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READING PREFERENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF URBAN EIGHTH GRADERS

Dr. Arlene L. Barry

Abstract

In order to identify materials that would encourage urban eighth graders to read, the authors asked students about the importance they placed on reading, about their own reading abilities, and the role of race and genre in their book choice. On the basis of subscale scores from the “Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile Reading Survey” (Pitcher, et. al., 2007) these students, as a whole, placed low value on reading, with females indicating a slightly higher value than males. In contrast, males indicated stronger self-concepts about their reading abilities than females. As a subgroup, Hispanic males reported the lowest overall average self-concept, or perceived reading strength. Hispanic males and females both reported valuing reading less than any other subgroup. One way to increase reading for all of these students may be to use the yearly award books identified for each of the minority groups involved so that students can see themselves in the books they read. Another approach may be to stock the top choices identified by students via indicators like the “Reading Preferences Checklist” (Fisher, Brozo, Frey, & Ivey, 2011), so that a wide variety of relevant, quality text can entice these reluctant readers. Engagement is critical.

Background

Marisol, a middle-secondary urban educator (pseudonyms are used), stopped by my office at Midwest University with some concerns:

Marisol: My students don't read much. I am sure if they read more, their test scores would be higher. Maybe reading isn't important to them. Are the novels too hard or irrelevant? Many of my kids are non-White, but the characters in their books are generally Caucasian. Do you have any suggestions?

Anna: Have you asked them what they like to read or if they think their books are too difficult? Would they tell you whether or not they connected with the characters in their books?

Of course, asking such questions to 148 eighth graders is no simple task. We brainstormed and decided that a group-administered questionnaire would probably be the most efficient way to start the process of linking these students with reading material. Engagement theory (e.g., Tracey & Morrow, 2006) guided our thinking about the importance of student involvement in classroom literacy. We tried to operationalize student involvement by asking them about their reading preferences, values and self-concepts. We articulated our questions so we could find a tool to guide us to some answers. Our questions were: a). Do students see themselves as capable of doing the reading they are asked to do? b). At this point in their lives, do these students believe reading is important? c). How does the race or ethnicity of the characters in books affect their reading? d). What do students say they would like to read?

Procedures

We began by digging through a variety of reading inventories and interest inventories and decided to both combine and slightly adapt what was available. As our main instrument we used the "Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile Reading Survey" or AMRP developed by Pitcher, et al., (2007) (see Appendix). This is a profile specifically constructed for adolescents. The AMRP includes two sections: the reading survey and a conversational interview. The reading survey is a 20-item, group administered instrument. Items are based on a 4-point scale, with the most positive responses receiving 4 points and the least positive receiving 1 point. The highest total score possible is 80 points. This section provides scores that give the examiner a general idea of a student's "Self-concept as a reader," or perceived reading strength and her "Value of reading," or perceived importance of reading. In order to calculate the Self-concept raw score and Value

raw score, all student responses were added, as directed by the scoring protocol, in the appropriate column. The full survey raw score was obtained by combining the column raw scores. Raw scores were converted to percentage scores, again as directed in the protocol, by dividing the total possible score by either 40 for each subscale or 80 for the full survey for a possible total 100%. The professor in this study calculated all raw scores and percentage scores. Additionally, a School of Education student was hired to do the same in order to check for any errors. Interrater reliability was 99%. These two components, Self-concept and Value, were appropriate for answering our first two questions.

The conversational interview component of the AMRP is individually administered and contains 14 open-ended items. Questions included in this section, while interesting, did not directly align with our queries, so this portion of the survey was not used at this time. Instead, one objective and three open-ended, constructed response items were added to the AMRP in order to answer our third guiding question. The objective item was inserted as number 21 of the survey instrument. Written in the same manner as the other items, it stated:

I would read more often if I had books about teens that were the same race I am

- read a lot more
- read a little more
- my reading would not change

Item 21 was not included when raw and percentage scores were calculated. Marisol's open-ended questions attempted to get at this same issue more qualitatively and asked:

1. How often do you encounter or read books with characters of your race or ethnicity?
2. If you do not encounter or read books with characters of your race or ethnicity, how does it make you feel?
3. Do you think you would be more likely to read books for pleasure if they were about characters with your racial or ethnic background?

