Literacy UKLA

Reading for pleasure: whose job is it to build lifelong readers in the classroom?

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Abstract

A survey questionnaire was administered to 146 MEd students enrolled in a teacher-training institute in Singapore to determine the strategies they use to promote engaged reading in the classroom. The majority of the teacher respondents when asked how they motivate students to read, wrote down *Not Applicable*, and 38% were unable to write down strategies to promote engaged reading. However, the results further indicate that even the non-devoted readers amongst them were able to identify sound literacy instructional strategies. This paper argues that the desirability of lifelong reading and the need for teachers to be accountable for its promotion should be culturally positioned within locally shaped realities and perceived from within the unique configuration of the results-driven context of the Singaporean educational landscape.

Key words: teacher education in Singapore, teachers as readers, lifelong readers, reading strategies, reader engagement, strategies for engaged reading

Introduction

The pivotal role played by international test outcomes in literacy policy could not be overstated. In fact, the changing landscape of educational reforms may be seen in light of the increasing use of quantitative indicators to capture student performance as evidenced in the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (Moss, 2012). Singapore lends itself as a good candidate for closer examination, given how highly and how consistently it has scored in literacy, if international tests, such as PISA, are to be used as benchmarks. In fact, the PISA 2009 report (OECD, 2011) showed Singapore to rank fifth among 65 participating countries when it comes to reading. The Singapore Ministry of Education (2013) also reports the country's literacy level in 2011 to be at a remarkable 96.1%. However, technical proficiency in reading does not necessarily translate to deriving pleasure or enjoyment in reading, the latter being a predominant trait of lifelong readers (Miller, 2013). In other words, high performance in international tests does not guarantee sustained lifelong reader engagement. In fact, Singapore academics claim that "we are not a reading nation, so few parents are role models, much less good guides" (Tan & Loh, 2015, n. p.). More than parents as reading guides or models, it is also worthwhile to examine whether educators perceive themselves as playing a role in promoting reading engagement in Singapore classrooms. Given Singapore's high achievement in international reading tests, it is safe to say that educators have played a central role in making this possible, but whether or not such a role translates to developing pleasurable and lifelong reading among young Singaporeans is an issue worth pursuing. Understanding and clarifying what educators with varied specialisms think their role is in promoting reading engagement in their classes could lead to a better understanding and identification of enabling conditions, factors and strategies in specialist subject classrooms for pleasurable and lifelong reading.

Reading for pleasure and links to cognitive and socio-affective gains

Research has consistently shown the relationship between reader engagement and academic achievement (Brozko, Shiel, & Topping, 2008; Smith, Smith, Gilmore, & Jameson, 2012), as evidenced in better reading comprehension and more enhanced vocabulary (Andreassen & Bråten, 2010; Krashen, 2004; Schiefele, Schaffner, Möller & Wigfield, 2012), and even maths performance (Sullivan & Brown, 2013). The availability of reading material in the home is likewise strongly related to maths and science achievement (Mullis et al., 2012). Pleasure reading among adolescents has also been found to bring about emotional and psychological benefits (Wilhelm, 2016), providing spaces for a more nuanced self-identification, self-construction and meaning-making (Howard, 2011). Correlational studies also indicate how declines in reading may have civic, socio-cultural and economic implications in the long term, such as less likelihood to go out and vote during elections (Gambrell, 2008; Gopalakrishnan, 2011). Furthermore, even among adults, strong associations have been found between reading fiction and levels of empathy while controlling for gender, age, English fluency, personality trait and capacity for imagination/fantasy (Mar, Oatley, & Peterson, 2009). Applegate and Applegate (2010) cautioned against interpreting these findings as causal which may lead to prescriptive errors in reading

pedagogy. Nevertheless, it behoves educators to exercise a more critical and reflective examination of the value of reading and consider how this could potentially translate in terms of actual classroom practice.

