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LITERACIES IN AND OUT OF SCHOOL: A SURVEY OF U.S. YOUTH

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Abstract

This report is of a national survey of the connections, overlaps, and disjunctions that adolescents perceive among their literacy practices in and out of school. The survey consisted of a mail questionnaire followed with structured interviewing via telephone. The youth were asked about connections between and influences on their everyday, out-of-school literacies and their academic, in-school literacies. Many of the respondents said that personal decisions strongly influenced their reading and writing, and they generally reported seeing some connections between their in- and out-of-school literacies. However, individuals consistently contradicted generalizations such as these, leading to caution in describing a randomly sampled population in generalized terms.

This report is of a national survey that examined connections, overlaps, and disjunctions among adolescents' literacy practices in and out of school. These points of contact (or lack thereof) are of particular interest in a world increasingly blurred by information communication technologies that tend to heed neither place nor space boundaries, especially where reading and writing are concerned (Alvermann & Eakle, 2006). At a time when young people can communicate readily with people and ideas around the globe, one might expect that their reading and writing practices would reflect a widening social network—one in which the influences on their choice and type of reading materials would extend beyond school and home. To what extent this is the case, at least for the youth we surveyed, is the subject of interest in this report.

Theoretical Framework

Many case studies of adolescents' multiple literacy practices have emphasized the differences between what occurs in and out of school (e.g., Evans, 1993; Hinchman, Payne-Bourcy, Thomas, & Chandler-Olcott, 2003; Luttrell & Parker, 2001; Moje, 2000; Myers, 1992;

O'Brien, 1998). For instance, researchers often claim that youth view literacy in school as demonstrations of what they know and literacy out of school as fulfillments of personal interests. Conversely, other research has suggested that adolescents' literacy practices are not represented well by dichotomies such as in-school/out-of-school, academic/personal, and achievement/social (Hull & Schultz, 2002a; Mackey, 2002). Some youth have been shown to read and demonstrate what they learned in multiple locations that include ones out of school (e.g., Guzzetti, 2004; Lewis & Fabos, 2005); others fulfill personal interests across a spectrum of literacy situations including those in school (e.g., Alvermann, Huddleston, & Hagood, 2004; Davies, 2006). This line of research has begun demonstrating complex links among adolescents' evolving constructions of literacy, identity, agency, and social relations across changing texts and contexts (Alvermann, Hinchman, Moore, Phelps, & Waff, 2006; Bean, Bean, & Bean, 1999; Moje, 2002; Young, 2000).

Several large-scale surveys have attempted to capture adolescent literacy practices in a generalized way. However, these surveys to date have largely neglected adolescents' multiple literacy practices. Instead, surveys have presented conclusions such as females read better than males, students receiving free or reduced lunch do not do as well as their wealthier peers, students who read and write frequently outside of school achieve higher scores than those who do not, and engagement with reading correlates highly with achievement (OCED Program for International Student Assessment [PISA], n.d.; U. S. Department of Education, 1999).

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) grade 8 and 12 student background questionnaires have addressed topics such as how much individuals read for fun on their own and how much individuals read in school and for homework (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.). But again, findings from the NAEP surveys offer practically nothing relative to what youth say about their in- and out-of school reading connections as well as what influences this reading.

The Pew Internet & American Life (2002) study, which employed a questionnaire plus interviews, included 200 adolescents' responses to an online survey and 14 focus-group interviews (N=136). It concluded that 78 percent of middle- and high-school students use the Internet while claiming that their teachers do not create online assignments that fully exploit the Internet's capabilities. However, this study presented little information about these youths' actions and beliefs in response to their situations.

The study reported here meant to extend the preceding research. We employed a questionnaire plus interviews, extending the Pew study's query by asking adolescents to examine connections between and influences on their everyday, out-of-school literacies and their academic, in-school literacies.

Methods of Inquiry

We employed mail questionnaires to regularize the information youths provided about their literacy practices according to the above in-school/out-of-school conceptual framework. Each youth in this study read and responded to identical item stems and response scales. The questionnaire was designed to collect data on youths' routine actions relative to in-school and out-of-school literacies.

