



Social and Cultural Influences on Adolescent Literacy Development

**NICHD/OVAE/IES
HD046115**

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Overall Purpose of the Study

- To produce developmental profiles of “types” of **readers** and writers in different contexts
- To produce profiles of types of **contexts** that support or constrain adolescent literacy development and transfer of skills
- To produce profiles of types of **texts** that support or constrain adolescent literacy development and transfer of skills
- To offer classroom **instructional strategies/interventions** based on observed strengths and needs of different types of adolescent readers and writers

Samples

- Secondary Analyses
 - Michigan Study of Adolescent and Adult Life Transitions (MSALT)
 - Childhood and Beyond (CAB)
 - Maryland Adolescent Development in Context Study (MADICS)
 - Panel Study on Income Dynamics-Child Development Supplement (PSID-CDS)
- Primary Analyses
 - Southwest Detroit Study (SDS)
 - 921 6-10th grade youth surveyed and administered reading diagnostic
 - W1 : ~323 total participants
 - W2: ~759 total participants
 - W1-W2 Overlap: 161 participants
 - 3 public schools, 1 public charter, and 1 private school
 - Subsamples (from 30-100 youth) studied qualitatively

Measures and Data Sources

- Two-part motivation-in-context **survey** (computer administered)
 - Part 1: **out-of-school** activities, text choices, ethnic/racial IDs, and future aspirations
 - Part 2: **in-school** activities and text choices across 4 academic content areas
- Individual **reading diagnostic** (developed in conjunction with ETS; computer administered)
 - Oral and silent reading components measure decoding, fluency, comprehension/interest/metacognition
 - Naturally occurring text passages from DPS adopted textbooks and one ETS constructed passage
 - Naturally occurring everyday text passages added for 2007

Measures and Data Sources

- Semi-structured interviews
 - 50 participants across grades 7-10
- Reading and writing process interviews
- Ethnographic interviews and [participant] observations
 - ~15-20 participants over multiple occasions
- School records and writing samples
 - ~800 participants

Survey of Literate Practice Findings

- 98% of youth report reading something 3-4 times a week or more
- Youth read websites, letter/notes, email, novels, and music lyrics more than they read other kinds of texts
- Only OOS novel reading appears to predict achievement as measured in grades
- They write email, letters/notes
- OOS Writing does not seem to predict anything about school achievement (in grades)

Reading Diagnostic

- Word list reading
- Oral passage reading (captured by audio-recording)
- Silent reading
- Comprehension questions; in brief:
 - What was the main idea?
 - What title would you give the passage?
 - What did you find most interesting?
 - What did you find difficult?

Survey of Diagnostic Findings

- No significant differences among W1 participants' comprehension scores by grade level, school, racial/ethnic identity
- Majority of youth in the sample are in a "middle" or "basic" level
- *No* relationship between word recognition and comprehension for the "middle" group.
- Only relationship between fluency and passage comprehension found for the "low" group.
- Relationship between time spent reading and comprehension for the "middle" group only.
- No relationships between time spent writing and comprehension scores.
- Writing scores (using ACT and state rubrics) also sit in middle or basic level

Diagnostic Findings

- Word recognition and fluency appear to work in predictable ways for low and high readers in our sample
- More data is needed to understand the middle—what might be thought of as “basic”—readers in the sample
 - Word recognition and fluency do not appear to explain their challenges, but what does?
 - Motivation to engage in the assessment?
 - Lack of strategies for dealing with higher-level concepts represented in the texts?
 - Too global a measure of comprehension to allow for fine distinctions?
 - What about the texts they’re being asked to read?

Textbook Passage: The Land of Silk

- The Chinese people called their country the Middle Kingdom. But people in the West called China the Land of Silk. Among all of China's many gifts to world civilization – paper was the most highly prized in the Western world.
- Silk was invented in China around 3000 B.C. No one knows who first made the first silk cloth. Many Chinese people believed that it was invented by the Silkworm Empress. She was the wife of the Yellow Emperor, the mythical founder of Chinese civilization.
- On farms all over China men grow grain while women produce silk. They tend groves of mulberry trees and feed the leaves to silkworms. When the silkworms mature they make cocoons of silk, which women collect and boil. Then the women unreel the delicate strand of silk from each cocoon, spin it into thread, and weave it into silk cloth. Farmers pay their taxes in grain and silk.

Textbook Passage: Student Main Idea Responses

- About the silk road and the Chinese people.
- The main point of the passage was the name they call China.
- About what the Chinese people think of their country or something.
- About China and the name they gave them about the silk and threads they have. The name that they gave them.
- About different people giving China different names.
- The main point was about China and just like details about China.
- First the Chinese people call their land the Middle Kingdom but other people called it the land of silk. Then they started saying . . . what's . . . what was the most popular thing back then? The most popular thing was paper.
- The point was that they called China the land of s-i-l-k whatever that word is.
- They gave paper from trees Western World.
- The main idea was about how in the middle east kingdom the . . .
- The main point was to show . . . how . . . I don't know.

Textbook Passage:

Lymphatic System

Fluids leak out of capillaries and bathe body tissues. The lymphatic system, also known as the immune system, transports this tissue fluid back into the bloodstream. As tissue fluids pass through lymphatic vessels and lymph nodes, disease-causing pathogens and other foreign substances are filtered out and destroyed.

Innate immunity involves the action of several types of white blood cells that protect the body against any type of pathogen. Macrophages and neutrophils engulf foreign substances that enter the body. If the infection persists, the lymphatic system becomes involved. The body develops an acquired immune response that defend against the specific pathogen.

Acquired immunity involves helper T cells that pass on chemical information about the pathogen to B cells. B cell produce antibodies that disarm or destroy the invaders. Some B cells remain in the body as memory B cells that recognize the antigens if they ever invade the body again. This process provides the body with acquired natural immunity against disease.

Everyday Text: *Performance Auto & Sound*

The Touring exhaust is a single straight-through design specifically tuned for the 2.4L engine. It is made in the USA with 304 100% mandrel-bent Stainless Steel and features Corsas' patented Reflective Sound Cancellation (RSC) technology. What RSC means is that the muffler is designed with a paper running straight through the muffler that incorporates a full 360-degree air gap that allows sound pressure waves to escape. The waves are channeled and then returned to the gap 180 degrees out of phase, cancelling specific unwanted sound frequencies, commonly referred to as drone.



Key Differences Across School and Out-of-School Texts

- Out-of school texts are situated in social networks
- Youth choose to read and write out-of school texts for social and cultural purposes
- OOS texts are rich with voice
- OOS texts are rich with situated meanings (concrete—abstract)
- In and out-of school texts often differ in quality of writing

Continuing Analyses

- What is the quality of what youth read and write out of school?
- What is the quality of what youth read and write in school?
- To what extent and with what intensity do youth read these materials?
- To what extent and with what proficiency do they comprehend these materials?
- What strategies do they bring to their reading and writing?
- What about texts motivates reading and writing?
- How do contexts in which texts are situated matter?

Acknowledgements

- Adolescent Literacy Development Team:

- Sharon Russell
- Melanie Overby
- Tehani Collazo
- Nicole Tysaver
- Karen Morris
- Tanya Cleveland
- Darin Stockdill
- Katherine Kim
- John Moje
- Andrea Pineda Raquel
- Gabriela Ramirez
- Jillian Graham
- Kim Walton

- Gender & Achievement Research Program:

- Jacquelynne Eccles
- Oksana Malunchuk
- Paul Richardson
- Helen Watt
- Pamela Davis Kean



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