TEACHERS' READING PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

Variation, structure and correlates

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine which different forms of reading promotion activities teachers perform in fifth and sixth grade in The Netherlands and whether different forms of reading promotion activities are acted out independently or cluster into meaningful categories of reading promotion behavior. A survey was administered to 194 teachers and data was analyzed using Principal Component Analyses (PCA). Based on the results of the PCA thirteen different types of reading promotion behavior can be distinguished. Specific teacher and class characteristics are connected with the different types of reading promotion activities teachers perform. Teachers seem to be mainly focusing on promoting the reading of fictional texts. Free reading happens most often, and teachers frequently use comics and short stories in class. Most daily activities take little or no preparation. Correlations are small but do suggest that teachers act out more different forms of reading promotion activities when there are more girls are in class than boys. Also, classes with more girls act out more activities concerning new media and nonfiction.

Keywords: primary education, reading promotion teacher behavior

1

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1. INTRODUCTION

Being literate is a core requirement in the modern world and is needed to gain knowledge and develop educational potential. The ability to understand and use information from written texts, is necessary for developing higher-order skills, and is closely linked to positive outcomes at work, social participation, and lifelong learning (PIAAC, 2009). Because learning depends so strongly on text materials, reading competence is an important precondition of academic achievement (Mason, 2004; McGeown, Duncan, Griffiths, & Stothard, 2015; Spörer, Brunstein, & Kieschke, 2009). However, in many countries, low levels of reading literacy of students are a matter of concern. Findings of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) reveal that in 2015, all participating countries faced sizeable proportions of students age 15 functioning below the baseline level of proficiency in reading (OECD, 2016). This proportion has remained stable since 2009. In the Netherlands, at the end of primary education, approximately a quarter of the students age 12 have insufficient technical reading literacy, which in turn negatively affects their reading comprehension skills (Gubbels, Netten, & Verhoeven, 2017).

To improve the reading literacy of students, schools devote substantial time to decoding skills and reading comprehension, from pre-school programs and kindergarten to secondary and tertiary education. As an aid to reading comprehension

education, the development of reading skills has been a key research interest in educational and psychological research (Adams, 1990). Historically, most research focused on the cognitive aspects of reading such as phonemic awareness, word reading, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (Gough & William, 1986; LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Perfetti & Stafura, 2014; Rayner, 2001; Snow & Burns, 1998). Stanovich (1986) noted that nearly every cognitive task that comprises the act of reading has been investigated. Additionally, many studies have been conducted into the best ways of reading instruction for different types of students, like studies into reciprocal teaching (Palincsar & Brown, 1983) and reading strategy instruction (Edmonds et al., 2009; Solis, Vaughn, Swanson, & McCulley, 2012).

Improving reading literacy is not solely dependent on reading instruction or reading activity in school. Reading behavior outside school is also thought to improve reading literacy. Leisure time reading for example is known to contribute to developing a wider vocabulary, which in turn enables more efficient reading. Frequency of leisure time reading explains 12% of variation in vocabulary of toddlers, 13% in grade four and five children, 19% in grade six and early grammar school, 30% in grammar school and 34% at university level (Mol & Bus, 2011).

Given the importance of leisure time reading for reading literacy and, consequently, for educational careers, social participation and lifelong learning, it is essential to note that there is an overall decline in time devoted to leisure time reading. Each generation reads less than the generations before them did. New generations are shifting their attention to other leisure activities, such as watching

television or doing sports (Cloin, 2013; Salter & Brook, 2007). Within generations, individuals read less as they grow older (Huysmans, 2013; Piek & Vonkeman, 1995). Van Schooten (2005) showed that in grades 7, 8 and 9 Dutch students in the lowest stream of secondary education on average only read 37 minutes per week for leisure and students in the highest stream 92 minutes.

In order to counter this negative trend in leisure time reading, it is helpful to know why individuals read for leisure. Given sufficient print resources (Neuman, 1999; Neuman & Celano, 2001) how often a child reads is thought to be explained by several factors (Cox & Guthrie, 2001; Turner & Paris, 1995). The first factor is initial success in acquiring reading skills (Stanovich, 1986). The second factor is motivation (Pressley, 2002; Wang & Guthrie, 2004). Wigfield, Wilde, Baker, Fernandez-Fein and Scher (1996) reported that intrinsically motivated children from grade 5 and 6 read more frequently than their less motivated peers. The two factors interact, according to the review by Morgan and Fuchs (2007) of 15 studies addressing the relationship between reading behavior and competency beliefs or goal orientations of children aged 5 to 12. Results indicate that reading skills and motivation correlate (though moderately), and the results support the possibility of a bidirectional relationship between the two. It is thought that in grades 1-6 (age 6-11) and grades 6-8 (age 11-13) children's attitude towards reading or children's motivation to read affects levels of reading ability through the influence on reading behavior (McKenna, 1995; McKenna, Jang, Meyer, Conradi, & Lawrence, 2012). In addition McKenna (1995) and also Mitchell and Ley (1996) report that children in grades 9 to 12 with a higher reading literacy show a more favorable attitude toward leisure time reading.