Decline in reading motivation and performance among older readers

Data from the International Reading Association (2002) indicate how levels of reading performance drop off significantly in the middle and high school years. More recent results from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2011 (Mullis, Martin, Foy, & Drucker, 2012) also indicate an apparent dramatic decline in reading attitudes of fourth grade students (mostly 10-year olds). Moreover, PISA findings (OECD, 2010) show that 15-year-old students in 2009 were less enthusiastic about reading compared to students in 2000. This connection between decline in reading attitude and motivation and apparent decrease in students' reading performance bears closer study, as research clearly shows how reading motivation and engagement can lead to increased learning (Teale & Gambrell, 2007). In a study done among 1,071 Dutch secondary school students, results reveal that those who did not like to read for leisure had the poorest school performance while those who claim to enjoy reading are found to have higher school grades (Mol & Jolles, 2014). These findings challenge the argument that "reading for pleasure is a 'cuddly' activity that some people like to indulge in but that is essentially without further merit" (Clark & Rumbold, 2006, p. 5). Mathers and Stern (2012) further contend that there is an apparent mismatch between what readers need and the instruction that they receive in the classroom which is said to produce the same result: "draining the pleasure out of reading" (p. 261).

This also makes the researchers wonder why – and what the implications could be if – teachers are convinced that promoting lifelong reading habits among their students is not applicable to them. Reading for pleasure has been shown to produce a substantial link to cognitive progress and attainment, not just in English but also in mathematics at 16 years of age (Sullivan & Brown, 2015), providing further evidence of the impact of leisure reading beyond language skills. This paper argues that pleasurable and lifelong reading can be promoted in all classrooms regardless of subject area, but that why many educators resist this potentiality requires greater scrutiny.

Method

Context of the study

This paper is a subset of a much larger research study that looks into the reading lives of Singapore teachers and the use of multicultural children's literature for social and emotional learning. A survey questionnaire was administered to 384 higher degree students. These were teachers who are taking their MEd/MA across various specialisations and were enrolled in the only teacher-training institute in Singapore. Only 146 participated in the study (response rate of 38%).

Profile of teacher respondents

Overall, the profile shows that the respondents are largely non-devoted readers especially among those who are teaching elementary, secondary and junior college levels. Moreover, only a few teachers reported reading primarily for pleasure. The respondents also come from a wide range of specialisms, including English, Maths and Science, and across different levels with a large majority teaching elementary school.

There were 146 respondents to the survey, namely, 64 (44%) elementary school teachers, 52 (36%) secondary or junior college teachers, 24 (16%) pre-school teachers while six (4%) provided no information. Among these respondents, 26 (18%) teach English, Maths and Science and 17 (12%) are English and/or Literature teachers. There are 26 (18%) respondents teaching Maths and/or Science, 24 pre-school teachers and five special education teachers handling all elementary classes. See Table 1 for more details regarding the subjects taught by the teachers.

Among the 146 respondents, there are 114 female teachers (78%) and 31 (21%) male teachers, with one respondent opting not to answer this item. A significant number have been teaching for 2–10 years (95 = 65.1%), followed by teachers who have been teaching from 11 to 20 years (40–27.4%), while five (3.4%) have taught for over 20 years (25 years being the maximum number). Six respondents provided no answer to this question.

Table 1: Subjects taught by respondents (N = 146)

Subjects taught	*n* (%)
English, Maths and Science (EMS) – Elementary	26 (18)
Math and/or Science	26 (18)
Pre-school	24 (16)
Tamil/Malay	18 (12)
English/Literature	17 (12)
Chinese	10 (7)
Philosophy/History/Social Studies/Geography	9 (6)
No Answer	6 (4)
Special Education Teacher	5 (3)
Art/ Music/Physical Education	3 (2)
French	1 (1)
Teaching Adult Pre-school Teachers	1 (1)

Sixty-four teachers (44%) noted that they read primarily for work or information, 40 (27%) reported reading primarily for pleasure, while 42 (29%) shared permutations of reading for both pleasure and work/information. Ninety-six teachers (66%) identified themselves as not devoted readers (those who claim that they are non-readers and/or do not regularly read for pleasure – 57 of whom are teaching pre-school, primary school and special education classes), while 49 (34%) self-identified as being a devoted reader (those who claim that they regularly read for pleasure – 31 of whom are teaching pre-school and primary school), with one teacher not responding to this item. See Table 2 for further characteristics of respondents and Table 3 for distribution of devoted/non-devoted readers and levels taught.

