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The evolution of library use and the development of literacy in adolescence

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Introduction

All through secondary school, students evolve in terms of the ways they use the library and in their development of a « literate » culture. We surveyed 2700 students aged 12 to16 years in two regions of Quebec, the Montreal region and the Mauricie, about their use of their school and municipal, or public, libraries. In addition to using traditional questionnaires, we interviewed more than one hundred students in focus groups. Our findings are divided into three sections: 1) general trends in literacy and library use, 2) the results of our survey on library use and book selection, and 3) a description of reader profiles as viewed in light of library use.

PART I : GENERAL TRENDS IN LITERACY AND LIBRARY USE

The Different Facets of Literacy
For the purposes of this study we have opted for a broad definition of literacy. Specialists long ago expanded the simple definition of literacy that was current in the nineteen-sixties and seventies. The concept of literacy has always been associated with the culture of the written word

and its definition has always included the capacity to read and write, the skills that are the keys to gaining access to the literate world, beyond functional literacy. Through the work of important researchers such as Bruner (1996; 2000), Ferreiro (2001), and others in the nineteen-eighties, a preoccupation with the social basis of literacy, as well as its different « sectors» and different « levels », emerged.

Presently we recognize that there are different sectors of literacy, such as academic literacy, community literacy or personal literacy (Hornberger, 2000; Masny, 2001), and that each of these includes the socio-political and socio-historical dimensions of a given group or society. A vivid example of this concept of literacy is provided by the work of Freire, in Brazil (Freire and Macedo, 1987), for whom mastery of the written word allows one to see the world and become conscious of one's social position in it. Furthermore, we now accept the concept that there are different levels of literacy (see Sinclair Bell, 1997, and especially Browne, 1992), that entry to literate culture is not the end, that from that point there is a progression to be made. In this sense, literacy is the key to accessing the humanities, whether these be classical forms (for example, the great works of literature that make up the "canon" of our cultural heritage) or more modern, or popular, forms.

During adolescence, young readers begin to establish their own tastes and become increasingly discriminating, as much through formal instruction as through free reading, or even reading « on the sly ». Therefore, we can truly speak of a « cultural literacy » that in our view goes beyond Hirsch's definition (1987), which does not take into consideration the role of cultural elitism. We know that young readers are great consumers of the « pulp» genres, such as crime novels and comic books, and we assert that these types of popular works also help their literacy develop, since not only do they often obey the same codes as more literary genres, but through them teenagers learn to position themselves as readers with their own tastes and their own analytical skills. As they get older and their tastes mature, these readers may be drawn to more sophisticated genres.

Public Libraries
Public libraries are frequented by people of all ages and usually they include a children's section. From the age of 10 to 15 years, children and teenagers construct their personal identities by asserting their maturity and their sense of belonging within a socio-sexual group. Young readers generally use the children's section of the library up to the age of 12, at which point they normally opt to begin using the adult section. It sometimes seems that these institutions overlook the needs of adolescent readers, although some teenagers, especially the better readers, actually prefer to skip directly from the children's library to the adult library.

Borrowing books is the primary or secondary purpose of library use for nine out of ten teenagers. Catalysts to abandoning the library can include specific tastes, for example favourite magazines are either not available at all or not in great enough numbers, or the atmosphere at the library is not appealing. Comic book and book-game readers have no propensity for library use. The library is not viewed by young people as privileged repository of documentary information resources. The most active library users read novels and stories, according to Poissenot (1997). We also notice that the young people who have read classics at school are those who use libraries

most. Therefore, at the library we find young people who have acquired, or are in the process of acquiring, literary discernment, that is the capacity to perceive books according to the categories that are relevant to literature (identification of the author, the title, the series, the publisher, for example, instead of the colour, the format, the jacket, and so on). Students learn these categories at school and they are reinforced by libraries which also use these methods of classification.

