

READING SELECTION AS INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOR:

A CASE STUDY WITH ADOLESCENT GIRLS

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The aim of this research, *Reading Selection as Information Seeking Behavior: A Case Study with Adolescent Girls*, was to explore how the experience of reading fiction affects adolescent girls aged 13 through 15, and how that experience changes based upon four activities: journaling, blogging, a personal interview, and a focus group session. Each participant reflects upon works of her own choosing that she had recently read. The data is evaluated using content analysis with the goal of developing a relational analysis tool to be used and tested with future research projects.

The goal of this research is to use the insights of the field of bibliotherapy together with the insights of the adolescent girls to provide a higher, more robust model of successful information behavior. That is, relevance is a matter of impact on life rather than just a match of subject heading. This work provides a thick description of a set of real world relevancy judgments. This may serve to illuminate theories and practices for bringing each individual seeker together with appropriate documents.

This research offers a new model for relevant information seeking behavior associated with selecting works of essential instructional fiction, as well as a new definition for terminology to describe the results of the therapeutic literary experience.

The data from this study, as well as from previous research, suggest that literature (specifically young adult literature) brings the reader to a better understanding of herself and the world around her.

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You think your pain and your heartache are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read. It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, or had ever been alive.

James Baldwin, 1924–1987

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Growing Up is Hard to Do

Wilson notes: "Situationally relevant items of information are those that answer, or logically help to answer, questions of concern" (1983, p. 457). While relevance obviously depends to some degree on the subject matter of a document, the impact or relevance cannot be determined without examination of a document's impact on a question of concern. How does the document change the decision making process for a person? One way to examine such a concern would be to have a group of people look back on their experiences with documents and how those documents has impacted their lives. If we could find some commonalities among members of a group, we might be able to inform future provision of services to similar seekers of informing documents.

It might also be useful to bring the insights of a field that has studied motivations and impact of a particular form of document on a particular type of information seeker. In this research, the insights of bibliotherapy and the insights of a group of adolescent girls were woven together with the concerns of information science for determining means of bringing together seekers and appropriate documents, what we will term relevance. Growing up is hard to do. One means of easing the pain of the journey for many adolescent girls has been reading novels.

The concept of literature as an entity illuminated by therapeutic relevance—using stories to build character, to teach lessons, to change attitudes and behaviors—is as old as the "art of reading" (Bryan, 1939, p. 773; Sclabassi, 1973; Miracle, 1995). The libraries in ancient cities such as Alexandria and Thebes displayed inscriptions bearing

the sentiments “Medicine of the Mind” and “Healing of the Soul” (e.g., Brown, 1975; Afolayan, 1992; Sullivan & Strang, 2002-2003; Heath, Sheen, Leavy, Young, & Money, 2005). Long before there were books, the oral tradition taught children morals and virtues with fables and fairy tales, as well as Bible stories (Shrodes, 1950; Myracle, 1995; McDaniel, 2001). The written adaptations that came later maintained the didactic nature of their oral predecessors.

In 1928, Edwin Starbuck published the first guide for parents on using literature to solve their children’s character problems (Myracle, 1995). Bruno Bettelheim asserted that “the achievement of psychological independence, moral maturity and sexual confidence” can result from reading folk tales (Zipes, 2002, p. 161). Riordan & Wilson (1989) stated that “bibliotherapy refers to the guided reading of written materials in gaining understanding of solving problems relevant to a person’s therapeutic needs” (p. 506). This idea, suggested Lenkowsky (1987), “that reading could affect an individual’s attitude and behavior and is thus an important influence in shaping, molding, and altering values” provided the foundation for bibliotherapy (p. 123).

The values of bibliotherapy include the opportunity to learn to know one’s self better, to understand human behavior, to find interests outside of the self and the socialization of the individual. In modern life, it is through the printed page that many of the most important social influences are exerted. (Edwards, 1972, p. 213)

Proponents of bibliotherapy such as Russell and Shrodes, and Hynes and Hynes-Berry have attempted to establish bibliotherapy as an interactive process. Russell and Shrodes (1950a/b) established bibliotherapy as an interaction between the reader and

the literature; however, Hynes and Hynes-Berry (1986) proclaimed bibliotherapy as an interaction between the reader and the facilitator. Regardless of the interactive situation, as Joseph Gold asserted, “We must see Literature as a necessary form of language, and we must see language as the means of reconnecting with each other and the world we depend on for life” (2002, p. xiii).

Statement of Personal Interest

I knew from the day that I first began the doctoral program that I wanted to explore the therapeutic value of young adult literature for my dissertation research. I was aware during my own youth that literature had a therapeutic value, although I never consciously sought out literature that might help with a particular problem. If anything, the young adult literature of yesteryear dealt less with problem solving and more with helping adolescents feel more normal and less alone.

I originally thought that the study would be based upon reading of one or more books. However, the more I tried to make that scenario work, the more it became obvious that there was a “better” way to go about researching the therapeutic value of young adult literature. Thinking back to my own self-selected literature-filled adolescence, I decided to explore what adolescent girls were choosing to read on their own and what affects that might discover in retrospect.

Statement of the Problem

Discovering what feelings and emotions adolescent girls experience when they read fiction and to investigate whether literature has value in the lives of adolescent girls

were the rationale for this study. In an age of television, blogging, instant messaging, and other forms of information access and social networking, does reading fiction still have a place in the lives of teenage girls? Do they see in retrospect that fiction has helped them? Does the mode of social engagement impact the degree to which social engagement contributes to the value of the reading?

The secondary purpose was to look at how the expression of those feelings and emotions affects how they interpret or experience what they read. Thus, this study explored the effects of reading fiction on adolescent girls, and how those effects changed based upon four post-reading interactions or activities, which were journaling, blogging, a personal interview, and a discussion group.

Significance of the Study

This study was significant because previous research focused primarily on the use of specific literature (usually self-help literature) to change, solve or impact a particular problem or behavior. This study explored the impact or value of the literature that adolescent girls have read in the course of their everyday lives. While this study focused on the value of young adult fiction literature, no specific books or other readings were assigned. There were no attempts to address, diagnose or treat any particular problems or behaviors. Cohen (1994) noted that studies from all disciplines that have sought to prove the effectiveness of bibliotherapy have done so “without a basic understanding of the reader’s experience of the process” (p. 428). The impact that young adult literature can have on everyday female adolescent life was the focus of this research.

It is important to note goals that were not addressed in this research. It was not an attempt to validate or invalidate bibliotherapy. It was not an attempt to *prove* that young adult literature has therapeutic value. It was not an attempt to condone or suggest librarians should be bibliotherapists or psychologists. It was not an attempt to redefine bibliotherapy. It was an effort to explore how adolescent girls have responded to young adult fiction and how various types of interaction might have affected those responses.

Relevance of the Study

Adolescent girls seek information on how to conduct their lives just as we all do. Focusing on a particular group of information seekers helps us focus our concepts of how best to help bring together seekers and useful documents. The girls' reading materials may be teen magazines, graphic novels, young adult novels, etc., and may be sought for reasons such as pleasure seeking, to relieve boredom, to escape pain and suffering for a while, or for the simple joyful escape that reading can provide.

These reading materials can be described as what Douglas MacBeth called essential instructional fiction (1994). When adolescents are seeking essential instructional fiction, they are not actively searching for instruction. They are seeking to select from a myriad of reading stimuli in response to the reasons mentioned above, and may look for input from various agencies (see Figure 1), such as librarians, teachers, peers, parents, and authors. Of all those agencies, the librarian must understand the members of the community, the essential instructional fictions available and the potential impact they may have on an adolescent girl. In order to increase the

possibility of pointing an adolescent girl to literature that would provide a meaningful second-hand experience, we need to know the Relevancy Components, which are “comprehensibility, credibility, timeliness, and style” (O’Connor & O’Connor, 1998). In other words, we are seeking to understand and implement relevance.

Relevancy Components

For the purpose of this study, the four relevancy components can be defined as follows:

Comprehensibility means that a work of essential instructional fiction meets the needs of the adolescent in terms of reading level, language, and environments to which she can relate. A work of essential instructional fiction about an orphan who lived in France may not be comprehensible for an orphan in west Texas; or perhaps it can, if written in a way that accounts for the differences in time and place.

Credibility means that the situations and characters are such that the adolescent can relate to them. An adolescent coping with a particular life issue may need a work of essential instructional fiction that closely correlates to her own experience. If her grandmother is close to death, a book about a best friend dying may not have the credibility she needs. Even a work of science fiction can be credible for the “right” reader, but other readers will require realistic fiction for credibility.

Timeliness is “the right book at the right time.” Is it what the reader “needs” now? If the characters face situations for which the reader does not yet have the necessary life experiences, then the work can lose both credibility and comprehensibility.

Style is just as important for many readers. A reluctant reader may find a Harry Potter book comprehensible, credible and timely, but will likely never finish a book of that magnitude. A book written in verse or instant messages is much likely to be read (and finished!) with enthusiasm, and they are becoming more popular.

Regardless of the actual form each of these variables takes in any particular book, relevance depends on a reasonable match between the adolescent girl reader and the attributes of the book.

Relevance Model

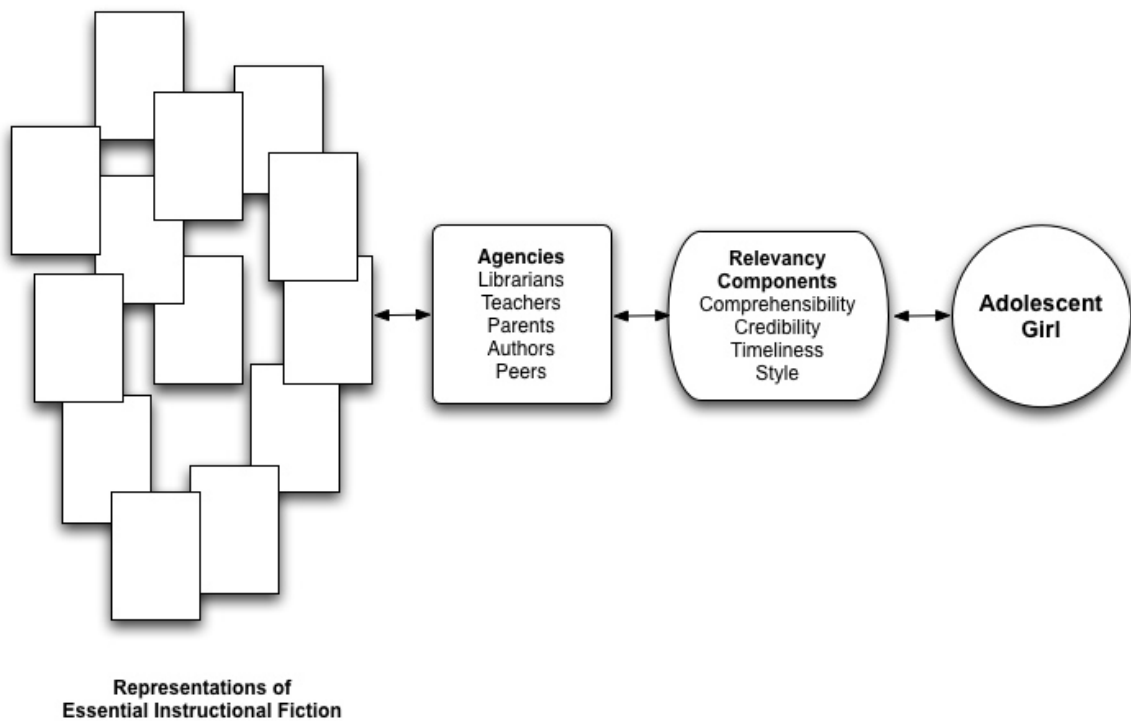


Figure 1. Relevance model.

Anticipated Limitations and Assumptions

Conducting a study of this nature does not present the opportunity to exert much control. The everyday life of human beings is always in flux, and adolescent girls are no exception. The possibility that a participant might not disclose her true feelings and experience because she feared parental or peer knowledge was also a concern. The issue of diversity among the participants was a concern. Self-selection into the study might have resulted in a participant group which represented neither the local population nor the nation's population. Participant recruitment took place at McMath Middle School in the Denton Independent School District. There were unanticipated restrictions that resulted in minor, but significant alterations to the study parameters. Those restrictions and the ramifications of them are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Research Questions

The primary objective of this study was to explore the effects of reading fiction on adolescent girls, and how those effects changed based on four types of social interaction. That objective was sought by attempting to answer the following questions:

- Can an interaction between the reader and the literature occur if the reader does not make a connection with the facilitator?
- How do we define the therapeutic value of literature when the connection is unsolicited and when there is no facilitation?
- In an age of television, blogging, instant messaging, and other forms of information access and social networking, does reading fiction still have a place in the lives of teenage girls?

- Do they see in retrospect that fiction has helped them?
- Does the mode of social engagement impact the degree to which social engagement contributes to the value of the reading?

Definitions

There are several terms important to this study that are ambiguous. Bibliotherapy is one of those terms. For the purpose of this study, bibliotherapy can be defined as *the use of literature to help the reader to better understand life experiences*. The numerous definitions and ideas surrounding bibliotherapy are discussed in detail in Chapter 2. *Therapeutic literature* usually refers to any literature with therapeutic value, which may or may not be used in bibliotherapy, but which potentially can be all literature. According to the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>), *therapeutic* can be defined as “causing someone to feel happier and more relaxed or to be more healthy.”

The terms *young adult*, *teenager* and *adolescent* frequently have different definitions depending upon the discipline or field of study. In the discussions that follow, all three terms are used interchangeably; they always refer to either those aged 12 to 18 in general, and to the participants of this study in particular as appropriate.

Young adult literature refers to that literature written specifically for the teenage market or that literature read primarily by teenagers.

The young ladies who participated in this study often are referred to as *girls* or *the girls*. These references were not intended to be derogatory or to undermine their emerging maturity, but rather they are considered terms of endearment – as in *my girls*.

I never heard them refer to themselves, but I heard them referred to as *ladies* and *girls* by adults on the campus. They are frequently referred to as *participants*, as well. In addition, because the participants were all female, the pronouns *she* and *her* are used throughout the document. This includes changes to quoted text, which are indicated in brackets.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Definitions of Bibliotherapy through History

The first use of the term bibliotherapy to describe therapeutic literature has overwhelmingly attributed to Samuel Crothers who wrote about the clinical use of literature for therapeutic purposes in an *Atlantic Monthly* article in 1916 (e.g., Crothers, 1916; Brown, 1975; Afolayan, 1992; Myracle, 1995; Wolpow & Askov, 2001; Sullivan & Strang, 2002-2003; Heath et al., 2005; Pehrsson & McMillen, 2005). The bibliotherapy to which Crothers referred involved the use of self-help books to facilitate healing. The intent was to use self-help literature to help those experiencing addiction or emotional problems, a physician usually provided the prescription. After completing the prescribed reading, the patient might have had a discussion with the doctor, or a therapy group. This clinical approach to bibliotherapy was prominent in hospitals during World War I (Myracle, 1995).

Hynes and Hynes-Berry, and others have noted the etymology of bibliotherapy: “*Biblio-* means *books* and, and by extension, *literature*; *-therapy* comes from *therapeia*, meaning *to serve* and *to help medically*, and it suggests the concept of healing” (1986, p. 10; see also Smith, 1991; Cohen, 1992). In 1961, Webster’s Third International Edition defined bibliotherapy as “the use of selected reading materials as therapeutic adjuvants in medicine and in psychiatry; guidance in the solution of personal problems through directed reading” (Brown, 1975, p. 1; Rubin, 1978b, p. 1). The American Library Association accepted this broader definition in 1966 (e.g., Tews, 1962). However, *Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary* (1941) defined bibliotherapy as “the

employment of books and the reading of them in the treatment of nervous disease" (Rubin, 1978b, p. 1).