The mail questionnaire procedures followed general guidelines described by Mangione (1995). The questionnaire, which consisted of 30 items, comprised 21 forced-choice questions with a five-point scale, 4 questions with 4-point semantic differential scales for 14 sub-items each, and 5 additional forced-choice items with varied scale points. The 30 items were derived

from a review of the literature on adolescents' in- and out-of-school literacies. They focused on what youth read when they are not in school and why they read it, as well as on the connection between such reading and school reading. We piloted questions with focus groups that were part of an earlier study by one of the researchers. Relying on the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Georgia <<http://www.src.uga.edu/>> to implement the survey, we piloted the questionnaire by mailing it to 500 households across the U.S. on September 2002. After receiving responses from thirteen youth (3 percent), we revised the instrument to clarify its directions and questions and upgrade its visual appeal. The questionnaire items actually used in the survey are presented in the Appendix.

Following the mail survey in the actual study, we used follow up telephone interviewing to access the youths' views of the settings – “the relationships among the components and members of particular institutions or groups” (Tierney & Dilley, 2002, p. 455) – that contextualized their actions reported on the questionnaires. The individual interview aspect of this study allowed us to explore in some depth issues that the questionnaire initially addressed. Pragmatic considerations of expedience, time, and cost (Shuy, 2002) in contacting our mail questionnaire respondents led us to use telephone rather than in-person interviewing.

The telephone interviews were structured, with interviewers asking respondents the same basic questions in the same sequence. Structured interviews are one of the few research methods that can be considered a hybrid, combining aspects of quantitative and qualitative research, because they offer more freedom than a questionnaire and more standardization than an unstructured interview (Corbetta, 2003).

Trained interviewers telephoned the houses of the youths who completed a questionnaire and consented to be called. All interviewing was conducted at the SRC and always was monitored by at least one supervisor. Interviewers used a computer-assisted system that allows questions to be displayed on a computer screen and responses to be entered directly with a keyboard. The following two items illustrate the telephone interview questions:

- You checked on your survey that friends had a somewhat strong influence on you when you read outside of school for a school assignment. Please explain what you meant.
- You checked on your survey that teachers had a very strong influence on you when you read outside of school for a school assignment. Please explain what you meant.

Interviewers called the houses of the consenting youth a minimum of eight times across different days of the week to reach hard-to-reach respondents. Interview respondents were paid \$50.

First analyses of the mail questionnaire and telephone interview data primarily were descriptive. We began by generating frequencies of responses to the questionnaire items. Then we visually analyzed the frequencies. To represent adolescents' responses to the interview questions, we developed categories in an open coding manner, and then we used data matrices to locate the interviewees' responses more specifically. We then blended the results from the questionnaires with those from the corresponding interviews.

Follow up analyses grew of an initial skepticism that resulted from the above open coding and some other realities of survey distribution and return. During this process, we realized, acutely, some of the complexities in attempting to speak for others, especially when treating diverse individuals collectively (Alasuutari, 1995). Indeed, Nancy Lesko (2001) warned about the use of survey data to normalize or regularize young people's behaviors. In her words, "Surveys produce the concept of a calculated, known population, an important technique in documenting, diagnosing, prescribing, and implementing practices in law, social welfare, medicine, schooling, and the military, among others" (p. 43). She makes the point that this way

of knowing such a population can serve to reify behaviors in ways that belie the complexities and contradictions in individuals' enactments. This, in turn, can institutionalize practices that might not be in youth's best interests. Thus, we also looked at individual participants' responses for examples of complex and contradictory enactments of one or more of our four main categories of the descriptive generalizations made during our preliminary analysis.

Data Sources

To enlist respondents we used a simple random sampling procedure (Fowler, 1993) in drawing from a population of 11- to 18-year-olds living in households across the United States. The SRC randomly selected from a larger list of such households 3,000 families believed to have children living at home in this age range. Beginning in March 2003, questionnaires were sent to these families along with the appropriate Institutional Review Board permission letters. Using a two-wave mailing, we received 74 usable questionnaires (excluding those received after the cut-off date), which is a one percent return rate. We surmise three explanations for this rate: (a) the youth did not buy into the importance of participating in this project, (b) the youth were put off by the format and length of the instrument, and (c) youth were not present in the households that were selected. Because a one percent return rate for a mail questionnaire is dismal, we do not extrapolate this study's findings to any particular population of U.S. youth.

Of the 74 youth who returned completed questionnaires, 55 consented to be called for a telephone interview. The number of completed follow-up telephone interviews was 37, due mainly to unsuccessful attempts to reach the adolescent respondents. All 37 respondents explained that they had experienced literacies in- and out-of-school for many years, so we judged their responses to be appropriate sources of information for this early exploration of a complex topic. This group represented a pool of youth with interesting, divergent views that seemed worth reporting despite our initial survey return rate. Indeed, they were a sample we likely would have missed had we captured our participants in another way, such as at settings predictably populated by youth.

