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The Reading Habits and Literacy Attitudes of Inservice and Prospective Teachers

Results of a Questionnaire Survey

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This article describes a questionnaire survey of 747 students enrolled in a graduate school of education, who are currently teachers or prospective teachers. The Literacy Habits Questionnaire, developed by Applegate and Applegate, was administered in September 2006. Findings suggest a high prevalence of aliteracy, the ability to read but a disinterest in personal reading. Although graduate students acknowledge the importance of reading for teachers, they do not themselves exhibit investment in personal reading. Also, the findings suggest that professors of literacy and education need to do more to encourage personal reading by incorporating strategies to promote reading among current and future literacy professionals.

Keywords: *teacher education; literacy; personal reading habits of teachers*

We are three university professors who were concerned about the academic information and skills we teach our students but also about our influence on their beliefs, values, and behaviors. Although our graduate students have a significant passing rate on competency-based teacher examinations and content-specialty examinations, we were unsure whether the programs we offer address behaviors, values, and habits—in short, the affective domain, characterized by lifelong learning and literacy. Were we, as trainers of teachers, preparing a generation of teachers only concerned with helping children to succeed with high-stakes tests, when the demands of an ever-changing global society require so much more?

In our desire to prepare teachers to go beyond high-stakes test mandates, this study replicated a survey developed by Applegate and Applegate (2004) about undergraduate college students' literary attitudes and habits. We focused on graduate students who are prospective or relatively new teachers of literacy and children with special needs. Our purpose was to investigate the fit between curricula and practices. Should teacher preparation institutions realign course content to balance the "scientific study" of reading with the "art" of reading? Should teacher preparation institutions also address the aesthetic enjoyment that comes from being a lifelong, engaged reader?

Related Literature

The Art of Teaching Reading: The Role of the Affective Domain

As we considered how our current preservice and inservice graduate students affect the youth in our schools, an essential question became, "Do children learn because of what we, as teachers, say, or do they learn by observing what teachers do and how teachers behave?" There is much evidence, buttressed by the experiences of classroom teachers, to suggest that teachers' values and behaviors exert as powerful an influence on students' hearts and minds as the curriculum itself. For example, Brophy's (1986) and Deci's (1971) work on intrinsic versus extrinsic motivators suggested that the teacher is a focal point for motivation. More recently, Schunk (1990) noted that teachers with low self-esteem or feelings of self-efficacy tend to avoid planning opportunities to promote growth, challenge, and change and, thus, fail to influence intrinsic motivation in pupils. Skinner, Wellborn, and Connell

(1990) characterized the relationship between teacher behaviors and student motivation as reciprocal. Therefore, student teacher behaviors influence pupils and vice versa. The importance of teachers in affecting student motivation for reading has been well researched (Guthrie, 1996; Sanacore, 2002; Scott, 1996; Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Sweet, Guthrie, & Ng, 1998; Wang & Guthrie, 2004; Wilhelm & Smith, 2000). Cunningham (2005) asked, "If they [students] don't read much, how they ever gonna get good?" to describe how teachers can go a long way in allocating time for reading. With all that we know about motivation and the teacher's role in promoting reading, how is it that reading is in decline today?

Aliteracy: A Growing Problem

Scott (1996) defined aliteracy as a "lack of reading habit especially in capable readers who choose not to read." Mikulecky (1978) was among the earliest researchers to differentiate aliteracy from illiteracy. Characteristics of aliterates have been well noted in the research. Aliterates typically suffer from a lack of engagement or intrinsic motivation to read, even when they are capable of successfully comprehending material (Asselin, 2004). Decker (1986) found three significant causes of aliteracy among students: (a) a narrowing of vocabulary development and exposure to words in schools; (b) an increase in television watching; and (c) an imposition of state-mandated high-stakes tests, which tend to dilute the curriculum and force teachers to do "test prep" skill and drill at the expense of reading for enjoyment.