School Libraries
The significant influence that the quality of a school library has on the development of students' reading and writing skills is no longer in question (Short, 1984; Trudel, 1995). For the library to successfully fulfill its supporting pedagogical role, it must have adequate material and human resources. As Bernhard (1994) reminds us, many recent educational reforms, in the United States as well as in Europe, have been founded on the increasingly well-recognized importance of the information resources of school libraries. Some Third World countries have even received funding from the World Bank and from large private foundations to this end.

According to Léveillé (1991) and Gaudet (1991), documentation centres in schools are pedagogical tools of the first order, opening the doors to knowledge and true scholarship. They must « permit children access to rich, current information that conforms to the requirements of their program of study and that can meet their personal needs for learning, knowledge and discover » (Léveillé, 1991, 17).

For a library to be effective, it must have an action plan, a broad-based reading program developed in cooperation with teachers. Quality reading material presented in an attractive atmosphere encourages students to pursue their reading interests. The school library also plays another role, that of helping students develop critical faculties, desirable social attitudes and reading habits through independent-learning skills and problem-solving strategies. The librarian participates, as do the teachers and students, in the learning process. The objective is to allow each student to become an independent learner, a critical thinker, and a creative participant in his or her own education. In this way, the library is a vehicle to developing life-long learning habits. Teachers and librarians must work together to plan and lead activities that involve students in the use and production of a wide range of resources, activities that ultimately steer them on a course toward ever increasing literacy.

PART II : RESULTS OF OUR SURVEY ON USE OF THE TWO TYPES OF LIBRARIES AND ON BOOK SELECTION

The 1,737 subjects of our study, Interactive Reading at the Secondary School Level (IRSSL, see Lebrun, 2004), had to discuss the books they borrowed from one library or the other and the reading they did in those books. Our results are divided to distinguish between the school library and the public library.

Table 1 : Library Use		
	yes	no
a) school library	835 (48%) 58,3% girls	814 (46,8%) 46,8% girls
b) public library	1043 (60%) 58,7% girls	661 (38%) 43,5% girls

As we can see, girls are the primary users of both types of libraries. In addition, the public library is more popular than its school counterpart, undoubtedly since it doesn't bear the connotation of obligation. Grade level plays a large role in the use of both types of libraries. First off, let's look at school libraries. The decrease in library use from Secondary I to Secondary IV presents itself as follows: 55.9%, 51.3%, 48.2%, and finally 34.5%. Conversely, the increase in public library use for the same grade levels is as follows: 53.6%, 51.1%, 66.4% and finally 74.2%.

The results highlight certain regional disparities. In Mauricie, 65.1% of teenagers from Secondary I to IV use the school library, compared to 40.6% in Montreal, and 53.9% of young people frequent the public library, compared to 65.9% in Montreal. Perhaps public libraries are better in Mauricie, or perhaps young people in Montreal tend to buy the books they read or borrow them from friends.

Table 2 illustrates the use of the public library during summer holidays. We believe that non-readers account for the high rate of nonresponse (greater than 22%), especially since over half of the subjects did not answer the question that asked them to compare their public library use during the holidays and during the school year. Nevertheless, young people do not seem to visit the public library any more frequently during school vacations. It might be valuable to evaluate the organized programs that these libraries offer teenagers during the summer.

Table 2 : Public Library Use During School Holidays		
yes	no	
722 (41,5%)	629 (36,2%)	

a) more often than during the school year	288 (16,5%)
b) less often than during the school year	287 (16,5%)
c) as often as during the school year	182 (10,4%
d) no response	979 (56,3%)

The public library is generally richer than the school library in terms of its collection of music CD's and CD-ROMS. Table 3 shows that over 11% of the youth clientele borrows this type of item. The same holds for magazines: over 22% of young users borrow magazines, since generally libraries have large selections of current issues. Nevertheless, novels and comic books are most popular: more than half of readers borrow novels and 41.2% are comic book fans. We will see that young people prefer the variety that they find at the public library to that offered by their school library.