The variance in definitions and practice, as well as the potential off-putting implication of the word *therapy*, has prompted many scholars and advocates of bibliotherapy to suggest alternative terms, such as bibliocounseling, bibliopsychology, bookmatching, literatherapy, library therapeutics, guided reading, biblioguidance, bibliodiagnosics, biblioguidance, and biblioprophylaxis (Rubin, 1978b, p. 6; Pehrsson & McMillen, 2005, p. 47). None of which have caught on in any field. Stephen Bonnycastle (2000) addressed this concern: "The word 'therapy' has a connotation of healing, which could be taken to imply that the use of bibliotherapy is wounded" (p. 2). "Some of the confusion is undoubtedly due to the incorporation of the word *therapy* in *bibliotherapy*, which automatically invokes assumptions that its purpose is to cure illness or treat dysfunction" (Doll & Doll, 1997, p. 6). Doll and Doll go on to say that "remediation, therapeutic effect, and personal problems" are often found in many definitions [and goals] of bibliotherapy thus creating the assumption that "the children and youth who participate in it are largely a dysfunctional and harried lot" (Doll & Doll, 1997, p. 6). Many of the definitions devised by bibliotherapy scholars and practitioners in psychology and medicine have supported the term and the inference it evokes.

All of the following representative definitions come from fields related to psychology and medicine. While all are simplistic, they spotlight, either explicitly or implicitly, the perceived need for a facilitator or guide. Schrank & Engels (1981) asserted, "Bibliotherapy means *guided* [italics added] reading that helps individuals gain understandings of the self and environment, learn from others, or find solutions to

problems” (p. 143). Hynes and Hynes-Berry (1986) said, “Bibliotherapy uses literature to bring about a therapeutic interaction between participant and *facilitator* [italics added]” (p. 10). Riordan & Wilson (1989) stated that “Bibliotherapy refers to the *guided* [italics added] reading of written materials in gaining understanding of solving problems relevant to a person’s therapeutic needs” (p. 506). Cohen called bibliotherapy “the therapeutic use of literature with *guidance* [italics added] or intervention from a therapist” (Cohen, 1994a, p. 426; Cohen, 1994b, p. 37). Alice Bryan’s 1939 definition, which appeared in an issue of *The Library Journal*, could be considered a catalyst between the science-oriented definitions above and the educationally originated definitions below:

The field of bibliotherapy might then be defined as the prescription of reading materials which will help to develop emotional maturity and nourish and sustain mental health. This definition broadens the scope of bibliotherapy to include not only the use of reading materials as an alleviative and curative measure for persons already ill, but as a preventative agent to keep people well. (p. 774-775)

The title of Bryan’s article was “Can there be a Science of Bibliotherapy?” In 1975, Eleanor Brown attempted to separate bibliotherapy approaches into science and art.

Both the scientific definition and the artistic definition were guidance based:

The *science* [italics added] of bibliotherapy requires cooperative effort on the part of doctors, nurses, and librarians. The doctors and nurses are not reading specialists and their knowledge of books is usually not as broad as that of a practicing librarian. The *art* [italics added] of bibliotherapy, on the other hand, can be practiced by a single individual who understands people thoroughly, has a

wide knowledge of books, and is very sympathetic to human needs. (p. 4)

The representative definitions below focused on the interaction between the reader and the reading material and its use in educational environments. The definition of Russell and Shrodes (1950a) was based upon Shrodes' dissertation from the year before: "Bibliotherapy may be defined as a process of dynamic *interaction between the personality of the reader and literature* [italics added]--interaction which may be utilized for personality assessment, adjustment, and growth" (p. 335). The 1979 definition of bibliotherapy by Galen and Johns was in an article published in *School Library Journal*; however, classroom teachers were the intended audience: "Bibliotherapy can be defined as an interaction between a reader and a book which helps the reader solve problems and develop effectively" (p. 25). For Davis and Wilson (1992), bibliotherapy meant "the process of growing toward emotional good health through the medium of literature" (p. 2). Doll and Doll attempted to bridge the gap between librarians and mental health professionals with their 1997 book *Bibliotherapy with Young People: Librarians and Mental Health Professionals Working Together*. They simply defined bibliotherapy as "sharing a book or books with the intent of helping the reader deal with personal problems" (p. 1).

In the 1930s, Sadie Peterson Delaney, United States Veterans Administration Hospital Chief Librarian, bibliotherapist and one-time public librarian, gained worldwide attention with her bibliotherapeutic methods for which she won numerous awards. Relying upon interpretation, Brown (1975) considered Delaney's succinct definition of bibliotherapy "the treatment of a patient through selected reading" to be "one of the most concise and apt definitions to be found anywhere" (p. 9; See also Gubert, 1993, p.

124; Jones, 2006, p. 24). A definition, which as Brown asserted, required the loosest possible definition of the word "patient" (1975, p. 9; Gubert, 1993, p. 124). However simple a definition one has given to bibliotherapy, the controversy over its usage has continued. As Lenkowsky (1987) pointed out, "the scope of interpretation of what bibliotherapy is appears too broad for its original intent" (p. 125).

The meaning of the term *bibliotherapy* has become as controversial at its intended uses, as well as its use as an umbrella term (Hynes and Hynes-Berry, 1986, p. 10) for all applications of therapeutic literature. "The practice of bibliotherapy is difficult to describe, defend, or debate" (Doll & Doll, 1997, p. 1). Although the scholars who have dispensed their knowledge over the last seventy years come from a number of schools of thought, even those within the same field have not been able to agree on a definition of bibliotherapy, and thus its usage. "Because of the various uses for bibliotherapy and the number of contexts within which the subject is written, one can find in the literature correspondingly different definitions, objectives, and types of literature utilized" (Sclabassi, 1973, p. 71).

Coming from an educational viewpoint, Russell and Shrodes noted in 1950, "the time is long overdue for comprehensive studies of the *effects* of literature upon the reader" (1950b, p. 417). Laura Cohen, a practicing bibliotherapist in nursing noted in 1994, "there is need for conceptual clarity, consistency in terminology and a framework to unify research/practice perspectives" (1994b, p. 38). By 2005, it seemed that little had changed. While case studies and anecdotal reports were abundant, there was little available in the way of empirical research (Pehrsson & McMillen, 2005). In an article the previous year, youth literature advocate, Marc Aronson noted that reading experts could

not provide empirical evidence regarding “whether young people's beliefs are formed by texts, or in which ways” (Aronson, 2004, p. 15). However, as Aronson points out, “this question of how books affect their readers is the big unexamined issue in children's books, and while we know it is there, we have not even begun to face it” (2004, p. 14). This has been particularly true within the realm of library science.

Models and Approaches

Because there is no unambiguous definition of bibliotherapy, only a few bibliotherapy researchers and supporters have attempted to apply theory to its use. Many bibliotherapy scholars have given credit to Caroline Shrodes as the pioneer of the bibliotherapeutic process. In her 1949 doctoral dissertation, Shrodes detailed a 3-stage process that included *identification*, *catharsis*, and *insight* (Shrodes, 1949; Afolayan, 1992; Wolpow & Askov, 2001). Thus, “bibliotherapy becomes a process of identifying with another character or group [identification] so that feelings are released [catharsis] and the individual develops a great awareness of his own motivations and rationalizations for his behavior [insight]” (Russell & Shrodes, 1950a, p. 336-337).

Myracle (1995) explained the development of bibliotherapeutic literature and divided it into three periods. In the 1800s children’s literature was didactic and revolved around religious instruction, and was written *for* kids; in the early 1900s series fiction emerged, which was characterized by sentimentality, and written *about* kids; and in the 1950s came realistic fiction, which was written *through kids’ eyes*.

Educational approaches to bibliotherapy typically used fiction literature as opposed to self-help books. Gold (1988) describes the benefits of fiction: “Reading

fiction invites identification or counter-identification relatively safely by the use of surrogate selves that can be lived through and then left actively which seems to produce insight and self-awareness and thus catharsis” (p. 139). Gold went on to say, “Fiction is an adaptive tool for human beings” (p. 140).

Following in the vein of insight, identification (or self-awareness) and catharsis, in her introduction to *Using Bibliotherapy*, Rubin (1978b) stated that “the goal of bibliotherapy should be insight and understanding.... Insight is the power of a thinking, feeling person to look within and beneath the surface of things; it is an ability that can be strengthened through bibliotherapy” (p. 9). The goals outlined by Pardeck (1994) are more about the process of bibliotherapy than Rubin’s, which focuses on the outcome.

The goals of bibliotherapy are: (a) to provide information about problems, (b) to provide insight into problems, (c) to stimulate discussion about problems, (d) to communicate new values and attitudes, (e) to create an awareness that others have dealt with similar problems, and (f) to provide solutions to problems.

(Pardeck, 1994, p. 421)

Over the decades, many, and sometimes overlapping, approaches to bibliotherapy have emerged. All of these approaches presume a facilitator’s involvement even if it is only guiding the reader to the material. Several of those overlapping approaches can be noted in the definitions below:

- Developmental bibliotherapy – “... grows out of the recognition that the need to confront personal feelings, to improve self-awareness, and to enhance self-esteem ...” (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 1986, p. 14) is beneficial to those facing life’s ordinary challenges, and fall outside of the realm of clinical or

institutional bibliotherapy. Clinical bibliotherapy has been considered more in depth than developmental bibliotherapy, which is usually group based, such as support groups (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 1986).

- Diagnostic bibliotherapy – the use of literature for personality assessment and mental health diagnosis.
- Clinical or institutional bibliotherapy – the use of literature as a therapeutic adjunct with those in correctional facilities and other institutions, including those in inpatient and outpatient treatment programs (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 1986)
- Reading bibliotherapy – the use of literature specifically for its therapeutic value, essentially therapeutic readers' advisory (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 1986)
- Protective bibliotherapy – the use of reading materials to protect recovering mental patients as they readjust to the outside world (Rubin, 1975)
- Interactive bibliotherapy – the dialogue that takes place with a facilitator after the reading experience is more important than the reading itself (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 1986)

None of the approaches allow for a completely self-guided reader or spontaneous therapeutic results.

Reader Response Theory

In reader response theory, “both reader and text are essential to the transactional process of making meaning” (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 27) and each reader “brings to it [her] own complex perceptions and reactions” (Russell & Shrodes, 1950a, p. 336). “The

beauty of a good story is its openness – the way you or I or anyone reading it can take it in, and use it for ourselves” (Coles, 1989, p. 47). Reading is an individual, “private and personal activity,” which is “almost entirely cognitive” (Gold, 1988b, p. 139; Bonnycastle, 2000). Reading is an affective activity which arouses the reader’s cognitive processes wherein “the reader supplies the images for ‘realizing’ the content” (Gold, 1988b, p. 139). The cognitive processes of this reader-oriented view generate insights, emotions, and other developmental changes, which produce value exploration, critical thinking skills, and stress relief – therapeutic effects that are more important than the act of reading itself and the foundation of bibliotherapy (Daisey, 1993; Gould & Mignone, 1994; Cheu, 2001).

“Imaginative literature makes possible an emotional experience” (Jackson, 1962, p. 121) through which “most children can be helped to solve the developmental problems of adjustment which they face” (Russell & Shrodes, 1950a, p. 335). When literature provides the opportunity for the adolescent reader to project her own feelings onto the characters, it can help to facilitate discussion thus allowing her to explore feelings before she is ready to claim them as her own (Alsup, 2003). The text of this literature becomes “signs on a page” immersing the reader in a “give and take” scenario (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 26).

Every reader processes these signs in her own way, bringing to each reading encounter only those feelings and experiences she holds within; thus, each new encounter with a work of literature creates a new experience (Rosenblatt, 1995; Bonnycastle, 2000). Because adolescents likely do not have a “consistent view of life or a fully integrated personality” (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 31), “the adolescent [reader] needs

to encounter literature for which [she] possesses the intellectual, emotional, experiential equipment” (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 25). “Any insight or clarification the youth derives from the literary work will grow out of its relevance to certain facets of [her] emotional or intellectual nature. The whole personality tends to become involved in the literary experience” (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 174). This process of identification with a character or characters in a fiction work results in the release of feelings, which creates catharsis and insight. This process is bibliotherapy (Russell & Shrodes, 1950a).

Why Story Matters

“Human beings both shape and are shaped by their stories” (Gold, 2002b, Preface xiv). “Reading stories is the best training for making stories, especially the one central story which is the reader’s life” (Gold, 2002b, Preface xv). Bauer (1991) said, “Fiction is about feeling. Reading fiction is about feeling one’s way into another human being’s life, looking out at the world through another pair of eyes. It is about the breaking down of that basic isolation into which we were all born. It is about experiencing on the most intimate level what it means to be another human being, and, therefore, coming away with a deeper understanding of ourselves” (p. 3).

Imaginative literature can create a more emotional experience than didactic literature, thus resulting in change (Sclabassi, 1973, p. 73). Consequently, imaginative “literature is a survival adaptation tool” (Gold, 2002b, Preface xiii), which when “carefully chosen and laid out in a pattern, says something about the nature of our lives, about being human” (Bauer, 1991, p. 3). Reading about the challenges, feelings, perceptions and growth of characters in a work of fiction “a reader can better realize his or her own

reactions and thoughts” (Coleman & Ganong, 1990, p. 327), and thus experience the therapeutic value of reading and that comes from realizing that they are not alone (Davis & Wilson, 1992; Cohen, 1994b). “The knowledge that someone else has similar problems has a therapeutic effect in itself” (Barbe, 1964, p. 478).

Gold (1988a) calls imaginative literature in the form of novels “complex systems of information storage” (p. 252). When these novels “tackle contemporary issues in straight-forward and honest ways,” (Angel, 2004, p. 102) they can “engage the reader affectively” resulting in “simulated life-experiences” (Gold, 1988a, p. 259). It is through the printed page that the impact of significant “social influences” (Edwards, 1972, p. 213) lets the reader experience new realities resulting in “growth and adjustment” (Alcorn & Bracher, 1985, p. 351). It is this “map of [the] rough terrain” of life, which when encountered by the reader of imaginative literature, can help [her] attain the adaptability and resilience necessary to survive and prosper in the unfamiliar regions where [she] may find [herself]” (Alcorn & Bracher, 1985, p. 351). This becomes bibliotherapy when the experience facilitates the knowledge that helps a child “recognize that life includes challenges that impact how people survive” and thus she develops “a hardy resilient spirit in the face of an assortment of circumstances” (Davis & Wilson, 1992, p. 2).

Fiction conveys information quickly thus becoming an “adaptive tool,” which gives voice to the reader’s “latent feelings” and thus “normaliz[es] the private trauma of life-crisis” (Gold, 1988b, p. 140). Sharing the gratification and influences that come from reading allows exceptional children “to understand better the problems of others as well as their own problems” (Barbe, 1964, p. 478). This consciousness does not need to be limited to exceptional children alone. All children – all readers – can experience “the

joys of losing oneself in the pages of a good book. But even more joyful, more validating, more vindicating is the experience of *finding* oneself in the pages of a good book. That is redemptive” (Cart, 2004, p. 21).

Adolescents, Especially Girls

Chris Crowe, Brigham Young University English professor and editor of the young adult literature column for the *English Journal*, proclaimed in a 2003 editorial, "I'm neither a psychologist nor a bibliotherapist, but I do know that reading books can help teenagers sort out some of the complicated issues facing them today" (p. 103). This is intuitively obvious, but what does “teenager” mean and why is that time in life so complicated? According to young adult literature advocate, Michael Cart (2004), it is important to understand that before World War II, teenagers were included in the umbrella term *youth* (generally those from 12 to 25), and the concept of young adulthood was non-existent. Teens did not gain status as a distinct population until after World War II.

It is often said that teenagers are “on the brink” of adulthood – they are no longer children but not yet mature, responsible adults. This would be Erikson’s fifth stage which begins around the time of puberty; it is a time when adolescents begin to question and often reframe the values and ideals of their childhood (Adler & Clark, 1991). This can also be called the liminal stage – that betwixt and between time when adolescents typically are “outsiders, on the margins, without a clear status or role” (Gauthier, 2002, p. 71). For example, C. S. Lewis’ Narnia is a liminal world (Ashley, 1990) adding to its appeal to adolescent subconscious states “because adolescents are so often in a

liminal stage before they even crack open any particular book” (Gauthier, 2002, p. 72). That is, because bodies, brains, and place in society are in a state of flux, the girls may not fully realize their own needs and motivations or what would resolve issues brought about by the state. Accordingly, they will seek what they sense they need in “accordance with [their] needs, goals defenses, and values” (Edwards, 1972, p. 215) at the time. “Left to their own devices, children will seek out their own level, read only what they are ready for” (Bauer, 1991, p. 2).