According to Sims Bishop (1982), "successful young adult literature for minorities must engage the reader by its familiarity," (p. 12). Therefore, not only should the reader see herself represented in the protagonist, but also the story should reflect the familiar circumstances of her own life. Guild and Hughes-Hassell (2001) elaborated on these points. They insisted that literature for urban youth should accurately portray the physical context and the social interactions of

their neighborhoods, church organizations and extended kinships. We were curious whether the eighth graders in this study agreed with these researchers.

Also, in part, because authors like Sims Bishop (1982) and Guild and Hughes-Hassell (2001) stressed the importance of realistic fiction for urban minority youth, Marisol wondered if her students would note this genre as a preference. To examine this issue and answer our fourth question, we included the 20-item “Reading Preferences Checklist” (Fisher, Brozo, Frey, & Ivey, 2011) as part of the data collection. Students were directed to “Check the kinds of books you like to read” from a wide range of text types.

Table 1 presents demographic information on the students who participated in this study:

Table 1: Demographic Information for 148 Eighth Grade Students

Race	Percent of race by gender		Total
	Male (72)	Female (76)	Percent by total group
African American	7% (5)	12% (9)	9%
Asian American	1% (1)	1% (1)	1%
Caucasian	50% (36)	39% (30)	45%
Hispanic	14% (10)	20% (15)	17%
Native American	3% (2)	1% (1)	2%
Multi-Racial	24% (17)	28% (21)	26%
Other (“American”)	.6% (1)		

The school these students attended was located in the state capitol and has approximately 69% of its students eligible for free or reduced lunch.

Findings

An examination of individual survey items and AMRP “self concept” and “value” of reading percentage scores allowed the authors to better understand the lens through which Marisol’s students viewed reading. We examined responses by gender, by race and as a whole. The study’s questions provide the organization for our findings.

Do Students see Themselves as Capable Readers?

The subscale for a student’s perceived reading strength, or “Self –concept as a reader” was based on a combination of 10 items identified by AMRP developers. Survey items that made up this construct, asked the reader to compare his/her

reading ability to that of peers, or to self-assess one's ability to figure out new words, read out loud, comprehend and answer questions about text. Included was an item that directly asked students to judge their ability:

I am_____

- a poor reader
- an OK reader
- a good reader
- a very good reader

Males in this group of eighth graders were slightly more confident about their reading ability than females. On the specific item above, 35% of males and 24% of females rated themselves “very good” readers. Overall, on the Self-concept subscale, the 68 males who completed the survey had an average score of 77%. Females, who completed this survey (N=74), averaged 72% on this subscale. Eighth graders as a whole averaged 75%, which appears to indicate a moderate level of confidence with their reading abilities. Native American males reported reading self-concepts higher (90%) than males in other racial groups, and significantly higher than males in Hispanic groups (65%). However, there were only two Native American males in this group. The largest male subgroup, White males, who numbered 34, indicated the next largest Self-concept in reading, with a confidence average at 82%. In the female groups, multi-racial females reported the highest self-concepts as readers (79%), and African American females the lowest (66%). Tables 2a and 2b present student averages in percentages of Self-concept for reading, by gender and racial group.

Table 2a: Averages of Female Self-Concept for Reading

Female Self-Concept		Number of Students
Multi-Racial	79%	21
White	76%	29
Asian	70%	1
Hispanic	69%	15
African American	66%	8

Table 2b: Averages of Male Self-Concept for Reading

Male Self-Concept		Number of Students
Native American	90%	2
White	82%	34
African American	80%	5
Multi-Racial	76%	16
Other (“American”)	68%	1
Hispanic	65%	10

Do Students Believe Reading Is Important?

Despite the fact that males, overall indicated a higher perceived reading strength than females, males made it clear that they were less interested in reading books. Given the statement, “Reading a book is something I like to do,” 57% of males said either “never,” or “not very often.” These negative inclinations toward books were expressed by 32% of females, a smaller, though still alarming percentage. White females were the only female respondents who emphatically noted, “I don’t like reading!” (3/30 or 10%).

