2002

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Inspire and Equip:
The needs and wants of students in a high school English curriculum

Jocelyn Hays
Presidential Scholars Senior Thesis
2002
A student walks into the classroom on the first day of school. He glances around to see if he knows anyone. Two of his friends wave him over, and he slides into a desk in close proximity to theirs. The bell rings and everyone turns to the front where the teacher starts talking about what you will be covering that semester. She points to a row of outdated anthologies full of short stories, poems, plays and mini-lessons designed to teach the intricacies of the English language. On the shelf below the anthologies is a class set of several different novels that will be crammed in between short stories and plays, this year you may or may not get to the poetry or mini-lessons. Everyone’s shoulders droop a bit further as the teacher picks up a stack of stapled papers from her desk and begins to hand them out, explaining that in this packet are the class guidelines, policies, and semester schedule. The student glances at his friends, and they shoot him back the same “great, another boring semester of English” look that he is giving them.

“It is true that many of us became English teachers because of a deep and personal love for quality literature. But how do we pass this love on to our students?” (Peterson 41). As a future English teacher, that is my question. How do I neatly collect my love for English and the experiences that have brought me to my career choice and put them in a neat package that is inspirational to my students and gives them something that they will use once they are out of high school? While inspiration is not the sole intended outcome for literature in a secondary classroom, the question remains, how can teachers create a more meaningful and student focused secondary literature curriculum?

It is very easy to speculate on what students want in their English curriculum, after all, we were all students once. However, times change; in fact times are constantly changing. While teachers can have valuable insights into student reading preferences, it is necessary
to go to the source, the students, for what they desire in their learning, because they of all people should know best what will reach and inspire them, what will stick with them when they venture outside the walls of their high schools. I believe that all students want to be inspired and they all want to learn. In fact, it may be those who are labeled least likely to succeed that want to learn the most, however, they have not been taught in a way with which they can connect. I believe that there is a way to reach all students in some way by teaching to them, not to the book. Books of any nature, whether anthologies or novels should be tools, not straight jackets or crutches. They should enable teachers to take students out of the classroom rather than bind them to it. If we teach students only to think in the classroom we have taught them nothing. It is when we teach them to think for themselves that we have taught them something valuable that will carry them beyond their high school graduation. In the following pages, I intend to explore that very question.
**Project Overview**

The purpose of this project was to investigate literature curriculum, having the student in mind, with the intent to uncover the needs of the student as a reader both through my own findings and the findings of other researchers. My goals coincide directly with my purpose for this project. As a future English teacher, I desire that I will be as prepared as I can for my chosen profession. Teaching is not all passion; it is important to be knowledgeable in the field as well. In addition, it is crucial that teachers are aware of the environment and conditions that they will be teaching in. The method for achieving my purpose and goals was to identify who would be the most qualified and informed to inform me and give me a base of knowledge that would be useful as I start off in the teaching profession. With this in mind, I conducted a survey of 147 high school students, interviewed two high school English teachers, and consulted various scholarly resources both from the past and current. I discovered that curriculum and creating a curriculum that meets the needs of students while meeting the requirements of standards set up by schools is a complicated process. To truly teach an effective and meaningful high school English curriculum requires continual education and research. The field of curriculum is constantly changing and the needs of students, though basically consistent, change as society changes.
Methods

Survey

I initiated my research by administering a thirteen question survey to 147 9th through 12th graders at Malcolm Price Laboratory School/Northern University High School in Cedar Falls, Iowa. NU High is accredited by the North Central Association Commission, which means that they set high standards for academic programs, learning materials, student needs, student interests, staffing, and facilities. Located on the campus of the University of Northern Iowa, Malcolm Price Laboratory School provides one of the nation's outstanding settings for clinical teacher education and research at the early childhood, elementary, middle, and high school levels. The demographics of the students surveyed come from a school of 545 students from nursery school to grade twelve with varying socioeconomic backgrounds. Twenty-three percent of the students are African American, Pacific Islander, Asian, or Hispanic. Twenty-six percent of the students that attend Malcolm Price Laboratory School open enroll, or attend school at Price Lab though they do not live in that school district (MPLS web site).