In a 2004 keynote address, Michael Cart stressed the importance of Havighurst’s developmental tasks. “While some of these [tasks] may sound a bit ... antique today, they are enormously important, because they established the notion of uniquely adolescent rites of passage ...” and they “presented a template for the evaluation of adolescent literature during its infancy” (Cart, 2004, p. 5-6). Havighurst’s developmental tasks for adolescents:

1. achieve new and more mature relations with age-mates of both sexes
2. achieve a masculine or feminine social role
3. accept one's physique and use the body effectively
4. achieve emotional independence of parents and other adults
5. prepare for marriage and family life
6. prepare for an economic career
7. acquire a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behavior and
8. desire and achieve socially responsible behavior

The “personal or ‘one to one’ relationship between a child and the book which [she] is reading is especially valuable” (Barbe, 1964, p. 478) because it is through story

that adolescents can experience characters with problems like her own. Therefore, reading “can be regarded as an exceptionally useful tool in the treatment of developmental blocks, periods of stress and life crisis, and in certain cognitive dysfunctions involving self-concept, self-esteem and interpersonal relations” (Gold, 1988b, p.135). Furthermore, she “is not threatened by the ever-present danger of ‘exposing’ [herself], for if the material becomes too threatening [she] may put it aside either temporarily or permanently” (Barbe, 1964, p. 478).

At a time when many youth feel like “nobodies,” they need to know that they are not alone, and “that they matter” (D'Ambrosio, 2006, p. 12). “Stories can help them connect with their hearts in a way that nothing else can.... to see their lives as a great adventure, rather than a series of meaningless events” (D'Ambrosio, 2006, p. 12). “A teenager who knows that he or she can find information and knowledge that could help him or her to cope with emotional and social matters would develop greater emotional independence” (Baruchson-Arbib, 2000, p. 105) thus they can learn to “take matters of choice and commitment more seriously than they might otherwise have done” (Coles, 1989, p. 90). They “may recognize them through literature and find possible solutions or alternative coping methods” (Gould & Mignone, 1994, p. 11). This is the power of story.

The idea of *self-concept*, which “infers a learned structure of ideas, feelings, and perceptions which each person reveals about [herself] and the way others see [her]” (Edwards, 1972, p. 213), is a significant one in the lives of young women. “Self-concepts can be defined in terms of self-confidence, freedom to express appropriate feelings, satisfaction with one's attainments and feeling of personal appreciation by others, and desire for enhancing self-esteem” (Edwards, 1972, p. 217). It is through

reading and identifying with characters – through bibliotherapy – that “literature is generally used as a tool to help [adolescent girls] deal with the issues so critical to this stage—self-identity, independence, and self-worth” (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 1986, p. 15), and “gain insight which will help them handle these [rites of passage] a better way (Green & Kruger, 1990, p. 27).

Garner (1999) stated, “the women and their fictional heroines/heroes reveal something very complex about the role of reading in a young woman’s life” (p. 105). The women who participated in Garner’s study felt empowered by “...heroines/heroes who were ‘just like me’ ... who “gave them the feeling that there was more than one way of being—that they had a choice in determining who they would become” (1999, p. 107).

Adolescence is "a time when readers are most susceptible to literary analyses that at least acknowledge moral concerns, and are most prepared to deal with alternative views of what a moral life may be" (Adler & Clark, 1991, p. 767). In a 2005 study, Pamela Carroll was surprised to discover that high school readers associate intelligence “with the ability to make moral judgments and, ultimately, to choose and do what is right" (p. 121). “Realistic teenage fiction ... can unobtrusively influence the manner in which girls cope with similar personal experiences. Developmental bibliotherapy is the term used to describe reading which achieves such a purpose.” (Green & Kruger, 1990, p. 27). Another “purpose of bibliotherapy is to help young people to feel a connectedness to others through the shared experience of reading” (Chatton, 1988, p. 336). Simply stated, nothing eases the universal pain and anguish of adolescence so “clearly and forcibly as fiction” (Gold, 1988b, p.144).

The YA in Young Adult Literature

"We read books to find out who we are. What other people, real and imaginary, do and think and feel is an essential guide to our understanding of what we ourselves are and may become" (Author Ursula LeGuin in Schutte and Malouff, 2006, p. 7).

Young adults could be considered fussy about their literature. They want to read literature "that respect[s] their intelligence, books in which characters are smart, wise, and strong and situations are complex" (Carroll, 2005, p. 121). According to Coleman & Ganong, "adolescent fiction can provide insight into the passions, problems, and concerns of children undergoing change" (p. 330), but only if readers can "identify with a culture of peers," and that the stories meet with their expectations of probability (Gauthier, 2002, p. 73). Jones (2000) said that authors of young adult literature brilliantly "capture the intensity and essence of adolescence" (p. 24).

The initiation of the contemporary realistic young adult novel came in 1967 with the publication of S. E. Hinton's *The Outsiders* and Robert Lipsyte's *The Contender* (Cart, 2004, p. 9). The issues presented in these and other contemporary young adult novels – in which adolescent readers view characters as "living and wrestling with real problems close to their own life experiences as teens" offering "a unique window on social conflicts and dilemmas" (Bean & Moni, 2003, p. 638) – often unnerve the adults in their lives (Alsup, 2003). "Many of these books address difficult or explosive issues that ... are real in students' lives" (Alsup, 2003, p. 161), "and if we treat children like they will be damaged by the strong feelings a story is intended to draw out, we cheat them of experiencing the fundamental power of story" (Bauer, 1991, p. 2). Imaginative literature can create a more emotional experience than didactic literature (Sclabassi, 1973, p. 73)

and “the response to the fictional world and its moral quandaries ... is deeper, more strongly felt, more lasting” (Coles, 1989, p. 181). According to story maestro Joseph Gold (1988b):

Reading fiction assists in the resolution of personal problems by setting up imaginary confusions and dilemmas for the reader and then guiding the reader through to systematic resolution. The experience of living through the reading generates detachment, distancing, and thereby a cognitive shift; the story is able to effect some rearrangement of the reader’s perception, while intimately involving and simultaneously removing the reader’s psychological attention from his/her immediate social environment (spatial and temporal). Reading fiction invites identification or counter-identification relatively safely by the use of surrogate-selves that can be lived through and then left, an activity which seems to produce insight and self-awareness and thus catharsis. (p. 139)

Realistic young adult fiction novels have often been erroneously labeled as “problem novels” that expose readers to unnecessary life trials and tribulations, which they may not be ready to handle. The realistic fiction cynics fail to understand that readers “have learned to regard the characters in novels as persisting voices – friendly and reassuring or sternly critical depending on the occasion” (Coles, 1989, p. 162). In 1936, Lind recognized that readers “took over not the whole personality of the fiction character, but such aspects as had implications in his own social experiences” (Lind, 1936, p. 462). And in 1972, Edwards noted:

When we read fiction or drama, we perceive in accordance with our needs, goals defenses, and values. The reader abstracts only what he is able to perceive and

organize. Hence, the student may interject meaning that will satisfy his needs and reject meaning that is threatening to his ego. (p. 215)

Young adult literature author and librarian Patrick Jones said that the young adult book is not a genre, but rather “it is a genre full of genres, but none so alive and so important as the most important one of all: the coming of age story” (2000, p. 24).

The therapeutic experience – bibliotherapy – begins when the adolescent reader is able to identify with a character (or characters) and recognizes her own problems in the life of the character (Davis & Wilson, 1992; Hebert & Kent, 2000). The reader does “not have to identify aloud with a particular character or problem unless they choose; rather they can explore and reflect upon the character’s ability to survive turmoil, loss, or crisis from a safe distance” (Davis & Wilson, 1992, p. 4). The “reader learns vicariously how to solve some of the problems upon reflecting how the characters in the book solved their problems” (Hebert & Kent, 2000, p. 168).

Adolescent readers and their families can experience the therapeutic benefits of young adult literature. Bruno Bettelheim took the stance that “most folk tales are an imaginative depiction of healthy human development and help children understand the motives behind their rebellion against parents and the fear of growing up” (Zipes, 2002, p. 161). If the same can be said of other types of imaginative literature, when “the novel elicits response by showing human feeling, thought, and behavior in relational context” (Gold, 1988a, p. 259), “bibliotherapy, and perhaps even reading itself, should at least occasionally provide a common basis of understanding for adolescents and adults” (Adler & Clark, 1991, p. 758).

Young adult literature helps young people see that they are not alone, and acts as a guide to help them make sense of this difficult time in their lives. (Alsup, 2003)

"Stories can help teenagers look at their feelings, or come to emotional resolution, from a safe distance... *I am not alone* is powerful medicine" (Chris Crutcher in Gallo, 1992, p. 39).

Prior Research

Russell and Shrodes noted in 1950, "the time is long overdue for comprehensive studies of the *effects* of literature upon the reader" (1950b, p. 417). More than half a century later not much has changed. Sciabassi (1973) commenting on the lack of new and expansive research stated, "there is a vast amount of literature written on the subject of bibliotherapy; the actual amount of information in these articles, however, is exiguous and repetitive" (p. 70). Moving forward to 1989, Riordan and Wilson asserted that, "well-designed studies that isolate bibliotherapy as a main treatment or co-vary its effects when used with other interventions are sparse" (p.507). In 2004, Aronson commented, "When I've asked reading experts to direct me to clinical research that might help to define better whether young people's beliefs are formed by texts, or in which ways, they've had little to offer" (p. 15). The vast majority of bibliotherapy studies and meta-analyses have focused on the efficacy of particular bibliotherapeutic treatments on particular problems, and most have been outside of the realm of library science (see Marrs, 1995; Apodaca, 2003).

The goal of nurse Laura Cohen's 1994 admittedly small 8-participant (5 women, 3 men) study "was to provide an understanding of the phenomenon underlying bibliotherapy and thus generate a tentative framework for research and practice of

bibliotherapy" (Cohen, 1994a, p. 428; Cohen, 1994b, p. 38). The results of this study authenticate the role of identification, which appeared universally among the subjects regardless of the type of literature (e.g., fiction, non-fiction, self-help, and poetry) used.

In 1997, Adler and Foster conducted one of the few studies using fiction literature with adolescents. In a New England town with a population of 40,000, they assessed 57 seventh graders to answer the question, what is the effect of literature on the development of a caring attitude? The experimental group read three books with a caring theme, and control group read three books from the regular curriculum. They defined the independent variable as the reading project, and the dependent variable as caring for others. Before and after the readings, all participants wrote essays in response to scenarios related to caring attitudes. While Adler and Foster's study did indicate that those in the experimental group developed a more caring attitude, the validity of the results is questionable. As the researchers point out, testing participants in a classroom environment can lead to undue influence from the teacher, and thus students may write what they think they *should*. In addition, not all participants completed both the pre-test and post-test essays, which resulted in missing data.

Although Cohen's study was innovative in its methodology, it may have proved more valuable with a larger, more random sample, and a greater emphasis on quantitative methods. The majority of the studies within the realm of education have occurred in classrooms with the teacher wearing the researcher's hat. This is true of most of the studies on the effects of bibliotherapy. It is difficult to encourage the use of a valuable construct such as bibliotherapy without the availability of valid research as support.

Other studies such as The Literature Project (Miller, 1993) focused on bibliotherapy as a treatment for at-risk youth. The Project was groundbreaking in that it explored the capacity of women's literature to improve the self-concept of at-risk female adolescents. Bibliotherapy is an important tool in intervention and prevention for people of all ages, everywhere. However, as a tool to help adolescents cope with everyday life, bibliotherapy remains a largely unexplored resource. This is due in part to the fact that although "books aid in adjustment ... the results are apt to be less observable and less conducive to measurement" (Edwards, 1972, p. 215). Shrank and Engels' (1981) research review indicated that bibliotherapy appeared effective for developing assertiveness, attitude change, helper effectiveness, self-development, and therapeutic gains. Bibliotherapy did not demonstrate effectiveness for facilitating academic achievement, or for improving self-concept.

Perhaps part of the reason for lack of bibliotherapy research within the realm of library science is two fold. On the one hand, librarians have generally only *practiced* bibliotherapy as adjuncts within the confines of other professions (e.g., medicine, education, psychology) in which librarians are not likely to be included in the research process. Secondly, bibliotherapy has never been a regular part of the curriculum in library science schools. Between 1949 and 1951, "several important scholarly works concerning bibliotherapy and its growing applications came out of a number of prestigious universities and library schools" (Smith, 1991, p. 37), most notably Caroline Shrodes 1949 dissertation for her Ph.D. in education. Dissertations other than Shrodes "appeared at the rate of one approximately every year and a half from 1949-1975" (Smith, 1991, p. 37).

In 1989, Smith (1991) sampled the curriculum offerings of fifteen library schools. Only the University of South Florida (Tampa) had bibliotherapy classes [which they did through at least 1990; I was unable to locate in bibliotherapy classes in their current course catalog.] Some schools covered bibliotherapy in other courses.

An April 2007 citation and abstract search in Digital Dissertations via ProQuest using bibliotherapy as the search term and limited by date (1995–present) resulted in the analysis of 38 doctoral dissertations. The per year mean for the search period was 2.92; the mode, 1; and the median, 2. Table 1 below shows the age group of the participants for each of the 38 studies. Youth and adults had an almost even distribution. The remaining three studies explored the perceptions others had regarding the benefits of bibliotherapy on another population, for example teachers perceptions of how bibliotherapy affected their students. Table 2 shows the field of study for which the doctoral degrees were awarded. There were no degrees awarded in library science or any related area. One degree was awarded in children’s literature. Psychology related field predominated the awarded degrees. Table 3 indicates bibliotherapeutic category or area researched. No particular category predominated; however, education related studies were on the low end, as Table 2 would indicate.

Table 1

The Age Group of Study Participants

Subjects	<i>N</i>
Youth	17
Adults	18
Other	3

Table 2

The Fields of Study of Awarded Doctoral Degrees

Field of Study	N
Education (Ed.D./Ph.D.)	7
Psychology (Ph.D./Psy.D.)	24
Other (none Library Science)	7 ^a

^aIncludes a Ph.D. in Children's Literature

Table 3

The Bibliotherapeutic Category or Treatment

Bibliotherapeutic Category	N
Educational Use	2
Mental Illness/Depression	7
Psychotherapy	4
Behavior Diagnosis/Modification	8
Delinquency Issues	2
Disabilities	3
Other	7

I was aware of a 2005 library science doctoral dissertation, *How Children's Librarians Use Books to Help Children Cope with Daily Life*, which explored the bibliotherapeutic usage of children's librarians, and noticed that it was not included in the Digital Dissertations search results. Upon further review, it was discovered that the term bibliotherapy was not part of the document title nor included in the abstract because the researcher had explored bibliotherapy from the standpoint of reader's advisory service. "This question of how books affect their readers is the big unexamined issue in children's books, and while we know it is there, we have not even begun to face it" (Aronson, 2004, p. 14). Let us start now.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY
Research Design

Adolescent girls' experience with literature was explored via four modes of social engagement: journal writing, participating in a Blog, being personally interviewed, or participating in a group discussion (see Appendix B). The girls were randomly assigned to one of the four groups, unless she and/or her consenting adult had concerns about her participation in an activity. To be selected, a potential participant had to be willing to be assigned to one of three activities. Two participants completed the journal writing activity; 4 completed personal interviews; 3 participated in the blogging activity; and 8 participated in the discussion group (seven had completed another activity). All participants worked from the same questions.. Those questions were:

1. What book did you have the strongest feelings about? When did you first experience a reaction while reading the book? Please explain.
2. In your own words, describe how you visualize the main characters in one of your favorite books.
3. What character(s) in this book did you identify with? Why?
4. Do you think that you changed in any way because of reading the book? Please give examples.
5. What were your initial perceptions the main character?
6. Had any of your perceptions about any characters changed by the end of the book?