Thus, the data sources for this study included 37 respondents' mail questionnaires and their corresponding telephone interviews. The 37 respondents resided in 16 states scattered throughout the U.S. A majority of the respondents (n=20) indicated that their schools were in the middle of a town; others were distributed evenly among large cities, suburbs, and rural areas. They were distributed evenly across grades 6 through 12. Most of the youth described themselves as female of European descent (n=21), followed by male of European descent (n=5), male of Latin American descent (n=2), and male of Asian descent (n=2). Single respondents marked female of Native American descent, female of Latin American descent, male of African descent, and male of Native American descent. Three respondents did not identify with any descriptor the survey offered.

Results

Reading Outside of School

When asked about the amount of time each week spent reading required materials outside of school, nearly half of the respondents (n=17) reported spending 1-3 hours. Most indicated that their personal decision as well as a teacher strongly influenced this reading. Family, print media, and libraries also influenced some respondents to some extent.

When asked to explain the strong influence of personal decision, our interviewees claimed substantial self-determination when deciding what to read, when to read, and how to

read. Interviewees said such things as, “I figure I can make the best decision about what can help me for an assignment.” Interviewees invoked personal goals as part of their decision-making, mentioning “doing well in school,” “knowing stuff,” “getting ahead,” and “getting good grades” as goals. Teachers influenced reading of required materials because, as one respondent put it, “They gave the assignment.” When families influenced reading, they did so by explaining material and calling attention to deadlines, as well as by emphasizing goals such as high school graduation and SAT scores. However, other youth noted that families did not exert such an influence, with one explaining that, “I like to keep my family time and school time separate.” Finally, print media influenced some respondents by being informative and interesting, by recommending books to read, and by encouraging independent reading.

When asked about the amount of time each week spent outside of school reading material not required but connected with school, the majority of respondents (n=20) reported spending 0-1 hours. Again, most students named personal decision as the most important influence on this reading. As one respondent said, “Whenever people recommend stuff, I choose whether or not to read it.” Some follow teachers’ recommendations as well, with interviewees explaining this influence with comments such as, “I trust what my teachers have to say,” and “They know more than I do.” Several interviewees reported reading books that family members recommended.

Finally, 29 respondents reported spending at least 1 hour each week reading materials not connected with school; 10 reported spending more than 5 hours each week reading material not connected with school. Once more, practically all respondents (n=35) reported that this time spent reading was the influence of their personal decision. Notably, 22 reported that friends also influenced their non-school reading.

Interviewees who said personal decisions influenced their reading of materials not connected with school reported different decision-making dynamics. Some seemed to have strong ideas about what they were willing to read and hinted that they did not complete much reading in this category, saying things such as, “I’m not going to read unless I want to,” and “I read what I want to read.” Others who did more outside reading noted, “I’m probably the best person to judge what I’ll like to read,” and “I pick out books that are interesting.” When friends influenced respondents’ reading of materials not connected with school, individuals made comments such as, “Sometimes they recommend things, and we often read the same things.” However, other respondents noted that they did not talk with their friends about reading. Interviewees also talked about being influenced by families, noting, “They always recommend I read stuff; they provide me with books and tell me to read them.” Some interviewees noted that they “discover books through print media sometimes,” that “I use TV and radio to find books for pleasure that will be more fun,” and that, “Once in a while I go to Barnes and Noble or Amazon.com and see what books they have.”

Respondents reported a gradual decline in the influence of teachers on their reading of material in- and out-of-school. Twenty-seven indicated that teachers strongly influenced their required reading, 19 indicated that teachers strongly influenced their reading of materials connected with school but not required, and 11 indicated that teachers strongly influenced their reading of materials neither required nor connected with school. Family, print media, non-print media, computers, and libraries were marked as roughly equal influences across the types of reading material, yet ones consistently more limited than either personal decision or a teacher.

Practically no respondents marked authors' characteristics (i.e., nationality, race or ethnicity, sex, religious affiliation, and socioeconomic class) as influencing any of their reading.

As one interviewee said, “I don’t care; I just care about the quality of the book.” And practically no students reported any reading connected with jobs.

