

**School of Media, Culture and Creative Arts  
Department of Information Studies**

**Graphic Novels: Enticing Teenagers into the Library**

**Clare Snowball**

**This thesis is presented for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
of  
Curtin University of Technology**

**March 2011**



## **Declaration**

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



### **Abstract**

This thesis investigates the inclusion of graphic novels in library collections and whether the format encourages teenagers to use libraries and read in their free time. Graphic novels are bound paperback or hardcover works in comic-book form and cover the full range of fiction genres, manga (Japanese comics), and also nonfiction. Teenagers are believed to read less in their free time than their younger counterparts. The importance of recreational reading necessitates methods to encourage teenagers to enjoy reading and undertake the pastime. Graphic novels have been discussed as a popular format among teenagers. As with reading, library use among teenagers declines as they age from childhood. The combination of graphic novel collections in school and public libraries may be a solution to both these dilemmas.

Teenagers' views were explored through focus groups to determine their attitudes toward reading, libraries and their use of libraries; their opinions on reading for school, including reading for English classes and gathering information for school assignments; and their liking for different reading materials, including graphic novels. Opinions on school reading can impact feelings on reading in general and thus influence views and amount of recreational reading.

A survey of public libraries determined the incidence of graphic novel collections throughout Australia and how collections are managed, with the intention of comparing libraries from different states and territories and metropolitan or rural areas. Interviews with selected librarians who collected graphic novels provided insight into their attitudes to the place of graphic novels in public and high school libraries and a more detailed picture of how the format is managed. This included use of graphic novel by the libraries' teenage users or students and problems encountered, such as complaints about specific titles.

Graphic novel collections are widespread among surveyed Australian libraries, although a metropolitan location led to a greater likelihood of collection of graphic novels, and librarians were passionate about the format and its popularity among teenagers. The teenagers investigated were not as universally positive about graphic novels or libraries. The necessity of inclusion of all formats of reading matter in library collections will enable teenagers to discover for themselves what provides enjoyable reading experiences, so these become the norm, and lead to a greater enthusiasm for reading and more undertaken in their free time.



## Acknowledgements

Thank you to my supervisors Dr Maggie Exon and Dr Helen Merrick, who put up with my erratic attendance at meetings and continual extension of deadlines, while being the best of supervisors and helping to turn my research into a thesis.

Thank you to all the librarians and library officers around Australia who answered my questionnaire, particularly the Perth librarians who completed the pilot questionnaire and made suggestions as to how I could improve it. Thank you to all the principals, teacher librarians and teachers who helped me with ideas for talking to teenagers and allowed me to visit their schools and classes. Especially thank you to the students who talked to me, whose only incentive was they skipped an English class. Thank you also to the librarians who agreed to be interviewed and shared the ups and downs of collecting graphic novels. The help of all my research participants is greatly appreciated.

Thank you to the members of the Graphic Novels in Libraries email list (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/GNLIB-L/>) for the knowledge shared and discussion provoked over the ten years since Steve Miller founded the list (although I only joined in 2003). Many of the authors in my literature review can be found among its members and my questions have been answered, often many times over, and I've learnt so much from others' questions.

Thank you to Andrew Kelly, who went from colleague to friend, all the while recommending comics for my reading pleasure.

## Permissions

### Chapter 2

p. 29 Permission has been granted to reproduce Figure 1 © 2011 Jeff Smith

p. 37 Permission has been granted to reproduce Figure 2 © 2002 Jessica Abel

Parts of Chapter 3, 5 and 6 have been published in:

Snowball, C. (2007). "Researching graphic novels and their teenage readers" *LIBRES*, 17(1). Retrieved 25 Nov. 2009, from <http://libres.curtin.edu.au/libres17n1/>

Parts of Chapter 4 have been published in:

Snowball, C. (2008). "Teenagers talking about reading and libraries" *Australian Academic and Research Libraries*, 39(2), p.106-118.

Copyright of both articles is held by the author.





## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	xi
List of Figures .....	xi
Abbreviations .....	xii
Note on Library Names .....	xii
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
Significance of the Research .....	1
Research Objectives .....	3
The Teenage Cohort .....	3
Defining the Graphic Novel .....	4
Significance of Graphic novels .....	6
Summary of Chapters .....	8
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	9
Is reading important? .....	9
What makes a reluctant reader? .....	14
Not enough time for reading .....	22
Choice in reading materials .....	24
Teenagers' enjoyment of Graphic Novels .....	26
Graphic novels in libraries .....	28
Graphic novels in the classroom .....	30
Literary merit of Graphic Novels .....	32
Visual literacy .....	34
Concerns about Graphic Novels .....	38
Chapter 3: Methodology .....	41
Research Methods .....	41
Survey of Public Libraries .....	42
Survey Reminders .....	44
Return Rate .....	46
Survey challenges .....	47
Focus Groups with Teenagers .....	49
Sampling for the focus groups .....	51
Challenges encountered during focus groups .....	52
Interviews with Librarians .....	55

## Table of Contents

Pre-testing.....	56
Limitations of the Research Methods.....	57
Chapter 4: Talking to Teenagers.....	59
Do teenagers read? .....	59
Or not read? .....	63
What do teenagers read? .....	65
Finding what to read.....	66
Libraries .....	69
The Internet .....	72
Graphic Novels.....	76
Teenagers' familiarity with graphic novels.....	76
Teenagers defining graphic novels.....	77
School libraries with existing graphic novel collections.....	77
Manga.....	78
Teenagers who disliked Graphic Novels.....	81
Teenagers who liked Graphic Novels .....	83
Visual literacy .....	86
Comics are for kids .....	89
The Movie of the Book .....	89
Reading in the English class.....	92
Graphic novels as assigned texts.....	96
Choice in English texts.....	100
Free choice reading programs .....	102
Literature Circles.....	104
Chapter 5: Graphic Novel Collections in Australian Libraries.....	107
Graphic Novel Collections in Libraries .....	107
Centralisation of Library Collections.....	112
Age of Graphic Novel Collections .....	113
Staff in charge of Graphic Novel Collections .....	114
Collection Development.....	116
Selection Criteria and Collection Development Policies .....	116
Acquisition .....	120
Cataloguing .....	123
Shelving.....	125

Why collect Graphic Novels? .....	128
Graphic Novels and Reluctant Readers .....	131
Use and Promotion of Graphic Novels .....	135
Who are Graphic Novels for? .....	136
Circulation Statistics .....	139
Promotion.....	142
Issues and Concerns with Graphic Novels.....	149
Vandalism and Theft.....	149
Bindings .....	150
Complaints and Censorship .....	151
Chapter 6: Discussion .....	165
Teenagers .....	165
Graphic Novels .....	171
School reading.....	174
Libraries .....	176
Selection.....	178
Shelving .....	180
Audience for Graphic Novels .....	181
Promotion.....	184
Issues and Challenges .....	185
Ideas for Practice.....	188
Chapter 7: Conclusion.....	195
Directions for Further Research.....	198
Literature Discussed.....	203
Graphic Novels and Comics .....	203
Conventional Novels.....	205
Plays .....	206
Non fiction .....	206
Picture Books .....	207
Movies & Television.....	207
Reference List .....	209
Appendix A .....	245
Appendix B: Questionnaire for Public Libraries .....	247
Appendix C .....	251

Table of Contents

Appendix D .....	253
Appendix E: Moderator’s Guide for Focus Groups .....	255
Introduction .....	255
Ground rules .....	255
Discussion .....	256
Appendix F: Graphic novels displayed during Focus groups .....	257
Appendix G: Student Handout for Focus Groups .....	259
Appendix H .....	261
Appendix I .....	263
Appendix J: Interview Guide .....	265

### List of Tables

Table 1: Corrected Table 1 from Ley, Schaer and Dismukes (1994) .....	20
Table 2: Response after each reminder .....	46
Table 3: Sample from each State and Territory .....	47
Table 4: State or Territory of respondents with Graphic Novel collections .....	110
Table 5: Staff in charge of Graphic Novels .....	114
Table 6: Subject Headings used for Graphic Novels .....	124
Table 7: Types of readers among focus group participants .....	166

### List of Figures

Figure 1: Promotion for YALSA's Getting Graphic @ your library™ Conference ..	29
Figure 2: "What is a graphic novel" by Jessica Abel .....	37
Figure 3: Response rate after each reminder .....	46
Figure 4: Libraries with Graphic Novel collections.....	108
Figure 5: Reasons for not collecting Graphic Novels .....	108
Figure 6: Location of library compared to presence of Graphic Novel collection ..	110
Figure 7: State or Territory compared to presence of Graphic Novel collection.....	111
Figure 8: Staff in charge of Graphic Novels .....	115
Figure 9: Selection Criteria for Graphic Novels .....	117
Figure 10: Sources used for selecting Graphic Novels .....	121
Figure 11: Budgeting for Graphic Novels.....	122
Figure 12: Purchase of Graphic Novels .....	123
Figure 13: Shelving of Graphic Novels .....	126
Figure 14: Spine labelling of Graphic Novels .....	127
Figure 15: Shelf order of Graphic Novels.....	127
Figure 16: Audience for Graphic Novel collections .....	136
Figure 17: Circulation statistics collected for Graphic Novels .....	140
Figure 18: Period of collection of circulation statistics for Graphic Novels.....	141
Figure 19: Promotion of Graphic Novel collections .....	143
Figure 20: Collage of manga and anime posters and dust jackets .....	144
Figure 21: Getting Graphic @ your library display .....	145
Figure 22: Types of Reader compared to those who liked Graphic Novels .....	172

### Abbreviations

Australia's states and territories are abbreviated as follows:

Australian Capital Territory	ACT
New South Wales	NSW
Northern Territory	NT
Queensland	QLD
South Australia	SA
Tasmania	TAS
Victoria	VIC
Western Australia	WA

### Note on Library Names

The pseudonyms assigned to libraries and schools were taken from the scientific and common names of plants native to the Perth area. Some are also found in other parts of Australia, but endemic plants may not be well known. Following is a pronunciation guide, using the “Received Pronunciation” of *The New Penguin Compact English Dictionary* (R. Allen, 2001, p. xi).

Acacia	/ə'kayseeə/
Banksia	/'bankseeə/
Boronia	/bu'rohneeə/
Corymbia	/kaw'rimbeeə/
Dryandra	/drie'andrə/
Grevillea	/gre'vileeə/
Hakea	/'haykeeə/
Illyarrie	/il'yaree/
Leschenaultia	/leshen'awlteeə/
Lobelia	/lo'beeleeə/
Scholtzia	/'sholtseeə/
Senna	/'senə/
Templetonia	/tempool'tohneeə/
Thomasia	/tom'ayzeeə/
Tricoryne	/'triekawrin/
Tuart	/'choohit/

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Significance of the Research

Literacy and reading are highly valued in our society. Many occupations necessitate a certain level of literacy and reading is an important method in acquiring knowledge for everyday living and general interest. While much information is available in our technological society by means other than traditional reading, literacy remains an integral part of today's electronic communication and knowledge exchange.

Libraries have been, and continue to be, significant cultural institutions, both as sources of reading materials and venues for the encouragement of reading. Libraries are aimed at the whole community rather than just the current or most active library users (Evans & Saponaro, 2005). Thus, libraries are important for all, not just those who enjoy reading and need no encouragement to undertake reading as a pastime or means to gain knowledge. Teenagers make up a significant segment of non-users as they become less regular visitors to libraries, compared with younger children, and teenagers show a declining interest in reading due to changing pressures on their time and interests (Nippold, Duthie, & Larsen, 2005). This is of concern because their literacy is still developing and they may not acquire the level of literacy necessary to become functioning adult members of our society (Kirsch *et al.*, 2002). Aside from school, public libraries are the best place to develop and encourage a love of literacy.

[Neighbourhood organizations] need to create environments in which young people can share a sense of responsibility and purpose and experience the benefits of building a community...Libraries could help to create these urban sanctuaries for young people, within their walls and elsewhere in the community. (V. A. Walter, 2001, p. 105)

While there has been much research into collection development and library users, groups such as teenagers, who are more often non-users of libraries, need to be investigated to the same extent. Teenagers' experiences throughout their lives contribute to their attitudes toward and use (or non-use) of libraries. Talking with this cohort and listening to their views will determine how their opinions intersect with what libraries do. This will enable knowledge among librarians of how to encourage greater library use among teenagers. Druin (2005) found, "When it comes to libraries, adults generally talk about children but rarely talk to them" (p. 21). This has been the case in other areas of research into young people, for example, violence among young people and teenage pregnancy, where "most research on this issue is

focused on large-scale data surveys” (Holm, Daspit, & Young, 2006, p. 90). Therefore it is important to investigate the needs of teenagers as (current and potential) library users by talking to them and discovering their views on libraries, reading, and what they like to read.

One significant format discussed in the literature as a particular favourite among teenagers is graphic novels (Bruggeman, 1997; Crawford, 2003; Fountain, 2004; E. T. Sullivan, 2002). This is largely anecdotal evidence from librarians and teachers, and contends graphic novel collections in libraries are well used by teenagers. Actual opinions from teenagers are rarely sought, except as informal case studies in particular libraries. In fact, much discussion on teenagers’ views of libraries “tends to be anecdotal and based on generalised experience and collective wisdom” (H. Fisher, 2003, p. 5).

If graphic novels are a part of a library’s collection or their addition is being considered, it is essential to employ the most effective methods to select, acquire, catalogue, house and promote the format. Much of the literature in this area is also comprised of anecdotal evidence from practising librarians (Goldsmith, 2005; Miller, 2005) and more large scale, systematic research needs to be undertaken. Collection development theory is vitally important for libraries in this time of decreased budgets and greater accountability (Dow, 2001, p. 329). Collection development in libraries should be aimed at identified needs, which can be determined through needs assessment of particular user populations (Evans & Saponaro, 2005, p. 20), including those who are not current library users, such as teenagers. If teenagers do enjoy graphic novels, the format should be a part of every public and school library.

Buckland (2003) praised research which led to “significant consequences for practical decisions” in libraries (p. 677). It is hoped practicing librarians will be able to use the results of my research to inform their decisions about young adult collections, specifically graphic novel collections. Librarians and teachers encountered throughout the data collection expressed interest in the research results. To keep them informed a website with linked blog was developed to promote and detail the research as it progressed (<http://alia.org.au/~csnow/research/>). This led to contact from librarians, editors of journals, journalists, comics creators and researchers from other countries.



## **Research Objectives**

The aim of this research was to contribute to the debate on encouraging teenagers' recreational reading through investigating two principal objectives: teenagers' views of reading and graphic novels; and whether the format's inclusion in public and school library collections encourages teenagers to use libraries as a source of recreational reading material. The investigation covered:

- teenagers' attitudes to reading, libraries and their use of libraries;
- teenagers' views on reading for school, including reading for English classes and gathering information for school assignments. The former, in particular, often impacts on opinions and the amount of recreational reading;
- teenagers' knowledge and opinions of graphic novels as reading matter.
- librarians' attitudes to the place of graphic novel collections in public and high school libraries;
- how public libraries around Australia acquire and manage graphic novel collections and how this has influenced the incidence of collections, including comparisons between states and territories which have different levels of centralisation among libraries;
- the effect current theories of collection development have on libraries with graphic novels and how this relates to problems encountered, such as complaints about specific titles.

The above areas were tackled through talking to teenagers in the informal setting of focus groups and investigating library collections of graphic novels and librarians' views on the format through a survey and interviews. The methods will be elaborated in Chapter 3.

In order to set the scene, the age range chosen for the research and definitions of graphic novels and associated terms follow, as well as a discussion of the growing popularity of graphic novels, thus their significance for library collections.

## **The Teenage Cohort**

Teenagers first emerged as an "autonomous youth culture" in the 1950s (Leccardi & Ruspini, 2006) and have since become an important social group. Bahr and Pendergast (2007) investigated the literature to determine the age range which

constitutes adolescence and found a diversity of opinions. High school\* and public libraries cater to the ages 12 to 17 when collecting and programming for teenagers and this age range is used throughout the thesis, although the lower end of the range is the main concern of the data gathering. The term Young Adult (YA) is used in publishing and public libraries to designate teenagers and is used throughout the thesis, particularly when discussing the interviews with librarians, where it was in common usage. The terms adolescent and adolescence, are used less frequently, predominantly when quoting or paraphrasing literature which used these terms.

Teenagers are not a homogenous group, despite often being stereotyped as all the same (Holm *et al.*, 2006). The findings from the teenage research participants, with an average age of 14, but a range from 13 to 16, cannot be generalised to all teenagers. Rather, the views expressed by participants in this project are typical of teenage attitudes in general.

### **Defining the Graphic Novel**

The term graphic novel has many inherent problems (E. Reynolds, 2005), but despite suggestions of more appropriate terms, it is firmly fixed in publishing and library jargon. Australian graphic novelist Eddie Campbell (2007) agreed that “confusion reigns” in reaching a definition, due to the myriad available (Goldsmith, 2005; Hatfield, 2005; Inge, 1990; Lavin, 1998a; McCloud, 1993; Miller, 2005; Serchay, 1998; Weiner, 2003; Wilkins, 1993). Campbell offered four possible definitions, one being “a bound book of comics either in soft or hardcover” (p. 13). This is similar to Raiteri’s definition of “any trade paperback or hardcover book consisting of work in comic-book form” (2002, p. 148) which is used in the thesis. Graphic novels may be a book-length story, a collection of stories or (despite the oxymoron) a work of non-fiction (Arnold, 2007, p. 12; Weiner, 2002, p. 55). This does not include collections of newspaper strips such as *Garfield* or *Peanuts* (Hatfield, 2005, p. 4; Rothschild, 1995). Graphic novels are a format and thus include many different genres (P. Jones, Hartman, & Taylor, 2006; Kan, 2003).

At times the terms graphic novels, comics and comic books will be used interchangeably. A number research participants did this during focus group sessions and interviews, as did Versaci in *This Book Contains Graphic Language* (2007).

---

\* Western Australian high schools cater to Year 8-12.

Versaci noted comics can be a generic term to “indicate the general aesthetic features” common to all three: “the interplay of word and image” and “the same set of formal principles” (p. 30).

Japanese comics, known as manga, are one segment of graphic novels (Schodt, 1996). Many series are translated and published in English by U.S. companies and available in Australia and other English speaking countries. Shōnen manga is written for boys and shōjo manga for girls (Kan, 2003). Boys’ Love (BL) or Yaoi is a genre of manga with themes of romance and love between two men. Aimed at different age groups, it includes erotic and pornographic titles aimed at adults (McLelland, 2000b). There is disagreement in the literature and among fans as to the correct terms for explicit and other titles, and also naming differences between the Japanese and those in English speaking countries (Levi, 2009). Throughout the thesis BL will be used for titles suitable for all ages and Yaoi for explicit titles.

As with all Japanese books, manga is read right to left. When manga was first translated for the U.S. market and subsequently available in English speaking countries, the titles were “flopped” from the right to left Japanese orientation so they could be read left to right (Wolk, 2001, p. 35). “Publishers were concerned that their audiences would not be able to make the shift to reading right to left” (Brenner, 2007b, p. 12). Manga fans today prefer the authentic right to left format and most are published “backwards” compared to the western way of reading (p. 74). The right to left format is designated traditional orientation manga throughout the thesis.

Japanese names are written with the surname first, then the given name. This order is sometimes used on translated manga, more often those published in the traditional orientation, and sometimes the Western order is used. Throughout the thesis if the full name of a Japanese author or illustrator is noted, the Western order with the surname second is used. Within the reference lists all names (Japanese or otherwise) are in the form: Surname, F.

In Japan popular manga is made into anime (animated movies or television programs). As with manga, anime is translated and dubbed or subtitled in English (B. Allison, 2009). Fans often read the manga and watch the anime, coming to the format through one and subsequently discovering the other (Brenner, 2007b).

Purists deem manga to be only those series produced by Japanese artists and writers (Brenner, 2009; Masters, 2006). Those produced by people from other countries are original English language (OEL) manga (Brenner, 2007b) or neo-

manga (Pawuk, 2006). Unless quoting a source, within the thesis Japanese produced manga and OEL manga are all termed manga. Some western comics and graphic novels are drawn in styles superficially similar to manga to make money from the popularity of manga (Phillips, 2007), for example, *Runaways* by Brian K. Vaughan and Adrian Alphona and *The Hardy Boys* by Franklin W. Dixon. The artists for the latter series were chosen because the publisher felt they could “do the manga style well,” (Fine, 2005, p. 14).

Within the thesis graphic novels are compared to conventional books, those that are all or mainly composed of text. Conventional books may include illustrations, but the visual content is not integral to the story and the text tells the story. The terms conventional fiction and conventional YA (young adult) novels are used as necessary.

### **Significance of Graphic novels**

Today “there are a lot more comics in print that reward close attention than there have ever been before” (Wolk, 2007, p. 10). Academic study of the format is undertaken from within diverse faculty areas (Matz, 2004) and traditional English literature journals such as *College Literature* and *Journal of American and Comparative Cultures* include literary criticism of titles, as graphic novels have become “part of the cultural landscape” (O’English, Matthews, & Lindsay, 2006, p. 175). *Booklist* has an annual Spotlight on Graphic Novels issue, the *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* featured graphic novels in the review section of the February 2006 issue, and in 2007 an issue of *World Literature Today* was dedicated to graphic novels (Arnold, 2007). This included articles detailing graphic novels from other parts of the world than the most commonly available from the U.S. and Japan (Shook, 2007; Vollmar, 2007). *School Library Journal* had an occasional series of short articles in comic-book form (Adriance & Lindner, 2007; Ambrosino, Dumm, & Dumm, 2008).

In the first years of the 21st century manga became increasingly popular in the U.S. and subsequently other English speaking countries (Phillips, 2007), what had been a “trickle had become a tsunami” (Robbins, 2009, p. 48). Misaka (2004) contends that as manga sales declined in Japan, publishers expanded to the U.S.

market, with great success.\* Hatayama (2009) attributes this success to the contrast between U.S. comics and manga and the diversity of manga available. One of the first U.S. publishers to translate and publish manga was Dark Horse Comics in 1988 (Cha, 2006b), although in 1978 *Barefoot Gen* by Keiji Nakazawa was “the first American edition of a translated Japanese manga” (Patten, 2004, p. 25). The widespread availability of anime on television encourages viewers to seek out the associated manga and has cemented its popularity (Brenner, 2007b).

There are numerous publishers of graphic novels, but publishers of conventional books have established graphic novel imprints, including Scholastic, Hyperion, Penguin and Nantier Beall Minoustchine (Cart, 2006; Fine, 2005). Random House has a manga imprint Del Rey Manga, through a partnership with Kodansha, the largest publisher in Japan (Glazer, 2005; Rosen, 2004).

In the 1980s and 1990s graphic novels were only available in specialty comics shops (Goldsmith, 2005), but are now available in book shops and from other retailers. Deppey (2005) examined the slow uptake of manga by specialty comics shops. Book shop sales led to improved graphic novel sales over the first years of the 2000s, driven by sales of manga (Phillips, 2007; Reid, 2005, 2006a). As in the publishing industry in general, the “distressed economic climate” of 2009 affected sales of graphic novels and comics (Price, 2009), but their popularity continues (Sabin, 2009). The greater availability of graphic novels led the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) to develop an annual “Great Graphic Novels For Teens” annotated list of recommended graphic novels for the age group (Rutherford, 2006).

Two Australian examples illustrate the local popularity of comics. The nationwide Summer Reading Club offered through public libraries in 2007-08 had the theme “Superheroes Read” (ALIA, 2007). At the Jurabi Turtle Centre near Exmouth, Western Australia a display around a wall has “large backlit animation...with vibrant colour, reminiscent of comic book and electronic media such as the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles” (Field, 2007, p. 52-3). The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles started as a monthly comic book (Wolk, 2007, p. 44) and are still popular many years later.

Graphic novels and their use in libraries and schools are regularly reported in newspapers (Carter, 2007). Graphic novels are reviewed in newspapers (Higson,

---

\* This is also the case with anime (Ruh, 2009).

2006; Overington, 2006; Ridout, 2007; Sabin, 2009; Williamson, 2007) and Perth comics artist Ben Templesmith, whose comic *30 Days of Night* was made into a Hollywood film, was interviewed in *The West Australian* newspaper (Leach, 2007). Comics and graphic novels are frequently filmed as movies or television programs (Serchay, 2004; Versaci, 2007). The two largest comics publishers, DC and Marvel, make a significant segment of their profits from selling movie rights (Reid, 2009) and Marvel used these profits to recover from near bankruptcy (Versaci, 2007, p. 11).

Popularity is an important concept in selecting materials for library collections, especially so when collecting for teenagers. The growing popularity of graphic novels has led to an increased prevalence in their collection by libraries, to be detailed in the review of the literature, and their investigation in this thesis.

### **Summary of Chapters**

The thesis begins with a review of the relevant literature in Chapter 2. This provides the reasoning behind the research objectives and covers the importance of reading, the reading teenagers undertake, and the debate in the literature as to whether this age group reads less than their younger counterparts. Graphic novels are discussed as a format of particular interest to teenagers and an important part of library collections catering to the age group. Chapter 3 outlines the three research methods utilized. Teenagers' views on graphic novels, libraries, and reading in general were investigated through the informal setting of focus groups held at high schools. A survey of Australian public libraries determined the extent of graphic novel collections and how collections were handled. Finally librarians who collected graphic novels were interviewed to determine their views on the format and the use made of their collections.

Chapter 4 presents the findings from the focus groups with teenagers which revealed a diversity of opinions in all the areas discussed, some diverging from the literature and others in agreement. Chapter 5 presents the findings from the Australia wide survey of public libraries and interviews with selected school and public libraries, which brought out the practice of managing graphic novel collections in Australian libraries. Chapter 6 brings together the results from Chapter 4 and 5 and the implications these results have for practising librarians, both those who currently collect graphic novels and those who do not. Chapter 7 concludes the findings from the research and discusses further research topics developed from these findings.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

A number of areas are covered in this review of the literature. Firstly the importance of reading in today's society and the benefits inherent in reading are clarified. A discussion of the factors determining reluctant (aliterate) readers is linked to a consideration of the disagreement as to whether teenagers in fact fit this profile. The lack of time today's teenagers experience is presented as one reason less reading occurs. The provision of choice in reading matter as an inducement for young people to experience reading as a pleasurable pastime is also considered.

Graphic novels are presented as one format which may encourage enjoyment of reading. Details of their collection by libraries and use in the classroom are provided, which leads into a discussion of the literary merit of the format. With the growing importance of skills in visual literacy, the literature review demonstrates the integration between textual and visual elements in graphic novels, confirming their worth as an aspect of literature. Finally, concerns believed to be inherent in the format are examined with reasons as to why they are no longer (or never were) the case.

### Is reading important?

Reading is an increasingly important skill in today's world (Kirsch *et al.*, 2002, p. 2; Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999, p. 3), as "the literacy demands of a complex, modern society are going up" (Ross, 2006b, p. 3). The ultimate reason for literacy is to inform the citizens of our democratic society (Baroody, 1984, p. ix). "An open and free society must be an informed and enlightened one," and it is reading which allows people to attain this level of knowledge (E. T. Sullivan, 2002, p. 10). Although information can be gleaned through means other than reading with current technology, there is some evidence that "in a technological society, the demands for higher literacy are ever increasing" (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998, p. 1) and many newer technologies are dependent to differing extents on reading (Braun, 2007). Reading also allows a more in-depth understanding of complicated issues (S. Johnson, 2005, p. 21; Muller, 1994, p. 94; Wolf, 2007).

A sense of narrative derived from stories and books contributes to the ability to reason and make sense of the world (Wells cited in Thomson, 1987, p. 79). Reading also provides knowledge of other cultures, historical periods and the world in general (Horton, 2006; Isaacs, 2006; Moore *et al.*, 1999; Toor & Weisburg, 2003) and escape

into other worlds (Hollindale, 1995).

Reading about other people and other experiences helps young adult readers understand themselves and their changing place in the world...[and] envision and create potential futures (Rothbauer, 2006, p. 115-6).

U.S. teacher Hollis Lowery-Moore (1998) collected autobiographies from students in Grade 4 to 8 and agreed that reading enables this understanding and also “opens up a whole new world” (p. 27). In a letter written in 1991, Australian children’s author Colin Thiele eloquently argued,

The purpose of literature, especially for children, is surely to provide enchantment and sustenance and enrichment for the soul, and the mind. It serves to stimulate the imagination, to excite, inform and reveal. (cited in Steggell, 2008, p. 24)

Another children’s author Paul Jennings considers,

Stories make us honourable members of the human family and tell us that dreams can come true...Stories help us to know who we are and where we come from. (2006, p. 14)

The mental effort required by reading is itself recognised as a benefit (S. Johnson, 2005, p. 22). A “good rich reading experience is imaginatively, intellectually, emotionally challenging, demanding, comforting and consoling” (La Marca & Macintyre, 2006, p. 18) and is “an activity by which individuals may enrich their lives in diverse ways” (Nimon, 2005, p. xvi).

Reading, and literacy in general, can help individuals to develop their own identity, a particularly important process for teenagers (Neilsen, 1998; Rothbauer, 2006; Warner, 2006). Books for young people “are important for their intellectual, social and affective development as individuals” (Meek, 2005, p. 129) and can help teenagers cope with the situations they encounter in their lives (Bishop & Bauer, 2002; M. Reynolds, 2004). They have not yet had the life experience to realise they will be able to live through difficult experiences, but the stories in books can provide reassurance that others have done so (Warner, 2006).

Although by the end of their primary education children have attained a certain level of literacy, adolescents need to further develop their literacy before they have attained the level necessary for their adult lives (P. Jones, 2007; Kirsch *et al.*, 2002; Moore *et al.*, 1999). The Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey determined this level had not been achieved by just under half (46%) of Australians aged 15 to 74 years (ABS, 2008a). Throughout adolescence, “there is an ongoing reciprocal relationship between language and literacy development” (Nippold *et al.*, 2005, p. 94) and U.S. education researcher Anne Reeves (2004) argues that reading instruction should continue throughout schooling. “Only the first steps of reading are taught or mastered



in childhood, and virtually every high school student can benefit from reading instruction” (p. 260). If literacy is not further developed, the resulting “inability interferes with their [students’] capacity to accomplish the challenging work necessary to meet high academic standards” (Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007, p. 22).

An Australian research study found that “more than eight in ten adults strongly agree that it is really important for children and teenagers to read for pleasure” (ACYL & Woolcott Research, 2000, p. 14). Stephen Krashen (2001) has studied the benefits of reading for a number of years. He found that children who read for pleasure show improvement in reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary and they acquire these skills “involuntarily and without conscious effort” (Krashen, 2004a, p. 149). If students read every day, “their word knowledge, fluency, and comprehension tend to increase” (Moore *et al.*, 1999, p. 5). Vocabulary development is another advantage for children who read avidly (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Lonsdale, 2003; Stanovich, 1986).

Reading, no matter what the format of the reading material, improves reading achievement (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; M. Gorman, 2003; Sanacore, 1992). This “widely established link between abundant wide-reading and reading competence” (Manuel & Robinson, 2002, p. 76) is called the Matthew Effect and leads better readers to improve and the less proficient to fall further behind (Stanovich, 1986, p. 381). The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2000 study showed this occurring in the Australian students surveyed (Kirsch *et al.*, 2002, p. 13). Reeves (2004) provided an example of what can happen when a student stops reading for pleasure. Joel was a capable reader in his first years of school. In Grade 7 he stopped reading outside of school because he was too busy with other things. In Grade 10, he couldn’t understand what he read anymore, and he couldn’t understand why reading had become so hard. Joel “was finding that he was not the excellent reader that he used to be – not so much because his reading ability had weakened but because it had not developed beyond a middle school level” (Grade 7) which was when he had stopped learning to read (p. 234). Struggling readers will also have more difficulties if they don’t read regularly (Worthy, Patterson, Salas, Prater, & Turner, 2002, p. 195). On a more positive note, a student in Ohio, U.S. was interviewed for a research project and said, “You don’t realise it I reckon, but the more you read the better you get at it. She [the school librarian] knew that but I guess the library has helped me realize that for myself” (Todd, 2004, p. 16).

A number of researchers have studied the Matthew Effect, to determine if it is the increased time spent reading which leads to improved reading achievement. It could be that better readers tend to read more, because a person who is good at something is more likely to do it (Cipielewski & Stanovich, 1992, p. 75). Greaney (1980) found that “avid readers tend to be good readers.” This correlational study did not determine which caused the other. More recent studies have controlled for reading ability, and found a positive correlation between more reading (measured through time spent reading or literary knowledge) and improved reading achievement (R. C. Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Cipielewski & Stanovich, 1992; Taylor, Frye, & Maruyama, 1990). Similarly Byrnes (2000) argued “there does appear to be a solid theoretical basis for assuming that frequent reading will promote higher levels of reading achievement” (p. 193).

Some reading research has divided reading by the material read, that is, reading books, comics, newspapers or magazines (L. Allen, Cipielewski, & Stanovich, 1992; R. C. Anderson *et al.*, 1988; Greaney, 1980). Other studies only investigated book reading (Cipielewski & Stanovich, 1992; NEA, 2004; Taylor *et al.*, 1990). Greaney noted the different skills needed for reading different materials (1980, p. 342), which has become more marked with the “transition from a written culture to one that is increasingly driven by visual images and massive streams of digital information” (Wolf, 2007, p. 19). The “deeper reading” of books (*ibid.*) is very different to the skimming from page to page which is the norm with online materials (CIBER, 2008; Gioia cited in NEA, 2004, p. vii), although some critics question which is of greater “worth” (D. Johnson, 2006).

Anderson, Wilson and Fielding (1988) asked children in Grade 5 to record the time spent on various out-of-school activities, reading being one of many choices. The researchers only included time spent reading when the child noted the title or author of the book, to increase the likelihood of truthful reporting. The reading ability of the children in Grade 5 was compared with their ability in Grade 2 and the amount of reading the children undertook at home. The results from the study led to the conclusion that “reading books is a cause, not merely a reflection, of reading proficiency” (p. 302).

Taylor, Frye and Maruyama (1990) found an improvement in reading from more time spent reading at school, but the same was not true for reading at home. They questioned this second finding because reading logs were filled out by Grade 5

participants for reading at school just after they did it and for reading at home from the previous night. The teacher could not verify the latter and thus this measure might not have been as reliable.

Cipielewski and Stanovich (1992) felt there were too many drawbacks to asking children to keep a reading log, as demonstrated by Taylor *et al.* (1990), so Cipielewski and Stanovich used “an index of relative differences in exposure to print” (p. 77). This index comprised checklists of popular authors and titles, which included foils (authors and titles invented by the researchers). Children who read a lot would know more authors and titles and children who marked foils would be found out. Cipielewski and Stanovich thus investigated the children’s literary knowledge through print exposure, rather than the time they spent reading. Print exposure was found “to be both a consequence of developed reading ability and a contributor to further growth in that ability” (p. 85).

Allen, Cipielewski, and Stanovich (1992) aimed to prove the reliability of their measure of print exposure by comparing the indirect indicators of reading habits (using an index similar to that discussed above and various questionnaires and tests) with more direct measures (daily activity diaries). They found that there was a correlation between recognition checklist measures of print exposure and amount of reading as recorded in daily activity diaries (p. 500) and also “print exposure was more strongly linked to performance in the verbal domain than in the domain of mathematics computation” (p.498). Allen, Cipielewski, and Stanovich believe recognition checklist measures of print exposure “provide reasonably reliable and valid measures of reading experience” (p.500) and are much easier to administer because children do not have to take the time to fill in diaries.

Some literature has linked enjoyment of reading with higher educational achievement (Block & Mangieri, 2002, p. 572; van Schooten & de Glopper, 2002, p. 172), although Cullinan (2000) maintained such findings were correlational and did not show causation. An investigation of U.S. Department of Education data on voluntary reading patterns and student standardized test scores concluded “frequency of reading for pleasure correlated strongly with better test scores in reading and writing” (NEA, 2007, p. 19). English teacher Steve Gardiner (2001) found that his “students who read frequently on their own had better literacy skills and better grades in English classes” (p. 32). In order to determine if reading predicts educational achievement, Gallik (1999) studied college students to compare their level of

recreational reading and academic success. Although there was a statistically significant correlation between the amount of recreational reading during holidays and their accumulative grade point average, it only accounted for a small amount of the variation between the two, so it was “not in itself a strong predictor of achievement in college” (p. 486). The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) collated data from numerous U.S. sources and determined those who read more “accrued personal, professional, and social advantages,” such as completing high school and gaining financially rewarding jobs (NEA, 2007, p. 14), although evidence for causation was not investigated.

For the above reasons, it is important to allow young people the “opportunity to discover reading as an unthreatening, unpressured, enjoyable pastime” (Mackey & Johnston, 1996, p. 34). Even some young people agree with this. A teenager interviewed by Bishop and Bauer (2002) said, “We need to make teens want to read and [think] that reading is not just for nerds, but reading can be fun” (p. 41).

### **What makes a reluctant reader?**

The American Library Association (2003) states reluctant readers are those who, for whatever reason, choose not to read. This is also termed aliteracy (Beers, 1996a). Reluctant readers have been taught the basic skills of reading and are able to read (E. T. Sullivan, 2002, p. 7), but do not for a variety of reasons (Beers, 1996a; Stringer & Mollineaux, 2003, p. 71; Worthy, 1998, p. 509). Teenagers in particular are often capable of reading but hate to do it (Mackey & Johnston, 1996), thus “few choose to do so for enjoyment” (Thomson, 1987, p. 12).

Sometimes talking to teens about reading is like talking vegetables with a fussy eater. You can tell them it’s good for them, but that won’t get them to open their mouths – or, in this case, the covers of a book. (P. Jones *et al.*, 2006)

Research has found that as children progress through school and reach adolescence, they become less likely to read in their leisure time (Baker, Dreher, & Guthrie, 2000; Bean, 2002; Clary, 1991; Dodds & Cheesman, 2003; Greaney, 1980; Kelly, 2007; Ledger, 1997; Moore *et al.*, 1999; Ryan, 2005; M. W. Smith & Wilhelm, 2002; T. M. Smith, Aronstamm Young, Bae, Choy, & Alsalam, 1997). Three decades ago Robinson (1977) discussed how difficult it is to encourage teenagers to read. Nippold *et al.* (2005) found interest in reading as a leisure activity was less in teenagers aged 14 than those aged 11. In a discussion between Year 9 students, they reported that reading was “boring, it was too difficult, it took too

long...reading was hard work.” These teenagers did not receive instant gratification from reading (Muller, 1994, p. 94), thus it is not “the mass diversion that it was half a century ago” (Knulst & van den Broek, 2003, p. 231).

Many teenagers think reading is “uncool” (Armstrong, 2004, p. 10; Martino, 2001, p. 61), with early adolescence being the “key period in development where reading apparently declined and became less cool” (Newman & Everall, 2003, p. 8) and “when many readers lose interest in books” (Reed, 1988, p. 13). Reeves interviewed high school students about their attitudes to reading. Many had “been good and enthusiastic readers in elementary school and then when early adolescence hit at age 12 or 13, the reading more or less stopped” (p. 238). In contrast, other research has found a negative attitude to reading formed in younger students (Gambrell, 1996). McKenna, Kear, and Ellsworth (1995) studied 18,000 elementary school students from throughout the U.S. and established students increasingly had a negative attitude to reading as they progressed from Grade 1 to 6. By the time children were on the cusp of adolescence, in Grade 6, their attitude to reading was “relative indifference” (p. 952).

A study of Australian young people found “enjoyment of reading for pleasure drops dramatically in teenagers, with 45% of primary students saying they really like reading for pleasure, down to 24% amongst secondary school students” (ACYL & Woolcott Research, 2000, p. 19). This improves when those who quite like reading for pleasure are included: “three quarters of young people aged 10-18 say that they quite like or really like reading for pleasure,” but when primary school children were looked at separately, this was a decrease from 85% (p. 18). A Dutch study found teenagers disliked reading more as they progressed from Grade 7 to 9, although the declining trend in the time spent reading as they aged was not significantly different between the grades (van Schooten & de Glopper, 2002, p. 184).

The children’s publisher Scholastic and consumer trends research company Yankelovich investigated reading among children aged 5-17 in 2006 and 2008. Both surveys found frequency and enjoyment of reading decreased as children aged (Scholastic & Yankelovich, 2006, 2008). In the more recent survey 80% percent of children aged 5-8 loved reading or “liked it a lot,” compared to 55% of teenagers aged 15-17 (Scholastic & Yankelovich, 2008, p. 10). Enjoyment of reading was still high among 15-17 year olds, only “37% read books for fun less than once a week.” Compared to 5-8 year olds, 9-14 year olds were “three times more likely to be

reading books for fun less than once a week” (p. 12).

An online survey of 4000 children aged 4-16 was conducted through U.K. schools, a follow-up to a similar study completed in 1996 (S. Maynard, MacKay, & Smyth, 2008). While those “rating themselves as ‘enthusiastic’ readers (reading a lot, with pleasure) decreased as the children got older...the proportion rating themselves as ‘average’ (reading an ordinary amount) did in fact increase with age” (p. 64). The survey investigated opinions on reading, reading behaviours, and a wide range of reading materials, but Maynard *et al.* (2008) presented the findings only in relation to fiction reading. While “the majority of the respondents to the survey at least ‘sometimes’ read fiction,” those who “hardly or never” read fiction increased from 8% of the youngest participants to almost one quarter of the teenagers (p. 64).

Another large scale study was conducted through Australian schools in 1981. Bunbury (1995) investigated school and leisure reading of Year 5, 7, 9 and 11 students. Most students “could be described as light readers, reading 1-2 books per month for leisure and/or school” (p. 121) and reading for pleasure decreased as students progressed through high school. 24% of Year 7, 34% of Year 9 and 42% of Year 11 students had read nothing in their leisure time in the previous month (p. 122). A small scale Australian survey found a quarter of the teenage participants preferred to read in their spare time than a range of other leisure activities, including spending time with friends or watching television, indicating three quarters preferred these other activities (Manuel & Robinson, 2002).

Some of the evidence for a decline in enjoyment of reading and decrease in time spent reading is anecdotal (B. T. Williams, 2007), and there is disagreement about the veracity of the decline. Williams examined the “literacy crises” that happen in every generation with examples from 1879, 1975 and 2005. A number of studies directly dispute a decline in reading for pleasure as children age to adolescence (Armstrong, 2004; Bintz, 1993; Foster & Prince, 2002; Gutchewsky, 2001; Rothbauer, 2006).

A U.S. national study found, “In a typical day, nearly three out of four (73%) young people [aged 8-18] reported reading for pleasure” books, magazines or newspapers, with an average of 43 minutes per day (Rideout, Roberts, & Foehr, 2005, p. 35). When participants were grouped into age ranges, the percentage who read a book during the previous day (not including for school or work) decreased. 63% of 8-10 year olds read for at least 5 minutes compared to 34% of 15-18 year

olds. Similarly 40% of 8-10 year olds read for at least 30 minutes compared to 26% of 15-18 year olds (Rideout, Roberts & Foehr cited in NEA, 2007, p. 6). This did not take into account reading materials other than books. A U.S. study of 600 low income minority students from an urban school catering to grades five to eight found “seventy two percent of the students indicated that they engaged in reading as a leisure activity,” which covered all reading formats, including the internet (Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007, p. 23).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics conducts *Children’s participation in cultural and leisure activities* every three years (ABS, 2003, 2006) and found similar results. The number of participants who read for pleasure in the past two weeks was lowest for 12-14 year olds (72%), although more 9-11 year olds (77%) read for pleasure than 5-8 year olds (75%) (ABS, 2006). These differences were not great. 72% reading for pleasure over a two week period is a considerable number. Among those who read for pleasure, as age increased the average time spent reading in the past two weeks increased, but from 2003 to 2006 the average hours spent reading decreased for every age range (ABS, 2003, 2006). These statistics and also Maynard *et al.* (2008) demonstrate the conflicting conclusions which can be drawn from results depending on the data used.

A common theme in the literature is dislike of school based reading (Bean, 1998; Krashen & Von Sprecken, 2002; Lowery-Moore, 1998; Reeves, 2004; Worthy & McKool, 1996). Teenagers “lose interest in school reading as they progress through school, but do not lose interest in reading per se” (Bintz, 1993, p. 613). The 1981 survey found “not only did young people read more books for leisure than they read for school, but they also enjoyed them more” (Bunbury, 1995, p. 63). Some students “avoid teacher-selected books as a matter of principle” (Worthy, 1998, p. 514). This leads to “an ever-increasing gap between student preferences and materials that schools provide and recommend” (Worthy, Mooreman, & Turner, 1999, p.23) and has “turned reading into a struggle” for some (M. Sullivan, 2005, p. 99).

Worthy (1998) interviewed two sixth grade boys “labeled reluctant readers by their teachers, [who] were so excited about their own reading that the subject regularly came up at lunch and outside of school” (p. 513). Love and Hamston (2003) also studied teenage boys deemed “reluctant readers” by their teachers. Love and Hamston found them to be “capable readers in domains of importance to

themselves at a particular point of their lives” (p. 162). A number of their research participants described reading as “a waste of time.” One boy said this, then described the reading he did enjoy which was “pragmatically oriented.” He refused to read novels, because he equated them with the reading he had to do for school (p. 169), which was “not interesting” to him (Reeves, 2004, p. 41). Martino’s research (2001) found very similar results to Love and Hamston. One boy described novels as “heaps and heaps of pages of shit” (p. 64). Reading materials which Martino’s students liked were not “officially sanctioned within schools” so the students did not equate them with reading (p. 66). When Reeves (2004) probed students who said they disliked reading, she “often found that the students still read but chose to read magazines or books of a particular genre [only]” (p. 238), similarly not “officially sanctioned” by their school. Smith and Wilhelm (2004) found this among the teenage boys they investigated, who “employed literacy in contexts in which they could demonstrate competence,” often in conjunction with their pastimes outside school (p. 458). “The presentation and practice of academic literacy was different, however, from the lived experience, desires, and uses of the boys,” thus they rejected it (p. 460).

Hall and Coles (1999) surveyed the reading habits of 8,000 U.K. children aged 10-14 in 1995, in a survey similar to that conducted in 1971. The later survey found children read more than respondents in 1971, books were more likely to be newer titles than “Victorian children’s classics,” and reading matter extended beyond books to include newspapers and magazines. The online (U.S.) Teen Read Survey is conducted yearly and the 2005 survey found “a majority (80%) of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed to [sic] the statement that they don’t like to read because it isn’t cool.” This decreased to 66% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they read for fun (Swenor, 2006, p. 43). These results may have been influenced by the posting of the survey on a website called SmartGirl.org. While it is “a safe place for girls (and boys) to be able to express themselves” (*ibid.*), boys would be less likely to visit a site with this name, noted by Jones *et al.* (2006) and demonstrated by the fact that 70% of respondents were girls.\*

Much of the literature identifies girls as having more positive attitudes to reading and reading more than boys (ABS, 2006; Greaney & Hegarty, 1987; Hughes-

---

\* Sex-based bias can be eliminated in online surveys as Maynard *et al.* (2008) did by conducting their research through schools.



Hassell & Rodge, 2007; Langerman, 1990; McKenna *et al.*, 1995; Nippold *et al.*, 2005; Power, 2001; Sax, 2007; van Schooten & de Glopper, 2002). Others have questioned dislike of reading among boys as a generalisation (Culican & Fattor, 2003). Former teacher librarian and now YA author James Moloney (1999) found theories about boys' reading "often contradictory and no single explanation seemed to match all of the evidence" (p. 10). Australian teacher librarian Rosemary Horton (2006) contended,

Many adolescent boys read...There is a sizeable minority, however, who will never pick up a book unless compelled. Very like some girls and some adults. (p. 5)

Krashen and Von Sprecken (2002) examined the results of a number of studies of children's reading, but they were "not interested in how much children read, just how much they enjoyed reading." They concluded the decrease in reading enjoyment as children age is only slight. Most studies used a 5-point scale and the average was always above 2.5, "at no stage do children show a negative attitude toward reading" (p. 11).

One of the studies critiqued was a longitudinal survey of 160 U.S. students over three years as they progressed from Grade 6 to 8 (Ley, Schaer, & Dismukes, 1994). According to Krashen and Von Sprecken (2002) Ley *et al.*'s findings suggest that as the amount of reading decreases from Grade 6 to 8, the time spent on homework increases in those same age ranges, that is, reading time is replaced by homework (p. 12). Ley *et al.* determined this through the Reading Behaviour Profile (RBP) and reading attitude was determined using the Teale-Lewis Reading Attitude Scales, which are made up of measures for three motivations: Individual Development, Utilitarian and Enjoyment (Ley *et al.*, 1994, p. 20).

Ley *et al.* stated they found "a statistically significant relationship existed between the reading attitudes and the reading behaviours of students...both their general reading attitudes and their frequency of voluntary reading declined during the three year period" (p. 29). The presence of a decline in general reading attitudes during the three years is incorrect due to an error in calculation. Ley *et al.*'s Table 1 (p. 23) showed the total scores for the Teale-Lewis Reading Attitude Scales, but the individual scores shown in Ley *et al.*'s Table 3 (p. 27) did not add to these totals. The correct mean total reading attitudes are listed in Table 1, over the page.

**Table 1: Corrected Table 1 from Ley, Schaer and Dismukes (1994)**

Students (n=164)	Mean total attitude
Grade 6	94.8
Grade 7	96.0
Grade 8	94.6

Thus, attitudes did not decrease with age. There was a slight increase and then decrease, which conforms more to the “relative stability” (p. 29) of the individual scores, not a decrease with age (p. 27).

Krashen and Von Sprecken did not mention this inaccuracy, but focused on the Enjoyment subscale of the Teale-Lewis Reading Attitude Scales, reported correctly by Ley *et al.* (1994, p. 27). Enjoyment of reading is an important concept, but despite Krashen and Von Sprecken’s emphasis on enjoyment rather than reading behaviour, the latter is equally important. As Beers (1998) emphasized “dormant readers,” those who enjoy reading and think of themselves as readers, but do not have time for it, “will become nonreaders if they go too long without reading” (p. 47). Bunbury (1995) found those “who had a high attitude to reading yet read few books for school or leisure, was greater than the number who had a high attitude to reading and sustained the habit of reading sufficient to be called ‘heavy’ readers for school or leisure,” the latter being only 5-10% for each group of Years 7, 9, 11 (p. 122).

Much debate surrounded the release of the National Endowment for the Arts’ (NEA) report *Reading at Risk* (2004) which found reading among U.S. adults had declined in the past two decades (Aronson, 2006; Iyengar, 2006; Krashen, 2004b). The report caused controversy due to the “definitions of literacy and literary reading in the report being laughably narrow” (B. T. Williams, 2007, p. 180), which was one of Krashen’s contentions (2004b). Press releases and newspaper articles about the report bemoaned a “national crisis” (Ross, 2006b, p. 20), but the NEA defined reading as “literary reading,” that is, “any type of fiction, poetry, and plays” (NEA, 2004, p. 3). While the report asserted reading encompassed what “the respondents felt should be included and not just what literary critics might consider literature” (p. 3), this aim of diversity was not achieved because the internet, magazines, newspapers, or any type of non-fiction were excluded.

Johnson (2006) also questioned the focus on literary reading of *Reading at Risk*. He compared his personal reading of a non-fiction book with online reading. One evening Johnson spent forty five minutes reading various blogs about an IT

topic of interest. This took time away from reading “the probably important book” *The Singularity is Near* by Ray Kurzweil. He wondered, although did not answer, “Is ‘a little learning’ [his online reading] more important in a fast-paced world than ‘drinking deep’ [his book reading]?” (p. 98).

*Reading at Risk* stated “young adults are reading much less than they used to” (NEA, 2004, p. 26), which provoked Krashen’s dissent (2004b, 2005). While the term Young Adult (YA) is used to designate teenagers in publishing and public libraries, *Reading at Risk* only investigated adults and the discussion of young adults’ reading described “literary reading” among 18-24 year olds, which had decreased from 60% in 1982 to 40% in 2004 (p. 26). Krashen (2005) paraphrased this, “the decline was especially serious among young people.” He explained “this ‘decline’ was probably not real” and responded with statistics from a Gallup poll on teenagers’ reading (p. 13).

Early results from the NEA Survey of Public Participation in the Arts conducted in 2008 found half of U.S. adults had read at least one novel, short story, poem or play (literary reading) in the past twelve months, an increase since *Reading at Risk*, hence the name of the new report *Reading on the Rise* (NEA, 2009). In addition to asking about literary reading, questions about online reading were included in the 2008 survey. When non-fiction books were included, the percentage of adults reading any book not required for work or school decreased from the last survey (p. 7), although it was still slightly higher than half the U.S. population.

The National Endowment for the Arts looked at teenagers’ reading in *To Read or Not To Read* (2007), a collation of data from numerous U.S. sources, including *Reading at Risk* (NEA, 2004) and *Generation M* which investigated reading among children and teenagers (Rideout *et al.*, 2005). The NEA (2007) concluded there was “a general decline in reading among teenage and adult Americans” (p. 3). As 9 year olds aged to 17, the percentage who read almost every day for fun decreased from 54% to 22% (p. 6).

As well as studies which examined samples of the population with the intention of generalizing to larger groups, other research investigated segments of the population, such as teenagers who were avid readers (Baker *et al.*, 2000; Page, 2005), or those with “extensive literary experience” and enjoyment in reading (Love & Hamston, 2001, p. 39). A U.S. sixth grader described her experience, “I love reading and I will love reading until I’m rotting in my grave” (Lowery-Moore, 1998,

p. 26). Much of this literature suggests that encouragement of reading by parents, both directly and through their reading behaviour, is a factor in producing avid readers (Baker, Scher, & Mackler, 1997; Bunbury, 1995; Greaney, 1980; Horton, 2006; Krashen, 2004a; Love & Hamston, 2001, 2003; Lowery-Moore, 1998; McKechnie, 2006; Ross, 2006b; Scholastic & Yankelovich, 2006; Swenor, 2006). That is, “children with positive attitudes toward reading had parents who spent a lot of time firmly planting the notion that reading is an enjoyable, worthwhile activity” (Beers, 1998, p. 52). Ross (2006b) contends that if parents are not readers, such support can be provided by any adult in a child’s life, “the presence in the child’s life of an adult who helps the child make connections between text and life” (p. 5). Reeves (2004) argues this “is not founded on cause-and-effect evidence. It is correlational.” As a teacher and researcher she had “seen many students whose relationship to reading was significantly different from that of other members of their families” (p. 239).

As demonstrated in the above discussion, while there appears to be a trend of teenagers reading less than their younger counterparts, many researchers dispute these findings. The reason for disagreement may be the fact that every study measures opinion of and amount of reading differently (Ross, 2006a). Thus further investigation is warranted.

### ***Not enough time for reading***

The reasons for teenagers not reading are diverse, but those discussed thirty years ago by Gentile and McMillan (1977) are still relevant today: the previously mentioned dislike of school reading; teenagers being more interested in socialising and not seeing reading as a social activity; perceiving reading as not entertaining enough or uncool; or because their friends did not read. An Italian study found the time teenagers spent watching television, playing sports, on hobbies, and socialising with friends was greater than that spent reading, mainly magazines and newspapers (Delle Fave & Bassi, 2003). Similarly the report *Young Australians Reading* (ACYL & Woolcott Research, 2000) revealed spending time with friends was the most popular activity among young Australians aged 10-18, “really liked” by 87% of respondents (p. 18). Reading for pleasure was less popular than a myriad of other activities including: playing sport, watching television, using the Internet, and playing computer games (p. 18), although two thirds of the young people agreed

“they would read more if they had the time” (p. 23). The ABS survey (2006) of a younger cohort investigated the leisure activities of 5-14 year olds. This did not compare preferences, but investigated activities undertaken in the previous two weeks. Three quarters spent time reading for pleasure, only surpassed by watching television, videos or DVDs (97%) and doing homework or other study (83%) (p. 15).

Cunningham & Stanovich (1997) asked U.S. Grade 11 students which of a number of activities students preferred, including: reading, watching television, talking to friends, listening to music, watching a movie, and spending time on a hobby. Every activity was preferred to reading. Martino (2001) surveyed Year 10 boys and established they preferred watching television or “doing more energetic things” like playing sport than sitting still reading (p. 63). One boy said, “When a book comes up against TV or computer or kicking the footy with friends, it has no chance” (p. 66).

Young people often explain their lack of reading due to a lack of time (Beers, 1998; Bunbury, 1995; Dodds & Cheesman, 2003; Gutchewsky, 2001; Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007; Hurst, 2000; Lowery-Moore, 1998; Reeves, 2004). Teenagers have “formalised activities filling many hours of their days” (Bahr & Pendergast, 2007, p. 293) allowing less time for unstructured activities such as reading. Other unstructured activities such as listening to music, watching television, videos or DVDs, or playing computer games are often more popular than reading (Nippold *et al.*, 2005). Aronson (2001) surmised these forms of entertainment are less “controlled” by adults than books, leading to teenagers’ indifference to reading.

An Australian survey of a thousand teenagers found “a colossal amount of time is spent watching television and considerably less time reading literature” (Thomson, 1987, p. 19). While television has been cited as an activity which takes time away from reading (Manuel & Robinson, 2002), the ABS survey of 5-14 year olds found the average time spent watching television decreased from 2003 to 2006 (ABS, 2003, 2006). Nevertheless, this time spent watching television was almost triple the time spent reading and almost all participants watched television, compared to three quarters who read for pleasure (ABS, 2006). *Reading at Risk* (NEA, 2004) established “frequent readers watch only slightly less TV per day than infrequent readers,” but noted these results did not prove “whether people who never read literary works would do so if they watched less TV, or whether they would use this extra time in other ways” (p. 15). The NEA provided an example of a survey which found

regardless of whether they used the internet, people read books for the same amount of time (p. 15), confirmed by the Canadian Internet Project (Fletcher & Zamaria, 2008).

The 1981 survey of Australian students found television viewing occupied the most time among Years 5, 7 and 9 students, but those in Year 11 reported homework as the most time consuming activity (Bunbury, 1995, p. 147), comparable to Ley, Schaer and Dismukes' (1994) finding that older students spend more time on homework.

### ***Choice in reading materials***

Worthy and McKool (1996) investigated sixth grade “students who were capable readers but who rarely chose to read in their spare time” (p. 247), the typical illiterate reluctant reader. Despite the students’ “claims to hate reading in general, all eleven spoke of strong extracurricular reading preferences” and genres and titles they enjoyed reading. Unfortunately these students did not have access at school or home to reading material “they found personally interesting” (p. 251). Ryan (2005) observed her teenage research participants found “limited pleasure” from book reading as a “consequence of [teachers] not allowing personal reading time at school” (p. 44). Despite “not reading frequently” because “they often did not find the right book,” when they found something they liked reading, they “stuck to it” (p. 40).

Thus, in much of the literature, reluctance to read is overcome by providing a wide variety of reading materials during class time, allowing choice in reading matter (Brassell, 2006; Darwin & Fleischman, 2005; Everhart, Angelos, & McGriff, 2002; Gambrell, 1996; La Marca & Macintyre, 2006; Manuel & Robinson, 2003; Reeves, 2004; Sanacore, 1992). Worthy (1998) found that “encouraging student choice leads to better attitudes toward reading” (p. 515). This access to “personally interesting” materials can be what determines whether students enjoy reading in their leisure time (Worthy & McKool, 1996, p. 254). “When the experience of reading is enjoyable, students read voraciously” (Thomson, 1987, p. 228), improving reading ability (La Marca, 2004, p. 4) and “beginning the development of a reading habit” (Schraffenberger, 2007, p. 72) which may last a lifetime (D. Fisher & Frey, 2007).

Classrooms have allowed time for sustained silent reading since the 1970s and many teachers describe their successes in the literature (D. Fisher, 2004; Gardiner, 2001; P. Jones *et al.*, 2006; The secret of her success, 2006). Krashen (2006) defined

sustained silent reading as “reading because you want to” (p. 43). His compilation of research from the last three decades demonstrated sustained silent reading leads to “higher levels of literacy” and improved scores on standardized reading tests (p. 44). Research has also found improvement in reading attitudes due to sustained silent reading (Yoon, 2002). U.S. middle school teacher Nancie Atwell (1998) concluded from her students “that the simple act of selecting their own books had turned them into readers” (p. 37).

Dutch researchers van Schooten and de Gloppe (2002) suggested the best way to promote reading among teenagers “is to stimulate them to enjoy their reading” through allowing choice in reading material and not forcing readers to finish a book they disliked (p. 185). Ivey and Broaddus (2001) interviewed U.S. sixth grade students and asked what advice they would give a person who disliked reading. Half the students suggested trying different books until something enjoyable was found (p. 364). An Australian teacher surveyed in 1981 had her Year 7 students bring a book of their choice to class. Ten minutes were designated for reading this and children presented oral reviews of what they read and swapped books amongst themselves. The teacher explained, “I think it has made a big difference. I think the kids are reading one another’s stuff and reading more widely” (Bunbury, 1995, p. 77). Worthy, Turner and Moorman (1998) investigated teachers’ views on sustained silent reading, termed self-selected reading in their study. While many teachers agreed on its importance in “modelling the enjoyment of reading for students” (p. 299), others noted the pressure to “make instructional time count” (p. 300).

U.S. teacher Kimberly Gutchewsky (2001) surveyed her one hundred Grade 9 students and only one said she liked reading, but added she did not have the time to read (p. 80). During the school year Gutchewsky set aside a weekly time for sustained silent reading of a book, magazine or newspaper of their choice, followed by discussion of what they read. The survey was repeated at the end of the year. All but one student had positive responses to the sustained silent reading and enjoyment of reading had increased to seventy percent of students, as long as they were reading what they chose (p. 84).

It is clear from the above that it is desirable to respect the choices of all students, and different formats such as graphic novels must be encompassed in the available reading options (Annandale *et al.*, 2004, p. 38).

### **Teenagers' enjoyment of Graphic Novels**

Many librarians and teachers discuss the popularity of graphic novels among teenagers (Crawford, 2004; Gagnier, 1997; Lavin, 1998a; McGough, 1995). Schwarz (2002a) believes the popularity is because teenagers “have come to expect visuals in the texts they encounter in the world” (p. 54). Others find graphic novels “lure and engage teenagers” (M. Gorman, 2002, p. 42) or “inspire reluctant readers” to undertake reading (Miller, 2005, p. 90) which is “voluntary and enjoyable” (Versaci, 2001, p. 63), thus encouraging reading for pleasure outside of school (Gibson, 1993, p. 24). Comics publishers have taken advantage of this, by updating superhero stories to make them popular with the current generation of teenagers, including stories with teenage superheroes such as *Runaways* by Brian K. Vaughan and Adrian Alphona (Flagg, 2003).

At one time, reluctant readers were thought to be particularly attracted to reading comics and graphic novels (Crawford, 2004; Kan, 2003; Mackey & Johnston, 1996; T. Maynard, 2002; Miller, 2005; Mooney, 2002; Sherman & Ammon, 1993), although Fountain (2004) observed “there is no special literary reason for this” (p. 37). Comics were described as having a “fantastic motivating power” (Haugaard, 1973, p. 55). Those “who will read nothing else will probably read comics and graphic novels” (E. T. Sullivan, 2002, p. 53) and many agreed they were “an ideal medium to spark the interest of an unmotivated or reluctant reader who is often caught up in the story long before he realises that he has invested a significant amount of time in the act of reading” (M. Gorman, 2003, p. 10). More recent literature, including the current opinion of U.S. librarian Michele Gorman, contends that graphic novels appeal to some reluctant readers, not all (P. Jones *et al.*, 2006). YA author Philip Pullman (1993) described a group of students in a class he visited.

These boys who didn't like English and didn't read novels and hated poems were talking about *Watchmen* [a graphic novel by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons] with critical intelligence, a sensitivity to levels of irony and implication, an awareness of the complexity of this kind of contrapuntal narrative, and a sheer intellectual enthusiasm that was a joy to share. (p. 14)

While graphic novels are not necessarily less sophisticated than conventional books, simpler titles can help struggling readers due to the visual component providing contextual clues to the meaning of the text (Christensen, 2006; Crawford, 2004; Krashen, 2004a; Lyga & Lyga, 2004; Miller, 2005). A dislike of reading may be due to difficulty visualizing the story of a conventional book (Beers, 1996b;



Stringer & Mollineaux, 2003). Graphic novels could be preferable for such readers because the pictures allow them to see the story, characters and action on the page (Lyga, 2006; Norton, 2003; Wilkins, 1993; Young, 2007).

Graphic novels are an “effective way to foster student’s enthusiasm towards books and reading,” particularly among boys (Crawford, 2003, p. 14), as was the case at Moss Side Powerhouse Library in Manchester, U.K. “Many teenage boys take four of five of them at a time” (Broadbent, 2003, p. 27). A project in which children took home and read comics from their class led a number of boys to “become more motivated to read” (Millard & Marsh, 2001, p. 34). A survey of sixth graders found comics were the second favourite reading choice for boys and third for girls (Worthy *et al.*, 1999).

Many researchers studying gender differences in reading find boys and girls prefer different formats in their reading matter of choice (Greaney, 1980; Love & Hamston, 2003; Martino, 2001; M. W. Smith & Wilhelm, 2002). The PISA 2000 study (Kirsch *et al.*, 2002) found a gap between girls’ and boys’ attitudes to and frequency of reading which “suggests that boys should be the focus of any initiative to engage teenagers more closely in reading.” The authors recommended “encouraging boys in their preferred reading habits” (p. 16). They found “girls tend to read more [conventional] books, especially novels, with boys reading various other written forms.” Graphic novels could be one of these preferred other formats (p. 20).