7. Do you feel more strongly about any beliefs you had prior to reading the book?
Please explain.
8. Do you feel less strongly about any beliefs you had prior to reading the book?
Please explain.
9. Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why?
10. Did reading this book help you with any issues or concerns that you are currently facing in your own life? If so, please explain.

No one was required to adhere to those questions, they simply served as a catalyst.

The Population

The participants in this study were eighth grade members of the National Junior Honor Society at McMath Middle School in the Denton Independent School District. This segment of the youth population was chosen because it is that time in an adolescent's life when they are teetering between childhood and young adulthood – the liminal stage. This is the time when they are moving away from juvenile literature and into the realm of young adult literature. The population for this study was the roughly 8 million 13- to 14-year-old girls in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003-2004). Six thousand of those girls live in Denton County (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). Since the aim of this research was more to illuminate information seeking behaviors with insights from a user group than to characterize any particular group, a small sample was deemed adequate.

Human Subjects Protection

Every precaution was taken to assure the safety and well being of the study participants. No participant was pressured to complete the study or to participate in any activity with which she or her parent(s) were uncomfortable. After the conclusion of the study, the well being of the participants was confirmed. A University of North Texas counselor was available on an as-needed basis. Possibilities for counseling assistance might have come as a request from a participant, a parent, or me. The most likely need for counseling might have been if a girl became disturbed or upset because of another participant's reaction to a reading or to something she herself experienced.

All participants were assigned a numerical code (e.g., 101) and a fictitious name was used for identification during the interactive activities and in the results narrative. A spreadsheet was used that included only the code numbers, the first initial of the participant's first name, and the assigned pseudonym (see Table 4).

Table 4

Study Participant Identity Protection Log

	Code #	First Initial	Pseudonym
ex.	100	T	Hillary

The first initial was included to assure that no participant accidentally received her real first name. Participant registration cards were the only form with both the participant's full name and code number. These forms were stored in a locked safe at the principal investigator's home. All other forms had only the code number, and were stored in the principal investigator's research file. No written records were destroyed unless requested by the participant and her parent(s) or other legal guardian(s). The

code numbers were used for all other documents. As indicated in the Institutional Review Board application and the Parental Consent Form, all participant data (i.e., journal entries, blog entries, audio recordings, and recording transcripts were destroyed.

Random Assignment

Only two girls completed the journal writing activity. One of the participants chose to opt out of all activities except for the journal writing, and thus she was not included in the random assignment of activities. The other journal writer was included in the random assignment. One of the girls' parents imposed restrictions on their daughter's participation by not permitting her to participate in the blogging activity. Thus, the participant's name was not included in the random assignment for that activity. All names were included in the "assignment" jar, and if her name had been chosen for the blogging exercise, it would have been returned to the jar.

There was one other alteration to the random assignment process. Two of the participants were twins. I was very excited about what their perspectives might add to the study, but wanted to be certain that they did not take part in the same activity. For the assignment of the activities, both names were placed in a jar that was used for the assignment of the activities. If both of them were drawn for the same assignment, one would be blindly chosen to be returned to the jar. This was not necessary, both girls completed a different activity, but they were both included in the discussion group session.

Preliminary Model of the Applied Literary Therapeutics Environment

This study explored the effects on adolescent girls of reading fiction and how those effects changed based upon four modes of social engagement which were journaling, blogging, a personal interview, and a group discussion. After the activities were completed, the audio files were transcribed for analysis.

Figure 2 below establishes the framework for the goals of this study. This preliminary model of the applied literary therapeutics environment shows how an adolescent girl might become motivated by an external professional factors, external social factors, or internal factors to seek out (whether consciously or unconsciously) a particular book(s) or type of book. She then makes a selection from available documents. She may then experience a change state which may be affected by outside influences, such as environmental factors or a facilitator.

Preliminary Model of the Applied Literary Therapeutics Environment

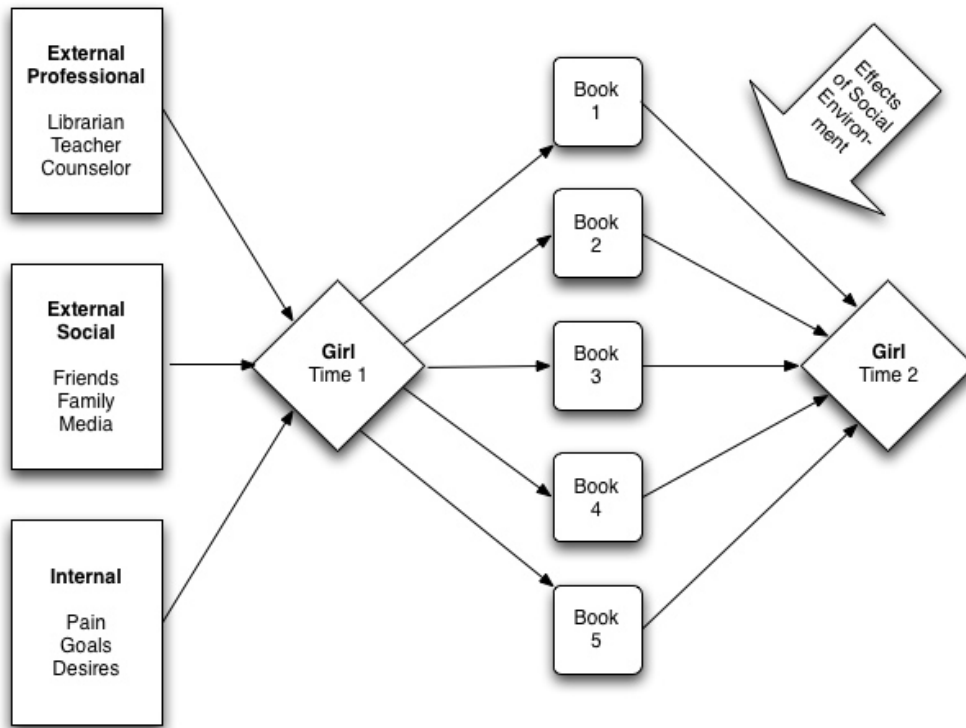


Figure 2. Preliminary model of the applied literature therapeutic environment.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF DATA

Research Questions

The primary objective of this study was to explore the effects of reading fiction on adolescent girls, and how those effects changed based on four types of interaction. That objective was sought by attempting to answer the following questions:

- Does one interaction matter more than another?
- Can an interaction between the reader and the facilitator occur if the reader does not make a connection with the literature?
- How do we define the therapeutic value of literature when the connection is unsolicited and when there is no facilitation?
- Is this still bibliotherapy?
- Is the literature itself not the facilitator?

The Population Revisited

The population sample of eighth grade girls, ages 13–15 (i.e., 5 were 13, 4 were 14, and 1 was 15), was recruited from the National Junior Honor Society at McMath Middle School in Denton, Texas for the population sample. Fourteen girls initially expressed interest and signed up to receive information packets. Twelve girls' parents responded regarding participation, and received information packets (see Appendices). Ten girls returned questionnaires and consent forms, and participated in the study.

These 10 participants brought quite a bit of diversity to the study. There had been concern that a high percentage of participants would be in highly educated families

given the high percentage of Denton residents with advanced degrees. Fortunately, this concern was unfounded. The highest level of education for 25% was some college, followed by Master's degrees at 30% (see Figure 2). Fifty percent of the parents had high school diplomas or some college. Those with Bachelor's and Master's degrees comprised the other 50%.

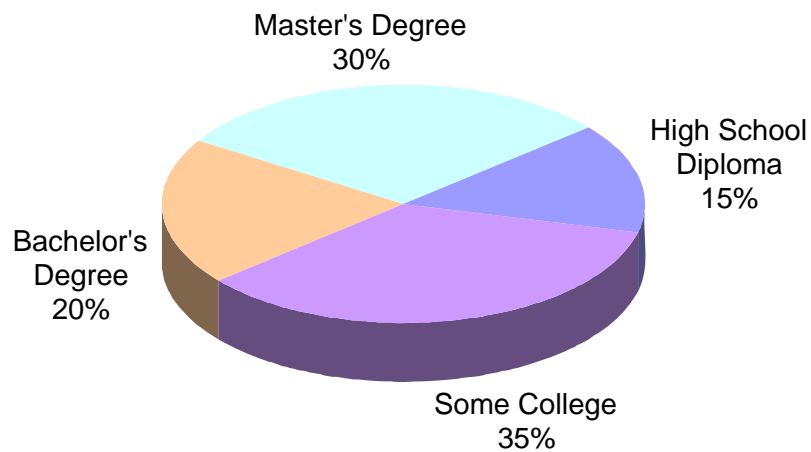


Figure 3. Educational status of participants' parents.

Some of the books that the girls chose to discuss during the study had been read years ago; however, some of the girls chose books that they read during the 4 months before the study began. The girls also showed diversity in their pleasure reading habits: 50% had read between one and ten books, but the other 50% had read between 26 and 100 books, with 30% having read greater than 50 books during the 4-month period (see Figure 3). While having devoted readers as participants was important to the success of the study, the indication that not all of them were voracious readers gives more legitimacy to the extracted statement of literary value (see page 42).

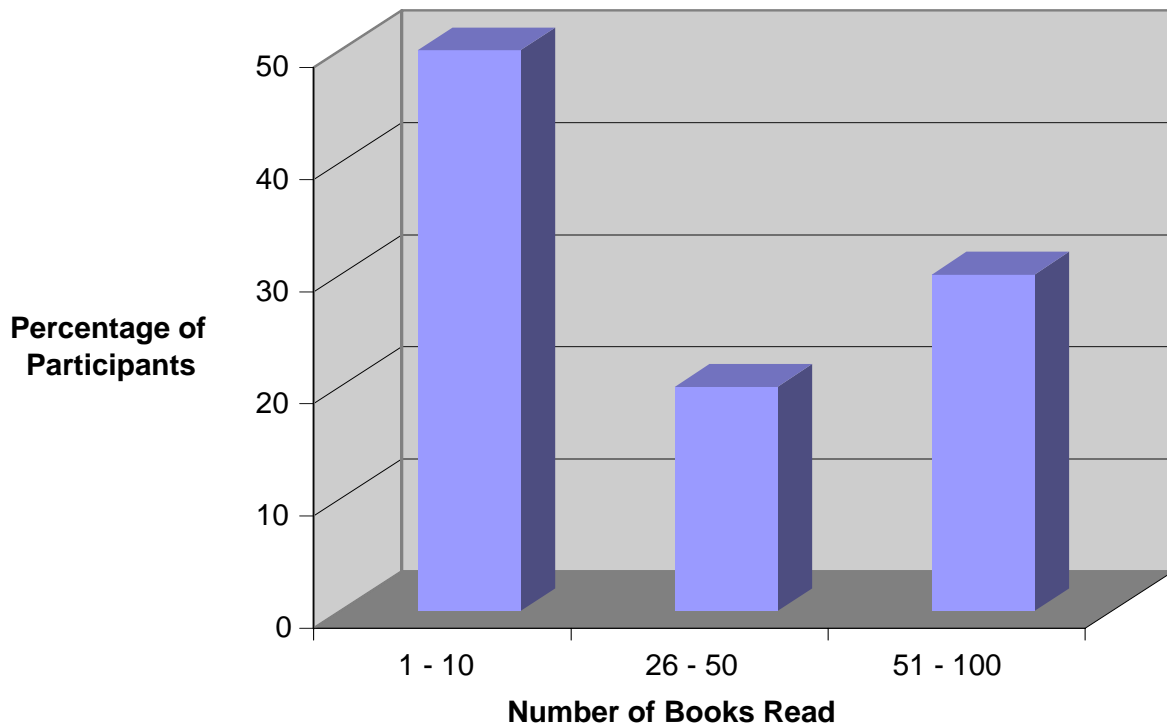


Figure 4. Number of books read.

The participants were not asked to disclose ethnicity, but for the purpose of determining the need to prepare parental consent forms in languages other than English, they were asked if they spoke another language at home. Four of the 10 girls (40%) spoke other languages at home. Given the small sample size, it is meaningful that each of the 4 participants spoke a different language at home.

Content Analysis

“Theories should not be applied to the subject being studied but are ‘discovered’ and formulated in working with the field and the empirical data to be found in it” (Flick,

2006) " . . . the research questions of Content Analysis must be answered through inferences drawn from texts" (Krippendorf, 2004, p. 31).

The analysis of all of the girls' content is represented in Table 6. The words or phrases in each column are mutually exclusive in that they are not intended to correspond to the word or phrase in the next column. The numbers that appear in parentheses indicate the number of times the word or phrase appeared in the content. The column headings represent my theory of the bibliotherapeutic process, which is represented in the model below, and is essentially a revision of Caroline Shrodes widely accepted model: Identification → Catharsis → Insight.

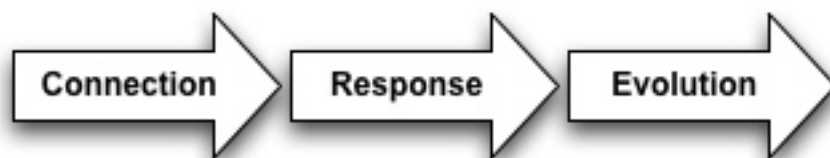


Figure 5. The Reynolds' model.

The primary differences being that the results of the data for this study indicated that the adolescent reader can *connect* with a character without having to *identify* with that character, and thus a response can occur that is not necessarily *catharsis*, but can result in *evolution*.

For example, several of the participants connected with the protagonist in Lurlene McDaniel's *A Rose for Melinda*. Melinda learns she has cancer. None of the girls who had read the book have cancer, but they could connect with Melinda even though they can not identify with her particular crisis. It was actually a very powerful connection. This *connection* resulted in "feeling emotional," to which one girl *responded*

that she “needed to learn that lesson,” and thus she “changed her life” and another “became a better person” (evolution). “She [Melinda] has a perfect life, and then she gets cancer. I’d rather have my okay life than to have a perfect life and get cancer” (Taryn, discussion group).

The girls’ content was analyzed further to construct one statement that represents what their comments and observations revealed about the value of young adult literature in their lives. This extracted statement of literary value (see page 42) was provided to the participants. Each girl was asked to respond to the statement anonymously using a 5-point Likert scale. The possible responses were strongly agree, somewhat agree, neutral or no response, somewhat disagree and strongly disagree. One participant was unavailable to respond, and there was one somewhat agree response. The remaining 80% of the participants strongly agreed that the extracted statement of literary value was a truthful representation of the value of young adult literature in their lives (see Table 5).

Extracted Statement of Literary Value

Young adult fiction literature has the potential to impart a good message to teens by realistically portraying teenage life, and therefore providing an opportunity for me to connect with characters and see myself – it can change my life and help me to become a better person. Through the characters I have connected with, I have learned that life is short, so I should follow my heart and share my talents. Sharing my dreams and talents with others has improved my self-confidence, which strengthened and created great friendships.

Table 5

Response to Extracted Statement of Literary Value

<u>Likert Scale Response</u>	<u>N</u>
Strongly agree	8
Somewhat agree	1
Neutral or No Response	1
Somewhat disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0

The data in Table 6 below was extracted from participant responses. The responses below are representative of that data:

Just like her my appearance affected some of the things people believed about [me]. I had hidden talents that no one knew about. I had hardly any friends. This book [*The Hundred Dresses*] help[ed] me to realize that I wasn't the only one. (Colleen, journal)

I felt connected to her because I needed to learn that lesson myself. (Natalie, blog, on the protagonist in *Just Listen*)

When I read the book [The Giver], I think he was right to leave, what's the point of life if you can't live it the way you want to. (Maya, personal interview)

I think I changed after reading *The Truth About Forever*. I changed by letting myself do what I wanted more. I used to be really shy, quiet, and did only what I had to. Now, I am more outgoing, and I let myself have fun and do what I want. I am definitely a better person. (Olivia, journal)

Table 6

Content Analysis of Textual Data

Connection	Response	Evolution
Common things	Be creative	Become a better person
Connected	Be optimistic	Cancer, true love, and dying could all happen to anyone
Feel emotional	Believe in yourself	Changed my life
Good message for teens	Follow me heart	I can do what I want
I can relate	Have fun	I used to be shy and quiet
I wasn't the only one	Hidden talents	I would rather have my okay life, than a perfect life and have cancer
Impact in my life	I had hardly any friends	Life is short
In love (3)	Learn (2)	Live the way you want
Left out by friends	Share	Love and live
Loved the book	Share my feelings	Outgoing
Made me cry	Share my talents	Perfect life
Realistic	Try your best	Point of life
Typical teenage life	Need to learn that lesson	Self confidence
Understand the character		Strong relationship
Unexpected friends		What she wants to do

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Findings and Limitations

The primary objective of this study was to explore the effects of reading fiction on adolescent girls, and how those effects changed based on four types of interaction.

