



Literature for high school students: the contribution of children's and young adult reading to the cognitive and emotional development of children and adolescents

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SUMMARY

This article seeks to understand the importance of reading during adolescence and its impact on the cognitive and emotional development of high school students. The aim is to analyze how reading for children and young people can significantly contribute to their personal growth. The work investigates reading habits among Brazilian students, their level of textual comprehension, and the benefits of reading based on authors and educational data. Using bibliographic research as a methodology, it is concluded that reading is a powerful tool for individual and social transformation and should be encouraged with sensitivity and creativity.

Keywords: Reading. Literature. Children's and Young Adult. High School. Development Cognitive. Children. Adolescents. Empathy.

ABSTRACT

This article seeks to understand the importance of reading in adolescence and its impacts on the cognitive and emotional development of high school students. The proposal is to analyze how children's reading can contribute significantly to the personal growth of adolescents. The work investigates the reading habit among Brazilian students, the level of textual interpretation and the benefits of reading based on authors and educational data. Using bibliographic research as a methodology, it is concluded that reading is a powerful tool for individual and social transformation, and should be encouraged with sensitivity and creativity.

Keywords: Reading. Literature. Children and Youth. Middle school. Cognitive Development. Children. Adolescents. Empathy.

1 INTRODUCTION

The interest in the subject arose from the personal practice of reading in the pre-school stages. adolescence and adolescence, with the custom and practice of the acquired habit, a improves vocabulary, imagination, creativity, and even social, emotional, and empathic skills. It is also important to emphasize the importance of

The effects of reading on adolescent development is an extremely relevant topic for the training of pedagogues, as the technique can be used in the classroom as a form of teaching.

Reading is therefore characterized as an indispensable tool for the formation of being, being relevant in social, political, economic, cultural and educational life. In addition, reading contributes to the cognitive development of adolescents, helping to develop

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skills such as intelligence, language, information processing and emotions thus facilitating the understanding of the world around you.

Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that reading plays a fundamental role in high school, as it offers the opportunity for students to get to know the world in a deep and reflective, beyond the superficial. Students can develop through it critical thinking, the ability to understand different cultural environments and historical, in addition to improving their communication skills.

It is also noted through studies that students have great difficulty related to reading and text interpretation, most students have difficulties to read and understand the text even if you read it multiple times. However, despite being common in Brazil comments about the reading crisis and difficulty in interpreting texts among young people the habit of reading among students remains at a high point question as there is no research carried out focused solely on this area, although articles published in magazines and websites not specialized in the subject indicate that the average Brazilians read 1 book per year, in contrast to other countries such as Argentina where the annual average is 12 books per inhabitant.

However, in contrast to studies focused on reading, studies are carried out research on the level of text comprehension of Brazilian students. The data from PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) suggests that Brazil remains in a basic level of reading and according to the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Economic Development) reveal that Brazil is below the world average.

The immediate answer to improve reading comprehension among students of schools would therefore encourage reading, as this has a significant impact on interpretation of texts. It helps develop the ability to interpret more depth, stimulating reasoning and the development of connections in the brain; expanding the vocabulary; broadens the reader's general culture by allowing him to have contact with other realities; improves the reader's writing skills and helps him acquire repertoire as well he will have the knowledge to express the same idea in different ways.

Regarding the objectives proposed by this article, it can be stated that the objective general is to identify and analyze the importance of reading for teenagers and its impacts cognitive, psychological and behavioral for their development as individuals.

The specific objectives, in turn, seek to analyze the reading habit among Brazilian high school students; the level of text interpretation of adolescents and how reading can improve this skill; finally, evaluate the benefits of the reading habit

can bring to the development of students and explain from practical examples how reading can impact someone's life and the reflections that books enable.

To develop this work, the bibliographic research method was used, which consists of collecting data from sources such as books, magazines and scientific articles with the aim of constructing the investigation.

Reading rates among the inhabitants of a given country are also considered indicators of educational development and human development of same. Reading, therefore, is considered fundamental for the development of a country because it promotes education, expands knowledge and fosters culture; however, in Brazil this is not a habit encouraged and valued by society, a fact that ends up reflecting on training of young people and consequently for the rest of their lives.