One participant’s contradictions. Participant #5 might, at first, seem like a good example of the predominate sensibility of many of the preceding respondents, that is, individuals who realize that, ultimately, they make their own choices about completing both leisure and school assigned out-of-school reading, saying, “I figure I can make the best decision on what can help me for an assignment.” Yet one should be careful not to regularize or normalize youthful reading habits from this account because, despite such reported self-determination, Participant #5 was interested in and often followed others’ recommendations for reading. This individual saw family as making helpful recommendations about novels. Friends were also described as having an influence, with the individual saying, “Sometimes my friends will recommend a book or something I can read that’ll help me,” and “I like to read things my friends either talk about or have read.” Teachers also were viewed as a source of recommendations, with Participant #5 saying, “Usually the recommendations match up pretty well [with my interests or needs] but sometimes I could have gotten better help from a teacher or an expert.” Participant #5 noted that she/he found that published reviews and television might influence pleasure reading, saying, “If I read a review in a magazine about a book that’s highly rated I’ll probably read it.” This individual also turned to librarians for advice about reading on specific topics or types. Data that initially suggest as much sense of agency as the preceding could be used by policy makers to make claims that could inappropriately cut Participant #5 off from important sources of reading material.

Responses to Recommendations

When asked about their actions after a teacher recommended - but did not require - readings connected with the classroom, most respondents (n=18) indicated that they thought about the importance of the recommendation and then decided later. Similarly, when students on their own came across reading connected with coursework, most (n=15) reported thinking about the importance of the recommendation and then deciding later. When a friend, adult family member, or family member close in age recommended reading, the participants in this study generally reported recording the recommendation and remembering it for later.

The respondents perceived that it was their parents who most frequently influenced their out-of-school reading, though some mentioned friends of their parents, other relatives, and teachers. They explained that the kinds of influence were limited largely to recommending good books, encouraging library use, providing reading lists, and modeling good reader habits (e.g., reading in one’s spare time, going to the library). The types of reading materials recommended included fiction books, nonfiction books, online materials, and magazines. Overall, the respondents were largely in agreement that the recommended reading materials matched their interests well. The kinds of materials recommended by friends varied (e.g., “good books in the subject area” and “study books or manuals”) though nonfiction predominated, and again the respondents stated that they felt their friends’ recommendations matched their own interests quite well.

In response to what they perceived to be the most helpful advice adults in their families gave them on out of school reading, most of the interviewees mentioned something having to do with reading fiction and nonfiction. A few, however, mentioned other kinds of materials; for example, they found it helpful to receive advice to read “any and all things connected to school,”

and “just going online and looking up stuff because it’s a lot faster. And it’s probably easier for me, too.”

By far, fiction was the most often recommended material by youth who were close in age to the individuals who were interviewed, though a few mentioned some other type of material. For example, some mentioned a sibling telling them “something to read that helped...with schoolwork” or a peer referring to “notes from class or [the] textbook.” As was the case for adults’ recommendations, their peers’ recommendations were perceived by the respondents to match their own interests quite well.

Interestingly, when the respondents were probed by the interviewers to reflect on the kinds of out of school reading they do on their own, they mentioned the Internet and library relatively often. Some representative responses include: “It’s [information] usually found on the Internet on search engines,” “I find it on Internet, print it off and take it in to school,” and “I would find it in the library, print it, and use it for school work.”

One participant’s contradictions. Like many of the above respondents, Participant #22 noted that, “If other kids my age like it, I probably will.” This individual explained that, “My friends have the same ideas [as I do] of what reading is.” Yet again, one would not want to regulate or normalize practices for Participant #22 from this explanation. The preceding did not exclude this individual from attending to others’ recommendations. This individual had older sisters who gave what were seen as good recommendations for books. The individual also appreciated the recommendations of young, close in age, teachers, and, to a certain extent, recommendations found in commercials, magazines, and the Internet—even while maintaining some skepticism, saying that, “If it’s a recognizable author they’ll put it on the Internet just because it’s a new book, not because it’s good.”

Connections among Reading Inside and Outside of School

Participants also were asked about the connections they perceived among outside-of-school reading skills and what they learned in school. For those everyday skills that the respondents perceived as being connected to what they learned in school (e.g., searching the Internet; reading books, newspapers/magazines, and technical manuals), the respondents were able to cite specific examples of the connections. For example, individuals reported that “The manuals are all reading and comprehension” and “You need to process the information books like you would the information in a search.” Those who did not see connections were also able to cite specific examples. For example, individuals said, “In school you read old books, the same every year. On the Internet they have more than classic books” and “It doesn’t take much skill to read something online.”