Given the supposedly causal relation between reading attitude or motivation and leisure time reading, it is not surprising that alongside the decline in leisure time reading, students' interest in reading declines also as they grow older (Nielen & Bus, 2015). Lepper (2005) reported that students' general intrinsic motivation decreases with age, as did Unrau and Schlackman (2006). PIRLS-scores show that 33% of grade 4 students in the Netherlands are not at all motivated to read (Gubbels, et al., 2016), which is in line with earlier PIRLS-studies (Meelissen et al., 2012). In the Netherlands, Elsacker and Verhoeven (2003) found a decline in reading motivation already in grade three. Reading motivation seems to be stable in the middle grades of primary education (grade 3, 4 and 5) and decreases in grade 5 and 6 (Tuijl, 2015).

This decline in reading motivation is a general concern for policy makers, educational professionals and parents (Eccles, Wigfield, Harold, & Blumenfeld, 1993; Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2014). In the Netherlands, over the last decades, reading promotion activities and interventions aimed at students have been initiated, at national and local levels and often of a targeted and recurring nature (e.g. projects like Boekstart (*Book Start*), and Bibliotheek op School (*Library in School*)). The Dutch term for these policies is 'reading promotion' ('leesbevordering') which is in use since the eighties (De Vries & Ohlsen, 1998). New institutions were set up in the Netherlands that specialize in reading promotion. One of these was the

Foundation for Reading, which in 1993 became the national platform for reading promotion.

Both in the Netherlands and internationally, professional organizations recommend that reading promotion in schools includes a wide variety of text genres, fiction as well as nonfiction (International Reading Association, 2000; Reutzel & Gali, 1997; Stichting Lezen, 2012). However, reading promotion in practice often aims primarily at fiction (Barone & Morrow, 2003; Chapman, Filipenko, McTavish, & Shapiro, 2007; Duke, 2000, 2003, 2004; Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003; Moss & Hendershot, 2002; Saul & Dieckman, 2005; Yopp & Yopp, 2006). Suggestions for incorporating nonfiction reading experiences in primary education seem to be ignored (Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003; Flowers & Flowers, 2009). This paper however adopts the broad definition of reading promotion: activities that aim to influence in a positive way students' attitude towards reading fiction and nonfiction and students' actual reading of fiction and nonfiction.

In the Netherlands the diversity in reading promotional activities might be relatively large, since Dutch primary schools and their teachers are to a large extent free to shape their curricula. Therefore teachers differ in the methods they use as well as in the time spent on reading (Gubbels, et al., 2016). Also, many Dutch primary schools do not exhibit a systematic and structural approach to reading promotion (Oberon, 2009), which could also help explain the variety in reading promotion as employed by teachers and in the time spent on different forms of reading promotion.

The precise role of the teacher as promoter of reading in the classroom and stimulator of out of school reading did not get much research attention up until now. Dutch teachers reported in 2004 that they spend more time on reading promotion activities compared to teacher reports in 1998 (Heesters, et al., 2007). PIRLS 2011 additionally reports that Dutch grade 4 teachers spend more time in school on reading aloud as well as free reading time compared to reports from 2001 (Meelissen, et al., 2012). However, PIRLS 2015 results indicate that teachers read aloud less often, as do their students as compared to 2011 (Gubbels, et al., 2016).

There are many ways in which teachers may try to stimulate their students' leisure time reading. Teachers themselves report that providing opportunities to read texts that are interesting to students is the primary mechanism for motivating them to become independent and fluent readers (Nielen, 2016; Sweet, Guthrie & Ng, 1998). Studies have shown it is recommended to talk to students about books (Humphrey, Lipsitz, McGovern & Wasser, 1997), reading a wide variety of materials aloud every day (Dreher, 1999) or let them read by themselves daily (Nielen, 2016). Turner and Paris (1995) showed that allowing students to interact with each other about their reading stimulates reading motivation and bolsters the confidence students have in their own reading abilities. Teachers may also function as a role model for their students (Burgess, Sargent, Smith, Hill, & Morrison, 2011; Dreher, 1999; Sweet, Guthrie & Ng, 1998; Turner & Paris, 1995). Many different reading promotion activities are also mentioned in course books for teacher training colleges

(Paus & Bacchini, 2010; Van Coillie, 2007). In contrast with these numerous suggestions there is little or no information available about the actual implementation of these activities in the Netherlands (Bonset & Hoogeveen, 2009).

The present study therefore aims to answer the question which reading promotion activities are performed in 5th and 6th grade in The Netherlands and how often they are done. The focus is on grade 5 and 6 since there is a decline in reading motivation starting in grade 4, the so called '4th grade slump' (Chall, 1983; Tuijl, 2015).

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The first research question addresses tendencies and variation: Which reading promotion activities are performed by teachers in 5th and 6th grade in the Netherlands and how often are different reading promotion activities used by 5th and 6th grade teachers in the Netherlands?

