read that one a lot.

Me: Is it good?

Brandon: Yeah, it's kind of cool..."

Brandon, one-to-one.

This exchange directly contradicts what Brandon said in front of the girls and myself during a previous group conversation, where he stated, "I haven't even read one page of it [the 'Booked Up' book]. Brandon appears inconsistent in his comments about his reading and his attitudes towards reading. However, this one to one exchange revealed that he did still read, and that he enjoyed reading a book which he thought was "cool". The fact that Brandon was not prepared to talk about his reading in front of the girls, unless he inadvertently 'dropped' his guard, or that he was prepared to immediately discuss it during a one-to-one with me, I believe, stems from his desire to fit in. Brandon talked with me specifically about his desire for social acceptability in relation to reading:

Me: "Do you ever talk about that book ['Booked Up' free book] at all with your friends in school?"

Brandon: No never...

Brandon: A Geek is someone who is really clever and they like reading, they have hardly any friends and they're not funny, and they're not fun to be around and stuff like that

Brandon: People will see you as different and you won't make friends if you're reading."

Brandon, one- to-one.

This idea of being seen as different was also present in a group conversation:

Me: "So how many of you enjoy reading but would never admit to enjoying reading?"

Brandon: You would never admit to that, wasting your time reading. Your friends would be like...

Gemma: (chipping in) 'Oh my God, you've been reading!'"

There is a pattern emerging here of Brandon not wanting to be seen as 'different' or as a Geek. He wants to fit in and he was prepared to 'hide' his reading, and - over time- engage in less reading, to ensure that he achieved this. He was concerned with his image and he became quite defensive when one of the girls accused him of being a 'chav':

Me: "What do you think about the people who wrote it's geeky? "I think my friends think reading is geeky."

Brandon: I think that they're chavs!

Gemma: Yeah, chavs!

Me: So chavs wrote that comment?

Brandon: Yes, chavs would say reading's geeky.

Me: What's a chav?

Gemma: Brandon kind of looks like a chav...

Brandon: No way! I don't have that haircut; I'm definitely not a chav!

Me: Is it okay to be a chav?

Brandon: I don't know...chavs bully."

I found it interesting that, on two separate occasions, Brandon stated that he wasn't a member of a specific group, Geek or chav, and that he was quick to say that he was not a member of the latter group. He did not appreciate the girls saying that he looked a bit like a chav and he had a clear idea of not only what a chav looked like - insisting "I don't have that haircut" - but also of what a chav did behaviour associated with a "bully".

Brandon did not just contradict himself about reading, he also contradicted himself about going to the school library. In primary school Brandon had said enthusiastically:

"I think there's going to be lots more books in the library I think there's going to be much more research to do and more fact books."

During our secondary school conversations, however, Brandon said "I don't go to the library." When I questioned this he clarified his position with, "Well, I have, I mean, I have to go this week because I've got printing homework..." Also, I had observed Brandon in his English lesson, reading in the library. This suggests that Brandon did not publically want to be associated with reading, or by association, the library, because he was very concerned with how he would be viewed by his peers.

Brandon wanted to be seen as sociable and fun and not as a reader, Geek or chav. In school he placed friendships and social interaction higher than reading. This is shown in the following exchange:

Me: “Would it be fair to say that some of the things that impact on your reading are: friends, homework, being allowed to do more by yourself (going into the city after school)?

All: Yes.

Scarlet: But I still spend the same amount of time on my reading.

Me: But, are you busier?

Gemma: Yes, I have animals and they’re hard work.

Brandon: I have friends.

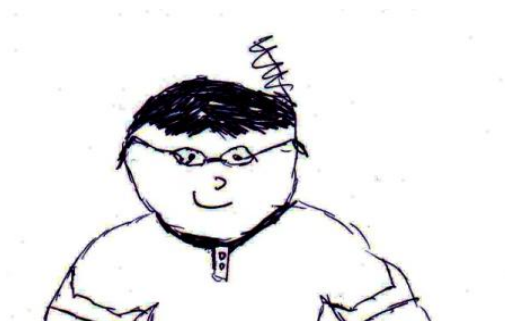
(General laughter at his delivery and comic timing)

Me: Are friendships more important?

All: Yes.”

On his secondary questionnaire, Brandon wrote that “I think my friends think that reading is: alright.” This surprised me because, in our conversations, Brandon had been concerned about how he was perceived and he had deliberately played down any enjoyment he got from reading for pleasure. His picture of “what your friends think a reader looks like” was also confusing (see Figure 40).

Figure 40: Brandon’s Secondary Questionnaire Image



This drawing of a male could be seen as negative because of the glasses and not very stylish hair, however, it does not depict an overtly geeky or nerdy person. As Brandon said, reading is “alright”, it is more positive than negative and I think that his picture reflects this.

In terms of Kelly’s classification of readers Brandon could be seen as “The Anti-Reader” who never reads books, because they are too damn long...” but I don’t believe that this fully conveys the true picture. I think that Brandon could be better described as: “Reader, Conflicted” because he doesn’t see the reading that he does frequently engage in as reading for pleasure. However, he could also be viewed as “The Sleepy Bedtime Reader” because he frequently reads to help him get to sleep.

Howard’s taxonomy is also difficult to relate to Brandon. His on-line reading during gaming could be viewed as “social” and “communal”, because this reading takes place on-line and there is a common link between the players and the reading material. However, he is not an “avid” reader, and even though he has always been good at reading and held positive rather than negative views about reading, perhaps he never was an avid reader.

My concern with Brandon is that perhaps he is beginning to believe his own mantra of ‘I don’t read’ when, in fact, he does. I also worry that the mantra ‘I don’t read’ could easily become ‘I don’t like reading’, which, according to the Booktrust’s Reading Habits Survey, is what 11% of the adult population say (Gleed, 2013).

Brandon used to enjoy talking to his dad about his reading of adventure stories and about the facts he had discovered in books like ‘The Guinness Book of Records’ but he had never really talked to his dad about his computer games:

Brandon: “I do lots of reading when I play computer games on the PC I have to read the story line and the instructions.

Me: Do you talk to your dad about the computer game adventures?

Brandon: Not so much as books.”

He read the messages and storyline but still returned to books when he couldn't get to sleep. He pointed out “When playing the games I read all of the messages on the screen.” This reading was not validated at home by his dad, even though Brandon enjoyed it. During a one-to-one secondary school visit I asked Brandon about his computer games and his conversations with his father:

Me: “Do you still talk to your dad about the stuff you're doing in school?

Brandon: Yeah, I like that.

Me: Do you talk to your dad about your reading?

Brandon: Not really.

Me: What about your computer games:

Brandon: Dad's not a gamer, he doesn't really get it.

Me: Are the games full of adventures?

Brandon: Yes, and you have to travel around different lands and solve puzzles and battle characters. They're really cool.

Me: And you don't talk to your dad about them?

Brandon: He doesn't see them like books.”

Brandon, one-to-one visit.

Computer Games and Reading

Today's children are growing up in a very different world to the world in which I grew up. My childhood technology involved three channels on the black and white television and designated times for children's programmes. Computers needed a cassette tape loading to

allow programmes to run and computer games were as advanced as 'Pong' the - very basic - tennis game (1972). There were records - which were singles, albums, 12 inch and picture discs -, cassette tapes and the radio to listen to. Phones were attached to the wall by cables and there were no mobile phones let alone smart phones. The internet as we know it did not exist and if you needed to look something up you used an encyclopaedia. There was no social media - nor snap chat, Face Book, and iPads. Books were paperback or hardback and you either bought them from a bookshop or borrowed them from a public library.

Today's children operate in a very different world in which, from an early age, they are:

“...immersed in textual landscapes that are no longer print dominated – this has implications for the skills and knowledge they bring with them to literacy instruction and for the world of work and leisure in which they will live out their lives”
(Carrington, 2005, p. 10).

Many have argued that the rise the usage of television, the internet and computer games have had a detrimental effect upon children's reading for pleasure. There seems to be an age-old argument which states that time spent watching television and playing computer games is inherently bad and that, unlike reading a book for pleasure, there is no educational benefit. Carrington addresses this assumption and writes:

“The assumption made by many of those who have never given computer games serious consideration is that printed text has been replaced with colour, music, mindless pushing of buttons and some hand-eye coordination” (Carrington, 2005, p. 14).

There appears to be conflict between children's reading and their love of computer games and other modern media. However, as Mem Fox states:

“Reading is not inherently 'good'. Television is not inherently 'bad'. What matters for

children – and adults – is the pleasure, the experiences, the relaxation, the excitement, the workings of the brain, the growth in general knowledge, and the satisfaction they get from each” (Fox, 2001, p. 132).

Carrington addresses the issue that many believe that there is not much reading involved in computer game play:

“There is, in fact, an abundance of printed text [in a computer game], but its relevance to successful interaction is less direct. Regardless of the amount of printed text, there is never enough textual information or audio to play the game without experimenting, guessing, taking risks and being prepared to lose” (Carrington, 2005, p. 14).

Thus, the role of text in computer games is very different to traditional print-based text such as books. When a child is reading a book the text has to be addressed first and then graphical information is addressed second as a supplement to the printed text. However, just because text is addressed in a different way, this does not negate the fact that there is text which needs to be read.

Some of the benefits of children playing computer games are discussed by Marsh and Millard:

“Educators have often overlooked the learning opportunities offered by popular, console-based computer games which develop a range of skills including hand-eye coordination, parallel processing, spatial and problem-solving skills. Resources of this kind are embedded within the intertextual media universe of young children’s lives and may motivate them to read across categories” (Marsh and Millard, 2003, p. 14).

This intertextuality of the media universe is important because of the merchandising which

surrounds television and computer game characters. These include pencil cases, school bags and, importantly for me, books. Thus, a child may become interested in a character because of a computer game, but they might subsequently read a book with that character in because of their initial game playing. Another aspect of developing a child's reading is the amount of information available on-line about specific games and specific characters. Children can go on-line and find the information required to complete a particularly tricky part of a game, or they can search for top tips on how to play the game. These involve reading, perhaps not reading for pleasure in the traditional sense, but they do involve and encourage reading.

As Marsh and Millard argue, children can engage in:

“reading comics and books related to their favourite TV characters, finding web sites devoted to them...rather than inhibiting reading...such artefacts [products linked to TV characters] can actually encourage children to extend their reading” (Marsh and Millard, 2003, p. 4).

Children's knowledge of, and enjoyment of, computer games can also be utilised in the classroom. Marsh and Millard argue that:

“Children's interest in computer narratives can be put to a wide range of uses. For example, a Y5 class developed a range of puzzle-solving adventures, based on platform and adventure computer games, using a wide range of character and settings in other media” (Marsh and Millard, 2003, p. 15).

Connie Veugen states, “Compared to film, and especially books, computer games are a very young medium,” (Veugen, 2011, p. 1). However, this is the medium to which many modern children tend to turn for their entertainment.

Glover Adams, like Marsh and Millard, suggests that computer games can be used in the classroom. Fantasy computer games can be used to develop advanced and reluctant readers' ability due to the use of fantasy fiction-specific vocabulary. Using the game *Neverwinter Nights*, Glover Adams found that there were several benefits for the students. She found that:

“...reading is one of the most important skills students can use when playing *Neverwinter Nights*. By reading – and reading quickly – students advance in the game, the literacy skills they use involve vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and reading for information. In additions, you may have students play on computers next to each other, thus allowing them to create characters and delve further into the game's plot and theme. By taking on actual characters, they are acting out the story themselves, which is a literacy skill that we often have little time for” (Glover Adams, 2009, p. 59).

Some computer games, such as *Neverwinter Nights*, have a clear story which engages the gamer in the narrative in a similar way to the way in which a good book engages a reader. Veugen argues that:

“...the more modern graphic adventure games...have a strong story element. Being able to participate in a compelling story is one of the key attractions of the traditional adventure game” (Veugen, 2011, p. 83).

The way that Veugen writes about the “gripping non-linear story, which makes it hard to turn away from the computer, because you want to know what happens next...” (Veugen, 2011, p. 83) is reminiscent of how readers of books become immersed in their book and in the story being told. Benton and Fox describe getting into the story of a new book as the

reader agreeing to playing a game:

“When embarking upon a novel the reader... is invited to play a game devised by the author. The rules are given in the first few pages which may indicate the setting, the narrative voice and mode of address...Once he has agreed to play, the reader is rapidly drawn farther into the story world and his preoccupations change from trying to resolve his uncertainties about the game and its rules to apprehending as fully as possible the world around him” (Benton and Fox, 1985, pp. 11-12).

However, where a gamer’s experience differs from a reader’s experience is that, when a gamer is playing a good adventure game, they are participating in the game, whereas when a child reads an adventure story, they are observing rather than participating. Veugen argues that this is because:

“...the way games ‘tell’ stories is different even if the game centres on, or is structured by, a borrowed or adapted story from another medium. It has to be...because games are about agency, about a gamer who makes her own decisions, consequently shaping the sequence of events and, in the truly great story-structured games, also the outcome” (Veugen, 2011, p. 83).

This idea specifically relates to how Brandon viewed his use of computer games. He liked to engage in role-playing adventure games where he created an avatar who participated in the story of the game. This is where Brandon got his adventure ‘fix’: not through reading an adventure story book where his involvement in the virtual world created by the book took place intrinsically inside his head and where he had to imagine the world created by the author, the voices of the characters and other details which come from inside his head. Instead, Brandon got his adventure story ‘fix’ by playing adventure computer games where his involvement in the virtual world of the story took place extrinsically, on the screen in front of him. Veugen expresses this difference between books and computer games as:

“...the way computer games ‘tell’ stories is different from the way books and films do. Computer games do not **tell** stories, nor do they **show** them, they create a story world in which the gamer ‘lives’ the story, for lack of a better term, so from the gamer’s point of view it feels more like mimesis than diegesis” (Veugen, 2011, p. 220).

Brandon still loved adventure stories, even though he was not reading many traditional print-based or book based adventure stories. Instead, he was engaging in playing computer games which allowed him actively to participate in the adventure. James Portnow (2008), quoted in Veugen, states:

“In most written works, the author has all the agency. This means the author controls exactly what happens. The author has complete autonomy over the outcome of every situation. In games, the agency is shared by the player and the author together. The player can’t exceed the bounds of what has been created for him, but he can choose when, how, and in what context he will experience it” (Portnow in, Veugen, 2011, pp. 219-220).

Ostenson argues that:

“Video games have come a long way from the days of *Pong* and *Pac-Man*, and not just in terms of graphical complexity. The games of today have come to rely more and more on the elements of fiction in their design, and they represent unexplored territory in studying the nature and impact of the narrative” (Ostenson, 2013, p. 71).

This involvement in both the adventures, and control over the outcomes according to the player’s choices is what made computer adventure games relevant and engaging for

Brandon in a way that traditional printed books were not. Ostenson wrote that the form of storytelling for a video game is participatory and that the player is the hero, “the one who makes many of the choices and drives the plot” Ostenson also noted the use of second person narrative and how this was more engaging for players because “the words were directed at them and their choices made an impact on the direction the plot would take” (Ostenson, 2013, p. 76). Veugen also echoes this idea:

“Tell me and I’ll forget; show me and I might remember; involve me and I’ll understand” (Chinese Proverb in Veugen, 2011, p. 219).

Brandon, in essence, enjoyed adventures and he wanted to be involved in these adventures and be able to make choices that made a difference to the adventure.

Brandon was struggling with his reading as his father didn’t see the reading he did on his adventure computer games as ‘proper’ book reading. His enjoyment of non-fiction ‘fact’ books was looked down on by some of his peers, for instance, Gemma commented “Oh shame Brandon, fact books!”. Also, his reading of fiction had become surreptitious, and he denied reading in front of his peers and myself, insisting “I don’t read”. The only socially safe reading Brandon engaged in, in school, was his reading of comics:

Me: “What is your favourite thing about the [secondary] school library?”

Brandon: Comics!”

Brandon also struggled with finding books that he wanted to read:

Brandon: “...if it is a good, interesting enjoyable book then it’s not boring but it’s finding them and if it’s not then it’s boring...”

Me: Do you find it easy in this school to get hold of something that you want to read?

All: Yeah.

Gemma: I tend to go and pick up a comic.

Me: What about the library – is it easy to pick up something there?

Brandon: Not really.”

Comics

A ‘safe’ option in library lessons, for some of the students involved in this study, was to select a comic to read. Their reasons for selecting comics were:

- “They are prominently displayed on display racks and you can just take one.”
- “No one will tease you if you’re reading a comic.”
- “Comics are a bit ‘naughty’.”
- “Everyone loves comics.”
- “They’re easy to read.”
- “You can read them quickly.”
- “When the lesson’s over you don’t stop mid-story because the chunks in a comic are so small.”
- “Everyone thinks comics are cool.”