Boys and men have been the traditional audience for comics and graphic novels (Deppey, 2005; Hudson, 1995; Phillips, 2007; Roberts, 1994). The increasing popularity of manga, particularly among teenagers (Kan, 2003; Krashen, 2004a; Nylund, 2007), has enlarged the potential audience for graphic novels. Shōjo manga written for girls is popular among pre-teen and teenage girls (Glazer, 2005; Masters, 2006; Phillips, 2007). Comics publishers which traditionally concentrated on superhero comics realised this trend and wanted “to court a new audience with products aimed squarely at teenage girls” (Phillips, 2007). In 2007 DC Comics introduced the Minx line to capture these female readers (Beyond Superman and Batman, 2007; Robbins, 2009). Unfortunately, the line ended due to unprofitability less than two years later (News briefs: Minx to close, 2008).

### **Graphic novels in libraries**

Libraries can make a “real difference...to young people’s lives, helping them to develop academic and life skills, confidence, independence and self-esteem” (Dodds, 2003, p. 6) but unfortunately libraries are not well used by teenagers (DCMS, MLA, & Laser Foundation, 2006; Dodds & Cheesman, 2003; Shenton, 2007; Snowball, 2008). Only a third of young people in the U.K. are active public library users, borrowing reading materials (Creaser & Maynard, 2005, p. 69). In the 1981 Australian survey “more than half of the young people sampled indicated that they were members of a public library, but this was seldom the source of books read for leisure” (Bunbury, 1995, p. 203). One method suggested in the literature to encourage library use among teenagers is to provide a graphic novel collection.

Over the years selected libraries have used comic books to attract young people to their collections and reading in general (Cline & McBride, 1983, p. 131; Dorrell, 1987, p. 30; Ellis & Highsmith, 2000, p. 32), although there has been dissension over their worth. The 1981 survey found many teacher librarians were “opposed” to comics in their libraries. One librarian explained,

I can’t see any point in the library buying those things. It’s not that I am absolutely against comics, but I have got so much more valuable stuff to spend my money on. (Bunbury, 1995, p. 59)

U.S. children’s librarian Michael Sullivan (2005) believes teenage boys are “nearly invisible” in libraries because “the types of reading [materials] that appeal most to boys do not appeal to children’s librarians, the vast majority of whom are women” (p. 14). This is a generalisation, but was also highlighted by YA librarian S. Richard Gagnier (1997). Agosto, Paone and Ipock (2007) surveyed almost a hundred teenage library users aged 14 to 17 and determined “adolescent girls tend to express more positive views of public libraries than adolescent boys” (p. 399). YA author James Moloney (1999) contended literacy activities are often modelled for children (both boys and girls) by women, whether in their roles as mothers, librarians or teachers. An example of this is myself as a librarian and author of this research. Agosto, Paone and Ipock (2007) noted this could lead boys “to view libraries as ‘female spaces’ or at least as more ‘female friendly’ than ‘male friendly’” (p. 399). Non-fiction author Marc Aronson (2007) considered this modelling among English teachers, the majority being women. The Boys, Books, Blokes and Bytes program conducted by the Centre for Youth Literature of the State Library of Victoria (Kelly, 2007) aimed to address this issue by partnering student participants (boys) with a

male parent or other reading mentor. This proved difficult in some cases due to the prevalence of single parent families or when “there was a lack of male role models prepared to engage in such a program” (p. 82). Despite this, most boys were partnered with a male reading mentor and the male authors, journalists, actors and sportspeople who led program activities “provided opportunities for boys to benefit from positive male role models from within and beyond the school” (p. 83).

Sullivan (2005) conceded “most libraries collect some of the types of books that boys enjoy, but not nearly as much as they collect books of interest to girls” (p. 15). Libraries improve this situation when graphic novels collections are developed, recommended as one format to counteract collections “that appeal mainly to a female readership” (Gagnier, 1997, p. 143).

**Figure 1: Promotion for YALSA's Getting Graphic @ your library™ Conference**



BONE® is ©2011 Jeff Smith

In the 1990s as publication of graphic novels increased, a minority of librarians argued for their inclusion in collections due to their popularity among teenagers (DeCandido, 1990; Walker, 1989; Weiner, 1992; Wilkins, 1993). By the end of the 1990s graphic novels were promoted with renewed vigour and the format became more common in libraries (Crawford, 2003; Gagnier, 1997; Gibson, 1998; M. Green, 1998; Weiner, 2003). In the early 2000s this became widespread and extended to Australian libraries (Fountain, 2004; Laycock, 2005). U.S. librarian Eva Volin “views 2002 as a turning point, when libraries began to take notice of manga” (Accomando, 2008). The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) held a preconference “Getting Graphic @ your library™” at the American Library Association (ALA) 2002 Annual Conference in Atlanta, U.S. (Preconference a sell out, 2002). Graphic novelist Jeff Smith drew a comic strip of his characters the Bone brothers to promote the conference (see Figure 1, above). The U.S. Teen Read Week in 2002 celebrated graphic novels and comics with the theme “Get Graphic @ your

library™” (Goldsmith, 2003). Graphic novel collections in libraries are now investigated for Masters of Library Science degrees (Horner, 2006) and other research (Charbonneau, 2005; Irwin & Young, 2005; V. K. Williams & Peterson, 2009).

A library with graphic novels provides for those “who often can’t find material attractive to them in traditional collections” (Bruggeman, 1997, p. 22), thus leading to improved circulation (Crawford, 2003; Nylund, 2007; Serchay, 2004). YA librarian Rollie Welch (2006) found this at Cleveland Public Library, U.S. with a collection of anime and manga, as did Alison Ching (2005) in her high school library. While graphic novels comprised a tiny portion of her collection (1.5%), their circulation was inordinately large (17%). Graphic novels “proved hugely successful” in YA collections at Leeds Libraries, U.K. (Heyworth, 2003). Academic librarian Anne Behler (2006) noted the popularity of graphic novels in a diversity of libraries. The format “adds richness and depth to our collections and helps encourage a love of reading” (p. 17).

Lyga and Lyga (2004) surveyed school librarians who had graphic novel collections and found the most common reason for collecting the format was that they were believed to inspire reluctant readers and improve attitudes to recreational reading (p. 81). In some of the surveyed schools, teachers recommended graphic novels from the school library to students who disliked reading (p. 87). U.K. teacher librarian Eileen Armstrong (2004) described graphic novels as part of a “balanced reading diet” (p. 16). La Marca & Macintyre (2006) noted the importance of graphic novels in school libraries, but discussed problems teacher librarians may encounter when starting a collection. I agree with these difficulties, but a novice may find such problems with any unfamiliar format and easily overcome them through gaining knowledge of the format.

### **Graphic novels in the classroom**

The education literature is replete with examples of comics and graphic novels being used in the classroom (Bucher & Manning, 2004; Crawford & Weiner, 2005; Ezarik, 2003; Galley, 2004; Hill, 2004; Lavin, 2004; Loewenstein, 1998; Schwarz, 2002b; Versaci, 2001). A compilation of essays describing programs from U.S. classrooms brought to light “the notion of a variety of texts working together as equal partners,” including graphic novels, as well as the more traditional

conventional novels, poems, plays and movies (Carter, 2007, p. 17). Much of the literature is written by U.S. teachers and education researchers, but this is changing as Australian teachers realise the potential of graphic novels (Cook, 1997; M. Green, 1998; La Marca & Macintyre, 2006; Laycock, 2005; Mahoney, 2006).

In one Melbourne school, a class of disengaged year eleven readers was turned round through the study of comics. Not only did they apply the literary and visual strategies they learned, but were willing to apply those skills to whichever text the teacher then suggested. Their interests and needs had been recognised and catered for, they enjoyed reading and responding to comics, and were then keen to apply their knowledge and engagement to conventional print texts. (La Marca & Macintyre, 2006, p. 44)

U.S. teachers Frey and Fisher (2007) used graphic novels, as well as anime and the Internet, with high school students who had difficulties reading and writing. It was found “the limited amount and level of the text [in graphic novels] allowed students to read and respond to complex messages and text combinations that better matched their reading levels” (p. 133) This has been replicated by others working with struggling readers (Hipple & Goza, 1998; P. Jones, 2001; Lyga, 2006), but the format is useful for students of all reading capabilities (Hipple & Goza, 1998; Kerkham & Hutchison, 2005).

Read Write Think, a U.S. partnership between the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English, aims “to provide educators and students with access to the highest quality practices and resources in reading and language arts instruction.” Selected online lesson plans include comics to teach skills and concepts such as narrative structure, genre, popular culture, and characterization (IRA & NCTE, 2009). The Comic Book Initiative is a project of the Maryland (U.S.) school system, which uses comic books in English, Mathematics and Science classes, with the objective of improving student’s learning by making lessons fun and “helping students find pleasure in reading” (Rifas, 2005).

Social Studies teacher Lila Christensen (2006) annotated non-fiction graphic novels useful in her subject area, with ideas for class discussion for each title. One graphic novel was *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, a recurring title recommended in the literature (Harris, 2007; Mattis, 2007; Sanderson, 2004; R. Wilson, 2006). Satrapi described the “international language” of images, “when you draw a situation – someone is scared or angry or happy – it means the same thing in all cultures” (R. Wilson, 2006, p. 33).

Graphic novelist and mathematics teacher Gene Yang was absent from some of

his classes and wrote and drew a comic for each lesson he could not attend. Each comic was four to six pages and included examples for the students to complete. His students enjoyed the comics, some preferring them to a class taught by their teacher (S. Lee & Yang, 2006). Yang believes this preference is partly because students were able to work through the comic at their own pace. They could read as fast or slow as they wished and go back to reread parts when needed (Carrier, 2000; Tabachnick, 2007). As well as being used by his students, the comics contributed to the final project of Yang's Master of Education degree (2003). He subsequently wrote and illustrated the award winning graphic novel *American Born Chinese*.

This abundance of educational literature is a recent phenomenon, as graphic novels have become more widely available and popular, and "reading development and approaches to literacy have changed" (Crawford, 2003, p. 13). More than twenty years ago some teachers used comics in their classrooms (Thomas, 1983), but this was a minority; many teachers disliked the format (Norton, 2003; Worthy *et al.*, 1999). Visual literacy was "rarely granted status within our education system," thus teachers were reluctant to use a format in which the visual image was such a significant part (Millard & Marsh, 2001, p. 27).

### ***Literary merit of Graphic Novels***

A number of authors report the past view that comics were deemed inferior to conventional books, and thus inappropriate reading matter in the classroom or as leisure reading (Arnold, 2007; Bunbury, 1995; Carrier, 2000; Crawford, 2003; Hatfield, 2005; R. Johnson, 1986; P. Jones, Gorman, & Suellentrop, 2004; Koenke, 1981; Lavin, 1998b). As Raiteri (2003b) pointed out, comics were considered "invariably poor-quality material unfit for serious consideration and reading them did not actually constitute 'reading' at all" (p. 72). Even in Japan where manga reading has been widespread for many years, "parents and teachers dismiss manga because they think reading them is unproductive." Schools ban them and parents try to encourage their children to read other materials. Critics have said reading manga "dulls readers' minds and makes readers lazy" (K. Allen & Ingulsrud, 2003, p. 677).

In contrast, comics and graphic novels today are published at different levels of sophistication and literary worth, as are conventional books (Alward, 1982; Lavin, 2004; Lyga & Lyga, 2004; Schodt, 1996). The diversity available "offers challenges to the good reader and support to the less enthusiastic" (Gibson, 1998, p. 14),

providing material catering to the full spectrum of reading ability (Brenner, 2006; Schwarz, 2002a; Young, 2007), or for those learning English as a second language (Cary, 2004; Ranker, 2007).

There are graphic novels which “carry as much truth, beauty, mystery, and emotion” as conventional books (Arnold, 2007, p. 12). Academic libraries and their attendant academics agree graphic novels are legitimate literary and artistic works (Canis & Canis, 2005; O’English *et al.*, 2006; Sturm, 2002) “deserving of sustained attention” (Hatfield, 2005, p. xi). Versaci (2007) aimed “to upend the notion of ‘literature’ as an inviolable model that must adhere to certain dimensions” in his analysis of graphic novels (p. 209). Graphic novels “feature sophisticated language and story lines” (Serchay, 2004, p. 28) and include literary devices such as: foreshadowing, irony, metaphor, symbolism, and allusion (Brocka, 1983; M. Gorman, 2003; Hill, 2004; Leibold, 2007). The third edition of *Best books for young adults* (Koelling, 2007) recognizes this sophistication with the inclusion of graphic novels. The bibliography was compiled from the Best Books for Young Adults lists released annually by the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA).

Although manga have an “image as an easy read,” readers actually need a number of skills in order to read them. “The combination of graphics, format, and text all make the reading of manga a complex process” (K. Allen & Ingulsrud, 2003, p. 679). This is compounded in English translation due to the traditional right to left orientation (Brenner, 2007b), which ensures “a challenging read” for novices (A. Schwartz & Rubinstein-Avila, 2006, p. 41; Toku, 2001; Wolk, 2001). Comics creators Will Eisner and Scott McCloud agreed that reading comics “requires more complex cognitive skills than the reading of text alone” (cited in Lavin, 1998a, p. 32). The children Millard and Marsh (2001) studied said comics were easier to read than books, although the authors noted, “the complexities of layout of comics and the reading skills demanded by them are by no means unchallenging” (p. 33). The fact that readers themselves say they are easy to read has probably more to do with readers’ skill than the simplicity of comics (K. Allen & Ingulsrud, 2003, p. 678).

Comics and graphic novels have also been described as stepping stones on the way to the more challenging reading of conventional books (Dorrell & Carroll, 1981; Goodgion, 1977; Marsh & Millard, 2000; Ujiie & Krashen, 1996; Weiner, 2003). Even comics great Art Spiegelman described them as “the gateway drug to reading” (Milliot, 2005, p. 16). A teacher and mother of three boys, who were all very

reluctant to read and had difficulty in learning to read, said, “The first thing my eldest boy read because he wanted to was a comic book.” A year or two after this, he progressed to reading other books (Haugaard, 1973, p. 54; see also Weiner, 2005). After teacher librarian Barbara Mulrine added graphic novels to her library, students came to the library specifically for graphic novels, but would see conventional books and take them out. “They start to look around and find some pretty good stuff on the shelves” (Mulrine, 2004, p. 301).

U.K. librarian Mel Gibson (1993) discussed the “bait and switch” method of using graphic novels as a lure in the hope that teenagers progress to reading “real books.” When setting up a graphic novel collection in her library Gibson “found that the ‘bait and switch’ argument convinced more people than the argument that ‘graphic novels are valuable’” (p. 25). This has changed in the intervening fifteen years as more people agree that graphic novels are equivalent to conventional books (Carter, 2007). While Gravett (2005) concedes reading graphic novels may lead to reading conventional books, he finds this a “backhanded compliment” because graphic novels “are worth reading in their own right” (p. 11).

When teenagers choose to read graphic novels, or any other material not deemed as “worthwhile” as conventional books, their choice should be respected (P. Jones, 2007; Sanacore, 1992), given the impact of personal choice on teenager’s reading previously identified. What is read is not as important as the fact of reading (P. Jones *et al.*, 2006; Morrison, Bryan, & Chilcoat, 2002).

### ***Visual literacy***

A major aspect in the complexity of comics and graphic novels is the interaction between the visual and textual elements, their “unique visual language” (McCloud, 2000, p. 84) which helps “define the medium” (Harvey, 2005, p. 21). Rather than “mirroring” each other as may occur in a conventional book with illustrations, the text and image “interact in many different ways, and each of the two contributes its own share for the interpretation” (Saraceni, 2003, p. 28). Symbiosis is a common metaphor (Hipple & Goza, 1998; Khordoc, 2001) for this “interplay which blurs any clear boundaries between them” (Schmitt, 1992, p. 160). This makes separation of the text and images impossible (Kannenber, 2001; Khordoc, 2001; McQuillan, 2001). Each enhances the other and adds more to the story (A. Allison, 1996; Canis & Canis, 2005, p. 134; Hipple & Goza, 1998, p. 368; Howie & Greene,



2003, p. 24; Miller, 2005, p. 2; Wray, 2004), allowing “an intensity of experience mere text can’t hope to match” (Goldberg, 2004, p. 199).

Wordless graphic novels such as *Owly* by Andy Runton are exceptions and “demand considerable visual literacy” (Gibson, 1998). Chris Ware provided another exception in his short comic “I Guess.” The text tells one story while the pictures tell another. “The effect is disconcerting and takes a few readings to appreciate...it is impossible to read one narrative without slipping over into the other” (Versaci, 2007, p. 74). It is the reader of a graphic novel who must “meld the parts into a unified whole” (Goldsmith, 1998, p. 1510) and these skills of visual literacy are “learned competencies” (Hatfield, 2005, p. 41), although the skills may be acquired subconsciously through exposure to reading comics and graphic novels.

Visual literacy is the ability to decode images and pictures and determine their meaning (Callow, 1999). This “goes beyond the presented graphics and looks at the messages, meanings, and motivation behind a visual image” (Lyga & Lyga, 2004, p. 9). The written word has long held dominance in our culture (Kress, 2003; Varnum & Gibbons, 2001) and illustrated materials have been denigrated (Heer & Worcester, 2004; D. Schwartz, 1952). Electronic technologies, from television to the internet, have caused “an increasing dependence upon and interest in the visual” (Bolter, 1996, p. 270), thus visual literacy has escalated in importance (Howie & Greene, 2003; Kress, 2000).

Unlike previous generations, teenagers today have been raised in this visual world (Bucher & Manning, 2004; Fountain, 2004; M. Gorman, 2002; Kress, 2003; Versaci, 2001). They are “comfortable with non-text visual media and are therefore more at ease ‘reading’ the combination of words and pictures” which occur in graphic novels (M. Gorman, 2003, p. 9). It is this “appeal to teens who are more visually oriented” (Vaillancourt, 2000, p. 40) which makes graphic novels such a useful addition to a library’s collection (Young, 2007). YA librarian Rachel Wilson (2006) described a 13 year old who preferred graphic novels because “she gets more detail from pictures than words” (p. 33).

Such “a drastic change from traditional reading” (A. Schwartz & Rubinstein-Avila, 2006) can lead to problems for those who do not have well developed visual literacy and thus find problems when reading comics and graphic novels (Kleffel, 2004). Teachers, librarians or parents who do not consider comics suitable reading material, may experience this difficulty (Wilkins, 1993, p. 20). Lyga and Lyga “have

seen many an otherwise intelligent adult balk when faced with the prospect of reading a comic book” (2004, p. 20). Schjeldahl (2005) argued the difficulties comics present to people not used to them “limits their potential audience” and Wright described comics as “the most bewildering and alien medium to adult sensibilities” (2001, p. 88). Perhaps it is this failure to understand how to read them that causes “adults’ aversion to comics” (Ellis & Highsmith, 2000, p. 29). “The visual orientation” of young people (Goldsmith, 2005, p. 66) means “processing words and pictures on several levels at once seems natural, even preferable” (Gravett, 1997, p. 141). For those who have difficulty reading comics, graphic novelist Jessica Abel (2002) produced a two page comic “What is a graphic novel?” which includes (visual and textual) instructions on how to read the format (see Figure 2).

Learning how to “read images” is as much a skill as learning how to read text (Albright & Walsh, 2003; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1990; McPherson, 2006), thus “visual literacy has become an important part of the literacy curriculum” (La Marca & Macintyre, 2006, p. 113). Teachers from previous generations, when print literacies were valued over visual, may have difficulty incorporating the visual in their classroom (Albright & Walsh, 2003, p. 15), while their students may be “better equipped than teachers in terms of a critically insightful visual literacy” (Schraffenberger, 2007, p. 79). An Australian research project *Teachers Investigate Unequal Outcomes in Literacy: Cross-generational Perspectives* investigated differences between students’ and teachers’ visual literacy. Teachers involved “became aware of their tendency to privilege written and verbal modes of communication over visual and multi-modal forms” (Kerkham & Hutchison, 2005, p. 117). One of the teachers found “the visual was an easier entry point to the critical” with her Year 8 students (Maney, 2005, p. 99). Through the project teachers were able to enhance their understanding of “what it means to be literate” (p. 97). Graphic novels, being an amalgam of print and visual, may alleviate problems of teachers’ inexperience with visual literacy. Manga has been recommended for use “in the classroom to develop students’ analytical and critical reading of visual texts” (A. Schwartz & Rubinstein-Avila, 2006, p. 47).

Figure 2: "What is a graphic novel" by Jessica Abel

**Q. What is a "graphic novel"?**  
**A.** Graphic novels have a few defining characteristics. But first and most importantly, they are long comic books. (I'll get back to the rest.)

**Q. What is a "comic book"?**  
**A.** You may think you know the answer to this one, but stick with me a few minutes: A comic book is a magazine or bound book that contains "comics" (also known as "comix"). Comics is a medium for expressing information and/or artistic ideas that is defined by

...and that's it. However, comics also often feature such things as "word balloons," "panel borders," "thought balloons," and sometimes "thought balloons."

It's also common to have the sequential images delineated by "panels," which are surrounded by lines called "panel borders."

These techniques aren't necessary to make comics, but they are quite common. There are other common, familiar, but even more optional elements of many comics, such as certain kinds of characters, like funny animals or superheroes. But I'll get to that in a minute.

Here's how to read a comic:  
 1. Just as in our written language, you read the elements of a comic starting with...  
 2. ...the upper-left corner of a page, and then you read across to the right...  
 3. ...before proceeding down to the next row...  
 4. ...and then the next.

comics are a nested system.  
 when you finish reading...  
 ...everything within one panel...  
 You even use the same rule for actions within a panel.  
 ...to the panels themselves!  
 You apply the same left-to-right, top-to-bottom reading order...

images used in a sequence...

©2002 Jessica Abel. This piece was first published by Artbomb.net

by Jessica Abel For educational use only. Page 1 of 2. See more of Jessica Abel's work at [www.ARTBABB.COM](http://www.ARTBABB.COM)

You think you're funny, huh?  
 Hee, hee.  
 I'll deal with you later!

Wait a minute, you may be saying, "what ABOUT those superheroes?"  
 Ahem.  
 OK. "Comics" is the name of a medium, like "film" or "painting."  
 You don't think "film" means movies about gangsters, or cowboys, do you? Film is a way to express ideas. Any ideas you want to express.

Comics is like that. It's a container for ideas.  
 mmm...  
 Not a lot of vitamins in this kind, but you get a taste for it.  
 I'm done talking about it.  
 my favorite flavor!  
 ok, let's stop.  
 delicious and nutritious!

OK, so what is a "graphic novel," besides a comic book?  
 Well, "graphic" means "told in images," not "naughty pictures."  
 But "novel" is used less precisely. The term "graphic novel" is often applied to short-story collections as well. I don't know why.  
 I think "novel" is just used to mean "long book."

Hardcover or softcover, graphic novels have enough pages to need a square spine...  
 So they can sit on the shelf with your other books.

The term is also sometimes used to imply adult-level content - i.e., comics are kids' stuff, but graphic novels are for adults. But then sometimes they call long kids' comics "graphic novels," too.  
 But don't worry...  
 The great thing about comics is, you can get an idea of their context just by flipping them open!

©2002 Jessica Abel. This piece was first published by Artbomb.net

by Jessica Abel For educational use only. Page 2 of 2. See more of Jessica Abel's work at [www.ARTBABB.COM](http://www.ARTBABB.COM)

## Concerns about Graphic Novels

Young people are framed as being irresponsible and incapable of being trusted with tasks that matter. This justifies diverse societal efforts to control them, including...bans on films and books. (Holm *et al.*, 2006, p. 86)

Being repositories for books and other materials, libraries, particularly those collecting for young people, may be in danger of imposing censorship. The core professional responsibilities of librarianship include the provision of diverse materials in collections and a commitment to oppose censorship (IFLA & FAIFE, 1999). The Australian Library and Information Association's (ALIA) *Statement on Free Access to Information* (2005) maintains,

Information services have particular responsibilities in supporting and sustaining the free flow of information and ideas including:...

2. adopting an inclusive approach in developing and implementing policies regarding access to information and ideas that are relevant to the library and information service concerned, irrespective of the controversial nature of the information or ideas;...

4. catering for interest in contemporary issues without promoting or suppressing particular beliefs and ideas;...

6. resisting attempts by individuals or groups within their communities to restrict access to information and ideas while at the same time recognising that powers of censorship are legally vested in state and federal governments.

In the past comic books were “the domain of the young: children, adolescents and young adults” (Wright, 2001, p. xvi), but not all graphic novels are suitable for children and teenagers (National Coalition Against Censorship, American Library Association, & Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, 2006). Titles aimed at mature readers may contain “nudity, sexual situations, adult language, graphic violence, and recreational drug use” (Crawford, 2003, p. 17). While comics are no longer “just for kids” (Versaci, 2001, p. 63), this opinion is still held by some and can cause problems in libraries.

Those unfamiliar with graphic novels may believe the word “‘graphic’ refers to sexual content” (Christensen, 2006, p. 230). Such content can be found in titles written for adults, but the word graphic “acknowledges the artistic representation of the story” (*ibid.*). If “objectionable content” is present, the visual nature may lead to a more “visceral” reaction (Goldsmith, 1998, p. 1510) than the same material in a conventional book which is textual and “much less obvious and offensive” (Gravett, 1997, p. 140).

The violence in comic books has been described as “gratuitous, excessive, and graphic” (Lavin, 1998a, p. 41), but comics as a whole are no more violent than any other format (Wilkins, 1993). In discussing manga, Brenner (2007b) noted that only

titles aimed at adult readers depicted “bloody, brutal, and vicious” violence (p. 101). Such visual content may lead to detractors “sensationalizing odd scenes from various stories,” rather the looking at the context of the scene within the wider story (Sabin, 1996, p. 234).

Comics have traditionally depicted women in a sexist manner (Cline & McBride, 1983; Lavin, 1998c; Marsh & Millard, 2000; Whelehan & Sonnet, 1997) and promoted a “macho ethos” (Hudson, 1995, p. 56). “Women in super-hero comics are typically voluptuous and wear skimpy skin-tight costumes,” to cater to the predominantly male audience (Crawford, 2003, p. 19). These sexually attractive female characters are known as “Good Girl Art” (Sabin, 1996, p. 231), “pretty women, usually scantily clad...[and] pinup-type pictures of leggy, busty females” (Goulart, 2004, p. 175).

While manga caters to a more diverse audience, translator Fred Schodt (1996) finds a “relentless pandering to the lowbrow tastes of readers and a more than occasional glorification of sex and violence” in manga (p. 28). The differences between Japanese and western culture and humour can lead to what may be construed as inappropriate content by western readers (Brenner, 2007b; Patten, 2004). Casual nudity is common in manga (Kan, 2003, p. 16) as is fan service, “glimpses at revealing female or male body shapes and/or undergarments” included solely for readers’ pleasure (B. Allison, 2009). This can be aimed at men or women (*ibid.*), but “male [characters] gazing at females who are either naked or shown in their underwear is a common motif” in shōnen manga, series written for boys and men (A. Allison, 1996, p. 29). Cooper-Chen (2001) undertook a study of the shōnen magazine *Weekly Young Jump* and concluded the portrayal of women “shows pervasive gender differentiation” (p. 110) and “results in a hierarchy that victimizes women” (p. 106).

*Love and Rockets* by Gilbert and Jaime Hernandez, “one of the most influential and critically acclaimed comics of the 1980s” (Reid, 2001), and *The Sandman* by Neil Gaiman were two of the first (western) comic book series to have “as many female as male readers” (Versaci, 2007, p. 32). *Elfquest* was another early series with a large female audience (Cornog & Perper, 2009). The ongoing publication in English of shōjo manga, including U.S. romance publisher Harlequin’s manga imprint Pink Ginger Blossom (Cha, 2006a; Glazer, 2005), and more women entering the western comics industry (McCloud, 2000) have led to a greater availability of

titles without “provocative images of women” (Crawford, 2003, p. 20).

If a public library receives a complaint\* regarding an item, whether a graphic novel or other format (often from a parent following their child borrowing or reading the item), the usual response is that public libraries collect material for all ages and it is the parent’s responsibility to supervise what their children read and borrow (S. B. Anderson, 2007; P. Jones *et al.*, 2006; National Coalition Against Censorship *et al.*, 2006; M. Sullivan, 2005). Extreme cases, where parents ask for titles to be removed from the library (Goldsmith, 2005; Miller, 2005), are more common in the U.S. than Australia. The American Library Association’s Office of Intellectual Freedom conducted a survey of U.S. public libraries and a quarter of respondents had “experienced problems or challenges to the graphic novels” in their collections (National Coalition Against Censorship *et al.*, 2006, p. 8). In some unfortunate cases titles were removed, although usually by a government official rather than a librarian (Reid, 2006d).

In summary, the literature on teenagers’ reading, the format of graphic novels and their collection in libraries is diverse. Much of the information about library collections is anecdotal from librarians working in the field. Academic writing often discusses graphic novels as an aspect of literature, rather than active research investigating collections in libraries or readers of the format. The discrepancies in the research as to whether teenagers enjoy and practise leisure time reading to the same extent as their younger counterparts also need clarification. This led to the formulation of the research project as a contribution to the academic field, encompassing graphic novel collections in libraries and teenagers’ opinion of reading in general and graphic novels in particular.

---

\* The term challenge is used in the U.S. literature, for example by the National Coalition Against Censorship *et al.* (2006).

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The research utilized three methods to collect data, combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Focus groups with teenagers were convened to investigate their views on reading, libraries and the graphic novel format. A postal survey of public libraries in Australia was conducted to determine whether public libraries had graphic novel collections and how these collections were selected, acquired, catalogued, housed and promoted. Public and school librarians who had graphic novel collections in their library were interviewed to determine their thoughts on their collections and the format in general. The methods will be described in the order they were undertaken, rather than the above order. The survey was conducted first due to students and teachers only being available during school term time, and data collection commencing in January 2006.

#### **Research Methods**

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to ensure the widest and richest possible picture of the subject was uncovered. “Combining qualitative and quantitative methods can give overall findings that are statistically rigorous and rich in contextualised meanings the respondents ascribe to the topic” (M. Walter, 2006, p. 11).

Qualitative research methods were chosen for parts of the research because “the ultimate goal of qualitative research is to understand those being studied from their perspective” (G. E. Gorman & Clayton, 2005, p. 3) and the phenomena to be studied “are social in nature” (Powell & Connaway, 2004, p. 59). This allowed a “fuller and richer understanding through immersion in the entire activity” of reading and graphic novel use by teenagers (G. E. Gorman & Clayton, 2005, p. 6) because qualitative research is “grounded in the lived experiences of people” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 2). The results from the quantitative survey were more amenable to being generalised to the whole population (M. Walter, 2006, p. 23).

Triangulation was achieved through more than one research method and different population groups (G. E. Gorman & Clayton, 2005; Powell & Connaway, 2004). Triangulation “clarifies meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is seen” (Stake, 2000, p. 444). This strategy improved the reliability and validity, and thus the quality, of the research (Creswell, 2002; G. E. Gorman & Clayton, 2005). The advantages of each method were enhanced and weaknesses

diminished (M. Walter, 2006). In this case, the survey and interviews investigated librarians' opinions and provided information on their graphic novel collections and the focus group discussions provided the point of view of teenagers. The two qualitative methods provided a richer picture of participant's individual opinions and the quantitative survey covered a much larger sample.

This is not a linear process, as each research method may impact on the practice and format of the others. For example, some of the survey results informed and changed the questions asked of librarians in the interviews. Additionally, the responsive nature of focus groups and interviews meant new questions and ideas generated during one, could be used in subsequent sessions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Thus not all focus groups and interviews used an identical set of questions.

Responses from the three research methods were confidential. All participants from the focus groups and interviews were assigned pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality. This included teenagers, any family members or friends they mentioned, teachers, librarians, libraries and schools. Teenagers were assigned first name pseudonyms, to distinguish them from librarians' surname pseudonyms. The first time each teenager is mentioned his or her age is noted.

### **Survey of Public Libraries**

A postal survey of public libraries in Australia was undertaken in January and February 2006. The questions determined:

- whether public libraries had graphic novel collections;
- how collections were selected, acquired, catalogued, housed and promoted.

The data collection method of a postal survey was chosen because there were a large number of respondents (167) and the wide geographic area of the whole of Australia was to be covered (Creswell, 2002, p. 403; Lovey, 2000, p. 43). This data collection method was chosen to “describe trends in the data rather than offer rigorous explanations” (Creswell, 2002, p. 396).

Sending the questionnaire by email was considered, but the literature suggested traditional mail based surveys received a better response (Hayslett & Wildemuth, 2004; Powell & Connaway, 2004; Schonlau, Fricker, & Elliott, 2002); thus postal dissemination and return was employed. In addition, a survey “distributed electronically will reach only those who have access to and are comfortable using e-



mail [or other online means]" (Powell & Connaway, 2004, p. 126). Some respondents in small rural or remote libraries may not have adequate or reliable internet connections, thus electronic distribution could cause problems.

The *Directory of Australian Public Libraries* (Bundy & Bundy, 2006) was considered as a source listing all public libraries in Australia. Although published every three years, at the time of compiling the sample (late 2005) the most recent edition was the sixth, published in 2003. An online listing of public libraries was deemed more up to date. The website *Australian Libraries Gateway* lists public libraries in Australia (National Library of Australia, 2005). The site listed 1527 public libraries, but the latest data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (at the time of survey distribution) stated the number of public libraries as 1716 (ABS, 2005). A combination of lists of public libraries from State Libraries and public library authorities of Territories, the *Australian Libraries Gateway* and local government websites, provided the final population listing.

A sample was selected from the population using random numbers, in order to allow generalisation of results to all public libraries in Australia. Two caveats were placed on libraries included in the sample. Each local government council provides public libraries for their area. Some local governments only have one library, but many have more than one. These libraries are a part of the council's library system. Only one library from any library system was chosen for the sample because it was considered that within a system, libraries would be similar. Mobile Libraries, Railway Express Services, Library Depots and very small branches that were only open a couple of hours a week (an example being Nangwarry Branch Library in South Australia) were not included in the sample. These collections were often very small (between 2000 and 4000 items) and may be rotated from a main library (Hawke & Jenks, 2005). This last exclusion, of Library Depots and very small branches, was not always easy to determine and some may have been inadvertently included within the sample or discarded incorrectly.

The literature was surveyed in order to develop a high quality questionnaire (Babbie, 1990; Berg, 2004; Creswell, 2003; Fowler, 1998; G. E. Gorman & Clayton, 2005; Hinds, 2000; Powell & Connaway, 2004; Schonlau *et al.*, 2002). The final questionnaire was an A5 size eight page booklet. Appendix B lists the questions, although not in the original questionnaire format.

Mangione (1998) and Dillman (2000) provided suggestions for an effective

cover letter to accompany a questionnaire, including the characteristics of keeping the letter to one page and printing on letterhead. The cover letter included a definition of a graphic novel and information regarding the confidentiality of responses and was printed on Curtin University letterhead (Appendix A). The survey, all letters, and other correspondence (for this and the other two research methods) included the following statement in the footer:

This study has been approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee. If needed, verification of approval can be obtained either by writing to the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee, c/- Office of Research and Development, Curtin University of Technology, GPO Box U1987, Perth WA 6845 or by telephoning 08 9266 2784.

The definition of a graphic novel was placed in the cover letter rather than within the questionnaire itself. The definition was a paragraph long and did not fit within the eight pages of the questionnaire. The positioning of the definition may have caused confusion for respondents who were not familiar with graphic novels. A condensed, sentence long definition within the questionnaire at the appropriate question may have lessened confusion.

### ***Survey Reminders***

Reminders were very important because just under a third of the questionnaires were returned before the first reminder (see Figure 3, p. 46). Mangione (1998) and Dillman (2000) mapped schedules of reminders to improve response rates. Ideas from both schedules were combined and two reminders sent by mail and a third telephoned, with two weeks between each reminder. The first postal reminder was postcard size and the second included a reworded cover letter, a replacement questionnaire and reply-paid envelope. Every questionnaire had an individual number corresponding to the list of libraries in the sample. Each library was removed from the list as their survey was returned and the number removed from the questionnaire (to ensure confidentiality). Thus, reminders were only sent to libraries that had not returned a questionnaire.

Telephone reminders were essential in increasing the response rate because slightly over half of the questionnaires were returned before this reminder (see Figure 3, p. 46). The differences in individual libraries and local councils in receiving mail caused problems which could only be resolved by telephoning non-responding libraries. Some respondents were encouraged to complete the survey which they had previously disregarded and some were willing to answer the

questions by telephone. A few respondents said they were too busy to complete it and this was helpful to know. Another respondent said she had been busy and had not completed it. After thanking her for considering it, she continued by saying she did want to help with the research and asked to be sent another copy. This was a very pleasant outcome.

Having a name within the library to personally address a letter was useful, and was acquired in some instances through the telephone call. One respondent said if a letter is not marked "Personal" it would be opened by the Records Department and "could end up anywhere." In this case, the librarian had never seen any of the three mailings. Some libraries had different positions responsible for acquisitions and junior collections, so more than one person had to complete different parts of the questionnaire. A couple of these respondents had only answered questions relevant to their work and not completed the rest. The telephone reminder enabled encouragement to send it on to their colleague who could complete the remainder and return it.

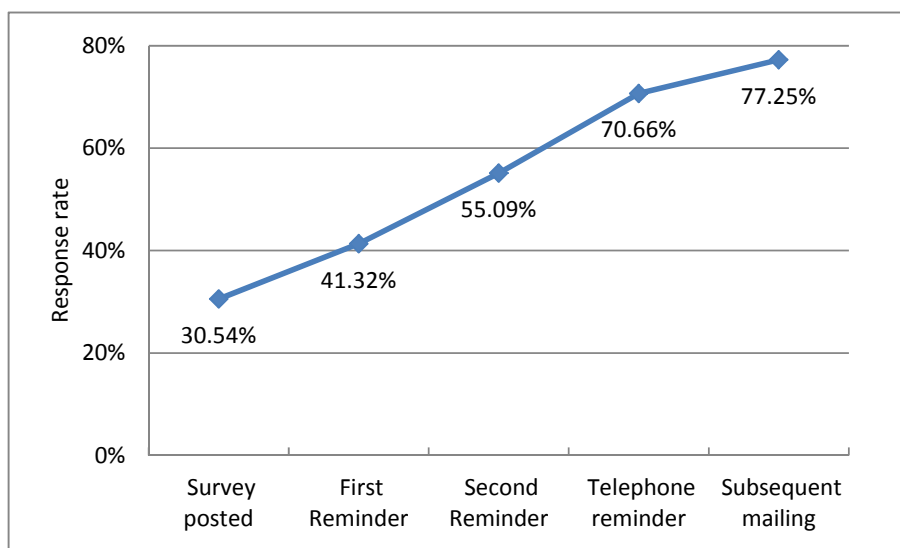
These problems could only be resolved by a conversation, thus the telephone reminder was invaluable. The time and cost involved in telephoning libraries that had not returned questionnaires was well worth the effort in terms of the increase in responses.

**Return Rate**

The return rate was improved by 46% (from 31% to 77%) through the schedule of reminders. Table 2 and Figure 3 show the number of responses received after each reminder. The fact that public library staff were surveyed may have contributed to the high response rate, this group being more likely to be interested in the results of the survey.

**Table 2: Response after each reminder**

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Total	Percentage
Survey posted	4	7	3	10	7		8	12	51	30.54%
First Reminder		7	2	1	2		2	4	18	10.78%
Second Reminder		3	2	2	7	2	3	4	23	13.77%
Telephone reminder		7		8	7		3	1	26	15.57%
Subsequent mailing		2		2		6	1		11	6.59%
Total	4	26	8	24	23	8	19	21	133	77.25%
Chose not to complete			1	1			2		4	2.40%

**Figure 3: Response rate after each reminder**

### *Survey challenges*

When determining the survey sample, the number selected from each state or territory could have been proportional to the number of libraries located in each state or territory. With this number ranging from nine libraries in the ACT to almost 400 in NSW this proved problematic and a proportional sample was decided against.

Table 3 compares the actual sample chosen to the number of libraries in each state and territory and a proportional sample.

**Table 3: Sample from each State and Territory**

	Total population	Proportional sample	Actual sample
ACT	9	1	5
NSW	392	45	30
NT	34	4	10
QLD	308	35	30
SA	138	16	25
TAS	48	5	10
VIC	244	28	25
WA	230	26	25
Total	1403	160	160

It was assumed individual libraries within a local government library system would be similar. It was subsequently discovered this was not always the case and led to the sample not being as representative as anticipated.

After talking with librarians and library officers through telephone reminders, the differences between library systems were better appreciated. Some had centralised selection of materials for all branches, some had only centralised processing and cataloguing, and others had total autonomy in their selection, processing and cataloguing of materials. Some systems had graphic novel collections at all branches and some had a collection at only one branch.

Four of the respondents said they were a smaller branch and thus had no graphic novels, but another library in the system did have a graphic novel collection. The questionnaire had been completed for that library, which was not initially included in the sample. One of these branches said there were four libraries in their system and the selected branch was the only one that did not have a graphic novel collection.

---

\* This final number of the sample was 167, as explained over the page.

Only two Tasmanian libraries responded to the survey. After telephoning the State Library of Tasmania, it was suggested the survey be sent to the seven metropolitan Tasmanian libraries. This increased the sample to 167 libraries and led to Tasmanian survey respondents being purposively selected rather than randomly.

As a third reminder, telephoning libraries which had not responded was very effective in increasing response rate, but these additional responses may have compromised the validity of the sample.

A small rural library in Queensland said their collection of about 4000 items was selected by the State Library of Queensland (SLQ), thus the library officer could not answer the questionnaire. After telephoning this library it was ascertained there was a YA collection with some graphic novels which were well-used. The library officer could answer questions about how the graphic novels were shelved and used, but SLQ had to be contacted to answer questions about selection and cataloguing. Among other small rural libraries in Queensland which were telephoned, the same joint answering was implemented.

When telephoning respondents, some did not know what graphic novels were. Rather than repeating the definition provided in the questionnaire, they were explained as comic books like *Asterix* by Goscinny and Uderzo or *Tintin* by Hergé. While the two series are graphic novels, they have been collected by libraries for many years, long before the term graphic novel came into common usage and libraries developed graphic novel collections. The two series are so well known that some people may think of them solely as children's books, thus distorting the perception of telephoned respondents as to what constitutes a graphic novel. One interviewed library with an extensive and separately shelved graphic novel collection did not shelve the *Asterix* series among the graphic novels. *Asterix* titles were interfiled with children's conventional fiction books. Thus a library which holds titles from the two series may not necessarily have a graphic novel collection, as stated by two South Australian survey respondents. Unfortunately some telephoned libraries may have misunderstood the reference to *Asterix* and *Tintin* and stated they had a graphic novel collection when they only held these two series, possibly including some of the small rural libraries in Queensland mentioned above.

Correspondingly libraries may have returned the questionnaire, saying they did not collect graphic novels because they did not know about the format or considered a small number of graphic novels did not constitute a collection. The possibility of

both instances decreased the randomness of the sample. Therefore some of the results may not be generalisable to all Australian public libraries, but nevertheless are more generalisable to libraries which are interested in, or collect, graphic novels.

### **Focus Groups with Teenagers**

Focus groups were held with forty teenagers from metropolitan Perth high schools in October and November 2006, to garner their opinions on reading and libraries. Issues investigated included:

- teenagers' attitudes to reading and what they read, including what they thought of graphic novels;
- teenagers' opinions of assigned school reading;
- teenagers' views on libraries and their use of libraries;
- teenagers' use of the internet and their attitudes toward online compared to print reading.

Investigating teenagers can “present unique concerns” (Wilkinson, 2004, p. 128). To counteract the challenges, much research investigating teenagers' views and opinions utilizes focus groups. A focus group is “an informal discussion among selected individuals about specific topics” (Beck *et al* cited in Wilkinson, 1998, p. 182).

The focus group method is “highly feasible” when working with children (Wood-Charlesworth & Rodwell, 1997, p. 1205) and works just as well with teenagers and other hard-to-reach groups (Berg, 2004, p. 123; Powell & Connaway, 2004, p. 154). Group members are “on a more even footing” with each other and the researcher (Berg, 2004, p. 127), due to a more natural and relaxed atmosphere (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 114). Focus groups have been used effectively with teenagers in public libraries (Vaillancourt, 2000, p. 16) and successfully in schools (Page, 2005; Wilkinson, 2004, p. 178). Haynes (2004) conducted a library evaluation and concluded surveys were not appropriate in soliciting children and teenager's views on the library service. Focus groups were found to be a practical alternative. In a U.K. study of teenagers' library use and reading habits, focus groups were held at schools. “The focus groups were most useful for gaining the collective opinion of teenagers” (Dodds & Cheesman, 2003, p. 15). Focus groups were used with eighth graders in a U.S. school and they provided “a rich source of information” (Campher *et al.*, 1996, p. 7). In Australia, focus groups with children and teenagers were used

to solicit views on internet use at home (Aisbett, 2001) and Page (2005) found the method beneficial with teenagers in Australian schools.

Wood-Charlesworth and Rodwell (1997) recommended groups of between six and eight children, whereas Page (2005) found five teenagers to a group worked well. The similarity between this project and Page's research, led to seven sessions of five to six teenagers being conducted. Wood-Charlesworth and Rodwell (1997) found age to be a factor in determining group structure. Different age groups can have very different opinions, therefore focus groups are recommended to have homogenous age ranges (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 178), thus participants in each group were from the same class in their school.

The intent of focus groups is to "find out the range of feelings and opinions on the topic" (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 201). The fact that responses are in the teenagers' own words is important (V. A. Walter, 1995; Wood-Charlesworth & Rodwell, 1997) and the flexibility of focus groups means unexpected issues may emerge during discussions (Widdows, Hensler, & Wyncott, 1991; Wilkinson, 2004).

Group dynamics...can produce an exciting synergy in the group as people are reminded of things they want to say by the comments of others...the results can be unusually rich. (V. A. Walter, 1995, p. 34)

Interactions between teenagers did stimulate discussion and participants reacted to comments made by each other. This makes the focus group method particularly useful for garnering teenagers' views because they can be unwilling to participate in activities. A focus group provides a less threatening environment for those "who are unwilling to talk without peer support" (G. E. Gorman & Clayton, 2005, p. 49).

As the researcher I was also the focus group moderator and led the sessions, with guidance from a written list of discussion points (Appendix E), as recommended by Gorman and Clayton (2005, p. 196). A selection of graphic novels was displayed during each session (Appendix F), given that the best way to define the format is with examples (Abel & Madden, 2008, p. 4). A page long list of these titles and other graphic novels of interest to the age group was given to students on completion of the session, as a take home reminder if they had become interested in the format and a small token of thanks for their participation (Appendix G). The list included some web comics for those more interested in online reading.

Discussions were audio recorded, and when the discussion points were completed, students were asked to brainstorm their ideas on butcher's paper. This



was suggested by a teacher from one of the high schools as a way to engage the students and was successful in this regard. Much of the brainstorming was repetition of topics previously discussed, but new information was also gleaned. As a start to the discussion, students were told they were the experts in the dialogue and were informing the “ignorant adult researcher” (Thomson, 1987, p. 231). Digital audio recordings of sessions were transcribed in full following each session, during which categories for data analysis were tentatively developed.

### ***Sampling for the focus groups***

Non-probability sampling often occurs in social science research because it may not be possible to select large scale samples, for example, with hard to research populations (Berg, 2004, p. 34). This is particularly the case when studying teenagers. Although a random sample could be selected, ensuring the teenagers in the sample agreed to the research (and their parents gave consent) would be difficult, thus negating the random sample.

Finding teenagers to take part in research can prove problematic. In this instance they could not be accessed through a public library because a wide range of teenagers were sought, including reluctant readers who may have no connection with libraries. High schools provided the solution to this problem. This method of accessing teenagers’ participation has proven successful in other studies (Loubeau, 2000; Shenton & Dixon, 2004; Sieber, 1992).

Purposive sampling was used to select the schools to take part in the research (Creswell, 2002, p. 194). The researcher had contacts with teacher librarians in metropolitan Perth high schools from previous work as a public librarian. These teacher librarians were telephoned to ask if they were interested in participating. Those who agreed were sent an information package including: a letter detailing the research and requirements of the school, teachers and students (Appendix C); a letter requesting permission of the school’s principal (Appendix D); a list of questions to guide the focus group discussion (Appendix E); and a letter to parents/guardians requesting their permission (Appendix H). The researcher’s current police clearance was provided to the school as a condition of interacting with students younger than 18 years.

The principal, teacher librarian and an English teacher from each school had to agree to participate, which led to interest being shown by some teacher librarians,

who were unable to convince their colleagues of the worth of the research. One such teacher librarian was subsequently interviewed as a librarian with a graphic novel collection, as a part of the third research method to be described presently.

Most high schools have more than one class for each school year. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) recommended using participants from the same school class because these children “tend to resemble each other more than they resemble” those from other classes in a school (Bunbury, 1995, p. 35). Therefore only one class from each school was selected to take part. Depending on teacher willingness, this was a Year 8, 9 or 10 English class. All students in the class were asked to participate and return a signed permission slip. Five or six students who had permission were selected at random (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 173). Unfortunately in some classes only five or six students had signed permission, thus these groups were self selected. The average age of participants was 14, with a range from 13 to 16.

A number of studies of young people have used such purposive sampling. Love and Hamston (2003) examined “one group of teenage boys in one specifically situated context in Australia” (p. 162), thus their sample was not representative. Agosto and Hughes-Hassell (2006) sought to “create a very detailed description of a smaller pool of participants than quantitative research typically employs” (p. 1400), as was achieved through the focus groups of this research.

As the students who took part in the focus groups were not a representative sample, generalization of the results to all teenagers is not possible (Agosto & Hughes-Hassell, 2006; Creswell, 2002; Love & Hamston, 2001; Martino, 2001). While not generalizable, the results may be transferable and useful to others in similar situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 297). The results of the focus groups allow an insight into what some teenagers think of libraries, reading and graphic novels and can “inform...librarians in other situations” (H. Fisher, 2003, p. 5).

### ***Challenges encountered during focus groups***

Focus group research is not without difficulties. Participants often repeated themselves and sometimes contradicted previous statements, conversations went off topic and needed to be reined in, and participants talked over the top of each other. A number of techniques were utilised to overcome these challenges.

As with any data gathering method, the people the researcher may wish to be

included may not be available to take part in the research. One class at Tricoryne High School were lower achieving in English and were described by their teacher as extremely reluctant readers, discussed in the literature as the perfect audience for graphic novels (Crawford, 2004; Kan, 2003; Miller, 2005). None of these students returned parental permission forms, despite encouragement from their teacher and her hope they would participate. The lack of parental permission meant no students from this class could take part in the research. Another class at Tricoryne High School did participate due to return of parental permission forms.

As moderator, I sat among the teenagers during the discussion. This helped participants feel more comfortable talking to the “supposed expert” (although the teenagers may not have agreed, in many cases they were more expert on the topic). Interactions amongst peers also contributed to this reassurance. Participants were assured their opinions were important and necessary for furthering the research, although some students did not need any reassurance. Some were surprised and pleased that an adult wanted to hear their opinions, a rare occurrence in school. When talking to high school students, Reeves (2004) noted “how little opportunity many students get to talk about reading on their own terms” (p. 30).

A group of teenagers taken out of class will always fall to talking about what they did on the weekend or their friend’s latest boyfriend. The focus groups were no exception and at times discussion went off topic. Allowing this for a moment helped improve participants’ comfort level, and thus their willingness to participate, and the moderator saying, “The next question is...” got the discussion back on topic.

More than one person talking at once or one person dominating the discussion (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 115) can occur in focus groups. Ground rules established at the beginning of the session helped to combat these difficulties. Initially, participants were reluctant to be the first to talk. Individually asking the first question of each student solved this problem and was a useful tactic if one person was dominating the conversation. The moderator saying, “Thank you Johnny. What do you think Sally?” invited another participant to contribute.

Despite the rule of one person talking at a time, participants did talk over the top of each other when excited about the topic. One student would be asked to elaborate and others who had been talking were subsequently asked to repeat what they had said. Despite this, during transcription there were times when particular students did not repeat what they said. Thus on occasion the audio recording was

indecipherable. This had to be accepted, but one occurrence was particularly irritating. After each session notes were written on memorable statements from the discussion. During transcription these were on hand to check their veracity. One such statement was, “Tom [age 14] will only read sports magazines and nothing else, not even the internet. He prefers to do things rather than read about them.” The first part of the statement was confirmed in the transcript, but “he prefers to do things rather than read about them” was not. Tom had a soft voice and had been reticent to speak, but there were a number of times when he was coaxed to voice his opinions. The recordings of the times he spoke were carefully replayed. The statement was still not found, although there were a few times when his voice was inaudible. I had felt this statement covered my impression of him well. It may have occurred during one of the inaudible parts, but it may have been an impression and not something he actually said.

While the interaction among focus group participants can stimulate discussion, this may be problematic if peer support influences the opinions participants express as their own (Cotterell, 2007, p. 161). A possible example was when Teresa (age 14) said, “No, I didn’t” when asked if she liked reading *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton, an assigned text in her English class. Her fellow students said they liked it, and Teresa added, “It’s alright.” It is difficult to ascertain which answer is her actual opinion, although the latter was not entirely positive. She was at most ambivalent.

Dixon (1996) felt peer influence was a particular problem for those who “fear peer disapproval if they express an interest in reading” (p. 54). At times Dixon’s belief was conspicuously absent. In one group the majority disliked reading, but Melissa, and to a lesser extent Marika (both age 14), were willing to talk about the books they liked and enjoyable reading experiences. During another session, the opposite occurred. All but one student were keen readers. When Joanna (age 15) stated her dislike of reading, her classmate Adam (age 16) jokingly teased her about this. Joanna was not bothered and happily discussed her dislike.

The question of participant honesty can be an issue when soliciting people’s opinions and views (Bouma & Ling, 2004), although “inconsistent statements may not necessarily stem from intended deception” (Mellon, 1990b, p. 79). Apart from Teresa’s there were other inconsistencies noted among participants. Jason (age 15) sometimes contradicted himself and Rita (age 15) had a tendency to change her mind. This could have been due to peer influence, or not being sure of their opinion.

Rita often answered, “It depends.” It is unlikely any inconsistencies were deliberate untruths. All participants were interested in talking about the topics and willing to impart their opinions, even if some were more vocal than others.

In order to overcome inconsistencies, similar questions were asked at different points in the discussion. Issues were first discussed and then brainstormed on butchers’ paper. All answers by participants on a particular topic were collated and compared before reaching conclusions.

While some problems were encountered in using focus groups as a research method, this did not adversely affect the quality of the data gathered. Focus groups were a worthwhile method for encouraging teenagers to open up and share their opinions and ideas with an unknown researcher.

### **Interviews with Librarians**

Interviews were held with selected public and school librarians whose libraries collected graphic novels in 2007. The issues investigated were:

- attitudes of librarians to the place of graphic novel collections in public and school libraries;
- how graphic novel collections were managed and any problems overcome;
- whether graphic novels encouraged recreational reading among teenagers, or led to reading other materials.

The purpose of the interviews was “to explore the topic fully from the perspective of the participant” (Travers, 2006, p. 95). The interviews were rewarding for both the researcher and librarian interviewed. “Talking with an interviewer about things that matter to the interviewee and doing so in a way that provides appropriate feedback often provides subjects with an intangible yet intrinsic reward” (Berg, 2004, p. 92). In some cases librarians interviewed learnt more about the topic from the interview. The interviews enabled exploration of causation, so that the reasons why things happened were revealed (G. E. Gorman & Clayton, 2005, p. 125). Very general questions were asked to “encourage participants to ‘open up’ and lead the interview and give their perspectives with as little influence from the researcher as possible” (Bouma & Ling, 2004, p. 177).

A list of interview questions was developed (Appendix J). These were a guide rather than a script because on occasion the interviews lead in directions not

originally anticipated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This flexibility allowed additional questions to be asked and respondents could introduce other issues (Travers, 2006), such as asking about findings from the focus groups with teenagers. This led to the interviews being more like conversations, rather than just question and answer sessions (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Travers, 2006).

Interviewed librarians were selected from the researcher's network of contacts and knowledge of libraries in Perth with graphic novel collections. Interviews were held with six librarians. These were initially to be all public librarians, but after contact with teacher librarians in high schools through the focus groups, teacher librarians were included in the sample and comprised half the interviewees. The initial contact letter included information regarding confidentiality of responses and was printed on Curtin University letterhead. Participants signed this letter prior to the interview to ensure they were participating voluntarily and understood they could withdraw their permission at any time (Appendix I).

Digital audio recordings of interviews were transcribed in full following each interview, during which categories for data analysis were tentatively developed.

### **Pre-testing**

All research instruments were piloted with small samples to pre-test and determine any problems (Berg, 2004, p. 91; Bouma & Ling, 2004, p. 83; Powell & Connaway, 2004, p. 139). This enabled discovery of the time frame necessary for completion, checking the questions making up the instrument, assessing the researcher's skills as interviewer and facilitator, and improving self-confidence in these roles (G. E. Gorman & Clayton, 2005).

The survey was pre-tested by five public librarians in Perth. While completing the questions they took note of the time taken, and made suggestions as to how the questionnaire could be improved. The data collected was not included in the analysis (G. E. Gorman & Clayton, 2005, p. 98) and respondents' suggestions were incorporated in the final questionnaire (Dillman, 2000, p. 146).

The first focus group session and interview were designated pre-tests. If anything had gone awry changes would have been made. As both went to plan, the data gathered was used in the analysis.

### **Limitations of the Research Methods**

The three research methods provided both a rich picture of teenagers' and librarians' views on the topics discussed and covered the large number of public libraries surveyed. It is recognised, however, that there are limitations to mixed methods approaches (Creswell, 2003).

As discussed previously, the primary limitations with regards to the quantitative data were:

- Due to telephone follow-ups for unreturned surveys, more Qld than WA libraries were in the sample.
- It was possible that some survey respondents were unsure whether they had a graphic novel collection or not due to the definition of graphic novels being only included in the cover letter, not the survey itself.

Qualitative data does not pretend to the same level of generalizability or reliability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), but a number of limitations on sample size and make up of the focus groups and interviews were noted:

- Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants for the focus groups and interviews which meant samples were limited in terms of geographical location.
- Problems of internal contradiction among participants is a recognised issue when investigating people's opinions (Bouma & Ling, 2004; Mellon, 1990b). As noted, this was countered by a comparative analysis of all statements made by participants, with the most common taken to be correct.
- When working with teenagers and children, peer pressure might influence individual's statements (Cotterell, 2007; Dixon, 1996), which was found in some cases. As above, comparative analysis of all students' statements allowed judgement to be made in such cases.

While the problems with the sample for the survey meant the results cannot be generalised to all Australian public libraries, results may be transferable and useful to others in similar situations. As is the case with results from qualitative research methods (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).





### **Chapter 4: Talking to Teenagers**

The three research methods were conducted in the order described in Chapter 3: survey of libraries, focus groups with teenagers, then interviews with librarians. This was necessary due to students and teachers only being available during school term time. Nevertheless, the people who use libraries are their reason for being, thus results from the focus groups with teenagers, who are the users (or potential users) in this case, are discussed prior to results from the survey and interviews with librarians, which investigated libraries' collections and their interactions with teenagers.

Topics discussed by teenagers during the focus groups were wide ranging and covered both those from the Moderator's Guide (Appendix E) and others which emerged spontaneously from ideas generated through the discussion points. As an introduction, teenagers' thoughts on reading in general and the materials they enjoyed reading in their leisure time outside school were considered. Even those who disliked or outright hated reading were drawn out to name occasions they had found pleasure in the experience. Discussing where reading materials were found by participants led to school and public libraries as an obvious source, although many teenagers did not take up this option. Instead, they chose the internet for school assigned information requirements and their entertainment and social needs.

Graphic novels were explored as one format available for leisure reading, with few participants enjoying them prior to the session, although some students left the session knowing about another reading format they could try. This led to illustration in conventional books and the visual literacy this entails and then to the movie adaptations of both conventional books and graphic novels. Finally, reading in the English class was scrutinized, with many students disliking assigned texts, but roundly applauding the provision of choice in their class reading material. Graphic novels were proposed as possible assigned texts, with opinions on this as diverse as about the format in general.

#### **Do teenagers read?**

There was great diversity of opinion on reading and whether students read in their spare time. One universal belief among participants was the importance of finding the right book, whether it was "interesting," "good" or on a topic they related to (McKechnie, 2006, p. 66; Reeves, 2004, p. 240).

- Jason (age 15) It's alright if you actually know what it's about, if you understand the book. You wouldn't just read a book about kids or something.
- Rita (age 15) It depends on the genre as well. It depends on what kind of book you like reading.
- Kelly (age 14) I like reading um, most books. Some books are really hard to get through, like the book we're reading in school um. But if you find a good book, it's really easy for me to read and I like it.
- Anna (age 14) Well, I like reading...It's just some books I like and then other ones, I might like the book in the same series, but I may not like that book.
- Peter (age 14) I only really read if I have something [good] to read.
- Jeremy (14) I enjoy reading um, if I've got enough time for it, I will definitely do it most nights and it's. If I get into a book I find myself reading an hour or quite a bit every night, but if I'm not into the book and I'm struggling I just find I avoid reading and, err. When I find the right book it's, I enjoy it and I get into it too a lot better, but I still read quite often.
- Marty (age 14) It's better if you pick your own 'cause that's what you're personally interested in.
- Mia (age 14) It depends what books I'm reading at the moment. Like, um, in the beginning of the year I was quite into this dragon book, 'cause I picked up this book and it was about dragons.
- Adam (age 16) Oh look, I'm really fussy. If I don't like, there's some books that I don't like. If I find one I do like then I'll just be there for hours.
- Kylie (age 14) I have to kind of like relate to it or it has to be interesting.

Kylie provided a clear example of this during her session. Her comments did not illustrate particular enjoyment in reading, but when she picked up and began reading *Queen Bee* by Chynna Clugston-Major, she was enthralled and wanted to finish it.

Voracious reader David (age 15) had his reading curtailed by choosing the wrong book.

I remember when I had *Pride and Prejudice* [by Austen] I barely read it. It took me like two months to finish 'cause I'd do something else instead of reading the book...I didn't like it. It was just a little bit too old fashioned and girly.

Beers' (1996a, 1998) continuum of readers was a useful model for categorising some teenage focus group participants. Marty, Angela (age 14) and Liam (age 13) were perfect examples of "dormant readers," those who had positive attitudes to reading and thought of themselves as readers, but did not currently have time for it. Angela was aware of her changing reading behaviour, "Sometimes I go through a phase where I really like reading and then I really go off it." She was currently experiencing the latter.

I do like lots of sport and everything, so reading's just something I kind of have to get done for school after. It's not something I choose to do.

Marty was less aware of his reading dormancy, but as typical as Angela.

I like reading, but I don't find much time to do it. I've got sport a lot and yeah. I don't read that often because of that.

Liam's contradictory views on reading were explained by his reading dormancy and Beers' associated contention that "lack of a behaviour (reading) does not always indicate a negative attitude" (1998, p. 47). At first Liam said,

I like reading magazines...When it comes to reading there are only a few books I can actually read. I get bored half way through and I put them down.

He later maintained he "liked reading a lot" and his need to share his positive views on reading became apparent. As Liam reached adolescence and his parents provided him with more freedom, his reading habits changed.

Researcher	So you have read a few graphic novels?
Liam	Oh yeah, I used to. I don't really read them anymore.
Researcher	Yeah?
Liam	I'm normally out on my bike.
Researcher	Yeah. So do you find better things to do than reading these days?
Liam	Well, I only really used to read at night, 'cause I used to have to go to bed at like 9:30. I used to read when I went to bed, but now I'm pretty much allowed to go to bed as late as I like.

Liam eagerly described past enjoyable reading experiences,

Before I came to [this] school [a year ago], there was a series of books I loved and I just read the whole thing, like there was 12 books. It was the Darren Shan series [*The Saga of Darren Shan*].

Jones *et al.* (2006) note this series is "a turnaround book, which would turn a non-reader into a reader" (p. 117).

Avid readers could also find difficulties fitting reading into their busy schedules. Anna said, "During the day you're doing so many...other things like homework or sport or going out" thus reading was not her "top priority." Anna found time to read in bed at night, "I can't fall asleep easy so if I read and then I get tired and fall asleep." While Danielle (age 15) also enjoyed reading in bed, sometimes even this was not possible.

It's nice to read a book in the evening, but sometimes if you're going out and doing things, you just want to go to sleep, not read.

When Danielle was not as busy she could become caught up in her reading,

What happens is you start reading a chapter and then it gets to a good bit and you have to read on to find out what happens and there's another good bit and then you finish the book.

Her classmate Adam "read every night and every morning." He also experienced getting caught up in the story, although this was more extreme in his case.

When I read it's annoying at night because then I don't sleep...I keep reading... I couldn't get to sleep till half one in the morning and I thought, "Oh Christ"...I never get to sleep when I first go to bed. I'm there for ages. So I normally read...And then I want to keep reading...Then I'm there for ages...I just read until I get so tired I can't read any more.

Kate (age 13) and Kylie also experienced this, although not quite to the extent of Adam's sleep deprivation at school the following day. Kate found, "If it's a really good book and I want to get like, I want to finish and then I go, 'Look [at] the time.'" Kylie's mother had told her reading a book in bed would make her tired, but she found the opposite, "I get into it and then like I can't, I don't want to put it down. I want to know what happens and it keeps on going and going." Others did use reading as a sleep aid. Cassie (age 14) only read in bed before going to sleep because, "It makes my eyes tired and I get to sleep easy." Sandra (age 15) said,

If I'm having trouble getting to sleep which I usually do, I like to read...I stay up for a bit longer, but once I've finished reading I can get to sleep a lot easier.