Finally, the rest of the work will analyze the historical roots of teaching in Brazil and its relationship with the reading habit of Brazilians, present the benefits that such practice can bring to teenagers and give practical examples of books that can be attractive to this audience, as well as the lessons that can be learned from them.

2 THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF READING IN BRAZIL

One of the first thinkers in humanity to propose a definition of literature was Aristotle, even in the time of ancient Greece, he defined literature as an imitation and reinvention of reality, a “lie” that reveals great truths. With the rise of various researchers in the educational field over the centuries his theory on literature was changing and evolving. (Paula; 2018).

To understand the historical roots of reading in Brazil, it is also necessary to understand about the history of the educational system and the concept of children over the years. Until the 17th century the child was classified as a “miniature adult”, therefore until the 17th century there was no different dedication aimed at the children's world and neither literature aimed at children and young people. (Jerônimo; 2023).

Only from the 18th century onwards did the child begin to be seen as a subject different from adults, this led to the beginning of publications aimed at children in Europe with authors like Perrault and the Brothers Grimm who wrote classics like Sleeping Beauty in the Woods; Cinderella; Bluebeard; The Fairies; Rapunzel; Hansel and Gretel; Snow White and the Red Rose; among others. The authors' intention with these tales were not only meant to entertain the population, but also to moralize and instruct teachings to the individual. (Paula; 2018).

From the 15th century onwards, the concept of childhood emerged as a period of innocence and purity, so from that moment onwards early childhood education began to be seen as a stage that gradually prepared the child for the adult world. This change in relation perception of childhood was reflected in children's literature, which came to be seen as a form of educate children in a fun and enjoyable way. (Jerônimo; 2023).

Regarding reading during the history of Brazil, it can be said that during the period colonial few were literate individuals, the rest of the population that was not part of the elite was excluded from the world of letters. The official history of education in Brazil took place with the arrival of the Jesuits around the years 1540/1550. Between the years 1549 to 1759 the Jesuits were primarily responsible for education in the country, with a focus on the priest José de Anchieta and the teachings of the Catholic Church. (César; 2017).

At this stage, education was not considered an important social value and served as an instrument of acculturation of native peoples and control of the colony, the educational task was aimed at catechizing and instructing the indigenous people, however for the colonial elite coming from Portugal offered another type of education.

During this entire period there was no concern for the nuances and complexities of reading, as well as the pleasures it could provide only with understanding grammatical.

Years later, the impacts of the French Revolution spread throughout the world, even in Brazil, the Catholic Church was no longer seen as the most suitable institution for take responsibility for education. From that period on, the press began to dedicate itself to production of textbooks for the population, with the aim of democratizing a little plus knowledge.

However, it was only during the Vargas Era, 1930 to 1945, that the Ministry of education that during this period continued to prioritize elitist education and teaching higher education to the detriment of elementary education. The year 1946, post-Vargas, was the most fertile period of Brazilian education as several thinkers acquired relevance, such as, for example, Paulo Freire who criticized the “banking education” typical of his time where the teacher made “deposits” of knowledge in students who received them passively. (Oliveira; Batista, 2018).

At the end of the 20th century, a slow evolution was observed in relation to the colonial period, whose education system was still elitist. This era was also marked by the expansion of basic schooling and the growth of the public education system, however, such expansion did not

converted into quality as demonstrated by Brazilian participation in PISA (Program International Student Assessment).

In 2012, Brazil participated again in PISA, where the performance of Brazilian students' reading performance has worsened since 2009. The country had only 410 points in reading, two less than their previous assessment, (Oliveira; Batista, 2018).

According to an interview with writer Rafael Guimarães, 44% of the population do not read and 30% have never bought a book in their lives and according to the Pró-Livro Institute 67% of young Brazilians between 15 and 29 years old say they like reading, however they don't read even two books per year and 66% of Brazilian students aged 15 and 16 have never read any book or text that have more than 10 pages.

2.1 THE BENEFITS OF READING FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

Literature plays a fundamental role in secondary education, as it provides students with students a way to explore the world in a deeper and more reflective way. Through students have the opportunity to develop a more critical view of the world; understand different cultural and historical perspectives; in addition to improving their ability of communication.