According to the 10 survey items that indicate one’s “Value of reading,” females reported valuing reading a bit more than males. Males averaged 57% and females, 63%, with a combined gender average for these eighth graders of 60%. Survey questions in this category focused on an individual’s belief that reading is “fun,” that those who read are “interesting” people, good books are shared, libraries are positive places, and one’s desire to read and to receive books as gifts. The concept of females valuing reading more than males noted here, aligns with the findings of other researchers (e.g., Pitcher et al., 2007). When asked directly about the importance of reading, 82% of males and 88% of females indicated on that specific item, that “Knowing how to read well” was “important” or “very important.” Only 3% of males and 1% of females claimed that knowing how to read well was “not very important.”

Examining these values by racial group, Hispanic males reported valuing reading least (49%) and a single male who reported his race as “American,” indicated valuing reading the most at, 68%. Among females, multi-racial females reported valuing reading most (71%) and Hispanic females valued reading least (58%). Tables 3a and 3b present student averages in percentages, of Value for reading, by gender and racial group.

Table 3a: Averages of Female Value for Reading

Female	Value for Reading	Number of Students
Multi-Racial	71%	21
White	65%	29
Asian	63%	1
African American	61%	8
Hispanic	58%	15

Table 3b: Averages of Male Value for Reading

Male	Value for Reading	Number of Students
Other (“American”)	68%	1
Native American	65%	2
White	61%	34
African American	59%	5
Multi-Racial	57%	16
Hispanic	49%	10

How Does Race or Ethnicity of Characters Affect One’s Reading?

On the issue of reading about characters who were the same race or ethnicity as they, (our third question) we noted both confusion and ambivalence among the students. Although children are aware of differences in the race of people by the time they are in preschool (e.g., Perlman, Kankesan, & Zhang, 2010), perhaps those racial lines both blur and become more focused as students age. Their teacher, Marisol elaborated,

Kids seem to be less aware of race, especially because so many of the kids are of mixed ethnicity at our school rather than *Black* or *White*. Even the White students didn’t seem to know what the term *Caucasian* meant, so I think kids are just less focused on identifying themselves with a racial group than perhaps kids have been previously, and it seems to be more of an afterthought for them. Others did not know what *ethnicity* meant. I also noticed that they hadn’t seemed like they had given much thought to the race of characters they read about. Perhaps this would be something they’d do, as they got older and more critical in their thinking. (personal communication, September 20, 2011).

After some discussion and explanation for her students regarding racial identities, they responded to the question, “I would read more often if I had books about teens who were the same race as I am” in the following manner:

Male		Females	
Read a lot more	13%	Read a lot more	8%
Read a little more	16%	Read a little more	30%
My reading would not change	71%	My reading would not change	62%

If 29% of males and 38% of females would read more, given books with characters with whom they identified, it would be an easy enough fix to give them those books. Additionally, many students noted in their written responses that they wanted some kind of connection with the character, whether it was personality or interests, race or ethnicity, they didn’t especially care, they just wanted a connection. Others specifically said they wanted a same-race connection. In the qualitative response section, about half of the multiracial females (10/21 or 48%) took the time to write about their interest in connecting with a character via race. One female said, “I find that I enjoy a book more when I have more in common with the characters” (Katrina, May 13, 2011). Another female noted, “I have never read a book with a Mexican. Mostly they are White. If it has a Mexican there [sic] about gangs” (Maria, May 13, 2011). Several others pointed out that while it “bothered” them not to see characters like themselves in books, “I still like to read all books” (Olivia, May 13, 2011). Of the group of females who identified themselves as “Hispanic,” 10/15 or 67% also wrote comments indicating their desire to connect. Evidently frustrated, Marta asked, “Why can’t they ever have books relating to me?” (May 13, 2011). Corinne said that not seeing herself in the novels “makes me feel like an outcast” (May 13, 2011). Isabel thought that books about individuals like her could provide an opportunity to learn more about her ethnicity. Examining feedback from African American females 7/8 (88%) indicated that they also would read more if they had access to books with more African American characters. Meeshawn said that it is simply “harder to find [stories] about people of my race” (May 13, 2011). When students actually wrote comments rather than checking a box to indicate a response, a greater level of concern was expressed regarding seeing themselves in the books they read.