(Student comments)

Whitehead defined comics as “periodicals which consist wholly or mainly of stories told by means of picture strips” (Whitehead et al., 1977, pp. 158-159) and he was scathing in his assessment of comics, stating that, “comics perform for many children the service of a time-consuming drug” (Whitehead et al., 1977, p. 255). He continued by expressing his belief that literature suffered because of “the crowding out of words by pictures in pulp reading matter...” (Whitehead et al., 1977, p. 256) and suggested that reading comics did not benefit children.

Senior is even more precise about her concerns over comics:

“Many teachers are uncomfortable with them [comics], citing the high levels of violence and lack of continuous text as reasons not to allow them as reading material in classrooms. The images of some, such as Wonder Woman, are seen as sensational and explicitly sexual while in others, such as The Simpsons, the language is often crude and challenging towards authority” (Senior, 2005, pp. 80-81).

Marsh and Millard confirm this view when they write “the discussion of comics, animations and cartoon representations often meets with stubborn opposition in schools” (Marsh and Millard, 2003, p. 17).

Whether or not this was the case in the English classrooms of the secondary schools I visited is unknown. What is known for certain is that all of the secondary school libraries involved in my study had a range of comics and graphic novels which were prominently displayed, easily accessible to students and which were frequently read.

The idea that comics are somehow ‘naughty’ is discussed by Senior who states that:

“[a] criticism of comics is the fact that the stories are often anarchic; the challenge to authority worries parents and teachers who think that children will copy the activities they see in the comics, but the students are well aware of the fantasy element of the characters’ ‘naughty’ actions” (Senior, 2005, p. 83).

Marsh and Millard also focus on the idea that comics are in some way ‘naughty’ and state:

“Comic and cartoon forms are, by their very nature, anarchic in content and racy in

language. Adults, parents, teachers and public figures such as police officers, town councillors and mayors are often the butt of a slapstick humour which has adult pomposity as its target. Children are usually shown as coming out on top, however naughty their actions, and the adults left looking silly” (Marsh and Millard, 2003, p. 17).

However, the ‘naughty’ aspect of many comics is that a character is doing something that is not allowed, and that you would never do, just like in slapstick comedy.

Steve Gardiner, when discussing his sustained silent reading programme, states explains why he excludes comics from the reading material allowed. His reasons are fourfold:

1. students read them so quickly that they need to select something else during the session;
2. the reader never seems to settle in and take ownership of their reading choices;
3. students are likely to want to turn to another student to share a cartoon, which violates that student’s right to ‘sustained and silent’ reading time;
4. comics present material in short bits which aren’t good for sustained reading (Gardiner, 2005, p. 35).

I can sympathise with Gardiner’s reasons for not allowing comics in his sustained silent reading sessions, however, I do not agree with his choice. I believe that children should be encouraged to read, and if they enjoy reading comics, then let them read comics. Comics can allow quick access to narrative that some books cannot. As Marsh and Millard state, “Because comic stories are seldom longer than a page or two at most, their narrative structure is readily grasped” (Marsh and Millard, 2003, p. 19).

Whitehead stated that comics do not encourage or develop independent reading:

“Whether such matter [comics] may assist or restrict the development of the reading habit is difficult to determine; but certainly the satisfactions afforded by the most popular comics suggests only the thinnest relation between the two forms of reading” (Whitehead et al., 1977, p. 255).

However, Jim Shooter, quoted in Krashen, tells the reader how he learned to read and spell from his comic books, stating that he used the word ‘bouillabaisse’ to win a spelling star having learned the word from a Donald Duck comic book:

“I’d like to thank my mother who read me that comic book and so many others when I was four and five...I learned to read from those sessions long before I started school. While most of my classmates were struggling with *See Spot Run*, I was reading *Superman*. I knew what indestructible meant, could spell it, and would have cold-bloodedly used it to win another gold star if I hadn’t been banned from [spelling] competition after bouillabaisse (Shooter, in Krashen, 2004, pp. 91-92).

Marsh and Millard state that when comics were sent home as a support for reading,

“...more family members got involved in reading comics with children than when only books were sent home. Comic book reading did not interfere with the borrowing of books, however. It was a case of comics and books, rather than comics or books” (Marsh and Millard, 2003, p. 19).

The actual reading skills which are required to access comics and graphic novels are complex. Senior states “bubble writing, comic-strip format and a variety of typefaces are all things which young people recognize...and they will work harder to access more complex information in this format than from a page of plain text. The interaction of text and visuals makes it possible to present more sophisticated language and ideas which might otherwise

seem too difficult” (Senior, 2005, p. 84).

Whether or not comic book reading is a help or a hindrance to encouraging and developing children’s reading is not the point here, what is pertinent is that children involved in my study felt ‘safe’ reading a comic in front of their peers. They also read comics because it brought them pleasure, which is the focus of this study.

Brandon does still read but he prefers to keep it hidden and, at times he absolutely denies reading. One reason for this could be that, within his peer group, reading for pleasure is not seen as acceptable. Howard states that:

“For the boys in particular, this preference for solitary reading could be a reflection of the ‘socially unacceptable’ nature of male pleasure reading observed by Cherland and Leng: some boys may be reluctant to share their reading with their friends because reading for pleasure is not recognised as a valid male pastime” (Howard, 2008, pp. 115-116).

The obstacles to Brandon continuing with his reading seem numerous.



I define Brandon as: a **‘conflicted, confused, in denial, bedtime reader who regularly reads some fiction and reads narrative via his computer games, and non-fiction.’**

Brandon still enjoys stories but he has become conflicted about his reading for pleasure and perhaps does not regard the reading that he regularly engages in as reading for pleasure. Brandon is aware of some people’s negative views of people who enjoy reading and this does appear to stop him from enjoying his own reading and accessing interesting reading

material. I believe that the reading habit- in its most traditional sense - is no longer firmly formed for Brandon because he does not acknowledge or recognise his reading. I suspect that if Brandon does not appreciate the reading that he does engage in then he is in danger of becoming negative about reading and could become part of the 'Don't like reading' part of the adult population, (Gleed, 2013, p. 50). Brandon's transition from primary to secondary school has been detrimental in terms of the amount that he is reading and the range of his reading, and he is only engaging with readerly texts. His attitude to reading has become quite negative.

18.4 Summary of Types of Readers in Secondary Schools

On paper, at the beginning of this study, these readers appeared to be similar. They all engaged in reading for pleasure, they all held positive views about reading, they all engaged in pleasure reading as a preferred leisure activity and their teachers viewed them as being both good and engaged readers. However, at the end of their first four terms at secondary school this was no longer the case.

The vocabulary I used to describe the students' reading and attitudes to reading at the end of the primary school study was:

adult text, audiobook, avid, bedtime, busy, committed, communal, compulsive, confident, developing, environment dependent, frustrated, habitual, immersive, rapid, re-reader, sequential, series, and social.

At the end of four terms of secondary schooling the vocabulary I used was:

audiobook, avid, bedtime, busy, communal compulsive, computer game narrative, conflicted, confused, developing, devourer, environment dependent, frustrated, habitual, immersive, in denial, sequential, series and stalled.

The above definitions, and combinations thereof, were applied deductively to the data and are explained below in Table 48:

Table 48: My definitions and an explanation of their meanings

Definition	Explanation
Confident	Confident in their reading ability and also confident to talk about their reading with teachers, researcher and friends.
Re-reader	Comfortable with re-reading familiar texts again and again. Can also engage with other new texts or can just re-read old favourites.
Familiar text	Links to re-reading familiar texts but also applies to text types – the same

	author, genre, series.
Adult Text	Moving beyond children's and teenage fiction and reading texts written for adults.
Rapid	A person who reads books really quickly. Will sometimes admit to missing detail because they want to know the story. These readers will sometimes then re-read the text slowly to get the whole story.
Social	These readers will read in front of their friends and will also talk about their reading. They look for recommendations from their friends and like to read the same texts as their friends so as to be able to participate in conversations and not to be left out. However, they also read some texts which their friends don't read and they share this reading with their friends.
Committed	This type of reader is committed to finding time to read, however busy they are. They choose reading as a preferred leisure activity.
Bedtime	People who read at night in bed before sleep.
Avid	People who love reading and always have a book 'on the go'.
Habitual	Someone who regularly reads and is habitual in their reading. They choose reading as a preferred leisure activity.
Sequential	This sort of reader likes reading series of books but they have to read them in the published order.
Developing	Someone who can read but who is not yet a habitual reader. They are beginning to read for pleasure but reading is not a preferred leisure activity yet.
Audiobook	This sort of reader enjoys listening to stories. This might be in bed before sleep, on a journey or with the book open and reading whilst the audio is playing. This sort of reader loves the story and doesn't mind how they access it.
Busy	A reader who likes to read but who struggles to find time for reading.
Environment dependent	Some readers need quite and solitude for reading. These readers struggle to read outside with unexpected noises and in classrooms with others around them. They will have a preferred reading location. For children,

	this is often in their room in bed away from the rest of their family.
Series	This type of reader enjoys a series of books by the same author with the same central characters. Examples are: Harry Potter by J. K. Rowling, Cherub by Robert Muchamore and Alex Rider by Anthony Horowitz.
Immersive	When this type of reader reads they are oblivious to everything else. They become immersed in their reading and might not be aware of things happening around them, for example: a person talking to them, time passing or a bell ringing.
Compulsive	This type of reader has to engage in reading on a daily basis.
Frustrated	This is someone who wants to read and who enjoys reading as a leisure activity but they are struggling to find a safe place to read and they struggle to find reading material that they are interested in. Thus they get frustrated with the situation.
Communal	This type of reader is similar to the social reader but unlike the social reader, they just read the same texts as their friends. They engage in book talk with their friends and look to their friends for reading recommendations.
Conflicted	This type of reader does enjoy reading but they are conflicted because their friends might not enjoy reading or they perceive that reading can be viewed negatively by their peer group and so they don't openly admit to their reading enjoyment.
Confused	These readers enjoy reading but they can be confused by different opinions of reading. In Year 6 reading tended to be viewed positively whereas in Years 7 and 8 reading could be perceived negatively. These readers are confused with how they feel about their enjoyment of reading.
Stalled	These readers share similar traits to frustrated readers and re-readers. They struggle to find new interesting reading material, yet they do not feel comfortable asking teachers, librarians, friends or family for reading suggestions. They re-read the same books or stick to known authors and do not seek out new reading experiences.

In denial	These readers enjoy reading yet they do not admit to reading, or in some cases, they do not recognise their reading as reading. For example, some students were reading but they were not reading fiction so they said that they weren't reading. Many students did not regard non-fiction, social media sites, computer games, texts etc. as reading.
Devourer	This reader <i>has</i> to read. They are similar to compulsive readers but more extreme – they have to read something, anything!
Computer game	These readers are multi-layered. The Computer game narrative reader reads the words on the computer screen to enable them to play their particular computer game but the game has to have a story to tell. To understand the game, the player has to understand the story, so they have to read the text. The social computer gamer engages in on-line gaming or connected gaming with a group of friends where they have to communicate with each other and share information. A final layer of computer game reading is the type of research a gamer engages in to discover better ways to play their games.
Series	This reader likes to read a whole series of books by the same author with the same core characters. They like the predictability of the writing but can get bored of the 'formula' of the series towards the end of the series. At this point, they move on to a new series of books.

One point which must be noted is that no one definition provided an adequate description of any of the students involved in this study. Instead a number of these definitions were used in combination to robustly describe these eight readers. This is very important because it is only with detailed understanding of the child as a reader that an enabling adult can hope to support and facilitate a child's reading for pleasure. My list of definitions is not exhaustive; it contains the definitions for my eight students and could be added to as new readers are encountered.

In the table below (see Table 49), I have presented this vocabulary in terms of:

- which vocabulary was used just to describe the primary school readers;
- which vocabulary was used just to describe the secondary school readers;
- which vocabulary was used to describe both primary and secondary readers.

Table 49: My Vocabulary Used to Define Readers

Primary school definitions	Shared primary and secondary school definitions	Secondary school definitions
Confident	Bedtime	Conflicted
Re-reader	Avid	Confused
Adult Text	Habitual	Stalled
Rapid	Sequential	In Denial
Social	Developing	Devourer
Committed	Audiobook	Computer Game Narrative
	Busy	
	Environment Dependent	
	Series	
	Immersive	
	Compulsive	
	Frustrated	
	Communal	

The vocabulary I used to define the children as readers at the end of their primary school education was nearly all positive. The only negative word used was ‘frustrated’, which applied to Gemma’s reading. But even this word did not reflect any negative attitudes from Gemma towards reading; instead she was frustrated because she was struggling to find a quiet place to engage in her reading for pleasure.

In contrast, the vocabulary I used to define the readers at the end of their first four terms at secondary school was a mixture of positives and negatives. There was approximately 75%

positive vocabulary and 25% negative vocabulary. The words 'conflicted, confused, stalled, and in denial' all reflect the changes in attitudes that some of these young people felt towards reading.

In terms of the six categories I used earlier of: the involvement of others; regularity of reading; reading ability; type of text; preferred reading environment and emotional engagement the secondary school reading looked like this:

Involvement of others: communal, series, on-line gamer.

Regularity of reading: habitual, devourer, busy.

Reading ability: developing, confident.

Type of text: audiobooks, adult or grown up texts, computer game narrative, fiction and non-fiction, readerly, writerly, series, and sequential.

Reading environment: environment dependent, bedtime, computer game.

Emotional engagement: frustrated, compulsive, avid, conflicted, confused, stalled, in denial, and immersive.

Involvement of others: Reading for pleasure is a paradox. On the one hand, the reader seeks solitude to immerse themselves in a good book. On the other, reading for pleasure is an intensely social pastime because of the conversations and discussions which take place. One striking difference between the primary and secondary reading stories was that Brandon, Tom and Gemma had all become more conflicted about sharing their reading with others. Tom was unsure about sharing his reading experiences with new friends at his new school because he wanted to be seen as sociable rather than as a reader. Brandon had lost his communication with his father about his reading, especially his experience of game narrative, which his father did not value as much as novels. However, Brandon did gain an on-line gaming community to whom he could talk about his gaming experience. Gemma tried to exclude her new secondary school friends from her reading and her visits to the school library. This surreptitiousness prevented her from gaining access to new reading material.

Jamie, Theo, Joe and Scarlet did communicate with their friends and family which allowed them to gain new and interesting reading material. The librarian and English teachers in Jamie, Theo and Joe's school really engaged and communicated with the students about their reading. The reading journals allowed and encouraged dialogue between the teacher and student which, crucially, allowed the teacher to learn more about the student and their reading. The journals also allowed the teacher to make reading suggestions to the student in a supportive and informed manner which could develop the student's reading. The knowledgeable librarians at the school also knew the students and could encourage reader development. Anna, Jamie, Theo and Joe also all communicated with their parents about their reading and all four listened and acted upon reading recommendations from their parents.

Regularity of reading: I described Jamie, Theo, Joe, Scarlet and Anna as avid readers. They habitually engaged in reading on a daily basis and they definitely appeared to have caught the reading habit. Jamie, Theo and Joe read fiction in school library lessons every week and Theo and Joe read when they had long coach journeys to sport fixtures. Brandon engaged in a little reading at night to help him get to sleep but he was not an avid reader. In Brandon's once a fortnight school reading lesson he did not read any fiction. Gemma, Scarlet, Anna and Brandon also had school library lessons every fortnight but only Scarlet and Anna regularly engaged in reading fiction during these sessions. Brandon and Gemma avoided reading novels in these sessions and tended to opt for comics.

Reading ability: I classed Jamie and Theo as the most able readers out of the eight research participants. This was because of their diverse reading profile over the two year research period and the number of texts they had read. Joe developed in his reading to have both reading fiction and non-fiction. Anna moved on to more challenging fiction texts which represented an improvement in her reading ability. Scarlet's inclusion of a novel which was not by her favourite author suggests progression from the familiar series texts to something different. Some students, such as Gemma, were reading the same novels in secondary school as in primary school and showed no progress at all in terms of their reading ability. Gemma's re-reading showed evidenced a lack of progression and a lack of selection

strategies for new reading material. Tom and Brandon had reduced the amount of reading that they were engaging in. This showed that they were not progressing in their reading in terms of stamina and variety.

Type of text: Joe was still the only reader who 'read' audiobooks. However, he was reading more fiction texts, and not all of this reading was social reading in terms of reading what everyone else was reading in order to be part of the group. Jamie was rapidly working his way through the readerly Cherub series of novels and this reading allowed him access to social groups and texts which dealt with adolescence and more adult subject matter. His reading of 'Jonathan Livingston Seagull' suggests that he is beginning to explore writerly texts. Theo's reading of the Darren Shan novels showed that he was moving beyond the social group reading of his peer group. The first of these texts could have provided a writerly experience for Theo as he learned a new genre and new author; however, as he progressed through the series, the experience would become more readerly. Tom's reading had moved to increasing amounts of non-fiction, which did not develop him as a reader. Both Tom and Brandon were reluctant to be classed as 'readers' in school and the types of text that they were engaging in most reflected this. Both boys did still read some fiction, but the frequency was declining. Brandon sought his narrative 'fix' from his computer games, which allowed his love of story to continue, but not to develop to experiencing writerly texts.