The survey was a collection of questions intended to gather information regarding reading choices and experiences of high school students. (See page 23-24) The survey covered questions about books that teachers choose and that students choose themselves, as well as how the students choose a book. The last questions on the survey challenged the students to think beyond high school and to rate their high school English/literature
experiences on whether they had prepared them for beyond high school and if and what they planned on reading after high school.

Each high school student, in compliance with the mandatory four years of English in high school is in an English class. Upon having a box of 150 surveys delivered by me to the Language Arts office at Price Lab School, each teacher took enough surveys for their class and administered them as part of their class time within a week of the surveys being delivered.

Interviews

In addition to a survey directed towards a very wide spectrum of students, I also conducted teacher interviews. The questions the teacher interviews are in the appendix. I interviewed two teachers, Ms. DeMoss and Miss Kading. Ms. Marguerite DeMoss is a veteran teacher at Cedar Falls High School in Cedar Falls, Iowa. She teaches Great Books and Great Books II, both upper level literature classes. The student survey addresses reading experiences and preferences both in and outside of the classroom.

Cedar Falls High School is in a community of approximately 36,000 residents. There are approximately 4,322 students from Kindergarten to grade 12. The average class size at Cedar Falls High School is 18.6 students with approximately 50% of the teachers having their Masters degree or above. Technology is a major emphasis at CF where there are fiber-optic connections to the school, all the classrooms have a telephone and the Internet, and there is a 4:1 ratio of students to computers.
Miss Cynthia Kading teaches at Denison Community High School in Denison, Iowa. She teaches a wide range of classes, from a remedial English class with special education students, students in foster care, and juvenile delinquents, to an Advanced Composition class. I interviewed Ms. DeMoss during her study hall period. We went to the Media Resource Center and had the interview there. At the conclusion of the interview, she gave me handouts that she uses in her classes. I conducted the interview with Miss Kading via email.

Denison Community High School is in a community of 16,427. Denison Community High School serves 665 students. There is a very diverse population of students at the high school with a large community of Hispanic students for whom English is their second language. Denison Community High School is set up in a block schedule of classes alternating A days and B days.
Findings

Survey

The first question asked students what they consider first when they are choosing a book. This was an open-ended question; students were able to write in whatever they wanted. The top five responses in order of popularity and exactly as the students wrote them were genre, topic, book jacket, author, and plot. Other answers that intrigued me included the mood they are in, if there was a movie made about it, the title, and even how cool it is. Another response by several of the students was that it needs to relate to their life. In reality, each one of these responses reflects the need for books to relate to a student’s life. The following percentages from Question 1 reflect preferences out of 172 responses. Twelve percent of the responses showed genre as their primary choice influence. Eleven percent of the responses showed topic as a primary influence. Ten percent of the responses showed author and another ten percent showed book jacket as primary influences in book choice. Nine percent of the responses showed plot as the primary book choice influence. Five percent of the responses showed Content as a primary influence and another five percent showed subject matter as a major choice influence. As we move through the survey, this idea of relating to life will become a common theme that greatly influences the response of the student.

Question two looked at how length is an influencing factor in book choice. Seventy-three percent of the students in some degree disagreed that they look for a book
less than 200 pages in length when they are choosing a book to read. However, that means that for 27% of the students, regardless of literary quality of the book, the length is a factor in their choice.

Question three cuts right to the heart of a student's opinion of their literature classes. They were asked simply if they enjoy the books they read for their literature classes. A glance at the graph representing the data would lead you to believe that there was a split; the vertical bars form a sort of bell shape with the agree bar just rising over the disagree bar. However, we have to keep in mind that disagree and strongly disagree are both disagreement but at different degrees. Thus, over half, 59% of the students surveyed did not enjoy the books in their literature classes. Granted, that leaves 41% that did enjoy the books in their literature classes, but of those, only 2% of those surveyed strongly agreed that they enjoy the books in their literature classes.