Respondents’ perceptions of the connections among outside-of-school reading skills and what they learned in school indicate differences among types of reading material. Most respondents reported that skills used with outside reading of books not required by anyone for anything as well as newspapers/magazines are strongly connected with school reading skills. For example, some said, “At school you learn how to read all kinds of stuff like titles and authors. And you’d need to know that” and “School teaches you to process information like you find in newspapers.”

Some respondents saw connections between reading religious materials and school reading, with one noting that, “Religious materials can be challenging; it takes a lot to understand them, and school helps you do that.” Other interviewees said that school taught one

to deal with “hard words” and to “find the message” in religious materials, skills they felt they had worked on in school. Relatively few respondents saw strong connections among reading CD labels, sales catalogs, emails and instant messages, and results of Internet searches with school reading, saying, “There isn’t a lot to read in a catalog,” and “They make CD labels so that anybody can understand them.” A few interviewees saw that reading and typing skills learned in school helped them with instant messaging.

One participant’s contradictions. In the wrong hands of well-intentioned policy makers, Participant #17’s responses could conceivably be used to regularize or normalize youthful reading habits, especially those that purportedly lead to increases on standardized reading achievement tests. For example, this participant claims that a parent’s encouragement to read is linked to improved SAT scores (“My mom wants me to read to help my SAT scores.”). This same student stresses the importance of reading “a certain number of books” and is somewhat disparaging in her/his remarks about non-book reading (“video game skills are so basic and [they] don’t relate to school”) or to reading popular-culture type texts (“you don’t have to be educated to read a TV Guide”). Although the picture these selective comments paint suggest that Participant #17 is knowledgeable about what counts as “serious” reading, a closer examination of the phone interview data would suggest that he/she is not wholly taken in by the message that reading the right kind of books and behaving like a successful reader will lead to increased reading achievement. For example, he/she reports reading something with appeal from “an ad in a paper” or “a magazine recommendation.” It is important, therefore, in analyzing data from adolescent surveys that have the potential to regularize literacy practices deemed worthwhile for youth that we report as fully as possible the complexities (and contradictions) of adolescents’ lives.

Values of Connecting Everyday and Academic Reading

When asked how much teachers should help respondents connect inside- and outside-of-school reading, most respondents (n=29) indicated that some or a lot of help would be appropriate; 8 indicated that either no help should be offered or no connections were seen. One interviewee noted that, “It’s basically their job; they teach you the curriculum so you can use it in your daily life.” Another focused on needing teachers’ help to develop reading skills, saying, “Because teachers should show you how to comprehend and not just read over stuff.” However, of those who did not think teachers needed to focus in this area, one said, “You need to be able to make your own decisions. They should have some influence, but they shouldn’t tell you what to read and what not to.”

Similarly, when asked how much students should try to connect inside- and outside-of-school reading, most respondents (n=32) reported that some or a lot would be appropriate; 5 indicated that either they should not try to make connections or they did not see connections to make. Of the majority who thought that such connections should be made, one said, “It’s nice to know that what you’re learning in school pays off.” Another said, “Because if I don’t learn to make connections between what I do in school and what I do on my own, then what’s the point of school, I mean, why do I go to school?”

One participant’s contradictions. Here again is the danger in reporting patterned responses that could conceivably be used to regularize or normalize the connections youth see (or fail to see) in their in- and out-of-school literacy practices. Take for example Participant #25 who believes that

“a teacher should help you make connections by giving you the ability to read and think things through” or Participant #33 who claims that “you’re going to want to read outside of school, so teachers should be able to help you if you need it.” Both participants seem to rely on an outside agent to help them make connections between in- and out-of-school literacy practices. Reported as such, it is conceivable that students would be given little encouragement to seek meaningful connections on their own.

Discussion and Implications

This study contributes to the current knowledge base on the connections adolescents make between the literacies they use in and out of school, as well as to our wariness about reifying too much from any generalizations we or anyone tries to make in this area. It provides some descriptive data regarding adolescents’ self-reported perceptions of what influences their reading. Realizing that the youth in our study say personal decisions strongly influence their literacy complicates some of the earlier research on adolescents that suggests they are sensitive primarily to peer influences (e.g., Cusick, 1973). The present study also offers more complex insights into the respondents’ perceptions of teachers’ influences on their literacy practices. As was the case in earlier research (e.g., Carlsen & Sherrill, 1988; Macpherson, 1983), our data suggest that while adolescents acknowledge the influence of teachers especially in school settings, they are quick to point out reasons for not depending solely on their teachers. Numerous significant others in these young people’s lives counted when it came to influencing their literacy practices.