Table 3 : Types of Documents Borrowed from the Public Library

	yes	no	No response
a) magazines	394 (22,7%)	772 (44,4%)	568 (32,7%)
b) novels	906 (52,1%)	296 (17%)	532 (30,6%)
c) non-fiction	574 (33%)	591 (34%)	294 (42,2%)
d) biographies	242 (13,9%)	908 (52,2%)	584 (33,6%)
e) comic books	717 (41,2%)	470 (27%)	547 (31,4%)
f) music	205 (11,8%)	941 (54,1%)	588 (33,8%)
g) CD-ROMS	195 (11,2%)	951 (54,7%)	588 (33,8%)
h) other	104 (5,9%)	898 (51,7%)	732 (42,1%)

Table 4 illustrates what Table 3 leads us to suspect, that voracious readers make greater use of the public library. More modest readers use the school library more, undoubtedly for their schoolwork. Classroom library loans and borrowing from teachers play a minor role. Loans among friends cannot be ignored, even though these numbers seems small, and doubtless this type of borrowing revolves around favourite or « cult » works.

Table 4 : Number of Books Borrowed in the Last Three Months (as % of the total)

	none	1 or2	3 to 5	6 to 10	More than 10
a) from the public library	900	233	**231**	133	**232**
	51,8%	13,3%	**13,3%**	7,6%	**13,3%**
b) from the school library	987	408	**204**	62	54
	57,4%	23,4%	**11,7%**	3,5%	3,1%
c) from friends	1101	438	133	39	15
	63,3%	25,2%	7,6%	2,2%	0,8%
d) from teachers	1385	252	63	17	7
	79,7%	14,5%	3,6%	0,9%	0,4%
e) from the classroom bookshelf	1355	230	93	26	18
	78%	13,2%	5,3%	1,5%	1%

The majority of teenagers feel that they are in a transitional phase in their reading choices, and for this reason 40.4% of them frequent both the children's section and the adult section of the public library. The tables above show that about 60% of students live in a world that includes the library, whether this is the school library or the public library. Although the number of books

they borrow is not very large, a large number of young people like to visit the public library either to do their schoolwork or for pleasure.

Since we wanted to delve deeper into the matter of how teenagers select the books they borrow, we asked them to identify their favourite type of work, one of the classic questions of reading research.

Table 5 : Interest According to Genre *				
	excellent	good	few interest	never read
a) romance novels	409 (23,5%)	411 (23,6%)	422 (24,2%)	483 (27,8%)
b)adventure novels	609 (35%)	767 (44,1%)	258 (14,8%)	97 (5,5%)
c) crime novels	532 (30,6%)	544 (31,3%)	419 (24,1%)	233 (13,4%)
d) historical fiction	258 (14,8%)	409 (23,5%)	548 (31,5%)	511 (29,4%)
e) science fiction	447 (25,7%)	442 (25,4%)	488 (28%)	344 (19,8%)
f) poetry	210 (12%)	298 (17,1%)	492 (28,3%)	721 (41,5%0
g) non-fiction	159 (9,1%)	346 (19,9%)	654 (37,6%)	558 32,1%)
h) traditionnel comic books	635 (36,5%)	589 (33,9%)	365 (21%)	133 (7,6%)
i) picture books	212 (12,2%)	426 (24,5%)	857 (49,3)	229 (13,1%)
j) photo novellas	244 (14%)	453 (26%)	545 (31,3%)	478 (27,5%)
k) mangas (japanese comics)	248 (14,2%)	152 (8,7%)	231 (13,3)	1048 (60,3%)
l) fantasy and legend	477 (27,4%)	410 (23,6%)	346 (19,9%)	483 (27,8%)

* The rate of nonresponse varies from 0.1% to 1.2% by category, except for *manga*, which had a nonresponse rate of 3.3%, probably because the word is unfamiliar to a fair number of teenagers.