Several researchers have concentrated on the interaction of home and school (Beers, 1996; Shapiro & Whitney, 1997; Trelease, 1995), suggesting that aliteracy may have its roots in preschool reading environments. McKenna (2001) noted that reading attitudes and motivations are crucial to the development of lifelong literacy. He described how schools make these attitudes about reading cumulative and ongoing.

Although home and school can provide a nurturing environment for lifelong reading, a study by the National Endowment for the Arts (2004) showed an overall decline in the amount of leisure time reading and noted the following dubious trends in aliteracy:

- Less than half of the adult American population now reads literature.
- There has been a progressive 10% decline in reading each of the past 20 years, representing the loss of 20 million potential readers.
- A decline in reading of literature parallels a decline in total book reading.

- Reading has declined among every group of readers, from high school dropouts to college graduates and professionals, for the past 20 years (pp. viii-xii).

Such statistics reinforce suspicions voiced by literacy educators and researchers such as Mueller (1973), Cramer and Castle (1994), and Metsala, Wigfield, and McCann (1997) that aliteracy may be growing among all segments of our population despite our best intentions and efforts.

Several investigators, including the authors of this study, have wondered how much of the blame for this problem may be assigned to literacy professionals. For example, Heathington and Alexander (1984), Lehman, Freeman, and Allen (1994), Reutzel and Sabey (1996), and Morrison, Jacobs, and Swinyard (1999) found that elementary school teachers have always valued lifelong reading; however, these researchers found very little information on how teachers consistently apply instructional support of that goal. Could the aliteracy problem be due, in part, to the aliteracy of professionals entrusted to nurture and support strong literacy habits?

Preservice and Recent Inservice Teachers' Attitudes Toward Reading: Problem or Solution?

Early Surveys of Teachers' Attitudes and Reading Habits

How important is leisure time reading to teachers? Do aliterate students become aliterate teachers? Informal discussions with our undergraduate and graduate literacy students suggested that, in terms of personal reading, these young people were part of the national trend of decreased readership. The research literature suggests, unfortunately, that many teachers do not make personal, leisure-time reading a priority.

Mueller (1973) conducted a questionnaire survey of teachers and found that only 23.5% of undergraduates and 50% of graduates could be characterized as enthusiastic readers. He concluded that many teachers do not value reading very highly, a finding with serious implications for teaching effectiveness. However, in a larger study, Mour (1977) surveyed graduate students enrolled in a reading instruction program over a period of two semesters. His findings supported Mueller's conclusion that many teachers do not read. For example, Mour found that only 25% of the participants were enthusiastic readers, and the rest were moderate to light readers.

Another investigation (Smith, 1989) of undergraduate education majors found a significant correlation between

students' attitudes toward reading and their overall GPA. However, across all GPA levels, Smith found that typical undergraduate preservice teachers possess only moderately positive attitudes about reading. Draper, Barksdale-Ladd, and Radencich (2000) conducted their own questionnaire survey of 80 preservice education majors and concluded that education majors did not grasp the importance of why teachers must themselves model strong literacy habits.

Powell-Brown (2003/2004) interviewed her graduate students in a reading methods course and asked them, "Can you be a teacher of literacy if you don't love to read?" She found that aliteracy was prevalent among her graduate students, especially inservice teachers who allocated little time for personal reading. Among her recommendations, Powell-Brown advised that effective literacy teachers must demonstrate a positive attitude toward personal reading. Or, as she put it, "make sure you model your passion for literacy for your students" (p. 287). Powell-Brown's findings raised a red flag about those who teach reading without having genuine enthusiasm or interest in lifelong reading and emphasized a need to nurture a passion for reading among her students.