Gemma's reading had changed to include more magazines, but in all other aspects, her reading had not changed from Year 6 to Year 8. Her experience of the adolescent world was through magazines rather than novels, and her reading had stalled at her Year 6 level.

Gemma was not experiencing any new fiction, and as such, opportunities for experiencing more writerly texts were few. Scarlet had the same love of Derek Landy novels in Year 8 as she had had in Year 6 and she really enjoyed reading the 'Skullduggery Pleasant' series. However, these readerly texts were not helping her to develop as a reader. Her passion for reading might encourage her to explore and experience more writerly texts in future and the social and communal aspect of her reading should allow for reading recommendations

to be shared. Anna had really developed as a reader, and although her reading material was still quite readerly, it was more advanced and age-appropriate than it had been in Year 6. Gemma and Anna also read women's gossip magazines which allowed them certain insight into the adult world but which did not develop them as readers.

Reading environment: the majority of the students still preferred reading in bed at night, with Jamie, Theo, Tom, Scarlet and Brandon all saying that they liked reading at bedtime when they were in bed. Gemma, Scarlet and Anna did not like reading during form time in their classrooms because they felt that the session was too constricted and because of the frequent interruptions. Scarlet liked reading, and talking about reading, in the school library with her friends during the school day but she was aware - as all of the girls were - about there being acceptable and unacceptable public reading. Brandon read in school library lessons and in bed at night, but he often denied this. All of the students were much more aware of their reading environment in school. Jamie, Theo and Joe all thought that reading was an acceptable activity to be seen doing at their school, especially for long journeys to sporting fixtures. In contrast, Tom and Brandon thought that it was inappropriate to read anything other than non-fiction at school. Gemma and Anna were aware that if they wanted to read in public then gossip magazines would be acceptable but that fiction or factual texts would not. Scarlet showed awareness of the magazine culture at her school but avoided it by reading comics, which were socially acceptable but not 'girly'.

Jamie, Theo and Joe liked their library reading lessons because they liked sitting on comfortable sofas around a fireplace or on beanbags. Tom, Brandon, Gemma, Scarlet and Anna all disliked school library lessons because they were not allowed to sit comfortably on the floor, in comfortable chairs or away from other members of their class.

Emotional engagement: Jamie, Theo, Scarlet and Anna continued to read on a regular basis and Joe had also started to read on a very regular basis. Jamie, Theo, Joe, Scarlet and Anna seemed compelled to read and they enjoyed their time spent reading. Gemma, however, had become more and more frustrated by her limited reading material and was finding reading less enjoyable. Tom read to get to sleep but did not engage in reading for pleasure,

just for the fun of reading. Brandon gained pleasure from his narrative reading of computer games but he was not particularly gaining pleasure from reading novels.

18.5 Next Steps

This chapter allowed discussion of these eight students as individuals. It allowed focus on the reading journeys of these students from their primary to their secondary schools. However, there was one more aspect which required exploration. These students were all very aware of 'fitting in' socially at their new secondary school and what they were prepared to reveal about themselves as readers was important.

The next chapter explores the importance of the 'Geek' label for these students and its relevance to them as readers.

19 Geeks

“I think that reading is...sweet but don't read too much
or people will think you're a Geek.” Year 6 student.

In each primary school involved in my research, the word 'Geek' was used in connection with reading. This was totally unexpected. The primary questionnaire data suggested that 78% of the students expressed positive attitudes about reading and yet there appeared to be an underlying concern that an individual should not appear to engage in 'too much' reading or else they would be labelled a Geek. Being called a Geek was definitely a negative that the students wanted to avoid.

19.1 Defining “Geek”

What does the term 'Geek' mean? Our modern understanding of the word Geek has evolved in recent years. The Chambers English Dictionary defines Geek as:

“1 A circus freak or sideshow performer.

2 A strange or eccentric person.

ETYMOLOGY: 16c as *geke*: from Dutch *geek* a fool” (Chambers, 2014).

Wikipedia has added to the evolving meaning of the word Geek. Julie Smith defined a Geek as "a bright young man turned inward, poorly socialized" (Smith, 2013) Wikipedia suggests that the return of the word "Geek" in the mid-1990s can be traced to the popularisation of workplace computing and the Internet, and the dot-com bubble of 1995-2000. This link with computers and IT, and the hint of androgyny which also seems endemic, is cleverly illustrated by the use of the power on, power off button icon shown below (see Figure 41):

Figure 41: Man, Woman, Geek



(<http://www.mrwallpaper.com/Man-Woman-Geek-wallpaper/>)

Also online, the Urban Dictionary is a series of posts which aim to define specific, informal vocabulary choices present in the world today. One post states:

“The term [Geek] now enjoys a special status within the technical community, particularly among knowledgeable computer programmers.

To identify oneself as a “Geek” indicates recognition that most people still consider programming computers to be a bizarre act, along with a certain fierce satisfaction in being very good at their inglorious profession...

Note: Unlike the word “nerd”, which is always pejorative, “Geek” often carries a positive connotation when used by one of the group. The use of the term by outsiders is considered insulting” (<http://www.urbandictionary.com> 2014).

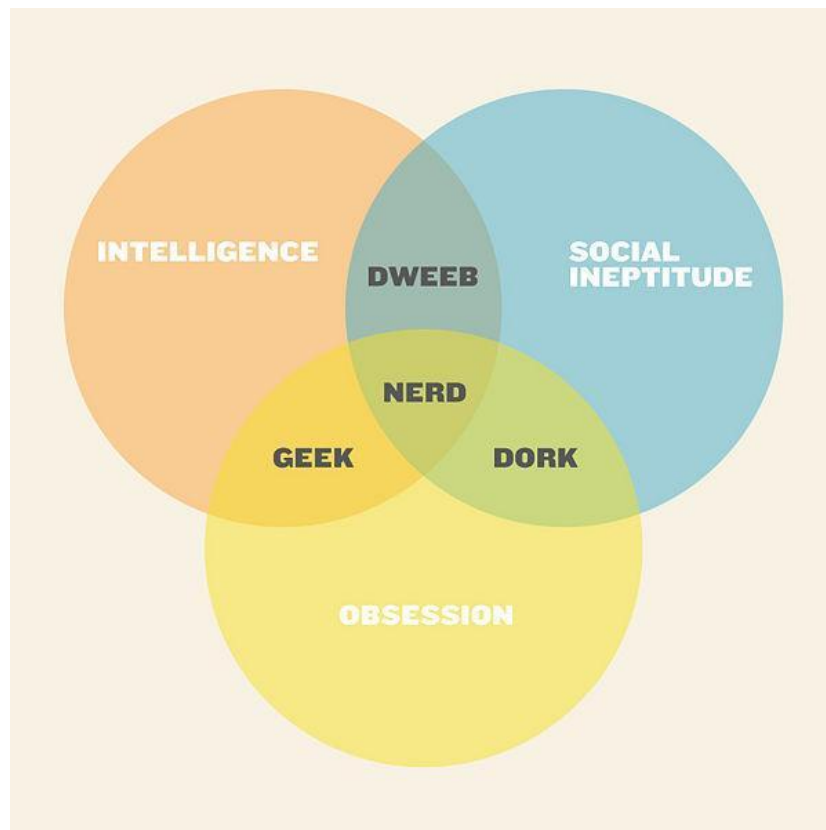
The suggestion, here, that to call oneself a Geek is socially acceptable, but to be labelled a Geek by someone else is not, is developed below:

1. “A computer expert or enthusiast (a term of pride as self-reference, but often considered offensive when used by outsiders.)
2. A peculiar or otherwise dislikable person, especially one who is perceived to be overly intellectual...”

(<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/geek?2014>)

These modern definitions suggest that to have knowledge of computers to be of high intellect, and “overly intellectual” is negative. The graphic below (see Figure 42) shows the links between intelligence, social ineptitude, obsession and the terms ‘dweeb’, ‘nerd’, ‘dork’ and ‘Geek’. This diagram would suggest that Geeks are intelligent and obsessive but are socially adept, unlike nerds who are intelligent, obsessive and socially inept. All the modern definitions link the term ‘Geek’ to high intellect.

Figure 42: Dweeb, Dork, Nerd and Geek Attributes



(http://www.mercatornet.com/articles/view/a_geek_lesson_about_sensitivity 2014)

The flowchart below by Flowtown.com shows one version of the evolution of the word Geek (see Figure 43).

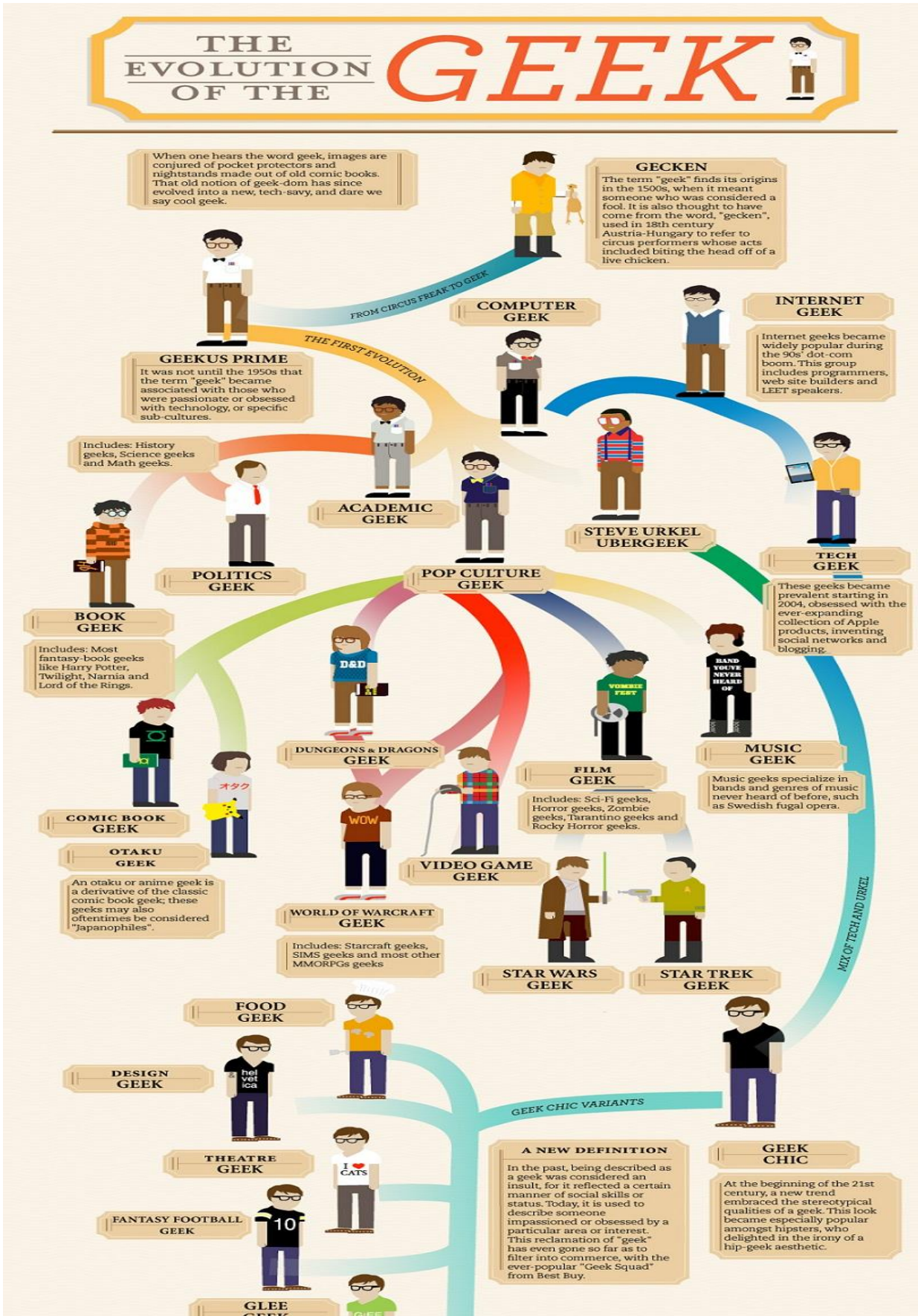


Figure 43: The Evolution of the Geek

From these definitions it would appear that a 'Geek' is intellectual, accomplished at IT and computer skills, and has skills which are perhaps outside of mainstream society. However, with 'Book Geek' and 'Academic Geek' in the above graphic, once again, there is the link to intellect and learning.

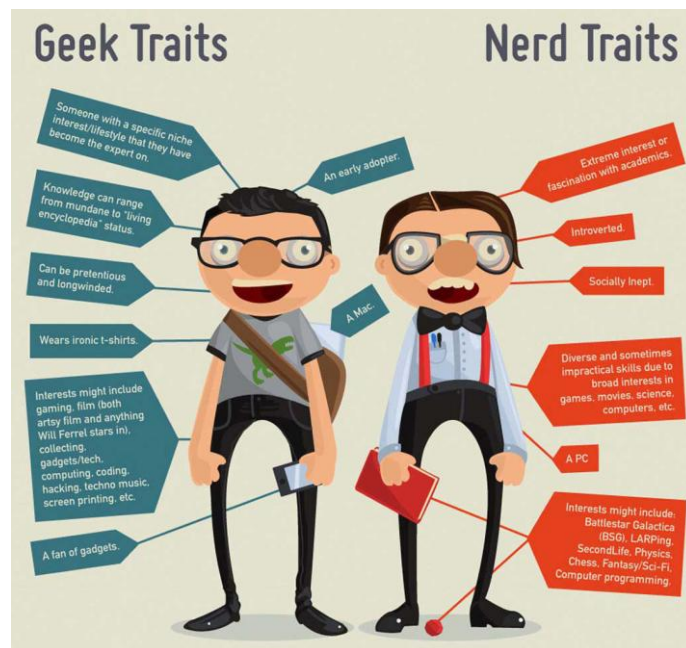
The terms 'Geek' and 'Nerd' were raised by the students in my conversations with them about reading but I struggled to understand the difference between these terms. The graphics below aim to explain the difference (see Figures 44 and 45).

Figure 44: Geek Hierarchy



(<http://techmash.co.uk/2013/01/24/where-do-you-stand-in-the-geek-hierarchy/> 2014)

Figure 45: Geek and Nerd Traits



(<http://www.taelon.co.uk/geek-vs-nerd/> 2014)

The above all suggest that a 'nerd' is somehow less socially acceptable than a 'Geek'.

Kathryn Westcott writes that the 1984 film 'The Revenge of the Nerds' "cemented in people's minds the image of the socially awkward, brainy group that particularly dealt with technology (Westcott, 2012).

Kory Stamper, associate editor for the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, suggests that today the term 'nerd' applies to people with a "depth of knowledge in a particular area," whereas the term 'Geek' has "taken on the more technical overtones that "nerd" once had."

Whatever the modern understanding of the word 'Geek', it was a label that the students involved in my study wanted to avoid in secondary school.

19.2 The Importance of Status Groups in Schools

When I spoke with my students prior to their transition to secondary school, there was an overwhelming desire on their part to 'fit in'. They did not want to stand out or be different in any way. Some of them were concerned that their fondness for reading might be a barrier to them achieving this 'fitting in'.

Status groups and a child's position within these groups can have a positive or negative impact upon a child's experience of secondary school. The students involved in my study thought that being labelled a 'Geek' would have a detrimental impact upon their secondary school experience. Status groups did not appear to be so obvious or as important for primary aged children. This is not to say that there are no status groups within British primary schools, however, status groups appear to be more varied and prevalent within secondary schools. Patrick Brady states:

"The adolescent peer group constitutes a vital component of the institutional culture of the contemporary secondary school...Individual students' perceptions of their positions within that hierarchy have the potential to impact significantly on their attitudes towards the institution they attend as well as the process of formal education" (Brady, 2004, p. 351).

Milner states that status groups are more important to secondary school students than their academic achievement:

"For teenagers, acceptance or rejection by peer cliques and crowds – preps, jocks, nerds, etc. – is often perceived to be much more important than the academic success" (Milner, 2004, p. 23).

Kinney discussed the difficulties attendant with students being in the 'wrong' social group over twenty years ago:

"[We] always had that one group – we had all the good-looking girls and that is the one [group] that everyone wanted to be in. At lunch we sit at our own table [but] if you go out to lunch with the wrong person, rumours would go around that you went to lunch with a *geek!*" (Kinney, 1993, p. 27).