We found it curious that none of the White respondents noted that they typically do see themselves in the books they read. Examining the races of the

protagonists in Newbery books, which are books that have won an award because they are “marked by excellence in [literary] quality,” (Association for Library Service to Children, p. 11) and therefore regularly placed in school classrooms and libraries, Nisse (2008), found that 72% of the main characters were White, even though the representation of this racial group in the U.S. population in 2010 was only 63% (Census Bureau). Latinos made up 16.3% of the U.S. population in 2010 (Census Bureau) and 17% of Marisol’s eighth grade population, but constituted only 3.7% of protagonists in Newbery books (Nisse, 2008). Indeed this minority group did not see themselves represented in a collection of books considered exemplary for adolescent readers.

Fewer multiracial males seemed concerned about the race of the main characters and even those who were, appeared more indifferent overall. When asked in a constructed response section if they would be more likely to read books with characters of the same ethnicity, their responses were, “kinda, not really” (Oscar, May 13, 2011), “possibly” or “I could maybe relate to it” (Anonymous, May 13, 2011). They were very noncommittal. Several Hispanic males who responded on the objective questions that they would “read a lot more” if books had same race characters, wrote “No” or “IDK” (I don’t know) when asked essentially the same question in a constructed response format. However, in the constructed response format, the word “ethnicity” (would you read more books if characters were of the same race or ethnicity as you) was used. Perhaps these eighth grade males were confused by the term ethnicity. Some of the African American males who marked that they would read a lot more in the multiple choice format, left the constructed response questions blank. Once again with White male respondents, as with other male groups, answers were made in an ambiguous fashion: “Probably, maybe not” (Ed, May 13, 2011).

What Do Students Want to Read?

Specific genre preferences for our group, (our fourth question) chosen from the list of genres provided by Fisher, Brozo, Frey and Ivey (2011) are presented in Tables 4a and 4b.

Table 4a: Reading Preferences of Eighth Grade Urban Females
When Directed to Check the Kind of Material They Like to Read

Genres	N=76
Scary books	50
Funny Novels	48
Fiction novels about people my age	44
Series books	41
Magazines about people	39
Adventure Novels	35
Picture Books	29
Cartoons, comics, or graphic novels	28
Poetry books	25
Books written mostly for adults	23
Fantasy and science fiction novels	22
Historical fiction	18
Books or magazines about sports	17
Books about animals	16
Magazines about hobbies	13
Biographies	10
Information books about history	6
Magazines about cars and trucks	6
Information books about science	3
Information books about math	3

According to Guild and Hughes-Hassell (2001), “Young adult novels about urban minority teens should represent a realistic picture of life in large urban cities—the limitations of poverty, the impermanence and mal-adaption of family structure...the physical danger associated with violence and drug use, and the isolating effects of geographic segregation within inner city neighborhoods” (p. 373). The females in Marisol’s school ranked realistic fiction number three in terms of preferences and the males ranked this genre number eight. Some researchers view these types of novels as providing a safe haven from which teens can observe the interactions of environmental stressors and vicariously make decisions that allow them to negotiate a safe passage through these difficulties and into adulthood. Additionally, *appropriate* novels, according to Guild & Hughes-

Table 4b: Reading Preferences of Eighth Grade Urban Males When Directed to Check the Kind of Material They Like to Read

Genres	N=72
Cartoons, comics or graphic novels	46
Funny novels	39
Series books	36
Books or magazines about sports	36
Adventure novels	36
Scary books	33
Fantasy and science fiction novels	32
Fiction novels about people my age	24
Picture books	22
Historical fiction	22
Magazines about cars and trucks	20
Books about animals	19
Information books about history	17
Biographies	16
Magazines about hobbies	13
Books written mostly for adults	11
Magazines about people	7
Information books about science	7
Poetry books	6
Information books about math	2

Hassel, portray their characters transitioning from their culture of origin to successful participation in the larger culture.