Participants provided their written consent to participate in this study, as required by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and were duly informed that their participation was optional, and that they would not be penalised at all for refusal, and that they had a right to withdraw their research involvement at any time throughout the semester. The university's IRB approved the ethics of this study, which was funded by a university research grant.

Table 2: Characteristics of respondents (N = 146).

Characteristic	*n* (%)
Sex	
Male	31 (21.2)
Female	114 (78.1)
No answer/missing	1 (0.7)
Years of teaching	
2–10 years	95 (65.1)
11–20 years	40 (27.4)
Over 20 years	5 (3.4)
No answer/missing	6 (4.1)
Type of reader	
Pleasure	40 (27.4)
Information/work/studies	64 (43.8)
Others	42 (28.8)
Currently reading a book	
Yes	59 (40.4)
No	86 (58.9)
No answer/missing	1 (0.7)
Devoted reader	
Yes	49 (33.6)
No	96 (65.7)
No answer/missing	1(0.7)

Table 3: Devoted/non-devoted readers and levels taught (N = 145)

Levels taught	*Devoted* *n* = 49 *n* (%)	*Not-devoted* *n* = 96 *n* (%)
Pre-school/EC	11 (22)	13 (14)
Elementary/SPED	20 (41)	44 (46)
Secondary/JC	14 (29)	37 (39)
Adult learners	–	1 (1)
No answer	4 (8)	1 (1)

Survey instrument

The teachers were asked to respond to a four-page 38-item survey questionnaire that examines the teachers' personal reading habits, reading attitudes, self-reported instructional practices, awareness of children's books and its connection to social and emotional learning, as well as access to multicultural children's titles. For this paper, the researchers highlight the teachers' responses to three open-ended questions that examine their instructional practices: (1) How do you motivate your students to read? (2) Over your years of teaching, what is the one thing you do on a consistent basis that you feel has the greatest impact in promoting more engaged reading in your students? (3) Name the top three literacy instructional strategies that you use regularly in your classroom. The first two questions were adapted from McKool and Gespass' (2009) Survey Questionnaire. The teachers' responses are also analysed in the light of whether they identified themselves to be devoted readers or not devoted readers.

Data analysis

The research team independently examined and categorised responses to each of the three questions and identified emerging (rather than prefigured) themes that arose organically from the data, using Glaser's Emerging Design from the Grounded Theory framework, whereby coding themes are generated while doing an iterative process of reading and close re-reading of each response to determine similarities and differences (Creswell, 2014). Multiple re-readings of the data had to be done to ensure that newly emergent themes would be taken into account across earlier responses indicating its modifiability, as the researchers continue to reflect on whether the responses fit the realities of the participants and to check whether the emergent themes work as evidenced in how they are able to explain the variations in the behaviour of the participants (Creswell, 2014). This type of data analysis process gave rise to a theory that provided greater insight and nuance into the phenomena under study (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The researchers reviewed the appropriateness of both the general categories and themes, and the statements and quotes under each of these thematic groupings.

The frequency counts for the top three frequently cited themes across the three questions were tallied, mapped and are presented here according to whether the teachers perceive themselves as devoted or non-devoted readers. The association between the readers (devoted and not devoted) and the teaching strategy

questions were further assessed using Pearson's chi-square or Fisher's exact tests. Level of significance was set at $P < 0.05$.

