

# **e-Readers: Enhancing boys' reading experience**

**Elizabeth Avery**

**Anglican Church Grammar School (Churchie)    Brisbane Australia**

---

## **Abstract**

A group of 20 Middle and Senior School boys of varying interests, ages and abilities was chosen to participate in an action research project investigating the motivational aspects of e-readers at Anglican Church Grammar School (Churchie) in Brisbane. At Churchie we have a strong vision for developing deeper levels of literacy skills in our boys but it is within these years, with the increased demands on their adolescent lives, that they often tend to either drift away from reading or indeed, become confirmed lifelong readers. The research question was: *'How can using e-readers develop an adolescent boy's feeling of reading competence and enhance his motivation to read for leisure?'* Various books were read by the boys using e-readers over a period of weeks, and through questionnaires and discussion, it was noted how these devices changed their reading experience. From the positive feedback and discussion gathered, it is clear that e-readers hold a place in enhancing the reading enjoyment and competence amongst a number of boys that Churchie has regarded as needing greater assistance to reach that deeper literacy skill level.

## **Rationale**

The central role of teacher librarians is to develop programs and initiatives to encourage and support core learning. Literacy underpins learning tasks, so teacher librarians have a core responsibility to motivate and support boys to read, and read deeply. This is a real and valid focus within the boys' school setting. How teacher librarians promote activities that develop boys' literacy can be a challenge when school library staff often has a strong female bias and where a very active lifestyle, the pursuit of many boys at Churchie, does not lend itself to the more sedentary habit of reading. A challenge that also needs to be met is that many boys seem not to enjoy reading as much as their female counterparts.

However, with literacy related technology moving into popular culture, teacher librarians have a wider range of tools available to motivate boys in literacy-strong activities. Since many boys pride themselves in their technological competence and, if e-readers are seen by them as a masculine vehicle for providing a positive reading experience, there is potential for e-readers to build confidence and increase reading skill and enjoyment.

## **Literature Review**

Boys are at the forefront of the reading debate. The most recent PIRLS study (IEA 2006) demonstrates that boys lag behind girls in the literacy stakes. Michael W. Smith and Jeffrey D. Wilhelm (2002, p.13) in their book *Reading don't fix no Chevys: Literacy in the lives of young men*, cite various commentators on the subject of boys and reading, to conclude that:

boys will go to great lengths to establish themselves as 'not female' and follow what their peer group establishes as gender-specific behaviour. If reading and other literate activities are perceived as feminized, then boys will go to great lengths to avoid them. This is particularly true if the activities involve effort and the chance of failure, for incompetence and expending effort are also seen as unmasculine. Achievement, for men, is supposed to be attained with ease. Boys will avoid feminized behaviors or responses as a form of 'pollution.'

They also speak of boys' need for 'flow experiences'; flow being defined by Csikszentmihalyi (1990) as "the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter". Inherent in the notion of the flow experience is a sense of control and competence. They found that the subjects of their research spoke frequently of how a feeling of competence caused them to persist with an activity such as reading and how they quickly gave up when competence was not perceived.

In order to motivate boys to choose to read during their free time, one should take into account their possible perception that reading is a feminized activity and that it may be considered by the less able of them to be a situation where their sense of control is minimal. Because the level of literacy skills needed to enjoy reading requires a certain level of competence to bring them *into the flow*, and because ICTs and multi-mediated texts have been shown to have a positive motivational impact on boys (Passey & Rogers 2004) in that they become more consistent and persistent with a task, e-readers may be the tool that can change these perceptions.

The following recent research suggests that e-readers may promote success in reading through the various technical capabilities built into the tool, for example, the ability to change font size to suit individual needs, the interactivity of the e-reader, and the inclusion of audible text. Larson (2010), a Kansas State University professor, used the Amazon Kindle in her work with elementary school students. Her qualitative research determined that features such as audible text, ability to increase font size, and note-taking facilities had a positive impact on the way in which children interact with texts. They typically showed greater understanding of the plot and character development when using an e-reader than in their interactions with the printed word.