To the students involved in my study, being accepted at their new secondary school was very important, as was trying to avoid the rejection that went with being placed in the 'wrong' social group. Brady explains the potentially wide-ranging significance of this:

"Peer acceptance or rejection has the potential to be a significant factor in the development of adolescents' attitudes towards their formal education and the process of schooling. Perceived or real peer rejection can contribute to the development of a significant sense of alienation on the part of individual students and groups of students" (Brady, 2004, p. 352).

The students were concerned that being labelled a 'Geek' might stop them making friends and fitting in to their new school environment.

Bradford Brown discusses how labels can be given to different groups of students in schools:

"Crowd affiliation denotes the primary attitudes and activities with which one is associated by peers...crowd norms are imposed from outside the group and reflect the stereotypic image that peers have of crowd members" (Bradford Brown, 1990, p. 177).

The suggestion that an adolescent's crowd label is assigned to them rather than them deciding upon it themselves is developed by Bishop who writes:

"Crowd affiliation is most fluid at transition between schools...Many students said they were aware of their crowd assignment, and the assignment of most of their friends, within a month or so after they started middle school. Many were not happy with the stereotypic identity they were assigned, and tried for the next couple of years to escape. However, once classmates categorize you, changing categorization is difficult" (Bishop et al., 2004, p. 237).

The term Geek is a label which is ascribed to a person, few children, it would appear, seek to be labelled as such, and many would go to extreme lengths to avoid being so labelled. The status of a Geek in a secondary school is low compared to more popular groups such as the sporty people or - to use American vernacular - the 'jocks', and the Geeks earn little respect compared to the jocks who tend to earn high levels of respect. Taylor reinforces this idea:

"In the adolescent subculture of the school, peer group interactions are guided by distinctive evaluative standards and status terminology which form the basis of the peer group's prestige hierarchy, and determine the kinds and amounts of respect the occupant of a status category can claim in the adolescent social system" (Taylor, 2001, p. 2).

The hierarchy in schools in terms of crowds is clarified by Bishop:

"In most schools the Jocks, Preppies, and Populars represent identities that carry prestige and bring power. Other crowds – Freaks, Goths, Losers, Druggies, Nerds – represent the bottom of the status hierarchy" (Bishop et al., 2004, p. 237).

In the secondary school, the students that I followed did not want to be labelled 'Geeks'. They felt that if they were labelled a 'Geek' then they would be alienated from other, more popular, groups. Bishop explains this alienation:

"One middle school student said: 'If a 'nerd' goes over and sits next to a jock or somebody who's really popular...they would probably tell him to leave.' Students avoid hanging out with the student since it sends a signal they are a nerd as well. Thus, students who are labelled as outcasts find it difficult to make new friends, and often lose old friends, which limits their ability to develop social skills that can help them get out of their predicament" (Bishop et al., 2004, p. 237).

There is also the use of the word Geek as a means of communication between adolescents in a group who know exactly what the term Geek means whereas any adult would not be totally clear about the meaning of the word. This may be, as Taylor wrote:

"The distinctive terminology or language of adolescents is more than an instrument of concealment or obfuscation, for it reflects their perceptions and assessments of their status in society, their values, interests, beliefs and world view, and serves as an index of solidarity and alienation" (Taylor, 2001, p. 297).

My confusion at the meaning of the word 'Geek' is perhaps unsurprising; I am not an adolescent or member of the social groups that the children I was observing were part of. It was enough for them to know what it meant.

19.3 Why I Believe that I am not a Geek

The students that I followed from primary school to secondary school responded in a number of ways when I asked them if they were Geeks. Their responses could be grouped into three general replies:

- “No because Geeks are like this...”
- “No because I could be called a Geek because I’m good at these subjects, but I’m not good at this subject so I’m not a Geek.”
- “No because I’m sporty or popular...”

19.3.1 “No because Geeks are like this...”

The first typical response of ‘No because Geeks are like this...’ saw the student seeking to reassure themselves, and me, that they were not a Geek by trying to define Geeks. For example, a definition of a Geek from Tom was:

“I think it depends what your personality is if you are a real Geek then you’re like I don’t want to do anything else but read... a Geek learns too much...A Geek is someone who only cares about school and he doesn’t have any social time and...a Geek is someone who plays on the PlayStation all the time or reads. If I read for too long I kind of get like I just want to move around I want to do something.”

It is interesting that Tom feels the need to distance himself from being identified as a Geek with his “If I read for too long...” statement saying why he is not a Geek. Once again, there is this idea of ‘too much’ learning or reading taking place, as if there is some whole group agreed acceptable level of behaviour. It is like a sliding scale: at one end of the scale is ‘too much’ at the other end is ‘too little’ and then somewhere along the scale there is whatever

is acceptable. Like all spectrums of human characteristics, it is not black and white, but many shades of grey.

Tom came up with his own guide to levels of geekiness or geekish behaviour:

“I've said a Geek is no fun they're boring and don't chat a lot, they sit by themselves a lot and that's it basically, there is that sort of a Geek. But then there's another type of Geek, one that thinks they're really cool, but they're not, and they kind of like hang around people – not mentioning any names but you know who I mean – (boy's name mentioned). If someone was reading a book, and like now, if say the whole class, or just some of the class, was reading then that would be a 'One' but a 'Three' would be like over the top, 'One' would be like you might want to read a tiny bit more. And if you read for like half an hour before bed that would kind of like be the expected time so that would be a number 'Two'. 'Three' would be like if you walked around between lessons with books you barely know where you're going. And like the kids who ask for extra prep, they are certainly Geeks. It is important to be sociable and make eye contact with people and you can't do that if your head is always in a book.”

Tom almost lists classifications of Geek when describing his perceived levels of Geeks One, Two and Three. There is a real link, in Tom's mind, between reading a great deal and being a Geek. It is also clear that a boy at his school reads all the time, especially when walking between lessons and Tom thinks that this is not acceptable behaviour. It is interesting that Tom, who read a lot in his primary school, decided to go to his new senior school on his first day without a reading book. He said:

“On my first day in I decided not to bring my reading book because I wanted to be able to make eye contact and make friends and seem sociable rather than being unapproachable because I had my head in a book.”

This idea of being unapproachable because of your reading is developed by Jamie and Joe at Secondary School A:

Jamie: "I mean it's like Harry who every morning from eight o'clock to 8:25, he reads on the beanbags over there, every second break he reads, every lunch break and after school he reads that's all he does all day.

Joe: And it kind of puts people off saying to him 'Do you want to come and do something?' He's isolated himself."

The students of Secondary School C attempted to define a Geek in response to my questioning:

Me: "So what is a Geek?"

Gemma: Well, a genius.

Me: Okay, so someone who is really clever, does it matter what they are good at?

Scarlet: Not really but they just read a lot.

Brandon: Probably maths.

Gemma: It's like someone who really likes every lesson and is good at every lesson to do with their brain...

Me: And is it un-cool to like lessons?

Scarlet: Not really, I mean I like my English because we get biscuits and stuff...

Me: So you said it was more maths and science...

Brandon: Probably more maths."

Here a distinction is being made between:

- being a genius;

- liking every lesson;
- being good at every lesson to do with your brain;
- being good at maths.

Scarlet says that she likes English lessons, not because of the content of the lessons or the subject itself but because she gets “biscuits and stuff.” It is as if she needs a socially acceptable hook to hang her enjoyment of English lessons on, the “biscuits and stuff”, rather than just being able to say ‘I like English’.

This negative labelling for academic success is nothing new. Fordham and Ogbu (1986) wrote about the phenomenon of Black high school students in America, who coped with “acting White” (which meant working hard to get good grades, and achieving those good grades) whilst simultaneously working hard on their image so as to avoid being negatively labelled as intelligent or “brainiacs”. They did this by “diverting time and effort into strategies designed to camouflage” their academic excellence (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986, p. 183). Kinney wrote about how, “Some nerds were singled out for their superior academic performance” (Kinney, 1993, p. 27). This idea of a negative identity is developed by Kinney who adds “...nerds focus so much on their academic achievement that they do not have a social life” (Kinney, 1993, p. 28). This concept of being negatively labelled a Geek because of academic success is also stressed by Gemma:

“Mary is a Geek but I’m only basing that on what she looks like, I don’t really know her but apparently she is in the highest groups for everything...”

This categorisation of Mary as a Geek is based solely on rumour of her academic achievement and what she looks like. It would be interesting to study the relationship between academic excellence and the term Geek, but that is not the focus of this study.

19.3.2 “No: I could be called a Geek because I’m good at these subjects, but I’m not good at this subject so I’m not a Geek.”

A second response to my question, “Are you a Geek?” reflected a form of inverse logic which seemed to serve a protective purpose. A general response was “No: I could be called a Geek because I’m good at these subjects, but I’m not good at this subject so I’m not a Geek.” An example of this came from Jamie who said:

“I like lots of different subjects, and me and Theo are in front of the year (academically) but we wouldn't call ourselves Geeks because we still do everything that everyone else does - and we don't have long noses.”

Tom also responded in this way:

“I am a maths Geek. If you're good at all subjects then you are a Geek but if you're just good at some subjects then you're cool... like I'm quite good at history and geography but then I'm not that good at English.”

It would appear from these extracts that academic success was permitted for individual subjects, but being good at all subjects was not acceptable. There is also - once again - the school culture or social spectrum at play here. What is acceptable at Secondary School A might be completely unacceptable at Secondary School C. Taylor states that adolescents “...are forced to look to each other to develop their own standards and codes of behaviour” (Taylor, 2001). This is especially so when students move schools. Tom refers to himself as a ‘Maths Geek’ which echoes the idea that the term ‘Geek’ can be “a term of pride as self-reference, but often considered offensive when used by outsiders.”

(<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/geek?>)

19.3.3 “No because I’m sporty or popular...”

A third response to the question “Are you a Geek?” was typically ‘No, because I’m sporty or popular...’ An example of this came from Tom who stated:

” You will never have a Sports Geek...being a Geek isn't about reading it's more like not being a very sporty person and if you are reading a book all the time then you don't look like a very sporty person or that you want to socialise.”

This indicates that there is a strong indication that being good at sports is socially acceptable, and that if you are good at sports you cannot be a Geek. However, there is another aspect in play here; it is if you don’t ‘look like a very sporty person’ and that you don’t want to socialise. Perhaps a student does not have to be good at sport to avoid being labelled a Geek, perhaps just looking sporty is enough to avoid this unwanted label. This connection between sport and being socially accepted rather than negatively labelled was explored by Kinney who found that, in American Middle and High Schools, for males students, being good at sport was an important factor in terms of popularity and prestige. (Kinney, 1993).

Theo expressed this idea of not being a Geek if you do sport by stating: “I like maths and I like science but I’m not a Geek because I do quite a bit of sport.” When Theo tried to define what he meant by geekish he said:”I mean geeky looking people, so people with big glasses who don't like sport.”

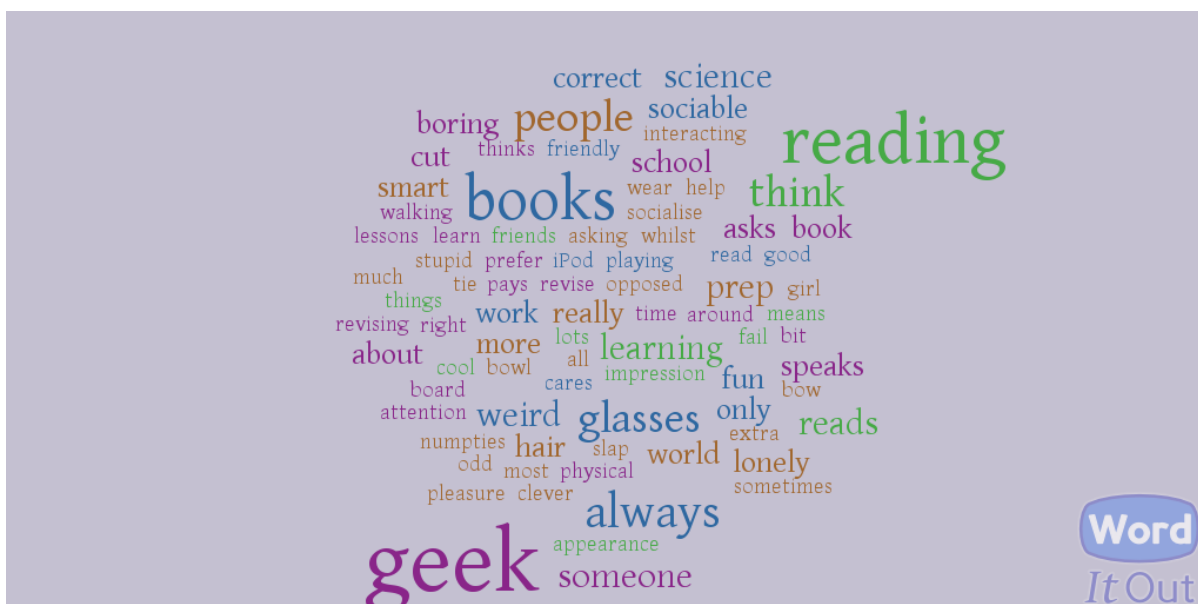
19.4 Geeks and Reading

The eight students involved in my group conversations wanted to avoid being labelled a Geek by their peers. But was there a link in their minds between reading and being labelled a Geek? The statement by a Year 6 pupil on their questionnaire was “I think that reading

is...sweet but don't read too much or people will think you're a Geek." To explore this further, during one of our secondary school sessions, I asked the students to draw or write down their interpretation of the word Geek in relation to reading. Some students worked on their A3 sheets of paper individually, and some worked in groups and pairs. The results were a combination of words and images.

I displayed the words in a word cloud, with the most common word written in the largest letters, and the least common word written in the smallest letters (see Figure 46).

Figure 46: Geeks and Reading Word Cloud



As can be seen from the word cloud, the most common word was 'Geek' closely followed by 'reading', 'books', 'glasses' and 'always'. It could be argued that because I asked the students to focus on a link between reading and Geeks that this had an impact upon the words used.

The images that the students drew in response to this task did not portray 'Geeks' in a positive light. However, it is interesting to note that in three of these pictures the 'Geek' is smiling (see Figure 47).

Figure 47: Children's Drawings of Geeks



Following my conversations with the eight students during their first year of secondary school, I was still confused about if there was any link in the students' minds in terms of Geeks and reading. I had not originally intended to focus on this area, but, in response to primary school conversations and the responses on the primary questionnaire, I felt that it was an aspect which required attention. As a result, I added an additional question to the secondary questionnaire which I gave to three Year 7 classes (sixty four students).

I asked: "Do you think people who read are Geeks?"

The results are below (see Table 50):

Table 50: Questionnaire Results for Reading and Geeks

Do you think people who read are Geeks?	Year 7 Replies
Yes	17.6%
No	73.5%
Yes and No	5.9%
No answer	2.9%
Total	100%

What surprised me about these results was that the overwhelming majority - 73.5% of the Year 7 students - did not see people who read as Geeks, which is in contrast to Clark and Osborne's 2008 results. In their 2008 study of 1600 pupils, they found that, in response to the question "If you imagine someone who reads, what kind of person are they? There were a number of different choices to consider:

- Clever/intelligent;
- Someone who will do well;
- Happy;
- Geeky/a nerd;
- Boring;
- Someone who has lots of friends;
- Someone who doesn't go out much;
- Outgoing."

In response to the above question the percentage of students who thought that someone who reads is a Geek or a Nerd was (see Table 51):

Table 51: Clark and Osbourne’s Results for Children’s views of Readers

Primary or Secondary reader or non-reader	Geeky/a nerd
Primary reader	14.4%
Secondary reader	23.2%
Primary non-reader	38.5%
Secondary non-reader	44.0%

Another question asked “Do your friends think reading is for people who...

- Are clever/intelligent;
- Want to do well;
- Are geeky/nerds;
- Are happy;
- Are boring;
- Are private;
- Have lots of friends?”

In response to the above question, the percentage of students who thought that their friends thought someone who reads is a Geek or a Nerd was (see Table 52):

Table 52: Clark and Osbourne’s Results for Friend’s Views of Readers

Primary or Secondary school reader or non-reader	Geeky/nerds
Primary reader	25.5%
Secondary reader	34.5%
Primary non-reader	33.3%
Secondary non-reader	54.6%

These figures show that “a significantly greater percentage of both reading and non-reading secondary pupils felt that their friends perceived readers to be geeky/nerds.” (Clark and Osborne, 2008, pp. 5-8).

However, I found it interesting that some of these twelve year olds had decided to answer *yes and no*. What was also noteworthy was that, when I revisited the questionnaire, a number of students had circled one or both of the *yes or no* and, in addition, had written a comment. Some of these comments were:

“Yes, No, It depends on how much you read.”

“No, not necessarily but some are.”