While some students' busy lives meant reading took a lesser priority, other avid readers found it easy to "make time for reading" (Ross, 2006a, p. 143). Neil (age 14) and Rita were such voracious readers they consistently found time for reading, above other activities. Neil "read quite a lot really" and despite continual jibes from his classmates about his enjoyment of fishing books and magazines, he was happy to share his preferences during the focus group, particularly for "all round non-fiction." Rita proudly stated she had read more than thirty books during the past year.

I read books out of school. I generally like reading if I have nothing to do which is pretty much most of the time, I'm just reading...On Saturdays I read. I read quite a bit.

David was the only teenager to describe himself as an "avid reader." Robert (age 14) used reading as an "escape to another world pretty much. Just like get away from what's happening." Chelsea (age 13) said, "I always read, like every day. I really like reading." Ellen (age 14) "really, really, really" liked reading and she, Robert and Bianca (age 15) also read every day. Kate's enjoyment of reading led to her preference for reading over television "because there's more variety." Kelly described the weather affecting their willingness to read.

It depends like what kind of day it is. Like, if it's nice outside, it's probably better to go outside...If it's like raining, you've really got nothing else to do.

Avid readers often became emotionally involved in what they read. Bianca cried when reading *A Child Called It* by David Pelzer. Melissa (age 14) described a book in which the trials of the protagonist caused her to become "a bit upset." She

could relate to what was happening to the character, “There’s a lot of people out there who that happens to” and empathized with the character’s situation. During another session, students discussed their reaction when the character Dumbledore died in the *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling.

- Adam            Sometimes when you get real into a book, then the character dies, sort of like you're distraught.
- Researcher    Yeah.
- Adam            I was like, I was really pissed off when I found that Dumbledore had died.
- Danielle        Same, I was. I got really angry and I was, "No. He's going to come back in the story."
- Teneal          I thought he was just pretending at first.

Avid readers often read more than one book at a time and re-read their favourite books. Kate was reading two books, but “not really liking” one, although she wanted to finish it and Danielle had “so many books on the go at the moment.” Adam had “read all the *Harry Potter* series nearly four times” and Teneal (age 15) said, “I re-read them, like ten million times. I buy the book and I re-read it.” Bianca was definite that she did not do this, “Once I’ve read it’ll stay in my mind so if I go back to read it, I’m like, ‘Oh I know what’s going to happen.’”

In 1931 Waples and Tyler said, “People like to read about themselves. The more closely a subject relates to what is familiar to the given reader, the more interesting it is” (cited in Ross, 2006a, p. 136). Melissa described this succinctly, “You’ve got to relate to stuff [you read].” She was one of the many participants who liked to read about teenagers. Participants often had difficulty describing this type of book because they did not know the publishing term YA fiction. Kylie described them as “teenage books, like girl issues kind of” and on three separate occasions said she liked YA author Jacqueline Wilson’s books. Angela tried to think of an example to illustrate her reading matter of choice.

- Angela            Sometimes, like, um, I can't remember the last one I read. But I like kind of trashy books.
- Researcher    Mmm.
- Angela            Like um [laughing]
- Researcher    Romance ones?
- Angela            No, like um, like high school kind of stuff.
- Researcher    Oh yeah, like kids in school.
- Angela            Yeah. It's funny to see what other people, like adults think about it.
- Researcher    Mmm.
- Angela            Like a lot of the time they get it all wrong or something.

### ***Or not read?***

Reading was discussed by some teenagers as a “last resort” or “not a top priority,” or something to do when bored, such as during a plane or long car journey.

Kylie explained, “If I have nothing to do then I’ll read.” For Tim (age 15), “reading’s like the last thing on my list to do.” Simon (age 14), Carl (age 13) and Natasha (age 13) preferred television to reading and Michelle (age 14) said of reading, “I don’t really like it, but I just do it like when I have to [for school].”

Tom felt anything in book form was anathema to him. He did enjoy magazines, which were different enough from books to entice him. The pictures in magazines drew him in, but it was not only the pictures that led to his favour. Tom “hated” graphic novels and would not read them, despite their visual content. Even with his topic of choice, Tom said, “I wouldn’t even read a full length book about skating.” It was the combination of a topic of interest (skate boarding), being factual and having pictures, which led to magazines being his preferred reading matter.

One of Leah’s (age 14) first statements was, “I never read, never read a book.” This was an exaggeration, but showed her antipathy toward reading. She later elaborated, “Hate it, it’s boring.” Leah had on occasion enjoyed assigned texts in her English class and also *The Four Fires* by Bryce Courtney. When younger she had told her mother she wanted to read *The Four Fires*. Leah “was only little,” so her mother had read the book to her at bedtime. When Tanya (age 15) teased her classmate about this, Leah replied, “I did a little bit on my own.” The help her mother provided led Leah to enjoy this “thick book” and her interest was held long enough to negate any trepidation at its length. Resistant readers are often unwilling to tackle “long books that they think will be boring” (Reeves, 2004, p. 47) and some participants shared this view. Marika (age 14) said, “I don’t like reading thick, thick books,” Simon said “I hate books with like, really small print” and Melissa felt the same. Conversely, avid reader Teneal preferred longer books.

Leah liked to “read about stuff that’s actually happening at the moment,” thus she enjoyed biographies. At one point Leah asked, “Why would you want to waste your time reading something that is fiction and probably would never happen?...This won’t like teach you anything.” Her classmates tried to convince her otherwise. Melissa had difficulty articulating her thoughts, but Tom surmised, “To kick you out of your own reality.” Tanya explained,

Ok Leah, say there was a book about a famous model, right? And she became famous and all of a sudden her life came crashing down. And then you went through a series of events where you know, she got back up on her feet and stuff. You would most probably like to read that. Something along those lines at least.

Leah would only concede she might enjoy such a story if it was about a “real

person,” that is, a biography. While Melissa had personal experience of enjoying fiction, both Tom and Tanya did not personally enjoy such reading matter, but were able to empathize with people who did.

Carl’s parents encouraged him to read and he did “like to read sport books and magazines.” His English class read *Holes* by Louis Sachar and he said, “That was cool,” and also noted as “a turnaround book” (P. Jones *et al.*, 2006, p. 119). Carl’s enjoyment with this had not led to other reading outside school in the previous term. Teresa explained why she disliked reading, “It takes me like ages to read a book. I can only read like two pages in a day. My eyes hurt after a while. It’s boring.”

### **What do teenagers read?**

Most teenagers equated reading with books, as has been found in other research (Mellon, 1990a; Pitcher *et al.*, 2007). When asked for the first thing she thought of when someone said reading, Angela replied, “Books.” Participants read numerous other formats and these were often more universally enjoyed.

Reading the newspaper was mentioned by a handful of teenagers. Phil (age 14) and Jeremy read the newspaper every morning. Jeremy particularly read the news “to see what happens” and Robert read it “now and then.” Marty read the sports section, “the only good part.” Peter and David read the comics in the newspaper. Ellen read the community newspaper when there was a story about her school, but otherwise found it “too boring.”

Almost all of the teenagers read magazines. Girls read fashion and beauty magazines (although Ellen read science magazines) and boys read sports magazines. Students such as Leah, Tom and Michelle, who had the most antipathy toward reading, enjoyed magazines. Melissa explained why she liked them.

Magazines now are actually...way more interesting I reckon, because you find out so much new stuff and information that you think would be useful.

Most bought the magazines they read, rather than borrowed them from a library, although when Neil and his brother waited after school to be picked up, Neil read the school library’s magazines. Angela used to buy magazines every month, but then started reading her sister’s old magazines. She did not mind they were not recent, “It depends on what you’re reading. For real life stories it doesn’t matter, but if you’re looking at the fashion pages then it’s just boring.” Danielle had a problem with old issues, “If you read like a *Girlfriend* magazine from two months ago, all the stories from it are really, really dated.” Joanna (age 15) had an innovative source for

her magazines.

I work at Woolworths so I just read them at work. Hell good...We have to stay for half an hour after the shop closes. So sometimes we get time to read mags...We're meant to put away stock, but sometimes [pause] It's pretty good.

Some were not as enthusiastic as others about their magazine reading. Bianca “didn’t read them that much, but sometimes,” as did April (age 15). She learnt English as a second language and liked the pictures in magazines, which presumably helped her decode unknown text. Danielle said, “I read magazines, but I’ll sit down and read them for about an hour, but then I’ve finished with them and I don’t really look at them again.” Adam distinguished between books he read over and over and magazines which he enjoyed reading, but “after about two weeks chucked them out.” Neil differed in having “something like three years worth of fishing magazines” which he looked back over. Teneal kept her old magazines because, “You know you’ve read something and you know it’ll be good for like, doing a health assignment on abuse or something like that.”

Kylie was one of the six dissenting voices when it came to magazines, “I don’t really like reading about other people and...clothes and stuff.”

### **Finding what to read**

When choosing what to read, popularity is an important factor (M. Sullivan, 2005), *Harry Potter* by J.K. Rowling being the prime example of this. The books and movies were discussed during every session (without prompting), reflecting their popularity among young people in general (S. Maynard *et al.*, 2008; Scholastic & Yankelovich, 2006). Even Teresa said she liked *Harry Potter*, despite taking four years to read the first title in the series. Rita was impressed that her teacher read the whole series in a week. Danielle read the titles in the wrong order and “got really confused.” Many of the teenagers came to the books from the movies and due to the length of time since the series began, some had earlier titles read to them by their parents when they were younger. This encouraged some to continue the series on their own, such as Neil and Jason, and others to be content with watching the movies.

Ryan (age 14) My mum read me the first, second one and then I read the third one and then I didn't read the rest, I just watched the movie.

Kylie My mum bought me like the whole, there was like four books...I only read the first one and then I was like, “Nah.” And I didn't read all of them. I shoved them in my cupboard. I watched the movies.

Movie or television versions of books have been described as leading young people to seek out the book to read for themselves (M. Sullivan, 2005), but apart



from *Harry Potter*, this was not always the case. Cassie laughed and replied, “No” when asked if she read the book of a movie after watching it. Joanna said the only book she had read following a movie was *About a Boy* by Nick Hornby for her English class. Angela watched the movie *Looking for Alibrandi* in her English class and subsequently read the book by Melina Marchetta because her sister had it at home. This was the first time she read the book after watching a movie.

Smith and Wilhelm (2002) note the importance of friends and family in choosing what to read and this was found during the research, with many teenagers finding the books they read in their home. Adam’s parents “read a lot” and had been trying to convince him to read Martina Cole whose books they enjoyed, but Adam had too many other books to read, often bought for him by his grandmother. Jeremy had similar tastes to his mother and read books after she finished them. Sandra and her sister came to their love of graphic novels through their mother’s reading of the format. Mia’s mother used to buy books for her and her sister, “but then I think she stopped because we don’t really read them. They weren’t really my type.” Chelsea had thought her mother chose the wrong books, but later realised she was mistaken.

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| Chelsea    | Sometimes when my mum's been out she just said that she saw something [a book] that she thought I might like.   |
| Researcher | Yeah and do you usually like what she finds?  |
| Chelsea    | Um sometimes. Like usually they're like. I got one...at the start of the year and I only just read it this term 'cause I thought it looked really bad. But it turned out to be really good. |

Marty told his mother what he wanted her to buy, thus avoiding the problem of incorrect choices. Kate’s mother bought books which both her and her brother enjoyed.

My older brother um, he reads a lot and he likes the same kind of genres that I like. And if mum's out she'll see a book she thinks we both might like and she'll just get it.

Ellen and Chelsea said their parents gave books as Christmas and birthday presents and Robert sometimes asked his parents for books as presents. Neil’s older brother had given him a book as a birthday present, although this was uncommon. More often, brothers and sisters passed on books they had read. Ryan, Neil and David had read graphic novels that their brothers had.

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| Anna   | My sister, she was really into the John Marsden series and stuff, so um, mum's always trying to get me to read them. So then mum buys them for Felicity and then she...passes them onto me. |
| Cassie | Well I found one at home that my brother had to read and I read that one and I liked it. And then I found out there was two before it [in a series], so I read them as well.                |

Teneal's cousin lived in a regional city, "They've got terrible shops down there, but they've got a really good bookshop." The two had similar tastes in reading matter. "She's always got new books and then I read them."

Despite Jason saying, "All the books in my house are like educational, they're not actually reading books," he enjoyed the *Horrible Histories* series by Terry Deary which he found among the books in his house. The series provides a humorous view of history and includes "quirky facts and grisly anecdotes, punctuated by cartoons" (Patrick, 2008, p. 40). The series is particularly appealing to boys and there has been a television tie-in. Most titles are "utterly Euro-centric" (*ibid.*) such as: *Dark Knights and Dingy Castles*; *The Ruthless Romans*; *The Frightful First World War*; and *The Barmy British Empire*, but there are some from other geographical areas: *The Angry Aztecs* and *The Awesome Egyptians*. The series "provided a possible template for a comparable series of kids' books dedicated to Australian history" (*ibid.*). The *Amazing Australia* series was subsequently produced. A review of the second title, *Airborne Australia* by Kevin Patrick and Douglas Holgate found only one fault with the title – the lack of an index. "It is cheap, informative and up-to-date, and written with wit" (Lees, 2008). The series is aimed at primary school age children, *Horrible Histories* being written for upper primary. Jason may not have enjoyed *Amazing Australia* because of this, but his younger compatriots might. More titles enlivening school subjects would captivate children and show them that even dry school subjects can be enjoyed outside school. This is particularly useful for boys who may prefer non-fiction (P. Jones *et al.*, 2006; McKechnie, 2006; Newkirk, 2002).

Some teenagers discussed the books in their homes as belonging to their parents or grandparents and thus not of interest to themselves.

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| Kylie      | We have a whole shelf full of books...about murders and stuff.                      |
| Ryan       | They're all my parents' and my dad's got all these war books.                       |
| Simon      | My grandma read all <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> books. She was an English teacher. |
| Researcher | So she buys your books for you?   |
| Simon      | Nup. She's just got like a whole room full of books. It's actually quite scary.     |
| Researcher | And do you ever read them?  |
| Simon      | What? Nah, they're all old people's books.  |

Friends were not as popular a source as family, but they were mentioned by some. Angela described a primary school friend who "always bought books and stuff and so I just borrowed them off her."

## Libraries

The library was not a favoured place to visit for focus group participants. They were more likely to go to their school library than a public library because they had to in class. After talking about graphic novels with one group, the conversation turned to libraries.

- Researcher Would any of you go to the library and think, “Oh I want to get a graphic novel. I want to read one.”
- [all talking at once]
- Kylie I wouldn’t even say I want to get a novel.
- Researcher So you don’t think much of going to the library?
- Kylie No, only if I have to do like, a research thing [for school] I’ll get like
- Researcher Yeah?
- Teresa I just use the internet.
- Kylie Yeah I just
- Researcher What about you guys, do you ever go to the library?
- Jason Sometimes if my mum’s working late, she makes us go to the library.
- Researcher Uhhh. The public library, not the school library?
- Jason Yeah, the local one.
- Researcher Do you ever come to this [school] library?
- Rita I do.
- Ryan Every second Friday.
- Kylie [laughing]
- Researcher What? Oh you have to come in the class.

Unlike her classmates, Rita praised Tricoryne High School Library’s collection, “I like the fiction.” While this difference of opinion might be due to her prolific reading habits, fellow avid reader Danielle from Lobelia High School was not as happy with her school library’s collection. Her problem was the lack of authors she enjoyed, “They have like twenty authors and they just have tons of their books, but you want kind of those books you will find at like the bookshop,” that is, the latest releases. The library may have held copies of latest releases but their popularity might mean they were always on loan and never on the shelf to find when browsing.

Library users like “book stock [that is] new, appealing and inviting” (M. Wilson, 2000, p. 82). Cassie complained, “Some of the books in our [school] library are really old and it’s really hard to find good ones.” Her classmate Kelly continued, “You don’t really want to read a book that’s got an old cover.”

Marty was more likely to “buy books than get them out of the library,” particularly with a series because “it’s better to have them all.” Angela concurred, “If there’s a new series, they [the library] have like the first one and then you get hooked on it, so you have to buy the next one, no libraries have it.” Adam was happy to have found the opposite at his school library.

I got all the um, you know Lance Armstrong, the cyclist? I got all of his um, his series out of there [the school library]. I got all of them out and I read them...’Cause my Nan

bought me the first one and then I didn't have the other two, so I got them out of the library at school.

Cassie disliked the ambience of libraries.

Cassie I don't really like libraries.  
Researcher Yeah?  
Cassie But, I get, yeah, mostly get my books from there, when I get books.  
Researcher From the school library or the public library?  
Cassie Um, both.  
Researcher Yeah? But you'd rather not go to them?  
Cassie Yeah. They're too quiet and all.  
Researcher [laughing] If you could make lots of noise, would you like it better?  
Cassie It [pause]  
Researcher If it was like a book shop?  
Cassie Um, I dunno.

While “teens prefer browsing and searching on their own,” rather than asking a librarian for help (Nichols, 2004, p. 166), Angela and Cassie mentioned the approachability of their school librarian, “Ms Turner\* helps a lot.” Cassie added that this did not occur when she went to her public library because she did not know the staff. “You don't know what they are into and stuff so you can't really trust them [if they advised you on what to read].” She seemed incredulous that staff recommendations could happen in a public library. Public Librarian Debra Burn (2007) wrote about the desirable situation at her Youth Library and Lounge, verbYL. “By actively participating with young people in these programs [run by the youth worker], the librarian also establishes a presence and rapport with young people and is developing a recognition of and respect for the profession [of librarianship]” (p. 101).

Tanya and Liam went to the library when they were younger. Tanya was too busy these days, and at first Liam was unsure as to his reasons for the change.

Liam I'd never go to the library, like outside of school.  
Researcher No? You've got better things to do?  
Liam Nah, I just [pause] I dunno. I used to with my mum, but I dunno, I just kind of like, I never really can ever really find a book that I will actually keep reading.

Liam's classmate Carl also experienced this problem, although he thought it could be solved by the library “getting some better books.” It was more likely due to the problem of discovery. When Liam and Carl visited the school library during class, both needed recommendations of books they would find “interesting” from teachers, librarians, and more importantly, their peers. An example of this was

---

\* Ms Turner from Tuart Grove High School Library was one of the interviewed librarians, discussed in Chapter 5.

provided by Leah's classmates during their focus group session, held in a corner of their school library.

Researcher So what are you guys talking about?  
 Melissa The Paris Hilton book [*Confessions of an Heiress*].  
 Tanya The Paris Hilton book.  
 Leah Is it over there [in the school library]?  
 Melissa Yeah.  
 Leah [incredulous] They wouldn't have that here.  
 Melissa Yeah.  
 Researcher So are you going to take it out of the library now?  
 Leah Are you serious?  
 Melissa Yeah.  
 Researcher You're going to have to take it out at lunch time.  
 Leah I know.  
 Tanya Yeah.  
 Leah I'll beat you to it.

Chelsea provided a unique reason for disliking libraries.

Chelsea I don't really like going to the library because like, it sounds stupid, but I read really fast.  
 Researcher Yeah.  
 Chelsea And I finish a book like really quickly.  
 Researcher Oh yeah and you want to swap it for another.  
 Chelsea It's like. Yeah it takes like, I could finish it all.  
 Researcher You'd have to go every second day.  
 Chelsea Three or four days and.  
 Researcher Do you think if they let you have twenty books that would be good?  
 Chelsea Yeah.

Some students did not visit public libraries because they had difficulty getting there. Kate had to be driven by her parents, "It's a bit far away from me to go all the time." Locating a public library within a shopping centre or next to a school may alleviate this problem, but is not something a library can control. Kate, and also Neil, said their brothers borrowed books from the library and they read them afterwards. Ryan and Natasha accompanied their mothers when they visited the public library.

Ryan If my mum's going then I'll go, um, I don't get anything.  
 Natasha My mum like gets one [a book] there and I'll just have a look around...When she's down Leschenaultia, like grocery shopping or whatever, she might look in there [Leschenaultia Public Library]."

In contrast to many participants, avid readers Robert and Ellen frequented their public library, "more often" than their school library. Ellen explained, "They have better stuff [than the school library], a bigger variety." Ellen went swimming at the pool next to the library, "it's like three steps away" and borrowed books from the library afterwards. David enjoyed reading as much as his classmates, but did not utilise the library. He borrowed books from his school's English Department collection.

David I get Mr Vale to feed me books.  
Researcher And is he good at that?  
David Yep. I can read at a Year 12 level.  
Researcher Yeah?  
David So I've read like *1984* [by Orwell], *Pride and Prejudice* [by Austen], stuff like that.

Manga aficionados Amy and Mia (both age 14) had their insatiable reading requirements fulfilled by libraries. Their local library was Dryandra Public Library\* which had an extensive graphic novel collection (began in the late 1990s) where Amy and Mia could find their manga fix. Unlike many teenagers who were more likely to buy books than go to the library, Amy went to a bookshop to find newly released titles, then borrowed them from the library. Phil, Peter and Danielle found leisure reading matter at their local public library and Melissa described her visits to the public library.

I go to my local library sometimes, like especially when I'm doing assignments for school. I find that sometimes I don't get enough time here in the [school] library. I go to my local library and get books out [for the assignment] and usually I get two or three books, like for me to read.

### **The Internet**

In the past the school or public library was the main location for finding information for school assignments or general topics of interest, attested to as still occurring by some of the above students. With the advent of the internet many teenagers find this an easier alternative. Leah was not alone in thinking, “They [teachers at school] say research, go get some books – I go on the internet.” Leah and others equated using the internet with Google, some used the terms interchangeably, as is found among other segments of the population (Grayson & Gomersall, 2006). Adam found research on the internet “much easier than going to the library.”

I only ever go to the library as a backup, if I can't find it on the internet...Ninety percent of the time you're going to find it on the internet. Even if it's not as good as the one in the book, at least you've got it straight away.

Adam's assertion that almost everything could be found online, was disputed by his classmate Danielle. She “tended to go on the internet first” to research assignments, but she conceded “some of the information you just cannot find on the internet.” Danielle had an assignment on the ANZACs and lessons learnt from World War II.

---

\* Ms Armitage from Dryandra Public Library was one of the interviewed librarians, discussed in Chapter 5.

It kind of was really hard to kind of pinpoint down...one reason, so you kind of have to think outside the box and it's actually quite hard to find all the information for it...I got like twelve books out [from the public library] and it was like, some were this thick and you only had like tiny little paragraphs to use.

Danielle added that when research could be undertaken solely on the internet through her home computer,

Then [afterwards] you've got more time to go on MSN and just talk to people, in the comfort of your own chair, with your food. It's pretty good.

Teresa, Joanna and Amy agreed with Adam and believed information on the internet was “easier to find” than in books. Bianca preferred research on the internet because “it’s the closest thing, otherwise you’d have to go all the way down to the library.” Marika said that when using the internet, “You can just write down [type into a search engine] what you want to know rather than going through the book to find out.” She preferred the computer do the work for her, rather than having to read a book to find the relevant information. This led to her incorrect assumption that typing a search term was all finding information on the internet involved. The problems inherent in this view are discussed below.

Her classmate Tanya felt the downside to using the internet was “it’s all from one source, so you’re not going to learn.” She used the word source as a teacher would, the internet is one source and books are another, and both should be used for school assignments. Kate mentioned that when given an assignment they spent a class in the school library, to ensure students used the library’s resources rather than only the internet. Her classmates Chelsea and Natasha made use of this time in different ways. Chelsea explained, “Sometimes I get a book out, but I usually just get it from the internet,” while Natasha said, “I just use the internet in the time that we’re in the library,” ignoring the availability of the school library’s print resources.

Many of the students had access to the internet at home so most of their internet use happened there (although not all students were asked this question). This may be a greater percentage than the general population of Australian teenagers. In Australia 67% of households have internet access in the home, but among households with children under 15 (just over two thirds of focus group participants were under 15) this increases to 82% having internet access (ABS, 2008c). Among U.S. teenagers aged 12 to 17 internet usage in general (not only in the home) is at similar high levels (87%) (Lenhart, Madden, & Hitlin, 2005). All participants had internet access through their school, with many having designated times during class to use computers and the internet. Often these computers were located in the school

library, leading to Chelsea and Natasha's behaviour described above.

Teenagers used the internet for school work, as well as entertainment and socializing. Jeremy said, "I'm on it every night, for homework and stuff," or as Angela explained, "An excuse to not do homework." Angela, Joanna and Teneal described opening multiple windows on their home computer. When their parents walked past, they opened the "homework" window to make their parents think that was what they were doing. Cassie lamented that her parents always caught her when she tried this.

Despite his keen reading of novels in his free time, David felt the internet was adequate for school assignments. Rather than checking the information he had found by also finding a book on the topic, David preferred to look at a different website, his favourite being Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/>). David thought highly of the site because his English teacher, Mr Vale, "gives us handouts in class and it's from Wikipedia." When it was suggested, "Some people say it's not always that reliable," David replied, "It's fairly accurate." His classmate Ellen agreed, "Yeah it is."

Various problems with Wikipedia are discussed in the literature (Garfinkel, 2008; Rosenzweig, 2006). Wikipedia recognizes some of these problems (*Wikipedia:About*, 2009) and policies are in place to deal with deficiencies (*Wikipedia:List of policies*, 2009), but they are not universally enforced. It is assumed Mr Vale checked the veracity of Wikipedia information he used in his Year 9 English class, but he did not seem to be discussing the problems inherent in Wikipedia with his students and the necessity of not using Wikipedia as the only source of information. David was a capable and intelligent student, but he was ignorant of the drawbacks to Wikipedia because he had not been told. As Rosenzweig (2006) argues, the use of Wikipedia by students is fine, as long as students also use other sources to ensure information is correct, rather than only using Wikipedia.

Ellen enjoyed reading as much as David, but in contrast to other students, preferred books for researching school assignments. Ellen would search the internet but also look at books because "a book's more reliable." Ellen found books easier to use than the internet. "With a book it's all there, with a web site you've got to find it," the exact opposite to Marika's opinion. Ellen found it simple to locate the appropriate book in her school or public library, "It takes me five seconds to find a book. It takes me an hour to find a website." David countered this by saying Ellen



would have to use a library catalogue computer to find the book. She disagreed, saying she knew where the books she wanted were, without the aid of the catalogue. This skill may become problematic as she continues her education and encounters more complicated research topics. During another session, Rita and Jason said they preferred books from the library for school assignments and found it “easier to use a book” than the internet, although they also searched the internet.

The majority’s preference for the internet was summed up by Adam.

The internet, it’s so much easier for assignments, for everything. You’re almost guaranteed to get what you want easily and it’s pretty easy to understand. It’s all been done properly. Otherwise it wouldn’t be there.

Adam did not realise that what he found on the internet could be a Wikipedia entry, a personal blog post, or a site produced by a university or a government department (foreign or otherwise) (CIBER, 2008). Any of these could be biased or just plain wrong (McPherson, 2005). While this can also be the case with books and traditionally published materials (Editorial: Britannica attacks, 2006; J. Giles, 2006), there are more checks and balances in place through the traditional publishing process. Distinguishing between a number of websites may be difficult and thus determining their accuracy more complicated than with other resources. McPherson (2005) pointed to the importance of “online critical literacy,” learning how to determine whether an online source is accurate and believable, and “challenging the notion that ‘all information on the web is true’” (p. 107). Melissa was aware of the unreliable nature of the internet.

When you’re looking for information for assignments and stuff on the internet...it doesn’t get to the point, yeah and it’s got different facts for [the same] one thing.

Online critical literacy must be taught to students, and some students in the focus groups had not learnt the skill, as is the case in the wider population (CIBER, 2008). Not only do students need to learn to evaluate information, through critical thinking, but also learn “deep reading,” gaining knowledge from what they read and integrating this with their own thoughts (Wolf, 2007). Rose Luckin, Professor of Learner Centred Design at the London Knowledge Lab, researches the internet’s impact on students’ “critical and meta-cognitive skills.”

The worrying view coming through is that students are lacking in reflective awareness. Technology makes it easy for them to collate information, but not to analyse and understand it. Much of the evidence suggests that what is going on out there is quite superficial. (Luckin cited in O’Brien, 2008)

Some believe this “skimming, jumping from point to point” and lack of reflection may lead to a “dumbing down” of the population (Litwin, 2006, p. 66).

Luckin provides a solution to this dilemma: the “fundamental importance” of teachers and parents educating their children to find and analyse online information (Luckin cited in O'Brien, 2008), which Mr Vale should have been teaching. Students at Gill St. Bernard's School in New Jersey (U.S.) are receiving this instruction as a component of information literacy lessons incorporated in library research sessions for assignments set in various classes, such as English, History and Science. Their research is guided by teacher librarians and they learn “to locate, evaluate, and use needed information” from the array of available resources, encompassing online databases to books held by the school library. This continues from Grade 7 onwards (Oatman, 2006, p. 58). The need for such education is reiterated in other research (CIBER, 2008; Combes, 2007).

### **Graphic Novels**

With the universal interest among teenagers in the visual format of the internet, graphic novels, another visual format, were discussed to ascertain if anecdotal evidence from the literature of their popularity among the age group was reflected in the opinions of research participants.

#### ***Teenagers' familiarity with graphic novels***

Teenagers were not universally familiar with graphic novels. While Angela had not read graphic novels, she had heard about them through the television series *The O.C.* created by Josh Schwartz, “Seth, he's like obsessed with them.” When talking about the hypothetical use of graphic novels in their English class, Kelly said, “I'm not sure everyone in the class would really know what they were.” This was referred to by Liam and Tanya during other sessions. Tanya provided the solution of learning about the format in class. This is suggested in the literature on teaching graphic novels in class.

As part of the preparation for reading *Persepolis*, devote one class period to a general discussion of the graphic novel – what it is and what it looks like. Encourage students who are already fans to bring in their favourite graphic novels from home. (Harris, 2007, p. 40)

Kelly's classmate Angela through this would improve the situation, but Kelly was “not sure.” Author and artist of *Persepolis*, Marjane Satarpi, came to graphic novel reading in adulthood and said, “Like anything new, you have to cultivate your interest. It's like in Opera. You have to go a couple of times to appreciate it” (cited in Harris, 2007, p. 40).

### Teenagers defining graphic novels

During the focus group sessions a selection of graphic novels, including manga in the traditional orientation, was presented to the students to ensure they knew what was being discussed (see Appendix F). After looking at the selection, Kylie said, “I think these are picture books.” Amy called manga comics, Angela and Peter called graphic novels comics\* and Alex (age 13) described them as comic books. Phil said, “I don’t like comics...I’d get really bored reading comics.” During another session Anna asked, “Isn’t it [graphic novels] just like comics?” Although her classmate Cassie later said, “I always thought comics were like a small magazine, not a book.” Liam called *Sin City* by Frank Miller a comic book and later used the terms interchangeably. He said of *Usagi Yojimbo* by Stan Sakai, “What a weird comic book. Like graphic novels are so innocent from the cover.” Some students asked if certain titles they had read were graphic novels, for example, *Horrible Histories* by Terry Deary, *Archie* and *Garfield*. This variety of names is reflected in comments from participants.

### School libraries with existing graphic novel collections

A number of the schools of focus group participants had existing graphic novels collections. It was assumed students at these schools would be familiar with the format. In contrast to expectations, the presence of a collection in a school library did not equate to liking, or even knowledge of graphic novels, among students.

Boronia High School Library had most of the graphic novels displayed during the focus group, but students from this school were unfamiliar with graphic novels and in general disliked the format. Ryan described the graphic novels at Tricoryne High School Library, including *Tintin* by Hergé and *Asterix* by Goscinny and Uderzo, as “all the crappy ones.” Picture books were shelved with this library’s graphic novels which led Kylie to equate any book with pictures to a graphic novel.

Teacher librarian Ms Hatcher from Illyarrie High School said her library had a collection of graphic novels and although staff had promoted the collection through displays, students did not borrow the graphic novels in large numbers. Unfortunately students from this school were not available for focus group participation.

Templetonia High School Library had a graphic novel collection and teacher

---

\* It is uncertain whether Angela and Peter (from different sessions) were referring to single issue comic books bound in paper covers, which may be termed comics.

librarian Ms Andretti said, “There is a core group who use the graphic novel collection.” The students in the focus group did not comprise this group, preferring conventional books. When Marty was asked if his school library had graphic novels, he only replied, “Probably” and certainly never read them. Alex had read one of the manga displayed during the session and Tim said he would read a comic if his friends recommended it, but neither was enthusiastic about the format. Neil was the most positive, “I don’t mind them every so often,” describing them as “alright” and later adding, “I don’t mind [reading them].” His younger brother borrowed graphic novels from the library and Neil read them when he came across them at home.

Scholtzia High School Library had a graphic novel collection but did not allow borrowing of the format. Amy and Mia came to their love of manga through other means. Mia had read the manga held by the library during the previous year in her Year 8 free choice reading program, “So I read them in class. That was like, ‘Ok, finished reading them.’” She borrowed manga from Dryandra Library, her local public library, but discovered manga she wanted to read online and through watching anime.

### ***Manga***

While the popularity of manga has grown in the last few years (Phillips, 2007; Reid, 2005, 2006a), some of the schools and libraries visited in 2006 and 2007 as part of the focus groups and interviews had eager manga fans and others did not. The last interview was held in early 2008 with two librarians at Banksia Park High School, where manga readers’ recommendations guided the purchasing of graphic novels. Ms Tyler said her students told her which manga series they wanted the library to buy “through whatever’s on Foxtel.” Increasingly anime is programmed on television, for example, on the pay TV Cartoon Network or during Saturday morning cartoons (Brenner, 2007b; Okuhara, 2009; Wolk, 2002).

While many manga fans come to the format through anime, not all anime viewers become manga fans. David enjoyed watching anime on television, but did not actively seek out anime or manga. After hearing that anime was from Japan, he assumed some of the cartoons he watched were anime, but thought of them as “just cartoons.” One of the teenage anime fans Allison (2009) interviewed for his dissertation research had the same experience. When she realised she was watching anime, her fandom burgeoned (p. 131), unlike David, who now knowing these

cartoons were anime, did not feel any differently about them and would not actively seek out manga or anime. During other sessions students who had not read graphic novels, realised they knew about manga when it was explained. Melissa said, “Isn’t *Yu-Gi-Oh!* and stuff in those kind of books?” and Teneal exclaimed, “*Sailor Moon*, *Sailor Moon*. See, there you go. It looks just like her.”

In late 2006, when the focus groups were conducted many of the students had never seen traditional orientation manga, which reads right to left, and found it particularly challenging. Comments included:

Teneal	I wouldn’t know where to go.
Chelsea	It just seems sort of weird.
Kate	I don’t like them being backwards.
Simon	It’s really confusing now.
Kylie	That’s so dumb.
Teresa	What the hell is—? I go down instead of across?
Tanya	Screw that! Who cares?

Students who enjoyed manga were used to reading right to left and had no problems. Sandra explained, “Oh yeah, it tells you [how to follow the panels] at the back.\* I’ve been reading it for years now.” These instructions are useful, but as in the acquisition of any new skill, practice leads to competence. Students at Banksia Park High School were insatiable manga fans. Ms Tyler said, “The students had a problem [at first] and now they’re just like, ‘Yeah ok.’”

Leah felt the problem with traditional orientation manga was, “You don’t know where to start from. You don’t know whether to go up [or down].” She questioned the reason for it, “Why would you do that? It’s too confusing.” Her classmate Marika believed, “If we were born like that [reading right to left], we’d be used to that.” Tanya found a solution to this problem,

It’d be better if we were introduced to it by...like in class and we were told about it. But if we were told to get it out [of the library] by yourself and just look at it and [we’d] think, ‘Oh, nah. [I don’t want to read that.]’

Liam agreed traditional orientation manga would be a problem, “I reckon you’d spend too much time worrying about reading it properly, rather than actually reading it.” Liam also provided the solution of learning (and practising) how to read manga,

---

\* The “back” she mentions is at the left opening of a traditional orientation manga volume.

with other students echoing this sentiment.

During the focus group held at Templetonia High School none of the students mentioned traditional orientation manga, or even the word manga. Alex had read one of the displayed manga, *Fullmetal Alchemist* by Hiromu Arakawa which is a traditional orientation manga, but he explained this by saying, “I’ve read this one” and pointed to the title.

Classmates Mia and Amy attended the focus group because of their passion for manga. They saw anime on television or downloaded episodes and read reviews online and sought out the corresponding manga to read. Mia described herself as “an OK reader. I just read whatever I want.” Both girls were very excited to see the manga displayed during the session (at times oohing and ahing or squealing in delight) and the list of graphic novels to take home (Appendix G). They had read the manga and seen the anime of some of the series, but not all. At the end of the session Mia asked where she could buy manga and Amy asked if she could borrow some of the displayed graphic novels. Unfortunately this was not possible as they were needed for subsequent focus groups.

As mentioned, storylines are retold in manga and anime, but may also be published in other formats, such as electronic games or conventional novels. They often retell the same story but not always (Brenner, 2007b, p. 64). Mia had heard that stories could be different between the anime and manga, “So I was like, ‘Oh let’s just see about that.’ And so I start reading.” She added that she watched anime more than she read manga.

Simon read a manga title in his English class prior to the focus group. He said of manga, “It’s really weird. You had to read it from the back...These [traditional orientation manga] are a bit of a novelty thing.” He was confused at first, but while his classmate Teresa did not “understand how to read them,” this did not overwhelm Simon’s enjoyment. After reading only a few chapters he believed, “It was good.” Simon considered manga to be better than conventional books, particularly liking the “really funny pictures and it looks like they are dancing or something.” Simon wanted to know where he could buy the action manga *Fullmetal Alchemist* by Hiromu Arakawa displayed during the focus group.

April liked manga, but the length of series annoyed her.

Sometimes they [manga titles] make me want to read the second one, but sometimes I can’t find the second one...They finish the [graphic] novel at some place. I really want to know what happened, but it’s on [in] another one...If I want to know the end, I

have to read more and more and more and more graphic novels to get to the end. This could also prove problematic for purchasing in libraries, as it is often necessary to commit to continuing expenditure for an ongoing series.

### ***Teenagers who disliked Graphic Novels***

Author Nick Hornby, who enjoys “proper books” and comic books, believes, “Comic books are never dull, in the excruciating way that prose fiction can be” (cited in Behler, 2006, p. 17). Some focus group participants shared Hornby’s views, others believed the exact opposite. Interviewed teacher librarian Ms Turner noted of graphic novels, “Some of the students really like them and others wouldn’t pick them up,” and this disparity was found among the focus groups participants.

Many students who disliked graphic novels had not experienced them before, for example Marty, who said, “It’s just not something that I’m interested in,” adding, “I like to read [conventional] books.” Other avid readers thought the same. Phil did not “get into” graphic novels. Danielle only went as far as saying, “I don’t like them” but her classmate Teneal “hated comics,” preferring “longer” conventional books. Danielle also preferred more in-depth reading material. She was not sure she would read a graphic novel in her genre of choice, detective fiction, “It depends if it was quite long and it had a detailed plot.” Kate’s family were avid readers and she borrowed books from her brother. Her brother also read graphic novels, but Kate never borrowed those.

Danielle, Teneal and Angela said the speech bubbles in comics, particularly their order, could be confusing. Angela explained, “If you’re reading them wrong [in the wrong order]; you get the way wrong idea.” Danielle thought she would concentrate on reading “what’s in the speech bubbles” and neglect the pictures, a common problem among those unfamiliar with the format.

David and Ellen were classmates and quite different to other students in their dislike of graphic novels. David was an avid reader, but felt graphic novels were “too short, too simple,” and conventional books were “better.” At one point David’s classmate Mia (who was passionate about manga) felt his dislike needed reassessment. Her comment was inaudible but David reminded her he was allowed a contrasting opinion. Prior to the focus group David had read the graphic novel adaptation of *Stormbreaker* by Anthony Horowitz *et al.* and a graphic novel borrowed from his brother (described by David as “not a big reader”). Despite

David's negative views, after asking why Courtney in *Courtney Crumrin in the Twilight Kingdom* by Ted Naifeh had no nose, he began reading the title.

Researcher Do you think you'd try reading any of them, these, after seeing them today? You seem interested in it.  
David Graphic novels? I still think they're no better than picture books.  
Researcher Yeah? You're just reading it because it's there in front of you?  
David Uhmm.  
All [laughter]

Similar conversations were repeated later in the session.

Researcher So that one's [*Courtney Crumrin* is] pretty good?  
David I'm reading it, I can hear.  
[laughing]  
Ellen He can't put it down.  
...  
Researcher Ok, but you think they're not as good as books, don't you David?  
David Huh? [David was reading *Courtney Crumrin* and did not hear the question]  
Researcher You think graphic novels aren't as good as books? Even though you're getting so into that one.  
David Yeah.

He continued reading and there was more comment on his reading tastes.

Researcher Are you impressed with that book [*Courtney Crumrin*] David?  
David Um.  
Robert You can't say no, can you?  
David I'm reading it.  
Researcher [laughs] Will you read anything?  
David It seems to have lost the plot though, where I am.  
Researcher Yeah?  
David She's rocked up at another school.  
Mia I think it's because you've been talking to us and reading at the same time.  
David I can literally do two or more things at the same time.

Ellen was also an avid reader and particularly scathing towards pictures in books, encompassing all graphic novels in her dislike. Every other student, even if they did not like the format, at least flicked through some of the displayed titles. Ellen refused even this. Not only those in front of her, but any graphic novels were anathema, "I don't read them" and later, "I've never read one in my life." Her classmate Robert suggested she "start now," but Ellen would not be swayed. Ellen had enjoyed *The Lord of the Rings* by Tolkien. Jeff Smith's graphic novel series *Bone* has been compared to *The Lord of the Rings* because they both entail quests. When this similarity was suggested to Ellen, she wanted to know why and added, "It's not as detailed...*The Lord of the Rings* is [in] like three different languages." The graphic novel version of *The Hobbit* by Tolkien, Wenzel, Dixon and Deming was also suggested and Ellen could barely verbalize her disdain, "Humpf." Ellen is not alone in her view. "There is a prevailing sense in the literary community that images devalue, or detract from, good writing" (Sadokierski, 2008, p. 219).



Not only avid readers disliked the visual aspects of graphic novels; others disliked any type of reading, including graphic novels. When asked if he liked reading Alex was uncertain, “If you include comic books, that’s like reading,” but added that he only “sometimes” liked them. Later when asked if he liked the format, he followed a pause with, “Um.” Tim “hardly” liked graphic novels, but would try them, “Only if like, only if my friends tell me they’re good.” He later added, “I can’t read it [a graphic novel],” further proving his ambivalence. Tom disliked all reading, “I hate graphic novels. I don’t read them,” preferring to watch movies. Tom’s classmate Leah was also very hostile toward reading. After looking at the displayed graphic novels she said, “None of them grab my attention.” Their classmate Tanya replied, “Not at all,” when asked whether she liked the format.

Interviewed librarians at two school libraries, Tuart Grove and Banksia Park, described students who did not like the graphic novel versions of *Nancy Drew* by Carolyn Keene, despite being in full colour\* and having manga-like illustration. After speculating as to why the graphic novel series *Degrassi: Extra Credit* by J. Torres did not circulate at Banksia Park, Ms Tyler had more definite opinions on the unpopularity of *Nancy Drew*. The library “had a big display up for them [*Nancy Drew* graphic novels] last year...They only went out once or twice.” She felt the problem was “*Nancy Drew* in its entirety,” the concept was just not appealing. “If they read it, they’d probably enjoy it,” but her students were not willing to give it a chance. Conversely, at Tuart Grove High School Library a Year 8 student (aged 13) asked for *Nancy Drew*, but when offered the newly purchased graphic novels said, “No, I don’t want those. I want the other ones.” Teacher librarian Ms Turner had discarded the “dog-eared, battered” copies of the original conventional novels and had to Inter-Library Loan them from another library.

### ***Teenagers who liked Graphic Novels***

The opinions regarding graphic novels were not all negative. Some teenagers were hooked on graphic novels and took part in the focus group due to their enthusiasm. Others knew little or nothing of the format but left the focus group thinking they would seek out graphic novels to read.

In contrast to a number of other avid readers from the focus groups, after

---

\* Graphic novelist Trina Robbins (2009) described the colouring as “dark and murky” (p. 51).

looking at the displayed graphic novels Robert, an avid reader himself, said,

Yeah, I reckon they're really good...I would consider it now [reading graphic novels]. 'Cause actually I've never seen, I've only seen one manga um, book and that's only how to draw the actual characters.

Robert and his classmates had all seen the movie *Spider-Man*, but Robert was the only one to say he would like to read the graphic novel version, "Ah, yeah, 'cause they, usually with movies they cut out the um, most bits." Reading the graphic novel would enable him to find out more of the story.

Unlike her classmates, Joanna did not think highly of reading, "It's ok. I don't really read that much. It's pretty boring." She never read in bed and was incredulous that Adam had read the *Harry Potter* series more than once. Although Joanna had not encountered graphic novels before, after looking at the displayed titles she thought, "They'd be more interesting than [conventional] books because they've got pictures and they're like all done up and pretty." Traditional orientation manga was "a bit confusing" for her and she felt graphic novels which read left to right "would be easier. I guess you get the hang of it halfway through. [laughs]"

Kylie initially disliked graphic novels, but was convinced otherwise during the focus group session. She said of the traditional orientation manga, "Oh my god, are you serious?" and "I wouldn't even be bothered to read that. It looks too trippy to read, just straight out." Later she picked up and began reading *Queen Bee* by Chynna Clugston-Major. Teresa exclaimed, "Oh my god, you're reading," demonstrating the rarity of such an event. *Queen Bee* is about girls in school – Kylie's favourite genre and she was captivated by it. At the end of the focus group Kylie wanted to know where she could find a copy to buy.

Its subject matter made *Queen Bee* popular with many of the girls in the focus groups. Teneal liked "the style." While Melissa thought, "They've got pretty good drawings hey," Marika was "not really interested" in graphic novels. After hearing the storyline of *Queen Bee* Marika admitted, "Maybe that one" would be enjoyable, the cover of which Melissa particularly liked, "It's not like all gloomy and stuff like that. It catches your attention, because the background is blue and the two girls are just out there."

Simon said, "I suppose they're really actually pretty short," a good point in his opinion. Peter also preferred shorter comic books (as opposed to the collected volume of comics which comprises a graphic novel). He enjoyed comic strips in the newspaper, but he did "not really" like graphic novels. He conceded, "Yeah um, I'd

probably read like shorter comics, not full book ones.” Liam said the length of graphic novels meant he would not buy them, only borrow them from the library.

I would read that [a graphic novel] in like one night easily, because whenever I get one like this. This is why I probably wouldn't buy them. I got out this Batman one [from the library] that was this thick one, and I thought it would take me like ages and I read it all in one night 'cause I was reading for about four hours.

Liam had great enthusiasm for graphic novels prior to the focus group and this is likely why he attended.

I read [laughs] I read like, graphic novels occasionally. [inaudible] like when it's my bedtime and I don't want to go to sleep...*X-Men* and *Spider-Man* and *Batman* are best I reckon...But really just, it's really rare that I find something that I like [to read]. That's why I read graphic novels because I find like, even in some, well I just enjoy all of them.

He described the displayed graphic novels as “sick” (very good) and *Plastic Man* by Karl Barker as “cool.” His classmate of few words, Carl agreed with both sentiments and spent some time looking at *Plastic Man*. Liam was more effusive. He talked more than the others in his focus group session and more than any other participant about graphic novels. Due to his reading dormancy he did not have as much time for the format as he used to, “Oh yeah, I used to [read graphic novels]. I don't really read them anymore. I'm normally out on my bike.” A lack of time for reading is common among teenagers, both among participants of the focus groups and the wider literature, as discussed in Chapter 2. Liam had not realised his school library held graphic novels. The students had a regular class in the library where they had silent free choice reading and Liam said, “I would read graphic novels [during this class] if they had them...I reckon heaps of people would read them at school.” When it was suggested he ask the librarian to buy them for the library, he said, “I doubt she'd buy them.” Unbeknownst to Liam and also Carl, Ms Robertson already had. As with other students, Liam asked where he could buy graphic novels at the end of the session.

Sandra also joined the focus group because of her penchant for graphic novels. “Yeah I've been reading them for years, so I have no problem figuring out which one to read and I really like the storylines.” Initially she couldn't remember how she first came across the format because “it was years ago...[but] I think, probably 'cause of my mum. She likes reading them every day...She gets my dad to get [buy] them.” Sandra had read a number of the displayed titles.

Some teenagers, such as Neil read graphic novels occasionally, and while not negative towards the format, were not particularly interested in them. Others were

uncertain whether they liked them. Rita had not encountered them prior to the focus group and when asked whether she liked them, responded, “I don’t know.” Classmates Kate, Chelsea and Natasha had also not read graphic novels. When asked if they might try any after seeing the displayed titles, Natasha said, “M-maybe” and later expanded on the theme,

Um yeah, I might have a look at them...Um, they're different, but I would prefer normal [conventional] books...I'd probably try them [graphic novels], if I liked them I'd continue.

Chelsea agreed she would try them, but then laughed and Kate’s only response was laughter. Kate later said she preferred conventional books and while she borrowed these from her brother, she did not borrow the graphic novels he also read.

### *Visual literacy*

Reading graphic novels entails skills in visual literacy, which Rita understood.

Rita                    In normal [conventional] books it's like you don't have a picture to the people but in these books [graphic novels] you've got their characters.  
Researcher        Yeah. So you can see what they look like.  
Rita                    You can see more and pictures of things while you're reading.

Mia and Amy’s devotion to manga is related to their liking for visual aspects in their reading material. Mia said, “You don’t have to imagine what it is, you can tell what they’re trying to tell you [from the pictures in graphic novels]” and Amy explained this as, “Pictures are to bring the [story\*] to life.” Their views were not exclusive of textual reading matter, because they also enjoyed conventional books. Joanna preferred visual reading matter and this translated from her enjoyment of magazines to an attraction toward graphic novels after looking at the titles displayed during the focus group.

Other students may not have had as well developed skills in visual literacy. Leah felt the problem with graphic novels was she was “just not a graphic person.” This was questionable as she chiefly liked magazines and biographies, particularly their pictures.

Leah                    And it has all pictures, you know The Boy named It, Boy named David [A *Child Called It* by David Pelzer]. I'll just go to them. Like I find out what they're about and then I just start looking at the pictures. I like.  
Researcher        So you like looking at pictures in books?  
Leah                    Yeah, only if they're real and if they're about people that I like.

Biographical graphic novels are published, but none of the displayed graphic novels were biographies. Leah may have felt graphic novels were too close in form

---

\* This word was inaudible. Amy said a word similar to “story.”

to conventional novels which she passionately disliked. Tom felt “the drawings [in graphic novels] are alright for those who draw and stuff but other than that.” He also preferred magazines for his reading matter, and it may have been the drawing style he disliked, rather than images in general. After Angela said, “Um, I dunno. I’m not really interested in comics,” she added,

When we were going around Australia, my sister, she had this comic. I can’t remember what it was called, but it was about a farm and stuff. And she read them, but I just got bored of them. I looked at the pictures, ‘cause I’m kind of interested in drawing, but that was about it.

Angela was not interested in drawing comics.

I like making things kind of different from before, rather than having to draw the same thing or characters or whatever. It would frustrate me trying to get them to look like each other.

Another artist, Liam, was interested in drawing comics and admired the art in graphic novels because he liked “good art.” Ms Tyler from Banksia Park High School Library discussed this in relation to *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan,

I don’t think it goes out [on loan] but they [students] sit there and they will look at the artwork. I think a lot of the ones who like to draw sit there.

In discussing graphic novel versions of conventional novels Ms Tyler from Banksia Park High School Library explained the difference, “It’s the visualization aspect of it as well. They’ve actually got the pictures in front [of the reader] so they don’t have to think.” She repeated this concept later in her interview, “So it’s either a graphic novel where it’s, ‘Hey I don’t have to think.’ And then they’ll take home *Eragon* [by Christopher Paolini] or something big and chunky.” Teenagers unfamiliar with graphic novels did not agree. Some said the pictures in graphic novels meant confusion ensued because too much was happening on the page at once.

Researcher So would you think these books that have pictures all through them [graphic novels] would be [good]?

Leah No because it’s too crowded.

Tanya There’s too many.

Tom Yeah.

Leah Is the fiction non-real stuff.

[unknown] There’s too many pictures.

Tanya My eyes just.

Leah Yeah.

Tanya I get my head, uh.

Researcher What about the ones that are black and white?

Tanya No that’s still boring.

Leah That is boring.

Researcher Yeah? You don’t like the black and white?

Tom There would be like no um, emotion or thing there.

Tanya There’s no depth.

Other students felt having pictures meant they would skip ahead to look at the

pictures, without reading the text and this would ruin the story.

Kylie           It's like wrong.  
Researcher    Do you think there's too much going on?  
Kylie           Yeah, but 'cause you're...trying to read one thing and all this distracts you.  
Researcher    Yeah.  
Kylie           That's why you go like this.  
Jason          Yeah. You're trying to read the page and you see a picture here you're interested in.  
Researcher    And you skip ahead?  
Jason          And you forget all these.  
Teresa          I do that. I see a picture ahead and look at it before I've read the part and then.  
Kylie          Yeah and it kind of ruins it.  
Teresa          I know what happens now.

However this does not only occur with visual materials. Bender (2004) considered this when reading a conventional book. She compulsively skipped to the bottom of the page to read the last paragraph before reading the whole page. “Sometimes I have to put my hand on the page to block the end of a scene because I don’t trust my eyes on their own” (p. 48). Other students deliberately skipped sections if they found a book boring, such as Mia and Teneal who skipped to the last pages to read the ending, without having to wade through the entire story.

Marika believed the pictures allow “you [to] see how they’re flowing, but it [the picture] just says what they’re [the words are] saying, so you might as well watch a movie.” As observed in the literature review there is much written to counter her opinion. Pictures often add more to the text of a graphic novel, allowing “critical interpretations of greater significance than would be possible if visual and verbal texts were read as separate elements” (Day cited in Schraffenberger, 2007, p. 81).

Marika had limited experience of graphic novels and was not interested in reading any of the titles displayed during the session. Her lack of experience with the format is the likely cause of her erroneous belief about the limited complexity of or necessity for the images in graphic novels. Marika’s comparison between graphic novels and movies is somewhat supported by Schraffenberger’s description of comics as the “format between text and film” (2007, p. 79).

What does reading do that movies and video games and television do not? I would argue that books, more than other media, allow us to live inside the lives of others because we have to translate scratches on a page into ideas and make the story ours. (J. Green, 2008)

Many avid readers agreed with this quote from YA author John Green, which led to a preference for conventional books over more visual materials such as graphic novels, including Kate, Adam, Bianca, Teneal, as well as David and Ellen.

McKinney (2006) believes “the imagination performs an immense amount of unacknowledged work as we read fiction” (p. 44). Some of the avid readers realised this work their imagination achieved and revelled in it, preferring their reading matter without pictures so they could imagine the setting, characters and other aspects of the story. Bianca thought pictures spoilt her imagination, “because I prefer to imagine it in my head” and Teneal and Kate felt conventional books were “more detailed,” which led to being able imagine the stories themselves. Adam agreed,

I like the way that I build my own image and it's, I build it the way I like it. But then the way someone else's done it [through illustrations]; I mean you might find one you like. Then you might find one being a picture that you think, “Oh, she shouldn't look like that. She should look hell different.”

### Comics are for kids

At the 2007 ComicCon librarian panelists “bemoaned that many fellow librarians still view anything in a graphic format as kid stuff” (Kim & Rogers, 2007). This does not seem likely to decrease because Sandra’s family were the only adults mentioned by participants who thought highly of the format, “My mum actually really likes them herself and so does my older sister.” Teenagers were more likely to mention the converse, whether it was a personal belief or parents who thought graphic novels were not “real books.” Adam was an avid reader, but he had not always been so inclined. When younger he never read and his parents often tried to encourage him. While he never came across graphic novels during this time, he “probably” would have tried them if he had, although his “parents would have said, ‘You’ve got to read a proper book.’” Ellen provided the ultimate example of the opinion that graphic novels are for children.

Researcher	What do you think of them [graphic novels] Ellen?
Ellen	For kids. [shouting] Pictures! I hate pictures!
Researcher	[laughs]
Ellen	It's, I get half way through a book and see a picture and I stop.
Researcher	Yeah?
Researcher	You want a novel?
Ellen	I want a novel, not a picture book.
Researcher	Yeah.
Researcher	Do you think they're too um, like a little kid's book?
Ellen	No. I reckon if you're an author you have be an author, not be an illustrator.
Researcher	Mmm. So you can like, paint a picture with words?
Ellen	Yeah. That's an author.

### **The Movie of the Book**

The truly visual format of movies was discussed by participants, particularly in relation to movie adaptations of both conventional books and graphic novels. The

*Harry Potter* series was the main example, but many others were covered.

Kylie	I don't see why they bring out movies if they want you to read the books.
Researcher	Yeah?
Teresa	That's why they bring out movies.
Jason	But the books got more stuff in it, like <i>The Da Vinci Code</i> [by Dan Brown].
Rita	Got more detail.
Ryan	The book's different to the movie.

Jones *et al.* (2006) agreed with Kylie's classmates that both are important and often very different. Many participants compared the visual to the textual in discussing books and their movie counterparts. *Holes* by Louis Sachar and its movie adaptation were often used as assigned texts in English classes and universally popular. Participants who had not studied *Holes* had often seen the movie or read the book in their free time. Kylie said, "Do you know what book I like? *Holes*," although she "liked the movie better than the book." She elaborated,

I hate books how they just like go on about the description of setting. I'm like, "I don't care. You told me where it is, I can picture it in my head already." It's so stupid.

The movie of *The Lord of the Rings* was also mentioned by many students, often saying the book was difficult to read. Simon read the first chapter "and then it gave me a headache, so I didn't finish." Ryan had read *The Hobbit* and the first chapter of *The Lord of the Rings*, but then watched the movie instead. Ellen was not disparaging of the book, although she also had initial difficulties with it.

When I read *The Lord of the Rings* I liked it. I got to the end, but I missed half the stuff. So when I watched the movie, I sort of got it and then when I read the book again I got half of the other stuff.

She added, "I think it's the only movie that I've seen that included most of the stuff." David always "liked the book better" and provided *The Lord of the Rings* as an example. Whether he read the book first or watched the movie first, "If it's a spin-off of a book, I don't like it."

Many avid readers, such as David and Rita, remarked on the greater detail in a book compared to the movie. Robert, Teneal and Kate agreed "movies miss so much." Melissa and Anna read the *Harry Potter* series before the movies and disliked the changes.

You read the book and then you have like an idea of what they'll look like and how they'll be and then you see it and they skip bits out and you're like, "Oh that's so disappointing."

Bianca found it harder to read a book after watching the movie, describing the movie of *About a Boy* as "a completely different story" to the book. Angela enjoyed this,



“to see how different things are, like from the movie and stuff.”

Leah disliked reading and thought the opposite. She found a movie “different because it’s watching and...you actually get the whole idea of it,” in agreement with Tabachnick (2007).

Most of us who are not visual artists cannot visualize what a writer is talking about when he or she describes a person or physical object; most of us need to see that person or object. (p. 27)

Adam described the book of *The Da Vinci Code* as “crap...I got fed up. I thought to hell with that.” His dislike translated to the movie adaptation as well. Danielle “loved the book” and the movie, but

The ending in the movie was better, I thought than the book, because I think the ending in the book, it kind of summed it up in under a chapter. And I thought for like a really, really long book, it should have had a better ending.

Until a few years ago Adam “just never wanted to read.” His parents tried to encourage him to read, to no avail. After seeing the movie of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* Adam discovered pleasure in reading. He explained,

I started reading the first book and I never really got the concept of playing the movie [in my head] by reading the book...When it told you that someone did something, I’d just read it. I’d never sort of play it as a movie in my head...Ever since I saw the [actual] movie and I saw the first characters, I just instantly got it and that’s when I started reading all my books and playing like the movie [of the story] in my head...If it wasn’t for that, I probably still wouldn’t read at all.

Fry (1985) discussed the concept of reading the book complementing watching the movie, “The images of the film help to create a visual reference point that the reader needs to construe the text” (p. 90), exactly as Adam described. April also found this with the manga she read because they were “a little bit like the movie.”

Graphic novels and comics are regularly filmed as movies or television programs (Tabachnick, 2007; T. Thompson, 2007). David Maisel, the chairman of Marvel Studios, discussed this in an interview.

Revenues for its [Marvel Studios] print wares have been growing in double digits for the past three years and profit margins have been running at close to 40% (Siklos, 2008)

Focus group participants did not contribute to this profit by buying or reading comics of the movies they watched. Many had seen the movies *Spider-Man* and *X-Men*, but had not read the comics and did not want to. Anna said, “I saw *Superman [Returns]* and I didn’t understand it ’cause I didn’t know...any of the characters. Then I wanted to read about it.” When asked if she would read the comic she did not reply. Her classmate Cassie said the movie *X-Men* “was really good ’cause of how they made it,” but she would “probably not” read the comic. Tanya would rather “watch

the movie” of *Spider-Man* than read the comic. She elaborated, “You get the actual idea instead of having to think all these different things and you know, make yourself so confused about it.” Marika said movies were easier because “you just sit down and watch,” as opposed to what Liam described, “When you’re reading you’re actually using your brain.” Mia thought there were times when this effort was greater, “If you feel stressed and you read a book, you use a lot of concentration.” At such times she preferred to do something other than read.

Liam and Robert were exceptions to the above. Robert had seen the movie of *Spider-Man* and although he had not read the comic, said he would like to. Liam had read the comics on which a number of movies were based.

I like graphic novels, but they're better than the movies 'cause they're always boring and dark in the movie. I was watching the *Batman* movie and I found it really boring. Then when I saw the, started reading them [graphic novels], they're all gory, like getting their heads like [inaudible]

Liam had enjoyed the movie adaptation of *Sin City* rated MA15+ and *Ghost in the Shell* rated M, despite being one of the younger participants. Both are based on graphic novels. *Ghost in the Shell* is Japanese anime, with a manga version by Masamune Shirow. Shirow’s work has been described as a masterpiece, but is “a more extreme example of sexual content, one in which fan service plays a major role” (Brenner, 2007b, p. 91).

The visual literacy inherent in the above materials is becoming a more important part of school curricula, but traditional literacy learnt through conventional books in the main focus of many English classes, of which teenage participants had varying opinions.

### **Reading in the English class**

Although many young people are doubtless enjoying the [assigned] texts that they must read for school, just as many do not find pleasure in curriculum based texts. (Rothbauer, 2006, p. 107)

Reading books is a large part of high school English classes. Teenagers who dislike reading in general or books in particular are at a disadvantage to those who enjoy reading. There are a number of different types of reading which may be undertaken in class and these are discussed in this section. Texts (conventional books or other material such as plays, poetry or movies) may be assigned to the whole class as a part of the curriculum. Students may be expected to own a copy, or a class set may be lent to students for the period of study. The text is analysed in depth and students complete assessed work on different aspects of the text, submitted through

written or oral presentation. The reading of the assigned text may be expected as homework, through silent reading in class, or read aloud by the teacher and/or students during class.

Cassie was emphatic in her universal dislike of assigned texts, “I don’t like them” and more specifically *The Chrysalids* by John Wyndham was “really hard to get into.” Carl described *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson as the “worst book ever.” Kate said *Bridge to Terabithia* was different to what she would usually read and teachers were trying to “get us used to the different books.” Anna also noticed this and explained the problems she found with assigned texts.

The ones they choose have weird themes. Like the one now [*The Chrysalids*] is about mutants and god and *The Running Man* [by Michael Bauer] was about...life and the lessons that you learn. Um, they choose them for...a reason, to make us think and stuff, but it, I wouldn’t choose them normally.

Reeves (2004) asked high school students if they had any advice for their English teachers. One common answer was “Don’t try to make us read boring stuff” (p. 243). Although finding something to please every student is virtually impossible, “teachers can choose [assigned] texts that are more likely to appeal to more young readers, especially if they get to know their students’ interests” (*ibid.*). Adam explained the importance of teachers assigning enjoyable texts in class,

Something I have no interest in, I’d do it for this level [grade], but I think it’s hard to read something when you don’t enjoy it. You [need to] really enjoy it.

While Leah was adamant in her dislike of reading, she enjoyed the assigned text *Hana’s Suitcase* by Karen Levine, “That was actually like one of the first books I’ve actually read.” Leah liked biographies which she described as “some sort of documentaries.” As wide reading improves vocabulary (Krashen, 2004a; Stanovich, 1986), Leah’s ignorance of the word biography may have been caused by her lack of wide reading. Jeremy also favoured biographies. When asked what he would think if biographies were assigned texts he said, “Yeah, I’d like finish it in a night.”

Tanya enjoyed *Letters from the Inside* by John Marsden because it “was about two teenage penpals like writing to each other. You know, they talk about parties, boys, everything that’s happening now.” Her classmate Tom did not share her enjoyment and Tanya surmised, “Most probably Tom couldn’t relate to it ’cause obviously he’s not a girl.” She provided advice for teachers when selecting assigned texts,

I think it would be better if we were reading stuff that actually relates to our lives at the moment. Like things that could possibly happen. Like what teenagers are going through...More to the point of where you can relate to it. And you’d like to read about

it 'cause it's...similar to you. And that would keep you interested.

Joanna liked her assigned text *Lockie Leonard, Human Torpedo* by Tim Winton, “I found that good. It was about teenagers, so it was easy to read.” Angela also thought books about teenagers made good assigned texts, “Maybe ask us if we have any good ones we could suggest.”