Creeping Aliteracy in Prospective
Teachers: The Peter Effect

Applegate and Applegate (2004) conducted a multiyear study of 379 undergraduate education majors. These researchers referred to the lack of reading enthusiasm as the "Peter Effect," a metaphoric reference to the biblical story of the Apostle Peter who, when asked for money, told a beggar, "How can I give what I myself do not have?" (p. 556). Applegate and Applegate then developed and administered a Literacy Habits Questionnaire (LHQ) to college students in several institutions. They found characteristics of readers consistent with the prior studies, specifically, a lack of enthusiasm for reading and anemic personal reading habits. For example, Applegate and Applegate found that 51.5% of respondents were characterized as unenthusiastic readers and aliteracy appeared to be unrelated to such academic measures as SAT scores. These investigators expressed concern about the lack of enthusiasm for reading found in their undergraduates. However, Applegate and Applegate also concluded, "Well planned instructional experiences may be quite successful in altering the views of reading held by many of their teaching candidates" (p. 561). That finding provided some ray of hope that further investigations could illuminate a path to inform and change reading attitudes of prospective teachers.

Investigating the Peter Effect in Graduate Preservice and Inservice Teachers: Research Questions

We wondered if teacher-training institutions could more successfully promote lifelong literacy among prospective and current literacy professionals. If the Peter Effect is alive and well on the undergraduate level, has it also permeated graduate students who are currently in schools teaching our young people? We wanted to survey as many graduate students enrolled in our program as possible to answer four key questions about teacher aliteracy:

1. Are preservice and new inservice teachers enthusiastic readers?
2. Did instructional practices affect reading enthusiasm?
3. Did family influence personal reading habits and attitudes toward reading?
4. Have former elementary, high school, or college teachers shared a love of reading?

Design of the Study

We used the LHQ developed by Applegate and Applegate (2004). In September 2006, on the heels of return from summer vacation and at the start of the academic semester, we surveyed 788 relatively new and prospective literacy and special education teachers in our department in a suburban university approximately 30 miles east of New York City on Long Island. Our university is ranked as competitive by Barron's Guide to Undergraduate Colleges. Graduate students in our department consistently score at a higher than 90% passing rate on New York State competency tests and content-area teaching tests in special education and literacy.

To become proficient at administering and scoring the LHQ, and also to obtain a high interrater reliability, prior to our study, we conducted a 2-year pilot using the LHQ with undergraduates and graduates, using the LHQ with various populations of students who were not included in this study.

We wanted to enlist the support and active engagement of graduate students and ensure a high rate of questionnaire return. By means of a cover letter and written directions, we assured students that the questionnaire would be anonymous. Respondents were asked only to identify themselves as either full-time, current teachers, or graduate students not currently teaching full-time. We enjoyed the active assistance and support of our departmental colleagues who in some cases assisted with obtaining and collecting questionnaires.

Although several questionnaires had to be discarded for incomprehensible or incomplete answers and a number of absentees could not be reached, we obtained 747 completed questionnaires, which represented a 91% usable response rate, a substantial slice of the total university enrollment in our graduate school of education. In our study, 283 (38%) were currently full-time teachers, and 464 (62%) were currently graduate students not teaching full-time but studying to become special education and/or regular education teachers or waiting for a teaching appointment.

LHQ Scoring and Data Collection

Applegate and Applegate (2004) assessed the level of reading activity by asking students to report on summer reading. Researchers compared the amount of reading with respondents' self-reported level of enjoyment associated with reading. Although Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, and Cammack (2004) noted the emergence of multiple literacies affected by the Internet and development of new information technologies, Applegate and Applegate were primarily concerned with respondents' efferent and aesthetic stances of literacy and concentrated on print materials such as newspapers, books, and magazines. In replicating the original LHQ, we also believed that summer reading would focus on the type of reading done when individuals are away from Internet or computer activities. The personal choice to read in free time, we believed, would reflect a commitment to literacy activities aligned with lifelong reading habits of enthusiastic readers.