These explorations proved to be insightful in different ways than anticipated.

The goal of this research was to explore how adolescent girls respond to fiction literature at various levels of interaction. Caroline Shrodes and others believed that the interactive process was a key component of bibliotherapy. The girls' responses to the literature were not as telling as how the interaction itself may have affected their responses. Both the journal writing activity and personal interview activity were not as revealing as they might have been given different conditions. Those conditions being a different environment, different external and internal factors, a different researcher (i.e., facilitator), etc. (see Figure 2).

The Personal Interview Activity

The interviews at the school were limited to the 35-minute, eighth grade lunch period and were conducted in the workroom of the school library or in the computer room. As with all the activities, the ten reading discussion questions (see pages 33-34) were used as a guide. The interviews were recorded using a digital recording device. Four participants completed personal interviews. Two of the interviews happened "accidentally" due to scheduling difficulties with the discussion group. On two occasions,

only one girl arrived for the discussion group session. The opportunity was not wasted and we did interviews instead.

Flick (2006) said about qualitative research that it “becomes a continuous process of constructing versions of reality. The version people present in an interview does not necessarily correspond to the version they would have formulated at the moment when the reported event happened. It does not necessarily correspond to the version they would have given to a different researcher with a different research question. Researchers, who interpret the interview and present it as part of their findings, produce a new version of the whole” (p. 19). As mentioned previously, two of the interviews were unplanned. The two participants arrived expecting to be a part of a discussion group. That aside, perhaps I was the greatest cause of their inhibition. I could have done several things differently.

First, I could have dressed on their level instead of professionally. Jeans and a sweater might have made the girls feel more at ease talking to me – I would have seemed more like I was part of their regular world. Second, as previously mentioned, we were limited to their 35-minute lunch breaks, and I had to frequently encourage them to eat. Several of the girls expressed concern that I was not eating. That concern may have been a distraction, or perhaps it simply bothered them to eat when I was not (they were all conscientious and caring). It is also possible that the interviewees were bothered by the presence of my recording device. Even adults are vexed when they know that their every word is being recorded. Lastly, none of the participants seemed particularly prepared to answer questions about literature they had read for pleasure and if it had an impact on them. The ten reading questions were provided to all of the

participants in their information packets. It may have helped if I had reminded them to review the questions and think about the books they had read for pleasure.

All of that aside, quite simply, I am not their peer. I am not their age. I am not a part of their normal circle, either at school or away from it. Most adolescents love to have adults ask for their opinion. I am convinced that under different circumstances, in a different, more relaxed, environment and with more time, that these girls would have had more to say. While I cannot say that these girls did not make a connection with the literature they discussed, I can say that I believe only one made a connection with me.

The Journaling Activity

In addition to the restrictions imposed by the School and/or the District, perhaps the greatest hurdle to the success of this activity was my choice for the journals (see Figure 6). *What teenage girl would want to write private reflections in a composition book?* My cover “art” was hardly a sufficient disguise. Perhaps if I had provided a more feminine looking journal with a lock, the girls would have felt more secure sharing their feelings. As with all the activities, the girls were suppose to complete their writing during a lunch period. However, I allowed them to take the journals home for a few days. Nevertheless, Olivia wrote just 345 words, and Colleen a mere 213. The intent of the study was to focus on fiction literature that the participant had self selected and read for pleasure. Colleen, however, wrote in her about a book that she had been required to read. Perhaps my instructions were not clear, or she felt more comfortable writing about a book she new had made an impact on her and it was the only one. Unlike the other activities, I was not there to try to ask the probing questions or to direct her.

Although it was five years after reading the book, Colleen indicated that the book had profoundly affected her life, and thus, she connected with the literature. Olivia was more reflective during the group discussion (see pages 49-50). Nevertheless, she demonstrated a connection with the literature during both activities.

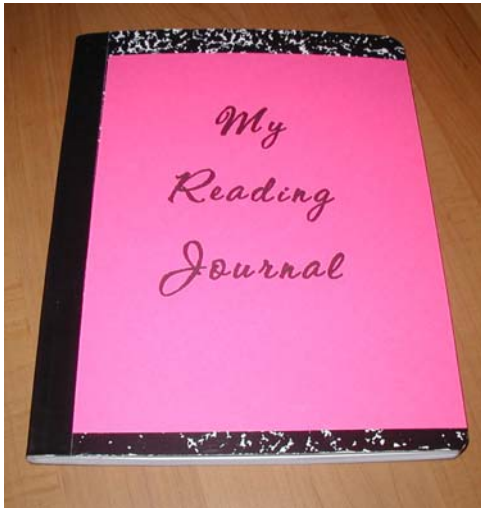


Figure 6. Composition book provided for journaling activity.

The Blogging Activity

The results of the blogging group were successful given the imposed restrictions and technical delays. The district's security measures were restrictive and we were required to use the district's blog interface on the school's Web site. The girls had to sign in as themselves – no anonymity. To protect the girls as much as possible, we made the decision that the blogging activity had to be completed in one synchronous, 35-minute lunch period session. Technical problems turned that session into less than 20 minutes. Although I blogged at home, and the girls were together at school, it was not a true blogging activity. The girls responded to my questions, but never had the

opportunity to respond to each other. Nevertheless, the girls' posts revealed forethought and cognition (see Appendix A).

The Discussion Group Activity

Eight of the ten girls came to the discussion; seven had completed another activity. The dynamics were remarkable. Nothing had changed in terms of the environment. I was dressed more casually than on previous occasions, but I still did not eat. The nine of us were spread out over three tables in the school's library. I was concerned that this setup would not be conducive to engaging conversation. I was wrong.

Several of my original research designs included assigning one or more fiction titles for the participants to read and then discuss. I decided against that plan, choosing instead to see how the girls were affected by what they chose to read on their own. It was a solid plan despite experiencing difficulty engaging with a participant when she discussed a book I had not read. This was true of the discussion group, as well; nevertheless, the discussion group was a phenomenal experience. The girls' interactions were dynamic. They shared with me and with each other. They appeared uninhibited and not bothered by the presence of the recording device or by my presence. I did not feel like I was invisible to them, but rather that I was one of them. I became a part of the group. While I facilitated to some extent, the discussion simply happened (see Figure 2).

How did these interactive experiences address the research questions? First, the discussion group experience strongly suggested that one interaction can matter more

than the others can. While it does not have to be a discussion group scenario, any situation that allows the adolescent reader to interact with her peers has the potential to create a strong connection within the group. The blogging group may well have achieved the same results as the discussion group if it had happened as planned.

This study did not give a strong indication that an interaction between the reader and the facilitator occurs if the reader does not make a connection with the literature. On the other hand, the study did suggest that the reader could connect with the literature and yet not establish a connection with the facilitator. For example, it would not be fair for me to say that the girls who participated in the personal interviews did not connect with the literature we discussed. There were too many other factors which could have potentially affected their connection with me.

How do we define the therapeutic value of literature when the connection is unsolicited and when there is no facilitation? With more than a dozen definitions, adding another would be superfluous. The outcome of the reading experience is what matters. As indicated in the literature review, there are advocates of bibliotherapy who would not consider a positive outcome from a reading experience with unsolicited material and without a facilitator to be bibliotherapy. If the reader benefits from the experience, it does not matter how we label it.

Can the literature itself be the facilitator? Facilitator is a synonym for catalyst. If the literature is a catalyst that leads the reader to growth and understanding, then I suggest that the literature can be the facilitator.

The overall findings were:

- The discussion group presented evidence that interaction with peers results in the most meaningful expression of the literary experience.
- Although Fantasy literature such as Harry Potter is fun and a good escape, as indicated in the content analysis, many adolescent girls prefer realistic fiction, literature that accurately reflects teenage life.
- Many adolescent girls prefer literature that recognizes the humanness of the teenage experience and provides insight from multiple perspectives.

Inspiration for *Scrambled Eggs at Midnight* co-author Heather Hepler, followed a similar vein. She wanted to write about what she wanted to read as an adolescent:

I wanted to write a smart book about falling in love and by smart I don't mean "thinky." I mean a book that explores what love can be like when you just let yourself fall. When you just forget about getting hurt or being cool or acting aloof. When you stop trying to figure it all out in your head and you just let your heart take over and lead you. I wanted to write the book that I wanted to read when I was in junior high and high school. (Hepler & Barkley, 2007)

Angel (2004) suggested, "These multivoiced contemporary works probably appeal to teens because tension is heightened when multiple perspectives play of each other. To keep the reader interested, characters offer insight into their deepest personal feelings and understanding" (p. 102-103).

Alternate Realities

Phenomenology may have been the better means, or an additional means for analyses of the data. Morse and Richards (2002) said, "The lived world, or the *lived*

experience, is critical to phenomenology.... Existence as *being in the world* is a phenomenological phrase acknowledging that people are in their worlds and are understandable only in their contexts” (p. 45). In other words, we get from a reading what we need at the time. Cheu (2001) asserted, "Meaning, in the light of bibliotherapy, is motivated by the need of the readers, and the validity of a reading is justified solely by the reader's own relation to the reading materials" (p. 38). When a young adult begins to read a work of fiction, she is subconsciously looking to make a connection. If she does not, she may put the book down, perhaps returning to it in another place and time. Alternatively, if she connects with a part of the story or a minor character, she may simply tune out that which is not relevant to her now. This is the phenomenology of reader response. This is the phenomenology of story. This was true for some of the participants who read *A Rose for Melinda*. None of the girls who had read it had personal experience with fighting cancer, but they could relate to her experience because they were more focused on the “perfect life” she had before the cancer. The phenomenological experience of a young cancer survivor would be different as would that of a young person battling cancer at the time she reads the book.

“Recent phenomenological nursing research has suggested that when individuals purposefully read for help in dealing with a difficult life situation, they identified with literary characters and recognized themselves in what they read” (Cohen, 1992, p. 92). *We are what we eat* is a commonly heard phrase. It could also be true that *we are what we read*, or better still, in the context of reader response theory, *what we read is a reflection of who we already are*. In that regard, grounded theory may also be applicable. “Theories should not be applied to the subject being studied but are

'discovered' and formulated in working with the field and the empirical data to be found in it" (Flick, 2006, p. 98).

Implications

Pleasure reading can be therapeutic, and often is even if it only because it is a temporary means of escape from reality. Doll and Doll (1997) understood this, "Often overlooked, are the recreational purposes underlying bibliotherapy. Children and youth also read for the enjoyment that reading brings" (p. 8). However, Yenika-Agbaw (1997) did not share the belief that pleasure reading has value beyond the reading itself when she stated, "Pleasurable reading does not help readers identify issues raised in books, question the ideologies informing the stories or understand how all these affect readers' daily lives.... children's book are read primarily for pleasure" (p. 446).

Changing or affecting attitude is the most common attribute of bibliotherapy definitions. In its simplest terms, bibliotherapy is a means of changing attitude via literature. Positive transformation is implied. Therefore, we should not get too carried away with broadening the scope of bibliotherapy. Doing so might mean that literature, which promotes attitudes and beliefs contrary to the aim of bibliotherapy, might fall into its domain. Even so, Samuel Crothers, quoting his friend Dr. Bagster who ran the Bibliopathic Institute, said, "A book may be a stimulant or an irritant or a soporific. The point is that it *must* [italics added] do something to you, and you ought to know *what* [italics added] it is" (1916, p. 292).

It is contrary to the solitary nature of the reading experience to assert that bibliotherapy requires a facilitator or an interaction with another human being. The data

suggest that the girls made some form of therapeutic transition without an overt external facilitator (see Figure 2). "Reactions may occur when we are in the privacy of surroundings that give needed solitude for expression," and thus allow "self-awareness [to take] seed" (Oberstein & Van Horn, 1988, p. 160). Bauer (1991) calls books that are meant to be private "a kind of personal letter between author and reader," (p. 2-3) which allows the reader to "explore and reflect upon the character's ability to survive turmoil, loss, or crisis from a safe distance" (Davis & Wilson, 1992, p. 4).

When I first began my doctoral studies, I had thought that I would attempt to conjure up a "better" term than bibliotherapy to describe the process of wielding the therapeutic power of literature. As previously mentioned, I now wonder if it is necessary to *label the process* at all. Drawing upon my few memories of freshman philosophy, I know that regardless of what anyone calls it, an orange is still an orange; its properties do not change. Reading has therapeutic value no matter what we call it; whether it is developmental, clinical, protective or otherwise, the outcome is what matters. Furthermore, "the elements by means of which the results are achieved will be the same regardless of whether the reader be a patient or simply a library patron" (Jackson, 1962, p. 119).

Baruchson-Arbib (2001) suggested that "the librarian adopt another name, *supportive knowledge* [italics added], for the developmental aspect of bibliotherapy" (p. 104). Although this was the first attempt to offer a name intended specifically for use by librarians, as with the terms mentioned in the literature review (e.g., bibliocounseling, bibliopsychology, bookmatching, literatherapy, library therapeutics, biblioguidance, bibliodiagnosics, biblioguidance) it is still an attempt to label a process too multifaceted

to be grouped under an umbrella term (bibliotherapy). However, the understanding of bibliotherapy has been complicated by too many labels. I suggest that the results of the therapeutic literary experience become the focus of research and discussion, and that that outcome be called *bibliocognition*. The definition of cognition (see below) is to come to know. Thus, *bibliocognition* can be defined as *coming to know oneself through the application of relevant literature*.

Cognition, noun, from *cognoscere* to become acquainted with, know, from *co-* + *gnoscerere* to come to know, Etymology: Middle English *cognicion*, from Anglo-French, from Latin *cognition-*, *cognitio*. (*Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>)

The data from this study, as well as from previous research, suggest that literature (specifically young adult literature) brings the reader to a better understanding of herself and the world around her. This shift often occurs when a reader recognizes that she is not alone in the world (Oberstein & Van Horn, 1988, p. 158). Sometimes this is the global world, and at other times, it is the reader's "world." Cheu (2001) noted, "The reading of one person's work leads to another person's *cognitive* [italics added] and/or affective changes, so that a new narrative evolves" (p. 39). Thus, we can say that the Reynolds' model (see Figure 5) creates a shift in cognitive thinking resulting in *bibliocognition*.

