

Reading Campaign—High School and Post-Secondary Working Group Condensed Report (Please see Full Report for more Context, Resources, and for Information about Individual Programs)

Vision of the Ideal for this Working Group

A national reading campaign that aims to foster positive reading environments in high schools, colleges, universities, libraries and in communities and individual homes; that recognizes and celebrates new forms and formats of reading; that engages in collaboration with interested partners; that provides strategies and programming for teenagers and adults; that aims to reduce access barriers to reading materials and reading forums; and that envisions a nation where all forms of literature are read, discussed, created and incorporated into daily life.

Current Situation

While the Canadian Heritage Survey *Reading and Buying Books for Pleasure* (2005) claims high reading rates among Canadians, the number of books read per Canadian per year is declining. The group is also concerned that several studies have identified a decline of reading practice at age 13-14, particularly for boys. However, young people whose pleasure reading is embedded with social contexts identify themselves as enjoying reading more, and extra-curricular reading clubs have a positive effect on reading frequency and reading ability.

Writers-in-the-schools programs help bring students and teachers in contact with local and regional writers. Reading and Writing Camps for Teens (i.e. Alberta inkpulse), literary festival touring programs (i.e. IFOA touring programs), university courses such as Canadian Writers in Person (York University), also help bring students and teachers in contact with writers, reading materials and promote engagement in literary social and educational activities. Websites, such as Resource Links, a resource that selects adult Canadian titles with potential appeal for strong teenage readers, TeenRC.ca year-long, national book club developed by librarians for Canadian teens, and Bookurious from Random House of Canada, help youth choose reading materials. Summer reading clubs, such as TD Summer Reading Club, also help encourage reading over the summer. Challenges, contests, and group reading initiatives, such as CBC Canada Reads, One City One Book, and other campaigns encourage the reading of Canadian literature through group engagement.

Suggestions Arising Out of Best Practices

Drop Everything and Read Program (the Nova Scotia once-a-year program) could be encouraged nationally and daily in schools and more frequently in communities.

Encourage faculties of education to offer a variety of credit courses in reading and writing, so that teachers are more prepared to implement positive reading and writing environments in their schools.

Encourage educators to implement innovative curricula that allow students to actively engage with their reading materials (i.e. developing a class Coles Notes version of a contemporary Canadian novel; production of radio or internet blogs, reviews, discussion groups).

Involve more students in literary festivals, book clubs, and other reading and writing initiatives (provide more avenues for the communication of these programs and opportunities available to students for participation). For instance, involve more students in Forest of Trees Programs, especially the White Pine Awards (young adult literature). We should encourage literary equivalents to school science fairs. Students should be encouraged to help facilitate the programming as well (see L3 Writers Conference, Barrie Ontario).

Encourage involvement in national reading events, such as CBC Canada Reads, Freedom to Read Week, Canada Book Week, One City One Book, etc.

More schools should be aware of how to access writers-in-the-schools programs (these are, for the most part, provincial programs) and should be encouraged to involve literary writers in school subjects other than English literature (i.e. biology, cultural studies, physics), depending on the interdisciplinary nature of their works and multiple genres (novels, poetry, plays, graphic novels and more).

Offer free access, where possible, to literary events, particularly to teenagers and youth, as well as to rural areas.

Offer book certificates as prizes in schools.

Encourage the development of more Reading and Writing Camps for teens.

Encourage the development of a Canadian Writers in Person credit undergraduate course at every Canadian university (see York University's model).

Encourage the development of more online book clubs, blogs, review sites, targeted to specific demographics (i.e. teenage boys, university students, adult readers).

Encourage more reading challenges and contests to create excitement and engagement and reward around reading. And encourage more effective communication about these challenges and contests and other reading programs.

Encourage the acknowledgement of new media and other forms of written text to be included under the definition of "reading".

Encourage new literary initiatives specifically for teenage boys. Also, identify and include teenage boy reading models and reading advocates in this campaign (i.e. YALSA, Patrick Jones and Eric Walters).