“Yes, because they choose to be and are smart.”

“No, reading is normal, everybody reads.”

“Yes, sometimes.”

“Yes, it depends what they read.”

“Yes, No, sort of.”

These comments, for me, reflect the confusion that surrounds the definition and identification of status groups in British secondary schools today. There seem to be few hard and fast rules, and there are constant exceptions to those which are fixed. I suggest that a student could be called a geek if they read too much, read frequently in front of their peers and read the ‘wrong’ sort of materials – for example, text books or fiction rather than comics or magazines.

20 Conclusion

“Why has she stopped reading?”

This thesis has been driven by my desire to find an answer to this question, because by answering it I hope to become a better English teacher for my students and a better mother to my children. I am passionate about reading for pleasure and, in my classes, I have always dedicated time to encouraging reading. However, I have discovered that there is a huge opportunity for English teachers to do more to develop and encourage the child as a reader.

One part of the answer to the above question is that I have realised that it is crucial for secondary school English teachers to have a detailed and precise understanding of secondary school readers. Yet this raises a further, important question: when schools are faced with brand new Year 7 students, how can this be achieved?

20.1 Primary Schools

My first step towards answering these questions was to step backwards, and explore what was happening in primary schools. The Year 6 readers that I worked with were all competent readers and they all held positive attitudes towards reading. This is no surprise as Clark reports that “Most 8 to 11-year-olds have positive attitudes towards reading” (Clark, 2014, p. 6). In addition 56.5% of eight to eleven year olds agreed with the statement “Reading is Cool” (Clark, 2014, p. 13). In the primary schools I observed that there were many varieties of reader who held positive attitudes towards reading and I realised that my secondary school labels of ‘Avid’ and ‘Good’ were in no way robust enough to adequately describe the Year 6 readers that I met. The labels that evolved for the primary students who were all ‘Avid’ and ‘Good’ were:

adult text, audiobook, avid, bedtime, busy, committed, communal, compulsive, confident, developing, environment dependent, frustrated, habitual, immersive, rapid, re-reader, sequential, series, and social.

The vast majority of these labels are positive, which again concurs with Clark's 2014 data. From the numerous labels, and combinations thereof, I realised that every Year 6 reader is unique. Some of the students involved in my study were happy reading readerly texts, such as those by Jacqueline Wilson and Robert Muchamore, but others were branching out to explore more writerly texts, such as P.G. Wodehouse. Some of the Year 6 readers were happy to remain with the familiar and be – as Chambers describes – less-adventurous, 'Flat-Earth' readers, (Chambers, 1993, p. 13) whilst others were prepared to 'pick up the flat map and form a globe' from which they could spiral in and out. Essentially, these Year 6 readers were reading, flourishing and blossoming. Yet one of the most important factors for their success as readers was about to be compromised.

20.2 Transition

The transition to Year 7 and secondary school broke the continuity of the primary school which had allowed the Year 6 students to flourish as readers. In Year 6 the readers knew their school, knew their teacher, knew their friends and knew their school library. More importantly in terms of developing and supporting the Year 6 reader, the teacher knew the child, they knew what they liked reading, they knew how to extend their reading and they knew when, and with what, to take the Year 6 reader out of their comfort zone to explore new reading experiences. With the move to Year 7 all of this continuity which supported the Year 6 readers' reading was broken and the child had to start again as a new Year 7 student.

There has been much discussion of the transition between primary and secondary school with specific focus on: friendship groups (Weller, 2007); continuities and discontinuities in learning (Galton et al., 2003); and on pupil progress and attitude (Galton et al., 1999). These focus on "the need to understand more about 'dip' in attitude, engagement and progress at key transition points" (Galton et al., 2003, p. i). However, there has been little focus on the individual child as a reader and what happens to their reading upon transfer to Year 7 and beyond.

Secondary schools are very different to primary schools. The new Year 7 students need to learn the geography of the new school, their new teachers, make new friends, and discover a new school library. Everything which had supported these readers at their primary school had changed.

20.3 Secondary School

When an English teacher is faced with a new Year 7 class at the start of the academic year they have very little information on the students in their class. They should have National Curriculum levels for each child for English Maths and Science, but legally, requirements do not extend further than this.

At this entry point it is easy for the English teacher to draw conclusions about the child as a reader. The teacher tries to identify which students are 'Struggling' readers and which students have not yet achieved literacy. After this, it is easy to make assumptions about the members of the class who have achieved some competency as readers. It is easy to say, 'That child is alright, they can read,' or, 'That child developed the reading habit in primary school so I don't have to worry about encouraging them to read because the job has already been done.'

This is similar to when a child learns to read by themselves. Some parents are delighted that their child can read and so they stop reading to or with the child, believing that their job is done (Fox, 2001). Nevertheless just because a child has developed the reading habit in primary school does not mean that they will keep the reading habit in secondary school. This approach to the child as a reader can, I suggest, be called 'maintenance'; the teacher simply has to maintain the current reading of the child. Yet even this is challenging. To use a car analogy, providing an MOT or a reading health check is a challenge, yet this, in isolation, does not create a champion in either field. Further fine tuning of the engine, or adding a supercharger, is also necessary. Yet of the eight students involved in my study, Gemma

stalled in her reading and her reading declined, Scarlet continued with her reading but she kept to the safe 'flat-earth', the familiar, the readerly, and Jamie explored writerly texts with 'Jonathan Livingston Seagull' but then retreated to the 'safe' with his adventure series reading. Theo branched out to a new genre, but the writing by Darren Shan, was much easier than his previous reading. Anna did develop her reading, to draw level with her peers and engage in Jacqueline Wilson's novels. Joe engaged in more reading and less audio book reading. Tom and Brandon reduced the amount of time that they spent reading and Brandon labelled himself as a non-reader. With the exception of Anna, who in some ways caught-up with her peers in terms of her reading, none of the readers really branched out to move beyond the safe, the readerly, the flat-earth. None of them moved beyond this to regularly read writerly texts.

Secondary school English teachers want to help children develop into readers who enjoy reading familiar safe readerly texts, *and* challenging and unfamiliar writerly texts. English teachers want to help children grow as readers and to support readers to be brave enough to leave the 'safe' behind and to venture out of their comfort zone into the unknown. But how can English teachers support and nurture their Year 7 readers and how do we discover what the child as a reader is really like and thus find out what they need from us?

Once again, I wish to state that I am not being critical of English teachers. Remember, it was *me*, the English teacher, who could not say why a Year 7 child had stopped reading at the school where I worked. My school had taken in a Year 6 reader with all of their wonderful uniqueness and turned them into a Year 7 non-reader in a matter of weeks. However, because of this study, I do now know what worked in the schools involved in my study and because of this I feel able to suggest what English teachers and secondary schools *could* do to ensure that other Year 7 readers don't stop reading.

20.4 Six aspects of the child as reader plus self-image

The most important aspect of encouraging Year 7 readers to continue reading is that the teacher or facilitator needs to know the child as a reader. Through my research I discovered that there were six aspects which required specific consideration when thinking about the child as a reader. Without understanding these six aspects, the English teacher is not in a strong enough position to help and support the reader. In addition to these six aspects was the issue of how the child presented themselves to their new teachers and friends and how they viewed themselves, and how they wanted to be viewed, as readers.

1. **Involvement of others.** This aspect looks at the involvement and importance of others in the child's reading. Are friends a significant factor in the child's reading and in their choice of reading material? For example, Joe read the Cherub series of books because his friends did. Similarly, Tom exclusively read non-fiction in library lessons because the other boys were doing so. Does the child talk about their reading with friends like Scarlet did? Are these friends trusted old ones they have known in their primary school or are they new friends they have just encountered? Scarlet was happy to talk about her reading with new Year 7 friends and yet Gemma would not even consider doing this. Does the child engage in reading the same as others in an attempt to 'fit in'? Jamie did this, to some extent, by reading the Robert Muchamore and Chris Ryan novels. What role do the child's parents or carers play? Is the child discussing their reading with their parents or do they keep their reading separate? Brandon enjoyed discussing interesting facts which he had discovered with his father. Does the child seek recommendations from their parents? For example, both Jamie and Theo read books because their fathers had suggested them. Does the child talk about their reading with their teacher – form or English – or do they prefer to remain private about it?
2. **Regularity of Reading.** How often does the child read? Every night at bedtime like the majority of the students involved in my study, every day, all the time, every lunchtime like Scarlet, once a week, or never?

3. **Reading ability.** This aspect looks at the child's reading ability in terms of: what the child can read; speed of reading and willingness to move from easy readerly texts to more challenging writerly texts. This could be reflected in the child re-reading readerly old favourites again and again rather than attempting to explore new texts. It could be reflected in the number of books being read a month increasing or the length of the books read getting longer. Gemma who was essentially reading the same texts over and over again was not developing in terms of her reading ability. Whereas Jamie, who was beginning to explore more writerly texts, was stretching himself with regard to the difficulty of texts encountered.

4. **Type of text.** What type of text does the child like engaging with? Does the child like familiar series like Cherub, authors like Jacqueline Wilson, genres like adventure, or do they prefer to try something new and perhaps out of their comfort zone? Is it always the same type of text that the child reaches for, or does the child like a combination of texts, for example fiction and non-fiction? Has the child experienced some more adventurous texts in Year 6 and subsequently returned to the safety of the familiar upon starting secondary school like Theo, who branched out to P.G. Wodehouse and then retreated back to Chris Ryan and Cherub?

5. **Reading environment.** This can be broken into two sections: Home and School. In the case of home, where and when does the child like to read? Is it in bed at night like the majority of students involved in this study, or on the bus, outside, or on the sofa in a sleeping bag like Gemma? In the case of school, does the child like reading in a classroom – which none of the students involved in this study did - or outside in the playground, or in library lessons, like Tom who liked to relax during library sessions?

6. **Emotional engagement.** This involves how the child relates to the text; do they imagine themselves in it, like Tom? He said "If I read an action book...it makes me imagine that I am there". Is their emotional state a factor in deciding what to read, like Gemma's was when she reflected "When I'm in a good mood I read really long books...If it's a really short book it makes me feel better and in a better mood", or does the text affect them

emotionally, like my child, who cried at the end of 'War Horse'? Is the child compelled to read, for example, do they simply *have* to read before they can go to sleep, like Jamie? Or rather, like Jamie, do they just *have* to read something, anything "...I read my book, my dad's book, my mum's book my sister's book about hamsters..."?

7. **Self-image.** This additional aspect is perhaps the hardest. The teacher has the child in front of them and needs to consider if the image which the child is presenting to them is a true representation of the child as a reader. For example, Brandon repeatedly told me that, once he had joined Year 7, he didn't read. This was the self-image, or projection of himself that he felt comfortable in sharing with others. He did not want to share a more accurate projection of himself as a reader, perhaps because his main priority was to 'fit in' to his new secondary school. Part of this behaviour linked to the complexity of status groups within secondary schools. Whereas reading was valued in primary school, it had the potential to negatively label a reader in Year 7 as a 'Geek' which could lead to social isolation, as Anna explained "Image here is quite important; like it wasn't so much in primary school but it definitely is here". Scarlet also shared her opinion on this aspect of identity and affiliation, saying "...if you get labelled but not by your friends, then your friends might desert you, they might not like you any more". The problem that the teacher faces is how to discover the real face of the reader, beyond the image projected by the child, and, perhaps, in spite of it.

20.5 How to Develop the Child as a Reader

Surprisingly, the first step in maintaining and developing readers in Year 7 could start before the child joins Year 7. If the teacher wants to discover what the child as reader is really like before they join secondary school then they could use a simple tool which I observed working well in one of the secondary schools involved in my study. This consisted of a project which the students completed during the summer holidays. Secondary School A asked the children to complete a 'Life Map' which served to introduce themselves to their new teachers and their new school. This was created prior to any of the status groups

influencing the child, thus it had greater potential to be an honest representation of the child. See an example of a Year 7 'Life Map' below (see Figure 48):

Figure 48: An Example of a Life Map from Secondary School A

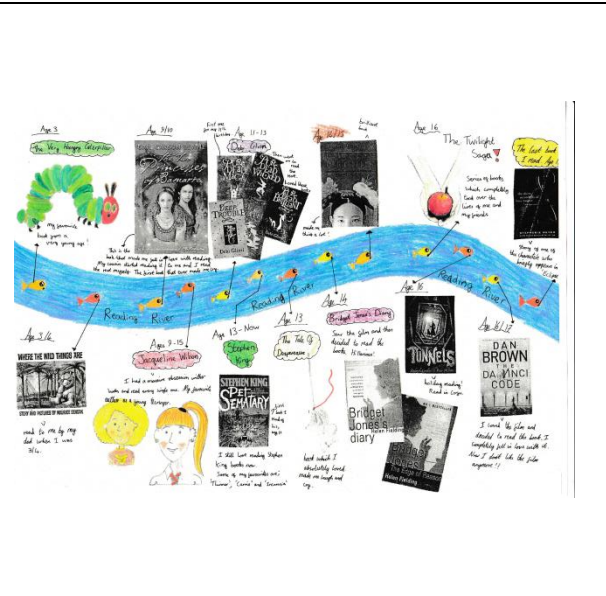


In a similar manner, a 'Reading Challenge' could be set for all new pupils. Most secondary schools have a taster day or transition day when the new Year 7 students spend the day at their secondary school during the summer term. I propose that English teachers utilise this day as a chance to find out more about the new pupils as readers. A 'Reading Challenge' could be to produce a 'River of Reading' (Cliff-Hodges, 2010) where the child picks one, a few or a number of texts from their childhood and explains why this text matters to them. See examples of 'Rivers of Reading' which I completed with a Year 12 class below (see Figures 49 and 50):

Figure 49: An Example of a 'River of Reading'



Figure 50: An Example of a 'River of Reading'



This could provide a valuable insight into the child as a reader precisely because it would be created before the child started the secondary school and before their continuity as a successful Year 6 reader is broken.

20.6 Year 7 English Reading Lessons

More essential methods of discovering the child as a reader are possible once the child has joined Year 7. I passionately believe that every child in secondary school should have time and space provided for reading for pleasure. This is especially so for Year 7 students. I believe that every week, Year 7 students should have a reading session, in the school library, where they can just “reeeeeeeead!” (Jamie).

Dialogue is also essential if the English teacher is to discover the child as reader. However, this is difficult to achieve when everything is new for the child. One method which I observed in Secondary School A was the use of reading journals to encourage children to

communicate with their English teacher about their reading. Dialogue can also be achieved through group book talk and informal gossip.

However, these things aren't possible unless the teacher and librarians are knowledgeable about children's literature and other texts. To get the right text to the right reader means that the teacher needs a thorough knowledge of the books in the library, and to do this they need to spend time reading them. Cremin et al., writes that knowledge of children's literature:

“...is surely a pre-requisite if teachers are to nurture positive attitudes and sustain and develop young readers” (Cremin et al., 2008, p. 450).

Teachers and librarians need to act as an 'Enabling Adult' who can guide and encourage young readers. However, Cremin et al., suggest that teachers:

“...may not be sufficiently familiar with a diverse enough range of writers to enable them to foster reader development, make book recommendations to individuals and promote independent reading for pleasure” (Cremin et al., 2009, p. 12).

The power of getting the right book to the right child is immeasurable:

“Mr Rivers knows about the books. My sister did not like reading and he helped her find a book that she liked and now she likes reading” Theo.

Children feel confused about what to choose in a library when they are told to pick something to read. The National Literacy Trust's 'Children and Young People's Reading in 2013' showed that 31.6% of eight to eleven year olds involved in the survey agreed with the statement “I cannot find things to read that interest me” (Clark, 2013, p. 10).

Two of the secondary schools involved in my study recognised the problem of finding an interesting read in a new and unfamiliar library. In Secondary School A, the students felt able to ask for reading advice from the Librarian because they respected her knowledge: Joe for instance, was in awe of her knowledge, saying “...and the Librarian knows every book in the library, every single book on the shelf”.

The Librarian had also produced bookmarks which the students could take away with them to look at later. Secondary School C’s Librarian had produced the ‘If you like...’ displays. Both of these initiatives helped to address the problem children have when they are faced with the so much choice. Secondary Schools B and C also had ‘Recommended Reads’ wall displays which, again, could guide the students. However, none of these initiatives were enough. What was lacking was real knowledge and dialogue between the teacher, child and librarian.

20.7 Choice

One unexpected discovery was that limiting student choice in terms of reading material had the potential to actually actively engage some children in reading. Secondary School A’s policy to only allow fiction resulted in all of the children reading fiction, even if, like Joe, they didn’t want to. The boys at Secondary School B decided to limit their choice when faced with an open choice of texts, and they just read non-fiction. Some of these boys might have preferred to read a novel and could not do so due to peer pressure but, conversely, some boys who would have preferred to not read at all would have read a non-fiction text. Perhaps a lesson here is that sometimes directing or limiting reading choices actually helps children to make a choice.