DeLamater (2010 online) also reported on studies of dyslexic students, finding that when they were offered an opportunity to select an optimal font size with less crowding, improvement of reading ease and speed was commonly found to be the case, thereby generally improving reading experience. She notes:

Digital text presents a new opportunity to readily adjust the text or font size of reading material given to students in school. Investigations over the past twenty years into the sources of slower reading on the part of dyslexic students have identified "crowding" as a central cause. Individuals who have begun reading on devices such as the Apple iPhone or the Amazon Kindle report a preference for larger font sizes and an accompanying improvement in the reading experience.

Supported by DeLamater's (2010) study into e-readers and dyslexia, Smith (2010) makes comment in her blogpost that e-readers aid the act of reading. Although not specifically relating this to boys, she does believe that there are some good reasons for considering the use of e-readers with struggling readers and possibly reluctant readers; a large part of that population we know are boys (IEA 2006). She also notes that having a text-to-speech synthesiser as an e-reader component reinforces words on the page and provides feedback, an important element in *going into the flow*.

It is assumed then for this action research study that boys may benefit from a different approach for getting them into the flow of reading. Technology that has the potential to provide an enjoyable reading experience and an increased sense of reading competence is certainly worthy of investigation. Hence the question for this action research, *'How can*

*using e-readers develop an adolescent boy's feeling of reading competence and enhance his motivation to read for leisure?'*

## **Research Context**

My research was conducted at Anglican Church Grammar School, a large independent boys' school with a population of approximately 1700 students from K – 12. The school is located in Brisbane and is a Christian School of the Anglican Church of Australia. There are four tenets that underpin education of boys at Churchie: Scholastic Attainment, Spiritual Awareness, Personal Growth and Community Service.

## **Research Method**

Action research is a methodology concerned with increasing our understanding of human behaviour (McNiff 2002). Hence action research was chosen for this study to investigate how the introduction of an innovative technology (e-readers) into an already established and supported curriculum framework of reading widely, could provide an opportunity to motivate boys to greater scholastic attainment and personal reading growth. I wanted to hear their opinions and understand how their attitudes about reading for leisure might change whilst using a small technological device that was portable, light, compact, and could be manipulated to provide a wealth of reading assistance.

## **Participants**

The boys chosen to participate in this project were from the Middle and Senior School Years 7-11 (ages 13 – 17). It is within these years at Churchie that the increased complexity of boys' lives, as they move from upper primary to middle school, can cause reading for leisure to be placed at risk. My sample consisted of 20 boys who could be roughly divided into three groups: those who find reading a real challenge, the 'average' reader and those who already really enjoy it and are very capable at it.

My first contact was with the two Middle School and Senior School learning support teachers whom I asked to nominate boys whose skills in, and attitudes to, reading were considered to be having negative impact on their learning and whom they thought might benefit by using an e-reader. I was approached by a Year 9 teacher who, as part of an assignment, had asked his boys to examine the notion of e-readers and their potential contribution to the reading world.

Some members of this class agreed to join the project. I also approached the gifted program co-ordinator to canvas boys in her Year 10 group who would be keen to participate, knowing that there were some in that group who were very good readers. Their views too, regarding the motivational value of e-reading devices, were of interest. In addition, all Year 10 boys had been issued with electronic tablets across the year level and I was interested to see what differences they might see between using the tablet as a reading device compared to a dedicated e-reader.

### **Data Collection**

Initially the study included 21 boys, of which one dropped out due to a concern regarding the borrowing of such an expensive item. 20 boys completed the project tasks. Each of them took home a letter outlining the project and returned a form signed by both himself and a parent consenting to project participation and for the use of photographs.

Each participant completed a preliminary questionnaire on *SurveyMonkey* (Appendix A) to gain feedback on their general level of reading, their interests, attitudes and reading preferences. Their perception of gender differences with regard to reading was also sought. As well as gaining valuable base line data and insight into their current reading 'world', this enabled me to load the e-readers with appropriate books to suit the boys concerned. The boys were asked to nominate titles and authors they would like to read. In some cases, chosen titles were not available digitally. As a result, in some instances boys were given their third or fourth choice or provided with books within the same genre or as having similar appeal to the book nominated. As this was commonly the case, the final questionnaire sought feedback regarding this aspect of e-reading, that is, not all of the material you would like is available in all formats. These market needs are being rapidly addressed, however, and many more titles have become available throughout the course of the project.