Our first question asked respondents to self-report what they had read over the summer in an open-ended response format. We worked individually and collaboratively to score responses, following a rubric developed by Applegate and Applegate. Comments were given numerical scores as follows:

1 = respondent did no summer reading
2 = respondent read only newspapers or magazines
3 = respondent was in the midst of completing a book (either fiction or nonfiction unrelated to professional work or graduate studies)
4 = respondent completed one book during the summer (fiction or nonfiction)
5 = respondent completed two or more books during the summer

Question 2 asked respondents to categorize the amount of enjoyment they received from reading and to provide reasons for their response. As with the first question, a 5-point rubric adapted from Applegate and Applegate's follow-up study was used to score the open-ended responses. Open-ended responses to Question 2 were coded as follows:

1 = no enjoyment in reading
2 = little enjoyment in reading
3 = moderate or some enjoyment
4 = great enjoyment
5 = tremendous enjoyment (highly enthusiastic)

In coding our responses, the most difficult aspect was discriminating Category 4 (great enjoyment) from Category 5 (tremendous enjoyment/highly enthusiastic readers). We assigned a 4 rating, unless, in the open-ended response category, the respondent was able to demonstrate that he or she read daily or considered reading a top priority of leisure-time activities.

Question 3 included a series of statements about instructional practices associated with reading. Respondents applied a 5-point Likert-type scale to indicate the extent to which their teachers emphasized these instructional approaches in elementary school and secondary school. Options were arrayed on a continuum from 1 (*no emphasis*) to 5 (*great deal of emphasis*). Rosenblatt (1978) indicated that every act of reading involves both aesthetic and efferent components. Two statements were consistent with a fact-based or efferent reading stance: remembering the details of what you read, and completing assignments or reports associated with reading. The third statement represented an aesthetic reading stance: discussing your reactions and interpretations of literature with classmates or teachers. Each of the three statements was scored separately for elementary school and secondary school.

In the LHQ, Questions 4 through 7 were open ended:

- Question 4: When you consider your early reading experiences with learning to read, do you recall them as primarily positive, negative, or neutral?
- Question 5: Did your experiences with reading at home differ from your experiences at school? If so, how?
- Question 6: Were any of your teachers effective in promoting a love of reading? If so, how did they do this?
- Question 7: When you consider your college-level reading experiences, do you see them are primarily positive, negative, or neutral? Why?

Results and Analysis

LHQ Question 1 and 2 Results

Question 1 of the LHQ provided data concerning titles or authors of books read as summer reading. The results for the sample of 747 graduate students with respect to summer reading are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1
Literacy Habits Questionnaire Question 1:
Reporting on the Amount and
Nature of Summer Reading

Self-Reported Amount of Summer Reading	Responses
Did no summer reading	114 (15%)
Read newspapers or magazines only	76 (10%)
Were in the midst of reading a book	13 (2%)
Read one book	188 (25%)
Read two or more books	356 (48%)

Table 2
Literacy Habits Questionnaire Question 2:
Summer Reading Patterns of Self-Reported
Enthusiastic and Unenthusiastic Readers

	Unenthusiastic Readers	Enthusiastic Readers	Total
Did no summer reading	67 (21.2%)	47 (7.7%)	114 (15.3%)
Read only newspapers or magazines	39 (28.1%)	37 (6.1%)	76 (10.2%)
Were in the midst of reading one book	0 (0%)	13 (2.1%)	13 (1.7%)
Read one book	27 (19.4%)	161 (26.5%)	188 (25.2%)
Read two or more books	6 (4.3%)	350 (57.6%)	356 (47.7%)
Totals	139 (18.6%)	608 (81.4%)	747 (100%)

As indicated in Table 1, 48% of the sample completed two or more books during the summer and 25% read one book during the summer. These data suggested that summer reading was not an important leisure-time priority for our sample. However, the responses to LHQ Question 1 must be interpreted in light of the results for LHQ Question 2, in which respondents rated their degree of enthusiasm for reading.