Questions four and five together provide valuable insight into the opinions of high school students. When asked if they enjoy books they choose on their own, 95% agreed to some degree. However, when asked if they would rather have their teacher choose for them, 91% said they would not rather have their teacher choose a book for them.

Question six asked for specific choices again, this time about specific types of books that they look for. The top four choices, in order of popularity were action books, mystery books, books in a series, and historical fiction. Out of 10 category choices, 49% of the responses fell into these four categories. The other categories that students chose in order of popularity were Non-fiction, Bio/Autobiography, Science fiction, 'other', romance, and books with happy endings. Under the category of 'other' students wrote in
options such as sports, fantasy, horror, comedy, classics, movie based on the book, and poetry. The last 6 categories, including ‘other,’ account for 51% of the student response.

Question 7 asked students to differentiate between books they read for school and not for school. Eighty percent said that they do in fact enjoy books that they do not read for school. This response corresponds with question one where several students responded that one of the first things they look for when choosing a book is whether it was recommended.

Question 8, ironically follows up on that by asking the students if they enjoy books recommended by a friend or relative. 68% voted in the affirmative, that they do enjoy books recommended by a friend or relative.

However, in question 9 when they are asked if they enjoy books recommended by teachers, the vote is almost completely split with 52% saying no they do not enjoy the books that teachers recommend and 48% saying yes they do enjoy books recommended by teachers.

When asked in question 10 to rate their overall experience with their English/literature classes, 79% agreed to some degree that they had enjoyed their overall experience. However, that leaves 21% out there that didn’t enjoy their overall experience.

Getting more specific with their overall experience evaluation, students were asked in question eleven if they would read books similar to ones they had read in high school once they have graduated. At barely a majority, 56% said they would read books that are similar to ones they read now once they graduate from high school.
Question 12 gave students the opportunity to write in what kinds of books they would read after high school. Only 45 students or 31% of the students surveyed wrote in an answer. Of the 45 students, 16% wrote in that they would not read books after high school, 11% said they would read biographies, 7% wrote in fiction, 7% classics, and 7% books for college. The following responses were given by 4% of those responding: sports, horror, action, novels, romance, non-fiction, and mystery. Adventure, ‘easier,’ history, best sellers, and ‘harder’ each got 1 write-in or 2% each of the responses.

Thinking overall, question 13 reveals that 76% of the students feel that their high school English/Literature classes have prepared them for reading opportunities after high school. That leaves 24% that do not think they are prepared for reading after high school.

Interviews

The interview questions answered by Ms. Marguerite DeMoss and Miss Cynthia Kading is included on page 25. The following findings summarize question by question their thoughts on reading choice and experience of high school students.

Miss Kading

Question one asked them what they look for when choosing a book for students to read. Miss Kading was very specific citing “readability level, content, vocabulary, length,” whether is fits “my curriculum objectives, standards and benchmarks.” With this in mind, when asked question two, how do you find books students like to read, Miss
Kading responded “English conferences, teaching seminars, mail, other teacher, and students.” Miss Kading, when asked whether it is more important for students to like a book or to read a challenging book responded that there “needs to be a balance of the two.” With this balance comes a need to “show [the students] success.” In addition, Miss Kading comments that when it comes to choosing books students like “if you want awesome classroom discussion you will still carefully pick the book that deals with issues teens deal with today.”

So, how does Miss Kading motivate students to read? In summary, it depends on the reading level of the student. The lower level students are motivated by attention, so asking questions on what they are reading helps. The higher level students are mostly motivated by grades, but they also enjoy the competition of games or page challenges to see who can read the most. According to Miss Kading, the required books that students like most are “the short novel that is a quick read and deals with issues they experience.” The response was similar when asked what kinds of books students are most likely to pick up on their own. She said most popular was “teen romance, science fiction…most YA (young adult) novels because they are easy reads and the content appeals to the teenager.”