Once it is known which reading promotion activities are used in school, different clusters of types of reading promotion activities may be discerned. Once identified, clusters of reading promotion activities indicate that teachers are inclined to act out several reading promotion activities together. This in turn reveals different types of teacher behavior as far as reading promotion is concerned. The clustering of different reading promotion activities combined with different patterns of behavior by teachers facilitates future research into effects of different types of reading promotion activities on reading attitude, behavior and proficiency of students. The second research question, addressing structure, therefore is: *Are there different clusters of classroom reading promotion activities of teachers in 5th and 6th grade in the Netherlands?*

Once these two questions are answered, the next question that arises is whether characteristics of teachers and of the students they teach are related to the frequency with which teachers act out different types of reading promotion activities. Teachers might adapt their behavior to the needs or preferences of the students they teach. For instance, there could be differences in reading promotion behavior related to the educational stream or characteristics of the class composition like the proportion of girls or the proportion of students of high social economic status in class. Also, teachers might behave differently because of their own preferences, which could be reflected in a relation between reading promotional behavior and the age or teaching experience of teachers. Hence the third and final research question, addressing correlates, is: What teacher or class characteristics are connected with reading promotion activities as performed by teachers in 5th and 6th grade in The Netherlands?

3. METHOD

3.1 Design

The design of the study is cross sectional. A survey was held among teachers of grade 5 and 6 of Dutch primary education.

3.2 Instrument

To construct the questionnaire items for measuring the variety and frequency of performed reading promotion activities (research question 1), oral interviews were conducted with four teachers of 5th and 6th grade students and with three lecturers of a teacher training college. A representative of the Dutch Ministry of Education was also interviewed, together with two representatives of two Dutch foundations aimed at reading promotion ('Foundation for Reading' and 'Art of Reading' ('Kunst van Lezen')), in an effort to include the views of policy makers and institutions for reading promotion. By means of the interviews, the ecological validity of the questionnaire was maximized (Bryman, Bell, & Teevan, 2009).

The interviews dealt with both reading promotion in class and the characteristics of an environment conducive to reading. For all these interviews a semi-structured interview guide was made, based on governmental documents and teacher trainer books offering reading promotion (Meelis-Voorma, Moolenaar, & Overmeijer, 2012; Paus & Bacchini, 2010; Van Coillie, 2007). The list of reading promotional activities resulting from the interviews, was complemented by activities mentioned in governmental documents on reading promotion (Stichting Lezen, 2012).

Based on the results of the interviews and the literature, items for measuring variety and frequency of reading promotion activities were created. The items addressed several categories, which can be found in the following paragraph. Most of the items (44) consisted of statements with 5-point Likert scales ("never", "a few times a year", "monthly", "weekly" and "daily"), a few items (5) could only be answered by "yes" or "no".

All items were piloted with two female 5th and 6th grade teachers, one with five and the other with sixteen years primary school teaching experience. Both had a degree in primary school teaching, one of them also had a university degree in English literature. During this pilot some rephrasing was done and some extra instruction was added (e.g. how to fill in the questionnaire if you work part-time, the difference between teaching reading comprehension or reading education and reading promotion).

Next to information about the activities teachers perform, background information was collected in order to answer research question three. Questions about background variables of teachers concerned gender, age (in days), educational background, number of years of teaching experience, the grade they teach, whether they work part-time, the number of students in class and the class percentages and

numbers of girls, non-native Dutch speakers and students in school of low, medium and high socio-economic status.

The resulting questionnaire contained 49 items about reading promotion activities classified into six a priori categories: (1) fictional reading promotion activities in classrooms, including items on interaction and the teacher as a model (e.g. How often do you give free reading time of a fiction text?), (2) nonfictional reading promotion activities in classrooms, based on the notion of incorporating nonfictional texts (e.g. How often do you give free reading time of a nonfiction text?, (3) outside of class activities, such as a trip to the library (e.g. How often do you visit the Museum of Children's Books?), (4) use of different kinds of fictional genres and materials, (e.g. How often do you use poetry?) (5) use of different kinds of nonfictional genres and materials (e.g. How often do you use newspaper articles?) and (6) the participation in national programs (e.g. Do you participate in the Week of Children's Books?).

3.3 Sample

To answer the first research question a representative random sample of 100 primary schools was drawn from the population list of 6901 primary schools in the Netherlands. In total 69 schools participated in the research, which gives a response rate of 69%. Schools were requested to ask a 5th and a 6th grade teacher to fill in the questionnaire. In some schools, the same teacher taught 5th and a 6th grade students. In total, 85 5th and a 6th grade teachers of the 69 participating schools returned a questionnaire. Since the aim was to obtain a representative sample of primary schools, and teachers working in the same school are probably more alike than teachers from different schools, the data of these 85 teachers are aggregated within schools for the analyses aimed at answering the first research question.

To verify whether the results lend themselves for generalization, some characteristics of the responding schools are compared to the same characteristics of all Dutch primary schools. Population characteristics of primary schools made available by the Dutch government were used. The characteristics used are respectively percentages of students in school of low, medium and high social economic status, the location of schools in different provinces, the type of school¹, and the total number of students in school. The analyses used for the evaluation of the generalizability of the school sample are correlations and cross tables with chisquare tests.