Encourage workshops for parents of teenagers to identify strategies to encourage reading and writing at home, in the schools and in the community.

Gaps in Services

Funding Issues: Some writers-in-the-schools programs have suffered drastic cuts to programming in the last several years (i.e. Manitoba Writers Guild). Others complain that they can only meet a fraction of the demand for services (Prince Edward Island Writers Guild can only meet 20% of demand). The successful TeenRC.ca needs a financial sponsor to keep this program running.

Many literary programs appeal more to women than to men, more to teenage girls than to teenage boys. We need, urgently, to address this gap, and provide programming that meets the needs of diverse communities.

Communication about services and programs that already exist needs to be vastly improved, especially to communities that have historically been unable to benefit from such programming.

Research Needs

We need more research to back claims for long-term effects of teaching more reading and writing skills and fostering positive reading environments. We also need more research on the relationship between reading and internet use, and on multitasking as it helps or hinders productivity of a single task (reading studies show an increase of using other media while reading).

Who is Responsible for Achieving the Vision?

The success of the working group vision depends on the positive and effective collaboration of a number of organizations: government, writers groups, literary festival organizers, educators, libraries, publishers and others. Effective communication between groups, as well as effective communication outreach will be crucial for a successful campaign and for the continued growth of reading communities (in person and online).

Selected Research Resources & Links (full list can be found in Complete Working Group Report)

Forest of Trees Program (White Pine Awards)

<http://www.accessola.com/forest2010/>

Inkpulse

http://www.writersunion.ca/rd_main.asp

L3 Writers Conference

www.l3writers.ca

IFOA (Young IFOA Program)

http://www.readings.org/?q=all_ages

Resource Links

http://www.ualberta.ca/~mmackey/Adult_Canadian_Books_2010.pdf

TeenRC

TeenRC.ca

Bookurious

Bookurious.com

WrestleMania Reading Challenge

[WrestleMania Reading Challenge](#)

Teen Author Week

[Teen Author Week](#)

Catherine Ross, Lynne McKechnie and Paulette Rothbauer

Reading Matters: What the Research Reveals about Reading, Libraries, and Community (Libraries Unlimited, 2006)

Stephen Krashen

The Power of Reading: Insights from the Research (Pearson Education Canada, 2nd edition, 2004)

Rachel van Riel, Fowler and Downes

The Reader-Friendly Library Service (Society of Chief Librarians, 2008)

Createc. Reading and buying books for pleasure: 2005 national survey. Ottawa: Canadian Heritage (2005).

Love, K., & Hamston, J. Committed and reluctant male teenage readers: Beyond bedtime stories. Journal of Literacy Research (2004).

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3785/is_200410/ai_n11826114/pg_1

National Endowment for the Arts. To read or not to read: A question of national consequence. No. Research Report #47 (2007). Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts.

<http://www.nea.gov/news/news07/TRNR.html>

National Endowment for the Arts. Reading at risk: A survey of literary reading in America. National Endowment for the Arts (2004).

<http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini>.

[jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED484208&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED484208](http://www.eric.ed.gov/jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED484208&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED484208)

[OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment \(PISA\).](#)

[2003 International Literacy and Life Skills Survey \(IALLS\)](#)

[International Survey of Reading Skills](#)

[Project Teen Canada](#)

Reginald W. Bibby and Vivian Howard

["Teens and pleasure reading: A critical assessment from Nova Scotia"](#)

[Forest of Reading Program](#)

[TD Summer Reading Club](#)

[Halifax Public Libraries Teen Read Week](#)

[YALSA](#)

[Patrick Jones](#)

[Eric Walters](#)

Sanford, Kathy; Madill, Leanna.

Understanding the Power of New Literacies Through Video Game Play and Design, Canadian Journal of Education. 01 Jan. 2007: 432. eLibrary. Web. 10 Nov. 2010.