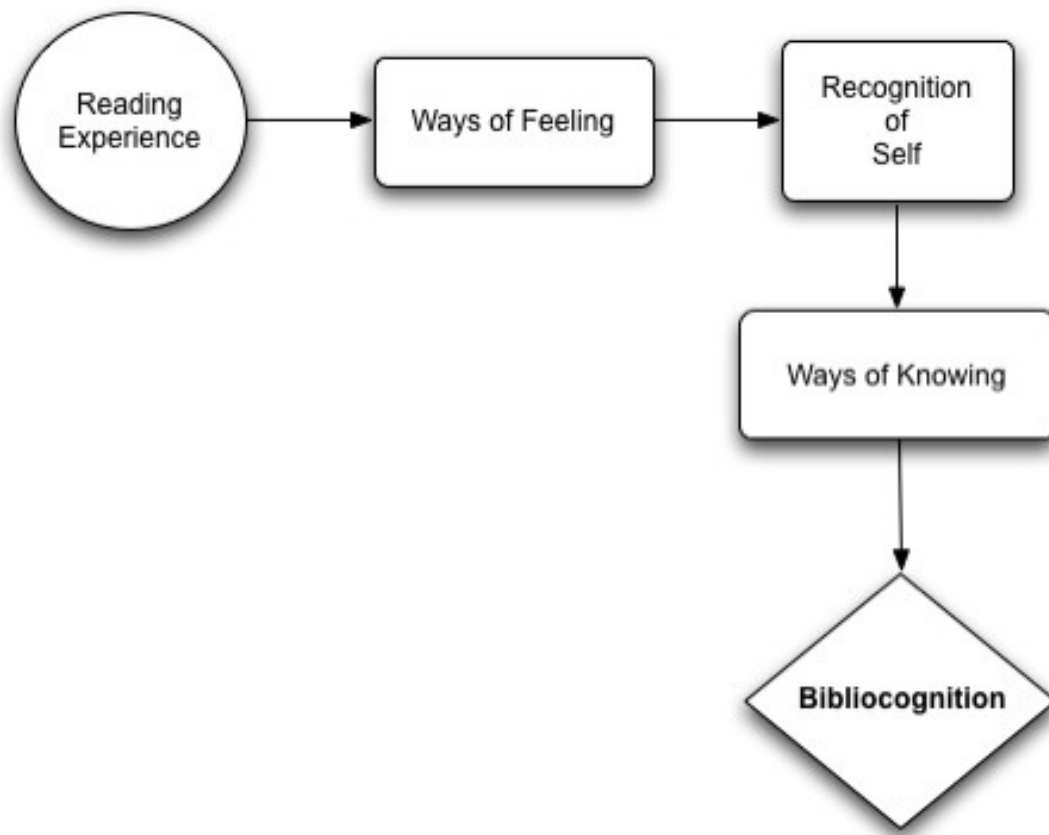


Figure 7. Model of applied literary therapeutics.

Laura Cohen's research (1994a/b) indicated that participants achieved a *recognition of self* because of their experience with therapeutic reading. As with this research, she looked at what the participants (adults) had previously read on their own. She asserted that participants achieved *recognition of self* through *ways of feeling* (i.e., shared experience, validation, hope, inspiration and catharsis) and *ways of knowing* (i.e., understanding, information gathering). Joseph Gold said that the therapeutic uses of novels bring us into the "realm of applied literature" (1988a, p. 252). Based on the data from this research and Cohen's, as well as the work of Gold, the following model above was constructed to represent the process of achieving bibliocognition.

Anticipated Research Agenda

The potential for future research in the areas of literary relevance and bibliocognition is tremendous. Fortunately, I have learned more from the challenges with my dissertation research than I did from what went as expected.

Future research plans include:

- A longitudinal study exploring the pleasure reading choices of young adults seventh through twelfth grade. There are many possibilities to explore in the design of this project. Research questions will include: Do teenage girls seek out fiction for “help” in coping with their lives? In the integration of the fiction reading into their lives? What role has essential instructional fiction played in the their lives, and what information seeking behavior led to finding it?
- A study exploring whether young adult pleasure readers have stronger decision making skills utilizing models and measurements of experiential learning.
- A study investigating the pleasure reading habits of adolescent boys. Boys may be included in the longitudinal study, however, I think that several short term studies need to occur first.
- Moving beyond books: Reseach exploring the impact of movies and music.

Second-hand Knowledge

Most of this dissertation would not have come to exist without second-hand knowledge from a myriad of people and information sources created by people. Essential instructional fiction is the epitome of second-hand knowledge. it is a guiding

light whether or not it was sought out for that purpose. Unsolicited second-hand knowledge is often the best kind. It can seep into our pores unawares and leave us with sense making skills we did not know we had acquired. In *Second-hand Knowledge: An Inquiry into Cognitive Authority*, Patrick Wilson (1983) explains:

Most of us go through life occupying a narrow range of social locations. If all we could know of the world was what we could find out on the basis of first-hand experience, we would know little. But what we can find out from first-hand experience itself depends crucially on the stock of ideas we bring to the interpretation and understanding of our encounters with the world. If we had to depend entirely on ideas that we ourselves invented, we would make little sense of the world. We mostly depend on others for ideas, as well as for information about things outside the range of direct experience. Others supply us with new theoretical perspectives as well as with information from other social perspectives. (p. 2)

It is from this perspective that the preliminary model of the applied literary therapeutics environment (see Figure 2) was modified to become the terminal model of the applied literary therapeutics environment (see Figure 8) to take into account the relevant competencies a reader needs to arrive at selecting a work of essential instructional fiction and thus that work becomes second-hand knowledge.

Terminal Model of the Applied Literary Therapeutics Environment

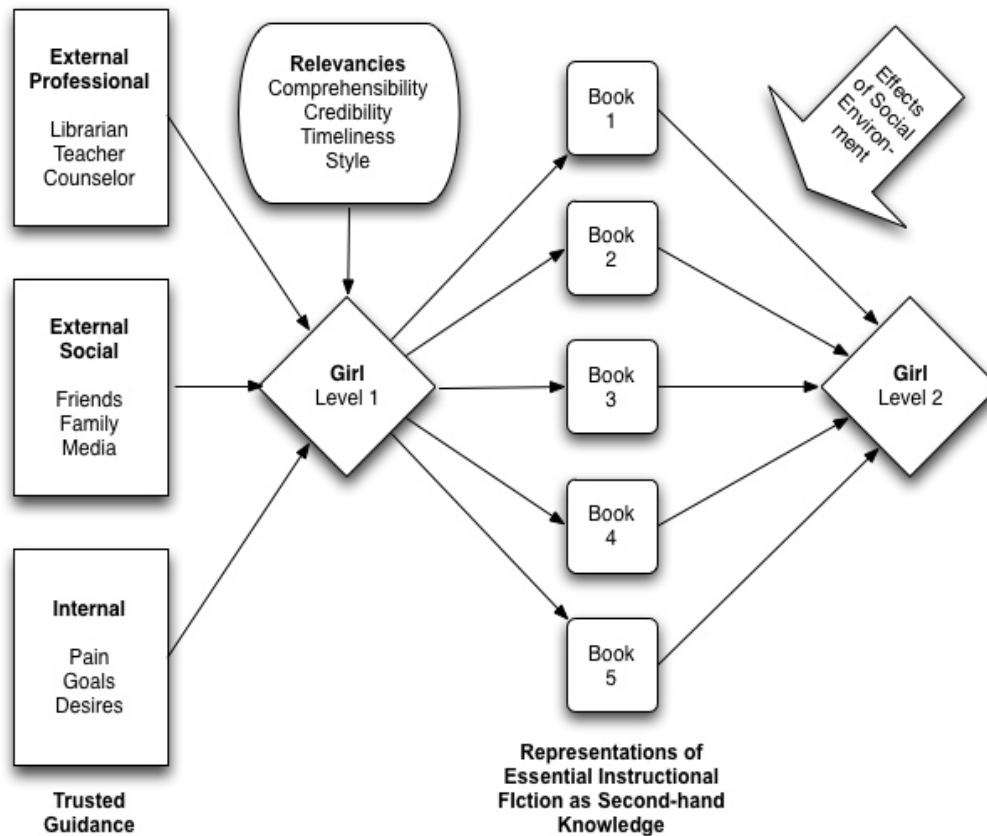


Figure 8. Terminal model of the applied literary therapeutics environment.

What Have They Told Us?

We may now wonder what is it the study participants were really trying to say. It may be a fair assessment that they might say that this is one of the great utilities of fiction – the reader enters a constructed world, tries on some different traits and environments, and can examine consequences without casualty. That is that Second-hand Knowledge, whether they are cognitively aware of it or not, is what essential instructional fiction is all about. That when they receive trusted guidance and choose a

work of essential instructional fiction which then provides second-hand knowledge, they are transformed. This transformation often comes from pleasure reading materials.

A researcher like me may come into their world wearing the “wrong” clothes, not eating at the “right” times and asking the “wrong” questions, but the results are still the same. It may just take more work and patience to figure out what those results might be. At the most basic level, a girl selects a book, she reads the book, she connects with characters, she gains knowledge from vicariously trying on new experiences, and she is transformed. How many pleasurable activities in life give us that?

Conclusion

Literature, rather it be novels, poetry, short stories, etc., is not a cure-all. Is anything? No one would suggest that literature can cure what ails all the problems of human kind. However, many young adult readers prefer realistic fiction because it addresses a need. It is important to remember that reader response theory tells us readers will only take from literature the experiences they bring to it. Often, grown-ups are bothered by the strong subject matter covered in much of today’s adolescent literature. They believe that it is too much reality too soon.

Fortunately, the authors of such literature understand their readers and that the world in which they live today is more complex than many adults realize or want to accept. Adolescents will block out the themes in realistic fiction that are too painful or uncomfortable for them to confront at the time; however, they can subconsciously take in knowledge that may help them in the future, either when they are ready to face a painful reality or faced with a new situation. Abuse, drug addiction, bulimia and the like

are all painful realities, but hiding them from such literature will not protect them and will not make the problems go away. Exposing young adults to realistic fiction helps them to better understand themselves and their peers, and perhaps recognize a silent crisis before it is too late. In essence, “sharing emotionally complex books before a difficult experience occurs may give children the ability to practice their own personal bibliotherapy” (Knoth, 2006, p. 275) and to attain bibliocognition. Knoth powerfully addressed the need for realistic youth fiction, specifically as it relates to divorce:

Rather than address what is happening in the present, I am inclined to prepare children for emotional experiences *before* they occur. I would rather inoculate children than treat the symptoms of the emotional trauma. We give children vaccinations against measles. We can't vaccinate against divorce, but we *can* give children some emotional knowledge to use when their families, or other families they know, do go through a divorce. (2006, p. 273-274)

It is troublesome that there is so much emphasis on what today's adolescents are reading, what is wrong with it and why they should not be reading it. What we should really be concerned about are the youth who are not reading at all.

The goal of this research was to use the insights of the field of bibliotherapy together with the insights of the adolescent girls to provide a higher, more robust model of successful information behavior. That is, relevance is a matter of impact on life rather than just a match of subject heading. This work provides a thick description of a set of real world relevancy judgments. This may serve to illuminate theories and practices for bringing each individual seeker together with appropriate documents.

APPENDIX A
PARTICIPANT DATA TRANSCRIPTION

The transcribed data below is a distilled version of the original data. Due to the requirements for Human Subjects Protection, the data has been redacted to protect the participants' identity when deemed appropriate.

Journal Writers

“Olivia”

The book I had the strongest feelings about was *A Rose for Melinda* by Lurlene McDaniel because it made me cry. This book made me realize that cancer, true love, and dying could happen to anyone. I experienced the crying and sad feelings right when I finished the book.

In *The Truth About Forever*, by Sarah Dessen, I visualize 3 of the characters very specifically. One of them is Macy. In my mind, she is really pretty, but in a subtle way, she is very athletic looking. In my head, she always wears her hair in a ponytail, barely ever down, and tennis shoes, and something comfortable to wear. She is quiet, but very determined, you couldn't look over her even if you wanted to. The next character is Wes. He looks strong and has a sparkle in his eye all the time. He is very handsome and has a tattoo on his upper arm.

I think I changed after reading *The Truth About Forever*. I changed by letting myself do what I wanted more. I used to be really shy, quiet, and did only what I had to. Now, I am more outgoing, and I let myself have fun and do what I want. I am definitely a better person. My first thought of Macy in *The Truth About Forever* was that she didn't follow her heart. In the book, she was in love with a guy named Wes, but she was afraid

to go after him, or do what she wanted. She was *always* doing what other people wanted her to do, and not what she wanted to.

Before reading *The Truth About Forever* I thought that I wasn't allowed to have fun or do what I wanted during school or in public. After reading it, I believe that this thought has changed. I let myself follow my heart.

One book I would recommend to a friend is *The Truth About Forever*. This is because, first of all, it is my favorite book and because it has a really good message for teens.

“Colleen”

One of the many books I have read has made an impact in my life. That one book is *The Hundred Dresses*. I was required to read in third grade. At the beginning it seemed to be quite boring. However, as I read on I realized myself and the character were a lot alike. We were the same age. We both had little money. We both were living with one parent. Just like her my appearance affected some of the things people believed about [me]. I had hidden talents that no one knew about. I had hardly any friends.

This book help[ed] me to realize that I wasn't the only one. Maybe I could share some of [the] talents and make some friends with. It also showed me that just because I'm having a hard time doesn't mean I should take it out on other people. This girl could design dresses, skirts, shoes, purses, anything. This book has changed my life. I look at the optimistic more. I'm not so much like that girl anymore. I live with a different parent now. I have great friends. I share my talent with more people every year. At the beginning of the book I thought she was a liar. When actually she was just creative.

Bloggers

“Caroline”

I recently read the book *Shadow Man*. The main character committed suicide. It's about his girlfriend and other people he knew trying to deal with his death. I really connected to it because his girlfriend and him really had a strong relationship, even though his home life wasn't great. I really liked how it shows how much they were in love. Also I really connected with the main character because in one part of the book he's thinking about committing suicide, then when he dies the whole school is devastated. Well last year, a kid at our school committed suicide and I remember how devastated our school was too. I could really relate to some of his friends in the book telling about their memories of him. It was a really good book that I could connect with a lot.

“Danielle”

I recently read a book called *[The] Little Prince*. The main character is the little prince about an inch [tall]. And I feel like I have connection with it because the little prince going around to find somebody who could help him and he wants to learn more things than just taking care of his flower. He met lots of people and other things. I really liked the book because it helps me to understand a character of trying to [find] success and find something you want to know. So I really loved the book called *[The] Little Prince* and it was really amusing to know made up characters can have common things with if you are trying find the same thing as them. This book really helped me to you could success something as you try your best until you success. I was really happy to share my thoughts with you thank you very much.

“Natalie”

I have read many books that I wasn't required to read that I felt I related to the main character. Most of these books were by my favorite author, Sarah Dessen. She has written many books, that if you haven't read... you should! My favorite of her books were *Just Listen*, *Keeping the Moon*, and *The Truth About Forever*. In these books, I related to the main character in such a way that I haven't with any other books. *Just Listen* was about a girl that felt unconnected to the world and other people. I felt that way for a long time, just because I couldn't strike up conversations at a moments notice, and if I did, I always bored the person. Also, this book was about how the girl needed to just listen, hence the title. She went through life half-listening to everyone and everything. I felt connected to her because I needed to learn that lesson myself.

The other book, *The Truth About Forever* I also related to really well. It was mainly about a girl that didn't believe in herself because of many things that happened in her life. I felt that way also. I didn't have much self-confidence when I read the book and it helped me to see that.

The last book, *Keeping the Moon*, was mainly about a girl that had been fat and grew skinny and had been teased about it her whole life, but when she went to her crazy aunt's house, she learned that many things that people say are for stupid reasons and she learned to love and live, with the help of 3 unexpected friends and of course her aunt. I related to her because I also needed to learn these things.

Personal Interviews

“Maya”

When I read it [*Tuck Everlasting*], I thought it was pretty cool. And then I saw the movie, and I was like, wow, it's true, we should live our life until we can't live it anymore. It was really special to me. The movie reinforced the book. The whole family had an opinion about living. The guy who wants to live forever has no clue what he's getting into. They keep that thing that made him live forever away from the world because once you've lived your life, it's like a repeat, a rerun. There's nothing real special because it wasn't the first time. It made me go back and see if I if I have the right goals. It made me go back and see if I am acting the right way I am suppose to, doing what I am suppose to, if I have the right goals. It really made me look back and check, and write some things in.

I wanted to be all sorts of things. The general things that all kids want to be – pilot, policeman, fireman. But, I have been around kids forever and I really, really want to be a kindergarten teacher. I want to be around kids who are still young and fresh, and still have no clue what they want to do yet. I want to be the person who when they look back they say she really made an impact on my life. The girl who falls in love with one of the children in the family, she comes from a very wealthy family. So basically all she does is something her parents paid someone to make her do. So it's not what she really wanted. She starts to realize that life is short and she really needs to do what she wants to do.

When I read the book [*The Giver*], I think he was right to leave, what's the point of life if you can't live it the way you want to. I admire the Giver because I would never ever be able to just know something and just live with it my whole life. I would have to tell somebody; I would have to share my feelings about it like I am over these books. I can't hang on to something that really means something to me. When I read something that makes me feel emotional, I will run in and share it with my mom even though she doesn't really care.