In analyzing responses to Question 2, we distinguished no or little enjoyment in reading from a broad continuum of enjoyment from *moderate* to *tremendous enthusiasm for reading*. Thus, responses originally scored 1 or 2 (*no enjoyment in reading* or *little enjoyment in reading*, respectively) were treated as unenthusiastic responses. Responses given a rating of 3 (*moderate enthusiasm for reading*), 4 (*great deal of enjoyment in reading*), or 5 (*tremendous amount of enjoyment*) were considered enthusiasm for reading. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 2.

Obtained results of reported summer reading for enthusiastic readers and unenthusiastic readers revealed meaningful and statistically significant differences between the two groups ($\chi^2 = 247.6$, $df = 4$, $n = 747$, $p = .000$). All of the enthusiastic readers did some summer reading; however, the more enthusiastic readers tended to read two or more books during their summer reading time.

LHQ Question 3A Results: The Degree of Instructional Emphasis Placed on Remembering Details in Elementary and High School Reading

Question 3A asked respondents to rate the degree of instructional emphasis placed on reading to remember details in elementary school and high school. This statement is characteristic of an efferent, fact-finding stance for reading. Our results indicated no statistically significant difference between enthusiastic and unenthusiastic readers with respect to how much emphasis was placed on fact-finding reading in elementary school ($\chi^2 = 3.3$, $df = 4$, $n = 742$, $p = .504$) or in high school ($\chi^2 = 4.8$, $df = 4$, $n = 735$, $p = .31$).

LHQ Question 3B Results: The Degree of Instructional Emphasis Placed on Reactions and Interpretations/Discussions of Literature

Question 3B asked respondents to rate the degree of instructional emphasis placed on their reactions to and interpretations of literature with classmates or teachers in elementary school and high school. This statement is characteristic of an aesthetic stance of reading. Results obtained in our survey indicated no statistically significant difference between enthusiastic and unenthusiastic readers with respect to how much emphasis was placed on discussion or interpretation of literature in elementary school settings ($\chi^2 = 7.1$, $df = 4$, $n = 741$, $p = .12$).

However, results obtained for high school experiences were different. As indicated in Table 3, we found both meaningful and statistically significant differences between enthusiastic and unenthusiastic readers in the amount of discussion in their high school classes ($\chi^2 = 17.4$, $df = 4$, $n = 734$, $p = .002$). To put it another way, enthusiastic readers were more likely than unenthusiastic readers to report that high school teachers put a great deal of emphasis on discussing their reactions to and interpretations of literature. The most meaningful difference was noted among enthusiastic readers who reported a great deal of emphasis for discussions and interpretations of literature in their high school classes.

LHQ Question 3C Results: The Degree of Instructional Emphasis Placed on Completing Assignments or Reports Associated With Reading

Question 3C concerned the degree of instructional emphasis placed on completing reports and assignments related to reading. This statement also reflected an efferent

Table 3
Literacy Habits Questionnaire Question 3B (high school): The Degree of Instructional
Emphasis on Reactions and Interpretations of Literature

	No Emphasis	Little Emphasis	Some Emphasis	Considerable Emphasis	Great Deal of Emphasis
Unenthusiastic readers	4 (.5%)	15 (2.0%)	38 (5.2%)	58 (7.9%)	22 (3.0%)
Enthusiastic readers	6 (.8%)	39 (5.3%)	141 (19.2%)	220 (30%)	191 (26%)
Total	10 (1.4%)	54 (7.4%)	179 (24.4%)	278 (37.9%)	213 (29.0%)

reading stance. Responses were not statistically significant between enthusiastic and unenthusiastic readers in elementary school ($\chi^2 = 4.5$, $df = 4$, $n = 741$, $p = .34$) or in high school ($\chi^2 = 7.42$, $df = 4$, $n = 733$, $p = .12$).