It seems that teenagers' main interests tend toward adventure novels, comic books and crime novels. Romance, science fiction and fantasy are also popular. Poetry and non-fiction do not garner much interest, and neither do historical novels or picture books, although the latter are slightly more popular than the former. The fad for *manga* has vanished. A few areas are evenly divided: photo novellas, fantasy, and romance. We also looked more closely at particular genres and their popularity according to gender, grade-level and region, taking into account the percentage of positive responses, that is the total of « excellent » and « good » responses.

Table 6 : Positive Responses to Genres According to Gender, Grade-Level and Region

	girls	boys	Sec. I	Sec. II	Sec. III	Sec. IV	Maur	Mtl
romance novels	76,9%	13,9%	41,6%	48,8%	55,6%	51,3%	53.3%	43,2%
aventure novels	80,8%	77,4%	76,7%	81,1%	80,9%	80%	85,1%	75,4%
crime novels	57,7%	66,4%	58,7%	62,1%	65,1%	67,6%	62,5%	61,6%
historical fiction	38%	38,6%	40%	33,1%	38,1%	46,4%	38,2%	38,5%
sciencefiction	40,2%	24,6%	28,4%	26,8%	25,7%	29,2%	49%	29,4%
poetry	46,2%	10,2%	26,2%	27,9%	32,7%	37,6%	31,9%	27,5%
non fiction	29,3%	28,7%	30%	24,9%	26,9%	38,4%	27,1%	30,4%
comic books	62,4%	79,4%	77,5%	68,7%	64,3%	59,2%	71,2%	70,1%
fantasy and legend	52,2%	49,9 %	48,1%	54,9%	48,5%	52,6%	48,4%	52,9%

Next we analysed the correlations between the reader's self-image and the popularity of the two favourite genres, the adventure novel and the comic book. On the whole, we can say that there is a correspondence between the subjects' perception of themselves as readers and their appreciation of adventure fiction. This is the strongest correlation (0.28985), even if statistically the result is not conclusive. An aspect that bears mentioning is self-identification as a reader among comic-book readers: this is the lowest correlation (0.00601). It also appears that comic books are popular across all the categories.

We also looked at the correlations based on gender. For boys, the trend indicates greater correlations between self-image as a reader and a positive opinion of adventure novels (0.29206) and smaller correlations with positive opinions of fantasy, crime and science fiction, all of which have almost identical scores. There is an analogous tendency for girls in terms of the correlation between the self-perception as a reader and an appreciation of the adventure novel (0.27955), while this correlation is not as strong for historical, crime and science fiction.

Table 7 is a compilation of the influence of various factors on students ' reading choices. The open questions received complementary responses: students are influenced by the size of print, the jacket, the first page of the book, by people they meet at book fairs and by photos, when there are any, as well as the factors in the table below.

Table 7: Influences on Reading Choices

	Very influential	Moderately inf.	Not very inf	Not at all inf.
a) friends	310 (17,8%)	479 (27,5%)	420 (24,1%)	515 (29,6%)
b) teachers	239 (13,7%)	502 (28,9%)	438 (25,2%)	542 (31,2%)
c) librarians	**119 (6,8%)**	**247 (14,2%)**	**433 (24,9%)**	**922 (53%)**
d) family	351 (20,25)	447 (25,7%)	338 (22,3%)	533 (30,6%)
e) radio, télévision, movies	377 (21,7%)	464 (26,7%)	407 (23,4%)	475 (27,4%)
f) print advertising	184 (10,5%)	315 (18,1%)	494 (28,4%)	726 (41,8%)
g) cover	711 (40,9%)	541 (31,1%)	227 (13%)	244 (14%)
h) title	782 (45%)	530 (30,5%)	215 (12,3%)	192 (11%)
i) theme or subjet	1097 (63,1%)	353 (20,3%)	122 (7%)	151 (8,6%)
j) number of pages	339 (19,5%)	380 (21,8%)	453 (26%)	544 (31,3%)
k) illustrations	353 (20,3%)	409 (23,5%)	483 (27,8%)	475 (27,3%)
l) author	209 (12%)	272 (15,6%)	373 (21,4%)	866 (49,8%)
m) series	197 (11,3%)	314 (18%)	404 (23,2%)	801 (46,1%)
n) summary	676 (38,9%)	476 (27,4%)	220 (12,6%)	342 (19,6%)
o) other	76 (4,3%)	40 (2,3%)	211 (12,1%)	14 (0,8%)