On the topic of what motivates students in higher-level elective classes, Miss Kading pointed out that “it is rare if you find a student in high school that is really passionate about literature…. Remember, many students love to write… but we must separate the study of literature from composition if you really want a fair comparison…” Finally, when asked what her goals were for teaching the books she does Miss Kading replied “student success, coverage of literary terminology to meet objectives… themes,
morals, and values- that the student will walk away learning something applicable to their life.”

Ms. DeMoss

When Ms. DeMoss was asked what she looks for in a book she explained that because she teaches Advanced Placement preparation courses she “pretty much [has] to stick with the classics.” She also said that she has to like the book and it has to be something “they will need for the future for their college work.” Ms. DeMoss finds the books she uses for her classes by doing research on what Humanities courses are teaching. However, some of the books were “pretty much settled” before she started teaching the courses.

When asked if it is more important for students to like a book or to read a challenging book, she said that there needed to be a combination.

With the harder texts, Ms. DeMoss finds that she has to motivate her students through testing, giving “very lengthy point worthy plot tests…” She says that she “doesn’t care how bright the kid is, if there’s not some kind of punishment out there, or carrot out there as the case may be, they’re going to turn to Cliff’s notes.”

Ms. DeMoss reported that of the books that she teaches, Hemmingway is most popular. *Hamlet* and *Crime and Punishment* are also popular. When students in her class are allowed to choose books, sometimes they choose *Purgatorio* which is the book after *Inferno*, which they study. When they choose a novel, they choose a mix between American novels and others.
Ms. DeMoss said that for her Advanced Placement students, they are motivated to take the class because it is college prep, but also because the students like the participatory nature of the class. Her goals for the class are for it to be "meaningful in their own minds... and thought provoking."
Discussion

Taking the information from the graphs as a whole, there are several things that are revealed. One of the most significant is that students want and need an emotional connection to the literature they are reading. This is evident from Question 6 in the survey that asks what students look for in a book and the top three answers are action, mystery and books in a series. A look at the graph [insert page/appendix letter] will reveal that the number of students who responded to these three categories is quite significant. In addition, both teachers that I interviewed discussed the importance of the literature relating to the lives of the student. If there is recognition for a need for meaning, that means there is a recognition that students want/need an emotional connection to what they are reading. That students need an emotional connection with books is a need that is many times overlooked.

Based on the response of questions four and five, choice is also a form of emotional connection. This is a very important realization to come to when planning curriculum, which I plan to put into effect in my classroom. This realization is that you can have novel after novel that students can connect with and learn from, but you can give them a sense of ownership of their learning when you allow them to choose their books. In general, most students will choose a book they are interested in and that will challenge them as was noted in the interview with Ms. DeMoss and in question 2 of the survey. Ms. DeMoss noted that her students sometimes pick up the sequel to Dante’s *Inferno* or other equivalent book and question two revealed that the majority of students
do not let length factor into their book choice. As a teacher it is important to be willing to
coach students in book choice, but that means knowing the students well enough to help
them find a book that they can connect with.

Between the interviews, the survey, and research that I did on my own, it has
become evident that the questions I asked at the beginning do not have one simple
answer. When I ask how do I inspire students and give them something they will use
after they graduate from high school, I must also ask who are the students that I am trying
to inspire and equip? It would seem that the teachers I interviewed responded to such
questions as “how do you choose books” and “what motivates your students to read” with
answers based on the level of students that they teach. Ms. DeMoss teaches Advanced
Placement preparatory courses and she responded to those questions by saying that she
motivates through testing and discussion; the students want to read because they know
they will have to contribute to discussion. Miss Kading teaches upper and lower level
classes, but more lower level than upper level. Her students are not motivated by grades,
but they are motivated by attention, games, and prizes. Her students are motivated most
by her showing interest in what they are reading.