Our data also indicate that at least the youth in our small group perceived some connections between in- and out-of-school reading. For instance, some connected what they learned about reading in school with the reading they did outside of school, especially in terms of the books, newspapers, and magazines they reported reading; they did not connect what they learned in school with out-of-school reading of short segments of print found in technical manuals, entertainment guides, sales catalogs, CD labels, and emails/instant messages. One possible explanation for this disconnect is that our questions did not specifically probe for multimodal ways of learning. For example, by emphasizing activities that involved written and spoken texts, we left little room for our respondents to recall times when they may have learned through other modes. Yet we know from the research on what counts as literacy in places other than school that youth do engage in multimodal learning. For example, Alvermann and Eakle (2006) reported that the youth with whom they worked rarely, if ever, relied on language as their sole means of communication. Rather, like Short and Kauffman (2000), Alvermann and Eakle (2006) observed that the young people in their studies quite readily integrated art, movement, and music with language as they talked with their friends, did research on school assigned topics in the library, peered over each other’s shoulders to read a downloaded rap lyric, chatted quietly (and sometimes not so quietly) in front of a museum exhibit.

Finally, the results of this study relative to the youths’ claims of personal decisions influencing their reading lead us to agree with Hull and Schultz’s (2002b) contention that it is important to avoid oversimplifying “the creative powers of context” (p. 12). That is, we noted patterns in the influences and linkages of literacies that are evident (or not evident) in students’ responses about in- and out-of-school situations that cause us to question “the notion of context as a container, as that which surrounds and therefore, of necessity, causes or influences or shapes” (Hull & Schultz, 2002b, p. 12). This finding has implications for future research designs in which in-school literacies are pitted against out-of-school literacies and students’ agency is

pitted against school structures. It also has implications for practice. As Lesko (2001) has argued, the time is ripe for interrogating the conditions (or contexts) under which taken-for-granted beliefs about youth become unstable and subject to change.

However, issues of validity, replicability, and generalizability raise implications for data collection and analysis using mail survey questionnaires and follow-up phone interviews. There is an assumption that any anonymous member of a cultural group (adolescents in this case) would experience the object under study (e.g., connections between in- and out-of-school literacies) in the same way that another does (Carspecken, 1999). A second assumption is that one can expect responses on one occasion to replicate those on another—a problem for us because we tried to find correspondences between what adolescents reported on the close-ended survey questionnaire and what they said in response to phone interviewers' probes. Mishler (1986) takes a similar stance, arguing that respondents make sense of interviewers' questions and give meaning to them much as one does when constructing a narrative.

A third assumption is that data gathered from large mail surveys and follow-up phone interviews allows one to describe a randomly sampled population in generalized terms (Mangione, 1995). Yet what may seem generalizable may be more representative of the mindset of the researcher who constructs a survey questionnaire or structured interview guide than of any mirrored reality (Scheurich, 1997). Most disturbing of all, when one considers the critique of generalized descriptions based on survey data, is the question that Campioni and Grosz (cited in Lather, 1991, p. 24) ask: "Why is it necessary to unify/solidify what may be fluid, diverse and changing, if not in order to block and control it?" In retrospect, if we had asked ourselves that question as we planned the study, we wonder if we would have chosen the methods that we did. If methods other than a mail survey and follow-up interview had been selected, might they have focused our attention less on generalizing and more on what we were looking to generalize? Might place-consciousness (in relation to adolescent literacies) be a term worth troubling? And, if so, what might a deconstructed view of the in-school/out-of-school binary look like?

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Appendix

Adolescent Reading and Literacy Questionnaire

Directions: Please circle ONLY ONE response to each of the following questions.

1. In a typical week, how much do you read outside of school that is required by school coursework or an assignment?

1. 0 hours
2. 0 -1 hour
3. 1-3 hours
4. 3-5 hours
5. more than 5 hours

2. In a typical week, how much do you read outside of school that is not required but connected with school coursework or an assignment?

1. 0 hours
2. 0 -1 hour
3. 1-3 hours
4. 3-5 hours
5. more than 5 hours

3. In a typical week, how much do you read outside of school that is neither required nor connected with school coursework or an assignment?