After completing the survey, each of the boys was loaned a dedicated e-reader for a period of two weeks. These included Kobo readers, Sony PRS-650 readers, Kindles and one iPad. They were given a checklist of e-reader features to refer to whilst reading, the expectation being that each participant would use this sheet to acknowledge the features he found most useful and submit this at the time of returning the e-reader. The checklist served as a tool to focus attention on the different features of the readers, which were not always fully understood by the boys. It became apparent with the first couple of boys who borrowed the

e-readers, that not everyone had the curiosity to fully explore the extent of each device's capabilities unless attention was specifically drawn to particular aspects. The iPad, being a more expensive item, was not for home loan but for use within the classroom and library. It was loaded with a number of the same books as those loaded to the dedicated e-readers and in addition, the digitally enhanced picture book *Animalia* by Graeme Base. The iPad, whilst offering far greater capability than simply e-reading, was seen by many as significant competition to the dedicated e-reader because it provided colour, high resolution complex graphics and increased interactive capabilities, yet could provide the same base e-reading function.

The views of each boy were sought prior to the summer vacation when he was asked to reflect on the value of reading from an electronic device so far. All boys' views were duly noted; some were video recorded using a Flip camera and from others I simply took notes in the very busy end of year period. With the summer vacation drawing near, giving ample time for boys to indulge in reading, it was decided to extend the project to include this time. Some boys chose not to take the device over the holidays expressing similar views to the boy who withdrew in the initial stages of the project; they, or their families, did not wish to be responsible for such an expensive item over a protracted time period. Some too, were anticipating a gift of an e-reader or iPad for Christmas.

On completing the project at the end of the December/January vacation, a final written questionnaire using *SurveyMonkey* (Appendix B) was undertaken by the boys, to compare their 'before and after' views. In addition to this final written survey, the outcome of formal and informal discussions was recorded. Indicators of a higher interest in reading for pleasure as a result of engaging with an e-reading device were sought and recorded in note form or by using a Flip camera.

I was particularly interested to hear, and record in detail, the voices of the boys in the group who found reading a real challenge and so used the Flip camera to record guided discussion with them, either in a small group of up to three or individually. I took notes and summarized their responses. One of the boys in Year 9 (Student K), a reader who was already very capable and found reading enjoyable, spoke formally to his class on the motivational aspects of e-readers. This was recorded by Flip camera as well.

## **Data Analysis**

Data were examined throughout the project; key aspects of the information being summarized in chart form (Appendix C). Written and spoken quotations were recorded and categorised according to the e-reading feature mentioned. Whilst the boys used their own names in any data collected, they were given a pseudonym (e.g. Student A) in my coding, to ensure anonymity.

The initial survey using *SurveyMonkey* provided me with vital base information concerning the boys' reading enjoyment, speed, feelings of reading competence, 'flow' experiences and their technological capabilities and attitudes. Summary and analysis was made using the considerable data analysis tools of *SurveyMonkey*. From this data, I divided the boys roughly into three groups: those who find reading a real challenge, the 'average' reader and those who already really enjoy it and are very capable at it. I attached a colour code to each category and colour coded those individuals in the main summary chart which compares key aspects from the initial and final surveys (see Appendices A, B and C).

I made copious notes from the checklist handed back by each of the boys at the conclusion of reading a book on each of the devices. From these checklists and oral comments made on the return of the devices, I summarized the comments made concerning each of the features they found most helpful in reading their particular book and took note of differences between the brands of e-reader.

The final questionnaire using *SurveyMonkey*, taken after the summer vacation, was once again analysed using *SurveyMonkey's* inbuilt data analysis tools and key information added to the chart (Appendix C).

## **Discussion of the Findings**

The initial survey of the 20 participants, designed to determine reading ability, attitudes to, and interests in reading, illustrated that the greater majority of the boys in the study felt reading was important, if not crucial, to their success in later life. They also regarded themselves technologically competent, and a significant number of the boys did not see that enjoyment of reading and capability as readers were necessarily linked. When asked if they thought e-readers could motivate them to read, again the greater majority believed it possible. However, after the intervention, although the majority of boys felt that the enjoyment of

reading may have increased, only a small number felt that e-readers had any effect on increasing their reading competence. It seemed also that there is a definite relationship between reader rating and reading speed; a good reader is a fast reader in the view of our 20 participants. And it was noteworthy that of the boys who felt that they read faster, rated themselves more highly, and enjoyed reading more after the intervention of using an e-reader, only one of them fell into the category of being a highly capable reader. In other words, the less capable the reader, the more of a difference an e-reader seemed to make; the use of an e-reader made less difference to the more highly capable reader. *Flow* was another factor felt important to this research. Again the greater majority expressed that they experienced flow whilst reading a traditional paper book, yet after the intervention, this majority dropped to 9 of the 20 boys.