English teachers want their students to be confident readers who know about reading. They can achieve this by helping and supporting children to choose texts which will interest and excite them. Instead of limiting children just to fiction, or children limiting themselves

merely to non-fiction, English teachers can guide choice through the use of reading journals and model choosing texts to read. Teachers can encourage students to try different things, and model this themselves by reading new authors, comics, graphic novels, and computer game narratives. Teachers need to talk about their experiences and share their reading with others.

Reading for pleasure also needs to be valued by all members of staff, not just the English teachers and librarians. Mem Fox writes positively about a headmistress in San Diego who reads aloud to her entire school every Friday (Fox, 2001, p. 25), but not all senior managers in secondary schools see the value of reading for pleasure. Fox writes of a principal who visited a classroom to observe a lesson. Upon seeing the teacher reading aloud to the students he whispered: "I'll come back later...when you're *teaching*" (Fox, 2001, p. 25).

Reading for pleasure is encouraged in the National Curriculum for English and the word 'love' with regard to students' reading has been included, and then, later, removed. Finally, in 2014, it has been included again. However, secondary schools are judged and rewarded for exam success and unless reading for pleasure is also rewarded and schools themselves are rewarded for actively developing readers with incentives then, I fear that side-lining reading for pleasure is what senior managers will do. This, in macrocosm, could echo the behaviour of the teachers who did not model reading for pleasure to their students in library lessons because they were concerned about what senior management might say if they saw this. Yet, reading for pleasure is so important for student's academic success, as Sullivan and Brown point out:

"The effect of reading for pleasure on cognitive development over time, found that children who read for pleasure made more progress in maths, vocabulary and spelling between the ages of 10 and 16 than those who rarely read," (Sullivan and Brown, 2013).

In an education system driven by skills, literacy and targets there is a concern that reading for pleasure can be lost. Frank Cottrell Boyce voices this in the 2014 David Fickling lecture:

“I see amazing, creative work being done...but I have a nagging fear that in encouraging literacy we are killing the pleasure of reading” (Cottrell Boyce quoted in Brown, 2014).

Reading for pleasure is also about taking risks. The teacher can show the slower reading of something new, or the swift reading of the familiar. They can demonstrate experimentation with a new genre and they can show students that it is good to not always stick with the safe and familiar, but to sometimes branch out and explore. Teachers can also show students that it is fine to decide not to read a text (Pennac, 1994b, p. 149), to put it down and say ‘This text is not for me’ and then to invest time in finding a text that is a suitable choice.

20.8 My contribution to the field and implications for future research

A strength of my study lies in the ability to tell the detailed reading stories of the eight students involved. My study does not, however, allow for generalisation because the numbers involved are not statistically significant, which could be seen as a limitation. Nevertheless, what is derived from my work is an opportunity to consider the complexity of the child as a reader, which cannot be achieved with pure numerical analysis. The opportunity for a wider scale questionnaire which could track individual children’s reading patterns over a number of years in order to provide a clearer understanding as to which children continue, which children stop and which children begin to read for pleasure, would be beneficial, and would allow for development of my detailed stories into wider generalisations.

The precise and detailed terminology I have developed to define the child as a reader will take the place of the inadequate, less determinate vocabulary currently used. My terminology will facilitate discussion and reflection for secondary school English teachers and allow a nuanced way of talking about emerging adult readers. My terminology is a powerful tool which helps me to understand the students I work with, it is powerful in enabling those students to think about their reading and it is a powerful means of facilitation for English teachers and parents when thinking about children's reading. This is important because, during the first years of secondary schooling, children are malleable and their identity as a reader can be influenced and shaped by enabling adults, peers and parents. In teaching, thinking and articulation are closely linked and my terminology will more fully enable the process of thinking about and discussing children's reading.

In addition to my enhanced and precise terminology, I introduce six aspects of the child as reader. These six aspects move beyond a child's ability to read and their attitudes towards reading and instead consider other elements, in interplay, which influence a child's reading. The six aspects of readers presents a structured framework which allows teachers and parents to consider the many aspects which influence and support a student's reading. My holistic approach to the terminology alongside the six aspects of readers is a strength of this study.

The social implications of reading and of a child's reading identity in a new secondary school environment are also contributions to the field. This is an area which would be rewarding to consider in more depth. I became very interested in the types of reading which were perceived to be 'allowed' and, conversely, those which were 'not allowed' by the peer group. Here, there is an implication for further research to examine the types of reading material which were acceptable and which were not, and the reasoning behind this, especially with regard to gender.

20.9 Final Thoughts

Essentially, the answer to the question “Why has she stopped reading?” is not simple.

However, there are some simple steps which can help English teachers help their students.

These are:

- spending time getting to know the child as a reader and seeing beyond the face the child initially presents;
- investing in becoming knowledgeable about children’s literature and the range of texts available;
- providing time and space for children to read;
- investing in, and facilitating, dialogue with students.

If English teachers follow these steps then, and only then, can they take on the role of an enabling adult who can nurture and guide young readers. This is how we can help children move towards being fantastic intergalactic readers of writerly texts. I agree with Gaiman when he states that:

“I hope we can give our children a world in which they will read, and be read to, and imagine, and understand” (Gaiman, 2013).

I also hope that we can give our children secondary schools where reading for pleasure matters and where children are proud of their reading.

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22 Appendix 1

Primary Questionnaire

1. Do you regularly read any magazines, comics or newspapers?

(a) Put a tick in the box by the answer you choose.

Yes

No

If you answered 'Yes' write a list of all the magazines, comics or newspapers you read. Write only one on each line. If you only read one or two, put those down.

If you answered 'No' go on to question 2.

(b) Read down your list and put a tick after the one you most look forward to reading. Now go on to question 2.

2. Have you read a book (or books) in the last four weeks?

Don't count books which a teacher said you must read as part of a lesson or for homework.

Yes

If you answer 'Yes' carry on with the next question.

No

If you answer 'No' go on to question 9.

3. Which books have you read in the last four weeks?

Write down any books you got outside school and any you choose yourself from school. Don't put down books which a teacher said you must read as part of a lesson or for homework.

Now, write down all the books that you have read in the last four weeks. Put the author's name as well, if you can. It doesn't matter if you can't remember all of the books you have read or if you have read only one or two books.

(We've written down two books to show you how to do it.)

Title	Author
Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief	

4. Have you read any of the books you've put down more than once/ If you have go back and underline it like this:

Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief

5. Did you decide not to finish any of the books?

If you stopped reading a book before the end put a cross after the title like this:
 Percy Jackson and the Lightening Thief X

Now, for every book you've written down in question 3 choose *one* of the answers to question 6 and one of the answers to question 7.

Put a tick on the same line as the book under the answer you choose.

6. Where did you get the book from?						
I was given it	I got it from school	I got it from the public library	I bought it	I borrowed it from a friend	I borrowed it from someone in my family	I got it from somewhere else

7. How much do you like the book?					8. Now write anything you would like to say about the books in this space.
It was one of the best I've ever read	I liked it very much	I quite liked it	I did not like it much	I did not like it at all	

9. Do you own any books yourself?

Yes

No

If you answer 'Yes' put a tick in the box which is nearest to the number of books you own.

If you answer 'No' go on to question 10.



- I own up to 10 books
- I own between 11 and 25 books
- I own between 26 and 50 books
- I own between 51 and 100 books
- I own more than 100 books

10. About how many books are there in your home?

- hardly any a few quite a lot lots

11. (a) Do you have a favourite writer, or a favourite series of books?

Yes



If you answer 'Yes' write the name.

No

If you answer 'No' go on to question 12.

(b) What first gave you the idea to read this author or series of books?

12. About how much reading do you think you do?

Put a tick in the box by the answer you choose.

- A large amount
 Quite a lot
 About average
 Not very much
 Only a little

13. Do you think you are good at reading?

Put a tick in the box by the answer you choose.

- Very good
 Good
 Average
 Not very good
 Poor

14. Do you borrow books from the public library?

Put a tick in the box by the answer you choose.

Yes



If you answer 'Yes' tick the answer which is most nearly true for you.

No

If you answer 'No' go on to question 15.

- I go to borrow books about once a week
 I go to borrow books about once every two weeks
 I go to borrow books about once a month
 I go to borrow books only sometimes

15. Did you watch television last night?
(It doesn't matter if it was at home or somewhere else.)

Yes



If you answer 'Yes' for how long did you watch?

No

If you answer 'No' go on to question 16.

- Less than ½ hour
- Between ½ hour and 1 ½ hours
- Between 1 ½ hours and 2 ½ hours
- Between 2 ½ hours and 3 ½ hours
- More than 3 ½ hours

16. Did you do any reading last night?
(It doesn't matter what it was or whether it was at home or somewhere else.)

Yes



If you answer 'Yes' for how long did you read?

No

If 'No' go on to question 17.

- Less than ½ hour
- Between ½ hour and 1 ½ hours
- Between 1 ½ hours and 2 ½ hours
- Between 2 ½ hours and 3 ½ hours
- More than 3 ½ hours

17. Did you use a computer, or play any computer games last night?
(It doesn't matter whether it was at home or somewhere else.)

Yes



If you answer 'Yes' for how long?

No

If 'No' go on to question 18.

- Less than ½ hour
- Between ½ hour and 1 ½ hours
- Between 1 ½ hours and 2 ½ hours
- Between 2 ½ hours and 3 ½ hours
- More than 3 ½ hours

18. (a) Have you bought any books, comics, magazines or newspapers this year (2010)?

Yes

If you answer 'Yes' which shop did you buy them from? Please write down the names of any shops you have used.

No

If you answered 'No' go on to question 19.

Name of shop	Book	Comic	Magazine	Newspaper

(c) Now go back and put a tick in the boxes which will tell us whether you bought a book, or a comic, or a magazine, or a newspaper, or all four.

19.

Now make a list of all the adults you live with.

(under here)



Is the person male or female?

Write M or F.

(under here)



If any of these adults go out to work write down what their job is.

(under here)



Do any of these adults read a lot at home? If yes put a tick for them.

(under here)



20.

Now make a list of any children you live with.

(under here)



Is the person male or female?

Write M or F.

(under here)



Write down their ages.

(under here)



Do any of these children read a lot at home? If yes put a tick for them.

(under here)



21. (a) Do you speak a language other than English at home?

Yes.

If you answer 'Yes' carry on with the next question

No.

If you answer 'No', go on to question 22.

(b) Can you write in this language?

Yes

No

(c) Can you read in this language?

Yes

No

(d) Is it easy to find things you enjoy reading in this language?

Yes

No

22. How would you describe yourself?

(For example, Chinese, White, Asian, Black-British, etc.)

--

23. Are you a boy or a girl?

Boy

Girl

24. How old are you?

Put your age, in years and months, in the box.

--

25. Please complete this sentence with one or two words

I think that reading is

26. Please draw a picture of someone who is a reader (someone who reads) in the box below.



Secondary Questionnaire

Name.....

School.....

1. Do you regularly read any magazines, comics or newspapers?

(a) Put a tick in the box by the answer you choose.

Yes

No

If you answered 'Yes' write a list of all the magazines, comics or newspapers you read. Write only one on each line. If you only read one or two, put those down.

If you answered 'No' go on to question 2.

(a) Read down your list and put a tick after the one you most look forward to reading. Now go on to question 2.

2. Have you read a book (or books) in the last four weeks?

Don't count books which a teacher said you must read as part of a lesson or for homework.

Yes

No

If you answer 'Yes' carry on with the next question.

If you answer 'No' go on to question 6.

3. Which books have you read in the last four weeks?

Write down any books you got outside school and any you choose yourself from school. Don't put down books which a teacher said you must read as part of a lesson or for homework.

Now, write down all the books that you have read in the last four weeks. Put the author's name as well, if you can. It doesn't matter if you can't remember all of the books you have read or if you have read only one or two books.

(We've written down two books to show you how to do it.)

Title	Author
Percy Jackson and the Lightening Thief	Rick Riordan
Vicky Angel	Jacqueline Wilson

4. Have you read any of the books you've put down more than once? If you have go back and underline it like this:

Percy Jackson and the Lightening Thief

5. Did you decide not to finish any of the books?

If you stopped reading a book before the end put a cross after the title like this:

Percy Jackson and the Lightening Thief X

6. Do you own any books yourself?

Yes

No

If you answer 'Yes' put a tick in the box which is nearest to the number of books you own.

If you answer 'No' go on to question 8.



- I own up to 10 books
- I own between 11 and 25 books
- I own between 26 and 50 books
- I own between 51 and 100 books
- I own more than 100 books

7. About how many books are there in your home?

- hardly any a few quite a lot lots

8. (a) Do you have a favourite writer, or a favourite series of books?

Yes



If you answer 'Yes' write the name.

No

If you answer 'No' go on to question 9.

(b) What first gave you the idea to read this author or series of books?

9. About how much reading do you think you do?

Put a tick in the box by the answer you choose.

- A large amount
 Quite a lot
 About average
 Not very much
 Only a little

10. Do you think you are good at reading?

Put a tick in the box by the answer you choose.

- Very good
 Good
 Average
 Not very good
 Poor

11. Do you borrow books from the public library?

Put a tick in the box by the answer you choose.

Yes



If you answer 'Yes' tick the answer which is most nearly true for you.

No

If you answer 'No' go on to question 12.

- I go to borrow books about once a week
 I go to borrow books about once every two weeks
 I go to borrow books about once a month
 I go to borrow books only sometimes

12. Did you watch television last night?

(It doesn't matter if it was at home or somewhere else.)

Yes



If you answer 'Yes' for how long did you watch?

No

If you answer 'No' go on to question 13.

- Less than ½ hour
- Between ½ hour and 1 ½ hours
- Between 1 ½ hours and 2 ½ hours
- Between 2 ½ hours and 3 ½ hours
- More than 3 ½ hours

13. Did you do any reading last night?

(It doesn't matter what it was or whether it was at home or somewhere else.)

Yes



If you answer 'Yes' for how long did you read?

No

If 'No' go on to question 14.

- Less than ½ hour
- Between ½ hour and 1 ½ hours
- Between 1 ½ hours and 2 ½ hours
- Between 2 ½ hours and 3 ½ hours
- More than 3 ½ hours

14. Did you use a computer, or play any computer games last night?

(It doesn't matter whether it was at home or somewhere else.)

Yes



If you answer 'Yes' for how long?

No

If 'No' go on to question 15.

- Less than ½ hour
- Between ½ hour and 1 ½ hours
- Between 1 ½ hours and 2 ½ hours
- Between 2 ½ hours and 3 ½ hours
- More than 3 ½ hours

15.

Now make a list of all the adults you live with.
(under here)

Is the person male or female?
Write M or F.
(under here)

If any of these adults go out to work write down what their job is.
(under here)

Do any of these adults read a lot at home? If yes put a tick for them.
(under here)

16.

Now make a list of any children you live with.
(under here)

Is the person male or female?
Write M or F.
(under here)

Write down their ages.
(under here)

Do any of these children read a lot at home? If yes put a tick for them.
(under here)

17. Are you a boy or a girl?

- Boy
- Girl

18. How old are you?

Put your age, in years and months, in the box.