The comparison of schools in the sample (data aggregated over schools, N = 69) and all other Dutch primary schools (N = 6832) showed that for none of the characteristics the responding schools differ significantly from all Dutch primary

¹ In the Dutch educational system next to public schools, there are schools with a religious affiliation (Protestant, Catholic, Muslim, etc.) and schools with a specific didactic pedagogical approach (Montessori, Dalton, et cetera).

schools. Correlations were virtually zero between a dummy variable indicating whether a school belongs to the sample and respectively the percentage of students of low (r = -.017; p = .160; N = 6901), medium (r = -.003; p = .815; N = 6901), and high social economic status (r = .014; p = .253; N = 6901). Also, school size of schools in the sample and not in the sample did not differ significantly (r = .013; p = .266; N = 6901). Similarly, the geographical dispersion of schools (χ^2 = 7.696; d f = 5; p = .174; N = 6901), and the distribution of school type (χ^2 = 1.916; d f = 3; p = .590; N = 6901) in the sample resemble the population. These results support the claim that the school sample is representative for The Netherlands.

A representative sample was not necessary for answering research question two and three, since these exploratory questions concern relations between constructs and aim at generating theory and do not aim at generalizing results to a specific population of teachers. To obtain sufficient power for conducting an exploratory factor analyses, the representative sample was extended with a convenience sample of 5th and 6th grade teachers. This resulted in 109 extra questionnaires of 5th and 6th grade teachers from 86 different primary schools. The data obtained in this way was merged with the data of the random sample, but now non-aggregated, adding up to a total of 194 respondents for answering research questions two and three.

3.4 Sample characteristics

Of the 85 teachers in the representative sample of 69 schools, 35 are male (41%) and 49 female (58%); 34 (40%) were 5th grade teachers and 27 (32%) were sixth grade teachers, 24 (28%) taught a combined class of both 5th and 6th grade students (percentages do not add up to 100%, due to teachers missing questions). The sample included both novice and experienced teachers. The mean of years of teaching experience for the entire group was 18.4 with a standard deviation of 12.1. The average age of the respondents was 44.4 years with a standard deviation of 12.3 years. 63 (74%) of them worked part-time and shared their position in 5th or 6th grade with a colleague. 76 (89%) teachers were trained at a polytechnic, 7 (8.2%) were university trained teachers.

Of the combined sample of 194 teachers, 66 (34%) respondents are male and 121 (62%) female, 62 (32%) were 5th grade, 78 (40%) were 6th grade teachers and 48 (25%) taught both 5th and 6th grade. The mean years of teaching experience for the entire group was 15.7 years with a standard deviation of 12.7 years. The average age of the respondents was 41.0 years with a standard deviation of 13.2 years. 125 (64%) respondents worked part-time, 173 (89%) are trained at a polytechnic and 15 (8%) are university-trained teachers.

3.5 Procedure

After receiving permission from the principals of the schools, the paper versions of the questionnaires were sent out accompanied by an introductory letter with directions and a stamped return envelope. Schools preferring a digital version received an e-mail identical to the introduction letter and the web address of the questionnaire. The introduction letter or e-mail informed teachers about the purposes and procedures of the research and that all information would be reported anonymously to both protect teachers' privacy and encourage them to provide honest responses (Alreck & Settle, 1995).

3.6 Data analyses

To answer the first research question, means and standard deviations are computed for each of the items measuring the frequency of acting out reading promotion behavior. As stated above, the data of the 85 teachers of the 69 schools of the representative sample are aggregated over schools.

To answer the second research question an exploratory factor analysis (Principal components analyses or PCA) was used, using the scores on the behavior items in the total sample of 194 teachers. To check whether the variables are normally distributed, Kolchorov-Smirnov test was used to see to what extent distribution deviated significantly from normality. All items appeared to deviate significantly from normality. This is of course partly caused by the large power (N = 173). In addition, we test whether item scores are exactly normally distributed and not roughly. The histograms with the normal distribution plotted over them show that some items really deviate from normality and others are fairly normally distributed. Some caution in generalizing our results is warranted.

In the PCA only 44 items were used that are measured with a 5-point Likert scale. We consider these variables to be ordinal approximations of continuous variables (Johnson & Creech, 1983; Norman, 2010; Sullivan & Artino, 2013; Zumbo & Zimmerman, 1993).