Results

The associations between the teachers' identification of themselves as devoted or not devoted readers and (1) how they motivate students to read, (2) what the teachers claim they do consistently that promote more engaged reading among their students, and (3) their top literacy instructional strategies are summarised and presented below.

What type of teachers motivate their students to read and what strategies they use

Table 4 compares the teaching strategies on how the teacher respondents motivate their students to read, indicating how significantly more not devoted readers provided a NIL/Not Applicable response compared to devoted readers (44% vs. 24%, *P*-value = 0.02). In addition, there is a statistically significant relationship between the teachers' identification of themselves (devoted reader vs. not devoted reader) and the teaching strategies of book sharing and recommendation of titles (*P*-value = 0.02). However, for motivating strategies, such as allowing students to pick books that interest them, creating spaces for reading, encouraging sharing among their students and organising task as well as using of innovative strategies inside the classroom, there is no statistically significant relationship between the teaching strategies and the type or reader (devoted/not devoted reader) (*P*-value = 0.76). This shows that even teachers who identify as not devoted readers are able to provide strategies for motivating their students to read.

What teachers do to promote more engaged reading among the students

Table 5 looks at what the teachers claim they do on a consistent basis that they feel has the greatest impact in promoting more engaged reading in their students. Once again, the percentage of not devoted readers (45%) who had no answer/strategy was statistically higher compared to the percentage of devoted readers (27%) (*P*-value = 0.03). It is to be noted, however, that the proportion of teachers who apply any of the three strategies was not statistically different between the devoted and not devoted readers (*P*-values > 0.81). This demonstrates that even teachers who self-identify as not devoted readers are able to enumerate strategies that can promote more engaged reading such as drama/role play/read-aloud/reading to and with children, teacher-led classroom discussions and written reflections, and sharing their own books and experience as readers.

Top literacy instructional strategies

Table 6 summarises the literacy instructional strategies that the teachers use regularly in his/her classroom. Once again, 38% of the not devoted readers answered NIL or Not Applicable, which is approximately two times more than the devoted readers (*P*-value = 0.02). Similar to the earlier results, even teachers who identify as non-devoted readers are able to provide literacy instructional practices deemed useful in promoting reading engagement. Such strategies include conducting read-aloud, shared book approach, silent reading, inquiry-based approaches, word drills among others.

Discussion

If not applicable, then whose job is it?

An overwhelming number of teachers claim that these questions do not apply to them, with a significantly greater number of non-devoted readers compared to those who identify as devoted readers (*P*-value of 0.03) opting for the *Not Applicable* or *NIL* responses across all the three questions. A more detailed analysis points towards most teachers' perception that promoting lifelong reading habits should only be under the purview of English teachers, which consequently make most non-English-subject teachers regard such questions as *Not Applicable* to them. In fact, one respondent (who identified as a non-devoted reader) scribbled this note in the first part of the questionnaire: "This survey should have been targeted for

Table 4: Comparison of teaching strategies on "How do you motivate your students to read" among teachers who are devoted and not devoted readers

Strategies	*Devoted reader n = 49*	*Not devoted reader n = 96*	*P-value*
No answer/NIL/NA	12 (24%)	42 (44%)	0.02
Allow students to pick books that interest them/create spaces for reading/ encourage sharing among students/organise tasks/use of innovative strategies inside the classroom	16 (33%)	29 (30%)	0.76
Book sharing and recommendation of titles	13 (27%)	10 (10%)	0.02

Table 5: Comparison of teaching strategies on "Over your years of teaching, what is the one thing you do on a consistent basis that you feel has the greatest impact in promoting more engaged reading in your students?" among teachers who are devoted and not devoted readers