In terms of benefits in using e-readers, 16 of the boys regarded adjustable font size and use of the on-board dictionary as useful to boys who find difficulty with reading, whilst 10 regarded the touch screen facility of the Sony as useful. Eight found the text-to-speech capability, screen size and weight a valuable feature. The boys also felt that added features on some of the e-readers aided their comfort and/or enjoyment of use, for example, colour, range of other applications available, user friendliness and clarity of the screen.

The focus groups and informal discussions provided a chance for the boys to expand on their opinions after they had used e-readers. They made comment that in terms of leisure activities, they prefer to be outside and doing things. One will, of course, have less time to read if a very active lifestyle is pursued. It would appear that there are many boys learning to juggle the need to be physically active but also keep up their reading. An e-reader, readily available in their bags and loaded with a wide variety of books, may assist boys in the pursuit of this balance. An important comment worthy of consideration from one of the participants was *“Using the e-readers was an interesting experience, not necessarily making reading more enjoyable for me, but certainly making it easier and more accessible”* whilst another noted, *“I found that the e-reader was more enjoyable because it is lighter and more aesthetically pleasing than a book. It was also easier to carry around in a case than a novel is”*. This comment about the ease of carrying an e-reader against books was echoed over and over and the fact that *“It was easier to ‘lug’ around at school instead of using a big, fat book that would get damaged”* as well as *“It made carrying hundreds of books very light, and*

*reading off the screen was very easy*” although not necessarily illustrating increased enthusiasm for reading, took away at least one of the negatives of ‘lugging books’ around.

It is noteworthy that 14 of the 20 believe the e-reader does not increase their feelings of competence. This at first seemed somewhat anomalous but it needs to be acknowledged that these devices were new to the boys, many comments suggesting that greater familiarity with them would be needed before final judgment could be made. Once completely familiar with the technology, it may be that a state of flow in reading could be more easily achieved. There may also be some inherent features of an e-reader which simply do not lend themselves to flow experience for some people. There were a number of comments made regarding how annoying it was that the screen of e-readers turned momentarily black as the page turned, as noted by this participant, *“It was convenient and fast to use. However I did find the colour invert slightly dizzying whenever I turned the page.”*

Not always could a boy read his first choice of book, a factor which no doubt impacts on reading enjoyment and flow. One boy commented that:

*I often read books from recommendations from others. However, since many authors were not yet available on the e-reader, I simply read the first few chapters of the books available and read to see if I got ‘hooked’.*

Another boy commented, *“I think that paper books have a better variety of books than the e-reader, but the e-reader is more enjoyable to read.”*

Generally speaking, the boys were very excited and pleased to have the opportunity to trial this technology. Many enjoyed being a source of attention when using it during a scheduled reading lesson or in front of their peers. It was interesting to observe the boys when they were first given the readers. A number of them turned them over repeatedly when discussing what was on them to be read. All boys had been asked to provide me with some titles of books they thought they would like to read. Not all of these were digitally available, so for some participants other similar, but unknown books were offered which, it was hoped, would suit their reading capabilities and interests. At the point of giving a boy an e-reader, I needed to explain to him what was available to be read, if indeed it was not the exact title he had

requested. One boy in particular asked how ‘thick’ the book was, how many pages it had, and how big the print size was. He kept turning the device over in his hands, looking at it sideways and underneath it. He seemed to be looking for the traditional cues, provided by paper books, for choosing what to read. It was apparent through observing this boy that making a decision as to whether a particular e-book is the sort that will meet your reading requirements must be based on a different set of criteria to those used when choosing a traditional book. Another boy also noted, *“It is easier (when using an e-reader) to choose a book that I know of, as it becomes more accessible. However, I believe it would be harder to choose a book that I did not know, as there was no cover, blurb etc.. upon which I could base a judgement”*. It became increasingly apparent to me that many facets of a paper book are key indicators to its potential for an enjoyable reading experience. The cover, thickness, size of font, illustrations, layout and perhaps even the quality of the paper may traditionally influence the boys’ decision to read a particular book. It was also clear that a boy gains ‘feedback’ by seeing where he is up to in a book. As one boy noted, *“I prefer holding a book and seeing how much I have read”* and another remarked, *“It’s hard to know what page you’re on. It only says the location”*. It would seem that a sense of achievement can be gained from physically seeing how many pages have gone by and it may also be possible that an experienced reader gains some insight into how far away a critical moment in the narrative might be from how far physically into a book he has read.