We used direct-oblimin rotation, because it is expected that components correlate. Components in reading promotion behavior are distinguished based on the Eigenvalue of the component (>1) and the scree-plot and they are conceptually interpreted based on the loadings in the rotated pattern- and structure-matrix. Prior to the interpretation of the components, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) was checked as were the diagonal elements of the antiimage matrix (all should be >.5) to check whether the number of respondents is sufficient for the PCA. Also, we checked whether the variables in the PCA are sufficiently correlated by means of Bartlett's test of sphericity (should be significant). Based on the results of the PCA, different types of reading promotion behavior are distinguished. For each of the distinguished types, the items with relatively high loadings on the specific component and relatively low loadings on other components were summed to create a variable for each type of reading promotion behavior. Both the pattern and the structure matrix were inspected to this end. For items that loaded relatively high on several components, sometimes also the contents of the items was used to allocate them to a variable. Means are divided by the number of

items summed, so that means can be interpreted on the original five-point Likert scales. For each of the sums Cronbach's alpha was calculated as an indication of its reliability. Only sums with alpha's larger than .6 are used for subsequent analyses to answer research question three. To answer this question, correlations were calculated between the aforementioned sums representing a component found in the PCA and the background variables of teachers and classes. However, not all correlations pertain to sums of items. When a component shows only one high item loading, correlations were computed between the single item concerned and the background variables.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Tendencies and variation

To determine the different reading promotion activities and its frequencies (research question one), mean frequency scores indicating the application of different reading promotion activities, class activities, use of materials, and participation in national programs were calculated. As mentioned in the method section, in the questionnaire six a priori categories of reading promotion were distinguished. Results are reported per category and simultaneously compared to the other categories. Each paragraph starts off with a general impression and then reports results of specific frequent and non-frequent items of the questionnaire.

4.1.1 Category 1: fictional reading promotion activities in classrooms

The activity in Table 1 reported to happen most frequently (daily) is giving free reading time (item no. 1). In Table 1 we also see that teachers in 5th and 6th grade on average report they stimulate students to read children's books more than once a week (item no. 2). The same holds for reading children's books to the class (item no. 3). On average, advising students on children's books is reported to happen more than once a month as are book presentations by students (items no. 4 and 5).

Somewhat less frequent is the promoting of specific children's books by the teachers themselves, which on average is reported to occur monthly (item no. 7). Even less frequently, teachers organize book talks, which happens on average a few times a year (item no. 17). In Table 1 we can see that 'tutor-reading by older peers' on average happens monthly (item no. 6). Given the amount of preparation concerned in organizing tutor reading, this is still fairly frequent.

As is shown in Table 1, the item 'read as a teacher while the class reads too', is on average reported to happen monthly (item no. 12), which is not very often since students read daily. Perhaps due to their workload, teachers prefer doing other work like correcting assignments or they might not realize that giving an example can be considered as a way of reading promotion. Inspecting the relatively large standard

deviation, it might be concluded that some teachers read while the class reads rather often and others almost never.

Table 1. Mean frequencies of acting out reading promotion activities concerning fictional texts in 5th and 6th grade (N = 69).

Activity		М	se	SD
1.	Give 'free reading' time	4.76	.05	.41
2.	Stimulate students to read children's books	4.51	.06	.52
3.	Read children's books to the class	4.28	.10	.86
4.	Give book presentations by students	3.45	.14	1.15
5.	Advise on children's books	3.43	.12	1.01
6.	Tutor-reading by older peers	3.31	.14	1.19
7.	Promote children's books	3.12	.11	.94
8.	Reading and declamation	3.12	.13	1.10
9.	Assess children's books	2.98	.15	1.21
10.	Introduce children's books	2.96	.11	.93
11.	Buy new children's books	2.91	.12	1.03
12.	Read as a teacher while the class reads too	2.89	.18	1.50
13.	Talk to parents about the children's reading behavior at home	2.74	.13	1.09
14.	Introduce classics	2.39	.10	.84
15.	Use processing tasks on children's books	2.35	.13	1.08
16.	Let students make a reading portfolio	2.31	.17	1.42
17.	Organize book talks	2.22	.13	1.10
18.	Give 'free reading time', using compulsory books	2.14	.17	1.39
19.	Invite writers in class	2.05	.13	1.06

Note. Items consisted of statements with 5-point Likert scales: Do you.../ do you act out/ do you let students (Meaning of Likert scale: 1 = "never", 2 = "a few times a year", 3 = "monthly", 4 = "weekly" and 5 = "daily").

Overall, more than half of the reading promotion activities on fictional texts are on average done only a few times a year. For some of these activities, this has possibly to do with organizational or financial issues: inviting a writer in class (item no. 19) or buying the copies for compulsory book reading takes time and money (item no. 18). For other activities the reported incidence in class seems rather low.

4.1.2 Category 2: nonfictional reading promotion activities in classrooms

Table 2 displays that promotional activities concerning nonfictional texts are acted out less often than the activities mentioned in Table 1. Reading a non-fiction text aloud in class (Table 2, item no. 1) is reported to on average happen monthly compared to more than once a week for reading fiction aloud to the class. While giving free reading time for fictional texts is reported to happen daily (Table 1, item no. 1), for non- fictional texts this same activity is reported to be acted out on average monthly (Table 2, item no. 2). Also, fictional books are bought more often (Table 1, item no. 11) than non-fictional books (Table 2, item no. 5) and advice about which books to read also is given more often for fiction (Table 1, item no. 5 and Table 2, item no. 4). However, free reading of compulsory text happens almost monthly with non-fiction texts (Table 2, item no. 3), whereas free reading of compulsory fictional texts is on average done a few times a year (Table 1, item no. 18). Possibly, the reading of nonfiction texts pertains to texts belonging to subjects like geography, history and biology. More variety of text genres can be found in Table 4.