"Lauren"

I like that it [*Liza's Star Wish*] takes place in Texas. I live here, so I can relate to it more. I liked how she [Liza] thought. It was realistic and I like those kinds of books. It's more interesting. With some books and movies, you are thinking, *that would never happen*. This book – I think she [the author] made it up – sounded like someone really went through this stuff. I really didn't relate to her that much, but I could relate to being left out by friends. [Lauren then told a personal story about being left out by friends.] We have the same personalities [somewhat contradicts the previous statement] but she's more of a rebel. I am not. If my grandmother died soon, I think I would react very much like Liza did to the loss of her grandmother.

Discussion Group

"Natalie", "Maya", "Lauren", "Arianha", "Olivia", "Kaitlyn", "Taryn" and "Danielle"

"Taryn": She [Melinda] has a perfect life, and then she gets cancer. I'd rather have my okay life than to have a perfect life and get cancer.

“Olivia”: It [*A Rose for Melinda*] is good because it represents typical teenage life. It made me cry, but it was great. [All concurred.]

“Natalie”: I like books like *A Rose for Melinda* that have multiple points of view. Most books have just one person telling the story, so you get just one perspective on what’s happening.

“Taryn”: I don’t like to read books like the Harry Potters books. I like more realistic books with stories that I can relate to.

“Olivia”: Reading books for classes kind of ruins the book for me. You have to read and respond to the book in parts. Summer reading is better because you can read at your own pace, the whole book at once, if you want.

APPENDIX B
IRB/PARTICIPANT MATERIALS

IRB Application

Application for Initial Review

University of North Texas Institutional Review Board
OHRP Federal wide Assurance: FWA00007479

For ORS Use Only	
File Number	
Approval Date	

Please save this Application as a Word document on your computer, answer all questions completely, and submit it along with all supplemental documents to the UNT Office of Research Services as described on the Signature Page. Handwritten forms will not be accepted.

1. Principal Investigator Information

Must be the same Principal Investigator named in any proposal for external or internal funding.

Stephanie	Reynolds	sreynold@library.unt.edu
First Name	Last Name	E-mail

If UNT faculty or staff:

UNT Department	UNT Building	Room Number
Office Phone Number	Fax Number	

If UNT student:

2401 E. McKinney Street, Apt. 427		
Home address		
Denton, TX 76209		
City, State, and Zip Code		
940-372-1228	NA	
Home Phone Number	Fax Number	
Brian C. O'Connor, Ph.D.	BOConnor@lis.admin.unt.edu	
Faculty Advisor's Name	Faculty Advisor's E-mail	
School of Library & Information Sciences	940-565-3565	
Faculty Advisor's UNT Department	Faculty Advisor's Office Phone Number	
Is this study for your master's thesis or doctoral dissertation?		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is this study for your other course work?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
Under the UNT IRB Guidelines, research conducted solely for satisfying course requirements does not require IRB review for approval, unless the investigator intends to publish or publicly present the results of the study as "generalizable knowledge" for his/her field of study.		

2. Co-Investigator Information

If applicable; students should include their Faculty Advisor as Co-Investigator only if he/she will be actively involved in conducting the study.

First Name	Last Name	E-mail
Office Phone Number	University or Other Entity	
The Co-Investigator's classification is:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Faculty/Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Student	

3. Key Personnel

List the names of all other Key Personnel who are responsible for the design, conduct, or reporting of the study.

--

4. Project Information

Growing Up is Hard to Do: Young Adult Literature as Therapeutic Process		
Project Title (Must be the same as any proposal for external or internal funding.)		
	07/22/2006*	12/31/2006
	Start Date (mm/dd/year)	End Date (mm/dd/year)
*Or the date IRB approval is received.		
Project Sponsors (Identify the source(s) of any external and/or internal funding and attach a complete copy of the funding proposal.)		

5. Significant Financial Conflict of Interest

If any external funding is proposed, have you and all Key Personnel submitted a Significant Financial Interest Disclosure form in compliance with the UNT Conflict of Interest Policy for Sponsored Projects? (For more information, see UNT Policy Number 16.12.3.3 at http://www.unt.edu/policy/UNT_Policy/volume3/16_12_3_3.html.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No External Funding

6. NIH Training

Have you and all key personnel completed the required NIH training course ("Human Participant Protections Education for Research Teams") and submitted a copy of the completion certificate to the Office of Research Services?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
---	-----------------------------

If "No," this training is required for all key personnel before your study can be approved. This free on-line course may be accessed at: <http://cme.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials/learning/humanparticipant-protections.asp>

7. Purpose of Study

In no more than half a page, briefly state the purpose of your study in **lay language** appropriate for the UNT IRB's community members and faculty members outside of your field; include the hypotheses or research question(s) you intend to answer; avoid cutting and pasting from any funding proposal, master's thesis, or doctoral dissertation; applications submitted with overly technical language will be returned to the Principal Investigator for revision before review by the IRB.

The primary purpose of this research is to discover what feelings and emotions adolescent girls experience when they read fiction. The secondary purpose is to look at how the expression of those feelings and emotions affects how they interpret what they read. This study will explore the effects of reading fiction on adolescent girls (dependent variable), and how those effects change based upon four reading-related activities (the independent variables), which are journaling, blogging, a personal interview, and a discussion group.

8. Previous Research

Summarize previous research leading to the formulation of this study, including any past or current research conducted by the Principal Investigator or key personnel.

NA

9. Informed Consent Forms

Written Informed Consent Forms signed by the subject or the subject's legally authorized representative are required for most IRB projects (exceptions include telephone surveys and internet surveys for which an Informed Consent notice is substituted). If any subjects will be children (under 18 years of age in Texas), the parent/guardian Informed Consent Form must include a section for obtaining assent by children ages 7-17. Submit a copy of all consent/assent forms to be used.

10. Foreign Languages

Will your study involve the use of Informed Consent Forms, data collection instruments, or recruitment materials in any language other than English?

Yes

No

If "Yes", identify all foreign languages below. Please do not submit any foreign language forms or materials until after the IRB has approved the English versions.

Spanish-language consent forms will be available.

11. Informed Consent

Describe the steps for obtaining the subjects' informed consent/assent (by whom, where, when, etc.).

Potential participants and at least one of their legal guardians will need to attend one of three meetings lasting 30-60 minutes. At each meeting, I will describe the research project in detail and provide handouts. Consent forms, assent forms, registration forms, and questionnaires will be distributed. All forms may be turned in at the end of each meeting, or returned via U.S. Mail (self-addressed, stamped envelopes will be provided). All forms need to be received within 5 business days.

12. Medications

Will any subjects be under the influence of any medication, drugs or stressful condition which could diminish their ability to give effective informed consent?

Yes

No

If "Yes," please explain and describe what steps you will take to verify that potential subjects possess the mental capacity to give meaningful informed consent to participation in the study.

13. Location of Study

Identify all locations where the study will be conducted. For each data collection site other than UNT, attach a signed and dated original of a letter on the cooperating institution's letterhead giving approval for collection of data at that site. This letter should reflect a general understanding of the nature of the study and how it will be conducted.

All informational meetings, personal interviews, and the discussion group will be held at McMath Middle School (DISD). Some interaction will occur electronically via e-mail or the blogging Web site. Interaction via telephone may be necessary if a participant is encountering problems or concerns with the study, encountering problems with electronic interaction, or cannot meet for a face-to-face personal interview.

14. Recruitment Population

Describe the population from which the subjects (including controls, if applicable) will be recruited.

Subjects will be recruited from National Honor Society members at McMath Middle School (DISD).

15. Subject Recruitment

Describe how you will recruit subjects to participate in the study; attach a copy of all recruitment materials (newspaper advertisements, posters, telephone scripts, etc.).

An introductory meeting will be held with potential participants, and an information sheet will be distributed to take home.

16. Subject Population Composition

Describe the anticipated gender, racial/ethnic composition, age range and health status of the study population and the criteria for inclusion or exclusion of any subpopulation.

All study participants must be female, aged 13-15, and fluent in English.

17. Vulnerable Populations

Please identify any vulnerable populations who will specifically be targeted for participation in this study:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children (under 18 years of age)	<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant women
<input type="checkbox"/> Prisoners, including juveniles	<input type="checkbox"/> Mentally impaired or mentally retarded

If any boxes are checked, describe any special precautions to be taken in your study due to the inclusion of these populations:

Every precaution will be taken to make certain that all participants understand the study; that they are comfortable taking part in the study at all times; and that they understand that they may leave the study at any time. No participant will be asked or required to participate in an activity that makes her uncomfortable. A McMath Middle School counselor is coordinating the participants and available to them. Referrals will be made to the Child and Family Resource Clinic at the University of North Texas as necessary.

18. Number of Participants

Total number of subjects (including controls):

15-25

Number of controls (if applicable):

None

19. Data Collection

Describe all procedures you will use to collect data (interviews, surveys, focus groups, observation, review of existing records, etc.). Attach a copy of all data collection instruments and interview scripts to be used.

Data collection will include personal interviews, journals, a blog, and a discussion group. All formats will be open-ended, but suggested questions will be provided. These questions will be the same for all formats. The personal interviews and the discussion group meeting will be audio recorded.

20. Time

Estimate the total time each subject will be involved in the study (include time per session, total number of sessions, etc.).

The time of involvement will vary. Each informational session should last no more than one hour. Once participants have been selected, the time requirements, which will involve completing one of the reading-related activities (i.e., journaling, blogging, personal interview, or discussion group), is anticipated to be 1-2 hours.

21. Compensation

Describe any payment or other compensation subjects will receive for participating in the study, including the timing for payment and any conditions for receipt of such compensation:

Each participant will receive American Library Association bookmarks and a reading-related bracelet.

22. Risks and Precautions

Describe any foreseeable risks to subjects presented by the procedures described above in the Data Collection section, including any physical, psychological, social, economic, legal, or confidentiality risks (see the UNT IRB Guidelines for more information about these risks). Include your assessment of the degree of each risk presented and all precautions you will take to minimize such risks or to respond to any adverse events, should they occur:

The risks of participating in this study are minimal. Possible risks include emotional distress from a reaction to the literature-related questions or to another participant's response (for those participating in the discussion group or blogging activity). Participants may also feel exposed, especially those participating in the personal interviews or discussion group as those reading activities are less anonymous. A counselor will be available to all participants. Well being checks will be conducted after completion of the study.

23. Benefits

Describe the benefits to the subjects or others (explain how the subjects will benefit from participating in the study, other than any compensation described in the Compensation section above; if the subjects will not directly benefit from the research, explain how the study will benefit others or contribute to your field of research):

Those participating in the study will hopefully gain a greater appreciation for literature, greater respect for and knowledge of other cultures, and a greater sense of self (e.g., self-confidence, self-esteem, self-respect, and self-knowledge). This research will contribute to the field of Library Science by providing a greater understanding of the impact of literature on the lives of adolescents, and evidence that they are positively influenced by what they read.

24. HIPAA

Will your study involve obtaining individually identifiable health information from health care plans, health care clearinghouses, or health care providers?

Yes

No

If "Yes," describe the procedures you will use to comply with the HIPAA Privacy Rule. (For more information about HIPAA, see the HIPAA Guidance page on the UNT Research Services website at <http://www.unt.edu/ospa/news/hipaa.htm>.)

25. Confidentiality of Research Records

Describe the procedures you will use to maintain the confidentiality of any personally identifiable data (including any videotapes and/or audiotapes of the participants).

All participants will be assigned a numerical code (e.g., 101) and a pseudonym to be used for the results narrative, and the interactive activities. A password-protected spreadsheet will be used which contains only the code numbers, the first initial of the participant's first name, and the assigned pseudonym (i.e., no participant will be assigned a pseudonym that begins with her first initial). The first initial is included to assure that no participant accidentally receives her real first name. Participant registration cards will be the only form with both the participant's full name and code number. These forms will be stored in a locked safe. All other forms will have only the code number, and be stored in the principal investigator's study file. No written records will be destroyed unless requested by the participant and her parent(s) or legal guardian(s). The code number will be used for all other documents. All information will be treated with respect and kept confidential. Audio recordings will be destroyed after transcription has been completed (by December 31, 2006).

Describe where your research records will be maintained, any coding or other steps you will take to separate participants' names from research data, and how long you will retain personally identifiable data in your research records.

See above.

Identify the categories of all persons other than the research team to whom personally identifiable data will be disclosed and the purpose of each such disclosure (presentations at academic conferences, dissertation committee, etc.).

There will be no disclosure of personally identifiable information to anyone, including parents or guardians, the dissertation committee, and the UNT counselor unless the release of such information is deemed critically necessary to the well being of the participant.

26. Publication of Results

Please identify all methods in which you plan to publicly disseminate the results of your study (academic journal, academic conference, thesis or dissertation, etc.).

Initially, the results will be disseminated as my doctoral dissertation. Post-dissertation dissemination may include conference presentations, and academic journals.

IRB Application Signature Page

Principal Investigator

I certify that the information in this application is complete and accurate. I agree to conduct this study in accordance with the UNT IRB Guidelines and the study procedures and forms approved by the UNT IRB. I agree that I will not make any changes to the approved procedures or forms without prior written approval from the UNT IRB.

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

Faculty Advisor (if applicable)

I have examined this completed application and I am satisfied with the adequacy of the proposed research design and the precautions to be taken for the protection of human subjects. My oversight of this study will include verification that it is being conducted in accordance with the UNT IRB Guidelines and the study procedures and forms approved by the UNT IRB. I agree that no changes will be made to the approved procedures or forms without prior written approval from the UNT IRB.

Signature of Faculty Advisor

Date

Submission of Your Application and Supplementary Documents

Print the entire application and sign this page. If you are a student, ask your Faculty Advisor to also sign this page.

Attach all supplementary documents, including:

Copies of all NIH Training completion certificates not previously submitted to the Office of Research Services;

A copy of any proposal for internal or external funding for this study;

The original of the approval letters from all cooperating institutions (other than UNT) where you will collect data;

A copy of all recruitment materials;

A copy of all informed consent forms; and

A copy of all data collection instruments.

Send or deliver the entire application (including this Signature Page) and all supplementary documents to:

Physical Address:

Office of Research Services

Hurley Admin. Bldg. 160

Mailing address:

UNT Office of Research Services

P.O. Box 305250-5250

Denton, TX 76203

Thank you for submitting your application to the UNT IRB. Please contact Shelia Bourns at (940) 565-3940 or sbourns@unt.edu for any questions about your application.

IRB Modification Request 1

MODIFICATION REQUEST FOR APPROVED RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

In accordance with federal regulations you must obtain approval before modification can be made to an approved Institutional Review Board (IRB) application.

Please type:

Investigator: Stephanie D. Reynolds **Today's Date:** October 5, 2006

IRB Approval Date: August 2006

E-mail address: sdreynolds@unt.edu **Telephone:** 940-372-1228

Address: P.O. Box 306222, Denton, Texas 76203

Faculty Sponsor: Brian C. O'Connor, Ph.D.

Title of Project: Growing Up is Hard to Do: Young Adult Literature as Therapeutic Process

IRB number (listed on formal approval letter): 06-253

Describe the changes you are requesting:

I am requesting (the corresponding IRB Application question numbers are included in parentheses):

- to change the venue for all activities to McMath Middle School (#13).
- to change my recruitment population to the McMath Middle School Honor Society members (#14).
- to change my recruitment venue to McMath Middle School; the notice that potential participants will take home is attached. (#15).
- to change the participant age range to 13-15 year olds females (#16).
- to add the McMath Middle School counselors in case of participant need (#17).
- to change the date for completion of the transcription to December 31, 2006 (#25).
- to leave the participant gifts off of the consent form at the request of McMath. This is not critical, but they asked if it was possible so that it is not an incentive for participation.

Why are these changes necessary?: My first recruitment efforts through the Denton Public Libraries were unsuccessful. I have obtained approval from Denton ISD and McMath Middle School to recruit from their National Honor Society members.

If changes are made to a Research Consent Form or Information Letter provide a revised copy with this modification request.