It would seem that the most influential factors are the theme or the subject, the cover, and the summary. People and advertising seem to have little influence on readers' choices, and the results are similar for the author or the series. Librarians are half as influential as teachers and one-third as influential as friends. Illustrations, family, radio, television, and movies, and the number of pages seem to have mixed results.

We also broke down readers' influences according to gender, grade-level and region. The percentages cited in Table 8 are a combination of the « very influential » and « moderately influential» responses, since teenagers are acknowledging a positive or substantial influence with these answers.

Table 8 : Different Influences According to Gender, Grade-level and Region

	Girls	Boys	1^e	2^e	3^e	4^e	Maur.	Mtl
friends	54,9%	34,8%	47,8%	42,9%	46,8 %	42,4%	48,4%	43,5%
teachers	50,3%	34%	43,6%	41,7%	48,5%	35,8%	51,3%	37,1%
librarians	**26,1%**	**15,2%**	**28%**	**17,1%**	**17%**	**14,1%**	**23,4%**	**19,5%**
family	53,1%	37,9%	48,2%	41,5%	41,4%	54,4%	45,6%	46,2%
radio,	54%	42,2%	49,5%	45,3%	53,1%	47,3%	49,9%	47,5%

TV,movies								
print advertising	34,8%	21,7%	30,6%	28,7%	27,3%	23,8%	31,7%	26,7%
cover	81,1%	61,9%	67,5%	75,5%	81,3%	67,2%	79,7%	67,1 %
title	85,7%	64,1%	70,6%	77,8%	83,8 %	75,6%	80,5%	72,3%
theme	91,1%	74,9%	77,1%	83,7%	91,7%	93,3%	85%	82,6%
n. of pages	40,1%	42,8%	39,2%	45,5%	42,7%	35,8%	42%	41%
illustrations	38,7%	49,6%	45,4%	46,9%	41,4%	33,6%	46,3%	42,3%
author	32,2%	22,6%	27,5%	23,7%	20,7%	45,1%	26,6%	28,4%
series	31%	27,5%	36,3%	26%	22,8%	23,4%	30%	29%
summary	82%	48,8%	59,3%	69,8%	70,1%	74,7%	69,3%	64,4%

This data indicates that girls are more influenced by friends, parents, librarians and teachers, and by extra-textual features such as covers, titles and summaries, while boys are only strongly influenced by the theme, the title and the cover page. The rate of influence for each factor is consistent throughout the grade levels.

PART III: LITERACY PROFILES AND LIBRARY USE

Our IRSSL study with students (Lebrun 2004) highlights the gap that almost always divides boys and girls as far as attitudes and reading habits are concerned, a gap that has been observed in many countries and for many years as a difference in terms of academic success.

What kinds of texts do Quebecois teenagers read? Although our study did allow us to make certain distinctions according to gender, we cannot establish a link between young peoples' school results and the various questions we asked them, apart from the fact that about 80% of participants said they were relatively satisfied with their school results and 70% said they were happy with their reading ability. Quebecois society is becoming increasingly concerned with the divide between boys and girls and the over-representation of boys among high-school dropouts and among those who are simply not succeeding in school.

In combination with surveys, focus groups can provide more nuance and can in some cases explain a particular phenomenon. As Fern reports (2001), focus groups are a valuable alternative to in-depth interviews for obtaining information on the attitudes, beliefs, and habits of a given population. Fern remarks that research studies that make use of focus groups obtain data that enhances or fills out the broad lines of data collected with survey questionnaires, without contradicting it. The focus group data adds subtle variations on the themes that emerge from the traditional questionnaires. This procedure permits us to give voice to our teenage subjects, and a qualitative analysis of the data allows us to make observations in the subjects' own vocabulary.