In my interview with Ms. DeMoss, she said, “I aim at the multiple intelligence
sort of activities so that instead of test, test, test, post-unit tests, they have choices of other
things to do.” The multiple intelligence activities that Ms. DeMoss is speaking of come
from the research of Howard Gardner. In 1983, Howard Gardner revealed to the world
that there are many different ways that we learn. Originally it was thought that there
were seven intelligences, but Gardner and his colleagues are now aware of eight:
Linguistic, Logical-Mathematical, Spatial, Musical, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, and Naturalist. Each intelligence has its own characteristics that identify it as unique from the others. Gardner holds that each person possess all eight intelligence’s from birth, but each person also has their own blend of intelligence, usually with one or two dominant and the rest supplementary.

The following examples take into consideration only the primary intelligence that a student uses. Students who enjoy playing with words, who quickly acquire other languages, or who always have a story to tell use linguistic intelligence. Those using musical intelligence obviously enjoy music, but are also the students who are attracted to birds singing outside or who are constantly tapping their pencil on their desk in a rhythm are using musical intelligence. Logical-mathematical intelligence students are those who analyze the details of problems either personally or school related before they systematically test solutions, or those who are fascinated by baseball statistics. Students with spatial intelligence will refer first the charts, graphs and pictures in their books, who draw out or web their papers before writing, or who fill blank space around their papers with intricate patterns. Students who love P.E. and school dances, who would rather make a model than a paper and who tend to be the ones tossing paper wads into the garbage from across the room are those that use bodily-kinesthetic intelligence. Students who thrive on small group work, who are sensitive to the moods of others, and who tactfully convince their teacher they need extra time for homework are using interpersonal intelligence. Intrapersonal intelligence is perhaps the most difficult to decipher, but these students tend to have a very accurate mental model of themselves and use this model to make thoughtful decisions about their lives. Finally, the newest
intelligence is the naturalist intelligence. Students who can name and describe the features of every make of car around them.

Facing a classroom of bright shining faces with different ways of learning can seem a daunting task, after all, it is much easier to teach how you as a teacher learn. It is possible to teach one lesson and reach every student, every way they learn. Teaching students how they learn is in fact one way of giving them literature. If both student and teacher are aware of how the student learns there is a greater chance that learning will be meaningful for the students because both will know how to make it such. A careful observation of students will reveal which intelligence they rely on most.

Regardless of whether Gardner is correct in his theory of multiple intelligences, it is obvious even from the teacher interviews and the student survey that students learn differently. Regardless of ability, all students are capable of learning, but are they able to step up to the challenge that learning presents them? Linda Pavonetti, in her review of Carol Jago’s book *With Rigor For All: Teaching the Classics to Contemporary Students*, says, “Jago contends that high school students—whether suburban or urban, minority or dominant, privileged or impoverished, native English speakers or ESL learners—are capable of reading classical literature” (82). Judging from Jago’s future comments that “it is a teacher’s responsibility to stretch students’ thinking, to help students grow as intellectuals and reflective thinkers…” that “they must guide their students through complex texts, teaching by direct instruction as much as by modeling their own literacy,” (Pavonetti 82) I would say that all students are capable of stepping up the challenge of learning. However, if teachers expect students to step up to the challenge, Jago urges that “literature chosen for classroom study be of finest quality” (Pavonetti 83).
But what about Miss Kading’s students that are not motivated by grades and do not see the value of the literature they are reading? I return to statements made in the introduction to this paper, that I believe that all students want to be inspired and they all want to learn, and that in fact it may be those who are labeled least likely to succeed that want to learn the most. Arthur Applebee says in his report “The Teaching of Literature in Programs with Reputation for Excellence in English” in reference to nonacademic tracks, or classes that are not taught to higher level students that “it was the very students in most need of help who got the least attention in curriculum planning and curriculum revision” (36). Applebee concurs that students who appear to be the least motivated are actually the students that need or want the most help.

At another point in his article, Applebee uses the example of an ESL (English as a Second Language) class to make the point that “the classes and programs that generated the greatest enthusiasm were those that sought to... [stress] student response and involvement as much as or more than the text to be analyzed” (17).