Strategies	*Devoted* $n = 49$	*Not devoted* $n = 96$	*P*-value
No answer/NA/NIL	13 (27%)	43 (45%)	0.03
Drama/role play/read-aloud/reader engagement/reading to and with children/ reading as fun	11 (22%)	20 (21%)	0.82
Class discussion (teacher led or among students)/written reflections	4 (8%)	9 (9%)	1.00
Sharing of knowledge and experience as reader – recommending books	4 (8%)	9 (9%)	1.00

Table 6: Comparison of teaching strategies on "Literacy instructional strategies that you use regularly in your classroom" among teachers who are devoted and not devoted readers

Strategies	*Devoted* $n = 49$	*Not Devoted* $n = 96$	*P*-value
No answer/NA/NIL	9 (18%)	36 (38%)	0.02
Read aloud/shared book approach/storytelling/role play/silent reading/poetry/ debates	24 (49%)	31 (32%)	0.05
Critical thinking/inquiry-based/Socratic models/word drills/specific reading pedagogies mentioned	12 (24%)	24 (25%)	0.95

primary/secondary school teachers or language teachers. My response as a JC Math teacher would be almost totally irrelevant to your study."

This attempt at specialisation and compartmentalization of one's supposed roles and responsibilities as a teacher is not unique to Singapore. In fact, Barton and McKay (2016) noted how most secondary teachers are trained to typically perceive themselves more as disciplinary experts rather than literacy teachers. The predominant view shows how the task of promoting reading to students is relegated to primary English teachers (Bouchard, 2001), despite the fact that research clearly shows "the need for all teachers to be literacy teachers" (Barton & McKay, 2016, p. 162) – especially with the evidence indicating that increasing numbers of adolescents enter secondary school in need of support in reading generally (Clary, Feez, Garvey & Partridge, 2015; Murphy, 2015).

Apart from this compartmentalised notion of what is expected of teachers depending on which level and the subject areas that they teach, there were three teachers who self-identified as devoted readers who expressed frustration about the futility of doing anything that would change their students' attitudes towards reading. One teacher added this explanation to her NIL response: "Motivated ones read without my motivation. Unmotivated ones will not read even if forced" indicating how they see the promotion of lifelong reading habits as beyond their purview. Another teacher who self-identified as a reader added this to her NA response: "I hardly ever do this – my students are too lazy to read. I have lost motivation in asking them to read." This prompts the researchers to wonder whether teachers' perceptions of students being "too lazy to read" refer to students' pleasure reading of books that students choose to read, or does this refer to teacher-prescribed texts that students are required to read as part of their lessons?

There are also challenges imposed on teachers who dare to remove themselves from outside of the prescribed confines on how modes of instruction should be delivered. In Loh's (2010) study, he shared how his addition of an alternative approach (i.e. Picture Word Inductive Model – PWIM) to those that were prescribed by his school mentors in teaching reading through a recommended literacy programme in Singapore was met with a great deal of resistance from colleagues. Despite positive feedback from other teachers and the enthused response of the students, he received censure for using PWIM to teach vocabulary instead of the prescribed strategies that are perceived to be packaged within the literacy programme (i.e. using word frame). Since teachers' competence is evaluated with reference to the exam results of students (Curdt-Christiansen & Silver, 2013), it is not surprising that teachers are pressured to "teach to the test" which results in focusing on a "narrow scope of curriculum content" (Curdt-Christiansen, 2010, p. 192). This kind of logic is also evident in the United Kingdom whereby "If not all children pass the test it is the teacher's delivery of the phonics curriculum that is at fault. If all teachers simply delivered the curriculum to plan and with fidelity, then everything would be resolved" (Moss, 2016, p. 934). This is a reality that potentially inhibits teachers from conceivably adding what may be perceived as peripheral – such as promoting lifelong reading habits

in what is already a packed curriculum. As one teacher (self-identified as devoted reader) who responded NIL to the questions, wrote down: "too focused on completing scheme of work."