Focus groups were conducted with 127 teenagers from Montreal and the Mauricie touching on such topics as their attitudes, habits and tastes, their motivation, and the stereotypes about reading that are prominent among them. The first cohort included 77 teenagers (44 students in the Mauricie and 33 in the Montreal region) from the four first levels of secondary school, boys and girls in equal numbers. In Montreal we combined 18 boys and 15 girls, in Mauricie, 19 boys and 25 girls, for a total of 37 boys and 40 girls interested in reading, some of them passionately, others more reluctantly. The second cohort comprised fifty young people who claimed they wanted to participate because they hated reading, an opinion confirmed by their teacher and by the school's education advisor.

The Reader Profiles
Our idea of reader profiles is inspired by De Singly (1989, p. 110), who suggests that literacy policy must develop the appetite for reading. Careful examination of the interviews suggests that not all teenagers are alike, that they have very different tastes, attitudes and habits. The readers were therefore grouped in a limited number of relatively homogeneous classes, based on several variables characterized as active, for example the number of works read, such as comic books, newspapers, novels, non-fiction works, gaming books; favourite genres; favourite themes; the amount of time spent reading; variation in terms of reading ability and the appropriation of a self-image as reader; and love of reading.

As a product of our methodology, general patterns emerged in our corpus of qualitative data (case studies, in-depth interviews with several subject) that are well-suited to the formulation of reader profiles. Using N'Vivo software for our data analysis allowed us to organize large quantities of data into categories in many different ways. For conventional focus groups, where the interview often aims to bring to light a decision-making process by organizing the subjects' statements as a whole under different codes, the type of analysis considers the group as a unit (N=1, that is the group). We elected to break up this unit and compiled the statements of each subject (N=number of participants in the group interview). Then, starting from the teenagers' answers, we determined certain typical profiles on the basis of similarities and differences that were often highlighted in the subjects' own remarks. In an interesting article on data analysis in focus group interviews, Catterall and Maclaran (1997) remarked on the interest of studying the effects of group dynamics in the evolution of subjects' participation, paving the way for a more refined analysis of each individual's statements.

With this approach in mind, we constructed six profiles for boys and five profiles for girls that aim to demonstrate their cultural literacy, their relationship with written works that are part of popular or classical culture. Although we might have in certain instances, we did not try to pair girls' profiles with boys', the fanatic with the bookworm, for example.

For boys, we developed the following literacy profiles.
- The fanatic, who reads everything, who reads quickly, and who always has something to say about his reading.
- The budding social psychologist, who is interested in humankind and social issues, and who doesn't like to be hurried along when a subject catches his interest.
- The social reader, who likes to exchange favourite authors and discover new ones and new

works.
- The athlete, who reads when he has to, who reads statistics, true stories, and specialised magazines.
- The solitary hedonist, who likes to tuck into a corner with large-format fine print books, and who loves rereading his favourite authors
- The recalcitrant, who listens so well in class that he doesn't have to read. If necessary, he will buckle down to the task, but he finds it burdensome. The extreme version of this profile is the outright rebel.

For girls, we developed the following literacy profiles.
- The bookworm, who reads everything she comes upon, and reads all the time, everywhere, either out of a desire for a change of scenery or out of sheer escapism.
- The impulsive, who jumps from one book to another, who likes to be caught up in a book, who reads in stops and starts.
- The selective reader, who is interested in current affairs, who knows her tastes and chooses her own books.
- The dreamer, who, influenced by friends and parents, lets herself slip into daydream and escapes into the fantasy world of novels.
- The active girl, who is too busy to read for pleasure, but who doesn't mind magazines, newspapers and anything to do with current affairs, or good adventure novels that plunge the reader into suspense for 50 pages at a time.

