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Adolescent Attitudes Toward Literature

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Adolescent Attitudes toward Literature

Anne Marie Casa – Educational Studies – Dr. Robin Leavitt

Research question: What types of books do adolescents like to read and why?

Participants: 17 First year high school students enrolled in a literature and composition course

Methodology: Students were asked to write 100 word reading logs bi-weekly discussing their feelings and attitudes toward literature that they were reading on their own as well as school required texts. Field notes on large group discussion and individual conversations regarding literature were also taken into account.



Conclusions: While students enjoyed the texts that they chose on their own better than most school required texts, this literature still needed to contain the right elements to keep them interested and connected. Understanding what literature adolescents enjoy and why is valuable to teachers because they can partner these novels with other school required texts to introduce literary concepts. Teachers should include the types of books that appeal to students in their curriculum since these novels will help students connect with the material and enjoy reading more. Students should be encouraged to find themes in literature that relate to their lives to increase positive attitudes toward reading and comprehension of material.

Findings

Students liked or disliked books depending on a wide range of reasons.

Author Style and Genre

Both the topic of the book and the style in which the author wrote affected students' attitudes about literature. When students like the author style, they enjoyed the book much more and even wrote that they comprehended the story better. Many students wrote about literature containing the right amount of action. With too much or too little, action, they quickly lost interest in the book.

Relating the Novel to Life

Students thoroughly enjoyed books that contained elements relating to their own lives. They made better connections with the literature when the books featured characters similar to them. Students often thought of these characters as real people and felt sympathetic, happy, or worried for them depending on their situations in the story. Students were eager and willing to read when they could relate to the characters or their story.

Identifying Themes

Regarding school required texts, students were able to identify themes and write about how those themes pertained to their lives. When stories featured themes that students could find in their own lives, they connected better with the literature. They also commented that this type of literature taught or reiterated life lessons.