Successful young adult literature for minorities, said Sims Bishop (1982) should validate the significance of the minority individual, “it must give *minority youth* a vision for a better future and a sense that such a future is attainable” (pp. 361-362). This kind of empowerment, according to Sims Bishop, rarely happens as a result of one book. She believes that there must be a large body of authentic literature available in order to achieve this goal. Unfortunately, based on the content analysis of 4, 255 book reviews completed by Agosto, Hughes-Hassell, and Gilmore-Clough (2003), a large body of realistic fiction with minority protagonists does not exist. According to these authors, while the U.S. Census for 2000 indicated that one third of the population consisted of people of color; only one sixth of the books they analyzed contained even one protagonist of color. If

young adult literature is to help urban minority youth attain “successful bi-cultural growth,” warns Guild and Hughes-Hassell, many more books must be available.

It would seem appropriate for teachers to choose books from various award categories since they have already been vetted and deemed of high quality. While Newbery award books, (those with primarily White protagonists) have been around since 1922, awards for books that focus on specific races are a more recent development. The Corretta Scott King Award, for example, which honors African American writers and illustrators, was first issued in 1970. The Americas Award winners are those books that present authentic and engaging portrayals of Latin America, the Caribbean, or Latinos in the U.S. These have been given only since 1993. The Asian/Pacific American Awards for Literature (APAAL) promote Asian/Pacific American culture and heritage and are given based on literary and artistic merit. Awards are given annually in picture book, children’s/young adult, and adult categories. The first sets of APAAL awards were granted in 2001. The most recent category of racially focused awards is the American Indian Youth Services Literature Award, first given in 2006. This book award was created to identify and honor the very best writing and illustrations by and about American Indians. Awards are given in three categories: picture book, middle school, and young adult. Having award books available that celebrate all of these racial identities would allow students to choose books and choice is a factor known to be important to motivate students to read (Guthrie & Humenick, 2004). Choice and the availability of books that students find interesting are components of engagement theory. As Tracey and Morrow (2006) have noted, “engaged readers spend 500% more time reading than disengaged readers” (p. 65). The benefits of time spent reading are profound.

Regarding preferences for in-class reading engagement, we were surprised that 42% of males and 34% of females said that they would like their “teachers to read out loud in my classes” as frequently as “every day” and “almost every day.”

Concluding Thoughts

In order to encourage a group of 148 eighth graders to read more, the authors asked questions about their perceived reading strength, the importance they placed on reading, and the role of race and genre related to their book choice. On the basis of subscale scores from the “Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile Reading Survey” (Pitcher, et al., 2007), students as a whole placed low value on reading. However, these low scores may be due to the nature of the specific questions asked in this subcategory (e.g., reading being “fun,” a library being a

“great place to spend time,” etc.). When simply asked about the importance of reading, almost all students indicated that “Knowing how to read well” was “important” or “very important.” As a group, females indicated a slightly higher value for reading, but males, overall, possessed better self-concepts as readers. This did not hold true for the Hispanic subgroup where Hispanic males reported the lowest overall average self-concept or perceived reading strength. Both Hispanic males and females reported valuing reading less than other subgroups. We were concerned about this and wondered why it might be the case?

According to Schneider, Martinez and Owens (2006) multiple barriers exist for Hispanics in their efforts to educate themselves in the United States. Barriers such as parents’ lack of knowledge about the educational system, their own limited education, poor relationships with teachers, inadequate school resources, or a family’s immigrant background all may serve to undermine academic success. This lack of academic success then manifests itself in “Hispanics having the lowest rates of high school and college degree attainment” (p. 179). The trajectory toward educational attainment begins at home during a child’s early years. Parent-child interactions, use of rich language, and book reading are instrumental in a child’s later school success (e.g., Padak & Rasinski, 2007). Unfortunately, however, “Hispanic children age 3 to 5 are less likely to be read to” (Schneider, Martinez & Owens, 2006, p. 181), visit a library, or hear a story, than non-Hispanic children. As a matter of fact, according to Schneider, et al., Hispanic families at all income levels except the highest, “are less likely than other groups to participate in literacy activities” (p. 182). Getting one’s child to the library or enrolled in preschool takes logistical, organizational and literacy skills on the part of any parent. Given parents who have not completed high school, do not speak English in the home, or have very limited income, it is easy to see why these literacy activities may not occur for some segments of our population.