For each profile, we tried to illuminate the most characteristic traits while keeping in mind certain categories that distinguish them: library use, lifestyle, purchasing habits, reading environment, reading rate, attitudes toward academic reading, perceived benefits of reading, special favourites, favourite types of work or genres. Not every literacy profile corresponds to every category, because the discussions in the interviews did not proceed according to these parameters (see Tables 9 and 10 for parallels among the literacy profiles of girls and boys that are underlined above).

At the heart of these profiles we find the general trends that have already been brought to light by De Singly (1989). While our teenagers overall are interested in reading, the group includes young people who like to read very much and do so for pleasure, others who do not like to read and do so only by obligation, and finally a certain number whose attitudes fluctuate according to the circumstances.

We also notice that certain types of readers appreciate particular genres and themes. We observe that young people who hate reading find the task difficult and still have bad memories of learning to read. Observations that we also remarked, De Singly noticed the resignation of this last group and underlined that the strategies used to help them progress and improve their literacy have little success.

Table 9: Parallels among the Athlete, the Recalcitrant and the Solitary Hedonist

	THE ATHLETE	THE RECALCITRANT	THE SOLITARY HEDONIST
Library use	Finds that the library doesn't have his favourite magazines but offers a good selection of comic books	Considers libraries to be entirely unappealing places.	Feels completely in his element at the library.
Lifestyle	Loves all sports, games and the outdoors. TV.	Likes sports, movies and TV. Never talks about what he reads with friends.	Loves reading above all else. Doesn't talk about the books he reads but experiences them very intensely.
Buying habits	Prefers to trade. Receives gifts.	Some magazines.	Buys as much as he can, collects.
Reading environment	Reads when he is obliged to. Has difficulty concentrating.	Reads if he is obliged to. When reading is difficult it is a product of the nature of the text and not his own abilities.	Reads anywhere, anytime, without being asked to. Likes to challenge himself.
Reading rate	Is often behind his peers.	Hates to be rushed.	Actively gets involved. Reads at a sustained rate.
Academic reading	Hates being controlled by questions. Doesn't appreciate class discussions, sees them as pointless.	Hates imposed tasks. Does the work when it "counts".	Doesn't like to have reading imposed on him, prefers to choose books himself, but is very efficient with supervision.
Perceived benefits of reading	Helps one's writing.	Helps build vocabulary.	Vicarious experience.
Special favourites	Loved *La courte échelle*. Has read comic books.	Loved the *Chair de poule (Goosebumps)* series. Liked the reading corner in primary school.	Loves great literature, titles that are beyond his age group.
Favourite genres	Compulsively reads sports statistics. Reads crime and fantasy novels. Reads *Safarir* and other illustrated parody magazines of that type (comparable to *Mad Magazine*).	Reads crime and fantasy novels. Sometimes reads magazines.	Is constructing his own cultural literacy with classic novels, poetry.
Reaction to reading	Likes to imagine himself in the skin of a character if the story is realistic.	If he participates in conversations about books, they must be short and to the point.	Is a daydreamer, doesn't talk about his reading but truly experiences it.
Emotional reactions to reading	Is a fatalist but not very perturbed by this fact. Is a realist: has a "that's life" attitude.	Aims for efficiency. Is focussed on the practical. Is always in motion.	Is focussed on beauty. Forgets real life when he is reading.