Such advice was not always followed by English teachers of focus group participants and led to some students dealing with their dislike of assigned texts by not reading them, while still being able to pass the assessments. Leah found an innovative way to overcome this problem, “Make sure she [the teacher] reads [the book] to us, that way we sleep and copy off someone else [rather] than listen.” Michelle had read one assigned text in the previous term, *The Running Man*, which she “didn’t really like.” She had not yet started reading the current assigned text, *The Chrysalids* and in the past had not read *Playing Beatie Bow* by Ruth Park. Michelle’s classmate Cassie felt she had to justify her reading of *Playing Beatie Bow*, “I had Ms Adelphi so I had to read it.” Tim “just pretended” to read assigned texts he disliked. Despite enjoying reading, Neil had not read *The Darkness* by Anthony Eaton when it was an assigned text the previous year, he “only read it last week” and did “not really” like it. Peter had read *The Darkness* prior to it being assigned in class and said, “I liked it. It’s ok, but it wasn’t the best.” Liam only read half of *Bridge to Terabithia*, “I kind of just skimmed through it...I just didn’t have much time.” Tanya had “never read” *The Cay* by Theodore Taylor and Marika had not read *Romeo and Juliet*, but was willing to provide her opinion that it “sucked” because she disliked the storyline. These practices corroborated Reeves’ (2004) findings that “most [students] could pass tests on a reading without having read the book themselves” (p. 242). One student Reeves interviewed felt there was no difference between reading a book and asking someone who had read it to tell him about it, “Either way, I find out what happens” (*ibid.*).

Some assigned texts mentioned by participants were recently published, but older titles included *Playing Beatie Bow* (1980), *Bridge to Terabithia* (1977), *The Outsiders* (1970) by S.E. Hinton, *The Cay* (1969), and *The Chrysalids* (1955). The suggestion that newer YA titles would overcome problems with assigned texts (Odean cited in P. Jones *et al.*, 2006, p. 112) did not necessarily apply to research participants. One class had read the recently published *Split Lip* by Charles Maekivi (2004) and roundly disliked it. Ryan described it as “really bad.” *The Outsiders*, on

the other hand, was declared by Simon to be “the best one we read,” with his classmates agreeing. In contrast to the others, Teresa at first said she disliked *The Outsiders*. After hearing her classmates’ positive comments she conceded, “It’s alright,” again demonstrating the difficulties of peer influence in a group setting. While both these titles are about teenagers and topics teenage students “could relate to,” the difference in preference shows the difficulties in predicting titles students will enjoy.

Cassie disliked *Playing Beatie Bow* because she had previously read it and, “It just wasn’t like a book that had anything happening in it. Much, anyway [laughs].” Cassie qualified this by adding, “[*Playing Beatie Bow*] had lots of things happening in it, but like, nothing main and important.”

The problem students had with *The Chrysalids* was its length and complexity. Despite Angela saying, “Once you do get into it though, it’s actually pretty good,” she explained why she was taking so long to finish.

It just kind of tires me out though because the printing [in the book] we’ve got is like tiny...’cause I only read when I’m going to bed...I normally get kind of tired, so I can’t be bothered any more.

Kelly described her difficulty with *The Chrysalids*, “Some books are really hard to get through, like the book we’re reading in school.” Anna was confused by the telepathy between characters. She had not realised they were speaking through thoughts until three quarters through, “I was like, ‘Why is it such a secret that he’s talking to people,’” not understanding the main conflict in the story.

Conversely, voracious readers David, Robert and Ellen said their assigned texts were too easy. Robert thought assigned texts could be improved by being “more challenging.” This group had not read Shakespeare’s plays or Greek tragedies such as *Antigone* by Sophocles, these texts’ main challenge being “that stupid language.” Leah agreed, “That’s only ’cause we read it in the old language. If we like had it in our terms, it would be ok I reckon.” A common practice when plays are assigned as texts is to read the play aloud in class. Cassie believed, “Where it’s all in, not a different language, but not modern English, it’s a bit confusing.” Angela had conflicting opinions on reading aloud in class. At first she said, “I think it makes it easier to read,” but then elaborated, “It takes too long though...Some people can’t read good.”

Marika and Melissa had watched Baz Luhrmann’s *Romeo + Juliet* outside school. Although considered an inauthentic interpretation of the text (Worthen, 1998)

Melissa enthused, “Oh my god. I’ve got that on DVD. That was so fun.” Year 9 students who study *Romeo and Juliet* are not allowed to watch this version because it is rated M, for audiences 15 years and over. In contrast to other participants, and his usual views on assigned texts, Marty thought, “*Romeo and Juliet* wasn’t too bad.”

Marty’s usual view was, “I don’t really enjoy reading those [assigned] books.” Despite initially saying this was because he did not like the lack of choice in assigned texts, he subsequently reasoned, “I just want to read it really. I don’t like all the writing stuff...The thing is, after we read a book in class we have to write a, like we do an oral or an essay on it...Yeah I hate that.” This was similar to Reeves’ student Duke who enjoyed reading when in elementary school, but in middle school his teachers started to expect book reports about students’ reading. “Books started getting long and thick...and the odds of the story boring him became too great” (Reeves, 2004, p. 78). Angela compared her reading in primary school with the expectations of high school.

About *Playing Beatie Bow* um, it was...the first book we studied in high school and...in primary school I never had to...study a book, I just had to read it. And then it was um, I hated it. It was so boring. It had...way too much happening in it, just to...start me off.

English classes often viewed a movie in conjunction with an assigned text, whether this was a movie related to the themes of the book or a movie adaptation of the text, particularly common when a play was assigned. Angela thought watching a related movie was helpful because it enabled her to write more through comparing the two works. She also thought it was easier to write notes while watching a movie than when reading a book.

### ***Graphic novels as assigned texts***

Webb and Guisand (2007) broadened the comparison of a conventional book and movie by assigning a conventional novel, movie adaptation and graphic novel which extended the story of the novel. This was

empowering for students and led not only to a more meaningful reading of the literary works, but also to a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural context [of the story]. (p. 126)

Graphic novels assigned as texts were not found to be a common practice in the research. Two interviewed teacher librarians had one or two teachers who used graphic novels as assigned texts, usually in conjunction with conventional books or a movie adaptation of the title. English teacher Jodi Leckbee in Texas (U.S.) believes, “Graphic novels should be acknowledged as a valuable learning tool,” just as movies

are used in English classes as a supplement to conventional books (2005, p. 31). The teacher at Tricoryne High School whose class took part in a focus group provided a selection of graphic novels and picture books for her students to read independently as a prelude to the focus group session. This was not expected, but provided some valuable insights. None of the other focus group participants had experienced graphic novels in class, assigned or as free reading.

All students in the class at Tricoryne read graphic novels prior to the focus group, but only six students took part in the research. Of these, the three boys had read graphic novels prior to the class, and the three girls had not. Kylie had read *Archie* comics and Rita liked the comic strip *Peanuts*. Simon particularly liked the manga he chose during class and became a convert to “Asian ones and Japanese manga ones.” If graphic novels were assigned as texts he thought, “It would be a lot better.” Ryan had previously enjoyed the manga series *Astro Boy* by Osamu Tezuka, describing it as “hell good.” He continued, “They’re easier to read than [conventional] books...It’s not as boring, it’s easy. You look at a page [of a conventional book] and it’s just like line after line [of text].” Rita was an avid reader and although she liked the graphic novel title she read in class and thought she might try reading some after seeing the selection during the focus group, she preferred conventional books. She was uncertain whether she would like a graphic novel as an assigned text, “It depends on what it is.” Rita later said she would like one of the graphic novels displayed during the session as an assigned text because it was fantasy, a genre she enjoyed.

The collection of graphic novels provided during the English class for students to choose from included picture books, which are chiefly illustrated, but, unlike graphic novels, do not have a sequential narrative displayed in panels with dialogue in speech and thought bubbles. Kylie chose two picture books during the class: *Window* by Jeannie Baker and *The Watertower* by Gary Crew and Steven Woolman. When she disliked the wordless *Window*, she picked her second disastrous choice. The simplistic pictures of *The Watertower* belie a complicated story on many levels. Its difficulty means most students would need the help of class discussion to understand the story. Kylie described her second choice,

I had a look at another one, but it was still pretty boring. It was kind of babyish, but it wasn't meant to be. It was something to do with a big well. It was...when two boys went into this thing they weren't meant to go into, but it was haunted. I don't know what it was. I was confused.

Teresa also disliked the graphic novel she selected, describing it as, “*Daredevil* and all that junk.” This is an action comic aimed at boys, thus her disdain was unsurprising. During a different session Anna explained her dislike for the action genre, specifically written for boys. After perusing some of the displayed graphic novels she said, “I don’t really like these ones, ’cause it’s all about fighting.” In the past Anna had read some of her sister’s *Archie* comics and enjoyed them, the focus on relationships and everyday teenage matters being more to her liking. Kylie also enjoyed *Archie* comics for the same reason.

At the end of the focus group at Scholtzia High School the Head of the English Department, Mr Fisher, was accosted by Mia and David to buy graphic novels from the list given to students to take home (despite David’s “supposed” dislike of the format). Mr Fisher asked where he could buy the listed titles and said, “Good because I was looking for some graphic novel titles and the fellow [the library supplier] said he didn’t have any.” The English Department collection, used by students in class, already included *Maus* by Art Spiegelman and the graphic novel adaptation of *Stormbreaker* by Anthony Horowitz *et al.*

Despite few focus group participants experiencing graphic novels in an English class at any time during their schooling, all had opinions on whether they would enjoy the format as an assigned text. As could be expected, those who had some knowledge or liking of the format thought they would be appropriate for class study, but those unfamiliar with graphic novels felt they would not be suitable. Liam was enthusiastic about graphic novels and “would want to read them” in class. Sandra said she would “love that.” Manga aficionados Amy and Mia thought, “That would be really great.” Their classmate Robert “wouldn’t mind it actually,” because he wanted to try them after seeing the titles displayed during the focus group. Joanna said she would be willing to try.

I'd probably read it, see if I like it and then, I dunno. I've never read one before...It might be interesting. [laughs]

During another session Neil, Alex and Peter discussed their occasional reading of comics and graphic novels and while this did not equate to a love of the format, commented that they would not mind them as assigned texts. Neil said, “I would prefer a [conventional] novel, but it wouldn’t faze me.” Alex “would finish it” and Peter was equally ambivalent, but not disparaging, “I’d still read it.”

Many of those with little knowledge of or liking for the format believed



graphic novels as assigned texts would be problematic, because graphic novels were an “easy” option when compared to a conventional book. If students were offered the choice between a graphic novel and a conventional book Anna thought,

People would choose the graphic novel without...thinking about it 'cause they're like, 'Oh yeah, it's just a comic, it'll be easy.' But they won't...think about...what you have to do. And they'll just be like, 'Oh it's a change' and do that [choose the comic over a conventional book].

Marty and Jeremy did “not really” know about the format, but had opinions nonetheless. Marty said, “They’re not really books” and Jeremy agreed, conjecturing that studying a graphic novel would compare unfavourably to a conventional book because it would be difficult “to go into full detail. That’s why we read more thorough books like *The Red Cardigan* [by J.C. Burke] and stuff...They’re trying to encourage us to broaden our reading.” Leah assumed, “I wouldn’t, I wouldn’t read it,” but her classmates said they would “probably read it.” Despite Marika first describing an assigned graphic novel as “kind of boring like, you know,” she continued, “I dunno. It’d probably be interesting, like if there’s action and stuff.” Phil was more definite in his scorn, describing graphic novels as “really boring.” If assigned one in class he would “just end up looking at the pictures.” Angela also thought she would do this. In contrast, her classmate Cassie considered it would be difficult because the pictures would distract her. During another session, Bianca believed the opposite.

Bianca	I wouldn't say it would be hard, but it wouldn't be much ch- um, challenging.
Researcher	So you think it's more challenging to read an ordinary book?
Bianca	Yeah, because then you have to um, work out what it all means. Then work it out in your head. So if the pictures just showed it [it would be too easy].

This common view that comics only equated to pictures and were thus easy, is a prevalent issue in the literature, discussed in the literature review. The only way to overcome the view is to provide graphic novels in class and show students they are not necessarily an easy option. Understanding the pictures involves visual literacy, which must be learnt like any other literacy (Schirato & Webb, 2004, p. 57).

Wordless picture books were sometimes studied as assigned texts. This format was discussed during the focus groups because one of the displayed graphic novels was a wordless graphic novel, *Owly* by Andy Runton. Some students, all girls, thought *Owly* was “cute” due to the storyline and style of drawing. Teacher librarian Allyson Lyga (2006) described the reaction to *Owly* of a third grader who was a

below average reader. When Bryonna returned it to the school library she said, “It’s my favorite book!...I read the story to my two year old sister, and she loved it too!”

When asked how she read a book with no words,

Bryonna explained that when she looked at the pictures she thought about the words the characters were saying and she visualized the words in her head. Then, when she read the story to her sister, she created the dialogue and story based on the pictures. (p. 56)

Among focus group participants in general, this view was not shared and wordless picture books were disliked. Chelsea said, “I hate ones that just have pictures...I just have no idea what’s even happening usually.” Anna thought this led to “everyone having...a different story line in their head.” Kelly said, “It would be faster to read” and during another session Liam explained why this was problematic.

I just think it would be a bit kind of, if you're reading it and you just whiz through it...You're trying to pay attention to what it is you see, like two bugs in a jar [describing a picture in *Owly*], that's what's on there [the page]. You'll be looking at it for ages because you don't just want to keep skipping through it all, but then it's really the whole thing.

Those who appreciate wordless graphic novels may find the opposite, as comics critic Douglas Wolk (2007) described when lingering on wordless panels in ordinary comics (p. 129).

Confusion was a common response to *Owly*, with many students believing the lack of words enabled multiple meanings to be taken from the story. Leah and Marika used the all-encompassing “boring” to describe it. Initially Melissa said *Owly* was “cute,” but then changed her mind to agree with her classmates, “No word books are crappy...Can’t understand...I don’t think I would be able to understand it.” This is a hazard when talking to any group of teenagers and occurred more than once with various participants.

None of the students ever chose to read a wordless picture book. Teacher librarian Ms Hatcher from Illyarrie High School Library said the reader of a wordless picture book “has to concentrate more because you don’t have the support of the words to help you.” She was passionate about the format and used titles in her classes, for example *The Expedition* by Willi Baum is “a good one to use to show the impact of the pictures because it’s a very quick one to read.”

### ***Choice in English texts***

Given the diversity of needs among adolescents in any secondary classroom, it is unlikely that one novel will meet the needs of all learners. (D. Fisher & Frey, 2007, p. 35)

The recommendation from the literature of the importance of choice in English

class texts was echoed by many students in the focus groups, Marty being a typical example,

I just prefer picking up my own books. Rather than being set a certain sort of genre or something that you've got to read...It's better if you pick your own, 'cause that's what you're personally interested in.

When Marty's classmate Tim was asked what he thought of being allowed to choose what to read in class, he replied, "Yeah, I would wake up." Joanna said, "Then you're not stuck with something that's [so] boring you don't want to turn the pages."

A minority were not so positive and thought it would be impractical for teachers to teach a number of assigned texts simultaneously. David believed, "They wouldn't be able to base the curriculum around books we choose to read." Teachers do not share this sentiment and have developed lessons around students reading what they chose as assigned texts (Massey in La Marca & Macintyre, 2006, p.129). Fisher and Frey (2007) discuss a lesson plan in which class time is divided into sections: instructional time when the teacher works with the whole class, then group work, and finally independent learning. During the group work, "collaborative learning" tasks may include book clubs and literature circles. Both of these allow students to choose texts from a list, thus allowing some choice and negating the need for the whole class to read the same assigned text.

Anna believed, "They should give us a choice" but had previously noted the difference between assigned texts and her own choice in reading matter. She thought if students were allowed choice in assigned texts, the resulting texts would not be "English-orientated," with enough depth and complexity for study. Adam thought this would enable easy marks.

Pick a book that I already know quite well. That way I just read it again like, to refresh my memory and then I definitely get quite good grades, because I understand it all.

Kylie mentioned another problem with choice in texts. It took her a while to find a book she liked, while teachers often expect students to quickly find a book and start reading. "Then you have to actually read a bit to understand if you like it or not. And then you have to put it back if you don't like it. And then get a new one." Recommendations from teachers and librarians are a solution to this problem. While some students said their teacher librarians were approachable in regards to recommendations, others might not be aware of this possibility or be unwilling to accept a teacher's recommendation.

In agreement with the literature (P. Jones *et al.*, 2006; Kramer-Dahl, 2004;

Reeves, 2004), interviewed teacher librarian Ms Hatcher suggested studying a book as an assigned text in English class could lead to student dislike of it, even if it was previously enjoyed when read for pleasure.

I remember that myself [when a student]. There were books that I got, that if I read them before the class started them, I loved them...To read them [in class], I hated.

To counter this Ms Hatcher instituted “reading blocks,” during which teachers “give students experience in just reading for pleasure...So sometimes they’ll just be asked to read a book” and not expected to undertake an activity related to their reading. This is free choice reading without the requirement for subsequent work, mentioned by Marty and Phil as a reason to dislike school reading.

### Free choice reading programs

As discussed in Chapter 2, Sustained Silent Reading is a free choice reading program and a response to the realisation of the importance of choice in reading materials. While most English curricula do not allow choice in texts analysed in depth, many involve some variation on a free choice reading program. This was often held in the school library during participants’ English class. On a regular basis students chose a conventional book from the library collection (other formats may be disallowed, although not always) and read silently for the duration of the class. Some free choice reading programs involved homework reading, books from anywhere (not just the school library), or a book report or journal writing in response to the reading.

At Boronia High School every student spent one class a week in the school library reading something of their choice. Most of the six students in the focus group were disparaging of the session, although Marika and Melissa enjoyed the time, likely because they actually read during the class. Leah disliked it because, “You don’t do anything.” She would start a book, “First, second page that’s it, don’t want to [continue reading]...Mostly, half of us sit on the floor, on the couches, you know. We put the books up and then just talk to each other.” Her classmate Tanya described it as a “social session.” The students were allowed to read magazines and this was a popular choice, leading to some students missing out because “there’s not really many.” Both Tom and Leah sought a magazine over a conventional book (graphic novels were available, but neither considered them). Leah explained her reason for only pretending to read, “If there’s no magazines, I just don’t read.”

Tricoryne High School’s free choice reading program was held fortnightly in

the school library and students could choose from the library's collection or were allowed to bring their own book, something Kylie had been unaware of. Kylie and Teresa had similar views of this class as students at Boronia High School. Kylie would "just read half of the book and just leave it" and Teresa "just opened the book and looked around." Teresa might suffer from the same difficulty with choice Kylie described and both students could have an improved experience if the "right book" were recommended to them. Chelsea from Senna High School described a similar predicament, "Often I'm not very good at like, finding new books to read." This led to her selecting books she had previously read for the free choice reading program or "I usually just get any one I can find, use it as a cover and then talk [to my friends] and then say that I'm reading the book." Her classmate Kate noted that Ms Robertson would recommend a book, "If you go up and ask her, 'I'm looking for this kind of book'...And if you don't know then she'll just find one she thinks you'll like." Chelsea seemed unwilling to take this path but might have been more accepting of recommendations from her peers (Brassell, 2006). This could benefit any student who felt their free choice reading program was "boring" or a "social session."

Students at Tuart Grove High School described a Reading Journal in which they wrote about their reading outside of school as a part of their English assessment. The previous year (Year 8) they had a regular class in the library for their free choice reading program, but in Year 9 they were expected to undertake this reading outside school, which led to Angela's changed reading habits, "It's just this year that I stopped reading mostly." While she conceded she had read three books last term and wrote about them in her Reading Journal, it was assumed this was less than she had read in previous years. Angela also described the free choice reading program at her primary school two years previously.

My teacher was always forcing us to read. Like we had a map in our classroom and it had um, different...spots around the world and you had to read a book for each place. And then the first person around won something. It was like 60 books or something.

In response to the program Angela and her friends read and shared series books, a common occurrence among young readers (E. T. Sullivan, 2002). Angela explained,

When I was in Year 7 I used to read...heaps. But um, me and my friends we all read...the same series at the same time. So we'd each buy like a few of them and then we'd all just share. In the end we had, like about fifty *Mary Kate & Ashley* books.

McKechnie (2006) observed, series function "as a shared cultural currency and allow children to participate in a community of readers as they buy, trade, give, read, and discuss the same titles" (p. 84), as exemplified by Angela and her friends.

The younger Year 8 students at Senna High School wrote a Reading Journal as part of their free choice reading program held in the library. Natasha described the class as “kind of boring” which caused her to “just sit there and...” Her pause aptly described this time she spent doing nothing. Carl echoed her sentiment, “Sometimes it’s pretty boring.” He thought his school library had nothing to interest him. If he investigated the library further he might have encountered the graphic novel collection, examples of which interested him during the focus group session.

As at Tricoryne, students at Senna High were allowed to bring in their own books, but “not allowed to read like, magazines or picture books.” They were unsure whether they were allowed to read graphic novels during this class. Some thought yes, others no. Chelsea said, “I don’t think we’d be able to because [pause] Yeah, I just don’t think [teacher librarian] Ms Robertson would let us.” Liam had a similar opinion of his English teachers’ views. When asked whether he thought his teachers would assign graphic novels as texts or did he “think they would think they’re not real reading so they might not?” He replied, “Not real reading, but I would want to read them.”

### Literature Circles

Literature Circles provide a method of reading and analysing texts in class while allowing student choice (Brabham & Villaume, 2000; Burns, 1998; Daniels, 2006). In a Victorian high school Literature Circles “reinvigorated reading and created a reading culture in the middle years” (Culican & Fattor, 2003). They have been compared to discussion of books in friendship groups (La Marca & Macintyre, 2006, p. 128), but students may not agree. Teachers could assign groups, deliberately separating friends to promote interaction between those who do not usually mix or to prevent socializing among friends.

Tim was scathing of the method, “Lit Circle books are bad.” At one point Jeremy had to calm his outburst, “Settle down buddy.” Tim did not consider Literature Circles enabled choice, “The library forces us to read those books...Let’s read our own stuff.” As with other class reading he disliked, the consequence was, “Nah, I don’t read them. I just pretend I do.” Marty and Jeremy described the problems they had with Literature Circles.

Marty

While we’re in here we um get, we’re put in groups of four or three or something. And then we have to have a mutual agreement in the group about which book we’re going to read and often people will contradict what other people–

Researcher Yeah, so you all have to read the same book?  
 Marty So you maybe end up reading something you don't really want to read.  
 Jeremy Sometimes you get a good book but there's not enough copies for everyone. So you need to leave it...There has to be a copy for each member of the group.

Phil added, "It's just a waste of time." The whole class had talked to their English teacher Mr Cavendish about their dislike and he suggested the class voice their concerns to teacher librarian Ms Andretti who ran the Literature Circles. Jeremy explained, "But we never have gotten around to doing it...The library teacher [Ms Andretti] I don't think would like us doing that." Instead they opted for passive resistance.

Researcher You do have to write something about it and hand it in?  
 Jeremy Yep  
 Alex Every week.  
 Jeremy We haven't for like the last, this term really.  
 Researcher Yeah?  
 Jeremy None of us have bothered to do it.  
 Alex Yeah.  
 Researcher And they don't mind that none of you have bothered?  
 Marty Oh, I think if nobody does it, they can't really do anything about it.

Marty initially named lack of choice as the reason for his dislike, but he also disliked having to report on the book, either in writing or orally. He did concede, "They're probably trying to make us think." As a part of Literature Circles students are assigned set roles (Daniels, 2002), which Marty and Phil disliked. "We're all given different roles...We have to either research the author's background or pick some quotes and write about them and talk about the characters." Phil explained what they did enjoy, "Reading the book and just talking about our views on it," a sentiment echoed in the literature. "Reading is socially situated and therefore should naturally include talk" (Guthrie & Anderson in La Marca & Macintyre, 2006, p. 47), as "talk improves comprehension and stimulates thinking about the text" (Reeves, 2004, p. 247). Reeves found one student's "pleasure in the story was enhanced by her sense of community [classroom] enjoyment...Her friends' recommendations [during class] provided some of the emotional warmth that she needs in order to read well" (p. 184).

Almost two decades ago Clary (1991) recommended alternatives to students writing about what they read.

They probably should not have to share every book in any way, and when they do share, there should be a variety of choice – costuming, advertisements, art projects, drama, booktalks, and oral readings. Such projects can be particularly rewarding to poor writers and nontraditional learners. (p. 343)

More recently Jones *et al.* (2006) also discussed alternatives to the traditional essay, for example: making storyboards, alternative book covers, timelines, or family trees of characters; writing online book reviews on sites such as Amazon.com (*Amazon.com: Books*, 2009); or producing audiovisual presentations on assigned texts. These were particularly aimed at encouraging reluctant readers to enjoy the activities accompanying school reading and not associate reading with bad experiences (p. 36-43). No focus group participants mentioned activities such as these occurring in their English classes, which if provided, may have been welcomed, both by those who disliked reading and those who enjoyed the pastime.

In summary, the teenagers investigated were a diverse group, with a myriad of views on the topics discussed. Some views were universal, such as liking the internet for research, communication with friends and entertainment and disliking school assigned texts, preferring choice to guide their reading. While views on graphic novels and reading in general varied from those passionate about it, to those who hated it, finding the “right” book or other reading material was a universal path to enjoyment, even if the particular teenager was reticent to admit this pleasure.



### **Chapter 5: Graphic Novel Collections in Australian Libraries**

Graphic novel collections in Australian libraries were investigated through the survey of libraries and interviews with librarians. Interviewed librarians and their library or school are denoted by pseudonym, as mentioned in Chapter 3. Some comments from teenage participants of focus groups are included in this chapter although the majority of teenagers' views were discussed in Chapter 4.

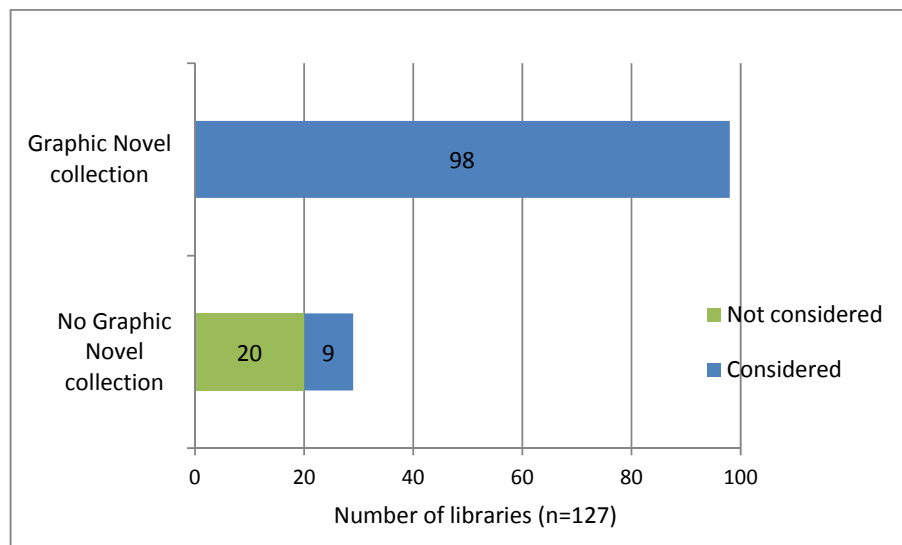
The chapter begins with a discussion of the incidence of graphic novel collections among surveyed libraries and the reasons why a minority did not collect the format. Factors such as location of library (state or territory and metropolitan or rural) and level of centralisation were compared to the incidence of graphic novel collections.

Staff in charge of graphic novels and the age of collections were examined. Many collections were launched in the mid 2000s, but the earliest dated from the late 1990s. Collection development among libraries with graphic novel collections was explored, covering the areas of selection criteria and collection development policies, acquisition and budgeting, cataloguing, and shelving.

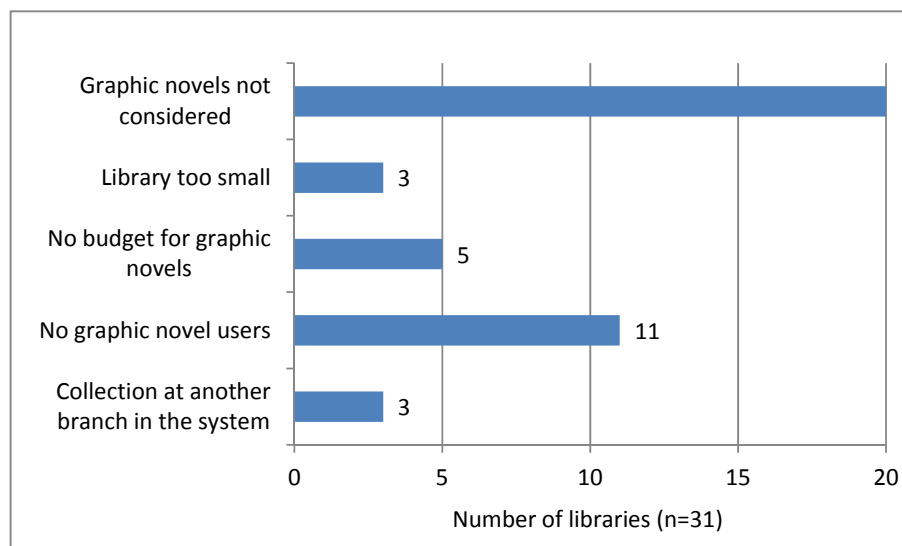
Interviewed librarians provided their views on why graphic novels are an important part of library collections and whether the format encouraged reluctant readers to read or led readers of graphic novels to progress to other formats, and whether the latter progression is desirable. A discussion of the intended audience for libraries' collections and those who actually used them follows, together with a consideration of the importance and incidence of collection of circulation statistics. Promotional methods employed to increase use of graphic novel collections are considered. Finally, issues and concerns with graphic novels are discussed, including vandalism and theft of titles, problems with bindings, complaints about titles, and the incidence of censorship in collections.

#### **Graphic Novel Collections in Libraries**

Graphic novel collections were prevalent among surveyed libraries. Ninety eight (76%) of the libraries had graphic novel collections and thirty one (24%) did not collect graphic novels (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Libraries with Graphic Novel collections**

The reasons for a library not having graphic novels included: a graphic novel collection had not been considered (65%), the library was too small (10%), there was no budget for a graphic novel collection (16%), there were no graphic novel users (35%), or there was a collection at another branch in the system (10%), illustrated by Figure 5. (Respondents could provide more than one reason.)

**Figure 5: Reasons for not collecting Graphic Novels**

As will be discussed presently, the majority of surveyed libraries which did not collect graphic novels were in rural areas; therefore it is no surprise that most of those who had not considered graphic novels were in rural areas. Some of those without graphic novels knew little about the format or had not encountered the term graphic novel before the survey. One rural NSW respondent explained,

I really didn't know enough about them. I am thinking about buying them now, with our next funds allocation, but I need more information.

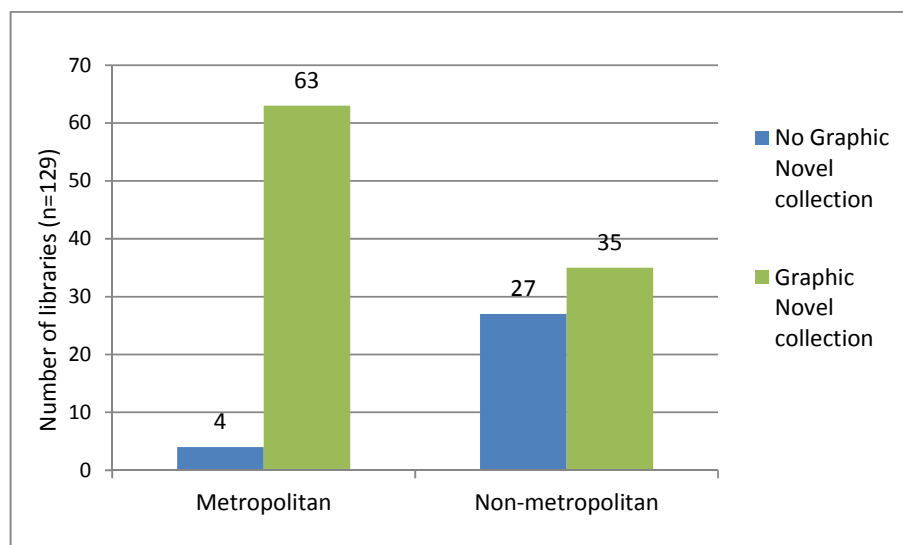
Others described the lack of teenagers visiting the library as a reason for not collecting graphic novels.

- We do not have enough teenage borrowers to warrant it.
- Local teenagers will read either [conventional] novels or magazines.

Of course, it is possible that a library with no graphic novels or a limited number would not attract potential graphic novel readers. Thus, teenagers may not be interested in visiting the library if it has nothing to interest them (Goldsmith, 2005, p. 91). Two rural WA respondents had no local high school, so teenagers went away for school. The first respondent said that if teenagers visited the library during school holidays, YA materials were requested through Inter-Library Loan (cost-free and very easily done in Western Australia) although it would have to be organised in advance as delivery could take time. The second library said, "Come holidays, everybody seems to head away."

Another respondent from a small WA rural library said, "I had never heard of graphic novels before reading this survey." She continued, "The people in town, especially children, have poor literacy skills and don't use the library very much." In such cases, providing graphic novels might lead to increased library use. A small rural Queensland library that is part of the State Library of Queensland's (SLQ) Country Lending Scheme said, "I request graphic novels on my exchange sheet and SLQ sends what they have available," similarly to the situation with small rural libraries in WA. In both states, if the library officer knows about graphic novels they can request them, while library officers with no knowledge of the format are unlikely to have a collection.

Libraries from all Australia's states and territories and metropolitan and rural areas were included among the survey respondents. A significant correlation (Pearson Chi-square  $p < 0.05$ ) was found between metropolitan or rural location of the library and the presence of a graphic novel collection. Among the respondents, those in metropolitan areas (including capital and regional cities and outer metropolitan areas) were more likely to have a graphic novel collection (95%) than not and a little over half in non-metropolitan areas (those in rural towns and their surrounds and remote areas) had collections (see Figure 6).

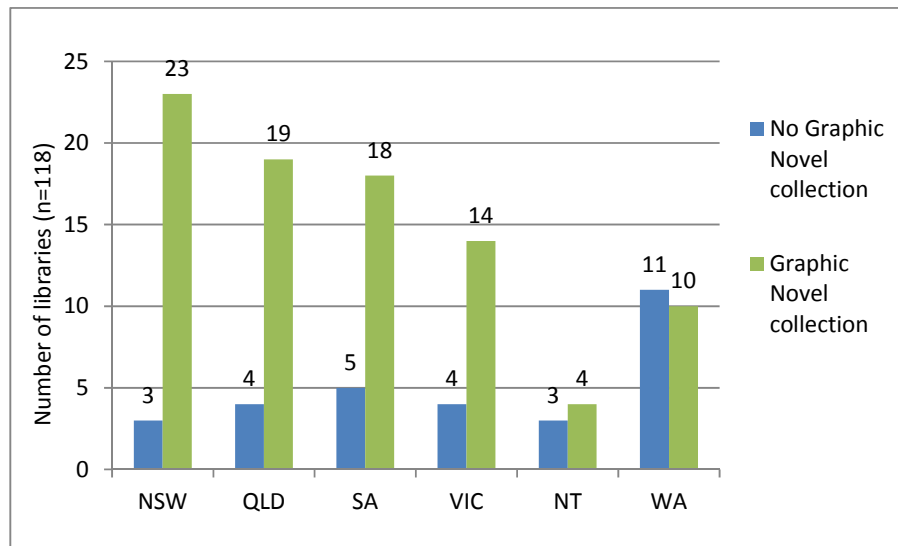
**Figure 6: Location of library compared to presence of Graphic Novel collection**

The presence of a graphic novel collection was also compared with the state or territory of the library, although there was no significant correlation (Pearson Chi-square  $p > 0.05$ ) between the two.

**Table 4: State or Territory of respondents with Graphic Novel collections**

	Number of libraries	Percentage
ACT	4	100%
NSW	23	88%
TAS	6	86%
QLD	19	83%
SA	18	78%
VIC	14	78%
NT	4	57%
WA	10	48%

Tasmanian and ACT respondents (see Table 4) were not easily comparable to results from other states and territories. Despite all ACT respondents having graphic novel collections, the group comprised only four libraries, half of the ACT's public libraries. Tasmanian respondents were almost all metropolitan libraries because of a lack of response from rural libraries. These libraries were removed and among the remaining libraries a significant correlation (Pearson Chi-square  $p < 0.05$ ) was found between state or territory of the remaining libraries and the presence of a graphic novel collection (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7: State or Territory compared to presence of Graphic Novel collection**

Western Australian respondents had the lowest percentage of libraries with graphic novel collections (48%) while those from New South Wales had the highest percentage (88%) (see Table 4, previous page). A number of reasons could have contributed to these disparities.

The Library Council of New South Wales distributes “Library Development Grants for projects that support the development of better public library services for the people of New South Wales” (State Library of New South Wales & Library Council of New South Wales, 2005, p. 5) The Holroyd City Council Library received this grant to start their graphic novel collection (Library Council of New South Wales, 2005, p. 73) and a number of NSW respondents mentioned that their collections were launched with one of these grants.

WA respondents were overwhelmingly located in rural areas (62%) compared to only eight NSW respondents located in rural areas (31%). As noted, a library located in a metropolitan area is more likely to have a graphic novel collection. However, a similar number of Queensland respondents were located in non-metropolitan areas (65%) and most of their libraries had graphic novel collections (83%). This difference between WA and Queensland respondents may be due to the problem with the survey sample, discussed in Chapter 3, when *Asterix* and *Tintin* were suggested during telephone reminders as examples of graphic novels. Small WA rural libraries are in a similar situation to those in Queensland, with central selection of their stock by their respective State Libraries (State Library of Western Australia & Western Australian Local Government Association, 2004). While

libraries from all states and territories who had not returned the survey were telephoned as a third reminder, many were from Queensland and few from WA. The large difference found between WA libraries' collecting of graphic novels (48%) and other states may be accounted for by this irregularity.

Some libraries in the sample did not have a graphic novel collection and passed the questionnaire onto another library in their system which did. After some consideration these responses were included in the results, although this altered the sample. As stated in Chapter 3 the latter two circumstances mean the results cannot be generalised to all Australian libraries, but are valid in terms of this selected group of libraries.

### ***Centralisation of Library Collections***

A major difference between public libraries in the eight states and territories of Australia is centralisation at the state level. Centralised selection, purchasing, cataloguing and processing for some or all of a library's acquisitions are in place in Western Australia, South Australia, the Northern Territory, Tasmania, the ACT, and among small rural Queensland libraries. Centralisation at the state level does not occur in New South Wales or Victoria.

In 1947 British librarian, Lionel McColvin, believed that "such a large and sparsely populated state," as Western Australia, needed a well-administered and centralised public library service. Such a system was implemented by State Librarian F.A. Sharr in the 1950s (D. J. Jones, 2005, p. 395). The State Library of WA implements a centralised purchasing and processing system for a proportion of all public libraries' stock (State Library of Western Australia & Western Australian Local Government Association, 2004). The situation in Tasmania is of one state-wide library system with forty eight branches and was described by one survey respondent,

Standing orders are centralised; teams select for the whole state; and we [branch libraries] have discretionary money which we can use for any format.

It was assumed the incidence of graphic novel collections would be greater among libraries with centralised systems, either at the state or local authority level, with knowledge of the format concentrated in the central location and shared with all libraries in the system. This was not the case among respondents. Centralised systems and the presence of a graphic novel collection were not significantly correlated (Pearson Chi-square  $p > 0.05$ ). The majority of libraries were centralised at

either the local government level (49%) or state level (48%). Only three libraries did not have any centralisation, and all three collected graphic novels.

The centralisation among Northern Territory (NT) public libraries did not lead to uniformity among their collections, as user populations have an impact on different libraries' collections (Northern Territory Library, 2006). One NT respondent had a well used graphic novel collection with graphic novels being borrowed as soon as they were put on the shelf. Word of mouth among borrowers meant graphic novels were often requested while on loan. Two other NT libraries did not make a special effort to collect graphic novels, and "there is little use of resources by [the] relevant age group." Of the few teenagers who visited the library, they did not use the few graphic novels the libraries held.

In the Northern Territory, almost a third of the population are Indigenous Australians (ABS, 2008b). There is a "preference by Indigenous library users for images" (Senior, 2007) and thus visual materials such as graphic novels. The lack of Australian graphic novels (Snowball, 2006) and thus those with Indigenous characters and storylines may lead to their being of little interest to Indigenous people. The oral culture of Indigenous people (Senior, 2007) may also contribute to visual materials such as DVDs or electronic resources being more popular than graphic novels.

While all surveyed libraries were public libraries, nine were joint use libraries between a school and a public library. There are forty one such libraries in South Australia (South Australian Public Library Network, 2006), of a total of 138 public libraries. Eight of the forty one were randomly selected in the survey sample. This small number did not allow differences between public and school libraries to be determined through the survey.

### *Age of Graphic Novel Collections*

Graphic novel collections became common in the early years of the 2000s (Miller, 2005). Five of the survey respondents launched their collections in the year previous to the survey (2005), unfortunately this was not asked of all respondents. A number of respondents were building their collections and said certain practices may change in the future. An exception to this was the respondent who "purchased a lot [of graphic novels] and then backed off to only fifty per year."

Many of the interviewed librarians described a small number of graphic novels

acquired over the years and interfiled with conventional books. When a definite decision was made to concentrate on the acquisition of graphic novels, this led to the burgeoning of their collection. This was the case at Banksia Park High School Library and Hakea Public Library in 2006. Ms Davilak explained, “There was quite a lot happening about graphic novels. It kind of cemented the feeling I’d had that it would be a useful drawcard.” Hakea’s Branch Library Grevillea already had a large collection “because it’s something that the librarian of the time [at Grevillea] was very interested in anyway...She was a bit of ahead of the rest of us, the [other] branches.” Grevillea was a smaller library than Hakea, but had a larger collection of graphic novels than Hakea (about one thousand titles) thus Grevillea’s collection comprised a higher proportion of their total stock.

Ms Armitage developed her collection at Dryandra Public Library, in the late 1990s, earliest among the interviewed librarians. The school library at Lobelia High School also had a collection dating from the 1990s. Students from this school took part in a focus group session. Some disliked graphic novels, but Sandra was enamoured of the format, saying, “I’ve been reading them for years.” Despite the extensive collection in her school library she discovered graphic novels through her family’s enjoyment of them. Her father bought graphic novels for the family and Sandra had already read those in her school library. She only read conventional books from the library.

### ***Staff in charge of Graphic Novel Collections***

Respondents were asked for their position title, with a wide variety offered. These were categorised as: Librarian (professional), Library Technician (para-professional), or Library Officer (clerical). Position titles such as Branch Co-ordinator, Library Manager or Library Administrator were deemed Not discernable and comprised almost a third of respondents. Almost half of respondents with a graphic novel collection were professional staff (see Table 5, below).

**Table 5: Staff in charge of Graphic Novels**

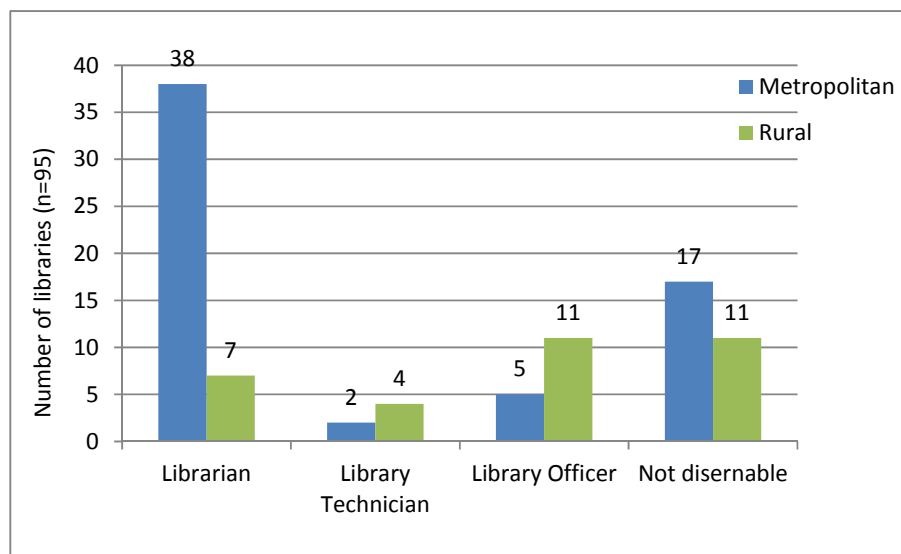
Position title	Number of libraries	Percentage
Librarian	45	47%
Library Technician	6	6%
Library Officer	16	17%
Not discernable	28	29%

Position title and metropolitan or rural location of library were found to be



significantly correlated (Pearson Chi-square  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, a larger number of rural and remote libraries had clerical staff in charge of their graphic novel collection, than those located in metropolitan areas (see Figure 8). Rural and remote libraries often have very small collections (of all materials) and may be run by a volunteer clerical staff member who only works a few hours a week (Collins, 1986). This did not always equate to professional duties such as selection being undertaken by clerical staff. Small rural libraries in WA, Queensland and Tasmania have their resources selected by staff at their State Library, with input from local clerical staff. Libraries which are part of a system may have similar duties undertaken by their Central Library. A respondent from a rural NSW library named her position as Volunteer Library Co-ordinator and stated, “As we are a voluntary branch of the City Library all buying decisions are made by them.”

**Figure 8: Staff in charge of Graphic Novels**



It may be supposed the same correlation would be present in libraries without graphic novels. Despite the high number of rural libraries managed by clerical staff, a correlation between position title and metropolitan or rural location of library was not found (Pearson Chi-square  $p > 0.05$ ), perhaps due to the low number of metropolitan libraries without graphic novels.

Among the interviewed metropolitan libraries, all had a professional in charge of the collection. Interviewee Mr Carlton was a library clerk at Corymbia Library, but his colleague YA librarian Ms Porter had charge of the graphic novel collection. Mr Carlton’s expertise in the format through personal reading meant he was integral in selection and promotion. When Mr Carlton resigned his position at Corymbia

Library, development and promotion of the collection continued because this was an aspect of Ms Porter's position description. Mr Carlton's focus on adult titles, discussed later, may have been abandoned.

Ms Armitage no longer worked at Dryandra Library where she developed the graphic novel collection. Her replacement "had different focuses to what I had. I did a lot of the young adult activities." Ms Armitage wondered if he would continue these tasks, including graphic novel selection and promotion, which "was just kind of an add-on" to her position because she was interested in the area. This is a problem when one person takes on graphic novel collecting because it interests them, rather than it being an aspect of their position description.

### **Collection Development**

Collection development is "the process of responsibly selecting appropriate material for the library and the community" (Miller, 2005, p. 28). It differentiates libraries from book shops, and is an important professional activity (Goldsmith, 2005, p. 27). Collection development includes the areas of selection criteria, written Collection Development Policies covering explicit selection criteria for all materials a library acquires, and weeding and/or replacement of old, damaged or unused materials. The latter was not mentioned by surveyed libraries or interviewed librarians due to the recent development of most collections. This section also details acquisition, budgeting, cataloguing and shelving of graphic novels among the surveyed and interviewed librarians.

### ***Selection Criteria and Collection Development Policies***

"I have not personally been involved in selecting graphic novels so I do not know specific guidelines. However, I do have occasional concerns about the amount of violence portrayed in some works" – survey respondent from a public library where materials were centrally selected.

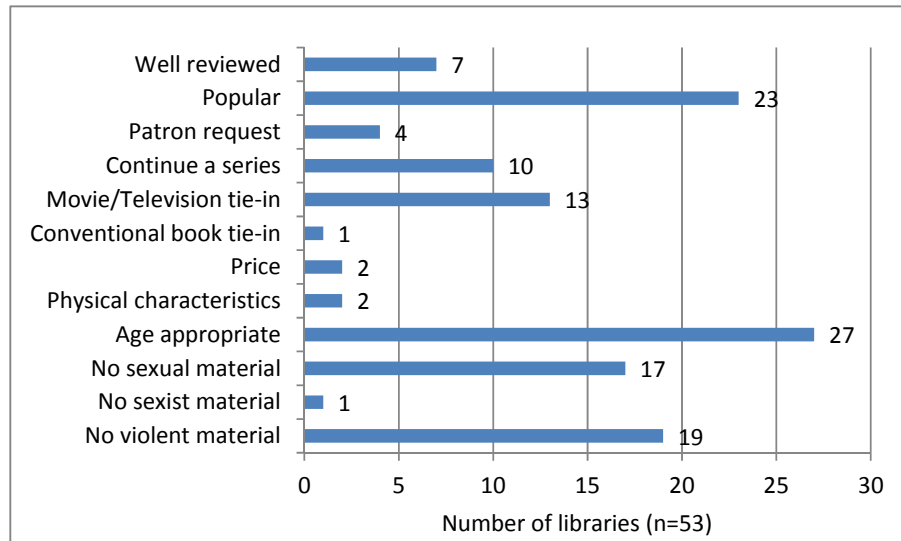
The selection criteria used by surveyed libraries when choosing graphic novels varied and are depicted in Figure 9. (Respondents could provide more than one criteria.) One discouraging response was: "Not overly 'bloody' – no manga." This respondent seems to assume all manga is graphically violent, which is far from the reality of the huge diversity available (Brenner, 2007b). It is unfortunate in such cases that people responsible for selection of graphic novels do not always realise the full spectrum of manga (or graphic novels in general) available.

The majority of survey respondents were public libraries but 7% (n=9) were

joint use libraries combining school and public libraries, mostly located in rural South Australia. The “potentially sensitive issues” (Goldsmith, 2005, p. 33) of sexual or violent content, can be more problematic in school libraries because they do not have adult collections, further discussed later in the chapter. One survey respondent from a joint use library said,

We have to be very selective with our selections, given that we are also a high school library. We don't buy graphic novels that contain sex, body imagery or violence.

**Figure 9: Selection Criteria for Graphic Novels**



The interviewed school libraries were also more selective, acquiring few graphic novels aimed at adults. Banksia Park High School Library held *V for Vendetta* by Alan Moore and David Lloyd, which was used as an English class text, but when Drama teacher Ms Pyke requested the library purchase *The Sandman* series by Neil Gaiman, this was deemed inappropriate.

With the trend for libraries to produce written collection development policies (Evans & Saponaro, 2005), selection criteria have become explicit, rather than being implicit knowledge that a librarian carries in her head (Jacob, 1990). Sullivan (2005) believes “the management of any library collection begins with its collection development policy” (p. 31), thus the policy is a “vital” part of collection development (p. 51). The benefits of collection development policies are myriad. They “ensure continuity and balance in collection growth” and “increase accountability” (Monroe & Philps, 2008, p. 151), particularly important when collections are prone to challenges, as is the graphic novel format (Goldsmith, 2005; Laycock, 2005; Miller, 2005). Following the guidelines set out in a collection

development policy is not the only step in selecting materials; choices must be made between items that fit all the selection criteria set out in the policy (M. Sullivan, 2005, p. 51).

While Sullivan asserted the importance of collection development policies in selection generally, Australian teacher librarian Di Laycock (2005) maintained “selection of graphic novels should be guided by an objective, written and accessible [collection development] policy that is based upon professional principles and statements” (p. 51). Heaney (2007) also discussed the importance of a collection development policy when considering a school library graphic novel collection. If a library already has a collection development policy, revision to include the format is important before acquisition of graphic novels begins (Goldsmith, 2005; M. Gorman, 2003). Such a policy ensures a high quality and comprehensive collection and protection against complaints.

The problems of not having a collection development policy were illustrated when the Marshall Public Library in Missouri (U.S.) received complaints about two graphic novels in their collection: *Fun Home* by Alison Bechdel and *Blankets* by Craig Thompson. The two titles were removed from their collection (Reid, 2006c), then reinstated following the approval of a collection development policy (Harper, 2007).

In practice, collection development policies were not found to be universally present in surveyed and interviewed libraries. None of the six school and public libraries interviewed included graphic novels in their library’s collection development policy, in most cases because they did not have a policy. While Hakea did, “it is so old” that Ms Davilak doubted it included graphic novels. She hoped to update it during the following year. Two interviewed librarians noted an “unwritten policy” which guided their selection and will be elaborated below. Only a quarter (27.5%) of the surveyed libraries which collected graphic novels had a collection development policy (71 libraries neglected to answer this question), but three quarters (n=20) of these libraries said graphic novels were not included in the collection development policy, or the policy was currently being updated to include graphic novels.

After return of the survey it was determined question 14 asked two different questions covering selection criteria for graphic novels and the presence of a collection development policy. This caused confusion and led to many respondents

(33) ignoring the question or answering just one part or the other. Only half the respondents provided selection criteria and a large number did not state whether they had a policy.

Five of the six libraries whose collection development policy covered graphic novels (18.5%) provided a copy of the relevant section. Two collection development policies had a specific section for the graphic novel format. Both of these libraries collected graphic novels aimed at adults as well as teenagers (and one also collected children's graphic novels). This compared to the other three libraries which only collected graphic novels for teenagers. Therefore these collection development policies included graphic novels as one format of Young Adult material selected. This is discussed in the literature as the best way to include graphic novels in a collection development policy (Goldsmith, 2005). One of the latter respondents had "considered making a different policy for graphic novels, but [this] was not thought necessary." The term "graphic novel" was not mentioned in the Young Adult materials section of the policy, thus it appears implicit knowledge was still being used when selecting graphic novels.

A worrying trend was that twelve of surveyed libraries which answered this question (18.5%) said they did not use selection criteria. It could be that respondents misread the question and these responses meant the library had no collection development policy or the policy did not cover graphic novels. Conversely, criteria may not be articulated, rather than selection criteria not being used. (It would be very difficult to use no selection criteria. This would result in random selection of acquisitions.) For example, two responses were: "no formalised criteria" and "no specific criteria," thus selection criteria are based on implicit knowledge of the selector. This may lead to respondents not often thinking of the criteria they use for selection, thus affecting a respondent's ability to articulate the criteria. When two of the interviewed librarians mentioned their libraries' lack of a collection development policy they noted they did use informal, unwritten guidelines in selecting resources. Ms Armitage provided examples, "Buying from local distributors and having a wide range of resources." They both felt this implicit knowledge was adequate in guiding their collection development decisions.

Two survey respondents contradicted their initial "no" and did in fact use selection criteria (such answers were not included in the 18.5%). In these cases, the initial "no" may have been in response to the part of the question which asked about

the inclusion of graphic novels in the library's collection development policy.

- Not really, [we] look more for those with less gratuitous violence. Usually fiction, not non-fiction.
- No, just what's popular. What we think people will read.

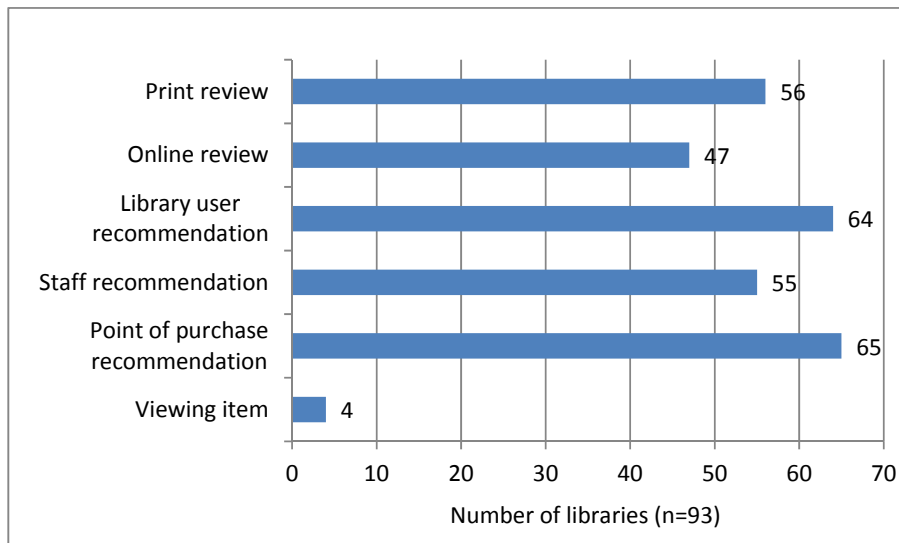
### *Acquisition*

A number of sources were used in deciding which graphic novels to purchase, as listed in Figure 10. Recommendations from library users or point of purchase were the most common sources. A variation on the former is recommendations from a youth advisory committee (YAC), advocated in the literature (Brehm-Heeger, 2008)\* and occurring at one surveyed library, "They get together and decide what titles they want." Some teenage focus group participants were not aware they could provide recommendations for purchase, which would lead to the acquisition of the title or series. A number who liked the graphic novels displayed during the session asked where they could buy them. They were told, as well as the average price, which shocked them. It was then suggested they ask their school or public library to buy the titles they liked, a novel idea for some.

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| Mia        | Shall we recommend them [the library] to buy them [manga series]?   |
| Researcher | Yeah. I don't know for sure whether they'll buy them, but they might. Because I used to work in a public library and if people said, "Oh this is a good book." I'd think about buying it. |
| Ellen      | No what you do is, you like get lots of people saying, so you get all your friends to go in and say.  |
| Researcher | So if all your friends like manga, tell them to all go to the public library and say, "Get this series."  |
| Mia        | Are you serious?  |

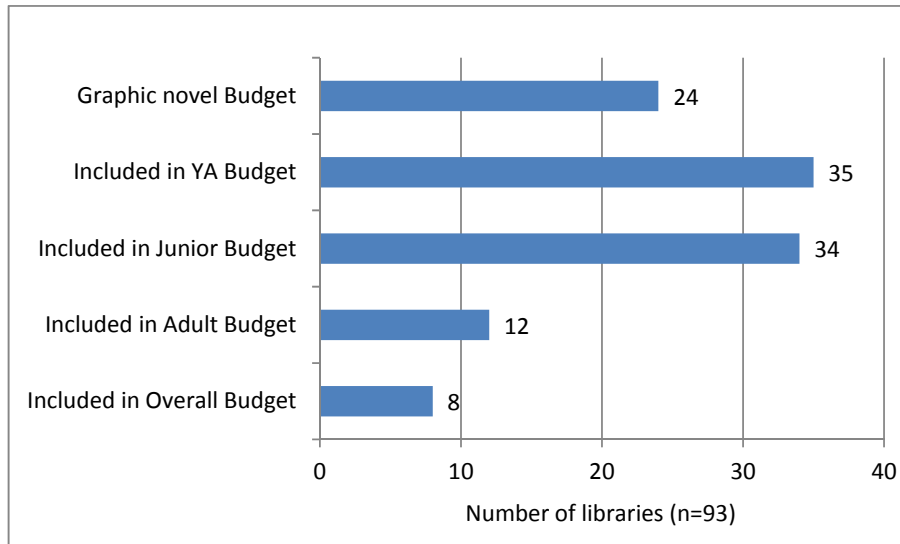
---

\* The U.S. literature uses the term Teen Advisory Board (TAB) as opposed to the Australian Youth Advisory Committee (YAC).

**Figure 10: Sources used for selecting Graphic Novels**

Print reviews were used more often than those online, but very few respondents (4%) viewed graphic novels prior to purchase. This could be problematic due to the visual nature of graphic novels. One respondent commented, “Have found hard to select from title information alone as don’t always reflect content.” This is the case with all materials. Reviews provide “authoritative evaluations of potential acquisitions” (Goldsmith, 2005, p. 29), but personally examining titles is equally important (Goldsmith, 2005; M. Gorman, 2003; Laycock, 2005; Lyga, 2006; Serchay, 2004). Reading graphic novels is even better. Interviewees who enjoyed reading graphic novels were at an advantage when selecting titles.

A quarter of libraries (26%) had a dedicated budget line for purchasing graphic novels (see Figure 11), but most used funds from their YA, children’s or (to a lesser extent) adult budget. Some used a combination from more than one budget because they had more than one collection.

**Figure 11: Budgeting for Graphic Novels**

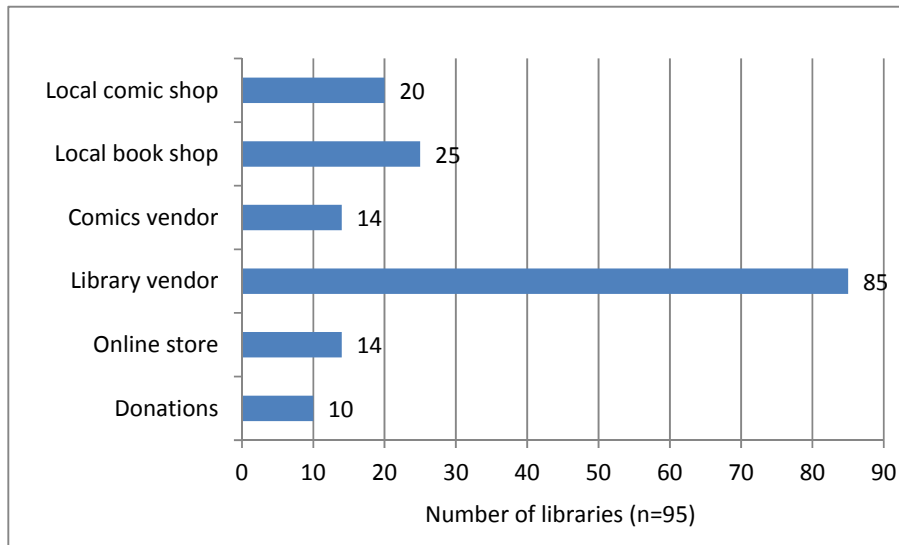
When the decision was made to acquire graphic novels, funds for their purchase had to be removed from spending elsewhere, which was the reason some libraries did not collect graphic novels (see Figure 5, p. 108). Two interviewed libraries had specific funds sourced for the purchase of graphic novels. Ms Davilak at Hakea had a “discretionary budget” to spend on areas where she felt there were stock gaps and collections that “need to be built up.” One of these areas was graphic novels for the four libraries in the Hakea system. Banksia Park developed their collection through funds from an English class reading program “to actually buy graphic novels as well as other books.” If this was not the case, the library’s budget could not have stretched to cover graphic novels. Ms Marchamley explained, “I mean it always comes back to money, the constraints of the budget.”

As with acquisitions in general, most surveyed libraries sourced their graphic novels from a library vendor (see Figure 12). Some of these libraries had standing orders with a vendor or the vendor selected titles guided by a purchasing profile. Some WA (4 of 10) and SA (10 of 18) libraries purchased their graphic novels through their State Library which supplied a proportion of their collections. A number of NSW metropolitan libraries bought from Kinokuniya in Sydney, a bookstore with an extensive collection of manga and graphic novels. Sealight Books (<http://www.sealight.com.au/>) is an Australian distributor of graphic novels, mentioned by some respondents, similar to the U.S.-based Diamond Comic Distributors (<http://www.diamondbookshelf.com/>), which supplies many comics publisher’s titles to Library vendors and Comics shops. Sealight and Diamond were



termed Comics vendors, to differentiate them from traditional Library vendors such as Baker & Taylor and Ingram. This was not explicitly stated in the survey and respondents may have noted either as an Online store because they provide online ordering.

**Figure 12: Purchase of Graphic Novels**



### ***Cataloguing***

There are numerous ways of classifying graphic novels (M. Gorman, 2003, p. 31). Most public libraries use the Dewey Decimal Classification scheme (DDC) to classify and shelve their non-fiction collections. DDC provides notation for fiction, but fiction is usually ordered by author surname or genre (Goldsmith, 2005, p. 53; Hopkins, 2007). DDC also provides notation for graphic novels (741.5) and the placement of the format at this number has provoked much discussion among librarians and graphic novel readers (Goldsmith, 2005, p. 55; Miller, 2005, p. 50). This was not an issue among interviewed or surveyed libraries. Just as conventional fiction is not classified by DDC notation in Australian public and school libraries, the DDC notation 741.5 was only used by one survey respondent for their small number of adult graphic novels (see Figure 13, p. 126).

Non-fiction graphic novels (an oxymoron, as pointed out by some survey respondents) might be dealt with differently, but this was not investigated in the survey. At Tuart Grove and Banksia Park High School Libraries graphic novel versions of Shakespeare (for example *Twelfth Night* by Shakespeare and Howard) and series such as *Ancient Greek Myths and Legends* by Nick Saunders were catalogued and classified as non-fiction and shelved among conventional non-fiction.

Subject headings were used to describe graphic novels at three quarters (74%) of surveyed libraries. These included Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH): “Graphic novels,” “Comic books, strips, etc.” and “Comic books, strips, etc. – Japan” (see Table 6). The heading “Graphic novels” came into use in 1994 (Library of Congress, 2009b) and the vast majority (94%) of libraries applying headings used “Graphic novels,” as did Tuart Grove High School Library. While Tuart Grove’s students could search for “graphic novels” on the online catalogue, Ms Turner said,

I can’t honestly think of a time when someone had said, “Can I have a graphic novel”...The readers who tend to be interested in [graphic novels] know exactly the titles, know exactly where they are, know exactly what’s new and available.

“Manga” was used by almost a third of libraries applying headings, despite the Library of Congress choosing not to add the term to LCSH (Hahn, 2009), instead stating “Comic books, strips, etc.” should be used for “Manga” (Library of Congress, 2009a).

**Table 6: Subject Headings used for Graphic Novels**

	Subject Heading	Number of libraries	Percentage
LCSH	Graphic novels	67	94%
	Comic books, strips, etc.	37	52%
	Comic books, strips, etc. - Japan	2	3%
	Comic books	14	20%
	Manga	22	31%

Ten respondents entered “Graphic novel” in the notes field of the MARC record for graphic novels. This would facilitate searching on the term if a keyword search were undertaken, but as seven of these respondents also used the subject heading “Graphic novels,” the addition in the notes field did not improve discovery.