As far as the use of electronic tablets for reading is concerned, one boy summarised what a many of them felt, *“Reading a book on a computer is too distracting as there are other things on the computer. Also the computer doesn’t engage you as a reader as much when you have an actual book in your hands”*. It isn’t absolutely clear what he means by an “actual book” but, given he is speaking of the distracting aspects of a multi-faceted computer, it could be either a paper book or a book on a dedicated e-reader. Most felt that, whilst the tablet was a very useful tool for research and completing assignments, when it came to reading, a more dedicated device, either a paper book or an e-reader, was preferred. Yet another student summarised the situation for some of the more capable readers when he said *“I don’t really mind as to what my format of reading is”*.

## **Implications of the Study on Practice**

Whilst it would seem that there are a number of features which make e-readers very useful tools in the teaching of reading to boys who find reading a challenge, namely the adjustable font size, the easy use of a dictionary and text-to-speech capability, there is an undeniable elegance inherent in the traditional paper book which has not been lost on the 20 young men of my study aged between 13 and 17 years. As one boy in Year 11, who is now into the second year of using an electronic tablet for all his studies, comments:

*I believe paper books still hold relevance in modern society because the thought of relaxing does not involve sitting with a computer or other such device because most of the education or working world involves these devices. Relaxing is thought of as escaping this.*

This boy is clearly speaking of reading for relaxation or leisure rather than for research related purposes. If e-readers and related electronic devices can provide those boys, for whom reading has never been a pleasure, an opportunity to increase their reading speed and ability and thereby gain some enjoyment from the experience, then they must surely serve a useful purpose in teaching boys to read. The fact that an e-reader can hold hundreds of books and be so light-weight and space-effective is also an undeniable advantage.

As a result of this study, boys who find reading a challenge will be provided with the added option of using an e-reader as part of the learning program at Churchie. It is School policy that all boys across the campus will ultimately possess an electronic tablet on which he will conduct all his assignments, research and indeed reading should he so wish. It would seem superfluous at this stage to invest in any further purchase of dedicated e-readers. There are enough within the School currently, for boys to trial prior to making a decision whether to purchase one for himself should he and his family deem it beneficial. Furthermore, a number of the participants who find reading a challenge, now own their own e-readers.

## **Implications for Future Research**

Library management of e-reading devices and their content under digital rights management laws is an issue that needs further investigation and clarification; a minefield which, whilst of avid interest to teacher librarians, need not be dealt with in the context of this study. This

study highlights to me the impracticality of libraries, school or otherwise, endeavouring to maintain and loan a large number of dedicated e-readers under current laws and commercial practices. This could change and evolve quickly, however.

A longer study whereby boys use an e-reader continuously over a longer period, becoming more thoroughly comfortable with the technology, may see a stronger co-relation between reading enjoyment, competence and flow. Despite 18 of the boys regarding themselves as at least competent in the use of technology, comments suggest that a frustration factor is often just below the surface when using any technology and that this is absent when using a traditional paper book. A second cycle of action research which documents the changes in engagement with reading for leisure amongst the more reading-challenged of boys, who have purchased their own e-readers, could provide a more solid foundation for judging the motivational aspects of e-readers.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, the action research into using e-readers to enhance boys' enthusiasm and success in reading for leisure demonstrated an overwhelming majority of the participants acknowledge that the use of an e-reader actually increases or may increase their reading enjoyment. As well, an interesting correlation between reading enjoyment and competence appears to exist amongst a number of the boys that Churchie has regarded as needing greater assistance with their reading. It may not be as strong a relationship as I had anticipated, but the evidence is worthy of further inquiry. Regarding boys' experience of 'flow', fewer boys experienced this when using an e-reader than is the case when a traditional paper book is being used. This may be for a number of reasons not the least of which are lack of experience with the technology, the factor of its novelty and failure of equipment to operate as expected. On the whole, e-readers have been demonstrated at Churchie to develop adolescent boys' feelings of enjoyment and competence in reading for leisure, especially in cases where literacy and learning are being compromised by a lack of motivation.