1. 0 hours
2. 0 -1 hour
3. 1-3 hours
4. 3-5 hours
5. more than 5 hours

4. When you read material that is required by school coursework or an assignment, how great of an influence does each of the following have on you?

	Very Strong	Somewhat strong	Not too strong	Not at all strong
	1	2	3	4
4.1 family				
4.2 friends				
4.3 teacher				
4.4 employer				
4.5 personal decision				
4.6 print media (book, newspaper, magazine, encyclopedia, etc.)				
4.7 nonprint media (television, radio, movie, video, etc.)				
4.8 computer (websites, online newspapers, online encyclopedia, etc.)				
4.9 libraries (public or school)				
4.10 nationality of the author of the material (if known)				
4.11 race or ethnicity of the author of the material (if known)				
4.12 sex (female or male) of the author of the material (if known)				
4.13 religious affiliation of the author of the material (if known)				

4.14 socioeconomic class (rich, poor) of the author of the material (if known)

5. When you read material that is not required but connected with school coursework or an assignment, how great of an influence does each of the following have on you?

	Very Strong	Somewhat strong	Not too strong	Not at all strong
5.1 family	1	2	3	4
5.2 friends				
5.3 teacher				
5.4 employer				
5.5 personal decision				
5.6 print media (book, newspaper, magazine, encyclopedia, etc.)				
5.7 nonprint media (television, radio, movie, video, etc.)				
5.8 computer (websites, online newspapers, online encyclopedia, etc.)				
5.9 libraries (public or school)				
5.10 nationality of the author of the material (if known)				
5.11 race or ethnicity of the author of the material (if known)				
5.12 sex (female or male) of the author of the material (if known)				
5.13 religious affiliation of the author of the material (if known)				
5.14 socioeconomic class (rich, poor) of the author of the material (if known)				

6. When you read material that is neither required nor connected with school coursework or an assignment, how great of an influence does each of the following have on you?

	Very Strong	Somewhat strong	Not too strong	Not at all strong
6.1 family	1	2	3	4
6.2 friends				
6.3 teacher				
6.4 employer				
6.5 personal decision				
6.6 print media (book, newspaper, magazine, encyclopedia, etc.)				
6.7 nonprint media (television, radio, movie, video, etc.)				
6.8 computer (websites, online newspapers, online encyclopedia, etc.)				
6.9 libraries (public or school)				
6.10 nationality of the author of the material (if known)				
6.11 race or ethnicity of the author of the material (if known)				
6.12 sex (female or male) of the author of the material (if known)				
6.13 religious affiliation of the author of the material (if known)				
6.14 socioeconomic class (rich, poor) of the author of the material (if known)				

7. What do you normally do when a teacher or another adult at school recommends outside-of-school reading that is connected with school coursework or assignments?

1. never happens
2. ignore it
3. record or remember it for later
4. act on it as soon as possible
5. figure out how important it is and then decide whether or when to do it

8. What do you normally do when a friend recommends outside-of-school reading that is connected with school coursework or assignments?

1. never happens
2. ignore it
3. record or remember it for later
4. act on it as soon as possible
5. figure out how important it is and then decide whether or when to do it

9. What do you normally do when an adult in your family recommends outside-of-school reading that is connected with school coursework or assignments?

1. never happens
2. ignore it
3. record or remember it for later
4. act on it as soon as possible
5. figure out how important it is and then decide whether or when to do it

10. What do you normally do when someone close to your own age in your family recommends outside-of-school reading that is connected with school coursework or assignments?

1. never happens
2. ignore it
3. record or remember it for later
4. act on it as soon as possible
5. figure out how important it is and then decide whether or when to do it

11. What do you normally do when on your own you come across reading that is connected with school coursework or assignments?

1. never happens
2. ignore it
3. record or remember it for later
4. act on it as soon as possible
5. figure out how important it is and then decide whether or when to do it

12. In a typical week, how much do you read that is connected with your job, where you work for pay?

1. 0 hours
2. 0 -1 hour
3. 1-3 hours
4. 3-5 hours
5. more than 5 hours
6. don't work [please go to question 14]

13. When you read material that is connected with your job, where you work for pay, how great of an influence does each of the following have on you?