The first benefit of reading that can be mentioned is the development of reading critically, literature encourages students to think critically about complex topics, characters and plots. Through the act of fantasy reading, teenagers learn the analyze texts, identify themes and symbolism; in addition to understanding the author's intentions.

Secondly, we can mention the expansion of vocabulary because the reader's exposure to the different writing styles and the variety of vocabulary present in the books can help the student to enrich their vocabulary and improve their writing and comprehension. Children and adolescents exposed to a variety of texts develop more sophisticated linguistic skills, thus facilitating oral and written expression.

Literature also offers a window into different historical periods of humanity, as well as for different cultures and human experiences. Read about different historical and cultural contexts, about stories set in other countries, other historical periods and contexts different from their own, helps students develop a broader understanding of the world. Furthermore, through reading fiction and fantasy, children and adolescents learn to think in abstractions and complex concepts, learning thus understanding metaphors and symbolism.

Improving empathy and understanding skills can also be cited as benefits of reading, because through literature readers learn to experiencing life through other people's eyes. This act fosters empathy and promotes a deeper understanding of the complexities of human emotions and relationships. (Roza, Guimarães; 2022).

The act of identifying with characters and their experiences helps young people develop empathy and better understand the emotions and perspectives of others. The way how fictional narratives introduce readers to characters, events, and settings transports you to the fictional world and therefore it is believed that the reader can change through the history. (Roza, Guimarães; 2022).

Fiction presents a simulation of real-world problems and therefore brings consequences for the reader. It is also worth noting that students who read begin to engage more with class topics – especially pre-teens and teens -, with their peers and their teachers. They come to understand the perspective of others thus decentralizing themselves from their own world. (Roza, Guimarães; 2022).

It is also important to emphasize that reading works of fiction can inspire students to create their own stories and explore their creativity, this act can improve their writing skills and artistic expression.

Stories and narratives stimulate imagination and creativity, helping young people to think more authentically and develop problem-solving skills innovative way.

Reading can also serve as a form of escapism and help you process emotions, books that address themes of personal growth and facing challenges can help young people deal with their own emotional difficulties. self-knowledge is also a skill that is worked on, as stories that explore the identity, growth and self-acceptance can help young people better understand themselves and their own development journey.

Finally, literature offers themes and questions that can be discussed in the classroom, stimulating meaningful discussions about morality, ethics, justice and other topics important.

It can be concluded, therefore, that in a first aspect, the encouragement of reading is characterized in school activities, giving the student a perception of the world that makes him know news, newspapers and current affairs from around the world, staying connected with the latest news. (Zambiasi; 2023).

However, there are vast adaptations of reading, it can be worked not only in school environment with the aim of making the student aware of what happens in the world, the social environment of students also influences the field of literature that each one may be interested and many of them may be interested enough to use it as a entertainment tool. (Zambiasi; 2023).

Reading, therefore, has the capacity to transform the individual socially beyond provide pleasure, learning and development of skills and a more critical vision and reflective of reality. It is an indispensable instrument for the formation of the individual and for their active participation in society. (Zambiasi; 2023).

2.2 CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND THE FORMATION OF READERS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

There is currently a lot of publicity surrounding technological advances and networks social, as well as its ability to ensure easier and more agile communication, generating the access to immediate information.

As a consequence of the rampant advertising linked to technology products an unbridled need has been created for everyone to be connected all the time, without time to reflect on this constant and growing use of screens by children and children and youth.

In the current era of technology, a relevant fact is the promotion of authors and books by large number of digital influencers - the so-called "booktokers", "influencers" and "youtubers" – to promote young writers and gain followers by drawing the attention of young people mainly because of the author's name and the "hype" of their works rather than the quality of the same and personal identification of the reader with the chosen book.

According to the fourth edition of the "Portraits of Brazil" survey carried out in 2016, Brazil is one of the countries where inhabitants dedicate the most time to the internet, social networks and applications cell phone use. Recent research also indicates that excessive use of technology is harming reading habits, this information is especially true for young people who are increasingly unaccustomed to reading long, critical texts because short and quick messages dominate the internet. (Figueiredo, Almeida; 2023).

Researcher Maryanne Wolf stated in an interview with BBC Brasil that People are having increasing difficulty understanding and processing long, complex texts. It's as if reading skills atrophy with continuous, uninterrupted use. on cell phones, although people are currently reading more words due to the use of

social media – about 100,000 words a day – most of which come in “little pills,” or that is, in small texts and a lot of things are read superficially. (Bbc News Brasil; 2022).