Mr Carlton discussed the problems with centralized cataloguing at Corymbia Public Library. Corymbia was a branch in a system of six libraries and there was one cataloguer for all locally purchased stock, including all graphic novels. “It just took forever [to catalogue new acquisitions] and if she did it wrong you had to really grovel to get her to change it.” Graphic novels were catalogued from the cover, not from the title page (contrary to the *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules* (1988)), and series titles for graphic novels can be difficult to determine. Both led to errors in catalogue records, of which Mr Carlton compiled a “huge list” of necessary corrections.

### ***Shelving***

Miller (2005) discussed the importance of shelving graphic novels “in a unified, distinct collection” because interfiling graphic novels among conventional books “does the reader a disservice” (p. 52). While graphic novels and conventional books are superficially similar, in that both are books, they are different enough to be treated as different formats in libraries (*ibid.*) and thus necessitate separate shelving (Bruggeman, 1997; M. Gorman, 2003; Laycock, 2005). Four of the six interviewed libraries separated the majority of their graphic novels into a “distinct collection,” but only Corymbia Public Library had a separate section including all graphic novels. Going against the tradition in public libraries of separating materials by age, Corymbia had one section where graphic novels for teenagers, children and adults were shelved together. This caused problems for the library, which will be further discussed in relation to the complaints received regarding this shelving arrangement.

When collecting begins and there are few graphic novels, interfiling among conventional books is more likely to occur. Dryandra and Hakea Public Libraries only separated their YA graphic novels when their collections grew larger. Titles aimed at adults or children were interfiled with conventional books in the respective sections because of their lower numbers. At Illyarrie High School Library the small number of graphic novels were interfiled with conventional books, but Ms Hatcher planned to separate the collection to a permanent face out display shelf in time for the new school year. She hoped this would improve graphic novel circulation, which was low.

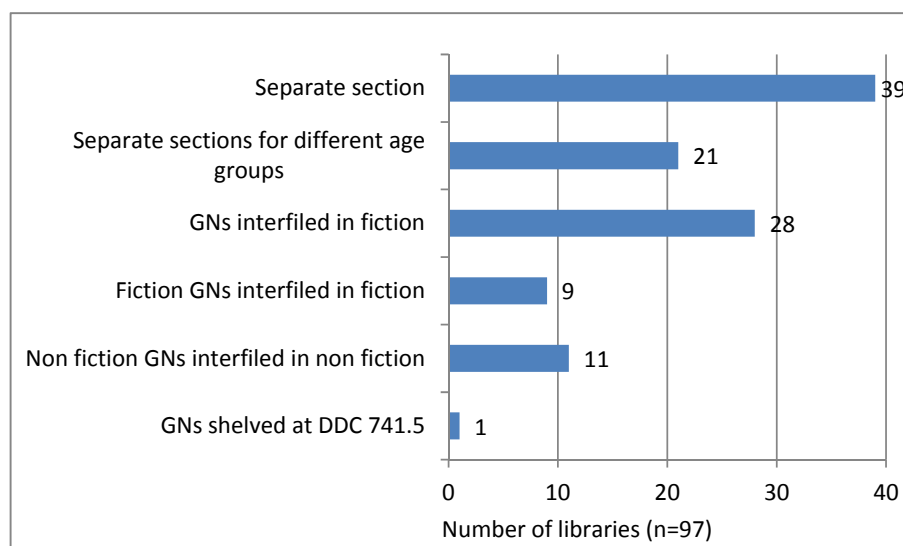
Despite having many graphic novels Tuart Grove High School Library interfiled them with conventional fiction, due to space constraints. Contrary to the literature that interfiling with other materials causes them to be “difficult to browse...and library users will not perceive them as a collection” (Goldsmith, 2005, p. 48), graphic novels were popular and students had no problems finding titles. Ms Turner questioned why libraries separated graphic novels from conventional books. As her collection was well used, her shelving arrangement was not an issue and separate shelving not necessary.

There are numerous choices when deciding how to shelve a graphic novel collection. Both age range and whether titles are fiction or non-fiction may influence how materials are shelved. Almost two thirds of surveyed libraries shelved their graphic novels separately as distinct collections, whether as a single collection or

divided by age range (see Figure 13). Details varied considerably, for example:

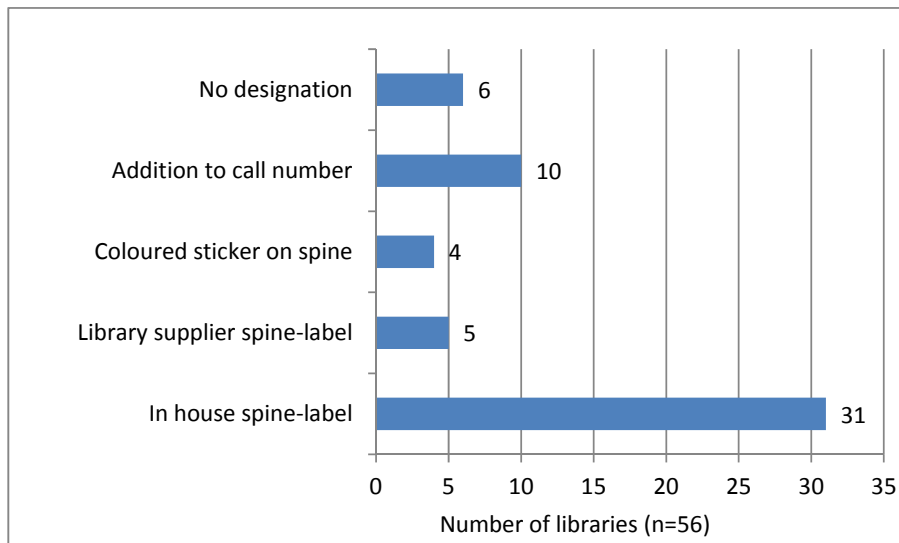
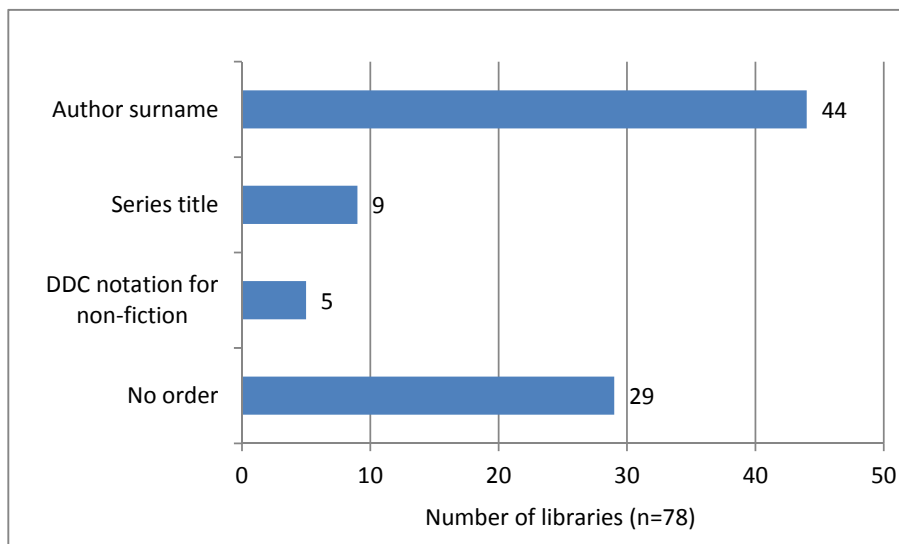
- Some GNs which predated this [separately shelved YA] collection are interfiled in adult non-fiction (eg. *Barefoot Gen*, *Maus*) and junior fiction (*Asterix*, *Tintin*, *Pokémon*)
- Separate sections for YA & junior. Adult graphic novels interfiled as there are few.
- Graphic novels shelved with periodicals in YA section.
- Interfiled with teenage fiction paperbacks.

**Figure 13: Shelving of Graphic Novels**



Contrary to the majority of respondents, one library started with a separate section for their collection, then changed to interfiling graphic novels within conventional fiction, when they decreased the annual purchasing budget for graphic novels. The library which shelved graphic novels at DDC notation 741.5 only did this for adult titles, graphic novels for teenagers and children were shelved in separate sections.

When graphic novels are shelved separately, a designation on the spine is helpful for shelvers to easily distinguish between graphic novels and conventional books without opening the book. When graphic novels are interfiled, such a designation could facilitate browsing among graphic novel readers, but this was not asked of survey respondents who interfiled their graphic novels. Just over half of respondents (55%) used a spine label produced in house by the library (see Figure 14). Other designations included: spine-labels from a Library supplier, coloured stickers, or an addition to the call number. Six respondents (11%) used no designation, which could lead to incorrect shelving among busy shelvers.

**Figure 14: Spine labelling of Graphic Novels****Figure 15: Shelf order of Graphic Novels**

Fiction has traditionally been ordered on the shelf by author and this has been carried over to many graphic novel collections (see Figure 15, above). Some graphic novel series change authors and illustrators over time, and ordering by author breaks up a series. Nine survey respondents (12%) sought to correct this by ordering graphic novel series by the series title rather than author, described by one respondent, “Most are by author, but series are by series title because they often have different authors.” Another respondent ordered by author, but “we wish we had used series title.” Twenty nine (37%) used no order on the shelf, which worked well for smaller collections:

- So popular we just display outwardly [face out] the few that are in at any one time.

- Collection not large enough [for order on shelf], all on display at present.

Many graphic novels are published in a larger format than conventional books, but manga are similar in size to conventional books. This led to one surveyed library separating manga from other graphic novels. Ms Tyler from Banksia Park High School Library was considering separating manga titles, but had not done so at the time of the interview.

Face out shelving of graphic novels is advocated to display attractive covers (Goldsmith, 2005, p. 66; M. Gorman, 2003, p. 35; Laycock, 2005, p. 53; Nichols, 2004, p. 166). Libraries with smaller collections can display all their titles face out, but most libraries, such as Tuart Grove, Corymbia and Hakea, could only afford the space for some titles shelved face out. At Corymbia Mr Carlton placed titles face out on display stands and “they would actually all go, like within a couple of days. So you’d have to continuously put them up [replace them], especially the new ones.” Ms Davilak described a library she visited, “They have their graphic novels and their YA [conventional books] in the rotating stands which have a lot of space opportunities [for face out display]...it’s something that kind of gives a bit of interest to the area as well, rather than just flat shelves.” Hakea had one of these shelving units for DVDs, but Ms Davilak wanted another for graphic novels.

In contrast to others interviewed, Dryandra Public Library “is such a huge library” that they had available space. When “eventually the collection grew,” new face out shelving was installed for all graphic novels in this now separate collection. The change made the collection more noticeable and increased circulation, so there was “never an awful lot in [on the shelf].” The collection at Banksia Park High School had only recently been moved to a permanent face out display shelving because there was “not much space down there” where they were previously shelved. The new location was more visible and students were attracted by the covers of graphic novels.

### **Why collect Graphic Novels?**

Many interviewed librarians collected graphic novels because their borrowers wanted to read them, with interest assessed through requests for purchase and circulation statistics once acquired. Ms Marchamley cited the popularity of graphic novels among her students as the reason for Banksia Park High School Library’s collection, “I don’t think you can deny that they’re getting used, especially all the

new ones.” Her colleague Ms Tyler continued, “I mean nothing really sits on the shelf.” Ms Turner said of Tuart Grove High School Library’s graphic novels, “There’s a little hard core of students who prefer that format, so they’re ticking over steadily.”

As a voracious reader of graphic novels, Mr Carlton had slightly different reasons for a library collecting graphic novels. He was passionate about the format and had enjoyed reading them since a teenager. He referred to their popularity, but as was found by Horner (2006) in her research, also considered graphic novels “a part of literature.” Mr Carlton explained,

I think you can’t not have graphic novels in your collection, because not everyone wants [conventional books]. I mean if you’re going to have you know, audio cassettes,...you’re going to have videos, books, DVDs...It’s just another format. And you’ve got the internet in there, so you’ve got graphic novels whether you want it or not through the internet [ie. web comics].

Ms Armitage found that when she developed her collection at Dryandra Public Library in the late 1990s, “There is that perception that they’re not very worthwhile, and I think a lot of library people feel that way.” Fortunately Ms Armitage and Mr Carlton are not alone in striving to ensure young people encounter a variety of genres and formats in their reading, without making judgements on supposed “quality.” Ms Davilak also thought highly of the graphic novel format, “They enrich and add to the reading material of adults or young people and a lot of young people do take advantage of it.” She read graphic novels in her leisure time, although she first encountered them through her work at Hakea Public Library, specifically during the 2006 Children’s Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Conference when manga expert Kosei Ono spoke (Murphy, 2006).

Researcher	Do you think they’re equal to other types of [conventional] books?
Ms Davilak	Oh, especially nowadays. There’s just some amazing stuff. You know, the art work is just incredible.
Researcher	Mmm, yeah.
Ms Davilak	And maybe, not so much the manga. I mean they just, they’re like the LPs, you know. They keep getting churned out, but there are some really fantastic [graphic novels]. You know <i>Maus</i> [by Art Spiegelman]?
Researcher	Mmm
Ms Davilak	Yep. It is just amazing.

Ms Armitage did not personally enjoy reading graphic novels, but she understood they “would appeal to a wide range of people and for that reason alone, it’s very important to have a good collection in your library.” She developed her collection because more and more graphic novels were requested through inter-library loan and “there was a real need.”

I could see what appeal it had for kids at that stage and people in general. And at that stage there was the Pokémon thing going on and lots of interest in manga.

While both Ms Marchamley and her colleague Ms Tyler at Banksia Park High School Library praised the format, Ms Marchamley recognised the greater knowledge of her colleague, “Ms Tyler has really got into it.” Both attended professional development sessions on graphic novels, but Ms Tyler was “a definite graphic novel fan.” She had read comics when she was younger,

But I mean I haven't read a graphic novel as such in a long time and then this, the last couple of years, when they started to bring out those ones [manga] that I started to go back to them.

As well as investigating series recommended by students through reviews and online forums, her reading of titles in her spare time provided “a bit of background about what they're about.” She could give more personal recommendations to students who came to the library just looking for something to read, not necessarily a graphic novel.

Other librarians unfamiliar with the format did not have the benefit of a knowledgeable colleague. Ms Turner at Tuart Grove High School Library had read comics as a child, and liked some comic strips in the newspaper, but

Personally it doesn't do it for me. It's never turned me on...I don't get them somehow... I think they're an acquired taste.

She wondered if this was the fault of “those adaptations” of Shakespeare which used “colloquial language with fairly crummy artwork.” Ms Turner had tried reading manga, but like students in the focus groups, she was “not sure which way on the page you go” in traditional orientation manga. She equated graphic novels, particularly manga, to “cornflakes, sort of. They'll fill you up, but they're not the best nutrition you could have.”

Her personal disdain for the format did not affect the collection at Tuart Grove High School Library. Some graphic novels, including *Fathom* by Michael Turner, were acquired in 2001 when the school's “Art Department became interested in fantasy art.” They were “used by a very eclectic set of students and usually under the firm direction and guidance of the Art Department” because the teachers “were aware of the graphic nature on the part of some of the images.” Around 2004-05 a “little posse” of students who were in Year 9-10 at the time, began requesting manga titles.

They were avid borrowers. They were always in the library and they were always chatting to me about what they liked to read and when they saw this, it was "Oh you've got this, you should get such and such." And they nagged and nagged and nagged at



me about getting *Full-Metal Alchemist*. And they gave me a whole list of things [titles of manga] and when I bought the *Fruits Basket* books they were over the moon.

In order to overcome her trepidation of the format, Ms Turner “canvassed their opinions.” Usually when a book was requested Ms Turner could order it on approval or look for a copy to preview.

I'd feel more out of my comfort zone with these [graphic novels] than I would with other novels where I could go and look up various reviews on the Net or find them in *Magpies* [a Australian book review magazine]...because they're not my forte. I'm not really sure what I'm letting myself in for, but you know, but certainly if the students requested it and there was enough support for them and they're no better or worse than the others that we've already got.

She asked this group of students, “If you had a wishlist and you had X number of dollars to spend what would you buy?” which enabled their knowledge to inform Ms Turner’s selection decisions. They “argued a good case for having them [graphic novels] and answered all my questions about the content and would it be suitable? Will I get complaints from Year 8 parents?” From there, the collection “burgeoned.”

Ms Hatcher was also unfamiliar with the format, but unlike Ms Turner, had not utilised knowledge of students to improve her familiarity. When Ms Hatcher first investigated the format she thought,

Oh this is great, you know. Students will really love it and I did see that sometimes some of the teachers, particularly the English teachers, want to see them [students] reading something that's more of a narrative, in terms of the traditional chapter 1, chapter 2.

She did not find this among her students and Illyarrie High School Library’s limited graphic novels were underused. This will be discussed at a later stage in the context of Ms Hatcher’s plan to improve the situation.

When Ms Hatcher endeavoured to buy graphic novels in the past she disliked the portrayal of female characters in manga, in agreement with the literature mentioned in Chapter 2. Ms Hatcher conceded this was “a couple of years ago” and continued, “I won’t not have them, but I have to say I’ve looked at some of them...I just flicked through it [a manga title] and I thought, ‘Nup, I can’t.’” When booksellers visited the library with graphic novels, she selected titles, such as *The Hobbit* by Tolkien *et al.* and *Black Beauty*, *Dracula* and *Treasure Island* from the Puffin Graphics series, but felt intimidated when entering a comics shop.

Going and just seeing a whole wall of them... I don't know what's right...so I just left them.

### ***Graphic Novels and Reluctant Readers***

As discussed in Chapter 2, the early literature on graphic novels proposed a

preference among reluctant readers for the format as a reason for libraries developing collections. There was dissension among interviewees as to whether graphic novels actually encourage reluctant readers to read. At first Mr Carlton said this was the case, “You know some people won’t pick up a book at all, but they’ll pick up a comic,” but the examples he provided were of people who enjoyed reading both graphic novels and conventional books. Mr Carlton provided the hypothetical example of a reader of *From Hell* by Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell, a fictionalised account of Jack the Ripper, “wanting to actually look up how true it is.” This was described by focus group participant Adam, “With the [fictionalised] true stories it’s sort of more, when you know it’s really happened, you want to read more to find out...if it’s true or not or [if] that character’s dead.”

Ms Tyler was in agreement with Mr Carlton’s examples, “I don’t know if they encourage them [reluctant readers to read]. I mean the ones who read them [graphic novels] will read anyway.” She also mentioned “the crossover between the graphic novels and the normal [conventional] novels” such as *Avalon High* by Meg Cabot and Jinky Coronado and *Stormbreaker* by Anthony Horowitz *et al*, “That’s a big one. The students read that.” Ms Marchamley added, “You can’t guarantee just ’cause they read the graphic novel, they’re going to read the book, but it works sometimes.” *Redwall* by Brian Jacques and *Artemis Fowl* by Eoin Colfer are other conventional novels adapted as graphic novels. In 2006 manga publisher Tokopop and traditional publisher HarperCollins agreed to a deal to publish manga versions of selected conventional novels (Reid, 2006b). Simon & Schuster had a similar deal with Nantier Beall Minoustchine to publish manga-like graphic novel adaptations of *The Hardy Boys* and *Nancy Drew* (Fine, 2005). As mentioned in Chapter 4 this series did not circulate well at Banksia Park High School Library.

In the first year graphic novels were purchased by Banksia Park, students in the Year 8 reading program were not given “the opportunity to read the graphic novels as much. But this year they virtually walk in the door, pick them straight off the shelf and they’ll just sit and read graphic novels now.” The teachers at Banksia Park “were fine” with this reading material. Ms Marchamley explained, “We pushed it really...We perhaps have a lot of reluctant readers, not necessarily non-readers, just reluctant readers. I think the teachers recognize that...We’ve actually dragged all those people on side.” Some of their students preferred reading magazines. While the library’s magazine collection was extensive and the format allowed during class free

reading periods, the narrative form of graphic novels was preferred by Ms Marchamley and teachers at Banksia Park and graphic novels “certainly had filled that niche with them [the students].” This enjoyment was not universal among the teenage focus group participants. One group who enjoyed magazines over conventional books, did not share a liking for similarly visual graphic novels.

Banksia Park’s collection had initially been purchased for free reading in ordinary English classes held in the library. Ms Tyler described a further program.

There’s another program that’s being set up in English that they want to get these [graphic novels] too because they’re just an easy read...A lot of the students don’t want to read. The only thing they’ll read is magazines. So the closest we can then get them to the novel is to a graphic novel. But I don’t know whether um, they [pause] encourage them.

Her colleague Ms Marchamley was more emphatic in her belief that graphic novels encourage reluctant readers to read, “Oh, I think so...I think slowly it does.” She sought to prove this when a student stopped at the library’s graphic novel display during the interview.

Ms Marchamley Tristan, you don’t normally read [conventional] books very often do you?  
 Tristan Yeah I do.  
 Ms Marchamley Do you? What’s your favourite?  
 Tristan I dunno.  
 Ms Marchamley But you like those [graphic novels]?  
 Tristan Yeah they’re alright. Oh um, not really but it’s something to read, something to do.  
 Ms Marchamley [laughter]

While it seems Tristan was not a reluctant reader and he liked graphic novels, his unwillingness to provide a favourite book and downgrading of his initial opinion of graphic novels may indicate he was only acquiescing to a teacher’s questions, rather than sharing his true opinions. Ms Marchamley’s laughter after his last comment could have caused him to answer what he thought Ms Marchamley wanted to hear.

A number of interviewees noted the crossover between readers of fantasy or science fiction conventional books and graphic novels of any genre. Mr Carlton said this was the case for adult graphic novels readers at Corymbia Public Library, but in contrast younger readers, the major users of the graphic novel collection, would borrow “mainly graphic novels,” rather than conventional books. Ms Tyler said of Banksia Park’s students, “The big fantasy readers, they’ll just jump from here [conventional books] to there [graphic novels].” Ms Turner looked at the borrowing records of Tuart Grove students who read graphic novels to find out what else they

borrowed.

It's all predominantly fantasy. So it's either this [graphic novels] or it's fantasy [conventional books], often high fantasy. And often quite complex, you know, quite intricately written stuff...The really doorstep books. You know, and you'd think that maybe the graphic novel was an easier format and that they were maybe afraid of words and the density of words in a fat book, but that's not the case. And most of them are *Harry Potter* fans as well.

Ms Turner was adamant that reading the format did not encourage reluctant readers to read, "I honestly don't [think so], no." Despite her finding of graphic novel borrowers' other reading, she also believed,

What they do is they're a bit of a safety blanket for students who are maybe not the keenest of readers, who aren't very adventurous. We've got a couple of Year 8s in that category who, who it's really hard to get off the [graphic novels] and get them onto other things...Some of them you have to definitely push them out of their comfort zone and get them to read something else.

This equates to graphic novels encouraging reluctant readers to read, but Ms Turner felt reading only graphic novels was problematic. Year 8 students at Tuart Grove took part in a reading program where they "read from a variety of different genres" and completed tasks on their reading. Ms Turner described two students who only chose manga such as *Fruits Basket* by Natsuki Takaya or *Negima!* by Ken Akamatsu. "The teacher and I were sort of trying to funnel them off that channel onto something else." This illustrates an important difference between public and school libraries. Teachers have a responsibility to introduce students to the full range of genres and formats (Moore *et al.*, 1999; Sanacore, 1992). Ms Turner continued,

In the same way, if someone only ever read fantasy, I'd say, "Oh you know, try something else, try historical fiction or try something from a different genre"...How do you know what else is out there unless you have a little try of it?...It would be a bit like saying someone could only eat Italian food for the rest of their life. You know, not try any of the other things.

Teacher Librarian Ms Hatcher had conflicting views on this scenario. If graphic novels were separately shelved as opposed to the current interfiling she feared this might lead to a lessening of reading diversity.

One thing that I would hate is that students would immediately go to the graphics [novels]. But this is a disadvantage. So if the students that start with the graphic novels would only go to graphic novels...That would worry me, because at the moment they do try other things.

Later she provided the opposite opinion. If students only read graphic novels and did not progress to conventional books, "It doesn't worry me. I subscribe to the view that if students are reading it doesn't matter what they're reading. I think the quantity is more important." It was not possible to determine which was her actual view on the matter.

Public librarians Ms Davilak and Ms Armitage were definite in their agreement with Ms Hatcher's latter statement and disagreement with Ms Turner. Ms Davilak said,

For young adults especially...it does provide a really good bridging media for them to get from electronic into books, especially your reluctant readers. It can present quite complex concepts in a simplified sort of form for them to absorb. So yeah, from that side of things I really like them.

Ms Armitage depicted graphic novels as "a very friendly format...[but] they don't look like children's books [and] people know that they're readily and easily read." Both were less sure that reading graphic novels led to reading conventional books, although they "would like to think so." Ms Davilak thought, "It's more a case of getting them into the library and being more comfortable in the library situation." She described the two types of graphic novel readers at Hakea Public Library.

Some are just, all they bring up to the issues desk is graphic novels. You get your little pile and that's all they borrow week after week. And then you get your others who it's part of what they like to read, whatever they're reading.

Her colleague Mr Cooper from Branch Library Thomasia said, "The main thing I notice is that a lot of patrons who borrow graphic novels tend to have a pile of other [conventional] books." Ms Armitage hoped, "They then probably see around those collections [of graphic novels], see the other things that are there and I'm sure they would be enticed to read a little bit more widely." Ms Armitage provided the example of young children who read *Asterix* by Goscinny and Uderzo and "discover perhaps the other books which are shelved around the *Asterix* books." While this series is a graphic novel, it has been held by libraries for many years, before graphic novels became common and the series is often interfiled in the children's section with conventional books, rather than shelved in a graphic novel collection. Despite Dryandra Library's extensive and separately shelved graphic novel collection, the *Asterix* series was interfiled with conventional books in junior fiction because the main readers were younger children.

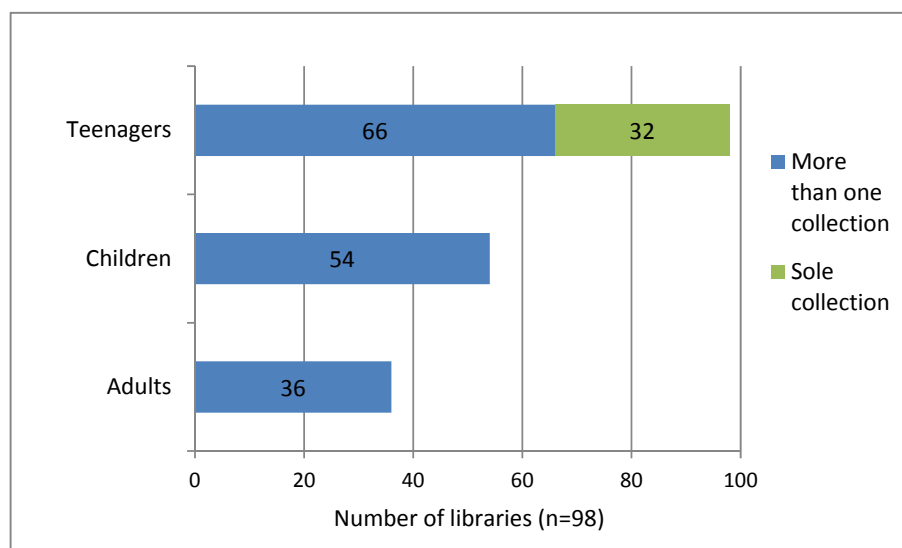
### **Use and Promotion of Graphic Novels**

The majority of surveyed and interviewed libraries found graphic novel collections were well used by their main target audience of teenagers. Some libraries had branched out into collecting titles for adults and children due to popularity among a wider age range. To ensure continued popularity of the format, promotion in various forms was undertaken by many of the libraries, although a number noted the tendency of word of mouth to be the best promotional method.

### ***Who are Graphic Novels for?***

Libraries often start collecting graphic novel for teenagers and as the collection grows, children's and adult's graphic novels may be added. This concentration on graphic novels as a format for teenagers is due to the historical situation of YALSA's endorsement of graphic novels in the early 2000s (Accomando, 2008; Goldsmith, 2003; Preconference a sell out, 2002). Unsurprisingly, all survey respondents who collected graphic novels acquired those for teenagers. This was the only age group catered to in one third (32) of the libraries (see Figure 16). Almost all survey respondents (96%) had a YA section in their library and all libraries which collected graphic novels had a YA section. Slightly over a third of libraries (37%) also collected adult graphic novels and a little over half (55%) collected graphic novels for children.

**Figure 16: Audience for Graphic Novel collections**



Corymbia Public Library's collection was originally shelved within the YA section and this caused the main users to be teenagers, particularly girls from 12 to 15 who read *shōjo* manga, however there were some adult graphic novels users. When the collection was moved from the YA section to the end of general fiction Mr Carlton observed a difference, "It was a bit more accessible and I did notice a few more mature [adult] readers actually borrowing them." A YA location was also the case at Dryandra and Hakea Public Libraries and similar usage patterns occurred.

At Dryandra titles such as *Asterix* and *Star Wars* were shelved in the junior section, and graphic novels with mature content in the adult collection, but the main graphic novel collection was aimed at teenagers and shelved in the YA area. Adults

also made use of this collection. Ms Armitage said, “I saw them [graphic novels] going out to adults and I thought, ‘Good they’re finding them in the Young Adult.’ Once they learnt what the YA was all about, they knew where to look.”

Ms Davilak concentrated her selection for “the younger young adult” those from 12 to 15. Older teenagers were more likely to use the adult collection or not visit the library. Younger children also used the collection, particularly 10 to 12 year olds, but also as young as eight. Manga and superhero comics were particular favourites of these younger users, who saw the movie and wanted to read the graphic novel. Graphic novels were sometimes found on tables in the adult section, “evidence that maybe we do get some adult/young adult [crossover] or young adult/adult [crossover].”

As at Dryandra some titles aimed at children or adults were shelved in the respective sections, but no one had responsibility for collecting in these areas. Ms Davilak noted that *Maus* was shelved in Hakea’s YA graphic novel collection. She had suggested to her colleague with responsibility for adult collections that a second copy be acquired for that collection, but to date it had not. Ms Davilak expanded on the inherent problems.

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| Researcher | I guess adults can take those books [in the YA graphic novel collection] if they want to.   |
| Ms Davilak | Oh of course. Yeah that's right. I mean they probably won't go down there 'cause you know, it's amazing how when you start separating things out. |
| Researcher | Never go there again.   |
| Ms Davilak | An invisible wall.  |
| Researcher | Yeah.   |
| Ms Davilak | Yeah and once they feel like they can't, it's not their territory.  |

There were “20-somethings dipping in,” but no one older. Ms Davilak said, “I grew up on comics and so I enjoy a read too. I don’t see many of them [people Ms Davilak’s age] going looking at [the graphic novels]. I’m lucky that I can do it behind the scenes.” Thus, she seemed embarrassed by her enjoyment.

At Tuart Grove High School graphic novels were used by all year levels.

The initial instigators of the collection have grown up and they're now in Year 12, but the other ones [students] I'm telling you about are just coming through in Year 8 now, so a sprinkling of each year group, a little hard core of each year group.

Students were allowed to read graphic novels during their free choice reading class held in the library and some took up this opportunity.

At Banksia Park High School Library Year 12 students were less likely to use the format because they were concentrating on study, although Ms Marchamley said,

“They will sometimes come in and read in here [the library]” and their choice of reading matter could be graphic novels. All other year groups used the format and requested titles for purchase. Graphic novels were popular in the Year 8 reading program and this was the first year students were allowed to read the format in the program.

Students at Illyarrie High School Library were also allowed to read graphic novels during their free choice reading class. “There’s always a couple of students who will pick them up, but it’s a very low proportion of our students that use them.” Ms Hatcher had little knowledge of the graphic novel format and believed her students’ underuse of Illyarrie’s limited graphic novels was due to their dislike of the format, “Some will pick up the graphic novels but a lot of our students won’t.” Some of her students were “really interested readers and really quite discerning readers” and when offered the graphic novel version of *The Hobbit* by Tolkien *et al.* declined in favour of the conventional book. She considered possible reasons for their choice.

I mean they come up with the stuff that I come up with, "Oh yeah it doesn't give you as much info on the character" and all that kind of thing...But these students who weren't quite that clear on their reasons still would prefer the [conventional] novel [of *The Hobbit*] to the graphic [novel]. Now I don't know whether that was because it was *The Hobbit* um, and that whole sort of support from the movie and all that kind of thing.

On the other hand, Ms Hatcher was able to recommend certain graphic novels to her students.

When the Masterpieces series [by R. Sikoryak] came out many, many years ago, that was a great cross-over. That was great and I still love those books. And I still push those and the students here are quite happy with those.

Ms Hatcher was aware that graphic novels were not merely simplified conventional books and noted her students’ knowledge of this as well.

In actual fact the graphic novels have got quite a lot of writing in and I think some of our students are clever enough to recognise that...When they've been told that they have to read [in class] there is always a small portion of them who will read the graphic novels if they get a choice...But then a lot of our students will just be looking for a thin book [with less words].

Ms Hatcher particularly disliked manga and thus the library held none. Manga was a drawcard in other library’s graphic novel collections and this could be a factor in her students’ “dislike” of the format. Illyarrie’s students requested the library purchase particular authors and titles of conventional books, but “no one’s ever asked for any manga.” Ms Hatcher wondered whether “they haven’t seen that much of it here [in the school library]. They don’t think that we would have any.” Some librarians’ personal enjoyment of graphic novels led to their ability to promote titles and series through first-hand knowledge, which no one at Illyarrie possessed. Ms



Hatcher realised the popularity of graphic novels in other libraries.

Often at network meetings people at other schools, they're like, "Oh graphic novels, we can't keep them on the shelves." Graphic novels [at Illyarrie] we can't give them away, you know. I mean there are like I said, there are students who will pick them up and maybe it's a matter of pushing it.

Ms Hatcher did plan to "push" graphic novels by separating them from their current interfiling to a permanent face-out display shelf in time for the new school year. This was similar to the shelving used by Banksia Park High School Library which worked well. At Illyarrie "high interest" books, conventional books of interest to teenagers but written at a lower reading level (Ammon & Sherman, 1999; P. Jones *et al.*, 2006), would be co-located on this shelving to garner interest from students who preferred fewer words in their reading matter.

### ***Circulation Statistics***

While interviewees referred to anecdotal evidence of collection use, Automated Library Management Systems allow statistical evidence to be collated on borrowing of different materials and by different types of borrowers. In a public library adult use can be compared to that of teenagers and children and in a school library different year groups can be compared. This is achieved through the use of codes for different types of borrowers and materials. Hakea utilised such a code for their graphic novels which meant they would "be able to pull out statistics" on circulation, although they had not at the time of interview. Of the surveyed libraries thirty one with graphic novels collections entered a format code for graphic novels (34%). Some had different codes for collections for different age groups, so statistics could be more finely collected.

Half the surveyed libraries (51%) with graphic novels did not collect statistics. While this may be because they did not have the capabilities in their computer systems, some respondents noted that they assigned general format codes to graphic novels, such as those for conventional books or paperbacks. This allowed general circulation statistics to be collected, but different parts of the collection cannot be investigated. This is a pity because following the launch of a new graphic novel collection, it is useful to determine whether the money invested is translating into circulation (Miller, 2005).

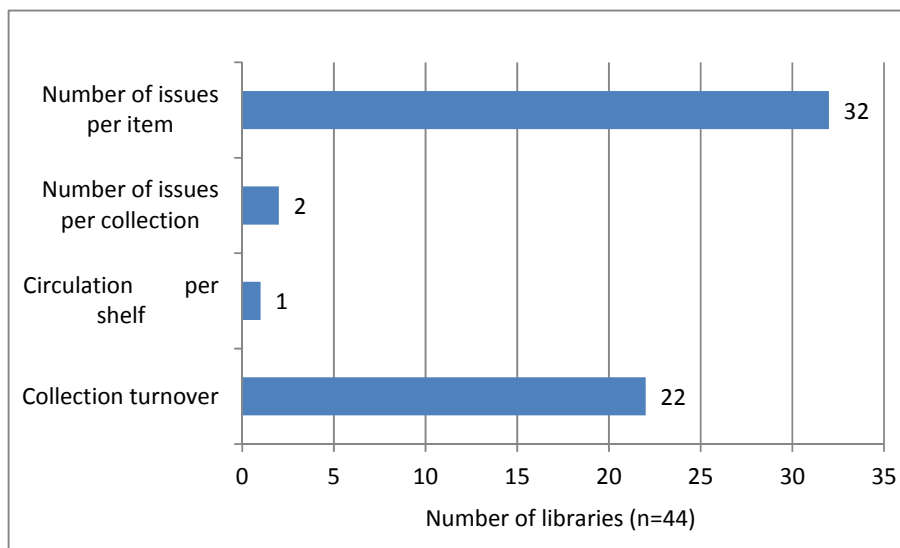
Of the libraries with a format code for graphic novels, eighteen (58%) collected statistics on their circulation. As at Hakea, thirteen libraries were not making use of this capability to determine the use of their graphic novels, for example,

- Not as yet. As we only recently acquired them. To be looked at in the future.
- Statistics could be drawn from our new library management system, but this hasn't happened yet.

Surprisingly twenty two libraries without a format code for graphic novels also collected circulation statistics. This may have been due to incorrect answering of the survey questions related to this, or statistics were collected through a non-automated method, possible with a smaller collection.

The forty four libraries (45%) which collected statistics used one or more of four different types: number of issues per item, number of issues per collection, circulation per shelf, and collection turnover (see Figure 17). Number of issues per item was the easiest to calculate and the most common (73%). Twenty one libraries only collected this statistic. Circulation per shelf and collection turnover take into account the number of items as well as their circulation, thus allowing more accurate comparisons of different collections (Miller, 2005; M. Sullivan, 2005). They need the number of issues per item and per collection as a part of the calculation, but these could be system calculated and not recorded as part of the statistics. More than one method could be used and the most common combination was number of issues per item and collection turnover, which ten libraries recorded.

**Figure 17: Circulation statistics collected for Graphic Novels**

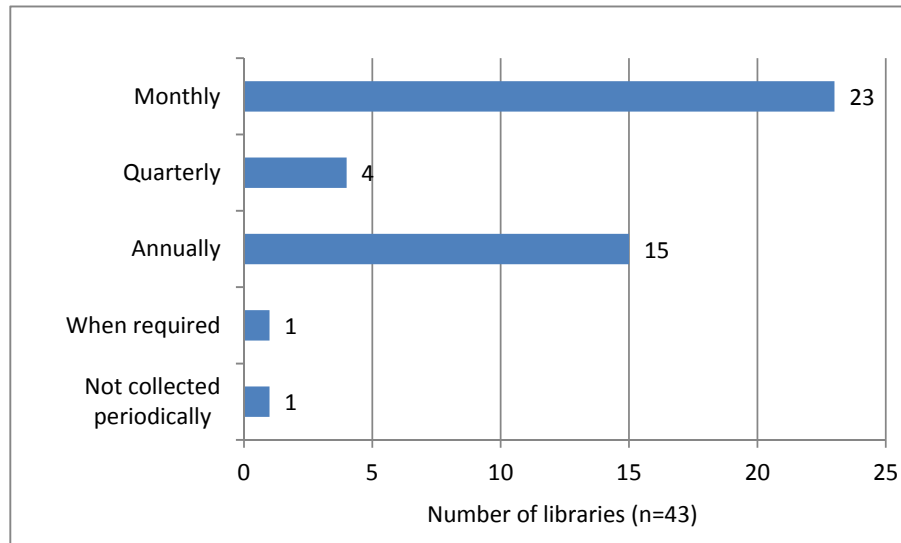


Despite one library stating they did not collect statistics periodically, they are most useful when compared over time. Monthly and annually were the most common time frames for collection and seven libraries recorded statistics for both periods (see Figure 18). Local government authorities or their library systems produce Annual Reports and statistics for collection use may be included, especially if a graphic

novel collection was launched during the year. Circulation statistics can also be used for purposes other than solely use. One respondent explained,

We are currently looking at wear and tear of GNs and we decided to look at weekly turnover of particular items to determine the cause of deterioration. ie. is it binding, use, vandalism?

**Figure 18: Period of collection of circulation statistics for Graphic Novels**



The capabilities of Automated Library Software Systems do not enable tracking of in-house use of graphic novels, discussed among interviewed librarians. The comfortable lounge chairs at Dryandra Library meant “people would sort of sprawl there” to look at graphic novels in the library. Ms Armitage felt this was because they were more “accessible” than conventional books, although she continued, “A lot of them do go out on loan too.” The format was both borrowed and read in the library at Corymbia and Hakea. Ms Davilak explained,

They are both, although generally borrowed. I'd say they're more often taken out whereas um, [pause] yeah you'll find other YA books just left, you know they'll start to read and then give them up. You do see a few [graphic novels left]. And you see, we find them [graphic novels left] down in the adult section as well.

Students at Tuart Grove High School Library “do read them [graphic novels] in the library and borrow them, but mostly borrowing and reading them in their own time.” At Illyarrie “they’d be borrowed,” but often students began reading a graphic novel during their free choice reading class held in the library and then borrowed it to finish reading.

In the first year graphic novels were available at Banksia Park High School Library they were not allowed for loan (as at Scholtzia High School Library which took part in the focus groups). This changed in May 2007 when they became

available for borrowing and circulation was extensive, but also “a lot of the students sit and read them in the library.” Before the instigation of a policy of only loaning two graphic novels to a student at one time, Ms Tyler used her discretion in loaning series.

- Ms Tyler I've sent out four, like the set of *School Rumble* [by Jin Kobayashi]. I sent that out in one hit because it was pointless keeping book 2 on the shelf. When [book] 1 wasn't there and no one else was going to read book 3 and 4 until they [book 1 and 2] came back anyway.
- Ms Marchamley And if you do that.
- Researcher And they're going to return number 1 first.
- Ms Marchamley Yeah.
- Ms Tyler Number 1's come back and that's gone out again. So now I'll wait for book 2 to come back and as soon as that comes back that'll go out [again].
- Researcher Yeah.
- Ms Tyler *The Dreaming* [by Queenie Chan], sent that out as a set because you know, you can't really have book 2 on the shelf if book 1 [is on loan], if that person's reading it. And guaranteed the minute they finish book 1 they'll want book 2 to start reading.
- ...
- Ms Tyler It all depends on the student who's coming in. And on the Friday you're not going to send them home with one.
- Researcher So it's pretty flexible, yeah?
- Ms Tyler Well I tend to be very flexible with the graphics [graphic novels].
- Ms Marchamley We've got the same mission.
- Researcher Cool.
- Ms Tyler Get them out and get them read.

This flexibility made for a user-friendly service and hopefully a limit would not constrict students' reading. Ms Turner described a contrasting situation at Tuart Grove. Students borrowed numerous volumes in a manga series at one time and did not return earlier volumes, even though they had finished reading them. The borrowing period was two weeks, but a limit on number of items could improve this situation.

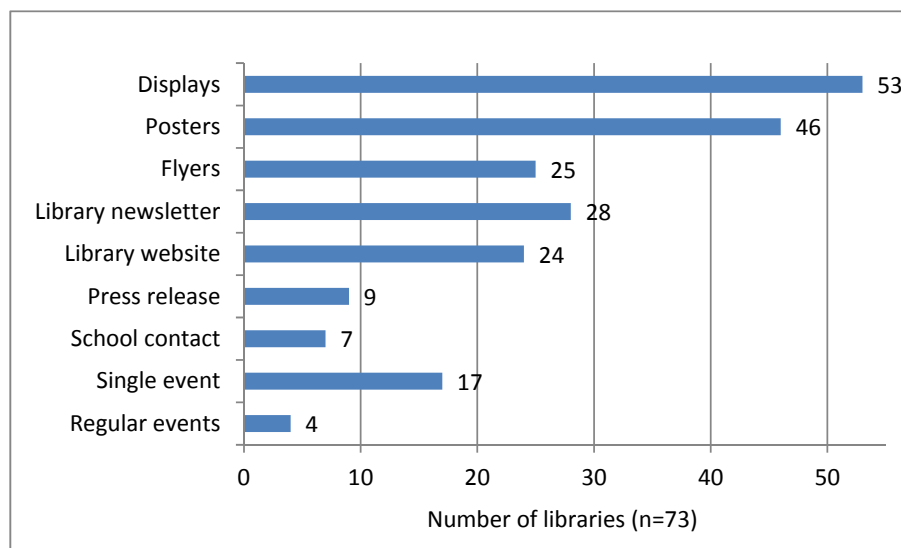
### **Promotion**

“Just putting them on the shelf resulted in half the JCO [children's graphic novel] collection going out in half an hour” – surveyed public library describing their new graphic novel collection.

While graphic novel collections often achieve high use, especially following the launch of a new collection, as the above attested, promotion is still important (Goldsmith, 2005; M. Gorman, 2003; Miller, 2005). It could have been pre-launch promotion, such as press releases, which contributed to the above borrowing frenzy. U.S. librarian Michelle Gorman found, “Word of mouth is your best form of publicity” (2003, p. 36), and a number of the survey respondents mentioned this phenomenon. Teacher Librarian Ms Turner said her library's graphic novels needed

no promotion because discussion among friends did it all. Many libraries, while noting the format's ability to promote itself, still undertook promotional activities. The majority of surveyed libraries with collections promoted them in some way (91%), many using more than one method. These included: displays in the library; posters and signs in the library; flyers, bookmarks or booklists; library newsletter; library website; press releases; contact with schools; and one off or regular events (see Figure 19). Only seven libraries undertook no promotion of their collection. Two of these had small collections, but indicated they would instigate promotion as the collection grew.

**Figure 19: Promotion of Graphic Novel collections**



“Staff recommendations” were noted by one survey respondent. This is one of the most effective promotional methods, but is only possible when staff are knowledgeable about the format through reading the actual titles or extensive reviews, as was the case with two interviewees: Mr Carlton at Corymbia and Ms Tyler at Banksia Park High School Library. Ms Davilak also enjoyed graphic novels, but did not spend much time “on the desk,” thus could not share her recommendations with borrowers. As mentioned, this was not the case with Ms Hatcher or her staff at Illyarrie High School Library and may have contributed to the format's under-use by her students.

Displays are a “valuable component” of a library and “draw people in and create ever changing spaces” (La Marca & Macintyre, 2006, p.63). Graphic novel displays were the most popular way to promote a collection in the public libraries surveyed, with two thirds of respondents doing so (n=53). Displays are usually set up

for a limited time, often during school holidays in a public library, when a collection is launched, or at the start of term in school libraries. One surveyed library launched their graphic novel collection with “new material on display and pizza for the kids.”

Another surveyed library ran a “Getting Graphic @ your library” campaign, with two extensive displays including a collage of manga and anime posters and dust jackets (Figure 20) and a display case with merchandise, graphic novels and DVDs (Figure 21, next page). This led to “no anime or manga titles on the shelves, long reserves on held titles, with requests to purchase new titles. It also encouraged youth to talk to library staff as they had not realised that librarians could be interested in such topics.” This dialogue with young people is the ultimate reward when working with such a hard to reach population.

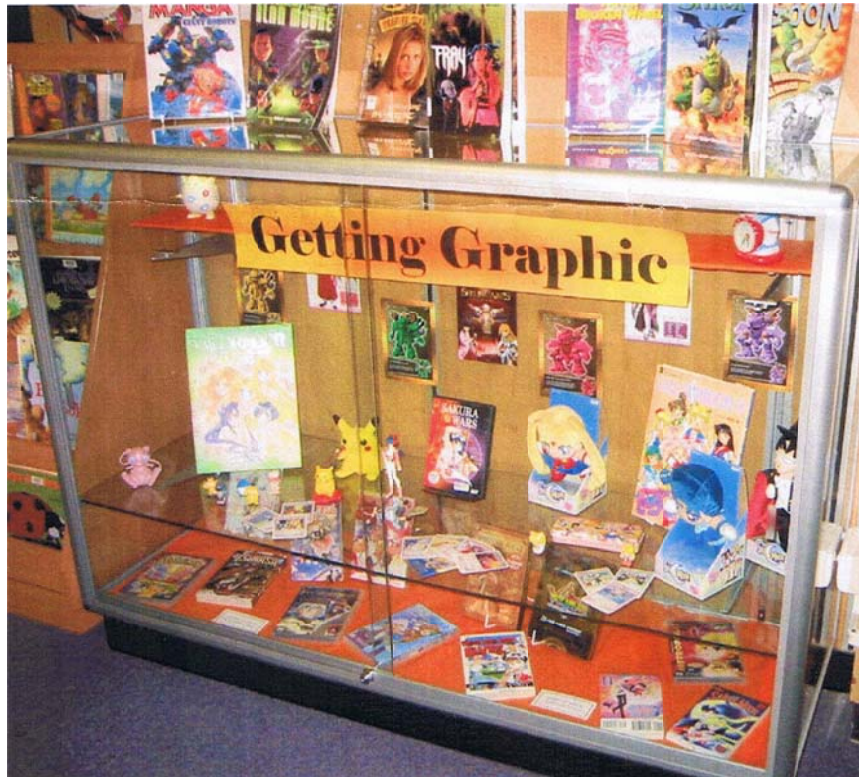
**Figure 20: Collage of manga and anime posters and dust jackets**



The display shelving at Banksia Park High School Library allowed students to see the graphic novels as they “walked through the door.” Ms Turner mentioned a display of graphic novels at Tuart Grove High School Library, but added, “Honestly the networking, the word of mouth works so well, that it was almost unnecessary to do it.” As with other libraries, the graphic novels “were [on loan and] hardly ever in [the library] to display.” This was problematic for one surveyed library, “When we had an initial big promotion, I was somewhat embarrassed as [the branch library] did

not actually have many titles for kids to borrow.” It is not known if this was because they were on loan or located at other branches.

**Figure 21: Getting Graphic @ your library display**



Signs and posters were close behind displays as the second most popular promotional activity among respondents (57%). Interviewee Ms Davilak at Hakea Library described promotional postcards about “different aspects of the collections. There isn’t a graphic novels one, but there is ‘Youth Stuff’ that talks about the graphic novel collection.” A small number of surveyed libraries mentioned graphic novels when they visited local schools to promote the public library (9%).

Graphic novels were promoted through the websites of only 30% of surveyed libraries. The survey was conducted in 2006 and since then the increasing popularity of blogs has simplified website updating (Farkas, 2007). This could mean more libraries now promote graphic novels online through a blog. The Goshen Public Library (Indiana, U.S.) Teens Blog posts new graphic novels with pictures of covers and links to catalogue entries (<http://gplteensblog.wordpress.com/2008/07/31/new-graphic-novels-manga-gpl/>). Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library (Kansas, U.S.) Teens Blog has reviews of graphic novels collected under a link in the sidebar ([http://www.tscpl.org/teens/section/graphic\\_novels\\_comic\\_books/](http://www.tscpl.org/teens/section/graphic_novels_comic_books/)).

Libraries still produce print newsletters despite the ease of online communication. They can be handed out from the issues desk or given to students in membership packs during school visits. One surveyed library included a newsletter with their response, with an article highlighting their new graphic novel collection. This provided a definition of graphic novels, information about manga and a review of a children's graphic novel held in the library, combining recommendation with a "take home" form of promotion.

Events and programs were not as prevalent as other methods of promotion, but 25% of libraries with graphic novel collections were taking note of advice to develop graphic novel events and programs for teenagers (Goldsmith, 2005; M. Gorman, 2003; Miller, 2005). Sixteen of these libraries held one-off events, three libraries had regular events and one library held both.

We have five branches, the three larger have collections. We launched the collections at each of the three branches and the launches were modest, but the interest shown was not. We spent \$30,000 on beginning the collections and by the end of the week the shelves were bare!

Events were diverse, from collection launches with pizza (an important component of many events) to drawing workshops, led by a manga or comics artist. Comics publisher and advocate for children's comics and graphic novels, Scott Robins, championed the drawing workshop held at the San Diego Comic-Con 2008.

By the time the panel got into full swing the room was packed with enthusiastic would-be cartoonists listening intently to the advice of the group of creators and scribbling their own drawings to be share with the audience at the end of the panel. When you work in comics whether it's publishing or promoting sometimes you just get tired of hearing your own voice reminding everyone that kids love comics, too! But it's events like this where you actually see that this is true. (Robins, 2008)

This was replicated at the drawing workshops held at six surveyed libraries, described by one respondent as "a successful graphic novel promotion." Half of these libraries were in New South Wales and half in South Australia, but with such a small sample, reasons for this are unknown. Following one respondent's workshop, graphic novels "flew out the door, with YAs placing holds on them [graphic novels on loan]." Another library held a drawing workshop to celebrate the launch of their collection. WA interviewee Mr Carlton also held drawing workshops to promote Corymbia Library's graphic novel collection with an amateur manga artist.

The difficulty with events is the struggle to encourage teenagers to attend (Lupa, 2007). Sometimes younger children under 12 will swell the ranks, or the session will have only one or two bookings. An event on Hip Hop DJ-ing (not related to graphic novels) was organised at one of the branch libraries of Hakea Library,



Thomasia Public Library. This cost \$500 and one booking was received. Ms Davilak said,

We had to round up all the kids, you know the staffs' children to come along to that. We ended up with about seven.

Uncertainties abound in knowing whether an event will be a success. The same library held a Henna workshop which was “really, really successful.” Targeted promotion outside the library is a critical issue (M. Sullivan, 2005). Whether the topic is popular with boys or girls is also a determining factor. Participants at the Henna workshop were all girls and Hip Hop DJ-ing may be more popular with boys, who Ms Davilak said, “just won’t cross” the threshold of the library. Mural arts workshops (also popular with boys) were held at Hakea and averaged about ten participants. This is a good number for the activity, but “it’s a real effort” to convince that number to attend.

Returning to graphic novel events, some surveyed libraries invited teenagers to “attend selection sessions where they get to choose titles for purchase.” One respondent held such “buying parties” quarterly and others only did this as a one-off event. This promoted the collection to the teenagers involved, who then promoted the graphic novels to their friends through word of mouth (A. Lee, 2004). Ms Armitage said, “I always wanted to do that. I thought that was a good idea.” She held such an event for Finding My Place participants at Dryandra Library and regretted not doing the same for other teenagers. The Finding My Place program, developed by Natasha Griggs at Ruth Faulkner Library in Belmont (WA) “to support disadvantaged youth to stay in education or training” (Murray, 2005), is implemented in many WA public libraries, including Dryandra and Hakea Libraries. A buying party for library resources was a popular part of programs. Ms Davilak at Hakea said participants “gravitated towards” graphic novels when presented with a variety of formats and genres to choose from.

Dryandra held their selection event at a local Comics Shop. “These students really weren’t knowledgeable [of the format], but they could see what they liked and they picked those out.” When the selections were processed for the collection, they were marked as chosen by teenagers, so others could see “they had been chosen by one of the peers, rather than some librarian who’s got no idea.” (Ms Armitage did actually know what she was doing, after a decade of graphic novel selection.) Another Finding My Place activity was a talk by a local comics writer about comics

and graphic novels. “He was brilliant and really good value...It’s really good because he’s sort of young and knows [his subject]. He spoke really well and he was really interesting.” As he talked, “he’d see things there [graphic novels on display] and go, ‘Ooh you have to read this.’” The teenage audience were “not really into reading books,” but the session encouraged them to borrow graphic novels. It was not only the presence of the format that encouraged interest by teenagers, but a display and enthusiastic recommendations from a knowledgeable reader.

Anime clubs where members meet regularly to watch and discuss anime and the related manga are common in larger libraries (Brehm-Heeger, Conway, & Vale, 2007), but were not as prevalent in surveyed libraries. One respondent held anime screenings during Youth Week, as well as manga drawing workshops. Another said, “We regularly screen anime at the library and promote the manga collection simultaneously with prizes from local businesses where possible.” Corymbia and Dryandra Public Libraries both held successful one-off anime screenings.

No surveyed libraries mentioned booktalks, a basic and important method of promotion of any library collection (Hartman, 2006; Mahood, 2007).

Booktalking blasts open the covers of books and shows teens what they can experience through reading. (Mahood, 2007, p. 111)

As the name implies, a booktalk involves talking about a book to an audience, but more importantly, making the book sound so exciting everyone wants to read it and “crazy-for-books energy bursts out” (Mahood, 2007, p. 111). A booktalk may include: a summary of the plot, with the all-important cliffhanger; describing the main character or becoming that character; or reading an exciting segment to make the audience want to find out what happens next (Hartman, 2006). Goldsmith (2005) described the value of booktalking graphic novels. The “staff recommendations” mentioned by one surveyed library equated to informal booktalks and interviewees who enjoyed reading graphic novels were able to provide the same through readers’ advisory when they had read a title. Ms Tyler did this when classes visited the library and she booktalked graphic novels as well as other materials. At other times when a student asked what was good to read these librarians could suggest a graphic novel. At Corymbia Library when Mr Carlton issued a graphic novel he had read, he discussed it with the borrower.

Ms Tyler believed she could promote books without having read them. Surprisingly she seemed to believe that if she expressed personal dislike of a genre,

students would nevertheless be enthused about it.

I'll tell them straight out, "I will not read a fantasy book." I will and I'll tell them that.

This is not promotion. Rather, it might be that students read a genre or title in spite of Ms Tyler's derision. Hartman (2006) stressed not booktalking titles the librarian had not read, nor those personally disliked. Ms Tyler continued,

And there's another girls' series. What's that horrid, horrid one that I hate? [pause] Louise Rennison [wrote *Angus, Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging*]. I hate it with a passion...And they will come back and they will brag about how fantastic this book is. And I've just spent half an hour bagging the series. God knows, it's going to get them interested. And then they'll pick it up and go, "Oh it's the best book ever." And then their friend will read it.

While Ms Tyler believed her disdain made students interested in a title, not all students would be swayed in the direction she hoped by her reverse psychology. She might more usefully acknowledge advice from Jones *et al.* (2006).

Denigrating reading tastes is perhaps the most dangerous and self-defeating attitude we can possess. (p. 66)

### **Issues and Concerns with Graphic Novels**

While the popularity and high use of graphic novels among surveyed and interviewed libraries appears to make them the ideal addition to a library collection, there are problems with the format. Some are unique to graphic novels, such as poorer quality bindings, while others are found among any library material or particularly with collections for teenagers or children.

When asked about problems encountered with graphic novels at Thomasia Public Library, a branch of Hakea, Mr Cooper felt, "The main problem is that we don't have enough [graphic novels]." This would be expected with any popular format, but problems more often designated in the literature are: vandalism, theft, poor bindings, and complaints\* about titles.

### ***Vandalism and Theft***

Most interviewed libraries did not consider theft or vandalism to be more prevalent than with other formats in a YA collection, as confirmed in the literature, "There is no reason to expect that the graphic novel collection will be especially vulnerable" (Goldsmith, 2005, p.50). In contrast Ms Armitage at Dryandra Public Library said, "A lot of them [graphic novels] go missing...Someone steals them, walks off with them." She felt this was more than for other formats. When stocktake

---

\* As mentioned in Chapter 2, the term challenge is used in the U.S. literature.

reports were compiled to discover which items were not being borrowed, “There’d be these graphic novel titles on the lists, a great wodge of them and you say, ‘That’s odd. That should be popular.’” The listed titles were not on the shelf and being borrowed because they had been stolen.

Few of the libraries had security gates at their exit. Hakea Library had unused security gates.

We don’t chip things now because...we don’t have the magnets in the desk anymore [to deactivate the chips]...Sometimes it beeps when people go out, even though they’ve taken it out because they’ve got an old chip in it [the item they borrowed]...So we’ve probably lost a lot of stock just because we say, "Go on, go on." And they're walking out with a bag full of stuff that they haven't checked out.

This situation had not been investigated, Ms Davilak explained, “I haven’t really chased it up. I think it’s [loss has] gone up a little bit, but then so have our overall stats. So I don’t know if proportionally it’s gone up at all.” It could be that the continuing presence of the security gates deters would be thieves.

Ms Turner found, not so much theft or vandalism in her library but,

Some people have just loved them so much, that it’s been really hard to get them back [when they borrow a graphic novel]...Even though they might be onto book 5, they still want to have 1, 2, 3 and 4 you know, to look at and refer back to.

She added, “That’s not limited necessarily just to graphic novels,” but Ms Turner had particularly noticed it with *Fruits Basket* by Natsuki Takaya.

### ***Bindings***

Comics and graphic novels have not been traditionally collected by libraries, thus publishers were notorious for producing poor quality bindings which did not stand up to repeated use in libraries (Goldsmith, 2005; Miller, 2005). Steps can be taken to preserve bindings prior to addition to the library collection (Young, 2007) and poor bindings were mentioned by only two interviewed libraries. The survey did not investigate the issue, although two respondents mentioned problems, for example “We find that they fall apart easily.”

At Banksia Park High School Library some titles, such as *The Simpsons* and *Garfield* are not loaned because they fall apart so easily. “*The Simpsons* are awful. They fall apart within minutes and anything like the *Garfield* comics, that’s pretty much the same.” Staff repaired volumes when pages fall out, but “some are worse than others” and some have been sent back to the point of purchase.

Mr Carlton believed poor bindings were not the only cause of titles falling apart.

Because it's a very thin binding a lot of them just fell apart but I mean, it actually showed that they were well used as well...You could read it within your week reading period. It would have a huge turnover and so they got really well used.

At Corymbia some titles were rebound in hardcover, but when bindings “were massively falling apart” they were discarded and popular titles replaced. Particularly with manga series, “All you need to do is lose a couple and you’ve lost the whole sequence.” Ms Armitage mentioned this frustration, which at Dryandra was caused by theft of one volume within a series, rather than overuse.

### ***Complaints and Censorship***

Due to the principles described in the Australian Library and Information Association’s *Statement on Free Access to Information* (2005), it may be assumed librarians would be unwilling to admit to any form of censorship. This was not found to be the case among surveyed and interviewed librarians. While few directly stated they undertook censorship, many revealed decisions not to acquire certain titles, which could be construed as either legitimate collection development or incidents of censorship.

In discussions with colleagues across the U.S. Robin Brenner found “no one has reported that graphic novels are challenged any more than any other type of book” (2007b, p. 105), a situation confirmed by interviewed librarians in this study. Ms Armitage said, “Generally we don’t get complaints for graphic novels. They’ve been not too bad. We get more complaints about things in Young Adult, actual [conventional] novels.” Ms Hill from Grevillea Public Library, a branch library of Hakea, said,

All staff have a different viewpoint. We have some staff here say that some of these are not suitable for the age group [teenagers]. Interestingly enough I haven’t heard of any complaints from the public about any of the graphic novels.

The visual nature of the format and the intended audience of young people leads to a supposed increased likelihood of graphic novels being the target of complaints. The perception of graphic novels being for children lingers, and caused problems for some libraries investigated, particularly Corymbia Public Library. This was chiefly because their collection was housed within the Young Adult (YA) area. This perception of graphic novels being for children was true in the past, but is no longer the case (Brenner, 2006; Versaci, 2007; Wolk, 2007). Janna Morishima (2007), a publisher of children’s comics and graphic novels, said at the 2007 New York Comic-Con, “It has been over forty years since comics were really a kid’s

medium.” Public librarian Ms Armitage noted, “They don’t look like children’s books,” despite her agreement that some are easier to read. In discussing adult manga in Japan, long time writer on manga, anime and Japanese culture, Fred Patten (2004) maintains, “Practically every adult [manga] comic of any length will involve sexual relationships at some point, usually graphically depicted though not to the extent of being X-rated” (p. 236), although not all such titles are translated and available in English. Librarian and manga expert Robin Brenner discussed adults questioning the content of mature graphic novels, “not quite realizing that the title is not intended for children” (Brenner, 2007b, p. 104).

What may go unchallenged in words only, may become contentious when delivered graphically. (Laycock, 2005, p. 51)

The visual nature of graphic novels makes mature titles more easily accessible than conventional books (Miller, 2005), which may have to be read in their entirety to find objectionable passages (or words). A graphic novel could be flicked through and one or two objectionable images noticed. This can be more confronting than text alone (Goldsmith, 2005, p. 86) and the whole item then deemed “inappropriate” (Miller, 2005, p. 59). Ms Davilak questioned this greater accessibility of visual materials when she wondered if fewer complaints were received about graphic novels in her library because parents were willing to “read the [conventional] books. They might not read the graphic novel,” because they were not familiar with the format. Cornog and Byrne (2009) attribute some parents ignoring graphic novels to their “automatically considering them ‘kid stuff,’ trivial, or akin to newspaper strips and comics they themselves are used to” (p. 213).

Mr Carlton was a library clerk at Corymbia Library. He had a personal interest in graphic novels through his recreational reading and assisted YA librarian Ms Porter in selecting graphic novels. Before Mr Carlton interviewed for his position he visited Corymbia and was impressed with their graphic novel collection, joining the library so he could borrow some titles. During Mr Carlton’s interview he mentioned this and “found out later on that was one of the things that kind of pushed him over” in the library management’s decision to hire him. Mr Carlton’s enjoyment of graphic novels written for adults led to him wanting to acquire these titles for the collection. This caused problems because the collection was housed in the YA area.

Agreeing with the literature, Mr Carlton questioned why graphic novels are automatically deemed YA, when they are “actually a medium [or format]” and

written for different age groups. He speculated this arose from people thinking of graphic novels as a genre written for teenagers. As previously mentioned, when graphic novel collections became popular in the early 2000s it was principally due to endorsement by YALSA and thus YA librarians starting collections (Accomando, 2008; Goldsmith, 2003; Preconference a sell out, 2002). Mr Carlton continued, addressing a hypothetical librarian in the second person,

I mean, if I gave you a [conventional] book you would go, “Oh that’s not suitable for young adults” and put it in the [general fiction collection]. But if I gave you a graphic novel, you’d just go [say it belonged in] YA, because you don’t even look at it.