LHQ Question 4 Results: Considering Elementary School Reading Experiences

We compared positive early reading experiences and negative or neutral experiences. The results were both meaningful and statistically significant for positive reading experiences ($\chi^2 = 6.2$, $df = 1$, $n = 752$, $p = .02$). Enthusiastic readers were more likely to rate their early reading experiences as positive. These results are presented in Table 4.

LHQ Question 5 Results: Noting Differences in Reading Experience Between Home and School

In Question 5, respondents indicated whether there was a difference between home and school reading experiences. Results indicated that a substantial number of students found home and school experiences different, and open-ended responses indicated a preference for home reading. However, we found no statistically significant difference between enthusiastic and unenthusiastic readers with regard to home and school differences ($\chi^2 = .67$, $df = 1$, $n = 737$, $p = .42$).

LHQ Question 6 Results: Noting Whether Teachers Shared a Love of Reading

In analyzing Question 6, we found a statistically significant difference between enthusiastic and unenthusiastic readers who had an elementary school teacher who shared a loved of reading ($\chi^2 = 19.0$, $df = 1$, $n = 742$, $p = .000$). We found that 56% of unenthusiastic readers did not have a teacher who shared a love of reading, whereas 64% of enthusiastic readers did have such a teacher. These findings suggest that the teacher meaningfully affects student enthusiasm for reading. The results are presented in Table 5.

LHQ Question 7 Results: Describing College Reading Experiences

Question 7 asked respondents to rate their college reading experiences as positive, negative, or neutral. On this question, we found no statistically significant difference between enthusiastic and unenthusiastic readers ($\chi^2 = 2.2$, $df = 1$, $n = 752$, $p = .2$). However, our findings revealed a substantial amount of negativity about college reading experiences. For example, 62% of all respondents rated college reading experiences as negative or neutral, compared with 38% who found their experiences positive.

Discussion and Implications

Although questionnaire data from our sample showed that our graduate students (both inservice teachers and preservice) did at least some summer reading, the evidence of strong enthusiasm for reading among inservice and preservice teachers is not there. In the self-reported data about enthusiasm for reading, approximately 17% of the total sample indicated that they found little or no pleasure in reading, roughly one third of the respondents enjoyed reading if and when they had time, and 47% of the respondents characterized themselves as enthusiastic to highly enthusiastic readers. Although enthusiastic readers tended to do more book reading, our findings did not suggest that teachers as a group have firmly engrained reading habits. This is a sobering and unsatisfactory situation, which, we believe, could have negative implications for the literacy of future generations.

The National Endowment for the Arts (2004) noted that reading is in decline in every social and educational stratum. Similarly, in *Reading Today*, the newsletter of the International Reading Association, President Linda Gambrell (2008) wrote about the importance of pleasure reading and cited several studies indicating that Americans are spending less time reading. Gambrell linked this lack of reading time to a decline in general reading comprehension skills. She also concluded that "declines in reading have serious civic, social, cultural,

Table 4
Literacy Habits Questionnaire Question 4:
Evaluating Early Reading Experiences

Early Reading Experience Rating	Unenthusiastic Readers	Enthusiastic Readers	Total
Negative or neutral	77 (10.2%)	263 (35%)	340 (45.2%)
Positive	64 (8.5%)	348 (46.3%)	412 (54.8%)
Total	141 (18.8%)	611 (81.3%)	752 (100%)

Table 5
Literacy Habits Questionnaire Question 6:
Teachers Who Shared a Love of Reading

Did You Have a Teacher Who Shared a Love of Reading?	Unenthusiastic Readers	Enthusiastic Readers	Total
No	79 (56.4%	219 (36.4%)	298 (40.2%)
Yes	61 (43.6%)	383 (63.6%)	444 (59.8%)
Total	140	602	742

and economic implications" (p. 18). Our study suggests that this trend of a decline in reading may be due, in part, to the lack of passion for reading in literacy professionals.