One of the questions that both teachers were asked in their interview probed their reasoning behind what they teach and why they teach, more specifically, their goals for teaching. Both teachers returned answers with one common theme: they were student centered. Some of their answers were as follows: “I want them (the books) to be meaningful to them. And meaningful in their own minds. And to be thought provoking.” “Student success, that the students will walk away learning something applicable to their life.” That is how these teachers are making their classrooms different. They are teaching to reach the students. To go beyond the box, that along the road of standards and benchmarks they have tried to give students something to connect with and take
away from the classroom. Perhaps it is Applebee's observations of class enthusiasm correlating to student response and involvement that will give these and all teachers the tools to create an environment where students will walk away from the classroom with something meaningful that they will carry with them beyond high school.

As the concept of meaningful continues to be sought out, I refer back to the picture I painted at the beginning of this paper of the "traditional" English classroom (the scenario of the student walking into class on the first day). I am not saying that there is anything wrong with anthologies, class sets of novels, or beginning of the year packets. However, I am saying that there is definitely a different way to present it. Arthur Applebee says in his book *Curriculum as Conversation* that in regard to learning, that "if students are to learn to enter into culturally significant schooled traditions of knowing and doing, they will do so through their participation in the language and culture of the classroom" (Curriculum 35). In other words, in order for schooling to be meaningful, students must be taught that what they do will get them somewhere.

The proof of the success of a participatory method is just beginning to roll in, and it is beginning to be conclusive. Wendy Sunderman in her article entitled "Reading, Living, and Loving Lord of the Flies" beautifully introduces the student focused curriculum that I am talking about.

During my high school education, one of the first things I learned about reading and writing about literature was that there was only one valid interpretation of a novel- the interpretation of the teacher. I did not always have the same opinions or responses to the situations in the novel as my
teacher, but I learned to abandon my views and adopt the “right” one quickly. After all, the grade was the thing. Fortunately, my experience in school did not negate my love of reading, but I never looked forward to reading the books on the school reading list. Now that I’m a teacher, I remember my high school experience, and my primary goal in the classroom is to introduce my students to the text and let them walk freely through the novel without following me around the pages. (Sunderman 49)

As more teachers adopt this attitude of allowing their students to walk freely through a text, it will become meaningful to them, as suggested earlier by Applebee, and thus they will become engaged learners who can take something with them beyond the walls of the classroom.

As I look ahead to teaching, I realize that no matter how much research is done, there is still more that could be done; with every question that is answered, there is another that is formed. I agree wholeheartedly with Arthur Applebee when he says that “traditions are the knowledge-in-action out of which we construct our realities as we know and perceive them, and that to honor such traditions we must reconstrue our curriculum to focus on knowledge-in-action rather than knowledge-out-of-context” (Curriculum 2). I began this paper wondering if we should be teaching classics, despite the average English teacher’s appreciation of them. Because of the trend to move away from classics because they are old, I would add to and agree with a statement by Carol Jago used earlier when she says, “While I am not recommending the return to an exclusive diet of nineteenth-century authors, and while celebrating the growing body of
young adult literature available to teenage readers, I urge that the literature chosen for classroom study be of finest quality” (Pavonetti 83).

There definitely is a problem with our literature courses today. If there wasn’t, regardless of their enjoyment of the subject, students such as those that I surveyed would not respond that their Literature classes did not prepare them for reading after high school. What then are the implications for high school curriculum? While there is certainly a strong need for competent teachers who are willing to take risks, there is also a need for the students to be held responsible for their learning. If we do our part to get quality literature in the classroom and guide students through the text, then it is their responsibility to step up to the challenge.