Table 2. Frequencies of acting out reading promotion activities (nonfictional texts) in 5^{th} and 6^{th} grade (N = 69).

Activity		М	se	SD
1.	Read aloud in class a non-fiction text (article from a newspaper or magazine)	3.19	.14	1.13
2.	Give 'free reading' time of a nonfiction text	3.11	.12	1.00
3.	'Free reading' compulsory non-fiction texts	3.02	.14	1.16
4.	Advise students on non-fiction texts	2.95	.11	.92
5.	Buy nonfiction texts (e.g. magazines about football, animals, countries)	2.60	.12	.98
6.	Point out websites	2.35	.13	1.06

Note. Items consisted of statements with 5-point Likert scales: Do you.../ do you act out/ do you let students ... (Meaning of Likert scale: 1 = "never", 2 = "a few times a year", 3 = "monthly", 4 = "weekly" and 5 = "daily").

4.1.3 Category 3: out of class activities

Next to activities that take place within the classroom, the questionnaire contained questions about activities outside of class (see Table 3). The activities in Table 3 are at most on average at most a few times per year. This is not surprising, since these activities cost money and a lot of time and preparation. The library (Table 3, item no. 1) and the theatre (Table 3, item no. 2) are on average visited with a class once a year. Physical visits from classes to the bookshop (Table 3, item no. 3) and the Museum (Table 3, item no. 4) hardly ever occur. The theatre visit might also refer to

tradition in the Netherlands to organize an end of year musical for students in grade six, which might explain why this class activity on average is done once a year.

Table 3. Frequencies of acting out reading promotion activities outside of class in 5^{th} and 6^{th} grade (N = 69).

Activity		М	se	SD
1.	A library with your class	1.85	.10	.82
2.	The theatre	1.83	.07	.55
3.	A bookshop	1.07	.05	.40
4.	The Museum of Children's Books	1.00	.00	.00

Note. Items consisted of statements with 5-point Likert scales: Do you visit ... (Meaning of Likert scale: 1 = "never", 2 = "a few times a year", 3 = "monthly", 4 = "weekly" and 5 = "daily").

4.1.4 Category 4 and 5: use of different kinds of fictional and non-fictional genres and material

In Table 4, the frequencies of the use of different materials are presented. Two types of material are not included in Table 4, since they are already mentioned in Table 1 and 2: children's books and non-fiction texts in general. The materials in Table 4 are specifications of these two types. A noticeable result is that comics are used most frequently (Table 4, item no. 1), followed by short stories (Table 4, item no. 4). Apart from comics, relatively high mean frequencies are found for non-fictional materials: instructional texts, newspapers articles and magazine articles (Table 4, items no. 2, 3 and 5). Given the results presented in Table 1 and 2, in which the highest frequencies are found for the reading of fiction, this is surprising. Newspapers and magazine articles might be chosen to prepare the young adolescents for society. Instructional texts are probably used to prepare students for secondary education. Less used genres are drama texts (Table 4, item no. 10), filmed books (Table 4, item no. 11) and audio books (Table 4, item no. 15). The low frequency of the use of drama texts might be explained by the fact that drama texts might be difficult to read, especially for 11-year-old students. The use of audio and filmed books presupposes technical facilities which have to be shared by the whole school, if present at all. Computers, tablets and e-readers are used on average a few times a year (item no. 9). The standard deviation of this score is large, meaning that there is a relatively large difference between schools in computer use.

Table 4. Frequencies of use of materials for reading promotion in 5th and 6th grade (N = 69).

Activity		М	se	SD
1.	Comics	3.51	.12	.99
2.	Instructional texts	3.33	.10	1.19
3.	Newspaper articles	3.27	.13	1.05
4.	Short stories	3.22	.11	.91
5.	Magazines articles	2.97	.13	1.11
6.	The internet to search for background information on writers or children's books	2.77	.13	1.09
7.	Poetry	2.66	.10	.85
8.	Website texts	2.61	.13	1.04
9.	Computers, tablets, e-readers for reading activities in class	2.49	.14	1.15
10.	Drama texts	1.98	.09	.78
11.	Filmed books	1.93	.10	.86
12.	Themed tables in the classroom	1.89	.11	.92
13.	Magazines about reading	1.89	.11	.87
14.	The internet to search for books	1.70	.12	.96
15.	Audiobooks	1.62	.10	.83

Note. Items consisted of statements with 5-point Likert scales: Do you use ... (Meaning of Likert scale: 1= "never", 2 = "a few times a year", 3 = "monthly", 4 = "weekly" and 5 = "daily").