He compared this to cartoons such as *South Park* and *The Simpsons* which are “both mature age cartoons...People think cartoons [=] kids and that’s when trouble happens...It extends to manga and anime.” Mr Carlton discussed the “chopping up” of the 1978 anime *Battle of the Planets* which included a transgender villain. It was translated for U.S. television with “the most violent and sexually charged scenes” including the transgender villain deleted. It was dubbed with vastly altered dialogue and characters added, and shown on early morning television for children (Diaz, 2004). Mr Carlton contended the content would have been better left as it was and rated as an adult anime, but animation in the U.S. is considered to be for children and such changes occur with most translated anime, even today with series such as *Sailor Moon* and *Dragon Ball* (Fukunaga, 2006; Levi, 2009; Okuhara, 2009).

The assumption that graphic novels were for children and teenagers was widespread at Corymbia Public Library and caused problems in Mr Carlton’s selection.

I would want to get things like *Punisher* and *Preacher* [both by Garth Ennis]. Especially *Preacher*, I really like it, because it’s [got] some good stories [although] it’s very graphic [graphically violent]. But I wanted to get things with content and popular ones. Whereas we had to stay away, we couldn’t actually get *Preacher* because it [the graphic novel collection] was in the young adult section.

Despite Mr Carlton asserting, “It’s not actually the librarian who should be censoring,” one or two graphic novels were removed from the collection of Corymbia Library after complaints. Mr Carlton disagreed with this, but the decision was not his to make. Mr Carlton continued, “There’s only one or two books that she [Ms Porter] actually did get rid of because she couldn’t justify them being in a young adult collection.” One of these titles was *Preacher*, reviewed as “black-humored and ultra-violent” (Pawuk, 2006, p. 515). Mr Carlton clarified his incorrect assertion above, when he said the title was acquired but discarded following complaints received after being borrowed by “kids” (it is unknown whether this was teenagers or

younger children). It was likely the parents of the borrowers who complained rather than the readers who chose the title.

Mr Carlton noted other problematic titles: *From Hell* by Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell, *John Constantine Hellblazer* by Garth Ennis and *The Sandman* by Neil Gaiman. President of DC Comics Paul Levitz described Alan Moore as,

One of the first [comics] writers of our generation, of great courage and great literary skill. You could watch him stretching the boundaries of the medium. (cited in Itzkoff, 2006)

*The Sandman* is one of “several critically acclaimed graphic novels essential for building a core adult collection but inappropriate for your library’s children or young adult section” (M. Gorman, 2002, p. 44). These titles were written for an adult readership and are “quite graphically violent” (Mr Carlton’s words) or have explicit sexual content. They are legitimate additions to a public library’s collection, and belong in a general fiction or graphic novel collection. Although Ms Porter had steered away from such titles because she was buying for a YA collection, this changed when Mr Carlton arrived. All graphic novels were shelved together and parents of teenagers or younger children objected to mature titles in the YA section.

“The solution that should be in place [when acquisition of adult graphic novels began],” of moving the collection out of the YA area, was not allowed at first by Corymbia’s Branch Librarian (Mr Carlton and Ms Porter’s manager). Individual adult titles were not moved from the YA collection and added to the general (adult) fiction collection because there were not enough to justify a separate adult graphic novel collection and Mr Carlton felt interfiling them in adult fiction would “bury” them. Ms Porter did have a legitimate reason for acquiring very few adult graphic novels. The most use made of the collection was from children and teenagers and she received requests from these borrowers. She wanted to, as Mr Carlton explained, “Concentrate on the [younger] people who were actually reading it [the graphic novels] rather than, you know, the weird, obscure [older] people like me,” who were in the minority.

We [Ms Porter and Mr Carlton subsequently] managed to convince everyone to move it [the graphic novel collection]...We moved the bay to the end of the adult fiction and removed all the YA stickers. So then technically it’s part of the normal [adult] fiction section, but it’s still [close to and] accessible for the Young Adults.

Ms Porter was the YA librarian and when the collection moved to general fiction, technically selection of the format was “no longer her domain.” As the librarian with the greatest practical knowledge of graphic novels Ms Porter did retain



selection, but this was a contributing factor in opposing a change to the status quo. The new shelving arrangement ended complaints about individual graphic novels in the collection.

Hakea Public Library also had a graphic novel collection located in their YA area. When complaints were received about adult titles in this collection (at the time of the interview only from staff during processing of titles) some were moved to the general (adult) collection and interfiled with conventional fiction, unlike at Corymbia where Mr Carlton had not wanted this done. Rather than violence being the problematic element, sexual content was the main issue at Hakea. One title included explicit sex (and was moved to the adult fiction collection), but another was manga of the genre Boys' Love (BL) with themes of romance and love between two men. The title at Hakea had no explicit content; the two male characters only kissed, unlikely to cause complaint if between a man and woman (McLelland, 2005). The genre may "offend some readers" (Brenner, 2007b, p. 135), as it did among Hakea's staff during processing. The title was investigated by librarians at Hakea and deemed suitable for teenagers. Ms Davilak explained, "We all talked about it. We decided that we would leave it where it was."

BL and Yaoi are generally created by and for women (Brenner, 2007b) and in Japan "gay men tend not to identify with the beautiful youths in women's manga and feel that these figures are figments of women's imaginations" (McLelland, 2000a). A survey of western readers of BL and Yaoi established the genre is "more popular with bisexual, gay, lesbian, and male readers than previous readership descriptions have suggested" (Pagliassotti, 2008). Levi (2009) found male readership to be almost 10% of her North American respondents. A U.S. survey of teenage BL and Yaoi readers found, "A number of male respondents expressed delight at seeing gay romances at all" (Brenner, 2007b).

One series, Satosumi Takaguchi's *Shout Out Loud!* focuses on issues of coming out (Masaki, 2008). Easy access to reading material about characters experiencing similar life events, "where male x male romance was desirable as opposed to being stigmatized" (Hale, 2008) is important for gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (GLBT) teenagers and those questioning their sexuality. These young people may be embarrassed to ask library staff about such material and if they do not find it on their own, while browsing the YA shelves, may leave the library disappointed.

*The Sandman* by Neil Gaiman was deemed mature at Hakea, as in the literature (Crawford, 2003; Raiteri, 2003a), and the series “broken up.” *The Sandman: Endless Nights* contains the story “What I’ve tasted of desire,” “a darkly sexual fable, painted by Milo Manara in the style of his more X-rated work” (Zaleski, 2003b). The “more graphic” volumes (Mr Carlton’s words) were interfiled among general adult fiction and the rest stayed in the YA graphic novel collection. Ms Davilak felt this outcome was acceptable, because the titles had not been removed from the library, a view endorsed in the literature (P. Jones *et al.*, 2006, p. 100). The mature titles might not have been as easy to find, but they were still available for all borrowers, teenagers included. She explained,

A couple of times I've heard someone say, "It says it's on the shelf but I can't see it there with the others." And then we'll say, "Oh ok, it says it's on that shelf there [adult], not that shelf there [YA]." And then we go and track it down for them. So really, I mean, it probably has added a little bit of extra footwork for staff but I think it's generally [fine].

Teenagers can be “extremely self-conscious...and will never approach a staff member for help. They may feel stupid when asking questions” (S. B. Anderson, 2007, p. 18). If such a teenager was not able to find *The Sandman* volume they wanted and gave up without asking for assistance, staff may never know. Leaving dissatisfied, the teenager may believe the library was inadequate and not return.

A change in content occurs as the manga series *Nana* by Ai Yazawa progresses. Manga publishers provide a suggested age rating for their titles and initial volumes of *Nana* were rated “T+ for older teens.” From volume 8, titles were rated “M for mature” because they included content deemed inappropriate for teenagers. Ariel Schrag’s *The High School Comic Chronicles of Ariel Schrag* also has content which becomes more mature as the series progresses, including “the typical teenage concerns of sex, drugs, drama with friends and the importance of music” (Awkward and Definition, 2008). This change occurred because each title in the series “was created in the summer of the year it chronicles” in the mid 1990s (*ibid.*). The books are “coming-of-age stories amply displaying the emotional uncertainty of adolescence” and depict the author’s burgeoning first lesbian relationship (Potential, 2008). The series is ideal for teenagers experiencing “emotional uncertainty.” If either series were shelved in YA, a dilemma similar to Ms Davilak’s with *The Sandman* may occur.

Ms Davilak qualified the movement of titles within the library collections, “I suppose we have removed them from the YA collection.” She believed removing a

title from the library entirely equated to “the waste of the price of a book.” Ms Davilak readily admitted, “I guess we do a little bit of pre-emptive stuff. We don’t just wait until we get complaints,” thus censorship was occurring to some extent. Such measures may not be professionally appropriate, as Ms Davilak explained, “The only people that have actually complained about that sort of content have been other staff members.” Cornog and Byrne (2009) contend graphic novels can provoke more complaints from library staff than conventional books. In Hakea Library’s case it could be argued that no complaints were received from the public because mature titles were moved to the general (adult) collection, rather than the YA graphic novel collection.

As described above, both Corymbia and Hakea Libraries handled complaints about titles in their graphic novel collections very differently. Despite both solutions having their respective problems, Mr Carlton and Ms Davilak felt the end result was the best suited to their particular situations.

In other instances, non-selection of titles occurred rather than removal of titles from a collection or a library. Ms Davilak did not acquire the manga series *Battle Royale* by Koushun Takami and Masayuki Taguchi for Hakea Library. She only selected graphic novels for teenagers and this is a mature title. The characters are junior high students, but the series includes explicit violence and sexual content. Ms Davilak explained, “I remember seeing [the cover of] *Battle Royale* thinking, ‘Oh this would be a good boy’s book.’” She flicked through a copy and decided, “Maybe not [laughs] Pretty bad.” A reviewer expanded on the content,

The book’s scenes of torture, implied rape and killing combine the horror and extreme violence of *A Clockwork Orange* with *Lord of the Flies’* exploration of human nature and depravity and aren’t for the faint of heart. (Zaleski, 2003a, p. 58)

A survey respondent from a public library was aware of the possibility of complaints about materials. In answer to a question on how the library’s collection was promoted she replied, such promotion “may draw attention of some council and community members to a collection they do not approve of, and attempt to ban purchase of all graphic novels.” While this seems to be an example of censorship the respondent was aware of her professional responsibilities and added, “Graphic novels [are] a valid and useful part of a library collection.” Another factor in the library’s low key promotion was they “do not have the budget to meet the demand this [promotion] would create.” Lack of funds is a constant issue in all libraries and the imperative to stretch limited funds across all materials means librarians may be

reluctant to purchase materials which could be in danger of removal from the collection following a complaint.

The above survey respondent also noted, “Some graphic novels are too explicit for many in our community so I have to be careful with choice.” As at other libraries, the respondent only acquired graphic novels for teenagers and children. She felt non-selection of explicit graphic novels was a legitimate selection decision, despite working in a public library which catered to all ages. The reason for the lack of an adult collection of graphic novels could be to placate community members who may object, or it could be due to budget constraints.

Budget constraints can impact selection in a different way. Libraries with adequate or generous budgets are less likely to encounter selection dilemmas than those who are constrained by a limited budget. The former is unlikely in today’s economic climate and may lead to more conservative selection decisions. Ms Davilak said of her colleagues, “The assistant librarians have to really struggle to justify spending” on graphic novels as opposed to conventional books. She also observed that if mature titles were (inadvertently) selected, which were then shelved in the adult collection, that money had not been spent on YA materials, for which it was budgeted.

Another survey respondent was blatant in acknowledging censorship of a cross section of graphic novels. The librarian equated manga with “overly bloody” materials and did not acquire any. This erroneous belief about the content of manga could easily be dispelled if she investigated manga series written for children and teenagers. Another survey respondent pre-empted complaints by,

Try[ing] to avoid overly violent or sexually explicit items. However, we have some in our collection – in this case borrowing restrictions may apply. 18+ borrowers only.

This was the only example of age restrictions on borrowing graphic novels in the libraries investigated. Libraries which moved titles from a YA collection to an adult collection did not prevent young people, of any age, from borrowing them, in contrast to MA15+ and R-rated movies, borrowing of which by those under 15 or 18 respectively, is illegal.

Complaints about library materials were remarked on more often from public, rather than school libraries. These were objections against mature titles held in a YA collection, which contained explicit violence or sexual content. Public librarians may find “a duty of care clashing with not censoring,” as described by Ms Davilak, but

duty of care is more an issue for school libraries (Goldthorpe, 2006). While the number of school libraries investigated was much smaller than public libraries, teacher librarians Ms Turner and Ms Hatcher pointed out school libraries would not acquire explicit titles because they are far from their collection development aims. Titles with no explicit content that are aimed at mature readers complicate the question of whether a selection decision is a legitimate act of collection development or censorship. School libraries collect adult conventional books, whether they are part of the curriculum or as recreational reading for students who enjoy reading these titles or are more capable readers. There is no reason for making different decisions when selecting graphic novels.

Banksia Park High School Library held *V for Vendetta* by Alan Moore and David Lloyd. It contains adult concepts which parents may find objectionable (prostitution, paedophilia, non-sexual nudity and indiscriminate killing), although there is no explicit material, in comparison to Moore's *From Hell*. *V for Vendetta* is written for adults and many concepts and themes may not be understood by younger readers, however older teenagers may enjoy it. This was attested to at Banksia Park by its being borrowed eleven times in the past year by students and teachers. English teacher Ms Cartwright used it as a text for upper school students and showed the movie adaptation as a comparison. A number of the adult concepts were removed from the movie, to ensure it did not receive an R-rating. For this reason Alan Moore described the screenplay of *V for Vendetta* as "rubbish" (Itzkoff, 2006) and he refused credits and royalties from the film adaptation and adaptations of his other work (Wolk, 2007).

As previously mentioned, a manga title in the Boys' Love (BL) genre may have no explicit content, only themes some may find objectionable (Brenner, 2007b). Mattie, a Year 9 student at Banksia Park High School, suggested to Ms Tyler that the library acquire BL manga. Ms Tyler quoted Mattie as saying, "Me and my friends love these books." Mattie supplied a list of titles and brought some of her own BL manga to show Ms Tyler. After seeing the content, Ms Tyler returned them to Mattie, with "Thanks, but no thanks." Her colleague Ms Marchamley added, "We would probably go, 'Mmm, maybe not.'"

During the interview, Ms Tyler did not use the terms Boys' Love, BL or Yaoi. She described the titles as "porn" and containing "a lot of man love," suggesting they contained explicit material. She was confused by this because the publisher assigned

a rating designating them as acceptable for teenagers. While publisher-assigned ratings may not equate to the content in particular contexts, such as school libraries (Goldsmith, 2005, p. 58), it is possible the rating correctly indicated the title had no explicit content. Banksia Park's staff may not have wanted to add it to their collection for fear of possible objections from parents regarding the depictions of gay relationships. If this was the case, it would be a particular disservice not only to GLBT students, but all students, who would benefit from finding such material in their school library. At Banksia Park the students who suggested the series were also missing out. As outlined in Chapter 4, allowing teenagers to choose what they read is recommended as the best way to encourage enjoyment of reading, thus acquiring student recommendations is a valuable method of building a library collection (P. Jones *et al.*, 2006). U.S. librarian Miranda Doyle elaborated,

Buy the books, magazines, graphic novels, etc., that they really want to read, even if those materials are controversial, edgy, or otherwise inappropriate. (cited in P. Jones *et al.*, 2006, p. 81)

To complicate matters further, *Ranma 1/2* by Rumiko Takahashi is an example of a graphic novel aimed at teenagers that has some nudity and transgender themes (the title character changes from a boy to a girl on contact with water). The “nudity is sometimes employed for comedic effect, but never for salacious purposes” (Lyga & Lyga, 2004, p. 77), but some find it objectionable, particularly in the U.S. (Glazer, 2005; Kan, 2003). The subject matter is of more interest to younger teenagers but Viz, the publisher of the English translation, rates the series for older teens. The translated anime of *Ranma 1/2* has never been shown on U.S. television, despite popularity on video and DVD (Levi, 2009, p. 171), likely due to the nudity and transgender themes.

In a discussion of graphic novels suitable for school libraries, Lyga and Lyga (2004) “recommended the book for its insight into Japanese culture, from the architecture, to school uniforms, to the food, to the ubiquitous bathing rituals” (p. 77). Mr Carlton also defended the series.

The nudity in *Ranma* and a lot of those similar ones [manga titles aimed at teenagers] is very nondescript, it's not detailed and it's more of a conveyance.

Mr Carlton mentioned Japan's very different culture. The Japanese have a “more open attitude” (Mr Carlton's words) to nudity, sex, transgender themes and other topics which in the western world may be found objectionable (Brenner, 2007b, p. 90-2; Levi, 2009). Mr Carlton also noted the fact that in Japan it is

understood that manga is written for “different [age] levels and [in] different genres” thus, not automatically deemed only for young people (Sabin, 1996; Schodt, 1996).

None of the interviewed librarians had problems with *Ranma 1/2* and a number of their libraries held the series. This was the case in school and public libraries, including Corymbia Public Library which had never received complaints regarding *Ranma 1/2* and its placement in the YA section. It may be that Australians are more accepting of this content than Americans, although the small sample cannot be generalized to all libraries.

Ms Turner at Tuart Grove High School dealt with a possibly questionable request from her students in a professionally appropriate way. *Fullmetal Alchemist* by Hiromu Arakawa (also requested by students at Banksia Park) is written for teenagers and was listed in YALSA’s 2006 Quick Picks for Reluctant Readers (Pawuk, 2006, p. 142). Ms Turner questioned its appropriateness due to violence and had “reservations” about acquiring it, but conceded,

You have to maintain some sort of credibility with the students. And you have to allow them some sort of flexibility in their choice and trust their maturity.

Ms Hatcher at Illyarrie High School Library remarked that some titles in her collection “are a bit racy and some of them are a bit questionable,” but if no one complained about them, she did not have a problem with this. She continued, “Quite often the ones that they [parents] are concerned about are not the ones that I’d be worried about.” Mr Carlton from Corymbia Public Library described parents focusing on one panel in a graphic novel, rather than reading the whole work and understanding the context of the panel. For example, “opening *Fun Home* to the panel showing lesbian oral sex has proven quite disturbing to some people, never mind Alison Bechdel’s artful and sympathetic story embedding the image<sup>\*</sup>” (Cornog & Byrne, 2009, p. 214). Mr Carlton compared focusing on one panel to watching a movie where the viewer sees something objectionable, then the next scene replaces it. While both are visual, thus more open to complaints, the two are “fundamentally different...because of how they are experienced” (Versaci, 2007, p. 167), with static works being easier to remember and refer back to. Teacher librarians Ms Turner and Ms Hatcher noted the necessity of questioning a parent who complains. Ms Hatcher explained,

---

\* It should be noted *Fun Home* by Alison Bechdel is a memoir written for adults and should be shelved in an adult collection.

Have you read the whole book? Have you read this? Have you considered [the context]?...And quite often it doesn't go much further than that.

Ms Turner also suggested to parents they discuss the title with their child. While Ms Hatcher dealt with complaints in a judicious manner, she added,

I guess I do apply some censorship because I'm the person who's going to have to deal with any challenges. And I know that there are some, somebody said to me, "Look I don't think this is good." And there's been a couple of books that I have actually taken off [the shelf], because they're not suitable...but then we've got an age range from 12 through to 18...We've got staff that come in and borrow. We've got some [pause] thrillers and that on our shelves which I wouldn't necessarily push to the students...If they want to read them, they're fine...But they're really meant to be adult...I mean there are some books like, I wouldn't get *The Exorcist*. Um, now that's a very old book and it's probably very tame now, but when I was fourteen I read that and it [inaudible] and I wouldn't get that for that reason. There are some things that I just couldn't for shame put on [the library shelf].

Public Librarian Ms Armitage was proactive in discussing complaints with parents (or others who made complaints) to alleviate their concerns, without removing (or even moving) titles. She had recently commenced work at Acacia Public Library, but as previously mentioned, developed Dryandra Public Library's YA graphic novel collection in the late 1990s, the oldest of all libraries included in the interviews. In contrast to Dryandra's extensive collection, Acacia had a smaller under-used graphic novel collection. Dryandra's collection is a large and vibrant source of graphic novels for local library members, including manga fans Mia and Amy from the focus group session at Scholtzia High School. As with the YA graphic novel collection at Hakea, Dryandra's collection did not include mature titles. Such titles were interfiled with the general (adult) fiction collection.

Ms Armitage had only received complaints about conventional YA novels, not graphic novels. Agreeing with views expressed elsewhere (Decker, 2008; A. Giles, 2008) and teacher librarian Ms Turner, Ms Armitage said,

I always say to parents that kids will read things at their own level. And they'll get out of them [the reading materials], what they perceive. If we put an adult perception on something they're looking at, we're going to see those things, but they're not.

Similarly to teacher librarian Ms Hatcher, Ms Armitage followed the guiding principles of librarianship in tackling these situations, as all librarians should strive toward. Despite any librarian's or library's efforts to shield teenagers,

Young people [today] live not only in a culture saturated by sexual images but also saturated with violent images and acts...Sex and violence have always been part of popular culture. (Holm *et al.*, 2006, p. 90,93)

Ms Davilak agreed with this in her discussion of the violence in *Inu-Yasha* by Rumiko Takahashi, rated for older teens by the publisher. She said,

I really don't see teens being freaked by that [the content of *Inu-Yasha*]. Maybe eight



year olds I wouldn't like to read it...The other thing is, I suppose, that those kids [children and teenagers] are exposed to a lot more graphic stuff at the newsagent. You know, on their shelf, than ever they would, you know, in here [the library]...Young adults too, they're starting to explore issues like sexuality, so have them ready [materials on those topics]...You tap into areas of interest.

The problem arises when parents do not agree that their teenage children are ready to explore these topics, a common occurrence during the teenage years (M. Gorman, 2003; P. Jones *et al.*, 2006, p. 99; Wilkins, 1993). Parts of the general public find it horrifying that “the protective membrane that once delineated adult from young adult subject matter is disappearing” (Neil, 2008). In reality, this has never been the case. Parents and concerned others have complained about children's and YA literature (and other forms of entertainment) since its inception (Holm *et al.*, 2006). Even before the advent of the term teenager, whatever the youth of the day was reading (or doing) was considered equally inappropriate, as they followed the difficult path to adulthood (G. Jones, 2004; Springhall, 1998).

While the general public will continue to call for age-appropriateness in children's and young adult materials (Emerson in Neil, 2008; Pattee, 2007), removing these topics from a library's collection will not protect young people. Time squandered on such a pointless exercise could be better spent on more useful practices, such as encouraging young people to enjoy reading, and visit and make the most of libraries and their collections, receiving “guidance [which] is more subtle and whose goal is to help them become thinking, independent, self-assured adults” (Broderick, 1990, p. ix).



## Chapter 6: Discussion

The results from the focus groups, survey and interviews brought to light many ideas to help librarians better appreciate teenagers as potential library users and make the most of one format, graphic novels, which may be the perfect reading matter for some teenagers. Teenagers were divided into types of readers based on the two separate categorisations of readers developed by Beers (1996a, 1998) and the report *Young Australians Reading* (ACYL & Woolcott Research, 2000). The different types of readers' preferences are discussed here, including in relation to graphic novels and school reading. Participants' attitudes to libraries are discussed, together with online activities as an important aspect of the literacy lives of all teenagers and the internet as an alternative to libraries.

Results from the survey of public libraries are compared with other research in this area, but there is little available as indicated in Chapter 2. The major findings on management of graphic novel collections from surveyed and interviewed libraries are outlined. The importance of the inclusion of the format in collection development policies and job descriptions of selectors as well as issues connected with continuity of collections and complaints about the format are considered. This is related to the view that graphic novels are just for teenagers, leading to potential censorship and clashes with the professional guiding principles of librarianship.

Finally, findings from teenagers and libraries are combined to provide ideas for practising librarians on how to make the best use of graphic novels, as one format among many in a library collection, to encourage teenagers to enjoy reading and use their school or public library.

### Teenagers

In his research on reading, Ennis discussed the difficulties of “how to define what is meant by a reader” and determine whether a person is a reader or not (cited in Ross, 2006a, p. 138). This was encountered during the research, with teenagers not necessarily readers or non-readers. Some said they “never” read but when drawn out, talked about the materials they enjoyed reading, often those other than books. Leah “hated reading,” but mentioned the biographies she had enjoyed and magazines she regularly read.

Rather than being a reader or not, teenagers were better described on a continuum of reading behaviour. The separate categories of readers developed by

Beers (1996a, 1998) and the report *Young Australians Reading* (ACYL & Woolcott Research, 2000) were useful models to divide participants into five types of readers: avid, dormant, intermediate, and ambivalent readers, and those who found reading irrelevant.

**Table 7: Types of readers among focus group participants**

	Participants	Percentage	Reference Source
Avid readers	16	40%	Beers & <i>Young Australians Reading</i>
Dormant readers	4	10%	Beers
Intermediate readers	8	20%	similar to “Book positive rebels” of <i>Young Australians Reading</i>
Ambivalent readers	6	15%	similar to “Book neutral light readers” of <i>Young Australians Reading</i>
Reading irrelevant	6	15%	similar to “Reading irrelevant” of <i>Young Australians Reading</i>

Categorisation was subjective, largely due to the subjective self reporting of reading behaviour of participants. Placement was decided by comparing participants, both within and between sessions. Within each group of reader type there could be noticeable differences between teenagers’ views on reading and reading behaviour, although overall they were more similar within each type than between types.

Avid readers enjoyed reading, regularly read books and other materials, and happily discussed their reading. Without prompting David described himself as an avid reader. The large number of avid readers among focus group participants (40%) is unlikely to be the case in the general population of teenagers. The larger and more diverse sample of *Young Australians Reading* found just under a third of participants (31%) in this category. Due to the necessity for voluntary participation in the focus group sessions it may be that teenagers who enjoyed reading, and were thus found to be avid readers, were more interested in taking part.

Beers’ (1996a, 1998) category of dormant readers aligned with four participants. As noted in Chapter 4, Marty, Angela and Liam fit Beers’ type exactly; they enjoyed reading but did not currently have time. In contrast, Kylie’s dormancy was due to difficulty finding books she liked. Despite mentioning many books she disliked, including those in her home and her personal selections from the school library during free reading time, she had at times found herself becoming caught up in a book, “I get into it and then like I can’t, I don’t want to put it down.” She said she liked YA author Jacqueline Wilson on three separate occasions and became enamoured of the graphic novel *Queen Bee* by Chynna Clugston-Major during the

focus group session. As with Liam, her contradictory statements were explained by her reading dormancy.

Intermediate readers spoke positively about reading and enjoyed reading for pleasure, which they did often, but not as regularly as avid readers. While this is similar to the “Book positive rebels” of *Young Australians Reading* (ACYL & Woolcott Research, 2000, p. 21), it was additionally stated,

Members of this segment don't like being told what to read, nor do they like the things they are made to read at school. (*ibid.*)

However, the above was the case among the majority of teenage participants in this research project, no matter what type of reader they were designated.

Ambivalent readers rarely read books for pleasure, but some could describe times they had enjoyed reading a book. Unlike the “Book neutral light readers” category of *Young Australians Reading*, ambivalent readers were not “more positive than negative about reading” (*ibid.*). Tanya was more negative, and others had no opinion of reading. Also “book neutral light readers” were particularly described as enjoying magazines (*ibid.*). In contrast, among focus group participants magazines were universally popular, with only a few disliking them, in agreement with other studies (Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007; Mellon, 1990a). All those who found reading irrelevant enjoyed magazines, as did all but one ambivalent reader.

Those who found reading irrelevant stated they “hated reading” or “never read,” some with forceful intensity. After probing, many mentioned occasions they had enjoyed reading, often magazines, but Leah and Carl mentioned selected assigned texts they had enjoyed.

This segment appears to be quite negative about reading,...in fact it is more that reading, and books in particular, had lost relevance for this segment...[R]eading is too much like school work and nerdy... they never see books they want to read. (ACYL & Woolcott Research, 2000, p. 21)

While this segment in *Young Australians Reading* “considered themselves to be slow readers” (*ibid.*) and Teresa mentioned this, it was not investigated among all focus group participants. Some were definitely “anti-reading,” in contrast to the category in *Young Australians Reading*.

The literature discussed in Chapter 2 revealed many methods to encourage readers of all types to either keep up their regular reading or realise the enjoyment reading could provide and take it up as a leisure time activity. Some of these methods worked with research participants, for example the provision of choice in reading material, while others did not. Even those who enjoyed reading sometimes found it

difficult to find time to read in their busy schedules. This was the reason for the reading dormancy of three participants. This will always be a problem with the myriad attractive leisure time activities available in teenagers' lives (McKenna *et al.*, 1995, p. 939). Providing free reading time in school, with choice of material, is a partial solution. A number of the avid readers, those who were "very avid readers," were always able to find time for reading, because it was such an important pastime for them.

Almost half of teenage participants (48%) thought of reading as "something to do when there is nothing else at all available," which Thomson (1987) found in his survey of a thousand Australian teenagers. Among avid and intermediate readers around 40% believed this. This increased to two thirds among those who found reading irrelevant.

Many teenagers discussed finding the "right" reading material which makes reading enjoyable, as observed in the literature (McPherson, 2006; Reeves, 2004). Even ambivalent readers and those who found reading irrelevant, some of whom had great antipathy toward reading, mentioned times they had found the "right" reading material. This was what brought Kylie out of her reading dormancy during the focus group session.

A number of avid readers preferred conventional books without pictures, because they enjoyed imagining the story in their head. They also disliked the differences they found between books and their movie versions, because they had already imagined the characters and story a certain way. Teneal (an avid reader) and Joanna (an ambivalent reader) described this between their reading of *About a Boy* by Nick Hornby and watching the movie adaptation in class.

You get like a picture in your head of the people that are in the book, but when they're on the screen it's like, you didn't picture them that way.

Many teenagers also disliked the plot differences between books and their movie adaptations and watching a movie did not universally lead to reading the associated book. This was not entirely in disagreement with the literature (M. Sullivan, 2005) because many participants had read the book of a movie they had watched, the main examples being *Harry Potter* and *Holes*.

Ross (2006b) believes "librarians ought to be more able than most to avoid fetishizing a particular format as the only one to be associated with 'real reading'" (p. 34), a common belief among the general population (Beers, 1996a; Mellon, 1990a).

Ross's view is important considering Rothbauer (2006) deemed young people "less likely, and perhaps less willing, to privilege book reading as the highest form of literacy" (p. 120). This was not the case among focus group participants. The five types of readers were determined largely in terms of book reading, as most participants equated reading with books. Few considered magazines or the internet to involve reading, while often preferring both to books. Other literature diverges from Rothbauer's view and concurs with this project's research participants (Pitcher *et al.*, 2007). The students McKechnie investigated disliked assigned texts "privileged in school and those commonly considered to be 'real' reading" (2006, p. 90). Two studies found this was particularly the case among boys (Coles & Hall, 2002; Martino, 2001).

Braun (2007) noted the necessity for the adults in teenagers' lives, such as teachers and librarians, "to recognize the important role that technology-based reading has" for young people (p. 40). Such recognition would enable teenagers to think of online literacy activities as reading (Rothbauer, 2006, p. 118; Schmar-Dobler, 2003; B. T. Williams, 2007, p. 180; Witte, 2007, p. 92). Prensky (2001) coined the term "digital natives" to describe this generation, due to their having "grown up in a time where computer technology is embedded into all aspects of their lives" (Bahr & Pendergast, 2007, p. 26). This was the case with the teenagers investigated who universally praised the internet as a communication tool and source of entertainment and information. Most used the internet as the preferred source for research for school assignments, concurring with the literature (Levin & Arafeh, 2002). Many participants had internet access at home and when they needed to find research information, could search without leaving their "own chair." Finding a book would involve going "all the way down to the library." Even if students visited the library during class with the objective of researching for assignments some preferred to use the internet in the library rather than the library's print resources, the task of looking through a book to find information being too onerous. Marika stated her preference for typing what she wanted in a search engine and having the computer do the work. As with many of the students her online critical literacy skills were lacking. She felt the results list displayed from a search was all she needed to find useful information, not seeming to realise the necessity for evaluating displayed search results (Combes, 2007; McPherson, 2005). Adam went further in believing that if it was online, it was correct.

There were exceptions to the above. Some students augmented their internet searching with information from books. Danielle discussed when the internet was not adequate for her research needs and she therefore had to borrow books from her local public library. Some teenagers found it easier to find information in books, rather than searching through numerous websites.

The small sample size and purposive sampling for the focus groups meant all teenage participants had access to computers with internet connections, enjoyed using the internet, and felt “comfortable with and attracted by new technologies” (Cedeira Serantes, 2009, p. 246). However it appears many were only tech-oriented rather than tech-savvy, the latter being those with the “skills to navigate an everyday environment that is characterised by multimedia, is multi-sensory and is in a continuous state of information overload” (Combes, 2007, p. 19). While it is often assumed all teenagers are tech-oriented, segments of the youth population, such as those from lower socio-economic backgrounds or indigenous communities, may not have the same access to technology or the same inclination toward new technologies (Cedeira Serantes, 2009, p. 246).

Home and family were the main source of recreational reading material, rather than libraries. Parents often gave books as gifts at Christmas or birthdays. Home collections, comprised of books belonging to parents, grandparents and siblings, were a common source of reading material, because they were readily available. When reading a series, owning the set was preferable, sometimes through necessity. If the first title was found at a library, subsequent titles may only be available from a bookshop. Some participants noted this as a problem with libraries.

Libraries were not well used or liked. The school library was more likely to be visited than a public library because classes were held in the library. While books used during such a class might be subsequently borrowed, visiting the school library during breaks was uncommon. Some students had difficulty getting to a public library. Others stated their dislike for libraries, and would only visit a public library if absolutely necessary, that is, for school work they could not find elsewhere. Some teenagers, particularly avid readers, did make use of their local public library for recreational reading material. None of those who found reading irrelevant visited their public library.

Debra Burn, Co-ordinator, Library and Arts Services at Livingstone Shire Council (Qld), responded to the survey on behalf of her regional library which serves



a township of 18,000. She subsequently published an article on the purpose built Youth Library, named verbYL by young residents (Burn, 2007). After consultation with young people in the area it was decided a combined youth services and library facility was needed and verbYL was opened in December 2005. This library had found the recipe to success, with “a very funky ‘cool’ physical space, it was no surprise that it was instantly popular” (p. 100). Thus it is possible to make libraries attractive places for teenagers to visit and spend time.

The debate discussed in Chapter 2 as to whether teenagers’ reading declines as they age from childhood seems to be disproven among the sample of teenagers investigated. While the majority were avid readers and as mentioned this is unlikely to correlate with the whole population of teenagers, the rest, even those with the greatest antipathy toward reading, did have preferences for particular materials and could provide instances when they had enjoyed reading. The necessity when researching teenager’s preferences and amount of leisure time reading is to ask more than just “Do you like reading?” or “How much do you read?” but to draw teenagers out with other questions, as occurred during the focus groups. The best way to do this is with qualitative research, but carefully considered quantitative questionnaires could achieve the same aim. The other aspect of investigating teenagers’ reading is to encompass all types of reading, not just that of conventional books. While many teenage participants did not think this way, the literature notes the imperative of covering all formats, including online reading (Braun, 2007; Rothbauer, 2006; Schmar-Dobler, 2003; B. T. Williams, 2007).

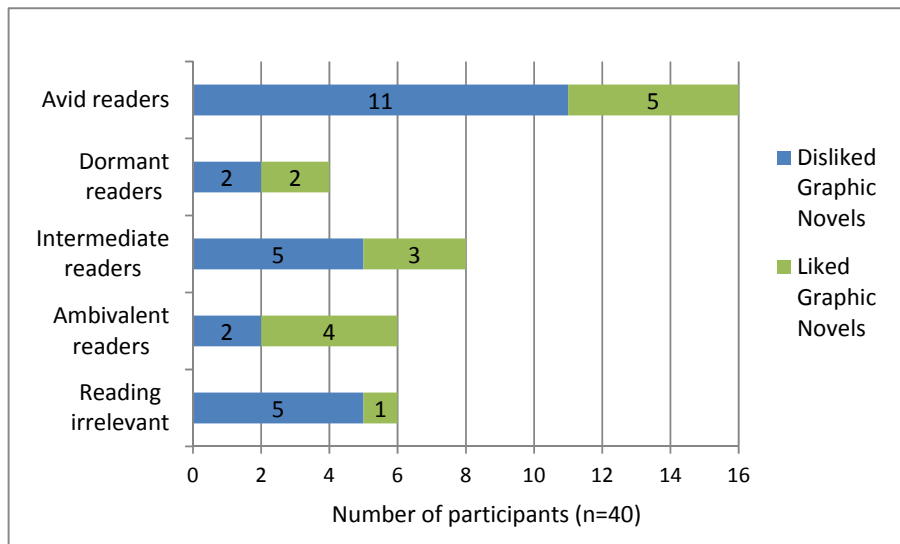
### ***Graphic Novels***

While the literature on teenagers’ reading of graphic novels is overwhelmingly positive, as examined in Chapter 2, the teenage participants were not found to be universally enthusiastic about the format. Only fifteen of the forty enjoyed them. This discrepancy may be explained by the fact that teenage participants were selected from a school class, with no conditions on participation. Participation was voluntary and the information sheet explaining the research mentioned graphic novels, leading to some participants attending because of their enthusiasm for the format, but these were a minority. Teenagers who visit libraries and read and borrow graphic novels, and are thus written about in the literature, are a smaller segment of all teenagers.

In comparing the types of reader with those who liked graphic novels whether

prior to the session or as a result of the session, two thirds (four) of the ambivalent readers enjoyed the format, the largest group among the types of reader (see Figure 22). Alex was an ambivalent reader who had read one of the manga titles displayed but was not interested in reading any more. Half of the dormant readers (Liam and Kylie) and just over one third of the intermediate readers enjoyed graphic novels. Just under one third of avid readers and only one of the six students who found reading irrelevant liked graphic novels, the lowest number among the types of reader. Unlike the other five participants who found reading irrelevant and disparaged the graphic novels displayed during the focus group session, Carl was particularly attracted to the superhero graphic novels during his session.

**Figure 22: Types of Reader compared to those who liked Graphic Novels**



The larger number of avid readers among the sample than among the general population may be another factor leading to the low number of participants liking graphic novels. As with other aspects of the results from the investigated teenagers, this lower enjoyment of the format among avid readers cannot be generalised to all teenagers due to the small sample size.

The above findings support the contention of Jones *et al.*, and librarians they interviewed in *Connecting with Reluctant Teen Readers* (2006) that the graphic novel format will appeal to some reluctant readers. Young people need to be aware of what is available and allowed to investigate the entire range of graphic novels, to decide whether any are to their liking. The short time available during the focus group session may not have been enough for some participants to make an informed decision. Some teenagers, particularly among those who found reading irrelevant,

felt graphic novels were not sufficiently different to conventional books, which they had particular antipathy toward, to warrant their consideration. More time and repeated exposure to the format could change a negative opinion. Many of those who had prior experience of graphic novels liked them and realised the diversity of genres available. Interviewed teacher librarian Ms Turner surmised, “I think they’re an acquired taste.” She initially wondered if her personal dislike of graphic novels “was an age thing. I thought it was just my generation,” but after discussion with her colleagues, from various generations, came to the above conclusion.

In contradiction to the “common expectation that young people are familiar with graphic novels” (Laycock, 2005, p. 53), not all teenagers had encountered the format previously. Even the presence of a collection in their school library did not equate to knowledge of the format. Ambiguity over the terms graphic novel, comics and comic book (Campbell, 2007; Wolk, 2007) contributed to confusion as to what constituted a graphic novel. The best way to define the format is with examples, as displayed during the focus group sessions.

Traditional orientation manga were included among the displayed graphic novels and there was avid questioning about why they were read “backwards” and discussion about the Japanese origin of manga. Nevertheless there was some disdain expressed for reading right to left, just because its origin is Japanese. Curiosity about the Japanese origin of manga among participants in this research with little experience of it is mirrored in studies of fans of manga and anime who have an interest in Japan, its language and culture (B. Allison, 2009; Fukunaga, 2006).

Many of those who were unfamiliar with traditional orientation manga were confused by the right to left reading format. Those who enjoyed manga had become used to the orientation through experience. Sandra told her classmates there were instructions on how to follow the panels in the book, but her expertise was entrenched through “reading it for years now.” Focus groups were conducted in late 2006 and as popularity of manga has grown in Australia, this problem may have lessened. The popular collection at Banksia Park High School contained many traditional orientation manga, and although students had issues with this at first, they did not by early 2008 when Ms Tyler and Ms Marchamley were interviewed. Conversely, Tuart Grove High School had a well used manga collection, but the students who took part in the focus group did not read manga nor were familiar with the right to left format. Just because there is a quality collection does not guarantee

students will be interested in manga.

Many of those unfamiliar with graphic novels felt one assigned as an English text would not be the equivalent of a conventional book. They considered conventional books to be more detailed, complex and challenging. As Sadokierski (2008) contends, this is incorrect.

This is not an easier type of book to read because it includes pictures, like a children's book; it requires a different way of reading. You need to read and look [at the pictures] simultaneously, a technique especially difficult for those accustomed to reading quickly. (p. 220)

These teenagers need to be taught the depth possible in a graphic novel, through reading titles, and discussion and experience of graphic novels as assigned texts, just as movies are studied in combination with conventional books in English classes.

While some teenagers were adamant they would never choose to read a graphic novel, others were willing to be convinced of the possibility of enjoyment from graphic novels. This was particularly evident when the “right” graphic novel was discovered, as occurred with Kylie and Simon. Kylie was resolute she would not read graphic novels, due to her past experience and initial viewing of the displayed graphic novels during the focus group. She was particularly scornful of traditional orientation manga. Later in the session she began reading a title in her favourite genre and found she really enjoyed it. She wanted to know where she could find *Queen Bee* so she could finish reading it.

The wide range of opinions found among participants points to some important implications for libraries, English classes, and others championing reading among teenagers. Just as with conventional books, the “right” graphic novel will entice a teenager to read it. This needs to be facilitated by the provision of a diversity of titles, series and genres to facilitate an enjoyable reading experience for all (Voskuyl, 2004). Anna had enjoyed reading her sister's old *Archie* comics but when she looked at the displayed graphic novels during the focus group said, “I don't really like these ones, 'cause it's all about fighting.” Leah enjoyed biographies, but no biographical graphic novels were included in the selection displayed. Many are published and she might have found some of these titles of interest. This may particularly have been the case because Leah enjoyed the pictures often included in biographies.

### ***School reading***

Many teenagers disliked the assigned texts they read in their English class, often stating a lack of choice caused their dislike. In contrast to the findings of *Young*

*Australians Reading* (ACYL & Woolcott Research, 2000) that only a quarter of participants disliked “being told what to read” (p. 21), the majority of focus group participants disliked this. Students could give examples of particular books they enjoyed, but titles they disliked stuck in their memory.

Free choice reading sessions in class were enjoyed if the student actually read during the allocated time. Those who disliked it often had trouble finding a book they wanted to read. They needed recommendations from librarians, teachers, but more importantly, peers. After a period of reading, students could discuss their reading and swap books or other reading materials amongst themselves (Bunbury, 1995; Gutchewsky, 2001). Rather than formal oral reviews to the whole class (Bunbury, 1995, p. 77), this could entail informal group discussions, so students did not feel it was “extra work.” Booktalks could be of particular use in this regard (Hartman, 2006; Mahood, 2007). Teenagers could then judge for themselves whether they might like the title, because they had expanded information about it, rather than just the title, cover and blurb.

The provision of choice in reading material is imperative to enjoyment of class reading, to ensure those who disliked reading had more memories of times they did enjoy reading than when they did not. Alvermann and Hagood (2000) advocated utilizing fandom among teenagers to develop critical literacy, providing the example of popular music, but other materials, such as manga, could work just as well (A. Schwartz & Rubinstein-Avila, 2006). This could enable connection with students and incorporate student choice in the curriculum. Ryan (2005) described the “devaluing” of choice in the secondary English curriculum as “absurd” (p. 41).

Many teenage participants commented on their dislike of assigned class texts and said they would not choose to read the type of books assigned. This is related to the need to find the “right” book if they are to enjoy reading. As noted by Ms Hatcher, if choice is instigated it is important “not to co-opt something [for classroom use] that belonged to the students” (Frey & Fisher, 2007, p. 134), thus “cancelling out the appeal” (Alvermann, 1998, p. 357).

While it may seem impossible for English classes to be anything but book based, perhaps this is the heart of the problem.

They [teenagers] are living in a world that has shifted in many ways, yet the schooling they are likely to experience has not shifted to the same extent. Schooling remains for most a book-based cultural experience formulated to suit the context of their parents and earlier generations. (Bahr & Pendergast, 2007, p. 30)

Textual forms other than conventional books are included in curricula, but this may need to be extended further to encompass the “multiple literacies that students bring with them to classrooms” (Selfe & Hawisher, 2004, p. 233) which “could invite opportunities for adolescents to become critical consumers of texts” (Pitcher *et al.*, 2007, p. 395). Bahr and Pendergast propose “new potentials for radically transforming this education environment” (p. 274), for example, including the literacies involved in online materials.

If this is the case for education, libraries may need to undergo the same radical changes to stay relevant for younger generations who will be the future user base and source of funding. Acceptance of graphic novels as a legitimate component of collections and equivalent in value to conventional books is an important step in this direction. Their equivalence is demonstrated in the literature discussed in Chapter 2 and the opinions of investigated librarians. The visual literacy which reading graphic novels necessitates is also an important contributor to their worth. Furthermore acceptance and collection of graphic novels values the preferences of teenagers, and other age groups, who find the format appealing.

### **Libraries**

Three quarters of the surveyed Australian public libraries had graphic novel collections. Almost all metropolitan libraries collected graphic novels and most libraries without collections were located in non-metropolitan areas. While non-metropolitan libraries were less likely to collect graphic novels than those in metropolitan areas, a little over half of the former did have collections. This is not easily comparable to statistics from other research as no widespread formal surveying among public libraries has been undertaken. Williams and Peterson (2009) investigated U.S. academic libraries which supported teacher education programs or library science programs to determine the extent of collections of graphic novels for teenagers. Such juvenile collections support teachers and librarians training to work with young people who will use these resources. Rather than asking if graphic novel collections were present, Williams and Peterson used the list checking method of comparing library holdings against “a bibliography that represents the types of books the library’s users are likely to seek,” (p. 168) in this case YALSA’s Great Graphic Novels for Teens list, mentioned in Chapter 1. Unfortunately the research found “many academic libraries supporting teacher education or library science programs

are not collecting graphic novels suitable for teenagers” (p. 172).

Among informal small-scale research, which is abundant, the State Library of NSW undertook an online survey in 2005 and found only three of forty one respondents did not collect graphic novels. The self selection of respondents may have led to this high rate of collections, that is, libraries without collections may have felt their opinions were not required. The majority of respondents were NSW libraries (85%) due to promotion of the survey through two email lists, one Australia wide and the other NSW-based (M. Joseph, personal communication, 25 Sep 2006).

The State Libraries of Victoria and New South Wales have less of an impact on selection and purchasing of public library materials than the State Libraries in other states and territories. In the latter, centralised selection, purchasing, cataloguing and processing of some or all of a library’s acquisitions occurs, although in Queensland this is only the case for small rural libraries. It was assumed this might lead to a concentration of knowledge about the format at the state level, thus increasing the likelihood of these libraries collecting graphic novels. New South Wales had the second highest percentage of libraries with graphic novels and Victoria equal fifth highest percentage. Libraries from other states and territories were spread among these. Another indicator which disproved the theory was that the three interviewed public libraries from WA all used local government funds and expertise to select, purchase, catalogue and process their graphic novels, rather than State funding which was used for other collections. It was also found that if centralisation at the State level did not occur, centralisation at the local government level was in effect and there was no significant correlation between either type of centralisation and the incidence of graphic novel collections. It was also found metropolitan or rural location of a library was a greater indicator of the presence of a graphic novel collection than the state or territory of the library.

Among libraries which collected graphic novels there was great diversity in how the format was managed. Writing a decade ago, before the majority of libraries developed graphic novel collections, U.S. librarian Katherine Kan (1999) suggested the importance of deciding how graphic novels will be handled before a collection is developed. This encompasses selection guidelines, point of purchase, cataloguing, and shelving. The myriad problems encountered by surveyed and interviewed libraries suggest such an approach was not always in place.

### ***Selection***

According to surveyed libraries, the most important factors in selection of graphic novels were age-appropriateness and popularity. Popularity would lead to higher circulation and is the most obvious choice if a well used collection is the aim. Age-appropriateness is a significant issue due to the visual nature of graphic novels and the lingering idea that this means they are for children. This led to violent or sexual content being important considerations in selecting graphic novels. The widespread belief that the format warranted particular caution in selection was erroneous; it was selecting for a YA (or younger) audience which necessitated this caution.

Despite the large amount written in the literature about the necessity for a collection development policy, only a quarter of surveyed libraries had a collection development policy and three quarters of these libraries did not mention graphic novels in their policy, again contradicting the literature describing the need for revision of the policy prior to development of a graphic novel collection (Goldsmith, 2005; M. Gorman, 2003). The relevant question on this issue was badly worded and may have contributed to this response. The previously mentioned survey from the State Library of NSW found greater numbers of libraries with graphic novels included in a collection development policy, but this was only slightly over a quarter (28%) (M. Joseph, personal communication, 25 Sep 2006). Of the interviewees, only Hakea Public Library had a collection development policy, which was out of date and did not include graphic novels. While this lack had not lead to problems in most libraries, Hakea and Corymbia had received complaints about adult titles in their YA graphic novel collections, as surmised in the literature and has occurred in U.S. libraries. These situations may have been averted through an updated collection development policy which included the format.

The lack of collection development policies meant the widespread incidence of selection criteria being implicit knowledge of librarians. Both Ms Turner and Ms Armitage felt this was a satisfactory situation, but Ms Armitage's leaving Dryandra Library for a branch library in her system may have proven otherwise. Ms Armitage had begun work with teenagers and development of the library's graphic novel collection because she was interested in the area, not because it was an aspect of her job description. Her replacement did not have the same interest in teenagers or young adult collections, leading Ms Armitage to speculate whether this would continue.



I don't know if the new librarian, if that's going to be a focus for him though. He's not as young adult oriented as me.

The lack of a collection development policy for Dryandra Library, and thus any written mention of graphic novel selection, compounded the problem. Dryandra Library's graphic novel collection was the oldest and most well developed collection of the interviewed librarians and it would be a tragedy if Ms Armitage's work in this area was not continued. The resignation of Mr Carlton from Corymbia Library did not lead to the same problems because he worked with his colleague Ms Porter in the development and promotion of the graphic novel collection and this was an aspect of her position description. Corymbia's lack of a collection development policy may have contributed to the problems experienced due to Mr Carlton's focus on adult graphic novels and this focus on mature titles may not have continued after he left.

Dryandra and Corymbia Library proved the necessity for capturing and passing on implicit knowledge of incumbent staff in all areas of library operations, not just in relation to graphic novel collections. Collection development policies and position descriptions make this knowledge explicit and available to selection committees and new appointees when staff change. If a library only had a well written collection development policy or a position description which covered graphic novels, this would not necessarily encompass every eventuality when problems arose or staff changed. The two need to be developed in tandem to be most effective and Kan's (1999) suggestion of considering all aspects of a graphic novel collection would be well covered.

Librarians must be highly attuned to their market when selecting materials (M. Sullivan, 2005). Some investigated librarians felt they did not know enough about graphic novels because they did not read them or enjoy the format, for example public librarian Ms Armitage and teacher librarian Ms Turner. However, both had other sources for gaining knowledge and were adequately informed to ensure their graphic novel collections were of high quality. This was particularly the case with Ms Armitage due to the length of time she had developed Dryandra's collection. As graphic novels have become a crucial part of library collections, it may become necessary to match staff passion for and/or expertise of the format with positions, to ensure the necessary quality and breadth of a collection. It was Mr Carlton's passion for graphic novels, through his voluntary mention of Corymbia's collection during his interview, which led to his appointment over other interviewed candidates,

despite this not being an aspect of the position.

In deciding which titles to purchase, recommendations from library users or the point of purchase, and to a lesser extent other library staff, were most commonly utilised by surveyed libraries. Reviews were also used, but direct expertise was more prevalent. Very few viewed an item before purchase to determine if it would be acquired and even fewer survey respondents had direct experience of titles through reading graphic novels. The importance of input from teenagers in selecting graphic novels is noted in the literature (Broadbent, 2003; Heyworth, 2003; A. Lee, 2004; Wilkie, 2001) and was mentioned by a number of surveyed and interviewed libraries as a worthwhile undertaking, particularly when staff knowledge of the format was lacking.

When a library starts collecting graphic novels, funds have to be sourced for their acquisition. While two interviewed libraries were able to allocate a special on-going fund to the new collection, others received a grant from an outside agency, such as those distributed by the Library Council of New South Wales for collection development and used by some NSW survey respondents. In her 1981 investigation of teacher librarians Bunbury (1995) found the prevailing opinion that resources other than comics were “so much more valuable” to spend limited budgets on (p. 59). While the perceived value of comics and graphic novels has improved in the intervening time, limited budgets are still an issue and led to some surveyed libraries not acquiring the format, particularly in smaller rural libraries.

The majority of survey respondents catalogued their titles with the subject heading “Graphic novels,” thus allowing discovery through a library’s online catalogue. One third used the subject heading “Manga.” Manga is a particularly popular aspect of graphic novels and increased use of this subject heading may be useful. Manga is not a Library of Congress Subject Heading (Hahn, 2009) which may affect the number of libraries using it.

### ***Shelving***

The majority of surveyed and interviewed libraries separated their graphic novels from conventional books, as advocated in the literature (Bruggeman, 1997; M. Gorman, 2003; Laycock, 2005; Miller, 2005), but libraries which interfiled graphic novels among conventional books did not find problems with this practice. Tuart Grove High School Library was a particular example of this, with their

interfiled collection being well used by students and those who enjoyed the format knowing exactly where to find them on the shelves. Many libraries which separated a large proportion of their graphic novels also interfiled a small number, such as non-fiction, adult or children's titles.

Face out shelving of graphic novels was only discussed among interviewed librarians. Despite all wanting to do this, few could afford the space, apart from selected display titles. Dryandra Public Library was fortunate enough to have space for face out shelving of all of their extensive collection, leading to improved visibility and thus circulation of the graphic novels.

While particular shelving arrangements are recommended in the literature, the diversity found among investigated libraries shows different methods work in different situations. Fortunately, if a particular shelving arrangement did not work, a library could change the arrangement. One surveyed library began with a separate collection of graphic novels, then moved to interfiling among general fiction when they felt this was a better use of space. Ms Turner wondered if she should change her interfiling of graphic novels to a separately shelved collection, but as her students found no problems with interfiling, change was not necessary. Her students were her source of knowledge in developing the collection, but shelving decisions were made by Ms Turner. She deemed the format similar enough to conventional books (particularly in relation to book height) to not warrant separate shelving.

### *Audience for Graphic Novels*

In general graphic novels were collected because of their popularity. Many libraries developed their collections due to increased requests for titles. Mr Carlton and Ms Davilak both enjoyed reading graphic novels and their reasoning was that graphic novels were just another aspect of literature, thus libraries should acquire them.

There was disagreement among interviewees as to whether graphic novels encouraged reluctant readers to read. Some librarians noted that those who borrowed graphic novels only borrowed the format, while other borrowers selected both graphic novels and conventional books. A number of librarians said readers of graphic novels were not reluctant readers, but also read conventional books, particularly fantasy. This was supported by Ms Turner's investigation of the borrowing records of her students who enjoyed graphic novels. As mentioned in

Chapter 5 they often borrowed fantasy conventional novels as well. This should be compared with the discussion earlier in Chapter 6 that among teenage research participants, graphic novels were incentives to read for some reluctant readers.

Most librarians agreed that reading graphic novels did not lead to reading conventional books. Older literature held the opposite view that graphic novels were stepping stones on the way to reading conventional books, as referred to in Chapter 2, but more recent writers are in agreement with the view of the interviewed librarians (Carter, 2007; Gravett, 2005). Teacher librarian Ms Turner found this problematic. She wanted to ensure her students read from all genres and formats and some students were reluctant to read materials other than graphic novels, particularly in the case of manga fans. This may be a more common view among teacher librarians, than public librarians. The literature relating to the classroom and school libraries discusses “inferior” compared to more “respectable” reading materials. Education researcher, Ann Reeves (2004) notes,

When the reading an adolescent loves is outside the realm of respectable literature, teachers are taught that their job is to move students away from their chosen genres and into the fold of “something better” as quickly as possible. (p. 155)

She is discussing conventional books, but some teachers have transferred this inferiority of certain genres to the whole format of graphic novels (T. Maynard, 2002). Reeves does not agree with this concept and continues by describing some teachers’ beliefs.

Teachers are given the responsibility for making the young person a more mature reader and thinker who can look upon popular fiction critically and understand why it is “inferior.” (*ibid.*)

Like Reeves, not all teachers agree with this sentiment (Armstrong, 2004) as was found among the majority of interviewees.

Collections of graphic novels were overwhelmingly developed for teenagers, with all libraries with collections acquiring graphic novel for teenagers. Half also had graphic novels for children and a third had collections for adults. Sometimes this was only a few titles which were interfiled with conventional books. Public library interviewees had YA collections with some adult and children’s titles, but no one had responsibility for collecting in the latter areas.

This research was concerned with graphic novels written for teenagers, but survey respondents and interviewees mentioned adult and children’s collections. Recent literature considers this diversity of graphic novels available for all age ranges (Brenner, 2007a; M. Gorman, 2007; Gravett, 2005; Lyga, 2006; Olsen &

Flagg, 2003; Pawuk, 2006; Serchay, 2008; J. Thompson, 2008; Versaci, 2007). The problems experienced by Corymbia Library were due to adult titles being shelved in a YA collection. Mr Carlton said Corymbia's main users of the graphic novels were teenagers and his selection of adult titles was due to his personal interest, but it is not known if this was because adults did not want to read graphic novels or there were few adult readers because there were no adult titles. All public library interviewees noted adults used their YA graphic novel collections, as did teachers at the school libraries, indicating dedicated adult collections might be feasible. However, for libraries beginning such a collection this would impact on adult collections budgets, as it had on budgets for YA materials.

While graphic novels were well used among libraries investigated, Illyarrie High School Library was the exception. Ms Hatcher planned to separate her interfiled collection to face out display shelving, to make titles more visible. This worked well at Banksia Park High School Library, but they also had many fans of graphic novels, particularly manga, among their students. The two aspects of "providing a quality collection and then marketing it well are [both] fundamental" to a successful graphic novel collection (La Marca & Macintyre, 2006, p. 125). Illyarrie lacked the former because Ms Hatcher was not knowledgeable about graphic novels and did not utilize the expertise of students, online sources or comics shops, as other interviewees did. She also particularly disliked manga, which led to her library holding none. Other libraries found manga to be very popular and this lack may have contributed to underuse of graphic novels the library did hold. Ms Hatcher wondered if this absence contributed to the lack of requests for manga from her students, many of whom readily provided requests for other materials. Students may have been subtly affected by Ms Hatcher's dislike for manga. They did not see manga on the shelves, thus they may have thought the library would not purchase any.

The popularity of manga is not the only reason for its inclusion in library collections. The "Japanese cultural viewpoint broadens the range of popular entertainment available" for teenagers (Patten, 2009, p. 52). The teenage anime fans Allison (2009) interviewed described their experiences of learning about Japanese culture through watching anime, but they also took classes to learn more about the culture and the language. Fukunaga (2006) interviewed students learning Japanese at the college level who were also anime and manga fans and interested in Japanese culture. Their experiences since adolescence of playing Japanese video games,

watching anime and reading manga developed their interest in learning the language. Their “repetitive watching of anime provided multiple advantages...word recognition, listening and pronunciation, and awareness of various Japanese linguistic features” (p. 213).

A little under half of the libraries with graphic novels utilized statistics to monitor their use, most commonly collected monthly or annually. It is a pity that the ease of collection of statistics enabled through Automated Library Management Systems was ignored by half of the surveyed libraries. A number of interviewees noted the in-house use of graphic novels, which is not as easy to monitor as borrowing. None of the interviewees recorded statistics of in-house use, although they noticed the practice.

The majority of investigated libraries found their graphic novel collections to be well used by their target audience of teenagers and also other age groups, particularly among those libraries which catered to adults and younger children with specific collections. The main exception was Illyarrie High School Library. Ms Hatcher cared about the importance of her underused collection and was planning a relocation to a more prominent area as a promotional method to improve the situation. Even if she found her students disliked the format, the knowledge of its availability would be there.

### ***Promotion***

Almost all surveyed and interviewed libraries undertook some form of promotion for their graphic novel collections. Even with well used collections there is much to be done to promote and provide information to more potential users. The diversity of methods in use included: signs and displays in the library, mentioning graphic novels during school visits, and events. Some noted less need for promotion because graphic novels were so popular, word of mouth among readers being the only promotion necessary. Even these libraries undertook some promotion.

The easier promotional methods, signs and displays in the library, were most frequently undertaken. Events, which entail their own promotion, were not as common, but when held were often highly successful. Survey respondents were not asked about graphic novel events which were not successful. Encouraging teenagers to attend events can be difficult, as mentioned by Ms Davilak from Hakea Library, but once teenagers attend an enjoyable event, “they likely will tell their friends. This

‘tribalism of young adults,’ which can perhaps be dangerous in unsupervised situations, can also work positively to attract teens to library programs” (Bishop & Bauer, 2002, p. 41). Further research is needed to determine whether graphic novel related events are more successful than other types of programming for teenagers.

The captive audience in school libraries means promotional events were usually held during class time, such as Reading Programs held in Year 8, the first year of high school in WA. All three school libraries employed displays for different aspects of their collection, including graphic novels, but the only events held outside class were at Tuart Grove High School Library to celebrate Children’s Book Week and were not related to graphic novels.

### ***Issues and Challenges***

Problems with graphic novels, such as vandalism, theft, and complaints about content, were not found to be more prevalent than with other formats. Despite this, there was a tendency to be careful when acquiring graphic novels, particularly in relation to sexual and violent content. Such content was not age-appropriate in graphic novels for teenagers or children. Poor bindings are discussed in the literature as a particular issue with graphic novels (Goldsmith, 2005; Miller, 2005). Unfortunately this was not asked of survey respondents and only two interviewees discussed it.

The complaints received by Corymbia Public Library were largely due to shelving adult titles in a YA collection, caused by the historical belief that graphic novels are a format for teenagers. This is a stance which needs re-evaluation. Complaints at Corymbia may have been due to the immediacy of the images in graphic novels, but moving the collection away from the YA section ended complaints. Mr Carlton noted the tendency for graphic novels to be automatically deemed suitable for young people because of their visual nature, a view held by several staff at Corymbia. The historical situation caused other interviewed libraries and a third of surveyed libraries to concentrate their graphic novel selection on titles for teenagers, ignoring the many titles written for adults and children. These libraries shelved graphic novels in the default YA location, leading to:

- (1) the collection containing material that is inappropriate for its intended users, and
- (2) the library failing to collect from the vast array of graphic novels that are not appropriate to the designated age group. (Goldsmith, 2005, p. 59)

Hakea Library also housed their collection in their YA area and experienced

complaints (only from staff) about graphic novels. Both Hakea and Corymbia Libraries encountered Goldsmith's problems, but Corymbia experienced worse repercussions. Mr Carlton's attempts to rectify the first led to the second. Writing about manga, but applicable to all graphic novels, Brenner (2007b) emphasized the necessity for having separate collections for children, YA and adult. As Mr Carlton suggested, extending this to all graphic novels brings them in line with other formats collected by libraries.

Half of the survey respondents who stated their selection criteria noted the importance of age-appropriateness, including not acquiring graphic novels with sexual or violent content. Among research participants, if an "inappropriate" title was "accidentally" acquired, this was moved from the graphic novel collection and shelved among adult conventional books. As Mr Carlton noted, this could lead to it becoming "buried" among conventional books and less likely to be found through browsing. (The one or two titles entirely removed from Corymbia's collection produced a worse outcome than this.) If a title written for adults did not contain graphic violence or explicit sexual content, for example *Maus* by Art Spiegelman, it was shelved in the YA graphic novel collection, as occurred at Hakea Library. While teenagers might enjoy this title, if it were a conventional book it would be shelved in an adult collection. *Maus* is a memoir, so its shelving among the fiction graphic novels at Hakea was another anomaly. The majority of their graphic novels were fiction, thus all were shelved together.

A concentration on YA titles could also be due to funding constraints. The historical situation meant initial funding allocations were often provided for YA graphic novel collections and limited funds did not extend to other age ranges. Two interviewed librarians noted they were able to develop their graphic novel collections due to special funding designated for YA titles. If extra funds had not been available, development of a graphic novel collection, apart from a few titles acquired over the years, would be unlikely. Selection is always a balancing act between competing interests, but it is important to ensure this does not lead to inadvertent censorship.

Unlike public libraries, school libraries do not have specific sections for adult material, but they do acquire titles written for adults, as teacher librarian Ms Hatcher noted. While school libraries are not expected to acquire material outside their collection parameters, titles which contain no explicit material or extreme violence are within those parameters, particularly if suggested by students. Banksia Park High



School Library held the mature title *V for Vendetta* by Alan Moore and David Lloyd, but chose not to acquire *The Sandman* by Neil Gaiman or Boys Love manga. These graphic novels have very different content which may be deemed inappropriate, but that of the last two is more noticeable when flicking through the book. Library staff may not have been aware of the content of *V for Vendetta*. *The Sandman* and Boys Love manga include sexual material (although not necessarily explicit in BL), which may be deemed worse than the indiscriminate killing of *V for Vendetta*. A survey respondent stated, “There is more tolerance for violence than for sex or nudity,” agreeing with a U.S. study of forty cases of library censorship (Cornog & Byrne, 2009). Mr Carlton questioned the practice of self censorship to prevent possible complaints.

