

Article Review #8

Article/Book Title: The Gift of Reading in 2011: Children and Young People's Access to Books and Attitudes towards Reading

Full APA Reference: Clark, C., Woodley, J., Lewis, F. (2011) The Gift of Reading in 2011: Children and Young People's Access to Books and Attitudes towards Reading. *National Literacy Trust*, 1-10. Retrieved from: <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED541403>

Major Themes/Theories: Engagement, accessibility to books and library, socio-economic backgrounds, and stigmas and stereotypes

Abstract: The authors' research has consistently highlighted the link between reading for pleasure and reading attainment. Worryingly, they have found that the number of children and young people who say that they own a book seems to be rapidly decreasing. In 2005, 1 in 10 of the children and young people they surveyed said they did not have a book of their own at home; while in 2011 the figure stands at a startling 1 child in 3. With one in six people in the UK having the literacy level expected of an eleven year old, this is of great concern. In this new report the authors explore children's reading in 2011 with findings from their first annual survey of literacy in the UK. It examines children's ownership of books, access to reading materials, frequency of reading and attitudes to reading. They also consider how these factors could all affect children and young people's reading abilities. Background information on the omnibus survey is appended.

Define the Research Questions:

In *The Gift of Reading in 2011: Children and Young People's Access to Books and Attitudes towards Reading* authors Christina Clark, Jane Woodley, and Fiona Lewis explore the impact factors, like the ownership of books, access to reading materials, and frequency of reading affect the attitude and reading abilities of children. Worryingly, the authors' found that the number of children owning books has been rapidly decreasing, as in 2005 studies report 1 in 10 children did not own a book, which has now increased to 1 in 3 children in 2011. By examining the factors that influence a child's ability to read, the authors' intend to discover the reasoning behind this sudden decrease, and provide their suggestions on reading improvement in schools.

Discuss the methodology used by the authors.

To gather research on their topic, the authors' had 18,141 young people from over 100 schools within and around the United Kingdom (100 from England, 3 from Wales, 3 from Scotland, and 3 from Northern Ireland) participate in an online survey from November 15th to December 10th in 2010. Students from 8 to 17 years old took part, with the majority of the pupils ranging from 11 to 13 years old. The survey consisted of 33 questions that explored their background, reading and writing enjoyment, behaviour attitudes towards reading, communication skills and technology use. There were also three different types of online surveys to choose from: (1) simple omnibus survey, (2) amended omnibus survey with two extra questions on reading attainment, and (3) amended omnibus survey with a name field and schools also provided reading and writing data from the participating pupils.

The key objectives of this survey were to determine the following: (1) their reading skills, (2) how often they read, (3) the types of materials they read, (4) number of books at home, (5) thoughts towards reading, (6) their writing skills, (7) what makes a good writer, (8) materials they use to write, (9) thoughts towards writing, (7) communication skills and their importance, and (8) how often they use technology (computer or mobile phone).

Describe the results.

In their results, the authors' found there is a clear relationship between their factors and a child's

reading ability. They report that children who had never received a book as a present are more likely to be reading below the expected reading level for their age, while children who have received books are more likely to read at or above their reading level. Females are also more likely to own books over males, as the study reports 7 in 10 females own books, while 6 in 10 males own one. The authors' also report these children who own books are more likely to read frequently, have more access to books of different materials, show positive attitudes and interests towards books, and are more likely to visit libraries and bookshops. Even owning a certain amount of books had some effect on children's reading ability, as children who owned up to 10 books were 8% above the reading level, while children who owned up to 500+ books were 38% above the reading level. Their research also found that frequently reading outside the classroom at least once a month also shows greater reading attainment than other pupils who did not. Overall, their results show that the ownership of books, access to reading materials, and frequency of reading did have an effect on a child's reading ability and their attitude towards reading, as children who owned books were more likely to read at or above the expected reading level, while children who did not own books were more likely to read below the expected level.

Connect the main ideas presented in the article.

As the results show, reading for pleasure has a profound effect on the academic performance of a child, and are found to be more likely at or above the expected reading level if they have access to reading materials in their home. Improvement in literacy can have a profound effect on an individual, as this can lead to better working jobs in their future, but sadly there are factors outside of a child's control that also affect their attitude towards reading. Socio-economic backgrounds, especially families in low-income areas, do not have the funds available to buy their children books as presents, and this is one of the reasons why there has been a decrease in ownership of books. To solve this problem, it means that children in these disadvantaged backgrounds need to be given support from outside sources, such as schools and libraries, in order to receive the help they need to improve their reading ability. Schools across the United Kingdom need to provide student access to reading materials, and put more time in class to teach important literacy skills to help their students succeed. Stigmas and stereotypes need to be addressed in the classrooms also, as in the survey students reported they felt embarrassed to read, or felt like they could not read well as others, which means teachers need to shape their classrooms into a safe environment where there is no judgement towards reading. In the end, children need to have access to books at homes and in their classrooms, as it impacts their reading ability, their attitude towards reading, and even their success in the future.