4.1.5 Category 6: The participation in national programs

Category 6 shows the participation of Dutch teachers in national programs. These programs are well known in the Netherlands. Nearly every teacher participates in the Week of Children's Books (item no. 1). This is a national event in which Dutch primary schools can request free packages of prepared lessons and subsidized books. The books of The Children's Jury (item no. 2) are books that are selected by children age 6-12 on which they can vote to select a book of the year and this comes with prepared lessons packages as well. Teachers just as often participate in programs such as the Reading Aloud Breakfast (item no. 3) or the Year of Reading Aloud (item no. 5) as they do not.

Table 5. Frequencies of acting out reading promotion activities (national programs) in 5th and 6th grade (N = 69).

Activity		М	se	SD
1.	Week of children's books	.97	.02	.17
2.	The Children's Jury	.79	.05	.41
3.	The Reading Aloud Breakfast	.59	.06	.50
4.	Literary prizes	.58	.06	.50
5.	The Year of Reading Aloud	.48	.06	.50

Note. Do you pay attention to ... (1 = yes; 0 = no).

4.2 Structure

Now that the variation and frequency of use of different reading promotional activities are known and data is available, a further look at these activities can be taken. To answer research question two (are there different clusters of classroom reading promotion activities of teachers in 5th and 6th grade in the Netherlands?) an exploratory factor analysis (Principal Components Analysis or PCA) was conducted over 173 cases since 20 cases showed one or more missing values on the 44 items.

Firstly, it was investigated to what extent all items can be seen as indicative of one and the same construct: The amount of reading promotion implemented in class. To this end, Cronbach's alpha was computed over all reading promotion items in the questionnaire. The alpha over all 44 items is .92 with a range in item test correlations of .048 - .709 (N = 173). This high alpha over all items indicates that the acting out of reading promotion activities as mentioned in the items can be summed as an indication of acting out reading promotion activities in general. However, given that alpha increases as the number of positively correlated items increases, and in view of the fact that some items show very low item test correlations, we cannot exclude the possibility that there are clusters of activities present. The exploratory factor analysis (PCA) serves to detect clusters.

The necessary preconditions for conducting a PCA are met: the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure is .832, and all measures of sampling adequacy (diagonal of the anti-image correlation matrix) for individual items are larger than .5 except one (.437; 'free reading in class in book of own choice'). We conclude therefore that the sample is large enough for conducting a PCA. Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant (χ 2 = 2991.326, df = 946, p = .000), so the correlations between items are sufficiently large for PCA. Also, the scree plot does not show a sharp hook which indicates there are several components. As was noted in the above based on the high alpha over all items, also the PCA shows that there is a lot of common variance in the items, since before rotation the eigenvalue of the first component (10.385) is much larger than the eigenvalue of the second component (2.649).

The PCA showed clusters of reading promotion activities acted out by teachers: 13 components had eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of one and in combination these components explained 64.78% of total variance, which exceeds the recommended criterion of 60% (Hair et al., 1998). Most of the items fitted well in the solution; communalities range between .50 and .76. Correlations between these 13 components are rather low (they range between -.214 to .258). Based on the above we answer the second research question (*Are there different clusters of classroom reading promotion activities of teachers in 5th and 6th grade in The Netherlands?*) affirmatively. Appendix A contains a table showing which items are combined into a variable based on the results of the PCA.

To interpret the components found with respect to their content, the items that show a relatively large loading on a component in both the pattern and structure matrix and relatively low loadings on all other components are inspected to find a conceptual interpretation of each component. Items are never assigned to more than one component.

For each group of items identifying a component, Cronbach's alpha is computed. Only when alpha is larger than .6 the items are summed to be used as a variable in subsequent analyses.

The first component is determined by six items concerning *Introducing texts* by teachers. These six items (α = .81, N = 189) represent the most basic form of reading promotion as opposed to the use of new media for example. In the interviews held to underpin the validity of the questionnaire items, introducing texts was mentioned every time. These forms also appear in most official advises on acting out reading promotion activities (Stichting Lezen, 2012).

Component two has the largest loadings of two items about *Using new media* (α =.66, N = 194). This means that teachers scoring relatively high on using computers, tablets and e-readers for instance also are more inclined to use website texts. It looks like innovation is an 'all or nothing' kind of activity.

The third component refers to teachers *Organizing outings and obligatory reading*. In the three items loading high on this component (α =.22, N = 192), the teacher takes students out of school to a bookstore or a museum or gives obligatory books to read in class.

Only two items show high loadings on the fourth component (α = .44, N = 194). These items refer to *Using audio books and a themed table*.

The fifth component is determined by four items (α = .73, N = 192), and represents *Using nonfiction* in class, e.g. newspapers, articles out of magazines and the reading of nonfiction aloud or in free reading time.

The sixth component is characterized by two items concerning *Organizing* obligatory activities for students and teachers such as visiting the library and theatre ($\alpha = .35$, N = 193).

The seventh component has six items that reflect the input of writers, talking to parents and buying new books; *Inviting parents & writers, buying reading material* ($\alpha = .81$, N = 186). This includes the buying of new (fiction and nonfiction) books and

inviting writers in class, but also talking to parents about reading promotion and students' reading behavior.

The eighth component has only one item and concerns *Using the internet to search for books* (N = 193).