## References

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York, Harper and Row.

DeLamater, W. E. (2010, April 29). How larger font size impacts reading and the implications for educational use of digital text readers. *eReadia*. Retrieved July 25, 2010 from: [http://www.ereadia.com/research/How\\_Larger\\_Font\\_Size\\_Affects\\_Reading.pdf](http://www.ereadia.com/research/How_Larger_Font_Size_Affects_Reading.pdf)

IEA. (2006), PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Study). Available at <http://pirls.bc.edu/index.html>

Larson, L. (2010, April 19). Less-enthusiastic readers motivated by Kindle e-reader. *Medical News Today*. Retrieved August 5, 2010 from: <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/185829.php>

McNiff, J. (2002). *Action research for professional development: concise advice for new action researchers*. Retrieved April 16, 2010, from <http://www.jeanmcniff.com/ar-booklet.asp>

Passey, D., Rogers, C. G., with Machell, J., & McHugh, G. (2004). *The motivational effect of ICT on pupils* (No. 523). London, DfES.

Smith, K. (2010, May 12). E-book readers and reading competence. *Education.au - You are Never Alone*. Retrieved July 28, 2010 from: <http://blogs.educationau.edu.au/ksmith/2010/05/12/e-book-readers-and-reading-competence/>

Smith, M. W., & Wilhelm, J. D. (2002). *Reading don't fix no chevys: literacy in the lives of young men*. Portsmouth, Heinemann.

## Reflection

---

*On first receiving confirmation that I'd been chosen to undertake this project, I had no idea exactly what form it might take and found this quite worrying. I'd made a commitment, but what was I going to do? My time at the conference in Philadelphia only exacerbated these concerns as I saw others full of ideas and already rolling up their sleeves to move forward. Then inspiration struck. I love gadgets, boys love gadgets and I became really keen to get my hands on some e-readers. I would examine e-readers in terms of their possibilities for motivating boys to read; my hunch being that it was very likely they could make a difference. This would be a project I could enjoy! Fortunately our library budget was not entirely committed and allowed me the flexibility to purchase a variety of available devices. I knew it would be a great deal of work (and it was) as loading, loaning them etc... would need countless hours of technical consideration as would the usual practical matters with which teacher librarians bother themselves. The practical matters did prove interesting to deal with; digital rights management matters standing well in the way of making it easy for teachers and libraries, school or otherwise, to make the most of them. Things are changing very quickly in this regard, so by the time you read this, I do hope some of the issues will be resolving themselves.*

*My library staff, our IT Department and I learned so much over the course of the project that never would have been the case without the impetus provided by the IBSC. In laid back style I may have watched adventurous souls in other schools and libraries toy with a technology crawling out of its infancy and then I may have, in leisurely fashion, proceeded down a more tested pathway on the strength of their findings. I had in the back of my mind that these little gizmos would provide something of a logistical challenge and they proved me right. Not all e-readers are born equal I discovered. I was swept briskly out of the comfort zone by the project and may not return.*

*There were times when I struggled to meet deadlines and still provide my best support to boys and staff members in other school commitments. I thank my colleagues who took up the slack when I had need to squirrel myself away in the office or on weekends to keep up with the demands of the project, especially during the rowing season when school duties for me seem to take on a more hectic hue.*

*I thank Churchie very much for funding me to be part of the IBSC project and the IBSC itself for providing the opportunity. It was an undeniable privilege to have had the time and resources to learn that e-readers could make a difference to boys, who struggle with reading motivation to the point of it impacting negatively on their literacy and learning. I thank the boys for participating in the project who patiently answered many a probing question about e-readers and their personal reading habits.*

*Lastly, but not least, I thank Linda for her project leadership and support and for reassuring me in times of minor meltdown.*