Table 10: Parallels among the Active Girl, the Dreamer, and the Bookworm

	THE ACTIVE GIRL	**THE DREAMER**	**THE BOOKWORM**
Library use	Goes when school requires it.	Often borrows fantasy series and accepts recommendations	Uses two libraries rather than one and often reads two books at a time.
Lifestyle	Is too busy to take time to read.	Participates in a variety of activities for fun; reads to daydream.	Finds that daily life leaves too little time for reading.
Buying habits	Buys magazines and newspapers.	Makes purchases based on advice from her friends and her mother.	Prefers to buy books rather than magazines.
Reading environment	Reads when obliged to. Has trouble concentrating.	Reads in bed at night.	The environment is of little consequence: she has no trouble concentrating.
Reading rate	Likes to read outside in nice weather, in summer.	Has many books on the go at the same time, in the same genre.	Reads everywhere, all the time, sometimes even in class.
Academic reading	Has to be hooked by the first line or gives up.	Prefers to choose from a variety of options and discuss her choices.	She does not mind having obligatory reading imposed on her.
Perceived benefits of reading	Agrees that there must be advantages but these are not great enough to compel her to read.	Considers reading to be an escape. It has nothing to do with academic results.	Is sure that reading is the most interesting activity in the world.
Special favourites	Prefers adventure novels to matter-of-fact narratives	Prefers psychological novels and romance.	Is very eclectic, as long as she is learning something new.
Favourite genres	Likes adventure and suspense novels.	Likes romance novels.	Likes novels of various genres.
Reaction to reading	Participates in short discussions.	Likes to discuss characters and their emotions.	Likes to talks about her overall reactions. Likes to hear others' recommendations.
Emotional reactions to reading	Can be caught up in the pleasure of reading.	Likes romantic escapism.	Likes to be drawn into the different worlds opened up by books.

An Example of Evolution in the Reader Profiles
To keep within time limits, we will focus on illustrating the evolution of just one of these reader profiles. We have chosen one of the girls' profiles, the dreamer, and represented it with statements taken directly from our corpus of data from readers aged twelve to sixteen.

At age 12:
"I really like to read romance novels about people my age. My favourite is the trilogy, *La deuxième vie* (A series by Annique Poitras loosely based on *Romeo and Juliette*, it's the story of a fourteen-year-old girl who experiences a series of tragic personal losses.)

At age 13:

I mainly read books I can relate to. Books that are interesting to teenagers, that deal with taboo subjects like anorexia, sexual assault, and heartbreak. I don't really like violent stories or police stories. I like true stories. If I'm interested in a book, I can read for hours.

At age 14:
I like books with a suspenseful plot and when I can predict what will happen next, when the descriptions are so good that I can imagine the story and practically walk into it. I used to just read comic books. Last year is when I really started reading.

At age 15:
I loved *Quand j'avais cinq ans, je m'ai tué* (by Howard Buten, a story about an eight-year-old boy who stops speaking after being sent to a residential institution). I love the way the author constructed the sentences, it reminded me of being five years old. I like psychological novels. The story has to revolve around people. I really like narration and I don't like dialogue. I really like to read the paper, but at my house we almost never get it. Anytime I find myself with some time and a newspaper handy, I take it and read it, except for the articles about politics, which I hate.

At age 16:
I like *La princesse de Clèves* (*The Princess of Cleves*, by Madame De Lafayette)*, La dame aux camélias* (*Camille*, by Alexandre Dumas). I started with *La Courte échelle*. I like well-written books. They can't be predictable. There has to be a bit of suspense for the story to be captivating. There's a magazine that I am totally into, it's *Jeune et jolie*– I love it. It has little games, and articles about actors and French singers.

These testimonials describe the reader profile of a young "dreamer" for whom literature is mainly about a process of identification. Starting off with children's literature, by age sixteen she can read classic novels and still appreciate popular magazines. Her principal interest is self-discovery, but she is increasingly demanding in terms of the writing of the books she chooses. With time, she will probably discover new favourites that will help her continue to develop her general literacy.

Conclusion
The reading that people do by choice is generally very revealing. It can transform our lives, open us to ourselves through vicarious experience, or lead us to greater knowledge by introducing us to new worlds. For this reason every educator, whether librarian, teacher or parent, hopes that young people spend as much time as possible reading, that they love reading for the wealth of experience that it offers on both an emotional level and an intellectual level. We believe that the development of true literacy inevitably occurs through books and library use and that a better understanding of teenagers' reader profiles can only help us serve them better.

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