IRB Modification Request 2

MODIFICATION REQUEST FOR APPROVED RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

In accordance with federal regulations you must obtain approval before modification can be made to an approved Institutional Review Board (IRB) application.

Please type:

Investigator: Stephanie D. Reynolds **Today's Date:** October 19, 2006

IRB Approval Date: August 2006

E-mail address: sdreynolds@unt.edu **Telephone:** 940-372-1228

Address: P.O. Box 306222, Denton, Texas 76203

Faculty Sponsor: Brian C. O'Connor, Ph.D.

Title of Project: Growing Up is Hard to Do: Young Adult Literature as Therapeutic Process

IRB number (listed on formal approval letter): 06-253

Describe the changes you are requesting:

I am requesting to make a slight modification to the blogging activity. All of my participants will be doing the blogging activity on the McMath Middle School campus using the Denton Independent School District Web registered user site instead of the blog page that I set up. Although it is unlikely, other registered student users will be able to see what the girls write for this activity. Thus, it has been modified so that all of the blogging activity participants will complete the activity at the same during one hour of the day. After the activity is complete, the data will be copied to a Word document and deleted from the blogging site. In addition, electronic journals have been dropped, and only hardbound journal books will be used.

Why are these changes necessary?: To accommodate the Denton Independent School District technology security requirements.

If changes are made to a Research Consent Form or Information Letter provide a revised copy with this modification request.

Human Participants Protection Course Completion Certificate

Human Participant Protections Education for Research Teams

<http://cme.cancer.gov/cgi-bin/cms/cts-cert5.pl>



National Cancer Institute
U.S. National Institutes of Health | www.cancer.gov

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Human Participant Protections Education for Research Teams

Completion Certificate

This is to certify that

Stephanie Reynolds

has completed the **Human Participants Protection Education for Research Teams** online course, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), on 04/09/2006.

This course included the following:

- key historical events and current issues that impact guidelines and legislation on human participant protection in research.
- ethical principles and guidelines that should assist in resolving the ethical issues inherent in the conduct of research with human participants.
- the use of key ethical principles and federal regulations to protect human participants at various stages in the research process.
- a description of guidelines for the protection of special populations in research.
- a definition of informed consent and components necessary for a valid consent.
- a description of the role of the IRB in the research process.
- the roles, responsibilities, and interactions of federal agencies, institutions, and researchers in conducting research with human participants.

National Institutes of Health

1 of 2

4/9/2006 7:29 PM

Facility Letter of Authorization



Denton Independent School District

Dr. Roger D. Rutherford

Assistant Superintendent
Academic Programs
1307 North Locust
Denton, Texas 76201
(940) 369-0133
Fax (940) 369-4983

Stephanie Reynolds
P.O. Box 306222
Denton, Texas 76203

October 6, 2006

Dear Stephanie Reynolds:

I am pleased to inform you that your research proposal: "Growing up is hard to do: Young Adult Literature as Therapeutic Process." has been approved by *Debra Noblesy* (940-369-3300), *Principal of McMath Middle School*, and the Academic Programs Division.

Please contact the principal to initiate your research activities.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger Rutherford".

Roger Rutherford, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent
Instructional Services Division

RR/cc
cc: Mrs. Debra Nobles

Reading Research Sign Up Sheet

READING RESEARCH STUDY SIGN UP SHEET

1 _____	14 _____
2 _____	15 _____
3 _____	16 _____
4 _____	17 _____
5 _____	18 _____
6 _____	19 _____
7 _____	20 _____
8 _____	21 _____
9 _____	22 _____
10 _____	23 _____
11 _____	24 _____
12 _____	25 _____
13 _____	26 _____

Please print your name. Thank you!

Stephanie Reynolds



Participant Reading Questions



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS™

Reading Questions

Please answer the questions below based on one or two books you have recently read. There are no right or wrong answers. Not all of the questions must be answered about the same book, and you are not required to answer every question. You may respond to the questions about as many books as you would like, but please indicate to which book your answers correspond.

1. What book did you have the strongest feelings about? When did you first experience a reaction while reading the book? Please explain.
2. In your own words, describe how you visualize the main characters in one of your favorite books.
3. What character(s) in this book did you identify with? Why?
4. Do you think that you changed in any way because of reading the book? Please give examples.
5. What were your initial perceptions the main character?
6. Had any of your perceptions about any characters changed by the end of the book?
7. Do you feel more strongly about any beliefs you had prior to reading the book? Please explain.
8. Do you feel less strongly about any beliefs you had prior to reading the book? Please explain.
9. Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why?
10. Did reading this book help you with any issues or concerns that you are currently facing in your own life? If so, please explain.

Study Synopsis for Parents/Guardians



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH★TEXAS™

Your daughter has been asked to participate in a research project entitled *Growing Up is Hard to Do: Young Adult Literature as Therapeutic Process* that I am conducting to complete a doctoral degree at the University of North Texas in the School of Library and Information Sciences. Below is a brief explanation to familiarize you with the study. If you are interested in your daughter participating in this study, additional information and consent forms will be provided to you when you attend a meeting with me. Information on these meetings will be forthcoming.

This research will explore what feelings and emotions adolescent girls experience when they read fiction, and how the expression of those feelings and emotions affects how they interpret or experience what they read.

This study will explore the impact or value of the literature that adolescent girls read in the course of their everyday lives. The focus will be on books your daughter has already read, no specific books or other readings will be assigned, and no particular problems or behaviors will be addressed. This study is interested the role fiction literature plays in everyday female adolescent life.

The role that fiction literature plays will be evaluated using four reading-related activities: journal writing, participating in a Blog, being personally interviewed, or participating in a group discussion. Your daughter will be randomly assigned to one of the four groups.

Every precaution will be taken to assure the safety and well being of your daughter. She will not be pressured to complete the study or to participate in any activity with which she or you are uncomfortable. If needed, participants will be referred to her school counselor or to the Child and Family Resource Clinic at the University of North Texas and/or her school counselor. The personal interviews and the discussion group meeting will be digitally recorded. The recordings will be destroyed upon completion of the transcription.

Your daughter will receive a numerical code (e.g., 101) and a fictitious name to be used for identification during the interactive activities and in the written results. The goal is to minimize any disruption to your daughter's everyday life. Your daughter is not expected to spend no more than 2 hours on her assigned activity. The personal interviews and the discussion group will be scheduled at times when it is most convenient for your daughter. She will not be asked to miss class or other school-related activities. Girls participating in the blog and the journal activities may do so on their own time.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at sdreynolds@unt.edu.

With best regards,

Stephanie Reynolds

Parental Consent and Child Assent Forms

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS™

Institutional Review Board

Parent/Guardian Informed Consent Form

Your daughter has been asked to participate in a study involving her response to literature that she has previously read. This research study is associated with the University of North Texas and not Denton Independent School District or McMath Middle School. Before agreeing to your daughter's participation in this research study, it is important that you read and understand the following explanation of the purpose and benefits of the study and how it will be conducted.

Title of Study: Growing Up is Hard to Do: Young Adult Literature as Therapeutic Process

Principal Investigator: Stephanie D. Reynolds, M.S., doctoral candidate, University of North Texas (UNT), School of Library & Information Sciences (SLIS).

Purpose of the Study: This study will explore how reading fiction affects adolescent girls and how those effects change based upon four reading-related activities: journaling, Blogging, a personal interview, and a group discussion. Those participating in the study will hopefully gain a greater appreciation for literature, greater respect for and knowledge of other cultures, and a greater sense of self (e.g., self-confidence, self-esteem, self-respect, and self-knowledge).

Study Procedures: It is anticipated that each participant will complete her reading-related activity in one to two hours. Hardbound notebooks will be provided for those participating in the journaling activity. Those participating in the blogging activity will do so via a Denton Independent School District Web registered user site while on the McMath Middle School campus. The personal interviews and the discussion group meeting will take place at McMath Middle School. Dates and times will be arranged later. The participants in the discussion group and the blogging group are expected to keep the words expressed by her peers confidential. However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Please see the Group Participation Instructions for details. All activities will begin the week of October 23, 2006 and will be completed by approximately November 10, 2006.

Foreseeable Risks: The researcher will make every effort to eliminate or diminish any risks to your daughter. Possible risks include strong emotions from a reaction to the literature-related questions or to another participant's response (for those participating in the discussion group or the Blogging activity). Participants may also feel exposed, especially those participating in the personal interviews or discussion group as those reading activities are less anonymous. If your daughter experiences any difficulties as a result of the study, free assistance is available from your daughter's school counselor or from the Child and Family Resource Clinic at the University of North Texas. You or your daughter may ask the researcher for assistance at any time during and after the study, or the Clinic can be reached at 940-565-2066.

Benefits to the Subjects or Others: Those participating in the study will hopefully gain a greater appreciation for literature, greater respect for and knowledge of other cultures, and a greater sense of self (e.g., self-confidence, self-esteem, self-respect, and self-knowledge). This research will contribute to the field of Library Science by providing a greater understanding of the impact of literature on the lives of adolescents, and evidence that reading young adult literature is beneficial to them.

Procedures for Maintaining Confidentiality of Research Records: All participants will be assigned a numerical code (e.g., 101) and a fictitious name to be used for the study results. A spreadsheet will be used that has only the code numbers, the first initial of the participant's first name, and her fictitious name. The first initial is included to assure that no participant accidentally receives her real first name. For example, a participant with the first initial "T" for Tammy might get the fictitious name Candace, but not Tiffany. Participant registration cards will be the only form with both the participant's full name and the code number. These forms will be stored in a locked safe at the principal investigator's home. All other forms will have only the code number, and be stored in the principal investigator's study file. No written records will be destroyed unless requested by the participant and her parent(s) or legal guardian(s). Audio recordings will be deleted upon completion of the written transcript (no later than December 31, 2006). The confidentiality of your daughter's individual information will be maintained in any publications or presentations relating to the results of this study.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Stephanie D. Reynolds, M.S. at (940) 372-1228, or the faculty sponsor, Brian O'Connor, Ph.D., University of North Texas, School of Library & Information Sciences, at (940) 565-3565.

Review for the Protection of Participants: This research study has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board (IRB). The UNT IRB can be contacted at (940) 565-3940 with any questions regarding the rights of research subjects.

Research Participants' Rights: Your signature below indicates that you have read or have had read to you all of the above and that you confirm all of the following:

- Stephanie D. Reynolds, M.S. has explained the study to you and answered all of your questions. You have been told the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study.
- You understand that you do not have to allow your daughter to take part in this study, and your refusal to allow your daughter to participate or your decision to withdraw her from the study will involve no penalty or loss of rights or benefits. The study personnel may choose to stop your daughter's participation at any time.
- You understand why the study is being conducted and how it will be performed.
- You understand your rights as the parent/guardian of a research participant and you voluntarily consent to your daughter's participation in this study.
- You have been told you will receive a copy of this form.

Printed Name of Parent or Guardian

Date

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date

For the Principal Investigator or Designee: I certify that I have reviewed the contents of this form with the parent or guardian signing above. I have explained the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study. It is my opinion that the parent or guardian understood the explanation.

Signature of Principal Investigator or Designee

Date

Child Assent Form

You are being asked to be part of a research project conducted by Stephanie Reynolds at the University of North Texas.

This study involves responding to books you have previously read by either writing in a journal, writing as a member of a Blog, participating in a personal interview with the researcher, or participating in a group discussion with the researcher and several other readers your age. You will receive a code number and a fictitious name so that your responses are kept secret.

If you decide to help with this study, please remember that you can stop participating at any time. You may discuss any concerns or issues you have with the researcher at any time. A counselor at your school or from the Child and Family Resource Clinic at the University of North Texas can assist you with any problems you might experience from participating in the study. Please let your parent, guardian or the researcher know if you need assistance.

If you would like to help with this study, please sign your name below.

Signature of Child

Date

Signature of Principal Investigator or Designee

Date

Waiver of Assent

The assent of (insert name of child) was waived due to:

_____ Age

_____ Maturity

_____ Psychological State

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Participant Registration Form

Code # _____



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Research Registration Form

Completion of this form does not mean that you will be required to participate in the study, nor does it guarantee that you will be selected to participate. Completion of this is simply an indication of interest.

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____

Phone numbers where the researcher can reach your parent(s) or guardian(s):

(1) _____ ; (2) _____

E-mail addresses:

Registrant _____ @ _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) _____ @ _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) _____ @ _____

Does your family speak a language other than English at home?

No Yes, we speak _____

Are your parents/guardians fluent in English? (check all that apply)

Mother Father Guardian(s)

Do you live in a single parent or single guardian home? No Yes

Registrant's Signature Date

Parent's or Guardian's Signature Date

Thank you for your interest,

Stephanie D. Reynolds

Participant Questionnaire

Code # _____



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Research Study Participant Questionnaire

- 1. About how many books of your own choosing have you read since May? ____
- 2. Do you regularly read for pleasure during the school year? Yes No
- 3. What genres or types of literature do you regularly read? (check all that apply)
 - Series Fiction Young Adult Fiction Mysteries
 - Romance Science Fiction Graphic Novels
 - Fantasy Other _____

4. If you have any favorite authors, please list up to five:

5. Of the titles that you have recently read, please list those you liked best:

- 6. Have you ever participated in a book discussion group? Yes No

7. Do you use a computer at home? Yes No

8. If you use a computer at home, do you use it for: (check all that apply)

- E-mail Blogging Homework Instant Messaging
 Gaming Chat rooms Browsing Other _____

9. Is your participation in any of the activities *unacceptable* to you or your parent(s)?

- Journaling: Me Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
- Blogging: Me Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
- Interview: Me Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
- Group Discussion: Me Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

10. My mother's (or guardian's) highest level of education is (please specify degree):

- High School Diploma _____
 Some College _____
 Bachelor's Degree _____
 Master's Degree _____
 Ph.D. _____

11. My father's (or guardian's) highest level of education is (please specify degree):

- High School Diploma _____
 Some College _____
 Bachelor's Degree _____
 Master's Degree _____
 Ph.D. _____

Registrant's Signature

Date

Parent's or Guardian's Signature

Date

Group Participation Instructions



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Group Participation Instructions

Journaling Group

If you are one of the journal writers, Stephanie will provide you with a journal book to write in. As with all of the activities, your real name will not be used in the notes and records that I keep. If you use the names of friends or family members, they will be changed if your work is quoted in my research. A list of questions will be provided to you as a guide, however, you may write about anything you like regarding what you have read. You may write as little or as much as you like. If you would like to have your journal returned to you after Stephanie has finished with it, please write your request in at the end of your journals entry before giving it to Stephanie.

Blogging Group

We will be using the McMath Web site for the blogging activity, and you will receive instruction from Ms. Thomson on how to access and use the blog page. Because we are using a Denton Independent School District Web registered user site, other students within the district may possibly see what you write. Therefore, we will restrict the blogging activity to one hour, and you all will complete the activity at the same time. Once the blogging activity is complete, all posts will be copied, and your blog entries will be deleted. A list of questions will be provided to you as a guide, however, you may write about anything you like regarding what you have read. Stephanie will serve as a moderator, but will not participate in the discussion. You may stop participating at any time.

Personal Interviewing Group

If you are participating in a personal interview, you will have a private meeting with Stephanie at McMath during or after school hours. All interviews will be recorded using a voice recorder attached to an iPod. After the recordings have been written out, they will be deleted from the iPod. If you or your parent(s)/guardian(s) do not want your interview to be recorded, please tell Stephanie immediately so that you may be assigned to the Journaling or Blogging group. The interview will last for as long as you are available and have something to share. We will work from the same list of questions provided to the Journaling and Blogging groups. Please expect the interview to last about an hour. However, you may end the interview at any time.

Discussion Group

If you are participating in the discussion group, a time will be arranged for those participants to meet at McMath during or after school hours. The discussion will be recorded using a voice recorder attached to an iPod. After the recording has been written out, they will be deleted from the iPod. If you or your parent(s)/guardian(s) do not want you to be recorded, please tell Stephanie immediately so that you may be assigned to the Journaling or Blogging group. The discussion will last for as long as the participants are available and have something to share. We will work from the same list of questions provided to the Journaling and Blogging groups. Please expect the discussion to last at least an hour. However, you may leave at any time.

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