Why should we care if there is a problem with literature courses today? Why should we invest in forming a curriculum that inspires students, is meaningful to them, and equips them for life outside of high school? Marshall Gregory outlines six contributions that the study of literature makes to students’ development. They include:

…(a) intellectual development through vicariously experiencing the human condition; (b) cognitive development, especially the ability to read thoughtfully across genre and styles, appreciate language, and think critically; (c) aesthetic development that allows the student to interact with art; (d) cultural sensitivity through awareness of the students’ own and others’ literature; (e) ethical sensitivity through solitary reflection and literate dialogue; and (f) existential maturity, defined by Gregory as a growing awareness that “what we personally desire and value [not] what everyone else desires and values.” (Pavonetti 82)
With these in mind, I find it hard to believe that a teacher of Literature would not want to invest in what they are teaching and whom they are teaching. Whether it is doing research like Ms. DeMoss or being familiar enough with student reading to ask plot questions like Miss Kading, there is a need for teachers to invest in what they are teaching. If what Marshall Gregory says is true, there is a lot at stake for Literature teachers when they step into a classroom and open a book. Bottom line, teachers need to be informed about what they are teaching and why they are teaching it. If teachers want to inspire, create meaning for, and equip their students, there needs to be a willingness to set high standards, but to meet the students half-way through investing in research and being an informed teacher. Teachers should never stop learning and growing. The very nature of teaching is learning. In the words of Ben Sweetland, “We cannot hold a torch to light another’s path without brightening our own” (Quoteland).
Survey/Interview
Reading Interest Survey

The following questions are designed to gather information regarding reading choices and experiences of high school students. Please answer each question as accurately as possible. All answers will remain anonymous. Thank you for your time.

1. What do you consider first when choosing a book?

2. When I choose a book to read, I look for one that is less than 200 pages in length.

   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

3. I enjoy the books I read for my English/Literature classes.

   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

4. I enjoy reading books that I choose on my own.

   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

5. I would rather have my teacher choose what I read in class rather than choose it myself.

   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

6. When you choose a book to read outside of class, which of the following options do you look for? Please put a check next to all options that apply to you and/or write in additional options not listed.

   __ Action books
   __ Romance novel
   __ Historical fiction
   __ Non-fiction
7. I enjoy reading books not required for school.

8. I tend to read books recommended to me by a friend or relative.

9. I tend to read books recommended to me by my teachers.

10. Overall, I have had a good experience in my English/Literature classes.

11. Based on my experience in my high school English/Literature classes, I will continue to read books considered classics or books similar to those I read in high school.

12. What kind of books will you read when you graduate from high school? Will the books be similar to the books you have read for class?

13. Overall, I think that my English/Literature classes have prepared me for reading opportunities after high school.
The following questions are designed to gather information regarding reading choices and experience of high school students. Please answer each question as accurately as possible. All answers will remain anonymous. Thank you for your time.

1. What do you look for when choosing a book for students to read?

2. How do you find books that students like to read?

3. Do you think it is more important for students to like a book or to read a challenging book?

4. How do you motivate students to read?

5. Which required books do students like the best?

6. What kind of books are students most likely to pick up on their own?
7. For students in higher-level elective Literature classes, what motivates them to be there?

8. What are your goals for teaching the books that you do? If you can, give specific examples of books and your reasoning behind that particular book.
Graphs/Charts
What do you consider first when choosing a book?
Question 2:

When I choose a book to read, I look for one that is less than 200 pages in length.

Question 3:

I enjoy books I read for my English/Literature classes.
Question 4:  
I enjoy reading books that I choose on my own.

Question 5:  
I would rather have my teacher choose what I read in class rather than choose it myself.
When you look for a book to read outside of class, which of the following options do you look for?
Question 7:
I enjoy reading books not required for school.

Question 8:
I tend to read books recommended to me by a friend or relative.
Question 9:

I tend to read books recommended to me by my teachers.

Question 10:

Overall, I have had a good experience in my English/Literature classes.
Question 11:

Based on my experience in my high school English/Literature classes, I will continue to read books considered classics or books similar to those I read in high school.

Question 13:

Overall, I think that my English/Literature classes have prepared me for reading opportunities after high school.
Bibliography

Works Cited


Works Consulted