Another school-related problem for Hispanic children may be teacher perceptions. Reardon and Galindo (cited in Schneider, et al., 2006) “found that Hispanic students entering kindergarten were rated lower than white students by their teachers, regardless of their academic ability” (p. 191). Unfortunately, these lowered expectations are realized in both fourth and eighth-grade National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores, where Hispanic students have tended to score almost 30 points lower than non-Hispanic whites over a period of two decades (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). Poor relationships between minority teens and their teachers in general (see Rosenbloom & Way, 2004) and

Mexican-American teens and their teachers in particular appear to persist (Martinez, 2003).

While the above factors are complex and deep rooted, perhaps at least one small step could be taken by providing students access to books with cultural environments and main characters with whom they relate. As more than one-third of participants in this study told us, “I would read more often if I had books about teens who were the same race as I am” (adapted AMRP survey). Steps toward engagement are significant because, as Guthrie (2004) pointed out, “engaged reading can overcome traditional barriers to reading achievement, including gender, parental education, and income” (p. 5). For Hispanic students in particular, this may be critical.

Award books for students from many racial and cultural backgrounds are available, although the recency of specialized minority book awards seems to make them less known and less common on school shelves. This may be a critical oversight because according to findings from the 2009 Program for International Students Assessment (PISA) in the areas of engagement and achievement, “In virtually all 65 participating countries students who enjoy reading the most perform significantly better than students who enjoy reading the least” (Brozo & Shiel, 2012, p. 14). One factor in literary engagement that teachers can directly influence is the availability of a variety of quality books. Such books for Hispanic students may include *The Dreamer*, for grades 4 and up, by Pam Muñoz Ryan or *Return to Sender*, by Julia Alvarez, grades 5-9, winners of the 2011 and 2010 Americas Award respectively. For younger Hispanic children, *Clemente*, by Willie Perdomo, grades K-3 and *What Can You Do with a Paleta?/Que Puedes Hacer Con Una Paleta?* for PreK-3 by Carmen Tafolla were also 2011 and 2010 Americas Award winners. Award books for African American students are Kadir Nelson’s *Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans* or illustrator Shane W. Evans’ *Underground: Finding the Light to Freedom*, winners of the 2012 Coretta Scott King Book Award. The most recent American Indian Youth Literature Award winners include *The Christmas Coat: Memories of My Sioux Childhood*, by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve (2011) in the picture book category; *Free Throw* and *Triple Threat*, both written by Jaqueline Guest, winners in the 2011 middle school category; and *My Life In An Indian Boarding School*, by Adam Fortunate Eagle (2010), winner in the young adult category. In the AsianPacific American awards for Literature (APALA) category, the picture book winner for 2010 was *Yasmin’s Hammer* by Ann Malaspina; the Children’s

Literature winner was *Heart of a Samurai*, by Margi Preus (2010); and the Young Adult Literature winner, *Shooting Kabul*, by N.H. Senzai (2010).

The scary, funny, graphic novels, sports, and adventure books also noted as preferences by students in this and other studies (e.g., Ivey & Broaddus, 2001; Worthy, Moorman & Turner, 1999) need to be vetted and made available. Given the repercussions of a lack of engagement by teens, and especially Hispanic youth, it appears to be essential to have materials these students want to read and find relevant to their lives. Perhaps they would then value reading more and ultimately improve their reading and self-concepts for reading. As educators, we must start somewhere.



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- Worthy, J. Moorman, M. & Turner, M. (1999). What Johnny likes to read is hard to find in school. *Reading Research quarterly*, 34(1), 12-27.

Minority Book Awards

Americas Award, Hispanic:

- Alvarez, J. (2009). *Return to Sender*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf
- Perdomo, W. (2010). *Clemente!* New York: Henry Holt & Co.
- Ryan, P.M. (2010). *The Dreamer*. New York: Scholastic Press.
- Tafolla, C. (2009). *What Can You Do With a Paleta?/Que Puedes Hacer Con Una Paleta?* Berkeley, California: Tricycle Press.