This also begs the earlier question raised by the researchers: if teachers do not see motivating readers to be applicable to them, then whose responsibility is it to promote more engaged reading? Other researchers attempt to provide an answer to this question with Barton and McKay's (2016) study indicating how a whole school approach driven by strong leadership that emphasises a more collaborative approach helps improve and support adolescent students' reading. This is also echoed quite strongly by Bouchard (2001) who puts the responsibility of promoting reading across all teachers, especially school leaders and administrators:

> *The primary years are key, there is no question about that. But some of the dollars going there would be better spent on getting senior chemistry teachers reading. These teachers too influence kids and the message that they are giving kids today is that reading is NOT important to them. These teachers honestly do not read. And why do they not see reading as their priority? Because they get no such direction from their department heads, their principals nor from their superintendents or boards. (p. 16).*

Not being devoted readers does not translate to poor literacy practices among Singapore teachers

It is interesting to note how even non-devoted readers were able to highlight strategies to motivate their students to read (in particular, allowing students to pick books that interest them, creating spaces for reading and using teacher-led classroom discussions and written reflections), demonstrating that the respondents are able to divorce their identity as readers from the actual instructional strategies they use to motivate engaged reading in the classroom.

This is critical information as international research evidence points towards an interaction between teachers' identity as readers and the type of literacy strategies they employ in the classroom (McKool & Gespass, 2009), even in teaching non-English subjects such as Maths (Sulentic-Dowell, Beal, and Capraro, 2006). In McKool and Gespass' (2009) study of elementary teachers in New Jersey, Florida and Texas, their results show how teachers who put value to "reading in their own lives the most were more likely to use literacy practices associated with best practice" and gave students the chance to read books silently daily and discuss these (p. 269). This has also been documented in the United Kingdom where Reading Teachers – teachers who read and readers who teach – were seen to make more of a difference to elementary children's pleasure in reading (Cremin et al., 2009). However, what is remarkable in the current study is that teachers who identify as non-devoted readers and who read primarily for work and information are able to provide strategies that motivate students to read that are more commonly seen among those who self-identify as readers.

The preponderance of literacy strategies mentioned above may also be understood in light of the discipline based literacy practiced in Singapore classrooms (Tang, 2016), ascribing to patterns of speaking, reading, writing and use of inscriptional tools bounded by specific subject areas and how they are valued within the educational landscape and the community in general. Thus, while the teachers may not consider more engaged or pleasure reading as a priority – the teachers are trained to ensure that subject-focused literacy skills (connected to decoding, comprehending, vocabulary enrichment, analysing texts) are taught to the students. In Tang's (2016) study, he showed how teachers implicitly taught the disciplinary language of science to the students using Initiate-Response-Evaluate (I-R-E) interactions. Evidently, the goal is to make students more effective and critical readers, for them to grasp disciplinal concepts and processes using English, the medium of instruction in Singapore. Jones (2012) shared that a review of the Singapore syllabi of Science, Maths and Social Studies for primary schools reveals a few references to *reading* as a learning outcome. Jones' research results point towards a need to recontextualize reading by viewing it as situated within particular subjects and that teachers need to reposition themselves as analysts of texts and to acknowledge and realise nuances of curriculum literacies.

Hence, the valuing of reading is deeply embedded in its assumed instrumental or deliberately functional purpose – a fact which is also underscored in Cox and Schaetzel's (2007) study on 115 Singaporean teacher-trainees who were studying to become English teachers. Here, it was evident that the majority of the trainees were 'functional' readers (p. 306) as 46% of the respondents primarily read for information and to complete tasks, rather than read for pleasure. Similarly, in our study, 44% reported reading primarily for work or information, while only 27% noted that they read primarily for pleasure. We argue that it is also rooted in and shaped by socio-cultural ideologies that frame and define what is given significance or prioritised in a teacher's repertoire of instructional strategies.