Despite obtaining data suggesting indifference about pleasure reading among literacy professionals, we found evidence that the teacher does, in fact, make a difference. Enthusiastic readers were more likely than self-described unenthusiastic readers to credit a former teacher's enthusiasm for reading as a means of promoting books and a love of reading. We found significant apathy or dislike about college reading experiences in our sample. Teacher-training curricula must include the "science" of literacy and best practices for preparing teachers as recommended by teacher education advisory groups such as the National Council on Teacher Quality (2006). However, our findings provided a compelling argument that college courses should stress the importance of motivating readers. Applegate and Applegate (2004) found that carefully designed college courses could realign student enthusiasm for reading. As Rosenblatt (1982) asserts in her transactional framework for reading, teachers need to convey that the reader shapes his or her understanding of the text and proceeds in a continuum of aesthetic and efferent responses. Our study supports the view that college reading courses should tap into not only the minds and competencies of students but their hearts as well. In noting the benefits of pleasure reading, Gambrell (2008) suggests that readers have access to "thousands of different realities they might never encounter or understand otherwise" (p. 18). This benefit must be transferred to college readers who are in the final phases of preservice preparation or the early phases of inservice professional development.

We also found that enthusiastic readers more frequently recalled discussions about literature and opportunities for making interpretations in secondary classes compared with unenthusiastic readers. We believe this reflects the importance of discussion as a motivational tool and suggests that aesthetic stances may have a transformative effect on developing reading enthusiasm. Our study supports using extensive discussion as a motivational strategy at all levels from elementary to university education.

In addition, we found evidence that parents have a powerful effect in creating enthusiastic readers. Respondents noted a strong difference between home and school reading experiences, with a strong preference for their early home experiences. If home and school experiences were designed to sustain personal reading development in young children, adolescents, and college students, perhaps the decline in general adult reading would be reversed.

One way to break the Peter Effect would be to make aliteracy an open topic for discussion, further study, and self-reflection among graduate students. Other suggested practices to implement include (a) deemphasizing textbook-driven lectures, (b) encouraging students to self-select professional print or online articles, (c) having open dialogues or online discussions with students about their readings, (d) assigning reflective journals about recreational reading, and (e) including technology-enhanced materials. Professors must raise consciousness about aliteracy in faculty forums, interactive seminars with graduate students, and departmental symposiums. Lively discussions may further facilitate reform.

Limitations and Recommendations

The first question of our study centered on an investigation of students' summer reading activity based on books, newspapers, and magazines exclusively. Leu et al. (2004) and Cohen and Cowen (2008) noted the emergence of multiple literacies affected by the Internet and development of new information technologies. Such technologies are currently changing the definition of literacy. Further research should broaden the focus to habits and attitudes of readers toward technology-enhanced materials and emergent electronics.

Another limitation of this study is the concentration on graduate students who are currently novice teachers or in the process of becoming teachers. We need to further investigate the effect of professional preparation on personal reading time of teachers at all experience levels.

Our study was conducted with literacy professionals who are engaged in completing professional study at a master's level. This condition, in itself, is a temporary situation. What happens to the personal reading habits of those teachers who have completed professional preparation and subsequently become tenured faculty? Our study did not address the reading habits and values of veteran teachers or those teachers who have completed graduate study, permanent certification, or recertification. To what extent, therefore, does the workplace and school culture enhance or support teachers' personal leisure-time reading and the value teachers place on it? Do curricula, time, and accountability factors enhance or decrease the Peter Effect among professionals? We suggest that further research should involve these more experienced teachers to ascertain the extent of their reading habits and attitudes. Applegate and Applegate (2004) were correct in expressing concern about the lack of enthusiasm among prospective educators. Our findings suggest that students in graduate programs do not always demonstrate a personal reading habit or enthusiasm for reading. If the Peter Effect is prevalent among veteran teachers, further studies might investigate how to support teachers' own personal literacies. Future generations of engaged readers are at stake, at the very least.

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