*Elizabeth Avery*

## **Appendices**

### ***Appendix A***

#### **e-Reading Project Initial Questionnaire**

1. What is your name? (Only to be used for administrative purposes. You will not be identified in the project findings.)
2. Please choose your year level from the selection below:
  - 7
  - 8
  - 9
  - 10
  - 11
3. Do you enjoy reading?
  - Yes
  - No
4. Tick the statement that most matches your own belief:
  - Reading is not important
  - Reading is crucial to your success in the adult world
  - Reading is more important now than ever before
  - Reading is less important than it used to be
5. On a scale of 1 - 10, how would you rate yourself as a reader. (10 is extremely good. 1 is not so good.)
6. I read:
  - Very fast and generally have a very good understanding of the text
  - Fast and generally understand most of the text
  - Neither fast nor slow and generally understand the text
  - Slowly and sometimes have trouble understanding the text
  - Slowly or very slowly but have no trouble understanding the text
  - Very slowly and often have trouble understanding the text
7. Do you feel confident and capable as a reader?
  - Yes
  - No

8. Have you ever become so involved in reading a text (novel/magazine/biography etc...) that nothing else seemed to matter?

- Yes
- No

9. Generally speaking, girls are more capable readers than boys.

- True
- False

10. Generally speaking, girls enjoy reading more than boys.

- True
- False

Reading Project Preliminary Survey 2010

11. Does using technology such as computers, i-pads and mobile phones make you feel:

- Highly incompetent
- Very incompetent
- Competent
- Very competent
- Highly competent

12. Have you ever used an e-reader such as an Amazon Kindle or read a book on a computer or i-pad/phone?

- Yes
- No

13. Do you think using an e-reading device would be helpful in motivating you to read more often and make the experience more enjoyable?

- Yes
- No
- I can't imagine what it would be like

14. If you own or have access to an e-reader, i-pad or similar device, what brand is it? (Kobo, Sony, Kindle etc....)

15. What titles would you like to read on an e-reader? Put 3 different authors as not all authors' books are available in digital format.

Question 4 is adapted from Burke, J. (2000). Reading Survey. Retrieved May 2, 2010, from Reading Reminders:

[http://www.asdk12.com/MiddleLink/LA/reading/surveys/ReadingSurvey\\_JimBurke.pdf](http://www.asdk12.com/MiddleLink/LA/reading/surveys/ReadingSurvey_JimBurke.pdf)

## ***Appendix B***

### **e-Reading Project Final Questionnaire**

Reading Project Final Survey 2011

1. What is your name? (Only to be used for administrative purposes. You will not be identified in the project findings.)

2. Did using an e-reader make reading a more enjoyable experience for you? Make comment if you wish.

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

- Unsure
3. How many books did you finish reading using the e-reader?
- 0
  - 1 - 5
  - 5 - 10
4. Did using the e-reader cause you to read:
- faster and generally increased your understanding of the text
  - more slowly but still with a good understanding of the text
  - more slowly and with decreased understanding of the text
  - no differently
5. Please rate yourself as a reader whilst using an e-reader. (10 is extremely good. 1 is not so good).
6. Having now used an e-reader (Kobo, Sony or Kindle), would you be likely to buy one?
- Yes
  - No
  - Undecided
7. Is there any other electronic device on the market that can be used as an e-reader that you would be more likely to buy than a dedicated e-reader such as the Sony, Kobo or Kindle?
8. Which of the following features of e-readers do you consider helpful to boys who find difficulty reading? You may tick more than one.
- Adjustable font size
  - Text to speech capability
  - Screen size
  - Weight
  - Touch Screen.
  - Other (please specify)
9. Did using an e-reader cause you to become so involved in reading a text that nothing else seemed to matter?
- Yes
  - No
10. Is there any other activity in your life that sometimes or often causes you to become so involved in it that nothing else seems to matter?
- Yes
  - No
11. Do you think e-readers are more likely to appeal to boys than girls?
- Yes
  - No
  - Don't know
12. Does using an e-reader make you feel more or less competent as a reader?
- More competent
  - Less competent
  - No difference
13. Are there any features of e-readers that make them a less attractive option than a paper book?
- Yes

- No

If yes, please specify

14. When using an e-reader, how do you tell if a particular book on the device is one you would like to read?

15. Is it easier or more difficult to choose an e-book compared to a paper book?

- Easier
- More difficult
- The same

16. Please state your opinion below, about the range of e-books available compared to paper books.