You can't deny freedom of information and freedom to read...It's not actually the librarian who should be censoring...If the book's [offensive] don't read it or don't let your kids read it.

In contrast to the situation in school libraries, public libraries have a duty to acquire a wide range of materials, for every age range, including those materials containing graphic violence or explicit sexual content (S. B. Anderson, 2007). This difference between the collecting aims of the two types of library could lead to the greater propensity of interviewed public librarians to receive complaints. The small sample size means such a correlation is not proven and needs further investigation.

Non-selection of titles aimed at pre-empting complaints was found in both school and public libraries. This raises the question: is such action, and the apprehension which leads to it, reasonable? A library not acquiring a title for fear of possible future objection by library users (or their parents) contravenes the core professional guiding principles of librarianship (Whelan, 2009). Mr Carlton strongly emphasized this point during his interview. While many librarians felt non-selection of mature graphic novels was a legitimate selection decision because they did not have an adult graphic novel collection, perhaps due to budget constraints, this entailed the added bonus of not having to deal with explicit titles which might attract complaints. The presence of *V for Vendetta* in Banksia Park High School Library's collection led to no complaints, nor did teaching the title to upper school students; thus librarians may be overreacting.

The importance of diversity and variety in reading materials was emphasized in

---

\* This word was inaudible. Mr Carlton said a word similar to “offensive.”

talking to teenagers. The investigated libraries which had well used graphic novel collections found diversity within their collections to be an important factor, demonstrated to the contrary by Illyarrie High School Library's collection. Illyarrie had a small collection and little diversity in genres and no manga, thus variety is the key to a popular collection.

### **Ideas for Practice**

Despite graphic novels not being the answer for every teenager investigated, this does not negate their importance as a part of every library collection. The lack of a universal liking for graphic novels among the participants cannot be generalised to all teenagers, but their diversity of tastes is likely to be present in the wider population, as this is a trait of any group of people. Providing variety in format and genre of reading material allows teenagers to try all that is available and find out what they like. This provision of choice is the way to feed the voracious appetite of avid readers and encourage the most reluctant readers to find enjoyment in reading. Graphic novels should be included in this choice, and collections developed in all libraries, as was the case in the majority of investigated libraries.

This is substantiated by the literature reviewed and results from investigated teenagers and libraries. Selected teenagers were excited by the format and even if they had not encountered them before the session, wished to find graphic novels to read in the future. The difficulty is predicting which teenagers this will encompass, thus the presence and promotion of graphic novels in libraries is essential. Some of these teenagers will be enticed by the visual elements as was found among specific teenage participants. This is particularly the case for those who have difficulty visualizing the story of a conventional book through text alone (Beers, 1996b; Stringer & Mollineaux, 2003). Adam had this difficulty prior to becoming an avid reader (although his change was facilitated by watching the movie adaptation of a conventional book). He had not encountered graphic novels during this period, but thought he "probably" would have enjoyed them if he had.

While not all graphic novels are quicker to read than conventional books, some are, primarily individual volumes of manga (although the length of series can counteract this). A shorter read can be an appealing factor for certain teenagers. Ms Tyler realised this when loaning manga to her students. She was more likely to loan more than one volume in a series, sometimes up to four at a time. This was especially

the case on Fridays when students had the whole weekend to read them. Mr Carlton mentioned graphic novels could be read in a shorter time than conventional books which led to a “huge turnover” in his library’s collection.

The importance of expanding the definition of literacy to encompass the multiliteracies of today’s world (Coles & Hall, 2002; Kress, 2002; New London Group, 1996) entails the need to learn the skills of these literacies during young people’s education (La Marca & Macintyre, 2006; Vasudevan, 2006). In terms of visual literacy, graphic novels are the perfect classroom resource for acquiring these skills (A. Schwartz & Rubinstein-Avila, 2006). Educational literature in this area is abundant, as demonstrated in Chapter 2. While this means teachers require knowledge of the format, they may turn to their school library for help in this area, thus knowledge of the format is critical for librarians. As well as sharing this knowledge with teachers, such knowledge facilitates the development of a strong library collection. Knowledge of the format was not found among all interviewed librarians and was lacking in some survey respondents, predominantly among those who did not collect graphic novels. Knowledge may be gained through personal enjoyment of reading graphic novels, as with Mr Carlton and Ms Tyler; or personal investigation of the format through active professional development and reading review sources, as Ms Davilak and Ms Armitage did. Perhaps the most rewarding method is to obtain advice from library users, as Ms Turner gained from her students. They recommended titles for purchase and discussed graphic novels, in particular manga, with their teacher librarian.

Professional development sessions on graphic novels can be a useful source of knowledge, but Ms Hatcher found these sessions inadequate due her almost non-existent knowledge of graphic novels and her personal dislike of manga. Librarians in this position could be helped by other means. A mentor knowledgeable in the format could improve selection of titles and thus develop a high quality collection, but employing a staff member with these attributes would be costly and impractical. The Graphic Novels in Libraries email list (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/GNLIB-L/>), which celebrated its 10th anniversary in September 2009, provides access to a diverse group of virtual mentors (Miller, 2002). Discussions cover varied topics (*GNLIB-L: Graphic Novels in Libraries*, 2009), for example:

- looking for an equivalent to *The Tale of One Bad Rat* by Bryan Talbot,
- “GNs for reluctant readers,”

- differences between *Amazing Spider-Man* and *Ultimate Spider-Man*,
- “Where to stop with *Hellblazer*?”
- “What shall I start with?”

Librarians new to the area can ask the most basic questions and receive multiple answers from members, many of whom have extensive experience in collecting graphic novels in (mostly U.S.) school and public libraries.

Ms Tyler enjoyed reading graphic novels, but supplemented her knowledge of genres and series she did not read through online fan-based resources such as review blogs and publisher’s websites where fans comment on series and discuss manga and anime. Some resources include:

- blogs such as Manga Life (<http://www.mangalife.com/>), Comics Worth Reading (<http://www.comicsworthreading.com/>), The Iceberg Lounge (<http://iceberglounge.blogspot.com/>);
- message boards such as Comicon.com, Newsarama.com Community, MarvelMasterworks.com discussion forum, and *The Comics Journal’s* message board;
- The Graphic Novel Archive (<http://www.graphicnovelarchive.com/>);
- The Grand Comics Database (<http://www.comics.org/>);
- publishers’ websites which allow readers’ comments and discussion such as Tokyopop, Viz, Del Rey;
- Anime News Network (<http://www.animenewsnetwork.com.au/>) which covers both anime and manga.

It has already been noted that graphic novel readers who use the library may be the best source of recommendations for purchase. Utilizing their knowledge is a simple offline solution to gaining a more general understanding of the format. Many teenage readers are passionate fans who would enjoy sharing their specialised knowledge (Brenner, 2009, p. 41), which most adults have no interest in. Ms Turner found this a successful tactic with her students. The vast differences between the graphic novel collections of Tuart Grove and Illyarrie High School Libraries were due to the input of students at Tuart Grove. Both librarians had an equivalent personal dislike and lack of knowledge about graphic novels, particularly manga. Yet, Ms Turner sought to balance this by utilizing the knowledge of manga fans among her students, while additionally “facilitating good relationships and positive attitudes” (La Marca & Macintyre, 2006, p. 124).

This education in an unknown format is vital. Otherwise librarians could make judgements on the popularity or worth of a particular collection based on the poor sample of titles held by the library. Popularity, and thus use of a collection, is related to its quality (La Marca & Macintyre, 2006, p. 125). While librarians with little knowledge of the format may see all graphic novels as similar, fans or even casual readers do not. In selecting titles librarians need to recognise the variety of genres available and the variety within these genres, as with any format. Ms Hatcher was in danger of making this incorrect judgement due to her limited collection. She surmised few of her students liked graphic novels because the titles held by her library were not popular. It may be that fans felt they were not catered to because the library held few graphic novels and no manga titles.

In libraries such as Illyarrie, where fans do not approach staff, they could be identified by holding graphic novel or manga related events, for example an anime screening. A local anime club, Japanese Animation Fans of Western Australia (JAFWA) in Perth, or similar in other areas, could help with organising the event. Their expertise would mean lack of knowledge on the librarian's behalf would not be a problem. Some interviewed librarians invited JAFWA to screen anime in their libraries as promotional events.

Events are more common in public than school libraries, but for this specific purpose an event would work just as well in a school library. Advertising for the event would be easier for a school library due to the captive audience of the student body. As with events in public libraries, advertising must be targeted throughout the school, not just within the library, to ensure the greatest awareness of the event. Those who attended would provide a recruitment pool of fans to enhance the librarian's knowledge of graphic novels and help with selection of manga and other titles. While Ms Turner had manga fans approach her, recruiting fans would lead to the same outcome as Ms Turner experienced at Tuart Grove High School Library.

The classic East Asian game Go is central to the series *Hikaru no Go* by Yumi Hotta and has led to the game's popularity among fans of the series. Tournaments are a manga related event which could entice fans to the library. The Australian Go Association (AGA) could help with organising a Go tournament, but not all capital cities have local chapters (Australian Go Association, 2009). In other geographical areas Go tournaments may be a subsequent method for promoting a manga collection. Once manga fans are recruited, some may have skills in playing Go. In

time for the new U.S. school year, the American Go Foundation (AGF) donated one hundred sets of *Hikaru no Go* (vol. 1-17) to school and public libraries. Winston Jen who paid for the donation said, “*Hikaru no Go* has contributed so much happiness to my life, I wanted to give something back to as many people as possible” (Free *Hikaru no Go* offer for schools and libraries, 2009).

Ms Hatcher felt the unpopularity of graphic novels among Illyarrie’s students was due to a lack of prominence of the collection. She planned to move the graphic novels from interfiling among the fiction collection to face out display shelving in a central position, making the collection more noticeable to students entering the library. The underlying problem causing the low use was more likely Ms Hatcher’s lack of knowledge. A recruitment campaign similar to the above would augment her knowledge and consequently her collection.

The greater likelihood of teenagers visiting their school library than their public library brings up the possibility of collaboration between the two (P. Jones, 2007; M. Sullivan, 2003). The captive audience of the student body of a school library can complement a public library’s graphic novel collection. The main aim of a graphic novel collection in a public library is to promote recreational reading, and while school libraries also endeavour to achieve this, as was found among interviewed teacher librarians, the curriculum needs of a school library collection may take precedence and lead to less funds available for recreational reading materials such as graphic novels. One potential method of collaboration between the two is a public librarian visiting a class in a school library to promote their library’s graphic novel collection by displaying and booktalking titles. Issuing titles might also be possible if students were public library members. Collaboration could also facilitate sharing knowledge of graphic novels between public and school librarians, if either needs to augment their knowledge the format.

Much is written about the best methods to select, organise, catalogue and promote a graphic novel collection (Goldsmith, 2005; M. Gorman, 2003; Kan, 2003; Miller, 2005). Among surveyed and interviewed libraries, these suggestions were not always followed and did not necessarily work in all situations. While these authors are practicing librarians who have experience in developing graphic novel collections in their libraries, the ad-hoc development of many investigated collections, and perhaps librarians’ ignorance of this literature, may have contributed to this finding.

If libraries found a certain way of doing things did not work, they were able to

try another method, resulting in success. One surveyed library began purchasing a large number of graphic novels, but decreased the amount over time. The problems Corymbia Library encountered with complaints about mature titles in their YA graphic novel collection were dealt with by moving all graphic novels from the YA section to shelving next to adult conventional fiction. While this goes against the general rule in libraries of dividing materials by age and was not practiced by any other interviewed libraries, it does occur in the graphic novel collections of other libraries, for example the WA metropolitan public library where I worked prior to commencing this research.





## Chapter 7: Conclusion

This research aimed to contribute to the debate on encouraging teenagers' recreational reading through investigating two principal objectives: teenagers' views of reading and graphic novels; and whether the formats' inclusion in public and school library collections encourages teenagers to use libraries as a source of recreational reading material. The following section discusses the contribution of this project to informing the specific research topics detailed in Chapter 1.

As was to be expected, teenage participants had diverse views on reading, from those who were passionate about reading to those who actively disliked the pastime. Whatever their opinions, students mentioned times they had found the "right" book or other reading material which led to a pleasurable reading experience. Avid readers experienced more of these instances, but all teenagers had the capacity to become interested in reading, they just needed that reading matter to capture their attention.

Libraries were not highly regarded by teenagers investigated due to a multitude of other sources for acquiring reading matter. School libraries were visited more often than public libraries because students were forced to during classes held in the library. Unsurprisingly, avid readers were more likely to use their local public library to feed their voracious reading habits. Classes held in the school library led many teenagers to associate all libraries with school work. A public library was only visited if absolutely necessary, that is, for school assignment research they could not find elsewhere. The internet was the first port of call for this information and a viable alternative because it was easier and more accessible. While the majority did not consider using the internet to be "reading," teenagers' online literacy activities encompassed entertainment and communication with friends, as well as school work.

In general teenage participants disliked assigned English class reading, although many could name particular titles they had enjoyed. They preferred choosing their own materials, although a number noted the unlikelihood of this being a viable part of the English curriculum. The education literature disagrees and, aside from allocated free choice reading sessions, promotes choice in other aspects of English classes (D. Fisher & Frey, 2007; La Marca & Macintyre, 2006). The teenagers who disliked free choice reading sessions were not finding the "right" reading matter and getting bored because they were not reading during the session. They needed assistance from their teachers and librarians, particularly through

booktalks, and more importantly, recommendations from their friends and classmates. Choice should encompass graphic novels, magazines and conventional fiction and non-fiction from which students may try any or all and discover which are to their taste. With this choice, potentially pleasurable reading experiences teenagers had been unaware of could ensue. An increase in such experiences in school could lead to reading being considered an enjoyable activity and a viable option in their valuable leisure time.

Much of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 claims graphic novel collections attract teenagers to libraries, with earlier literature noting this was particularly the case with reluctant readers. As one of the research objectives this was an important point to investigate. However, it was obvious not all teenage research participants had encountered graphic novels or enjoyed the format. Some were passionate about graphic novels and others developed an interest in the format during the short introduction of the focus group. Others were adamant they would never enjoy graphic novels, whether because they refused to read them or disliked what they had read in the past. Some of these teenagers may be converted if they had access to the huge range of titles available and more time to peruse them. Nevertheless, the fact that some teenagers liked graphic novels, means libraries should develop and expand collections to encompass the full range of genres to serve all audiences.

The research established overwhelmingly positive attitudes among librarians to graphic novel collections in public and school libraries. Collections of the format were widespread among three quarters of surveyed libraries. Almost all metropolitan libraries collected graphic novels and most libraries without collections were located in non-metropolitan areas, although a little over half of these libraries did have collections. Interviewed librarians were chosen specifically because they collected graphic novels, but even those librarians who experienced difficulties with their collections still realised the importance of the format for a well rounded library collection.

The situation of individual libraries was found to be crucial in the development of high quality graphic novel collections which were well used. This encompassed aspects of personality and dedication of staff, and the population the library served. A quality collection could be developed under any supportive administrative regime. The speculation that graphic novel collections would be more common in States and Territories where libraries were centralised at the State level was proven incorrect.

While centralisation may concentrate knowledge of the format in the central location, enabling sharing among all libraries in the system, this had no effect on the incidence of collections. Centralisation occurred at the State/Territory level or local government level and the differences between libraries within these systems were considerable. Some systems had collections in all libraries and among local government systems some only had a collection at the central library. None of these administrative differences was as important as having enthusiastic and knowledgeable librarians.

Despite the literature advocating the importance of including graphic novels in collection development policies, this was uncommon among investigated libraries. Often collection development policies were noted as in need of updating. Many libraries had not experienced problems with their graphic novel collections due to this deficit, although the problems encountered by two libraries may have been ameliorated by the format's inclusion in a collection development policy. In order to ensure continuity of collections and support enthusiastic librarians, as well as also those with limited knowledge, the format must be included in all policy documents, including collection development policies and job descriptions of staff managing collections.

The survey and interviews aimed to ascertain to what extent complaints about graphic novels occurred in Australian libraries and they were found to be very few. The historical situation of many libraries beginning graphic novel acquisition with collections for teenagers caused some survey respondents to believe they were only for young people, a view which must be eliminated. The complaints described by two interviewed librarians were a result of this belief. The complaints were dealt with in very different ways, but the basic solution was the realisation, by all the libraries' staff, that graphic novels are written for teenagers, children and adults. The lack of complaints about graphic novels among surveyed libraries may negate the view that the format is for teenagers or reinforce it, because libraries were careful in their selection of age-appropriate titles. Further research in this area could indicate which was the case.

Including graphic novels in library collections was not found to entice all teenagers to use libraries. Even those who enjoyed graphic novels did not necessarily use libraries to find titles or other reading matter, although some teenagers did. Nevertheless, libraries with staff passionate about the format, or willing to learn from

others, for instance teenage library users, were found to have superior collections. Such collections were popular and well used by their target audience, often teenagers, but in the case of public libraries also children and adults.

Another method likely to improve library use by more teenagers, rather than just those who enjoy reading, is increased and targeted promotion, both of services, events and collections. This should cover the whole range of formats collected by libraries and the entertainment options other than reading libraries provide. This could include promoting the library as a place to meet friends and make new ones. Promotion is as important in school libraries as public libraries, and the former have a captive audience in their student body. School libraries should consider events, promotional activities, or just ordinary class visits, with the aim of changing the library from a place of boredom to endure, to a memorable and enjoyable experience.

In conclusion, graphic novels must be included in public and school library collections as one of the myriad formats enjoyed by teenagers with a diversity of tastes in reading matter. The format will encourage some teenagers to use libraries to find their recreational reading material but other means must be implemented in conjunction with graphic novels collections and their promotion, to reach out to all teenagers.

### **Directions for Further Research**

The research aims of this project concentrated on graphic novels for teenagers, influenced by the historical situation of YALSA's endorsement of graphic novels in the early 2000s. The format as a whole was discussed by research participants; hence libraries with (or without) collections for adults or children were discovered. As demonstrated by these libraries, adult and child readers of the format want titles published for them. Some libraries catered to these readers with specific collections for adults or children, as well as those for teenagers. Although not investigated in the survey, interviewed librarians noted the presence of adults and children borrowing from YA graphic novel collections. Former YA librarian, now Library Director Stephen Weiner has written extensively on graphic novels and explained the situation.

Unless you have a library where someone in the adult services or reference department is a comics promoter, or you have a vocal graphic novel reading adult patron group, the major task of collecting graphic novels will continue to fall [on] the shoulders of YA librarians. (Weiner, 2009)

As graphic novels are standard fare in YA collections, this should be extended

to all readers. With more surveyed libraries collecting the format for children than adults, adult collections, in particular, are a necessary development so adult readers do not feel like “weird, obscure people,” as Mr Carlton described himself. Ms Davilak also mentioned she could find graphic novels to read in her leisure time “behind the scenes,” implying it would be embarrassing for her to browse the YA graphic novel shelves. Developing collections for all age ranges would ensure graphic novels were treated in the same manner as other formats held by libraries. The problems encountered in the literature and among research participants due to mature titles being shelved among those for younger readers may be eliminated if adult and children’s collections became widespread. In the time since the public libraries were surveyed, the increase in collections for these age ranges is a possible topic for further research. The extent of adult and children’s reading of graphic novels is another area for investigation.

Teenagers from rural and remote areas and other states in Australia were not included in this project, due to cost and time constraints. These cohorts would be important research subjects in subsequent research. Also larger samples, which may be investigated more easily through quantitative research methods, are a necessity in further research.

As part of the interviews school and public libraries were investigated. This very small sample would be complemented by further investigation of a larger sample of school libraries. (The results from the survey of public libraries were combined with interviewed public librarians in some instances.) One of the differences between the two types of library is the different client groups. Although they both cater to children and teenagers, public libraries also have the wider audience of all members of the public. Thus, their collections potentially contain material inappropriate for children and teenagers. This may have led to the only complaints regarding graphic novels occurring in interviewed public libraries and not school libraries. A larger sample could determine if this finding is the case among school and public libraries in general. Librarians in both types of library practiced self censorship aimed at pre-empting complaints and a larger sample could determine whether this is more common among school or public libraries.

The manga genre Boys’ Love (BL) or Yaoi has themes of romance and love between two men, which some may find objectionable (Brenner, 2007b). This should not affect whether a library acquires the genre. BL is aimed at different age groups,

and includes erotic titles aimed at adults (McLelland, 2000b), the latter not being appropriate for a school library. BL and Yaoi were only discussed by one interviewed Public Librarian and one Teacher Librarian. The literature investigating fans of the genre in Western countries is sparse and that examining inclusion of BL and Yaoi in library collections almost non-existent. In terms of librarianship the latter is a research area worth consideration.

While talking to the various librarians during the research project the notion that certain aspects of library work may be dependent on the personalities of staff was considered, particularly in regards to how actively library staff work toward developing the library as a centre for the community it serves. Debra Burn's (2007) work at VerbYL in Yeppoon, Qld is an example of the amazing results which can be achieved with libraries for teenagers. Qualitative research would be beneficial in determining whether personalities of staff and their level of community engagement effect library collections and their use by teenagers or other groups.

Some questions were developed while undertaking of the research and may warrant further study. These areas were touched on in the literature review, and the small sample of librarians interviewed had opinions, particularly in regards to the first two, but the topics were not fully investigated in this research project.

Is graphic novel reading as "worthwhile" as reading conventional books? The literature discussed in Chapter 2 universally agrees with this sentiment, as do I through reading and knowledge of particular titles. Investigating the reading habits of young people who predominantly read conventional books and those who predominantly read graphic novels, then comparing their reading abilities through standard tests could conclusively prove this. Factors such prior reading ability, gender and socio-economic status would need to be controlled to determine the actual cause of any difference.

Does graphic novel reading lead to subsequent reading of other materials, that is, conventional books? This question is debated in the literature described in Chapter 2, and the small sample of interviewed librarians did not agree it was the case. This could be investigated using questionnaires and reading logs about past and present reading among a cohort of young people and repeating such studies longitudinally. If the previous research question were proven to be the case this question may be irrelevant for further study.

Is visual literacy a skill the younger generation finds easier to acquire than

older generations who grew up surrounded by less visual media? This has been proposed as one reason for teenagers' particular enjoyment of graphic novels (M. Gorman, 2003; Schwarz, 2002a; Vaillancourt, 2000). Questions surrounding visual literacy are important areas of investigation due to the growing attention to visual literacy in the classroom and educational literature. If younger generations were found to be more attuned to visual means of communication, visual literacy may need to become an even greater part of school curricula.

The above areas for further research would add to the results of this research and contribute to a wider understanding of the importance of the graphic novel format and the diversity of readers who enjoy this alternative way of reading, as well as those who could be encouraged to find graphic novels to be the "right" reading material that would make reading an enjoyable leisure time activity.





## Literature Discussed

### Graphic Novels and Comics

- Akamatsu, K. (2006). *Negima!* [series] London: Tanoshimi.
- Arakawa, H. (2005). *Fullmetal Alchemist*. [series] San Francisco: Viz.
- Barker, K. (2005). *Plastic Man: On the Lam*. New York: DC Comics.
- Bechdel, A. (2006). *Fun home: A family tragicomic*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Bendis, B.M. & Bagley, M. (2000). *Ultimate Spider-Man*. [series] New York: Marvel Comics.
- Bloom, V. & Montana, B. (1942-). *Archie*. New York: Archie Comics.
- Cabot, M. & Coronado, J. (2007). *Avalon High*. [series] Los Angeles: Tokyopop.
- Chan, Q. (2005). *The Dreaming*. [series] Los Angeles: Tokyopop.
- Clugston-Major, C. (2005). *Queen Bee*. New York: Graphix.
- Colfer, E., Donkin, A., Rigano, G. & Lamanna, P. (2007). *Artemis Fowl: The graphic novel*. New York: Hyperion Books.
- Davis, J. (1978-). *Garfield*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Dixon, F. W. (2006). *The Hardy Boys*. [series] New York: Papercutz.
- Ennis, G. (1996). *Preacher*. [series] New York: DC Comics.
- Ennis, G. (1997). *John Constantine, Hellblazer*. [series] New York: DC Comics.
- Ennis, G. (2003). *Punisher*. [series] New York: Marvel Comics.
- Gaiman, N. (1991). *The Sandman*. [series] New York: DC Vertigo.
- Gaiman, N. (2003). *The Sandman: Endless nights*. New York: DC Vertigo.
- Gosciny, R. & Uderzo, A. (1969-). *Asterix*. [series] London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Hergé (1958-). *Tintin*. [series] London: Methuen.
- Hernandez, G. & Hernandez, J. (1982). *Love and Rockets*. [series] Seattle: Fantagraphics.
- Horowitz, A., Johnston, A., Kanako & Yuzuru. (2006). *Stormbreaker: The graphic novel*. London: Walker Books.

- Hotta, Y. (2004). *Hikaru no Go*. [series] San Francisco: Viz.
- Jacques, B., Blevins, B., Moore, S. & Starkings, R. (2007). *Redwall: The graphic novel*. New York: Philomel Books.
- Kane, B. (2005). *Batman: The greatest stories ever told*. New York: DC Comics.
- Keene, C. (2006). *Nancy Drew: Girl Detective*. [series] New York: Papercutz.
- Kobayashi, J. (2006). *School Rumble*. [series] London: Tanoshimi.
- Miller, F. (1997). *Sin City*. [series] Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse Books.
- Moore, A., & Gibbons, D. (1986). *Watchmen*. New York: DC Comics.
- Moore, A., & Lloyd, D. (1990). *V for Vendetta*. New York: DC Comics.
- Moore, A. & Campbell, E. (1991). *From Hell*. New York: Mad Love Publishing.
- Naifeh, T. (2004). *Courtney Crumrin in the Twilight Kingdom*. Portland, OR: Oni Press.
- Nakazawa, K. (2004, 1978). *Barefoot Gen*. [series] San Francisco: Last Gasp.
- Niles, S. & Templesmith, B. (2003). *30 Days of Night*. [series] San Diego: IDW Publishing.
- Runton, A. (2004). *Owly*. Marietta, GA: Top Shelf Productions.
- Sakai, S. (1998). *Usagi Yojimbo: The Brink of Life & Death*. Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse Comics.
- Satrapi, M. (2003). *Persepolis*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Saunders, N. (2007). *Ancient Greek Myths and Legends: Hercules*. Tunbridge Wells, Kent: Ticktock Media.
- Schrags, A. (2000). *The High School Comic Chronicles of Ariel Schrags*. [series] San Jose, CA: Slave Labor Graphics.
- Shakespeare, W. & Howard, J. (1985). *Twelfth Night*. London: Oval Projects.
- Shirow, M. (2004). *Ghost in the Shell*. Seattle: Dark Horse Comics.
- Sikoryak, R. (c1989, 2009). *Masterpiece Comics*. Montréal: Drawn & Quarterly.
- Smith, J. (1995). *Bone*. [series] Columbus, OH: Cartoon Books.
- Spiegelman, A. (1986). *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*. New York: Pantheon Books.

- Takaguchi, S. (2006). *Shout Out Loud!* [series] Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten.
- Takahashi, K. (2002). *Yu-Gi-Oh!* [series] San Francisco: Viz.
- Takahashi, R. (1988). *Ranma 1/2.* [series] San Francisco: Viz.
- Takahashi, R. (2003). *Inu-Yasha.* [series] San Francisco: Viz.
- Takami, K. & Taguchi, M. (2003). *Battle Royale.* [series] Los Angeles: Tokyopop.
- Takaya, N. (2004). *Fruits Basket.* [series] Los Angeles: Tokyopop.
- Talbot, B. (1995). *The Tale of One Bad Rat.* Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse Comics.
- Tan, S. (2006). *The Arrival.* Melbourne: Lothian Books.
- Tezuka, O. (2002). *Astro Boy.* [series] Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse Comics.
- Thompson, C. (2004). *Blankets: An Illustrated Novel.* Marietta, GA: Top Shelf Productions.
- Tolkien, J.R.R., Wenzel, D., Dixon, C. & Deming, S. (1990). *The Hobbit.* London: Unwin.
- Torres, J. (2006). *Degrassi: Extra Credit.* New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Turner, M. (2001). *Fathom.* [series] Berkeley, CA: Image Comics.
- Vaughan, B.K. & Alphona, A. (2003). *Runaways.* [series] New York: Marvel Comics.
- Vaughan, B.K. & Kubert, A. (2004). *Ultimate X-Men.* [series] New York: Marvel Comics.
- Ware, C. (1991). I Guess. *Raw*, 2(3).
- Yang, G. (2006). *American Born Chinese.* New York: First Second.
- Yazawa, A. (2005). *Nana.* [series] San Francisco: Viz.

### **Conventional Novels**

- Austen, J. (1813, 2006). *Pride and Prejudice.* London: Penguin.
- Bauer, M. G. (2004). *The Running Man.* Adelaide: Omnibus.
- Brown, D. (2003). *The Da Vinci Code.* New York: Doubleday.
- Burke, J.C. (2004). *The Red Cardigan.* Milsons Point, NSW: Random House.
- Courtney, B. (2001). *The Four Fires.* Ringwood, Vic.: Viking.

- Eaton, A. (2000). *The Darkness*. St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press.
- Hinton, S.E. (1970). *The Outsiders*. London: Gollancz.
- Hornby, N. (1998). *About a Boy*. London: Gollancz.
- Maekivi, C. (2004). *Split Lip*. Mundaring, WA: Futuretrack.
- Marchetta, M. (1992). *Looking for Alibrandi*. Ringwood, Vic: Puffin.
- Marsden, J. (1992). *Letters from the Inside*. Chippendale, NSW: Pan Macmillan.
- Orwell, G. (1949). *1984*. London: Secker and Warburg.
- Paolini, C. (2003). *Eragon*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Park, R. (1980). *Playing Beatie Bow*. Melbourne: Thomas Nelson.
- Paterson, K. (1977). *Bridge to Terabithia*. New York: Crowell.
- Rennison, L. (1999). *Angus, Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging*. London: Piccadilly.
- Rowling, J.K. (1997). *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Sachar, L. (1998). *Holes*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Shan, D. (2000). *The Saga of Darren Shan*. [series] London: Collins.
- Taylor, T. (1969). *The Cay*. London: Doubleday.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. (1937). *The Hobbit*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. (1954). *The Lord of the Rings*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Winton, T. (1990). *Lockie Leonard, Human Torpedo*. Ringwood, Vic: McPhee Gribble.
- Wyndham, J. (1955). *The Chrysalids*. London: Joseph.

### **Plays**

- Shakespeare, W. (1597, 1984). *Romeo and Juliet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sophocles. (442 BC, 2003). *Antigone*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

### **Non fiction**

- Deary, T. (1997). *Horrible Histories*. [series] London: Hippo.

Hilton, P. (2004). *Confessions of an Heiress: A Tongue-in-Chic Peek Behind the Pose*. Milsons Point, NSW: Random House.

Kurzweil, R. (2005). *The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology*. New York: Viking.

Levine, K. (2002). *Hana's Suitcase: A True Story*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

Patrick, K., & Holgate, D. (2008). *Airborne Australia*. Sydney: Random House.

Pelzer, D. (1995). *A Child Called It*. Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications.

### **Picture Books**

Baker, J. (1991). *Window*. Sydney: Julia MacRae Books.

Baum, W. (1978). *The Expedition*. New York: Barrons Juveniles.

Crew, G., & Woolman, S. (1994). *The Watertower*. Flinders Park, SA: Keystone Picture Books.

### **Movies & Television**

Columbus, C. (2001). *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. [Film]. Los Angeles: Warner Bros.

Davis, A. (2003). *Holes*. [Film]. Los Angeles: Walt Disney Pictures.

Hanson, D.E. (1978). *Battle of the Planets (Gatchaman)*. [Anime series]. US: Gallerie International Films.

Howard, R. (2006). *The Da Vinci Code*. [Film]. Los Angeles: Columbia Pictures.

Jackson, P. (2001). *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*. [Film]. Los Angeles: New Line Cinema.

Luhrmann, B. (1996). *Romeo + Juliet*. [Film]. Los Angeles: 20th Century Fox.

McTeigue, J. (2005). *V for Vendetta*. [Film]. Los Angeles: Silver Pictures.

Miller, F., Rodriguez, R. & Tarantino, Q. (2005). *Sin City*. [Film]. Los Angeles: Dimension Films.

Nishio, D. (1995). *Dragon Ball: Curse of the Blood Rubies*. [Anime film]. Los Angeles: FUNimation.

Oshii, M. (1995). *Ghost in the Shell (Kôkaku kidôtai)*. [Anime film]. Tokyo: Bandai.

Raimi, S. (2002). *Spider-Man*. [Film]. Los Angeles: Columbia Pictures.

Sato, J. (1992). *Sailor Moon*. [Anime series]. Tokyo: Toei Company.

Literature Discussed

Schwartz, J. (2003-2007). *The O.C.* [TV series]. Los Angeles: Warner Bros Television.

Singer, B. (2000). *X-Men*. [Film]. Los Angeles: 20th Century Fox.

Singer, B. (2006). *Superman Returns*. [Film]. Los Angeles: Warner Bros.

Slade, D. (2007). *30 Days of Night*. [Film]. Los Angeles: Columbia Pictures.

Weitz, C. & Weitz, P. (2002). *About a Boy*. [Film]. Los Angeles: Universal Pictures.

Woods, K. (1999). *Looking for Alibrandi*. [Film]. Sydney: Roadshow Film.

### Reference List

- Abel, J. (2002). *What is a graphic novel?* Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from [http://jessicaabel.com/learning\\_comics/index.php?s=what\\_is\\_a\\_gn](http://jessicaabel.com/learning_comics/index.php?s=what_is_a_gn)
- Abel, J. & Madden, M. (2008). *Drawing words and writing pictures*. New York: First Second.
- ABS. (2003). *Children's participation in cultural and leisure activities, Australia* [report no. 4901.0]. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4901.0Apr%202003>
- ABS. (2005). *Public libraries: 2003-04* [report no. 8561.0]. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/8561.02003-04>
- ABS. (2006). *Children's participation in cultural and leisure activities, Australia* [report no. 4901.0]. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4901.0Apr%202006>
- ABS. (2008a). *Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, Summary Results, Australia, 2006* [report no. 4228.0]. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from [http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4228.02006%20\(Reissue\)](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4228.02006%20(Reissue))
- ABS. (2008b). *Australian Social Trends* [report no. 4102.0]. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from <http://abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4102.02008>
- ABS. (2008c). *Household Use of Information Technology, Australia, 2007-08* [report no. 8146.0]. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/8146.0>
- Accomando, B. (2008, 28 Jul). *Librarians harvest new manga titles at Comic-Con*. San Diego: National Public Radio. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=92998234>
- ACYL & Woolcott Research. (2000). *Young Australians reading: From keen to reluctant readers*. Melbourne: Australian Centre for Youth Literature. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from [http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/about/information/publications/policies\\_reports/reading.html](http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/about/information/publications/policies_reports/reading.html)
- Adriance, L. & Lindner, E. (2007). Chaos theory is the future. *School Library*

- Journal*, 53(8), 38-39.
- Agosto, D.E. & Hughes-Hassell, S. (2006). Toward a model of the everyday life information needs of urban teenagers, part 1: Theoretical model. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 57(10), 1394 - 1403.
- Agosto, D.E., Paone, K.L. & Ipock, G.S. (2007). The female-friendly public library: Gender differences in adolescents' uses and perceptions of U.S. public libraries. *Library Trends*, 56(2), 387-401.
- Aisbett, K. (2001). *The internet at home: A report on internet use in the home*. Sydney, NSW: Australian Broadcasting Authority.
- Albright, J. & Walsh, C. (2003). Jamming visual culture. *Literacy Learning: The Middle Years*, 11(2), 15-21.
- ALIA (2005, 8 Jun). *Statement on free access to information*. Canberra: Australian Library and Information Association. Retrieved 16 Oct. 2008, from <http://www.alia.org.au/policies/free.access.html>
- ALIA (2007). *Superheroes Read: Summer Reading Club*. Canberra: Australian Library and Information Association. Retrieved 23 Jul. 2009, from <http://www.alia.org.au/src/2008/>
- Allen, K. & Ingulsrud, J.E. (2003). Manga literacy: Popular culture and the reading habits of Japanese college students. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 46(8), 674-683.
- Allen, L., Cipielewski, J. & Stanovich, K.E. (1992). Multiple indicators of children's reading habits and attitudes: Construct-validity and cognitive correlates. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 84(4), 489-503.
- Allen, R. (Ed.). (2001). *The New Penguin Compact English Dictionary*. London: Penguin.
- Allison, A. (1996). *Permitted and prohibited desires: Mothers, comics, and censorship in Japan*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Allison, B. (2009). Interviews with adolescent anime fans. In M. I. West (Ed.), *The Japanification of children's popular culture: From Godzilla to Miyazaki* (pp. 119-146). Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Alvermann, D.E. (1998). Imagining the possibilities. In D.E. Alvermann, K.A. Hinchman, D.W. Moore, S.F. Phelps & D.R. Waff (Eds.), *Reconceptualizing the literacies in adolescents' lives* (pp. 353-372). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Alvermann, D.E. & Hagood, M. C. (2000). Fandom and critical media literacy. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 43(5), 436.



- Alward, E. (1982). Superhero comic books. *Serials Review*, 8(1), 33-38.
- Amazon.com: Books (2009). Retrieved 23 Sep. 2009, from <http://www.amazon.com/>
- Ambrosino, M., Dumm, G. & Dumm, L. (2008). The metamorphosis: Or how I went from being a quiet bystander to a raging library activist. *School Library Journal*, 54(1), 50-53.
- American Library Association (2003, Oct). *Young adults deserve the best: Competencies for librarians serving youth*. Retrieved 5 Apr. 2005, from [http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=Continuing\\_Ed&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=61110](http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=Continuing_Ed&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=61110)
- Ammon, B.D. & Sherman, G.W. (1999). *More rip-roaring reads for reluctant teen readers*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.
- Anderson, R.C., Wilson, P.T. & Fielding, L.G. (1988). Growth in reading and how children spend their time outside of school. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 23(3), 285-303.
- Anderson, S.B. (2007). Childhood left behind. In S.B. Anderson (Ed.), *Serving young teens and 'tweens* (pp. 1-30). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*. (1988). (2nd ed.). Chicago: ALA.
- Annandale, K., Bindon, R., Handley, K., Johnston, A., Lockett, L. & Lynch, P. (2004). *First steps reading resource book: Addressing current literacy challenges* (2nd ed.). Port Melbourne: Harcourt.
- Armstrong, E. (2004). *Fully booked: Reader development and the secondary school LRC*. Wanborough: School Library Association.
- Arnold, A.D. (2007). Comix poetics. *World Literature Today*, 81(2), 12-15.
- Aronson, M. (2001). *Exploding the myths: The truth about teens and reading*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Aronson, M. (2006). Don't buy the hype. *School Library Journal*, 52(6), 36.
- Aronson, M. (2007). Boys: Defective girls. *School Library Journal*, 53(1), 32.
- Atwell, N. (1998). *In the middle: New understandings about writing, reading, and learning* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook.
- Australian Go Association (2009). *Club Directory*. Retrieved 5 Mar. 2009, from <http://www.australiango.asn.au/Clubs.php>
- Awkward and Definition. (2008). *Publishers Weekly*, 255(1), 41-42.
- Babbie, E. R. (1990). *Survey research methods* (2nd ed.). Belmont, Ca: Wadsworth.

- Bahr, N. & Pendergast, D. (2007). *The millennial adolescent*. Camberwell, Vic: ACER Press.
- Baker, L., Dreher, M.J. & Guthrie, J.T. (2000). Why teachers should promote reading engagement. In L. Baker, M.J. Dreher & J.T. Guthrie (Eds.), *Engaging young readers: Promoting achievement and motivation* (pp. 1-16). New York: Guilford Press.
- Baker, L., Scher, D. & Mackler, K. (1997). Home and family influences on motivation for reading. *Educational Psychologist*, 32(2), 69-82.
- Baroody, W. (1984). Foreword. In N. Thimmesch (Ed.), *Aliteracy: People who can read but won't*. Washington D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.
- Bean, T.W. (1998). Teacher literacy histories and adolescent voices: Changing content-area classrooms. In D.E. Alvermann, K.A. Hinchman, D.W. Moore, S.F. Phelps & D.R. Waff (Eds.), *Reconceptualizing the literacies in adolescents' lives* (pp. 149-170). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Bean, T.W. (2002). Making reading relevant for adolescents. *Educational Leadership*, 60(3), 34-37.
- Beers, G.K. (1996a). No time, no interest, no way! the three voices of aliteracy Part I. *School Library Journal*, 42(2), 30-33.
- Beers, G.K. (1996b). No time, no interest, no way! the three voices of aliteracy Part II. *School Library Journal*, 42(3), 110-113.
- Beers, G.K. (1998). Choosing not to read: Understanding why some middle schoolers just say no. In G.K. Beers & B.G. Samuels (Eds.), *Into focus: Understanding and creating middle school readers* (pp. 37-63). Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.
- Behler, A. (2006). Getting started with graphic novels: A guide for the beginner. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 46(2), 16-21.
- Bender, A. (2004). Flat and glad. In S. Howe (Ed.), *Give our regards to the Atomsmashers! Writers on comics* (pp. 44-50). New York: Pantheon.
- Berg, B. L. (2004). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Beyond Superman and Batman. (2007, 15 Jan). *The New York Times* [Upfront]. p. 5.
- Bintz, W. P. (1993). Resistant readers in secondary education: Some insights and implications. *Journal of Reading*, 36(8), 604-615.
- Bishop, K. & Bauer, P. (2002). Attracting young adults to public libraries: Frances

- Henne/YALSA/VOYA research grant results. *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries*, 15(2), 36-44.
- Block, C.C. & Mangieri, J.N. (2002). Recreational reading: 20 years later. *The Reading Teacher*, 55(6), 572-580.
- Bolter, J.D. (1996). Ekphrasis, virtual reality and the future of writing. In G. Nunberg (Ed.), *The future of the book* (pp. 253-272). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bouma, G.D. & Ling, R. (2004). *The research process* (5th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brassell, D. (2006). Mr. Hobbs's extraordinary approach to teaching reading. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 50(2), 92-95.
- Braun, L.W. (2007). Reading: It's not just about books. *Young Adult Library Services*, 5(4), 38-40.
- Brehm-Heeger, P. (2008). *Serving Urban Teens*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Brehm-Heeger, P., Conway, A. & Vale, C. (2007). Cosplay, gaming, and conventions: The amazing and unexpected places an Anime Club can lead unsuspecting librarians. *Young Adult Library Services*, 5(2), 14-16.
- Brenner, R. (2006). Graphic novels 101: FAQ. *The Horn Book Magazine*, 82(2), 123-125.
- Brenner, R. (2007a). Graphic novels for middle grades: Selected new releases. *Library Media Connection*, 25(4), 30-31.
- Brenner, R. (2007b). *Understanding Manga and Anime*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Brenner, R. (2009). Japanese manga. In M. Cornog & T. Perper (Eds.), *Graphic novels beyond the basics: Insights and issues for libraries* (pp. 25-43). Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.
- Broadbent, W. (2003). The Moss Side Powerhouse Library in Manchester. In I. Dodds (Ed.), *Reading remixed: new approaches to library services for teenagers* (pp. 26-28). London: Youth Libraries Group.
- Brocka, B. (1983). Comic books: In case you haven't noticed they've changed. In J. L. Thomas (Ed.), *Cartoons and comics in the classroom: a reference for teachers and librarians* (pp. 26-28). Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited.
- Broderick, D. M. (1990). Preface. In *The VOYA Reader*. (pp. ix-xii). Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press.
- Bruggeman, L. (1997). Zap! Whoosh! Kerplow!: Build high quality graphic novel

- collections with impact. *School Library Journal*, 43(1), 22-27.
- Bucher, K.T. & Manning, M.L. (2004). Bringing graphic novels into a school's curriculum. *The Clearing House*, 78(2), 67-72.
- Buckland, M.K. (2003). Five grand challenges for library research. *Library Trends*, 51(4), 675-686.
- Bunbury, R.M. (Ed.). (1995). *Children's choice: Reading at home or at school*. Geelong, Vic: Deakin University Press.
- Bundy, A.L. & Bundy, J. (Eds.). (2006). *Directory of Australian public libraries* (7th ed.). Adelaide, SA: Auslib Press.
- Burn, D. (2007). VerbYL: Yeppoon's unique Youth Lounge / Youth Library. *APLIS: Australian Public Library and Information Services*, 20(3), 99-102.
- Byrnes, J.P. (2000). Using instructional time effectively. In L. Baker, M.J. Dreher & J.T. Guthrie (Eds.), *Engaging young readers: Promoting achievement and motivation* (pp. 188-208). New York: Guilford Press.
- Callow, J. (1999). Reading the visual: An introduction. In J. Callow (Ed.), *Image matters: Visual texts in the classroom* (pp. 1-13). Marrickville, NSW: Primary English Teaching Association.
- Campbell, E. (2007). What is a graphic novel? *World Literature Today*, 81(2), 13.
- Campher, G., Cohen, J., DeBrady, P., Gold, L., Jones, L., Mason, B., et al. (1996). *Taking stock/making change: Focusing on student voices at AMY Northwest*. Philadelphia, PA: Research for Action.
- Canis, L. & Canis, P. (2005). Jean-Paul Sartre meets Enid Coleslaw: existential themes in *Ghost World*. In J. McLaughlin (Ed.), *Comics as philosophy* (pp. 130-152). Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- Carrier, D. (2000). *The aesthetics of comics*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Cart, M. (2006). Carte Blanche: My Love Affair with the Comics. *The Booklist*, 102(14), 44.
- Carter, J.B. (2007). Introduction: Carving a niche. In J.B. Carter (Ed.), *Building literacy connections with graphic novels: Page by page, panel by panel* (pp. 1-25). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Cary, S. (2004). *Going graphic: Comics at work in the multilingual classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Cedeira Serantes, L. (2009). Untangling the relationship between libraries, young adults and Web 2.0: The necessity of a critical perspective. *Library Review*,

58(3), 237-251.

- Cha, K.-M. (2006a, 11 Jul). Harlequin set to relaunch manga line in-house. *Publishers Weekly*. Retrieved 28 Aug. 2006, from <http://www.publishersweekly.com/article/CA6351241.html>
- Cha, K.-M. (2006b, 28 Mar). Manga still a big story at Dark Horse. *Publishers Weekly*. Retrieved 10 Apr. 2006, from <http://www.publishersweekly.com/article/CA6319464.html>
- Charbonneau, O. (2005). Adult graphic novel readers: A survey in a Montreal Library. *Young Adult Library Services*, 3(4), 39.
- Ching, A. (2005). Holy Reading Revolution, Batman! *Young Adult Library Services*, 3(4), 19-21.
- Christensen, L.L. (2006). Graphic global conflict: Graphic novels in the high school social studies classroom. *The Social Studies*, 97(6), 227-230.
- CIBER. (2008). *Information Behaviour of the Researcher of the Future*. London: British Library & JISC. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/infostudies/research/ciber/downloads/ggexecutive.pdf>
- Cipielewski, J. & Stanovich, K.E. (1992). Predicting growth in reading ability from children's exposure to print. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 54(1), 74-89.
- Clary, L.M. (1991). Getting Adolescents to Read. *Journal of Reading*, 34(5), 340-345.
- Cline, R.K.J. & McBride, W.G. (1983). Comics in our society and in the classroom. In *A guide to literature for young adults: Background selection and use* (pp. 131-151). Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Co.
- Coles, M. & Hall, C. (2002). Gendered readings: Learning from Children's Reading Choices. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 25(1), 96-108.
- Collins, R. (1986). What do teenagers read?: Reflections of a perplexed librarian. *Magpies*, 1(2), 4-5.
- Combes, B. (2007). Techno-savvy or just techno-oriented? *Access*, 21(2), 17-20.
- Cook, J. (1997). I couldn't put it down: Manga, anime, electronic games, horror. In P. Adams & C. Millard (Eds.), *Texts: The heart of the English curriculum. Series 2* (p. no.20). Adelaide, SA: Curriculum Services Dept. of Education Training and Employment.
- Cooper-Chen, A. (2001). The dominant trope: Sex, violence, and hierarchy in Japanese comics. In M.P. McAllister, E.H. Sewell & I. Gordon (Eds.), *Comics & ideology* (pp. 99-128). New York: Peter Lang.

- Cornog, M. & Byrne, E. (2009). Censorship of graphic novels in libraries. In M. Cornog & T. Perper (Eds.), *Graphic novels beyond the basics: Insights and issues for libraries* (pp. 211-232). Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.
- Cornog, M. & Perper, T. (2009). Introduction: Origin Stories. In *Graphic novels beyond the basics: Insights and issues for libraries* (pp. xv-xxx). Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.
- Cotterell, J. (2007). *Social networks in youth and adolescence* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Crawford, P.C. (2003). *Graphic novels 101: Selecting and using graphic novels to promote literacy for children and young adults: A resource guide for school librarians and educators*. Salt Lake City, UT: Hi Willow.
- Crawford, P.C. (2004). A novel approach: Using graphic novels to attract reluctant readers and promote literacy. *Library Media Connection*, 22(5), 26-28.
- Crawford, P.C. & Weiner, S. (2005). *Using graphic novels in the classroom: A guide for teachers and librarians*. New York: Scholastic.
- Creaser, C. & Maynard, S. (2005). *A survey of library services to schools and children in the UK 2004-05*. Loughborough: LISU.
- Creswell, J.W. (2002). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Culican, S.J. & Fattor, T. (2003). Who says boys don't read? They do in Literature Circles. *Literacy Learning: The Middle Years*, 11(2), i-viii.
- Cullinan, B.E. (2000). Independent reading and school achievement. *School Library Media Research*, 3.
- Cunningham, A.E. & Stanovich, K.E. (1997). Early reading acquisition and its relation to reading experience and ability 10 years later. *Developmental Psychology*, 33(6), 934-945.
- Cunningham, A.E. & Stanovich, K.E. (1998). What reading does for the mind. *American Educator*, 22(1-2), 8-15.
- Daniels, H. (2002). *Literature circles: Voice and choice in book clubs and reading groups* (2nd ed.). Portland ME: Stenhouse.
- Darwin, M. & Fleischman, S. (2005). Fostering adolescent literacy. *Educational Leadership*, 62(7), 85-87.

- DCMS, MLA & Laser Foundation. (2006). *A research study of 14-35 year olds for the future development of public libraries* [report no. 1516]. London: Museums and Libraries Archive Council. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from <http://research.mla.gov.uk/evidence/view-publication.php?dm=nrm&pubid=139>
- DeCandido, K.R.A. (1990). Picture this: Graphic novels in the library. *Library Journal*, 115(5), 50-55.
- Decker, A. (2008, 2 Jul). Age Banning... I Mean, Banding. *Ypulse Blog*. Retrieved 20 Aug. 2008, from <http://www.ypulse.com/age-banning-i-mean-banding>
- Delle Fave, A. & Bassi, M. (2003). Italian adolescents and leisure: The role of engagement and optimal experience. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development* (99), 79-93.
- Deppey, D. (2005). She's got her own thing now. *The Comics Journal* (269). Retrieved 15 Apr. 2009, from [http://www.tcj.com/269/e\\_own1.html](http://www.tcj.com/269/e_own1.html)
- Diaz, E., Jr. (2004, 22 Oct). *Battle of the Planets 25th Anniversary Collection*. Retrieved 24 Oct. 2008, from <http://au.dvd.ign.com/articles/559/559396p1.html>
- Dillman, D.A. (2000). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method* (2nd ed.). New York: Wiley.
- Dixon, J. (1996). Are we childproofing our public libraries? Identifying the barriers that limit library use by children. *Public Libraries*, 35(1), 50-56.
- Dodds, I. (2003). Introduction. In I. Dodds (Ed.), *Reading remixed: New approaches to library services for teenagers* (pp. 5-6). London: Youth Libraries Group.
- Dodds, I. & Cheesman, R. (2003). Reading remix: Consulting young people in South-East London. In I. Dodds (Ed.), *Reading remixed: New approaches to library services for teenagers* (pp. 14-17). London: Youth Libraries Group.
- Dorrell, L.D. (1987). Why comic books? *School Library Journal*, 34(3), 30-32.
- Dorrell, L.D. & Carroll, C.E. (1981). Spider Man at the library. *School Library Journal*, 27(10), 17-19.
- Dow, J. (2001). Issues in collection management. In K. Dillon, J. Henri & J.H. McGregor (Eds.), *Providing more with less: Collection management for school libraries* (2nd ed., pp. 327-352). Wagga Wagga, NSW: Centre for Information Studies.
- Druin, A. (2005). What children can teach us: Developing digital libraries for children with children. *Library Quarterly*, 75(1), 20-41.
- Editorial: Britannica attacks. (2006). *Nature*, 440(7084), 582.

- Ellis, A.W. & Highsmith, D. (2000). About face: Comic books in library literature. *Serials Review*, 26(2), 21-43.
- Evans, G.E. & Saponaro, M.Z. (2005). *Developing library and information center collections* (5th ed.). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Everhart, N., Angelos, S. & McGriff, N. (2002). Long-term tracking of student participants' reading achievement in reading motivation programs. *Knowledge Quest*, 30(5), 43-46.
- Ezarik, M. (2003). Comics in the classroom. *District Administration*, 39(4), 42.
- Farkas, M. G. (2007). *Social software in libraries: Building collaboration, communication, and community online*. Medford, NJ: Information Today.
- Field, G. (2007). Interpretation: Enriching the visitor experience. *Landscape*, 23(1), 50-55.
- Fine, J. (2005). Ouch! *Young Adult Library Services*, 3(4), 14.
- Fisher, D. (2004). Setting the 'opportunity to read' standard: Resuscitating the SSR program in an urban high school. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 48(2), 138-150.
- Fisher, D. & Frey, N. (2007). Altering English: Re-examining the whole class novel and making room for graphic novels and more. In J. B. Carter (Ed.), *Building literacy connections with graphic novels: Page by page, panel by panel* (pp. 26-37). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Fisher, H. (2003). A teenage view of the public library: What are the students saying? *APLIS: Australian Public Library and Information Services*, 16(1), 4-16.
- Flagg, G. (2003). Not your father's superheroes. *The Booklist*, 99(11), 988.
- Fletcher, F. & Zamaria, C. (2008). *The internet, media and emerging technologies: Uses, attitudes, trends, and international comparisons*. Toronto: Canadian Internet Project. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.ciponline.ca/>
- Foster, J.E. & Prince, S. (2002). *Pilot study for an investigation of young people's reading in the 21st century: An evaluation of the reading habits and preferences of school children in South Australia*. Adelaide: University of South Australia.
- Fountain, I. (2004). The emergence of graphic novels. *Synergy*, 2(2), 35-38.
- Fowler, F.J. (1998). Design and evaluation of survey questions. In L. Bickman & D.J. Rog (Eds.), *Handbook of applied social research methods* (pp. 343-374). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.



- Free *Hikaru no Go* offer for schools and libraries. (2009). *Sensei: American Go Foundation Newsletter*, 1(3). Retrieved 6 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.usgo.org/agf/AGFNews3.htm>
- Frey, N. & Fisher, D. (2007). Using graphic novels, anime, and the Internet in an urban high school. In J.B. Carter (Ed.), *Building literacy connections with graphic novels: Page by page, panel by panel* (pp. 132-144). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Fry, D. (1985). *Children talk about books: Seeing themselves as readers*. Milton Keynes, England: Open University Press.
- Fukunaga, N. (2006). Those anime students: Foreign language literacy development through Japanese popular culture. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 50(3), 206-222.
- Gagnier, S.R. (1997). A hunger for heroes. *School Library Journal*, 43(9), 143.
- Galley, M. (2004). Going graphic: Educators tiptoe into realm of graphic novels. *Education Week*, 23(23), 6.
- Gallik, J.D. (1999). Do they read for pleasure? Recreational reading habits of college students. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 42(6), 480-488.
- Gambrell, L.B. (1996). Creating classroom cultures that foster reading motivation. *The Reading Teacher*, 50(1), 14-25.
- Gardiner, S. (2001). Ten minutes a day for silent reading. *Educational Leadership*, 59(2), 32-35.
- Garfinkel, S. (2008). Wikipedia and the meaning of truth: Why the online encyclopedia's epistemology should worry those who care about traditional notions of accuracy. *Technology Review*, 111(6).
- Gentile, L. & McMillan, M. (1977). Why won't teenagers read? *Journal of Reading*, 20(5), 649-654.
- Gibson, M. (1993). Too graphic? Graphic novels in a dual use library. In K. Barker (Ed.), *Graphic account: The selection and promotion of graphic novels in libraries for young people* (pp. 24-27). Newcastle: Youth Libraries Group.
- Gibson, M. (1998). Picture this! Snapshots of work with graphic novels, libraries and young adults. *School Librarian*, 46(1), 14-15.
- Giles, A. (2008, 26 Jun). Children know which books they're old enough for. *The Guardian Blog*. Retrieved 20 Aug. 2008, from [http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/books/2008/06/children\\_know\\_which\\_books\\_the\\_y.html](http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/books/2008/06/children_know_which_books_the_y.html)

Reference List

- Giles, J. (2006). Internet encyclopaedias go head to head. *Nature*, 438(7070), 900-901.
- Glazer, S. (2005, 18 Sep). Manga for Girls. *New York Times Book Review*, 16-17.
- GNLIB-L: Graphic Novels in Libraries* (2009). Retrieved 6 Nov. 2009, from <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/GNLIB-L/>
- Goldberg, M. (2004). The exquisite strangeness and estrangement of Renée French and Chris Ware. In S. Howe (Ed.), *Give our regards to the Atomsmashers! Writers on comics* (pp. 196-207). New York: Pantheon.
- Goldsmith, F. (1998). Graphic novels. *The Booklist*, 94(17), 1510.
- Goldsmith, F. (2003). *Teen Read Week 2002: Introduction*. Chicago: ALA. Retrieved 6 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/teenreading/trw/trw2002/trw2002.cfm>
- Goldsmith, F. (2005). *Graphic novels now: Building, managing, and marketing a dynamic collection*. Chicago: American Library Association.
- Goldthorpe, F. (2006). Reflecting on our school policy. *Scan*, 25(4), 20-22.
- Goodgion, L.F. (1977). 'Holy bookshelves!': Comics in the children's room. *School Library Journal*, 23(5), 37-39.
- Gorman, G.E. & Clayton, P. (2005). *Qualitative research for the information professional: A practical handbook* (2nd ed.). London: Facet Publishing.
- Gorman, M. (2002). What teens want. *School Library Journal*, 48(8), 42-47.
- Gorman, M. (2003). *Getting graphic! Using graphic novels to promote literacy with preteens and teens*. Worthington: Linworth.
- Gorman, M. (2007). *Getting graphic! Comics for kids*. Worthington: Linworth.
- Goulart, R. (2004). *Comic Book Encyclopedia: The Ultimate Guide to Characters, Graphic Novels, Writers, and Artists in the Comic Book Universe*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Gravett, P. (1997). Telling tales through visuals. *Library Association Record*, 99(March), 140-142.
- Gravett, P. (2005). *Graphic novels: Stories to change your life*. London: Aurum Press.
- Grayson, L. & Gomersall, A. (2006). Google: Boon, bane or both? *Evidence & Policy*, 2(4), 535-542.

- Greaney, V. (1980). Factors related to amount and type of leisure time reading. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 15(3), 337-357.
- Greaney, V. & Hegarty, M. (1987). Correlates of leisure time reading. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 10(1), 3-20.
- Green, J. (2008, 24 Nov). Building *Paper Towns*: The classic in the contemporary. Paper presented at the ALAN Conference 2008, San Antonio, Texas. Retrieved 6 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.sparksflyup.com/2008/11/speech-i-wrote-for-alan-conference.php>
- Green, M. (1998). Kapow or splat: Graphic novels as part of the school library resource centre collection. *Access*, 11(4), 13-14.
- Gutchewsky, K. (2001). An attitude adjustment: How I reached my reluctant readers. *English Journal*, 91(2), 79-85.
- Hahn, J. (2009, 16 Jan). Re: [GNLIB-L] LCSH for GNs. Retrieved 16 Jan. 2009, from <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/GNLIB-L/message/2991>
- Hale, I. (2008, 8 Oct). *Manga Recon @ Yaoi-Con 2008*. Retrieved 10 Oct. 2008, from <http://www.popcultureshock.com/manga/index.php/features/manga-recon-yaoi-con-2008/>
- Hall, C. & Coles, M. (1999). *Children's reading choices*. London: Routledge.
- Harper, R. (2007, 15 Mar). Library board approves new policy/Material selection policy created, controversial books returned to shelves. *The Marshall Democrat-News*. Retrieved 1 Aug. 2008, from <http://www.marshallnews.com/story/1193923.html>
- Harris, M. (2007). Showing and telling history through family stories in *Persepolis* and young adult novels. In J. B. Carter (Ed.), *Building literacy connections with graphic novels: Page by page, panel by panel* (pp. 38-53). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Hartman, M.L. (2006). Booktalking 101. In *Connecting with reluctant teen readers: Tips, tools and techniques* (pp. 231-262). New York: Neal Schuman.
- Harvey, R. C. (2005). Describing and discarding 'comics' as an impotent act of philosophical rigor. In J. McLaughlin (Ed.), *Comics as philosophy* (pp. 14-26). Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- Hatayama, H. (2009). The cross-cultural appeal of the characters in manga and anime. In M. I. West (Ed.), *The Japanification of children's popular culture: From Godzilla to Miyazaki* (pp. 191-198). Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Hatfield, C. (2005). *Alternative comics: An emerging literature*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

- Haugaard, K. (1973). Comic books: Conduits to culture? *The Reading Teacher*, 27(1), 54-55.
- Hawke, B. & Jenks, F. (2005). On the move: Mobile library services in New Zealand. *APLIS: Australian Public Library and Information Services*, 18(3), 93-105.
- Haynes, A. (2004). Bridging the gulf: Mixed methods and library service evaluation. *Australian Library Journal*, 53(3), 285-306.
- Hayslett, M.M. & Wildemuth, B.M. (2004). Pixels or pencils? The relative effectiveness of web-based versus paper surveys. *Library & Information Science Research*, 26(1), 73-93.
- Heaney, M. J. (2007). Graphic novels: A sure bet for your library. *Collection Building*, 26(3), 72-76.
- Heer, J., & Worcester, K. (2004). Introduction. In Heer & Worcester (Eds.), *Arguing comics: Literary masters on a popular medium* (pp. vii-xxiii). Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- Heyworth, B. (2003). The Beat: A creative writing project for young people in Leeds. In I. Dodds (Ed.), *Reading remixed: New approaches to library services for teenagers* (pp. 21-23). London: Youth Libraries Group.
- Higson, R. (2006, 18 Nov). Out of the mouths of babes. *The Australian* [Review]. pp. 16-17.
- Hill, R.A. (Ed.). (2004). *The secret origin of good readers: A resource book*. San Diego: Comic-Con International.
- Hinds, D. (2000). Research instruments. In D. Wilkinson (Ed.), *The researcher's toolkit: The complete guide to practitioner research* (pp. 41-54). London: Routledge.
- Hipple, T. & Goza, E. (1998). It ain't only in books any more. In G.K. Beers & B.G. Samuels (Eds.), *Into focus: Understanding and creating middle school readers* (pp. 363-373). Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.
- Hollindale, P. (1995). Children's literature in an age of multiple literacies. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 18(4), 248-258.
- Holm, G., Daspit, T. & Young, A.J.K. (2006). The sky is always falling. In C. Leccardi & E. Ruspini (Eds.), *A new youth? Young people, generations and family life* (pp. 85-102). Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Hopkins, S. (2007). Decimating Dewey: Introducing a bookshop arrangement for shelving the non-fiction collection. *APLIS: Australian Public Library and Information Services*, 20(1), 8-13.