The 21st century is characterized as an era in which children are born into a digital context, very far from physical books. However, it is possible to make use of technology that currently exists to encourage reading and find new ways and ways to engage and encourage young people to embrace such a lifestyle.

It is possible for the school to encourage students to read using technology as an ally, Teachers can present digital book reviews to students and videos with interviews with new authors. The advent of technology has brought with it new ways to go through and reach the understanding of texts in the most enjoyable way possible for readers, it is only necessary to adapt teaching methods and practices to the reality of new teenagers. (Figueiredo, Almeida; 2023).

Instead of fighting the reality of technological advances, the community can adapt to it and use the resources that technology offers to encourage the habit of reading. The “Reader Digital”, for example, is a device that displays a selection of books that can be shared and discussed with many people in an online community; also There are other advantages of reading books online, such as a link to a text within a book. which can be easily accessed and searched through the internet.

It is also important to emphasize that introducing a teenager to the universe literary does not occur only through books themselves, there are other types of content that attracts the attention of teenagers, such as comic books; manga and magazines for example.

Additionally, there is the option of making readings available in digital formats, such as Young people live with digital devices every day, many of them may choose to read books through eBooks. There is currently a wide variety of digital works written specifically to be published in this format, in addition to devices specifically for this purpose type of reading like the Kindle produced by Amazon.

2.3 PRACTICAL EXAMPLES OF BOOKS AND THEIR LIFE LESSONS

Some authors and works are frequently included in the high school curriculum, among them are: Machado de Assis with works such as Dom Casmurro and Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas who are fundamental to understanding Brazilian literature and realism; Jorge Amado wrote Captains of the Sands and Gabriela, Cravo e Canela which offer a more critique of society at the time and delves into Brazilian culture and Clarice Lispector, writer of



The Hour of the Star and Near the Wild Heart which explore the modernist era of literature Brazilian and the psychology of the characters.

However, despite these works being classics of Brazilian literature written by authors who revolutionized literature in the country and are essential for students to understand the culture and history of Brazil many students do not read the books, even though they are considered as “mandatory readings” of the school curriculum because they consider the language used to be difficult comprehension, wordy texts, outdated grammar and boring stories.

It can be seen, therefore, that most teenagers choose to read with more current language and easy to understand for them, in addition to plots, more plots sophisticated and agile that are more successful in capturing the attention of this target audience. Although not being the books recommended by the school curriculum that are most successful in capturing the child's attention attention of young people in this age group also has numerous benefits and carries I bring valuable life lessons to your readers.

One of the “favorites” among teenagers and pre-teens in Brazil is the book The Little Prince written by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, although it has a simple and be officially classified as a children's book it offers lessons about friendship, love and the importance of seeing beyond appearances.

The book mentioned above addresses the simplicity and purity of the child's gaze, encouraging readers to rediscover the importance of curiosity and imagination; furthermore, one of the main topics covered is the appreciation of relationships as the story emphasizes the importance of human connections and emotional bonds. In addition to criticizing superficiality: the author criticizes adult life and its material concerns, inviting the reader to reflect on what really matters in life.

J.K. Rowling's "Harry Potter" book series also features among the titles favorites of young readers around the world, it explores themes of friendship, courage and the confronting evil. The importance of friendships and teamwork is a theme central to the entire work, showing teenagers how these relationships can strengthen us and support us throughout life.

JK Rowling's story also touches on themes such as courage, loyalty, love and fight against injustice, encouraging reflection on ethical and moral values. In addition to address complex issues such as prejudice, death, sacrifice and the importance of understanding differences in a way that is accessible to young readers. The journey of the central character in the work is full of obstacles and inspires the reader to face their own difficulties with resilience.



With the success of the Netflix series “Anne With Na E” in recent years, the books by LM Montgomery that inspired the series have a growing demand from teenagers in school libraries. The work can help them in their personal growth and adaptation to new circumstances, in addition to encouraging imagination and creativity because the protagonist of the story is a dreamer who uses her creativity to transform her life and the lives of others around her around.