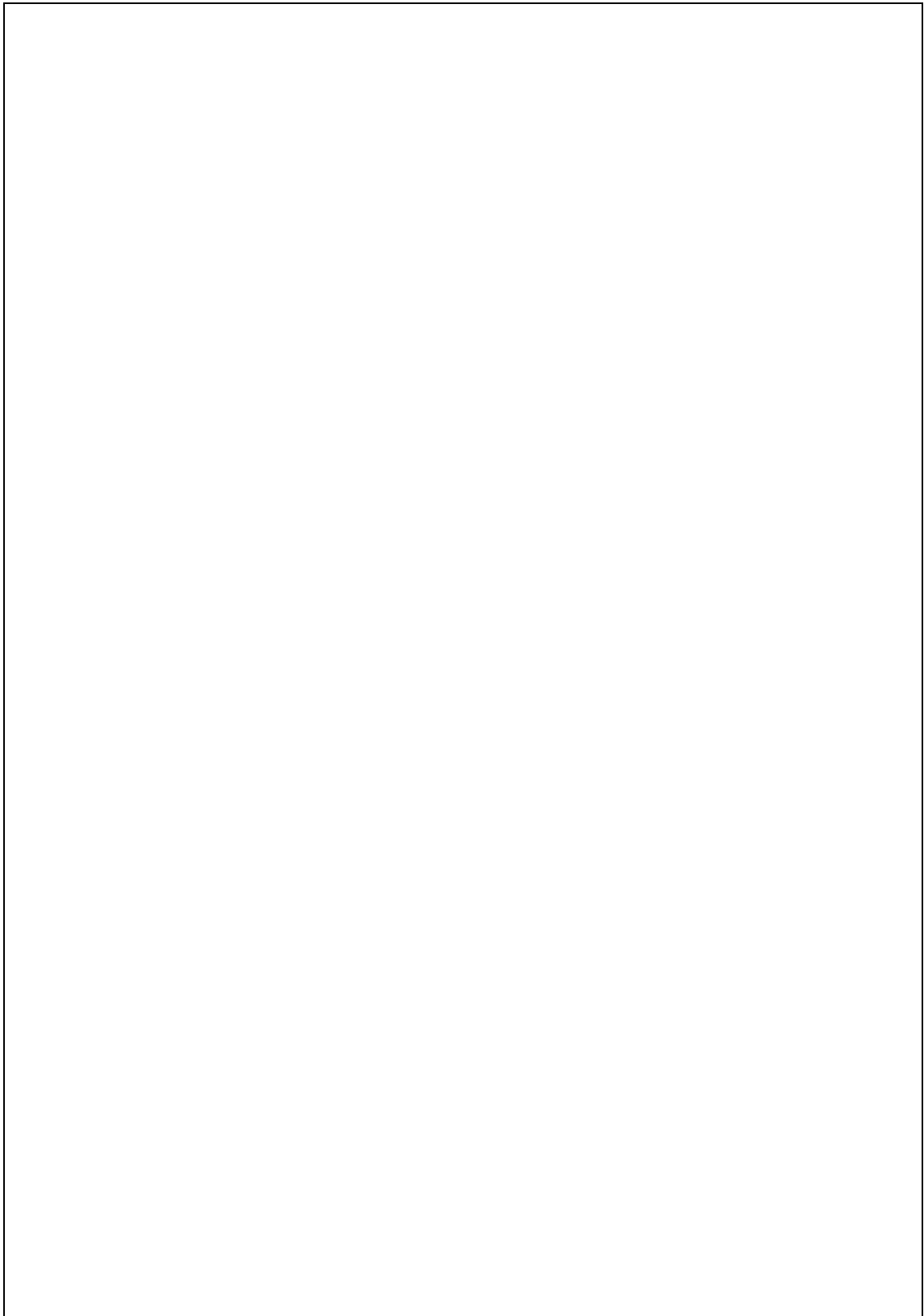
--

19. Please complete this sentence with one or two words.

I think *my friends* think that reading is:

.....

20. Please draw a picture of what *your friends* think a reader looks like:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a drawing. The box is oriented vertically and occupies most of the page's width and height.

21. Do you think people who read are geeks? Yes / No

23 Appendix 2



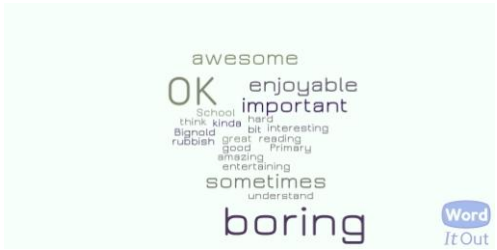
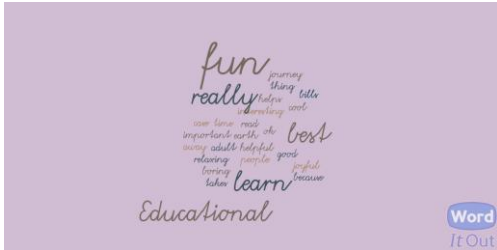

Primary School Word Clouds Conversation Resources

As a way to involve the students and as a prompt to discussion I decided to use two aspects of the Year 6 questionnaire with the groups.

The first were word clouds using the words students wrote in response to the request:

“Please complete this sentence with one or two words:

“I think that reading is.....”

 <p>A word cloud on a pink background. The most prominent words are 'exciting' and 'fun'. Other visible words include 'interesting', 'like', 'enjoyable', 'awesome', 'relaxing', 'educational', 'books', 'good', 'sometimes', 'brilliant', 'great', 'boring', 'fantastic', 'different', 'information', 'relaxing', 'enriching', 'subtle', 'bit', 'reading', 'straight', 'books', 'great', 'OK', 'rather', 'books', 'hobby', 'sometimes'.</p>	<p>Primary School Aa</p>
 <p>A word cloud on a light green background. The most prominent words are 'fun' and 'cool'. Other visible words include 'awesome', 'quite', 'understand', 'alright', 'some', 'education', 'brilliant', 'time', 'writing', 'good', 'okay', 'only', 'sometimes', 'interesting', 'wasting'.</p>	<p>Primary School Ab</p>
 <p>A word cloud on a light blue background. The most prominent words are 'boring' and 'enjoyable'. Other visible words include 'awesome', 'OK', 'important', 'School', 'hard', 'bit', 'interesting', 'rubbish', 'great', 'reading', 'good', 'Primary', 'amazing', 'entertaining', 'sometimes', 'understand'.</p>	<p>Primary School Ba</p>
 <p>A word cloud on a purple background. The most prominent words are 'fun', 'really', and 'Educational'. Other visible words include 'enjoyable', 'thing', 'bottle', 'amazing', 'cool', 'use', 'time', 'read', 'important', 'books', 'the', 'best', 'reading', 'people', 'good', 'boring', 'learn', 'because'.</p>	<p>Primary School Bb</p>
 <p>A word cloud on a teal background. The most prominent words are 'good', 'read', and 'great'. Other visible words include 'people', 'amazing', 'brilliant', 'helps', 'hard', 'spell', 'teaches', 'much', 'fun', 'boring', 'sweet', 'exciting', 'best', 'greek', 'think', 'abilities', 'something', 'educational', 'quite', 'bad', 'important', 'language'.</p>	<p>Primary School C</p>

All of the primary schools responses combined:



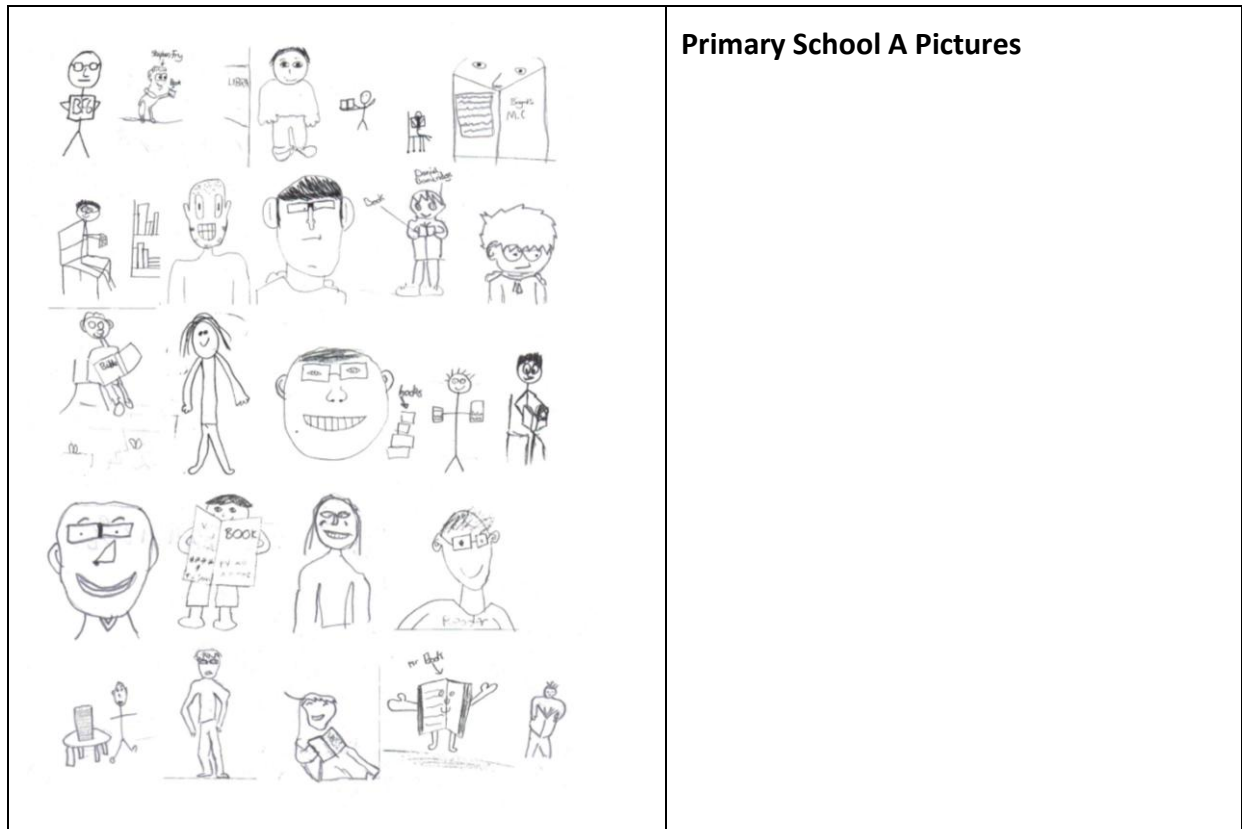
Primary School Picture Collages Conversation Resources

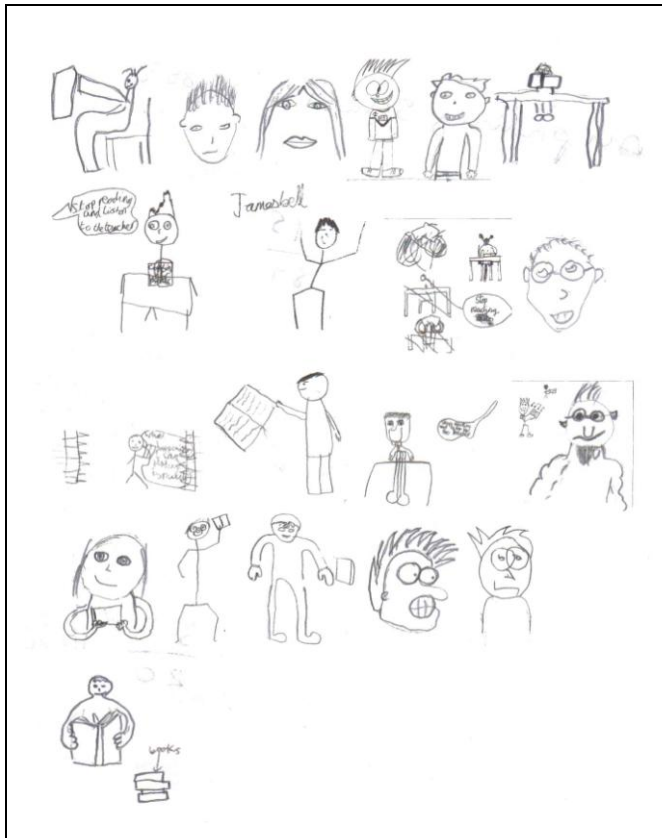
The second set of prompt material was a collage of all of the images that the students had drawn in response to the request:

“Please draw a picture of someone who is a reader (someone who reads) in the box below:

I created a collage for each Year 6 class.

Below are the Year 6 students’ pictures I used for prompting discussion:





Primary School A Pictures



Primary School B Pictures



Primary School B Pictures



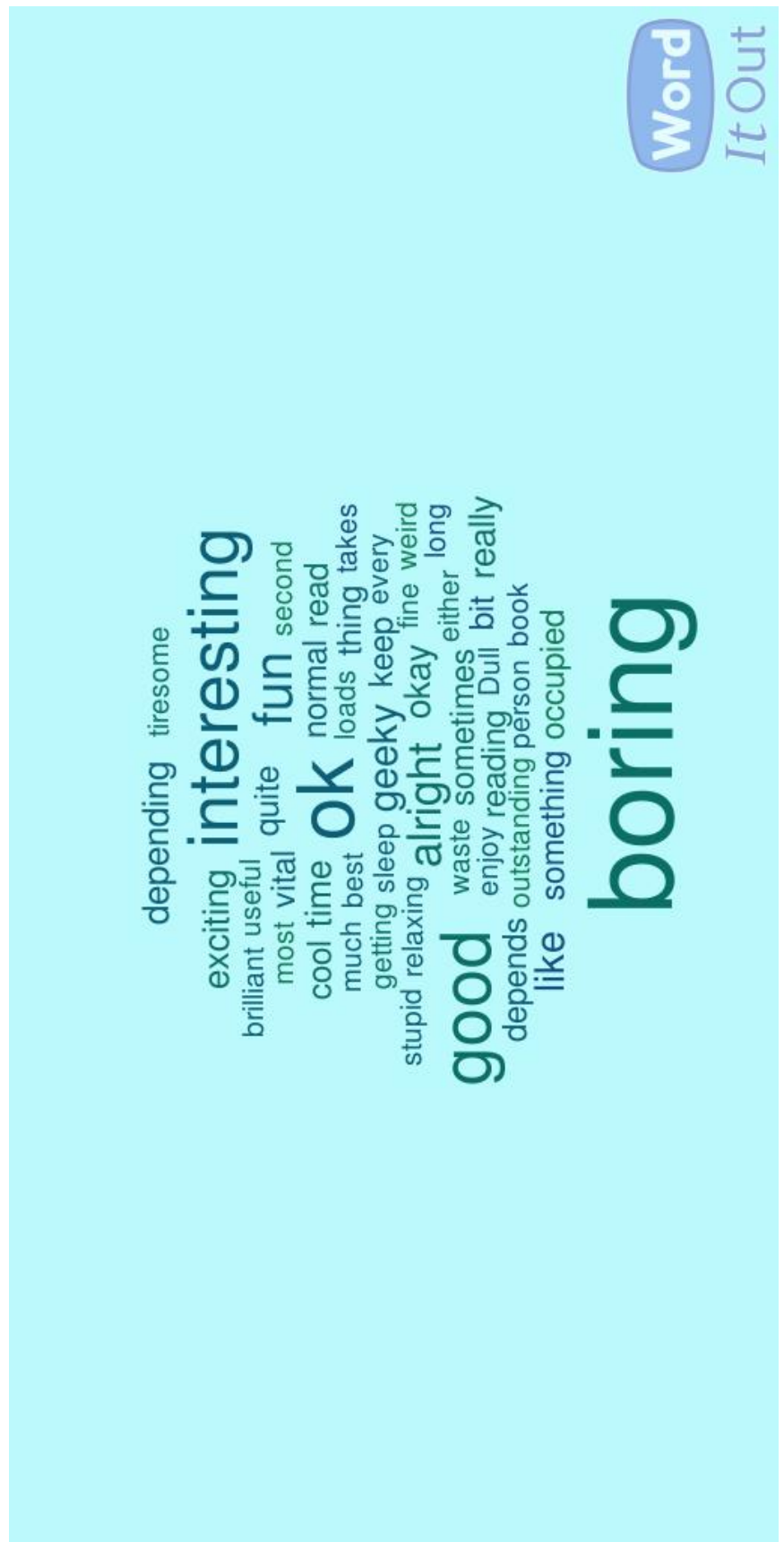
Primary School C Pictures

Secondary School Word Clouds Conversation Resources

I have used word clouds to draw out the key areas of the end year 7 conversations. The words are drawn from responses to the prompt: "I think *my friends* think that reading is..."