Coretta Scott King Book Award, African American:

- Evans, S. W. (2011). *Underground: Finding the Light to Freedom*. New York: Roaring Brook Press.
- Nelson, K. (2011). *Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans*. New York: Balzer & Bray.

American Indian Youth Literature Award, Native American

- Eagle, A. F. (2010). *Pipestone: My Life in an Indian Boarding School*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Guest, J. (2011). *Free Throw*. Toronto: J. Lorimer.
- Guest, J. (2011). *Triple Threat*. Toronto: J. Lorimer.
- Sneve, V. D. H. (2011). *The Christmas Coat: Memories of My Sioux Childhood*. New York: Holiday House.

Asian Pacific American Awards, Asian American

- Malaspina, A. (2010). *Yasmin's Hammer*. New York: Lee & Low Books.
- Preus, M. (2010). *Heart of a Samurai*. New York: Amulet Books.
- Senzai, N.H. (2010). *Shooting Kabul*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Appendix A

Adolescent Motivation to Read Profile Reading Survey

Name: _____

Date: _____

Sample 1. I am in: _____

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| Sixth grade | Seventh grade |
| Eighth grade | Ninth grade |
| Tenth grade | Eleventh grade |
| Twelfth grade | |

Sample 2. I am a _____

- | | |
|------|--------|
| Male | Female |
|------|--------|

Sample 3. My race/ethnicity is _____

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| African-American | Asian/Asian American |
| Caucasian | Hispanic |
| Native American | Multi-racial/Multi-ethnic |
| Other: Please Specify _____. | |

1. My friends think I am _____

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| A very good reader | a good reader |
| an OK reader | a poor reader |

2. Reading a book is something I like to do.

- | | |
|-----------|----------------|
| Never | Not very often |
| Sometimes | Often |

3. I read _____

- not as well as my friends
- about the same as my friends
- a little better than my friends
- a lot better than my friends

4. My best friends think reading is _____

- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| really fun | fun |
| OK to do | no fun at all |

5. When I come to a word I don't know, I can _____

- almost always figure it out
- sometimes figure it out
- almost never figure it out
- never figure it out

6. I tell my friends about good books I read
I never do this
I almost never do this
I do this some of the time
I do this a lot
7. When I am reading by myself, I understand _____
Almost everything I read
Some of what I read
Almost none of what I read
None of what I read
8. People who read a lot are _____
very interesting interesting
not very interesting boring
9. I am _____
a poor reader an OK reader
a good reader a very good reader
10. I think libraries are _____
a great place to spend time
an interesting place to spend time
an OK place to spend time
a boring place to spend time
11. I worry about what other kinds think about my reading _____.
every day almost every day
once in a while never
12. Knowing how to read well is _____
not very important sort of important
important very important
13. When my teacher asks me a question about what I have read, I _____
can never think of an answer
have trouble thinking of an answer
sometimes think of an answer
always think of answer
14. I think reading is _____
a boring way to spend time
an OK way to spend time
an interesting way to spend time
a great way to spend

15. Reading is _____
very easy for me kind of easy for me
kind of hard for me very hard for me
16. As an adult, I will spend _____
none of my time reading
very little time reading
some of my time reading
a lot of my time reading
17. When I am in a group talking about what we are reading, I _____
almost never talk about my ideas
sometimes talk about my ideas
almost always talk about my ideas
always talk about my ideas
18. I would like for my teachers to read out loud in my classes _____
every day almost every day
once in a while never
19. When I read out loud I am a _____
poor reader OK reader
good reader very good reader
20. When someone gives me a book for a present, I feel _____
very happy sort of happy
sort of unhappy unhappy

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Teacher Added:

21. I would read more often if I have books about teens who were the same race as I am
read a lot more
read a little more
my reading would not change

About the Author

Arlene L. Barry, PhD, is an Associate Professor at the University of Kansas. Her research interests include the history of literacy, adolescent literacy, especially striving readers, and assessment.