A very important lesson that can be learned during this reading is the importance of education, the narrative values learning and personal growth, highlighting the importance of education and knowledge.

Students who have a family nucleus that is atypical of what is usually observed in society can also identify with the work, as Anne's relationship with Marilla and Matthew shows how family ties do not necessarily mean belonging to the same blood and that families can be formed in unexpected ways.

Last but not least, the appreciation of nature is among the list of beneficial themes, as vivid descriptions of the Avonlea landscape invite readers to value the beauty of nature and the importance of the environment around us. All of these elements make "Anne of Green Gables" a timeless and enriching work, which continues to resonate with readers of all ages.

The biography “The Diary of Anne Frank” found in most school libraries and which even gained a comic book version with the aim of captivating the most readers young people provides an insight into life during World War II and the experience of a teenager in extreme circumstances.

The book provides a personal and emotional view of the Holocaust, helping readers to understand the atrocities of World War II and the impact of antisemitism, Anne's intimate, first-person narrative allows readers to connect with her experiences, promoting empathy and understanding towards victims of persecution.

Anne's writing demonstrates the power of words as a form of expression and resistance, inspiring others to write about their own experiences. Despite the dark circumstances, Anne maintains a perspective of hope and faith in the future, teaching about the strength of the human spirit, thus inspiring qualities such as resilience and willpower.

The book highlights the importance of freedom and human rights, inviting reflection on living conditions and dignity. Anne's courage in expressing her



thoughts in such a difficult time inspires readers to fight for their beliefs and value the freedom they currently have.

The "Hunger Games" book series, written by Suzanne Collins, is a beloved dystopia by teenagers and young people from all over the world, it encourages the reader to reflect more critically of society, the narrative provokes a critical analysis of social inequality, oppression and the use of power, leading readers to question realities.

The series also raises important discussions about morality and raises ethical questions about sacrifice, survival and human nature, encouraging debates about choices difficult. The author also promotes a strong critique of entertainment culture by satirizing the glorification of violence and spectacle, leading readers to reflect on the relationship between media and social behavior.

John Green's tragic romance novel *The Fault in Our Stars* also featured in the list of titles preferred by teenagers during some years, especially from 2013 to 2016 due to the film adaptation that reached the cinema. The book addresses reflections on the fragility of life and the inevitability of death in a way that is accessible to young readers encouraging them to value every moment.

Furthermore, the narrative allows readers to connect emotionally with the characters, promoting understanding of the struggles of people with terminal illnesses, thus encouraging the development of empathy. John Green's writing in this novel combines humor and tragedy, demonstrating that it is possible to find moments of joy even in dark circumstances, demonstrating the importance of resilience.

Following the same literary niche, Nicholas Sparks' tragic novel aimed at teenagers "The Last Song" also gained an adaptation. film starring pop star Miley Cyrus and during that period sold 3.4 million copies in the US in just 6 months. The book in question explores the family dynamics and their relationship challenges, teaching readers to value and understand their own families.

The story also addresses the need to forgive and let go of resentments, showing how this can heal emotional wounds and strengthen bonds. During the narrative different forms of love are also explored, from romantic to familial, showing the the complexity and beauty of human relationships. Finally, music is a central theme that symbolizes emotions and connections, highlighting its power as a form of expression and therapy.

Even underrated literary genres like historical romances can be a source of of great learnings in a development phase. After Netflix's adaptation of



literary saga "Bridgerton", written by Julia Quinn, once again topped the list of the most popular books sold.

Firstly, Julia Quinn's writing is engaging and her novels are full of drama, allowing the reader to escape into an aristocratic world in another historical period if thus becoming a valuable source of entertainment and escapism. Furthermore, the author's prose is fluid and engaging, making it easy to read and attracting the attention of even those who are not used to it. read novels.

The saga, in addition to addressing romantic relationships, also explores dynamics family and issues such as love, loyalty and commitment. Furthermore, although it is fiction, books also offer insight into British Regency society and customs providing historical context about that period.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It can be concluded, therefore, that integrating reading into children's daily lives and teenagers and a great way to promote cognitive and emotional development, helping them become more complete and empathetic individuals. The act of incorporating into teenagers' daily lives enrich their lives and also prepare them to face the challenges of future with more confidence and knowledge.

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