

## RESEARCH TOPIC

For my research prospectus, I would like to investigate factors that affect children's reading habits, and how reading habits can be improved.



## ABSTRACT

Reading is a skill that is essential for children to grow and develop as learners. Children's literacy is a topic that needs to be addressed in school systems, as many children are at a disadvantage when it comes to literacy due to outside factors such as their parent's literacy. Illiterate parents can unintentionally create an environment where it is difficult for a child to become literate. During this project, I have been researching factors that affect children's literacy. I have also been researching methods by which parents and educators can promote children's literacy. My research has consisted of studies and papers written by other researchers. In my research, I have discovered ways that teachers and illiterate parents can help to improve children's literacy.

## METHODOLOGY

As a tentative plan for research, I would like to begin by looking at multiple studies done in children's literacy and organize the findings of other researchers. I would also like to conduct a study of my own in children's literacy. I would like to determine how socio-economic class affects a child's literacy. In order to do this, I would need to randomly select children of different socio-economic backgrounds and look at their reading levels. I will try to determine if there is a pattern among the different socio-economic classes. It will be difficult to research this as an undergraduate, so I might have to rely on data that has already been gathered. I will have to ensure that this follows all of the NIH's rules, as well as ensure that all of my information and sources are cited correctly and given credit. I will have to be especially careful when doing research involving children. I will have to ensure that the child and parent understand what is going on and consent to the research. This is only a tentative idea, and I will need to further study research methods and my topic before I decide on how I will conduct research of my own.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many factors that can affect a child's reading habits, as well as many methods of improving a child's reading habits.

### Why Is It Important for Children to Read?

- Reading is essential for a child's development.
- Children can explore different time periods and places without actually traveling there.
- Children can learn to view situations from different perspectives.
- Children can learn how to empathize with people who are different from them.
- Children quickly learn to distinguish authors and illustrators and develop their own personal reading styles.

### Factors that Affect Children's Reading Habits

- There is a lack of strong language examples and quality literature in homes of children with illiterate parents.
- This phenomenon generally occurs among less educated and lower income parents.
- Teachers and educators also have an effect on children's reading habits. Teachers who are knowledgeable about children's literature and encourage children to read outside of class have a positive effect on children's reading habits.
- By discussing literature with children, teachers can help students develop critical reading skills.

### Methods of Improving Children's Reading Habits

- Parents can talk to their child at length each day.
- Parents can use a more expansive vocabulary when talking to their children.
- Parents can encourage children to use toys to tell stories.
- Mothers who respond verbally to their children when they are young tend to help children develop a better vocabulary.
- Parents can also increase the amount of two-way conversations with their children.
- Instead of actually reading stories to children, illiterate parents can simply create stories of their own to go along with the pictures in a picture book.
- Parents can also use magazines and catalogs to help children develop language skills
- Teachers should know what types of children's literature are preferable, have access to children's literature, and encourage their students to read voluntarily outside of class.
- Teachers should be familiar with the books they are teaching, know how and when to use books in the classroom, and understand how children develop as readers.
- Teachers should also read as many children's books as they can and teach good reading habits as well as books.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Collins, Fiona M., and Kimberly Safford. "'The Right Book to the Right Child at the Right Time': Primary Teacher Knowledge of Children's Literature." *Changing English: Studies in Culture & Education* 15.4 (2008): 415-422. Academic Search Complete. EBSCO. Web. 19 Oct. 2011.
- Cooter, Kathleen S. "When Mama Can't Read: Counteracting Intergenerational Illiteracy." *Reading Teacher* 59.7 (2006): 698-702. Academic Search Complete. Web. 2 Nov. 2011.
- Lynch-Brown, Carol and Carl M. Tomlinson. *Essentials of Children's Literature*. Needham Heights: Allyn and Bacon, 1993. Print.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- Warren Burggren, Ph.D., Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Vish Prasad, Ph.D., Vice President for Research and Economic Development
- Michael Monticino, Ph.D., Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
- Gloria Cox, Ph.D., Dean, Honors College

## PHOTO CREDITS

- <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-496985/English-childrens-literacy-levels-worst-developed-world.html>
- [http://www.double-crossing.com/?page\\_id=22](http://www.double-crossing.com/?page_id=22)
- [http://hill.troy.k12.mi.us/staff/bnewingham/myweb3/literacy\\_centers%20final.htm](http://hill.troy.k12.mi.us/staff/bnewingham/myweb3/literacy_centers%20final.htm)