- | | Very Strong | Somewhat strong | Not too strong | Not at all strong |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 13.1 family | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

- 13.2 friends
- 13.3 teacher
- 13.4 employer
- 13.5 personal decision
- 13.6 print media (book, newspaper, magazine, encyclopedia, etc.)
- 13.7 nonprint media (television, radio, movie, video, etc.)
- 13.8 computer (websites, online newspapers, online encyclopedia, etc.)
- 13.9 libraries (public or school)
- 13.10 nationality of the author of the material (if known)
- 13.11 race or ethnicity of the author of the material (if known)
- 13.12 sex (female or male) of the author of the material (if known)
- 13.13 religious affiliation of the author of the material (if known)
- 13.14 socioeconomic class (rich, poor) of the author of the material (if known)

14. When you read the directions for playing a video game, do you see any connection between the skills required in reading the directions and the skills you learn in school?

- 1. I don't play video games
- 2. no connection at all
- 3. not very much connection
- 4. a good bit of connection
- 5. a great deal of connection

15. When you read the results of an Internet search, do you see any connection between the skills required in reading the results and the skills you learn in school?

- 1. I don't search the Internet
- 2. no connection at all
- 3. not very much connection
- 4. a good bit of connection
- 5. a great deal of connection

16. When you read a book not required by anyone for anything, do you see any connection between the skills required in reading it and the skills you learn in school?

- 1. I don't read books that are not required
- 2. no connection at all
- 3. not very much connection
- 4. a good bit of connection
- 5. a great deal of connection

17. When you read newspapers, magazines (offline or online), do you see any connection between the skills required in reading them and the skills you learn in school?

- 1. I don't read newspapers or magazines
- 2. no connection at all
- 3. not very much connection
- 4. a good bit of connection
- 5. a great deal of connection

18. When you read technical manuals (repair, computer, health, sports, cooking, etc.), do you see any connection between the skills required in reading them and the skills you learn in school?

1. I don't read technical manuals
2. no connection at all
3. not very much connection
4. a good bit of connection
5. a great deal of connection

19. When you read religious materials, do you see any connection between the skills required in reading them and the skills you learn in school?

1. I don't read religious materials
2. no connection at all
3. not very much connection
4. a good bit of connection
5. a great deal of connection

20. When you read TV, movie, or video guides, do you see any connection between the skills required in reading them and the skills you learn in school?

1. I don't read TV, movie, or video guides
2. no connection at all
3. not very much connection
4. a good bit of connection
5. a great deal of connection

21. When you read sales catalogs, do you see any connection between the skills required in reading them and the skills you learn in school?

1. I don't read sales catalogs
2. no connection at all
3. not very much connection
4. a good bit of connection
5. a great deal of connection

22. When you read music CD labels or inserts, do you see any connection between the skills required in reading them and the skills you learn in school?

1. I don't read music CD labels or inserts
2. no connection at all
3. not very much connection
4. a good bit of connection
5. a great deal of connection

23. When you read e-mails or instant messages, do you see any connection between the skills required in reading them and the skills you learn in school?

1. I don't read e-mails or instant messages
2. no connection at all
3. not very much connection
4. a good bit of connection
5. a great deal of connection

24. How much should a teacher help you make connections between the reading you choose to do on your own outside of school and the skills you learn in school?

1. not a thing
2. some
3. a lot
4. I don't see a connection between out-of-school reading and in-school learning

25. How much should you try to make connections between the reading you choose to do on your own outside of school and the skills you learn in school?

1. not a thing
2. some
3. a lot
4. I don't see a connection between out-of-school reading and in-school learning

26. When you answered the questions above, were you answering them the way you thought the people who made the survey expected you to answer them?

1. never
2. sometimes
3. always
4. I don't know what they were expecting

27. Where is the school you attend located?

1. in the middle of a large city
2. in a suburb of a large city
3. in the middle of a town
4. in a rural area
5. I am home schooled
6. I don't attend school

28. What is the last grade you passed?

1. 5th
2. 6th
3. 7th
4. 8th
5. 9th
6. 10th
7. 11th
8. 12th

29. How old are you?

1. between 11 and 12
2. between 12 and 13
3. between 13 and 14
4. between 14 and 15
5. between 15 and 16

6. between 16 and 17
7. between 17 and 18
8. between 18 and 19

30. With which descriptor do you most identify?

1. Female of African descent
2. Female of Asian descent
3. Female of European descent
4. Female of Latin American descent
5. Female of Native American descent
6. Male of African descent
7. Male of Asian descent
8. Male of European descent
9. Male of Latin American descent
10. Male of Native American descent
11. I don't identify with any of these descriptors; I am _____

Thank you for your participation in this survey.