- Horner, E. (2006). *Librarians' attitudes and perspectives regarding graphic novels*. MLS thesis. University of North Carolina. Retrieved 6 Nov. 2009, from <http://sites.google.com/site/emilyhorner/master'spaper>
- Horton, R. (2006). Boys and reading: Strategies and problems. *Access*, 20(2), 5-7.
- Howie, M. & Greene, P. (2003). Teaching the visual in English: The grammar of visual design and critical literacy. *Literacy Learning: The middle years*, 11(2), 22-27.
- Hudson, A. (1995). Graphic novels. *Assistant Librarian*, 88(4), 55-56.
- Hughes-Hassell, S. & Rodge, P. (2007). The leisure reading habits of urban adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 51(1), 22-33.
- Hurst, J. (2000). Southwark TRG: A new approach to teenage libraries. In C. Hall (Ed.), *Read smarter not harder: Reading promotions for children's libraries* (pp. 17-19). London: Youth Libraries Group.
- IFLA & FAIFE (1999, 25 Mar). *Statement on libraries and intellectual freedom*. The Hague: International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. Retrieved 16 Oct. 2008, from <http://www.ifla.org/faife/policy/iflastat/iflastat.htm>
- IRA & NCTE (2009). *Read Write Think*: International Reading Association & National Council of Teachers of English. Retrieved 15 Apr. 2009, from <http://www.readwritethink.org/>
- Irwin, M. & Young, R. (2005, 6-9 Oct). *Graphically speaking: Research in the use of graphic novels with high school students*. Paper presented at the American Association of School Librarians Conference, Pittsburgh, PA.
- Isaacs, K. (2006). It's a big world after all. *School Library Journal*, 52(2), 40-44.
- Izkoff, D. (2006, 12 Mar). The vendetta behind 'V for Vendetta' *The New York Times*. Retrieved 15 Apr. 2009, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/12/movies/12itzk.html>
- Ivey, G. & Broaddus, K. (2001). Just plain reading: A survey of what makes students want to read in middle school classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 36(4), 350-377.
- Iyengar, S. (2006). Is Reading at Risk or What? *School Library Journal*, 52(12), 13. Letters to the editor.
- Jacob, M. (1990). Get it in writing: A collection development plan for the Skokie Public Library. *Library Journal*, 115(14), 166-169.
- Jennings, P. (2006). Testing times. In S. La Marca & P. Macintyre (Eds.), *Knowing readers: Unlocking the pleasures of reading* (pp. 11-15). Melbourne: School

- Library Association of Victoria.
- Johnson, D. (2006). The decline of reading. *Library Media Connection*, 25(2), 98.
- Johnson, R. (1986). Comic-book fan magazines: Watching pop turn into art. *Serials Review*, 12(1), 17-26.
- Johnson, S. (2005). *Everything bad is good for you: Why today's popular culture is actually making us smarter*. New York: Riverhead Books.
- Jones, D. J. (2005). Great minds: Metcalfe, McColvin and 'Public libraries in Australia'. *Australian Library Journal*, 54(4), 386-412.
- Jones, G. (2004). *Men of tomorrow: Geeks, gangsters and the birth of the comic book*. New York: Basic Books.
- Jones, P. (2001). Books for struggling and reluctant readers. *Voices from the Middle*, 9(2), 67-70.
- Jones, P. (2007). Connecting young adults and libraries in the 21st Century. *APLIS: Australian Public Library and Information Services*, 20(2), 48-54.
- Jones, P., Gorman, M. & Suellentrop, T. (2004). *Connecting young adults and libraries: A how-to-do-it manual for librarians* (3rd ed.). New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers.
- Jones, P., Hartman, M.L. & Taylor, P.P. (2006). *Connecting with reluctant teen readers: Tips, tools and techniques*. New York: Neal Schuman.
- Kan, K.L. (1999). Comics and graphic novels in the library. *Voice of Youth Advocates*, 22(4), 252-253.
- Kan, K.L. (2003). Getting graphic at the school library. *Library Media Connection*, 21(7), 14-19.
- Kannenbergh, G. (2001). I looked just like Rudolph Valentino: Identity and representation in *Maus*. In J. Baetens (Ed.), *The graphic novel* (pp. 79-89). Louvain, Belgium: Leuven University Press.
- Kelly, P. (2007). Boys, books, blokes and bytes. *APLIS: Australian Public Library and Information Services*, 20(2), 72-83.
- Kerkham, L. & Hutchison, K. (2005). Principles, possibilities and practices: Making the difference. In B. Comber & B. Kamler (Eds.), *Turn-around pedagogies: Literacy interventions for at-risk students* (pp. 109-123). Newtown, NSW: Primary English Teaching Association.
- Khordoc, C. (2001). The comic book's soundtrack: Visual sound effects in *Asterix*. In R. Varnum & C.T. Gibbons (Eds.), *The language of comics: Word and image* (pp. 156-173). Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

- Kim, A. & Rogers, M. (2007). Librarians out front at ComicCon. *Library Journal*, 132(6), 15.
- Kirsch, I., de Jong, J., Lafontaine, D., McQueen, J., Mendelovits, J. & Monseur, C. (2002). *Reading for change: Performance and engagement across countries: Results from PISA 2000: Executive summary*. Paris: OECD. Retrieved 6 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.pisa.oecd.org/dataoecd/43/34/33690986.pdf>
- Kleffel, R. (2004, 31 Jan). *Words and pictures: A reader's guide to reading graphic novels*. Retrieved 24 Sep. 2009, from <http://trashotron.com/agonycolumns/2004/12-31-04.htm>
- Knulst, W. & van den Broek, A. (2003). The readership of books in times of de-reading. *Poetics*, 31(3-4), 213-233.
- Koelling, H. (Ed.). (2007). *Best books for young adults* (3rd ed.). Chicago: ALA.
- Koenke, K. (1981). The careful use of comic books. *The Reading Teacher*, 34, 592-595.
- Kramer-Dahl, A. (2004). Constructing adolescents differently: On the value of listening to Singapore youngsters talking popular culture texts. *Linguistics and Education*, 15(3), 217-241.
- Krashen, S.D. (2001). Do teenagers like to read? Yes! *Reading Today*, 18(5), 16.
- Krashen, S.D. (2004a). *The power of reading: Insights from the research* (2nd ed.). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Krashen, S.D. (2004b). What reading decline? Survey excludes different categories of literature. *School Library Journal*, 50(11), 13.
- Krashen, S.D. (2005). A decline in teen reading? *School Library Journal*, 51(6), 13.
- Krashen, S.D. (2006). Free reading. *School Library Journal*, 52(9), 42-45.
- Krashen, S.D. & Von Sprecken, D. (2002). Is there a decline in the reading romance? *Knowledge Quest*, 30(3), 11-17.
- Kress, G.R. (2000). Multimodality. In B. Cope & M. Kalantzis (Eds.), *Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures* (pp. 182-202). London: Routledge.
- Kress, G.R. (2002). English for an era of instability: Aesthetics, ethics, creativity and design. *English in Australia*(134), 15-23.
- Kress, G.R. (2003). *Literacy in the new media age*. London: Routledge.
- Kress, G.R. & Van Leeuwen, T. (1990). *Reading images*. Geelong, Vic: Deakin

University.

- Krueger, R.A. & Casey, M.A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- La Marca, S. (2004). An enabling adult: The role of the teacher-librarian. *Orana*, 40(3), 4-13.
- La Marca, S. & Macintyre, P. (2006). *Knowing readers: Unlocking the pleasures of reading*. Melbourne: School Library Association of Victoria.
- Langerman, D. (1990). Books and boys: Gender preferences and book selection. *School Library Journal*, 36(3), 132-136.
- Lavin, M.R. (1998a). Comic books and graphic novels for libraries: What to buy. *Serials Review*, 24(2), 31-45.
- Lavin, M.R. (1998b). Comic books and libraries: Introduction. *Serials Review*, 24(1), 35-36.
- Lavin, M.R. (1998c). Women in comic books. *Serials Review*, 24(2), 93-100.
- Lavin, M.R. (2004). Q & A: Artful ways to fit comic books into your curriculum. *Curriculum Review*, 44(1), 14-15.
- Laycock, D. (2005). Developing a graphic novel collection. *Synergy*, 3(2), 50-54.
- Leach, P. (2007, 17 Nov). Templesmith's star on the rise. *The West Australian* [SevenDays]. pp. 28-29.
- Leccardi, C. & Ruspini, E. (2006). Introduction. In *A new youth?: Young people, generations and family life* (pp. 1-11). Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Leckbee, J. (2005). I Got Graphic! *Young Adult Library Services*, 3(4), 30-31.
- Ledger, M. (1997). Get real 'n' read: A program to promote public libraries to teenagers. *Orana*, 33(2), 112-114,116.
- Lee, A. (2004, 21-24 Sep). *Graphic attraction: Graphic novels in libraries*. Paper presented at the ALIA 2004 Conference: Challenging Ideas, Goldcoast, Qld. Retrieved 6 Nov. 2009, from <http://conferences.alia.org.au/alia2004/pdfs/lee.a.paper.pdf>
- Lee, S. & Yang, G. (2006, 29 Aug). Comics and the Monkey King. *Publishers Weekly*. Retrieved 6 Sep. 2006, from <http://www.publishersweekly.com/article/CA6366449.html>
- Lees, S. (2008). Patrick, Kevin (text) Douglas Holgate (illus.) *Airborne Australia*. *Reading Time*, 52(3), 43.



- Leibold, D. (2007). Abandon every fear, ye that enter: the X-Men journey through Dante's Inferno. In J. B. Carter (Ed.), *Building literacy connections with graphic novels: Page by page, panel by panel* (pp. 100-112). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Lenhart, A., Madden, M. & Hitlin, P. (2005). *Teens and technology: Youth are leading the transition to a fully wired and mobile nation*. Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2005/Teens-and-Technology.aspx>
- Levi, A. (2009). North American reactions to Yaoi. In M. I. West (Ed.), *The Japanification of children's popular culture: From Godzilla to Miyazaki* (pp. 147-173). Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Levin, D. & Arafah, S. (2002). *The digital disconnect: The widening gap between internet-savvy students and their schools*. Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2002/The-Digital-Disconnect-The-widening-gap-between-Internetsavvy-students-and-their-schools.aspx>
- Ley, T.C., Schaer, B.B. & Dismukes, B.W. (1994). Longitudinal study of the reading attitudes and behaviors of middle school students. *Reading Psychology*, 15(1), 11-38.
- Library Council of New South Wales. (2005). *Annual report 2004/05*. Sydney, NSW: State Library of New South Wales. Retrieved 6 Nov. 2009, from [http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/about/publications/annual\\_reports/2005.html](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/about/publications/annual_reports/2005.html)
- Library of Congress (2009a). *Authority record for Comic books, strips, etc. LC Control Number sh85028863*. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from <http://authorities.loc.gov/>
- Library of Congress (2009b). *Authority record for Graphic novels LC Control Number sh94008233*. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from <http://authorities.loc.gov/>
- Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Litwin, R. (2006). Google's monetization of libraries. In *Library Juice concentrate* (pp. 61-70). Duluth, MN: Library Juice Press.
- Loewenstein, A.F. (1998). Confronting stereotypes: *Maus* in Crown Heights. *College English*, 60(4), 396-420.
- Lonsdale, M. (2003). *Impact of school libraries on student achievement: A review of the research*. Melbourne: ACER. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.asla.org.au/research/research.pdf>
- Loubeau, P.R. (2000). Exploration of the barriers to bicycle helmet use among 12 and 13 year old children. *Accident Analysis & Prevention*, 32(1), 111-115.

## Reference List

- Love, K. & Hamston, J. (2001). Out of the mouths of boys: A profile of boys committed to reading. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 24(1), 31-48.
- Love, K. & Hamston, J. (2003). Teenage boys' leisure reading dispositions: Juggling male youth culture and family cultural capital. *Educational Review*, 55(2), 161-177.
- Lovey, J. (2000). Researching in schools. In D. Wilkinson (Ed.), *The researcher's toolkit: The complete guide to practitioner research* (pp. 117-131). London: Routledge.
- Lowery-Moore, H. (1998). Voices of middle school readers. In G.K. Beers & B.G. Samuels (Eds.), *Into focus: Understanding and creating middle school readers* (pp. 23-35). Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.
- Lupa, R. (2007). Programming for 'tweens and young teens. In S. B. Anderson (Ed.), *Serving young teens and 'tweens* (pp. 87-109). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Lyga, A. (2006). Graphic novels for (really) young readers. *School Library Journal*, 52(3), 56-61.
- Lyga, A. & Lyga, B. (2004). *Graphic novels in your media center: A definitive guide*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Mackey, M. & Johnston, I. (1996). The book resisters: Ways of approaching reluctant teenage readers. *School Libraries Worldwide*, 2(1), 25-38.
- Mahoney, B. (2006). Graphic novels in the classroom. *Viewpoint: On Books for Young Adults*, 14(1), 2-4.
- Mahood, K. (2007). Booktalking to 'tweens and young teens. In S. B. Anderson (Ed.), *Serving young teens and 'tweens* (pp. 111-151). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Maney, B. (2005). Re-positioning the reluctant high-school reader. In B. Comber & B. Kamler (Eds.), *Turn-around pedagogies: Literacy interventions for at-risk students* (pp. 93-107). Newtown, NSW: Primary English Teaching Association.
- Mangione, T.W. (1998). Mail surveys. In L. Bickman & D. J. Rog (Eds.), *Handbook of applied social research methods* (pp. 399-427). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Manuel, J.V. & Robinson, D. (2002). What are teenagers reading? The findings of a survey of teenagers' reading choices and the implications of these for English teachers' classroom practice. *English in Australia* (135), 69-78.
- Manuel, J.V. & Robinson, D. (2003). Teenage boys, teenage girls and books: Re-viewing some assumptions about gender and adolescents' reading practices.

*English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 2(2), 66-77.

- Marsh, J. & Millard, E. (2000). *Literacy and popular culture: Using children's culture in the classroom*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Marshall, C. & Rossman, G.B. (2006). *Designing qualitative research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Martino, W. (2001). Boys and reading: Investigating the impact of masculinities on boys' reading preferences and involvement in literacy. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 24(1), 61-74.
- Masaki, L. (2008, 6 Jan). 'Yowie!' *The Stateside appeal of boy-meets-boy Yaoi comics*. Retrieved 10 Oct. 2008, from <http://www.afterelton.com/Print/2008/1/yaoi>
- Masters, C. (2006). America is drawn to manga. *Time*, 168(7), A5.
- Mattis, K. V. (2007). Making time for literature with Middle Eastern perspectives. *English Journal*, 96(3), 110-113.
- Matz, C. (2004). Collecting comic books for an academic library. *Collection Building*, 23(2), 96-99.
- Maynard, S., MacKay, S., & Smyth, F. (2008). A survey of young people's reading: Thinking about fiction. *New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship*, 14(1), 45-65.
- Maynard, T. (2002). *Boys and literacy: Exploring the issues*. London: Routledge.
- McCloud, S. (2000). *Reinventing comics*. New York: HarperCollins.
- McGough, A.L. (1995). Hooked on fun. *Scottish Libraries*(53), 17-18.
- McKechnie, L. (2006). Becoming a reader: Childhood years. In C.S. Ross, L. McKechnie & P.M. Rothbauer (Eds.), *Reading matters: What the research reveals about reading, libraries, and community* (pp. 61-100). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- McKenna, M.C., Kear, D.J. & Ellsworth, R.A. (1995). Children's attitudes toward reading: A national survey. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 30(4), 934-956.
- McKinney, M. (2006). Reading in tongues. In *When Books Die* (pp. 39-49). Braidwood, NSW: Finlay Lloyd.
- McLelland, M. (2000a). Male homosexuality and popular culture in modern Japan. *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context* (3). Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue3/mclelland2.html>

## Reference List

- McLelland, M. (2000b). No climax, no point, no meaning? Japanese women's boy-love sites on the Internet. *The Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 24(3), 274-291.
- McLelland, M. (2005). The world of Yaoi: the internet, censorship and the global 'Boys' Love' fandom. *Australian Feminist Law Journal*, 23, 61-77.
- McPherson, K. (2005). Of course it's true! I found it on the internet: Fostering online children's critical literacy. In R. Doiron & M. Asselin (Eds.), *Literacies, libraries, and learning* (pp. 107-115). Markham, ON: Pembroke.
- McPherson, K. (2006). Graphic literacy. *Teacher Librarian*, 33(4), 67-69.
- McQuillan, L. (2001). Texte, image, récit: The textual worlds of Benoît Peeters. In J. Baetens (Ed.), *The graphic novel* (pp. 157-166). Louvain, Belgium: Leuven University Press.
- Meek, M. (2005). Growing up in reading: The balance of fictive reality and the real world: The reader's lessons. *New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship*, 11(2), 129-145.
- Mellon, C.A. (1990a). Leisure reading choices of rural teens. *School Library Media Quarterly*, 18(4), 223-228.
- Mellon, C.A. (1990b). *Naturalistic inquiry for library science: Methods and applications for research, evaluation, and teaching*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Millard, E. & Marsh, J. (2001). Sending Minnie the Minx home: Comics and reading choices. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 31(1), 25-38.
- Miller, S. (2002). *GNLIB: Graphic novels in libraries*. Retrieved 31 Aug. 2006, from <http://www.angelfire.com/comics/gnlib/>
- Miller, S. (2005). *Developing and promoting graphic novel collections*. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers.
- Milliot, J. (2005). Publishers examine the good, bad and ugly: Speakers at Annual Meeting address need for change. *Publishers Weekly*, 252(10), 11,16.
- Misaka, K. (2004). The first Japanese manga magazine in the United States. *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 19(4), 23-30.
- Moloney, J. (1999). We don't read because we want to be men. *Magpies*, 14(1), 10-14.
- Monroe, B. & Philps, P. (2008). A collection of importance: The role of selection in academic libraries. *Australian Academic and Research Libraries*, 39(3), 149-170.

- Mooney, M. (2002). Graphic novels: How they can work in libraries. *The Book Report*, 21(3), 18-19.
- Moore, D.W., Bean, T.W., Birdyshaw, D. & Rycik, J.A. (1999). *Adolescent literacy: A position statement* [report no. 1036]. Newark, DE: International Reading Association. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.reading.org/General/AboutIRA/PositionStatements/AdolescentLitPosition.aspx>
- Morishima, J. (2007). Kids comics: The category waiting to explode. In *New York Comic-Con*. New York.
- Morrison, T.G., Bryan, G. & Chilcoat, G.W. (2002). Using student-generated comic books in the classroom. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 45(8), 758-767.
- Muller, V. (1994). The 'I hate reading' book club: What a challenge, and how did it come about? In A. Nieuwenhuizen (Ed.), *The written world: Youth and literature* (pp. 92-95). Port Melbourne: D.W. Thorpe.
- Mulrine, M.B. (2004). And just a few for teens: Getting graphic. *Public Libraries*, 43(5), 301-302.
- Murphy, D.C. (2006). Kosei Ono. *Reading Time Supplement: Book Now 8th National CBCA Conference*, 50(2), 2-3.
- Murray, E. (2005). Finding 'My Place'. *Teacher: The National Education Magazine* (Dec), 26-27.
- National Coalition Against Censorship, American Library Association, & Comic Book Legal Defense Fund. (2006). *Graphic novels: Suggestions for librarians*. New York: NCAC. Retrieved 6 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.ncac.org/graphicnovels.cfm>
- National Library of Australia (2005). *Australian Libraries Gateway*. Retrieved 29 Sep. 2005, from <http://www.nla.gov.au/libraries>
- NEA. (2004). *Reading at risk: A survey of literary reading in America* [report no. 46]. Washington DC: National Endowment for the Arts. Retrieved 20 Jul. 2009, from <http://www.nea.gov/news/news04/ReadingatRisk.html>
- NEA. (2007). *To read or not to read: Executive summary* [report no. 47]. Washington DC: National Endowment for the Arts. Retrieved 20 Jul. 2009, from <http://www.nea.gov/research/ToRead.pdf>
- NEA. (2009). *Reading on the Rise: A New Chapter in American Literacy*. Washington DC: National Endowment for the Arts. Retrieved 6 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.arts.gov/research/ReadingonRise.pdf>
- Neil, R. (2008, 20 Sep). Analysing their dark materials. *The Weekend Australian*

- [Review]. Retrieved 29 Sep. 2008,  
<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24355625-16947,00.html>
- Neilsen, L. (1998). Playing for real: Performative texts and adolescent identities. In D.E. Alvermann, K.A. Hinchman, D.W. Moore, S.F. Phelps & D.R. Waff (Eds.), *Reconceptualizing the literacies in adolescents' lives* (pp. 3-26). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- New London Group. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(1), 60-92.
- Newkirk, T. (2002). *Misreading masculinity: Boys, literacy, and popular culture*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Newman, W. & Everall, A. (2003). Book Pushers in Derbyshire. In I. Dodds (Ed.), *Reading remixed: new approaches to library services for teenagers* (pp. 7-10). London: Youth Libraries Group.
- News briefs: Minx to close. (2008). *Publishers Weekly*, 255(39), 4.
- Nichols, C.A. (2004). Shelving and display options. In C.A. Nichols (Ed.), *Thinking outside the book: Alternatives for today's teen library collections* (pp. 165-180). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Nimon, M. (2005). Introduction. In J.E. Foster (Ed.), *Bush, city, cyberspace: The development of Australian children's literature into the 21st century* (pp. xv-xvii). Wagga Wagga, NSW: Centre for Information Studies, Charles Sturt University.
- Nippold, M.A., Duthie, J.K. & Larsen, J. (2005). Literacy as a leisure activity: Free-time preferences of older children and young adolescents. *Language Speech and Hearing Services in Schools*, 36(2), 93-102.
- Northern Territory Library (2006, 25 Aug). *Libraries and Knowledge Centres: The facts*. Darwin, NT: Department of Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs. Retrieved 8 Sep. 2006, from [http://www.ntl.nt.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/4678/lkc\\_otherorgs.pdf](http://www.ntl.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/4678/lkc_otherorgs.pdf)
- Norton, B. (2003). The motivating power of comic books: Insights from Archie comics readers. *The Reading Teacher*, 57(2), 140-147.
- Nylund, C. (2007). Selecting mangas and graphic novels. *Library Media Connection*, 25(5), 30.
- O'Brien, C. (2008, 9 Jul). How the Google generation thinks differently. *The Times*. Retrieved 4 Aug. 2008, from [http://women.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life\\_and\\_style/women/families/article4295414.ece](http://women.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/women/families/article4295414.ece)

- O'English, L., Matthews, J.G. & Lindsay, E.B. (2006). Graphic novels in academic libraries: From *Maus* to manga and beyond. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 32(2), 173-182.
- Oatman, E. (2006). Overwhelming evidence. *School Library Journal*, 52(1), 56-59.
- Okuhara, R. (2009). The censorship of Japanese anime in America. In M. I. West (Ed.), *The Japanification of children's popular culture: From Godzilla to Miyazaki* (pp. 199-208). Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Olsen, R. & Flagg, G. (2003). Adult graphic novels: A core list. *The Booklist*, 99(11), 968.
- Overington, C. (2006, 9 Sep). Comic version of events is a seriously good read. *The Australian*, p. 26.
- Page, S. (2005). *Australian young adult keen readers: Choices they make, and creators' views regarding the young adult market*. PhD thesis. University of Canberra. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from <http://erl.canberra.edu.au/public/adt-AUC20061024.143742>
- Pagliassotti, D. (2008). Reading Boys' Love in the West. *Particip@tions*, 5(2). Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from [http://www.participations.org/Volume%205/Issue%202/205\\_202\\_pagliassotti.htm](http://www.participations.org/Volume%205/Issue%202/205_202_pagliassotti.htm)
- Patrick, K. (2008). Airborne Australia. *Reading Time*, 52(3), 40-41.
- Pattee, A. (2007). Rethinking 'racy reads'. *School Library Journal*, 53(1), 30-31.
- Patten, F. (2004). *Watching anime, reading manga: 25 years of essays and reviews*. Berkeley, CA: Stone Bridge Press.
- Patten, F. (2009). The allure of anthropomorphism in anime and manga. In M. I. West (Ed.), *The Japanification of children's popular culture: From Godzilla to Miyazaki* (pp. 41-52). Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Pawuk, M. (2006). *Graphic novels: A genre guide to comic books, manga, and more*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Phillips, M. (2007, 8 Jun). Pow! Romance! Comics court girls: Inspired by Japanese manga, major American publishers aim for new female fans. *Wall Street Journal*, p. B.1.
- Pitcher, S.M., Albright, L.K., DeLaney, C.J., Walker, N.T., Seunarinisingh, K., Mogge, S., et al. (2007). Assessing adolescents' motivation to read. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 50(5), 378-396.
- Potential. (2008). *Publishers Weekly*, 255(11), 55.

Reference List

- Powell, R.R. & Connaway, L.S. (2004). *Basic research methods for librarians* (4th ed.). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Power, S. (2001). Reading the mismatch: Differing perceptions of boys' reading practices. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 24(1), 49-60.
- Preconference a sell out. (2002). *Young Adult Library Services*, 1(1). Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/yalsa/yalsapubs/yals/yalsaofficevolume.cfm>
- Prensky, M. (2001). Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants. *On the Horizon*, 9(5), 1-6.
- Price, A. (2009, 30 Jun). Diamond's new minimums shape a tough comics market. *Publishers Weekly*. Retrieved 1 Jul. 2009, from <http://www.publishersweekly.com/article/CA6668139.html>
- Pullman, P. (1993). Words and pictures: An examination of comic-strip technique. In K. Barker (Ed.), *Graphic account: The selection and promotion of graphic novels in libraries for young people* (pp. 5-18). Newcastle: Youth Libraries Group.
- Raiteri, S. (2002). Graphic novels. *Library Journal*, 127(14), 148.
- Raiteri, S. (2003a). Graphic novels. *Library Journal*, 128(8), 94.
- Raiteri, S. (2003b). Graphic novels. *Library Journal*, 128(4), 72.
- Ranker, J. (2007). Using comic books as read-alouds: Insights on reading instruction from an English as a second language classroom. *The Reading Teacher*, 61(4), 296-305.
- Reed, A. (1988). *Comics to classics: A parent's guide to books for teens and preteens*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Reeves, A.R. (2004). *Adolescents talk about reading: Exploring resistance to and engagement with text*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Reid, C. (2001). Los Bros restart 'Love and Rockets'. *Publishers Weekly*, 248(11), 35.
- Reid, C. (2005). U.S. graphic novel market hits \$200m. *Publishers Weekly*, 252(16), 15.
- Reid, C. (2006a). Big crowds at NYCC, big sales gains. *Publishers Weekly*, 253(10), 18.
- Reid, C. (2006b, 28 Mar). HarperCollins, Tokyopop ink manga deal. *Publishers Weekly*. Retrieved 10 Apr. 2006, from <http://www.publishersweekly.com/article/CA6319467.html>



- Reid, C. (2006c). Library pulls novels. *Publishers Weekly*, 253(41), 4.
- Reid, C. (2006d). Manga work pulled from libraries. *Publishers Weekly*, 253(17), 12.
- Reid, C. (2009, 30 Jun). New ICv2 Confab on comics and media crossovers. *Publishers Weekly*. Retrieved 1 Jul. 2009, from <http://www.publishersweekly.com/article/CA6668203.html>
- Reynolds, E. (2005). Growing pains. In S. Heller & M. Dooley (Eds.), *The education of a comics artist: Visual narrative in cartoons, graphic novels, and beyond* (pp. 174-176). New York: Allworth Press.
- Reynolds, M. (2004). *I won't read and you can't make me: Reaching reluctant teen readers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Rideout, V., Roberts, D.F. & Foehr, U.G. (2005). *Generation M: Media in the lives of 8-18 year olds* [report no. 7251]. Menlo Park, CA: Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. Retrieved 6 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/7251.cfm>
- Ridout, C. (2007, 10-11 Mar). Manga without borders. *The Weekend Australian* [Review]. p. 12.
- Rifas, L. (2005, 28 Jun). *Educating with comics*. Retrieved 19 Jul. 2005, from <http://www.aiga.org/content.cfm/educating-with-comics>
- Robbins, T. (2009). Girls, women, and comics. In M. Cornog & T. Perper (Eds.), *Graphic novels beyond the basics: Insights and issues for libraries* (pp. 45-60). Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.
- Roberts, J. (1994). The comic exchange at the Osborne Library. *Orana*, 30(2), 113-115.
- Robins, S. (2008, 20 Oct). *Kids Draw! SDCC 2008*. Retrieved 21 Oct. 2008, from <http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/blog/540000654/post/190035219.html>
- Robinson, M. (1977). Encouraging teenagers to read. *School Library Bulletin*, 9, 70-74.
- Rosen, J. (2004). Del Rey: Tracking younger. *Publishers Weekly*, 251(14), 30-31.
- Rosenzweig, R. (2006). Can history be open source? Wikipedia and the future of the past. *The Journal of American History*, 93(1), 117-146.
- Ross, C.S. (2006a). Adult readers. In C.S. Ross, L. McKechnie & P.M. Rothbauer (Eds.), *Reading matters: What the research reveals about reading, libraries, and community* (pp. 133-241). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Ross, C.S. (2006b). The company of readers. In *Reading matters: What the research*

Reference List

- reveals about reading, libraries, and community* (pp. 1-62). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Rothbauer, P.M. (2006). Young adults and reading. In *Reading matters: What the research reveals about reading, libraries, and community* (pp. 101-131). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Rothschild, D.A. (1995). *Graphic novels: A bibliographic guide to book-length comics*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.
- Ruh, B. (2009). Early Japanese animation in the United States: Changing *Tetsuwan Atomu* to *Astro Boy*. In M. I. West (Ed.), *The Japanification of children's popular culture: From Godzilla to Miyazaki* (pp. 209-226). Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Rutherford, D.M. (2006). Introducing a brand-new list: Great Graphic Novels for Teens. *Young Adult Library Services*, 4(3), 32.
- Ryan, J. (2005). Young people choose: Adolescents' text pleasures. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 28(1), 38-47.
- Sabin, R. (1996). *Comics, comix & graphic novels*. London: Phaidon.
- Sabin, R. (2009, 4 Sep). Graphic and glorious. *The Guardian Weekly* [Books]. p. 41.
- Sadokierski, Z. (2008). Word and image in contemporary fiction. *Heat*(15), 201-221.
- Sanacore, J. (1992). Encouraging the lifetime reading habit. *Journal of Reading*, 35(6), 474-477.
- Sanderson, P. (2004). True tales: From bee behavior to the life of Buddha, not all comics are fiction. *School Library Journal*, 50(8), S14-19.
- Saraceni, M. (2003). *The language of comics*. London: Routledge.
- Sax, L. (2007). The boy problem. *School Library Journal*, 53(9), 40-43.
- Schirato, T. & Webb, J. (2004). *Reading the visual*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Schjeldahl, P. (2005, 17 Oct). Words and pictures: Graphic novels come of age. *The New Yorker*, 81, 162.
- Schmar-Dobler, E. (2003). Reading on the internet: The link between literacy and technology. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 47(1), 80-85.
- Schmitt, R. (1992). Deconstructive comics. *Journal of Popular Culture*, 25(4), 153-161.
- Schodt, F.L. (1996). *Dreamland Japan: Writings on modern manga*. Berkeley, CA:

Stone Bridge Press.

Scholastic & Yankelovich (2006). *The Kids and Family Reading Report*. New York: Scholastic. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.scholastic.com/aboutscholastic/news/readingreport06.htm>

Scholastic & Yankelovich (2008). *2008 Kids and Family Reading Report*. New York: Scholastic. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.scholastic.com/aboutscholastic/news/kfr08web.pdf>

Schonlau, M., Fricker, R.D. & Elliott, M.N. (2002). *Conducting research surveys via e-mail and the web*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

Schraffenberger, J.D. (2007). Visualizing Beowulf: Old English gets graphic. In J.B. Carter (Ed.), *Building literacy connections with graphic novels: Page by page, panel by panel* (pp. 64-82). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Schwartz, A. & Rubinstein-Avila, E. (2006). Understanding the manga hype: Uncovering the multimodality of comic-book literacies. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 50(1), 40-49.

Schwartz, D. (1952). Masterpieces as cartoons. *Partisan Review*, 19(4), 461-471.

Schwarz, G.E. (2002a). Graphic books for diverse needs: Engaging reluctant and curious readers. *ALAN review*, 30(1), 54-57.

Schwarz, G.E. (2002b). Graphic novels for multiple literacies. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 46(3), 262-265.

The secret of her success. (2006). *School Library Journal*, 52(9), 45.

Selfe, C.L. & Hawisher, G.E. (2004). *Literate lives in the information age: Narratives of literacy from the United States*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Senior, D. (2007). Giving indigenous knowledge: The Akaltye Antheme collection, Alice Springs Public Library. *APLIS: Australian Public Library and Information Services*, 20(1), 28-33.

Serchay, D.S. (2004). But those aren't really books! Graphic novels and comic books. In C. A. Nichols (Ed.), *Thinking outside the book: Alternatives for today's teen library collections* (pp. 21-53). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.

Serchay, D.S. (2008). *The librarian's guide to graphic novels for children and tweens*. New York: Neal-Schuman.

Shenton, A.K. (2007). Attitudes to books and school libraries among teenagers in an English high school. *New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship*, 13(1), 31-51.

- Shenton, A.K. & Dixon, P. (2004). Issues arising from youngsters' information-seeking behaviour. *Library & Information Science Research*, 26(2), 177-200.
- Sherman, G.W. & Ammon, B.D. (1993). Beyond Superman: The boom in trade comics. *School Library Journal*, 39(5), 34-35.
- Shook, D. (2007). An interview with Fábio Moon & Gabriel Bá. *World Literature Today*, 81(2), 42-45.
- Sieber, J.E. (1992). *Planning ethically responsible research: A guide for students and internal review boards*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Siklos, R. (2008, 13 Oct). *Spoiler alert: Comic books are alive and kicking*. Retrieved 20 Oct. 2008, from [http://money.cnn.com/2008/10/10/news/companies/siklos\\_marvel.fortune/](http://money.cnn.com/2008/10/10/news/companies/siklos_marvel.fortune/)
- Smith, M.W. & Wilhelm, J.D. (2002). *Reading don't fix no Chevys: Literacy in the lives of young men*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Smith, M.W. & Wilhelm, J.D. (2004). "I just like being a good at it": The importance of competence in the literate lives of young men. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 47(6), 454-461.
- Smith, T.M., Aronstamm Young, B., Bae, Y., Choy, S.P. & Alsalam, N. (1997). *Condition of education: Reading and writing habits of students* [report no. 98003]. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/98003.pdf>
- Snow, C.E., Burns, M.S. & Griffin, P. (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children: Executive summary*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.middleweb.com/ReadingNRC.html>
- Snowball, C. (2006). Graphic novels: Telling tales visually. *Synergy*, 4(2), 18-22.
- Snowball, C. (2008). Enticing teenagers into the library. *Library Review*, 57(1), 25-35.
- South Australian Public Library Network (2006). *Locate a Library*. Retrieved 5 Oct. 2006, from <http://www.libraries.sa.gov.au/>
- Springhall, J. (1998). *Youth, popular culture and moral panics: Penny gaffs to gangsta-rap, 1830-1996*. Hampshire, England: Macmillan.
- Stake, R.E. (2000). Case studies. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 435-454). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stanovich, K.E. (1986). Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy. *Reading Research*

*Quarterly*, 21(4), 360-407.

- State Library of New South Wales & Library Council of New South Wales. (2005). *Library development grant guidelines: 2006/07*. Sydney: Library Council of NSW. Retrieved 5 Oct. 2006, from [http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/services/public\\_libraries/funding/docs/guide2006.pdf](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/services/public_libraries/funding/docs/guide2006.pdf)
- State Library of Western Australia & Western Australian Local Government Association. (2004). *Framework Agreement between state and local government for the provision of Public Library Services in Western Australia*. Perth, WA: SLWA. Retrieved 5 Nov. 2009, from [http://slwa.wa.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0015/3534/Framework\\_Agreement\\_Final.pdf](http://slwa.wa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/3534/Framework_Agreement_Final.pdf)
- Steggell, S.E. (Ed.). (2008). *Yours sincerely, Colin Thiele*. Adelaide, SA: Crawford House.
- Stringer, S.A. & Mollineaux, B. (2003). Removing the word 'reluctant' from 'reluctant reader'. *English Journal*, 92(4), 71-76.
- Sturm, J. (2002). Comics in the classroom. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 48(30), B.14.
- Sullivan, E.T. (2002). *Reaching reluctant young adult readers: A handbook for librarians and teachers*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Sullivan, M. (2003). *Connecting boys with books: What libraries can do*. Chicago: American Library Association.
- Sullivan, M. (2005). *Fundamentals of children's services*. Chicago: American Library Association.
- Swenor, K. (2006). A teen take on reading: Results from the 2005 Teen Read Survey. *Young Adult Library Services*, 4(4), 42-44.
- Tabachnick, S.E. (2007). A comic-book world. *World Literature Today*, 81(2), 24-28.
- Taylor, B.M., Frye, B.J. & Maruyama, G.M. (1990). Time spent reading and reading growth. *American Educational Research Journal*, 27(2), 351-362.
- Thomas, J.L. (Ed.). (1983). *Cartoons and comics in the classroom: A reference for teachers and librarians*. Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited.
- Thompson, J. (Ed.). (2008). *Manga: The complete guide*. London: Titan Books.
- Thompson, T. (2007). Embracing reluctance when classroom teachers shy away from graphic books. *Library Media Connection*, 25(4), 29.

## Reference List

- Thomson, J. (1987). *Understanding teenagers' reading: Reading processes and the teaching of literature*. Norwood, SA: AATE.
- Todd, R.J. (2004). From information to knowledge: The key to constructing communities of learning and literacy. In J. Bales & K. Bonanno (Eds.), *Constructing communities of learning and literacy: ASLA online conference 2004 proceedings* (pp. 7-21). Zillmere, Qld: ASLA.
- Toku, M. (2001). What is manga?: The influence of pop culture in adolescent art. *Art Education*, 54(2), 11.
- Toor, R. & Weisburg, H.K. (2003). Kids learn when: Your lessons start with ten. *Knowledge Quest*, 32(1), 48.
- Travers, M. (2006). Qualitative interviewing methods. In M. Walter (Ed.), *Social research methods: An Australian perspective* (pp. 83-111). South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Ujiie, J. & Krashen, S.D. (1996). Comic book reading, reading enjoyment, and pleasure reading among middle class and Chapter I middle school students. *Reading Improvement*, 33(1), 51-54.
- Vaillancourt, R.J. (2000). *Bare bones young adult services: Tips for public library generalists*. Chicago: American Library Association.
- van Schooten, E., & de Gloppe, K. (2002). The relation between attitude toward reading adolescent literature and literary reading behaviour. *Poetics*, 30(3), 169-194.
- Varnum, R., & Gibbons, C.T. (2001). Introduction. In R. Varnum & C.T. Gibbons (Eds.), *The language of comics: Word and image* (pp. ix-xix). Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- Vasudevan, L.M. (2006). Looking for Angels: Knowing adolescents by engaging with their multimodal literacy practices. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 50(4), 252-256.
- Versaci, R. (2001). How comic books can change the way our students see literature: One teacher's perspective. *English Journal*, 91(2), 61-67.
- Versaci, R. (2007). *This book contains graphic language: Comics as literature*. New York: Continuum.
- Vollmar, R. (2007). Frédéric Boilet and the nouvelle manga revolution. *World Literature Today*, 81(2), 34-41.
- Voskuyl, H. (2004). Our stories, their stories: The need for diversity in children's and YA literature. In J. Bales & K. Bonanno (Eds.), *Constructing communities of learning and literacy: ASLA online conference 2004 proceedings* (pp. 128-130). Zillmere, Qld: ASLA.

- Walker, G. (1989). Comics and graphic novels. *The Booklist*, 85, 1896.
- Walter, M. (2006). The nature of social science research. In M. Walter (Ed.), *Social research methods: An Australian perspective* (pp. 3-28). South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Walter, V. A. (1995). *Output measures and more: Planning and evaluating public library services for young adults*. Chicago: American Library Association.
- Walter, V. A. (2001). *Children and libraries: Getting it right*. Chicago: American Library Association.
- Warner, M. L. (2006). *Adolescents in the search for meaning: tapping the powerful resource of story*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Webb, A. & Guisgand, B. (2007). A multimodal approach to addressing antisemitism: Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* and Will Eisner's *Fagin the Jew*. In J.B. Carter (Ed.), *Building literacy connections with graphic novels: Page by page, panel by panel* (pp. 113-131). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Weiner, S. (1992). Creating a graphic novel collection for the public library. *Voice of Youth Advocates*, 15, 269-270.
- Weiner, S. (2002). Beyond superheroes: Comics get serious. *Library Journal*, 127(2), 55-58.
- Weiner, S. (2003). *Faster than a speeding bullet: The rise of the graphic novel*. New York: Nantier Beall Minoustchine.
- Weiner, S. (2005). *The 101 best graphic novels* (2nd ed.). New York: Nantier Beall Minoustchine.
- Weiner, S. (2009, 1 Mar). RE: [GNLIB-L] 18+ Manga Graphic Novels? Retrieved 4 Mar. 2009, from <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/GNLIB-L/message/3200>
- Welch, R. (2006). Cleveland teens' top ten manga series. *Young Adult Library Services*, 4(3), 11.
- Whelan, D.L. (2009). A dirty little secret: Self-censorship. *School Library Journal*, 55(2), 26.
- Whelehan, I. & Sonnet, E. (1997). Regendered reading: *Tank Girl* and postmodernist intertextuality. In D. Cartmell, I.Q. Hunter, H. Kaye & I. Whelehan (Eds.), *Trash aesthetics: Popular culture and its audience* (pp. 31-47). Chicago: Pluto Press.
- Widdows, R., Hensler, T.A. & Wyncott, M.H. (1991). The focus group interview: A method for assessing users' evaluation of library service. *College & Research*

- Libraries*, 52(4), 352-359.
- Wikipedia:About (2009, 20 Jan). Retrieved 21 Jan. 2009, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:About>
- Wikipedia:List of policies (2009, 18 Jan). Retrieved 21 Jan. 2009, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:List\\_of\\_policies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:List_of_policies)
- Wilkie, S. (2001). Paddington Zone: Involving young people: Westminster Libraries. In L. Sim (Ed.), *All our children: Social inclusion and children's libraries* (pp. 32-35). London: Youth Libraries Group.
- Wilkins, J. (1993). 'Who are we protecting them from?' The selection of graphic novels in the London Borough of Camden. In K. Barker (Ed.), *Graphic account: The selection and promotion of graphic novels in libraries for young people* (pp. 19-23). Newcastle: Youth Libraries Group.
- Wilkinson, S. (1998). Focus group methodology: A review. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 1(3), 181-203.
- Wilkinson, S. (2004). Focus group research. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative research: Theory, method and practice* (2nd ed., pp. 177-199). London: Sage.
- Williams, B.T. (2007). Why Johnny can never, ever read: The perpetual literacy crisis and student identity. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 51(2), 178-182.
- Williams, V.K. & Peterson, D.V. (2009). Graphic novels in libraries supporting teacher education and librarianship programs. *Library Resources & Technical Services*, 53(3), 166-173.
- Williamson, G. (2007, 3-4 Mar). Inked World of Dark Genius. *The Weekend Australian* [Review]. p. 6.
- Wilson, M. (2000). Understanding the needs of tomorrow's library user: Rethinking library services for the new age. *APLIS: Australian Public Library and Information Services*, 13(2), 81-86.
- Wilson, R. (2006). Multicultural graphic novels. *Library Media Connection*, 24(6), 32-33.
- Witte, S. (2007). "That's online writing, not boring school writing": Writing with blogs and the Talkback Project. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 51(2), 92-96.
- Wolf, M. (2007). *Proust and the Squid: The story and science of the reading brain*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Wolk, D. (2001). Manga, anime invade the U.S. *Publishers Weekly*, 248(11), 35-36.



- Wolk, D. (2002). The manga are coming. *Publishers Weekly*, 249(24), 29-30.
- Wolk, D. (2007). *Reading comics: How graphic novels work and what they mean*. New York: Da Capo.
- Wood-Charlesworth, L. & Rodwell, M.K. (1997). Focus groups with children: A resource for sexual abuse prevention program evaluation. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 21(12), 1205-1216.
- Worthen, W.B. (1998). Drama, performativity and performance. *PMLA*, 113(5), 1093-1107.
- Worthy, J. (1998). On every page someone gets killed! Book conversations you don't hear in school. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 41(7), 508-517.
- Worthy, J. & McKool, S. (1996). Students who say they hate to read: The importance of opportunity, choice, and access. In D. Leu, C. Kinzer & K. Hinchman (Eds.), *Literacies for the 21st century: Research and practice: 45th yearbook of the National Reading Conference* (pp. 245-256). Chicago: National Reading Conference.
- Worthy, J., Mooreman, M. & Turner, M. (1999). What Johnny likes to read is hard to find in school. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 34(1), 12-27.
- Worthy, J., Patterson, E., Salas, R., Prater, S. & Turner, M. (2002). More than just reading: The human factor in reaching resistant readers. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 41(2), 177-201.
- Worthy, J., Turner, M. & Moorman, M. (1998). The precarious place of self-selected reading. *Language Arts*, 75(4), 296-304.
- Wray, J. (2004). This world, that world, and the invisible hinge. In S. Howe (Ed.), *Give our regards to the Atomsmashers! Writers on comics* (pp. 108-116). New York: Pantheon.
- Wright, B.W. (2001). *Comic book nation: The transformation of youth culture in America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Yang, G. (2003). *Comics in education*. ME thesis. University of California. Retrieved 6 Nov. 2009, from <http://www.humblecomics.com/comicsedu/>
- Yoon, J.-C. (2002). Three decades of sustained silent reading: A meta-analytic review of the effects of SSR on attitude toward reading. *Reading Improvement*, 39(4), 186-195.
- Young, R. (2007). Graphically speaking: The importance of graphic books in a school library collection. *Library Media Connection*, 25(4), 26-28.
- Zaleski, J. (2003a). Battle Royale: Volume 1. *Publishers Weekly*, 250(36), 57-58.

Reference List

Zaleski, J. (2003b). The Sandman: Endless Nights. *Publishers Weekly*, 250(36), 57.

Every reasonable effort has been made to acknowledge the owners of copyright material. I would be pleased to hear from any copyright owner who has been omitted or incorrectly acknowledged.

**Appendix A**



Faculty of Media, Society and Culture  
GPO Box U1987  
PERTH WA 6845

«School»  
«Address1»  
«Address2»  
«Suburb» «State» «Postcode»

10 January 2006

Dear Librarian or Library Officer,

I am a PhD candidate at Curtin University of Technology. I am undertaking a research project to find out about graphic novel collections in public libraries, specifically teenager's use of graphic novels and library collections of them.

A graphic novel is any trade paperback or hardcover book consisting of work in comic book form. It may be fiction, non-fiction, a collection of stories, or a part of a series. This item would belong in a monograph collection, not a serials collection. Collections of comic strips, for example Peanuts, are not graphic novels.

I have asked librarians from public libraries around Australia to participate in my research by completing this questionnaire. Whether your library currently has a graphic novel collection or not, I value your participation.

Confidentiality of your responses will be ensured during and after my research project. After return of your questionnaire the number which identifies its return will be removed immediately. This will ensure information cannot be linked to individual libraries or librarians. In the writing of my research results, care will be taken to ensure that no individual libraries or librarians can be identified.

I would greatly appreciate your participation in my research project. The questionnaire will take about ten minutes to complete. If your library is part of a system, please answer the questions for your branch, Library, only. When you have completed the questionnaire, please return it in the reply paid envelope. The envelope is addressed to my supervisor, Maggie Exon, who will pass it on to me unopened.

Yours sincerely,

Clare Snowball.



### Appendix B: Questionnaire for Public Libraries

To be completed by the Librarian with responsibility for acquisitions or the Library Officer if your library does not have a Librarian.

- 1) In which state or territory is your library? Please mark one option.
 

ACT	NT	SA	VIC
NSW	QLD	TAS	WA
- 2) How would you describe the location of your library? Please mark one option.
 

Metropolitan	Rural
Regional city	Other, please state
- 3) What is your position title?
- 4) Is your library a part of a system at the local authority level?
 

Yes	Please continue from question 4a
No	Please continue from question 5
- 4a) If yes, does your branch have autonomy in your acquisition decisions?
 

Yes	No
-----	----
- 5) Does your library have a centralised acquisitions purchasing, cataloguing and processing system for some or all of your acquisitions?
 

Yes, at local authority level
Yes, at state government level
No
- 6) Does your library have a YA (young adult) section where materials for teenagers are shelved?
 

Yes	No
-----	----
- 7) Does your library make a special effort to acquire graphic novels?
 

Yes	Please continue from question 10
No	Please continue from question 8
- 8) Have you considered acquiring graphic novels?
 

Yes, but decided not to	No
-------------------------	----
- 9) If you have decided not to, or are likely to decide this, what were your reasons?  
 You have completed the questionnaire. Thank you for your time.

10) Are your graphic novels aimed at a particular age group? Please mark as many as necessary.

Adult

Children

Young adult (teenagers)

Other, please specify

11) What sources do you use for selecting graphic novels? Please mark as many as necessary.

Print reviews

Online reviews

Recommendations from library users

Recommendations from library staff

Recommendations from point of purchase

Other, please specify

12) How do you acquire your graphic novels? Please mark as many as necessary.

Local comic shop

Online store

Local book shop

Donations

Comics vendor

Other, please specify

Library vendor

13) How are your graphic novels budgeted for?

eg. Are they included in budget line for fiction, junior, a separate category, etc.

14) Do you have criteria for selecting graphic novels? If yes, please explain. If graphic novels are included in your collection development policy, please attach a copy of the relevant section.

15) How are your graphic novels shelved? Please mark as many as necessary.

All graphic novels shelved at DDC 741.5

All graphic novels interfiled in fiction

Fiction graphic novels interfiled in fiction

Non-fiction graphic novels interfiled in non-fiction

One separate section for all graphic novels

Separate sections for different age groups

Other, please specify

If your graphic novels are interfiled with other materials, please continue from question 18

16) If your graphic novels are shelved separately from other collections, how is this designated on the item?

Coloured sticker

Graphic novel "genre" label from library supplier

Graphic novel "genre" label produced in-house

Other, please specify

17) How are your graphic novels ordered on the shelf? Please mark as many as necessary.

By author's surname

No order

By series title

Other, please specify

DDC notation for non-fiction

18) Are any or all of your graphic novels denoted by a subject heading on the catalogue?

Yes Please continue from question 18a

No Please continue from question 19

18a. What heading(s) & MARC tag(s) are used? Please mark as many as necessary.

Subject Heading

MARC tag

Graphic novels

\_\_\_\_\_

Comic books

\_\_\_\_\_

Comic books, strips, etc.

\_\_\_\_\_

Manga

\_\_\_\_\_

Other, please specify

\_\_\_\_\_

19) Are graphic novels given a format code on your catalogue system?

Yes Please continue from question 19a

No Please continue from question 20

19a. If yes, what code(s) is used?

20) Do you collect statistics on the circulation of your graphic novels?

Yes Please continue from question 21

No Please continue from question 23

21) How do you collect statistics? Please mark as many as necessary.

Number of issues per item

Collection turnover statistics

Circulation per shelf

Other, please specify

22) Do you collect statistics periodically?

No

Monthly

Quarterly

Annually

Other time period, please specify

23) If you promote your graphic novel collection, how do you do this?

Signs / Posters in the library

Displays in the library

Flyers / Bookmarks / Booklists

Library web site

Library newsletter

Press releases

Notices / Letters sent to local schools

One-off events

Regular events

Other, please specify

24) Please describe one successful graphic novel promotion held at your library.

You have completed the questionnaire. Thank you for your time.



## Appendix C



Faculty of Media, Society and Culture  
 GPO Box U1987  
 PERTH WA 6845

«PrincipalFirstname»  
 «School»  
 «Address1»  
 «Address2»  
 «Suburb» «State» «Postcode»

September 2006

Dear Teacher Librarian,

I have worked in public libraries as a young people's librarian and I am currently a PhD student at Curtin University of Technology. I am undertaking a research project to find out about the reading habits of teenagers, particularly their reading of graphic novels and whether graphic novels encourage teenagers to use libraries and read in their free time. Graphic novels are book-length comics.

I wish to hold a focus group (group discussion) with your students who will discuss their reading habits, including whether they read graphic novels. I would like to request the participation of one of your Year 9 or 10 English classes. I anticipate that the focus group will take place during a timetabled class next term. I have attached a draft of the questions which I will use to guide the discussion. I have also attached a draft letter to parents to request parental permission. I hope to give this to all students in the class and of the permission slips that are returned, I will randomly select five participants to take part.

Participation is voluntary and students are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time. There is no prior preparation necessary. I have a number of graphic novels and a list for further reading, which I would like to use during the session. I have attached the reading list, with those which I will bring to the session marked.

Confidentiality of student's discussions will be ensured during and after my research project. Focus group sessions will be recorded. I will transcribe these recordings and cassettes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet accessible only to myself. Any information which identifies individuals will not be revealed. In the writing of my research results, if individual students are described, pseudonyms will be used.

I would greatly appreciate your school's participation in my research project. I have attached a letter to your principal requesting permission. I look forward to hearing from you if you would like to take part.

Yours sincerely,

Clare Snowball.



## Appendix D



Faculty of Media, Society and Culture  
 GPO Box U1987  
 PERTH WA 6845

«PrincipalFirstname»  
 «School»  
 «Address1»  
 «Address2»  
 «Suburb» «State» «Postcode»

September 2006

Dear Principal,

I am a PhD student at Curtin University of Technology. I am undertaking a research project to find out about the reading habits of teenagers, particularly their reading of graphic novels and whether graphic novels encourage teenagers to use libraries and read in their free time. Graphic novels are book-length comics.

I am asking a number of metropolitan high schools to participate and seeking the involvement of English teachers and their students. I wish to hold a focus group with students who will discuss their reading habits, including whether they read graphic novels. I would like to request the participation of one of your English classes. I anticipate that the focus group will take place during a timetabled class next term. I have attached a draft guideline which I will use to guide the discussion. I have also attached a draft letter to parents that requests parental permission. I hope to give this to all students in the class and of the permission slips that are returned, I will randomly select five participants. Participation is entirely voluntary and students are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality of student's discussions will be ensured during and after my research project. Focus group sessions will be recorded. I will transcribe these recordings and cassettes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet accessible only to myself. Any information which identifies individuals will not be revealed. In the writing of my research results, if individual students are described, pseudonyms will be used.

I have already discussed this with your Teacher Librarian. I would greatly appreciate your school's participation in my research project and I look forward to your permission to go ahead.

Yours sincerely,

Clare Snowball.



## Appendix E: Moderator's Guide for Focus Groups

### Introduction

I'm doing a research project at Curtin University and I want to ask you about reading:

- whether you like to read or not;
- whether you read outside of school or not;
- and if you do, what are some of the things you read.

I want to know what *you* think, because I don't know the answers to these questions.

### Ground rules

To make sure we don't talk over the top of each other, put your hand up if you think of something to say when someone else is speaking. If no one's speaking, you can just talk without putting your hand up.

I want to hear everyone's opinion during our discussion, but that means every one can't talk at once. It might happen that what you think is different to what someone else says, but that's fine. There are no right or wrong answers. If you do disagree with anything, say so, and the same goes if you agree with what someone says.

Whatever you say during this session won't be discussed with other people, so if you say how much you hate reading, I won't go back to your teachers and tell them.

I'm taping our discussion so I can remember what everyone said and write about it afterwards. I'm the only one who is going to listen to the recording.

I'm going to write a report about what we talk about, and if I write something that one of you said, I'll give you a different name, so no one will know it was you.

I have some name tag stickers that everyone can write their name on. I'm wearing one too so you can remember my name.

I also have some butchers paper and pens. Some of what we talk about is going to be written down to help me remember everything. There are a couple of different times we're going to write, so we'll need a couple of scribes. Who would like to be a scribe?

### **Discussion**

- 1) What do you think of reading? Do you enjoy or not enjoy reading?
- 2) Since the start of term what have you read outside of class? ie. not for any school subjects and you chose it? [if discussion is slow give examples: books, magazines, newspaper, web]
- 3) I have some graphic novels here. [pass around examples of graphic novels]
- 4) Have you seen graphic novels before?
- 5) Have you read graphic novels before?
- 6) What do you think of graphic novels from looking at these ones?
- 7) Would you like to read any of these graphic novels?
- 8) Do you think you will try reading a graphic novel after today?
- 9) Where do you get what you read?
- 10) Do you ever use the school library or a public library to find things to read, that are not for class?
- 11) What do you think of the books you read for your English class?
- 12) What would you think if your teachers assigned graphic novels in your English class?
- 13) Do you think graphic novels would be appropriate to study in your English class? Why?
- 14) [Brainstorm ideas discussed through the questions on butchers paper.]

Thank you for taking part. Our discussion has been lots of help to me.

### Appendix F: Graphic novels displayed during Focus groups

- Arakawa, H. (2005). *Fullmetal Alchemist* (Vol. 3). San Francisco: Viz.
- Barker, K. (2005). *Plastic Man: On the Lam*. New York: DC Comics.
- Bendis, B. M., & Bagley, M. (2000). *Ultimate Spider-Man: Power and Responsibility* (Vol. 1). New York: Marvel Comics.
- Clugston-Major, C. (2005). *Queen Bee*. New York: Graphix.
- Fujishima, K. (2002). *Oh My Goddess! Wrong Number* (Vol. 1). Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse Comics.
- Gownley, J. (2006). *Amelia Rules! The Whole World's Crazy* (Vol. 1). Harrisburg, PA: Renaissance Press.
- Kanari, Y., & Sato, F. (2006). *The Kindaichi Case Files: House of Wax* (Vol. 13). Los Angeles: Tokyopop.
- Naifeh, T. (2004). *Courtney Crumrin in the Twilight Kingdom* (Vol. 3). Portland, OR: Oni Press.
- Runton, A. (2004). *Owly*. Marietta, GA: Top Shelf Productions.
- Sakai, S. (1998). *Usagi Yojimbo: The Brink of Life & Death*. Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse Comics.
- Smith, J. (2005). *Bone: Out from Boneville* (Vol. 1). New York: Graphix.
- Takahashi, R. (1988). *Ranma 1/2* (Vol. 28). San Francisco: Viz.
- Takahashi, R. (2003). *Inu-Yasha* (Vol. 3). San Francisco: Viz.
- Takaya, N. (2004). *Fruits Basket* (Vol. 1). Los Angeles: Tokyopop.
- Ueda, M. (2004). *Peach Girl* (Vol. 2). Los Angeles: Tokyopop.
- Vaughan, B. K., & Alphona, A. (2003). *Runaways: Pride and Joy* (Vol. 1). New York: Marvel Comics.
- Vaughan, B. K., & Kubert, A. (2004). *Ultimate X-Men: Cry Wolf* (Vol. 10). New York: Marvel Comics.





## Appendix G: Student Handout for Focus Groups

### Superheroes

*Plastic Man* by Kyle Barker  
*Ultimate Spiderman* by Brian Michael Bendis  
*House of M* by Brian Michael Bendis  
*Ultimate Fantastic Four* by Mike Carey  
*Catwoman: Selina's Big Score* by Darwyn Cooke  
*Absolute Batman* by Jeph Loeb  
*Runaways* by Brian K. Vaughn  
*Ultimate X-Men* by Brian K. Vaughn  
*Astonishing X-Men* by Joss Whedon & John Cassaday

### Action & Adventure

*Fullmetal Alchemist* by Hiromu Arakawa  
*Spyboy: The Deadly Gourmet Affair* by Peter David  
*Akiko* by Mark Crilley  
*Juline* by Narumi Kakinouchi  
*Polly and the Pirates* by Ted Naifeh  
*Usagi Yojimbo* by Stan Sakai  
*Inu Yasha* by Rumiko Takahashi  
*Gon* by Masashi Tanaka  
*Alison Dare, Little Miss Adventure* by J. Torres & J. Jones

### Mystery

*The Kindaichi Casefiles* by Yozaburo Kanari & Fumiya Sato

### Comedy

*Groo* by Sergio Aragones  
*Lenore* by Roman Dirge  
*Oh My Goddess!* by Kosuke Fujishima  
*Amelia Rules!* by Jimmy Gownley  
*Bone* by Jeff Smith  
*Iron Wok Jan!* by Shinji Saijyo

### Fantasy

*Book of Magic* by Neil Gaiman  
*Courtney Crumrin* by Ted Naifeh  
*Emily the Strange* by Rob Reger  
*Bone* by Jeff Smith  
*The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien & David Wenzel

### Science Fiction

*Electric Girl* by Michael Brennan  
*Queen Bee* by Chynna Clugston  
*.hack: Legend of the Twilight* by Tatsuya Hamazaki & Rei Izumi  
*Mai the Psychic Girl* by Kazuka Judo  
*Mobile Suit Gundam: Ecole du Ciel* by Haruhiko Mikimoto

### Non Fiction

*Age of Reptiles* by Ricardo Delgado  
*Clan Apis* by Jay Hosler  
*Age of Bronze* by Eric Shanower  
*Maus* by Art Spiegelman

### Sport & Games

*Hikaru no Go* by Yumi Hotta  
*Rebound* by Yuriko Nishiyama  
*The Prince of Tennis* by Takeshi Konomi

### Romance

*Fruits Basket* by Natsuki Takaya  
*Love Roma* by Minoru Toyoda  
*Kare Kano* by Masami Tsuda  
*Marmalade Boy* by Wataru Yoshizumi

### Manga

*Fullmetal Alchemist* by Hiromu Arakawa  
*Oh My Goddess!* by Kosuke Fujishima  
*.hack: Legend of the Twilight* by Tatsuya Hamazaki & Rei Izumi  
*Hikaru no Go* by Yumi Hotta  
*Juline* by Narumi Kakinouchi  
*The Kindaichi Casefiles* by Yozaburo Kanari & Fumiya Sato  
*The Prince of Tennis* by Takeshi Konomi  
*Mai the Psychic Girl* by Kazuka Kudo  
*Mobile Suit Gundam: Ecole du Ciel* by Haruhiko Mikimoto  
*Rebound* by Yuriko Nishiyama  
*Iron Wok Jan!* by Shinji Saijyo  
*Inu Yasha* by Rumiko Takahashi  
*Fruits Basket* by Natsuki Takaya  
*Gon* by Masashi Tanaka  
*Love Roma* by Minoru Toyoda  
*Kare Kano* by Masami Tsuda  
*Marmalade Boy* by Wataru Yoshizumi

### Web Comics

*Scary Go Round* by John Allison  
[www.scarygoround.com](http://www.scarygoround.com)  
*Joe and Monkey* by Zach Miller  
[www.joeandmonkey.com](http://www.joeandmonkey.com)  
*Megatokyo* by Fred Gallagher  
[www.megatokyo.com](http://www.megatokyo.com)  
*Questionable Content* by Jeph Jacques  
[www.questionablecontent.net](http://www.questionablecontent.net)  
*Apple Geeks* by Mohammad "Hawk" Haque & Ananth Panagariya  
[www.applegeeks.com](http://www.applegeeks.com)  
*Order of the Stick* by Rich Burlew  
[www.giantitp.com/Comics.html](http://www.giantitp.com/Comics.html)



## Appendix H



Faculty of Media, Society and Culture  
 GPO Box U1987  
 PERTH WA 6845

October 2006

Dear Parent,

I am a PhD student at Curtin University of Technology. I am undertaking a research project to find out about the reading habits of teenagers, particularly their reading of graphic novels and whether graphic novels encourage teenagers to use libraries and read in their free time. Graphic novels are book-length comics.

High school students from a number of metropolitan high schools are being asked to participate in a focus group. These sessions will occur during a timetabled English class and students will discuss their reading habits, including whether they read graphic novels. Some graphic novels that have been approved by the school will be shown during the session. I would like to request the participation of your child. This is entirely voluntary and your child is free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time. Participation does not entail the need for any prior preparation.

Confidentiality of student's discussions will be ensured during and after my research project. Focus group sessions will be recorded. I will transcribe these recordings and cassettes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet accessible only to myself. Any information which identifies individuals will not be revealed. In the writing of my research results, if individual students are described, pseudonyms will be used.

If you are willing to give permission for your child to participate in a focus group, please sign and return the attached form to your child's English teacher. When permission slips are returned, I will randomly select five students to take part in the focus group. This will mean your child is not guaranteed a place in the focus group, but whether your child is one of the five chosen or not, your permission will contribute to my research and will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Clare Snowball.

-----  
 My son/daughter \_\_\_\_\_ wishes to take part in a focus group. I have read and understood the information detailing the focus group. I give permission for my son/daughter to participate in a focus group during an English class in Term 4, 2006.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date



Appendix I



Faculty of Media, Society and Culture  
GPO Box U1987  
PERTH WA 6845

August 2007

Dear Librarian,

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed about the graphic novel collection in your library.

The interview will take an hour of your time. You are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time if you change your mind.

Confidentiality of our discussion will be ensured during and after my research project. I will record our discussion and transcribe the recordings myself. A digital copy of the recording will be kept in a locked filing cabinet accessible only to me. Any information which identifies individuals, libraries or schools will not be revealed. In the writing of my research results, if individuals, libraries or schools are described, pseudonyms will be used.

Your help with my research is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Clare Snowball.

-----  
I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to take part in an interview. I have read and understood the information regarding the interview.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



### Appendix J: Interview Guide

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.

1. What do you think of the graphic novel format?
2. How did your graphic novel collection come about? Did you start it? Why?
3. Do you think graphic novels encourage reluctant readers to read?
  - a. Do you believe reading graphic novels leads to reading other materials?
4. Do you find that students who use graphic novels in your library use only that collection or also borrow other materials? If so what else?
5. What do you think are the main reasons in support of having graphic novels in your library?
6. How are your graphic novels used by the students?
  - a. What age groups are they aimed at?
  - b. What age groups actually use them?
  - c. Used in the library or borrowed?
7. How are your graphic novels shelved?
  - a. Are they interfiled with other books?
  - b. Is there a separate location where all graphic novels are shelved?
  - c. Are your graphic novels divided in any way eg. older/younger students.
8. Have you considered shelving your graphic novels face out? What do you think of this?
9. A U.S. librarian, Francisca Goldsmith, has noted the assumption that because graphic novels are picture-based they must be for children or teenagers. This has led to some libraries shelving all graphic novels in one location, often YA. This can lead to “(1) the collection containing material that is inappropriate for its intended users, and (2) the library failing to collect from the vast array of graphic novels that are not appropriate to the designated age group” (2005, p.59)
  - a. Have you considered this? Do you find this with your collection?
  - b. How do you deal with this issue?
10. What problems have you encountered in working with graphic novels and how significant do you think these problems are?
  - a. Theft/vandalism?
  - b. Is it more than other materials?
11. Much US literature discusses “challenges” to graphic novels (Miller, 2005, p.59). Do you find that graphic novels receive more complaints than other materials?
12. Have you had any complaints about a graphic novel in your collection? How did you deal with this?
  - a. Do you have a collection development policy which includes graphic

novels?

- b. Do you actively try to select materials which will lessen complaints?  
e.g. not acquire graphic novels that depict sex, violence.
- c. Discuss *Ranma 1/2*.

13. How have you promoted your collection?

Thank you for your time.