Implications of the study

The National Library Board of Singapore has just launched a five-year National Reading Movement campaign to encourage its citizens and residents to "Read More, Read Widely and Read Together" which started on 30 July 2016, the country's first National Reading Day. Described as a "community-centric movement," the goal is to celebrate the joy and importance of reading as a nation (Lim, 2016). This is in response to the steady decline of the number of people

visiting libraries and number of book loans since 2012. This initiative, supported by the Ministry for Communications and Information, provides a systemic and societal response to our earlier question concerning whose job it is to build lifelong readers. This shows that instead of adapting a whole school approach (Barton & McKay, 2016), Singapore has taken it one step further by promoting lifelong reading habits on a macro (i.e. societal) level.

However, given that the reading movement to promote lifelong reading habits is only in its early stages, it will be interesting to examine how its unfolding (including its own discourse of reading) would impact upon teachers who, based on this research study, believe that it is neither their duty nor their responsibility to promote more engaged readers in their classroom. What are the implications of having teachers who are able to claim with such startling conviction that promoting and developing more engaged readers is not part of their task as educators? What is the long-term impact of such an attitude when it comes to lifelong reader engagement and affective involvement with reading books, especially in the light of empirical studies indicating the associations between pleasure reading and civic, socio-cultural and economic implications in the long-term (Gambrell, 2008; Gopalakrishnan, 2011), not to mention the connection between reading and the development of empathetic skills (Nikolajeva, 2012; Bal & Veltkamp, 2013).

To be able to answer these questions, we could refer to Moss' (2016) admonition that the changing knowledge landscape in the field of education indicates that it is "always culturally shaped" rather than "general and immutable laws for how things must be" (p. 929) and that it is important to situate policies and practices alongside contextual realities. For example, how do we make sense of one teacher respondent who notes that pupils are allowed to read books during class time, so long as they are related to Maths upon completion of their tasks as a 'sponge activity'? How does this relate to the broader finding that most teachers indicate *Not Applicable* when asked what they do to motivate their students to read and to promote engaged reading? They see themselves as disciplinal experts, not literacy teachers, yet many of them (including those who see themselves as non-devoted readers) are able to provide good literacy instructional practices which they use in the classroom. If we accept international findings which indicate that who you are as a reader impacts who you are as a teacher (McKool & Gespass, 2009; Barton & McKay, 2016), then there is a need to make sense of the teachers' view of themselves as non-devoted readers and not responsible for the teaching of reading. This is despite their deployment of literacy practices in their (non-English language) classroom, such as sharing their own books and reading experiences with their own students, and allowing students to pick books that interest them and creating spaces for reading.

In this case, we need to return to the largely centralised instructional infrastructure of Singapore education as largely responsible for the shaping of teachers' instructional perceptions and behaviours, knowing for example, that they are accountable for their students' performance in high-stakes exams which thus requires the privileging of disciplinary literacy instruction. Is the teachers' perception of themselves as not responsible for promoting lifelong reading attributable to the fact that they do not see disciplinal reading as a potential ground to nurture pleasurable and lifelong reading? Given the fact that many of them can identify good literacy instructional practices, can these practices be similarly deployed to promote pleasurable reading within disciplinal literacy? This would, for example, require extending the discourse on lifelong reading to tap into, rather than devalue, privileged practices in disciplinary or content area contexts but, which, of course, work towards independent or lifelong reading. For example, picture books and other fictional texts promote lifelong reading, but "we may be missing a great opportunity for catching some children by neglecting to include information books in a more central role in our literacy programs" (Doiron, 2003, p. 40) and, if we may add, in more disciplinary literacy programs. "What Johnny likes to read," says one well-cited paper (Worthy, Moorman & Turner, 1999), "is hard to find out in school" (p. 12).

Consequently, the duality that the teachers see in their own identities – for example, they are disciplinary experts, not literacy experts – is a construct that needs to be dismantled. As disciplinary experts, they also need to see reading as central to knowledge production in their respective fields of expertise and that they too are readers in their own right who can make lifelong readers out of their pupils.

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