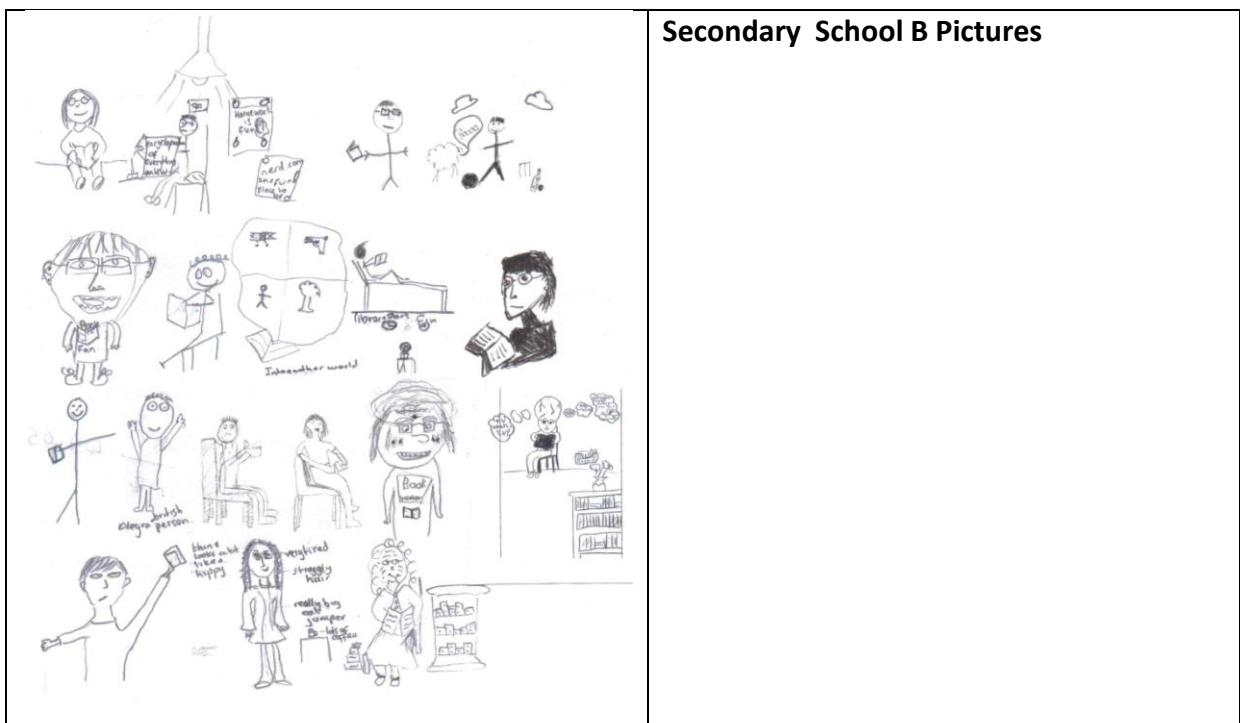
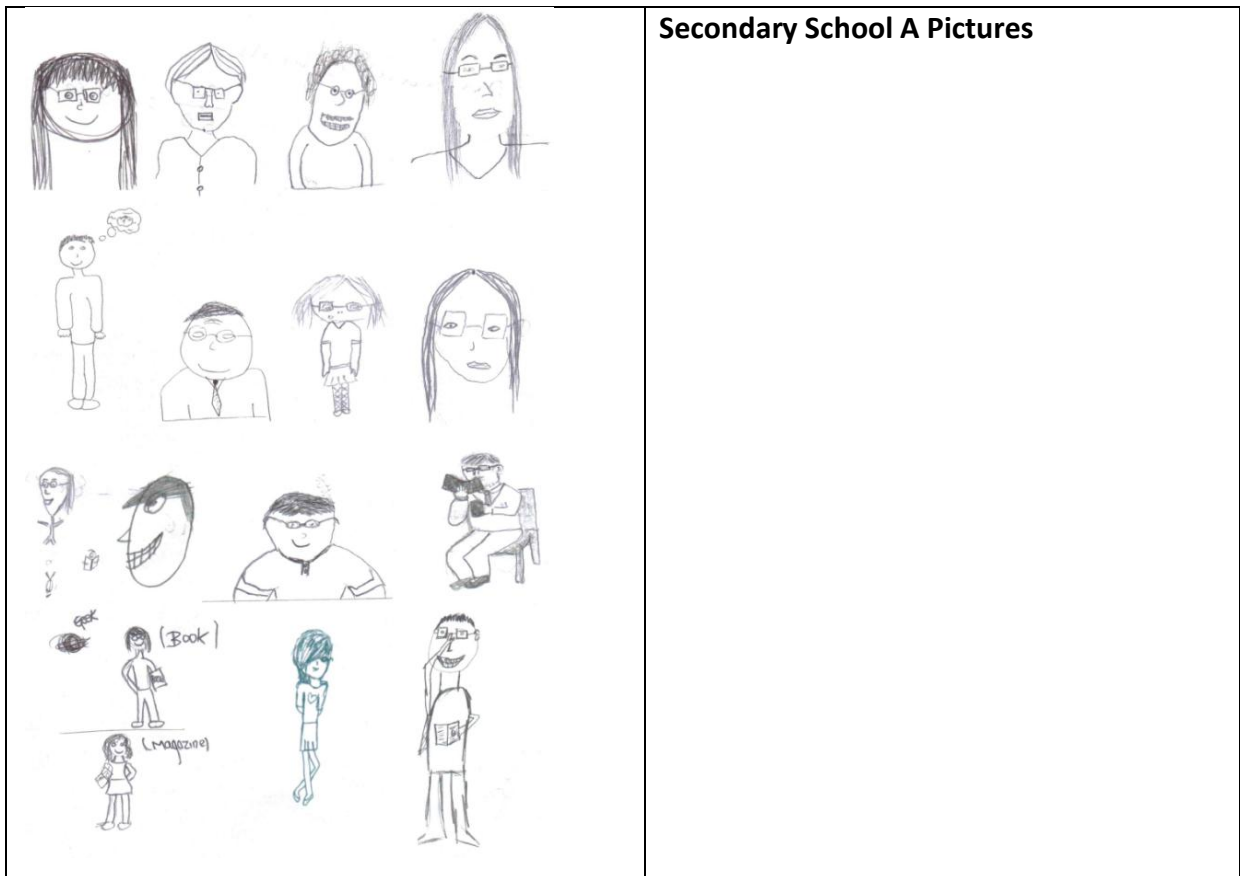
	<p>Secondary School A</p>
	<p>Secondary School B</p>
	<p>Secondary School C</p>

Combined secondary school responses:



Secondary School Picture Collages Conversation Resources

The secondary school children drew the following pictures: 'Please draw a picture of what *your friends* think a reader looks like:'





Secondary School C Pictures

24 Appendix 3

Howard's Definitions of Avid Readers
Preliminary taxonomy of teen readers

Type of reader	How often do you read for pleasure?	How do you feel about reading for pleasure?	Number of teens
Avid	Daily	Preferred leisure activity	38
Occasional	Weekly	Preferred leisure activity	20
Reluctant	Never	Don't like reading; don't have time for reading; don't read	10

(Howard, 2008, p. 108)

Taxonomy of teen readers

	Avid	Occasional	Reluctant
Social Communal	Avid Social Communal	Occasional Social Communal	Reluctant Social Communal
Detached Communal	Avid Detached Communal	Occasional Detached Communal	Reluctant Detached Communal
Solitary	Avid Solitary	Occasional Solitary	Reluctant Solitary

Taxonomy of teen readers 'Avid'

	Avid
Social Communal	<p>Avid Social Communal</p> <p>Readers experience a clear and mutually reinforcing relationship between friendship and reading. Reading exists in a 'virtuous circle' in which friends encourage reading for pleasure and shared reading experiences solidify friendships. Avid Social Communal Readers want to read the same materials as their friends to reinforce their membership in the group and to avoid the feeling of being left out...reading exists within a mutually accepted comfort zone of shared reading choices. As Social Readers, these teens exhibit little risk-taking or experimentation in their reading selections and read within a fairly</p>

	<p>limited and homogenous range of themes and genres. There are high levels of positive adult (usually parental) encouragement to read and members are usually regular library users. Avid Social Communal Readers are predominately female.</p>
Detached Communal	<p>Avid Detached Communal Readers share several features with Avid Social Communal Readers: both groups indicate generally high levels of positive adult (usually parental) encouragement to read and are regular library users. These readers tend to consider themselves as more ‘serious’ readers than Avid Social Communal Readers and see their reading choices as intimately linked to their identity; they dislike the predictability of series fiction and read a wide variety of themes and genres, often deliberately selecting challenging or ‘edgy’ titles...Avid Detached Readers are adamant in their dislike of receiving reading recommendations or advice from their friends...some Avid Detached readers see themselves as trendsetters...and enjoy dispensing reading recommendations to others...many Avid Detached readers also dislike reading recommendations from adults.</p> <p>Avid Detached Readers avoid developing a reading community with their immediate friends. Instead they actively seek other, more distant, opportunities for peer support for their reading. Several Avid Detached Readers established a virtual reading community through social networking tools such as Facebook...Several other Detached Avid Readers were members of a teen book club run by a local independent bookstore. These ‘detached’ reading communities function as safe spaces for these avid readers to discuss and share their reading interests with peers without threatening their primary friendship relationships. Detached Avid Communal Readers are predominately female.</p>
Solitary	<p>Avid Voluntary Solitary Readers are readers who are solitary by choice and they simply do not see any reason to share or to discuss their reading with their peers. Males and female readers are evenly represented in the Avid Voluntary solitary Readers group; however, there are some significant differences between male and female teens in terms of the role of adult mentorship of their reading habit. The male teens report high levels of positive adult encouragement to read whereas female teens feel they have received low levels of adult mentorship. Both male and female Avid Voluntary Solitary Readers have effective selection strategies and feel confident and self-sufficient as readers; they enjoy reading, but it is something they keep to themselves.</p>
Solitary	<p>Avid Involuntary Solitary Readers are readers are mainly female who are solitary by necessity. These readers are solitary because they have non-reading friends. In some cases, their friends are actively opposed to reading and see it as a ‘useless activity’. Avid Involuntary Solitary Readers acutely feel the lack of peer support; they wish they had peer support for their reading, feel isolated in their pleasure reading, and state that they read for pleasure ‘despite their friends’ and, sometimes despite their family as well. Avid Involuntary Solitary Readers do not participate in any detached reading communities, either online or through book clubs, either because they are unaware of such opportunities</p>

	or because they are unavailable in their community. These readers have weak selection strategies, often choosing books fairly randomly, and frequently have difficulties finding books they enjoy.
--	--

(Howard, 2008, pp. 108-116)

CLASSIFICATION OF Book Lovers & Other Readers

This graphic depicts the Linnaean hierarchy of **Readers**.
It is not meant to be comprehensive but does show most major groups.

Which book species are you?
(And yes, you may very well be a cross-bred reader mutt.)

CLASSIFICATION CHART					
DOMAIN	CLASS	FAMILY	GENUS	SPECIES	
R E A D E R S	Book Lovers	COMPULSIVE	Book Cherisher		
			Book Abuser		
		SITUATIONAL	Social		
	Other Readers	FREE-RANGE			
	PRESTIGE				
	CONFLICTED				
	HATERS				

SEE BELOW

COMPULSIVE

BOOKS AS LOVE OBJECTS – CHERISHED

THE OCD READER
You never loan books because they may not be returned in exactly the condition they were loaned. Or may not be returned at all (horrors).

THE BOOK PRESERVER
Like books to look as though they're untouched by human hand. No bending back pages or breaking spines. Book damage often results in a fresh copy being bought.

THE BOOK WORSHIPPER
Treat books like trophies, displaying them proudly on shelves to admire for years, showcasing your beautiful collection of literature.

THE HOARDER
Love books so much that you collect them by the dozens. You seldom have time to read all of the books that you collect. And now it's worse with ebooks.



THE CHRONOLOGICAL READER
Go through each book methodically, no skipping ahead; always finish. Feel compelled to read every book in the series.

COMPULSIVE BOOK BUYER
Feel strong desire to visit bookstores or Amazon nearly every day. And do so.

THE IMMERSIVE READER
Obsessively believe in one-sitting-reading. Anything not life-or-death must wait until you find out what happens in the book.

THE LIBRARY LOVER
Always get books out from the library to read. Scour *Library Journal* and *Kirkus* every month for advance word on new releases.

BOOKS AS LOVE OBJECTS – ABUSED

THE BOOK-BUSTER
You dog-ear book pages and take books out into the sun. Eat over them, too. The more beaten up the book, the more beloved.

THE UNDERLINER & SCRIBBLER
Love to annotate and underscore, and believe the margins were invented for scribbling notes in.

THE RE-READER
Know what you like, so read the same books over and over. Have multiple copies of a book ready for when an old favorite falls apart.

THE BOOK RESCUER
Have 24 book boxes in the garage filled with wonderful books rescued from other garages and used book stores.



THE PROMISCUOUS READER
A book cheater. Can't help abandoning the current beloved book in pursuit of the next latest and greatest new book to hit the charts. Rarely return to a previous book.

THE MULTITASKER
Might start the day out with a few pages from one novelist, then read something entirely different on the subway, and another at home.

THE BOOK THIEF
Love books so much that you just don't give them back.

THE BOOK BORROWER
Hate choosing your own books so borrow them from friends & family. Promise to return them, and unlike *The Book Thief*, usually do.

SITUATIONAL

THE OMNIREADER
You'll read anything you can get your hands on. Back of boxes, instructions, terms of service, whatever is around.



APP HAPPY
Whenever there's crumb of time, or just if you're bored, will download or read whatever's next up in your ebook queue.

THE SPOILER
Have to know what's going to happen, so will skim-read a book, before going back and reading carefully.

THE COMFORT READER
Have a small collection of absolute favorite books that you return to time and again when in-between new books, or in times of strife when in need of familiar old friends.

THE BOOK SWAGGER
Love getting your hands on books before anybody else—especially if they're free.

THE KINDLE CONVERT
You say you still love the smell and feel of paper books but are totally addicted to the convenience of digital reading.

THE TRAVELLING READER
Preferred reading venues are airports, train stations, bus depots, subways. Would rather read than gaze out the window, and bookmarks are ALWAYS tickets.

THE AUDIOBOOK LISTENER
Car owners and marathon runners.



THE SLEEPY BEDTIME READER
Cannot keep your eyes open and end up waking up with a book on your face and your light still on at 3 a.m.

THE BATHROOM READER
A person, often a man, who will stay in the bathroom for hours finishing a book.



SOCIAL

THE SHARER SCREAMER
You love to share your recent reading experience—loudly. Might release books into the wild by leaving them on park benches and in fitness club changing rooms.

THE (Sometimes Way Too Dogmatic) EVANGELIST
Love a book so much you buy other people copies of it, and keep asking "Have you started reading that amazing book I told you about yet?!"

THE BOOK CLUBBER
Favorite social event is the monthly book club get together. Look forward to more than just discussions of books.

THE EASILY INFLUENCED READER
Listen to everyone, from your mom to Oprah to the members of your book club to Michiko Kakutani, and believe them all.

THE ALL-THE-TIMER
Doesn't matter what the book is, really, so long as there are pages with words on them, or an e-reader with words on it. (You're reading one right now, aren't you?)

THE ECLECTIC
You read Haruki Murakami and Michael Connelly. Have a great time with the Swedes and are especially fond of a South African author who is just breaking through.

FREE RANGE

THE CROSS-UNDER
A grown-up who reads Y.A. or kids books, or a kid who reads adult books.

THE "IT'S COMPLICATED" READER
You are a combination of many of these things and yet completely different, too. You refuse to be defined or categorized. Beg, borrow, steal, devour. And do it all again.



PRESTIGE

THE BOOK SNOB
You never stoop to read something sold in a discount department store or as a free ebook. Only read award-winning hardcovers.

THE CRITIC
More often hate than love books, but when you love, you love deeply and in the most eloquent of fashions. Like to discuss books but find book clubs too "mainstream."

THE SHOW OFF
Pretend to have read *Remembrance of Things Past* (all seven volumes) when in fact know only the bit about the cookie. Which you will talk about.

THE ANACHRONIST
Actively or subconsciously reject modern technology and modern life. Love abstract concepts from past ancient civilizations.



READER THE OBSCURE
Reads books you've never heard of.



THE SELF-CONSCIOUS READER
Say you read things like Woolf and Hemingway but secretly hanker to get home and read about ripped bodices or time travelers.

THE CONSCIENTIOUS READER
Only read nonfiction with a purpose. The purpose = learning something, otherwise you'll read it on the Internet not in a book.

THE PROFESSIONAL READER
Read because need to write an article for an academic journal or because need to finish a chapter of a dissertation.

THE CAREER READER
Say you read for pleasure but really only read books that will benefit your own (writing) career.



DELAYED ONSET READER
Buy one or many books but months may go by before starting them. When you do you are amazed that you waited so long.

THE SLOW-STARTER
Takes you 6 months to read the first half of a book, and 6 hours to read the second half.



CONFLICTED

THE RELUCTANT READER
Find quite suddenly, after a number years of enforced reading, that there is a beauty and a joy in the written word.

NO-TIME-TO-READ READER
Between kids, work, and fatigue simply can no longer find the time to read.



HATERS

THE CENSORSHIP READER
Borrow books only to go through them with a permanent marker and cross out all the "naughty" words.



THE "I LOVE TO HATE IT" READER
May close the cover and toss a volume across the room, but will do it with a great, secret frisson of satisfaction because it feels so good.

THE ANTI-READER
Never read books, because they are too damn long. Blogs are too long, too. Prefer golf.





Sources

This classification chart is adapted from the writings of Rick Morton at Mamamia.com (“7 Types of Book Lovers” <http://bit.ly/12xiWbg>), Jen Doll at TheAtlanticWire.com (“The Atlantic Diagnostic Guide to Types of Book Readers” <http://bit.ly/16IKM4v>), and Mark O’Connell at the New Yorker’s Page-Turner blog (“Promiscuous Reader” <http://nyr.kr/19N02zi>). Please visit their sites to read their original funny essays and the enthusiastic reader commentary that followed.

I created this infographic because I’m a reading mutt who loves to read, and thought this would be a fun way to pay homage to all the readers out there. After noting that there are doubtless more than 50 species of readers, I no longer fear that we’re a dying breed!



Laura @ Laura-e-Kelly.com

(Kelly, 2013)