The ninth component has high loadings of three items, all about *Stimulating free* reading, for example by reading as a teacher while the class reads and giving free reading time with a self-chosen children's book ($\alpha = .33$, N = 192).

The tenth component has high loadings of six items of which five show a rather classical approach to reading promotion or even literary education and is captured as *Reciting*. These items concern using poetry and drama, the reciting of texts and using magazines about reading as well as searching information about authors on the internet. The one item loading high on this component that is different is about advising on what non-fictional texts to read. Teachers using a more classical, highbrow approach to reading promotion, might also feel the need to advise students about which non-fiction texts they should or should not read (α = .75, N = 188).

The eleventh component is determined by two items (α = .56, N = 191), all concerning *Using short stories*; short texts chosen by the teacher that students have to read.

The twelfth component has only one item: *Using comics* in class.

The thirteenth component is formed by six items concerning *Organizing student* tasks and where to find answers: letting students assess fiction, give book presentations and organizing book talks and tutor-reading, but also pointing out websites about books, using movies about books ($\alpha = .76$, N = 191). All these items concern the thinking about books by students.

The answer to research question two is that reading promotion, although fairly homogeneous (α =.92, as stated above), can be seen as at least consisting of 13 different sub types of behavior. Some components (7, 10 and 11) contain items about fiction as well as items about nonfiction, which suggests that in the mind of the teachers, there is no such thing as a difference between fictional and nonfictional texts as far as these forms of reading promotion are concerned. Factors such as time can play a role where it comes to *Using short stories* in class (Component 11), either a short story (fiction) or an instructional text (nonfiction); both fit in a tight time schedule a teacher sometimes has.

Correlations between the various components are low (range -.269 to .369). These results also imply there are different types of teachers as far as reading promotion is concerned. The question what teacher and class characteristics coincide with different forms of reading promotion, is answered in the next section.

4.3 Correlates

To answer research question three (What teacher or class characteristics are connected with the different types of reading promotion activities as performed by

teachers?), sums of items were created as indicators for the different aspects of reading promotion behavior found in the PCA as well as a sum over all items. For answering research question three only sums with alpha's larger than .60 are used. This means components (3, 4, 6, 8, 9,11,12) are not included in the analyses for answering this question. Correlations were calculated between the remaining 6 sums and background variables of teachers (gender, age, educational background, number of years of teaching experience, grade they teach, whether they work parttime) and class characteristics (the number of students in class and the class percentages and numbers of girls, non-native Dutch speakers and students in school of low, medium and high social economic status). Also, correlations were computed between these variables and all items not included in the above-mentioned sums.

Looking at correlations between background variables and components, no significant correlations are found between component 7 (*Inviting parents & writers, buying reading material*) and any of the used background variables.

Small but significant correlations are found between *Introducing texts* (component 1) on the one hand and the percentage of students of medium SES in class (r = .16; p = .024; N = 185) and the percentage of girls in class (r = .17; p = .018; N = 183) on the other. This implies that teachers spent more time introducing texts when they have more girls in class and more students of medium SES.

Using new media (component 2) is significantly correlated with the percentage (r = .17; p = .002; N = 188) and number of girls in class (r = .19; p = .006; N = 189).

Component 5 *Using nonfiction* is significantly correlated with the percentage of girls (r = .17; p = .018; N = 186) and the number of girls in class (r = .20; p = .006; N = 187) and with teachers gender: male teachers make less us of nonfiction in class (r = .17; p = .023; N = 185).

Component 10 *Reciting* is significantly correlated with the age of teachers (r = .16; p = .042; N = 169).

Lastly Organizing student tasks and where to find answers (component 13) was significantly correlated with the percentage of girls in class (r = .16, p = .003, N = 185).

Correlations were calculated between all the teacher and class characteristics and the single items that were left out of the aforementioned sums. Results show that male teachers spend more time on going to the Museum of Children's books (r = .16, p = .034, N = 186), and let students read more often in their own choice of books (r = .15, p = .046, N = 187). Also, older teachers pay more attention to searching machines on the internet (r = .25, p = .001, N = 174), and make less use of themed tables (r = -.24, p = .001, N = 175). More experienced teachers take less time to go to the Museum of Children's books (r = -.21, p = .003, N = 189) and use themed tables less (r = -.27, p = .001, N = 191). Themed tables are used when teachers split their workweek with a colleague (r = .60, p = .028, N = 191), and these teachers use comics less (r = -.15, p = .041, N = 191). Teachers with students of a high SES read less often themselves as an example (r = -.17, p = .017, N = 189).

In classes with more female students, more time is spent on audio books (r = .20, p = .006, N = 189). The percentage of girls in class also correlates positively with using

the internet to search for books (r = -.18, p = .015, N = 187). More male students in class coincides with less reading time for the teacher (r = -.15, p = .050, N = 185) and less visiting the Children's museum (r = -.16, p = .033, N = 184). The percentage of boys in class also correlated negatively with the use of audio books (r = -.18, p = .013, N = 185) and using the internet to search for books (r = -.18, p = .013, N = 184).

Both the number and percentage of students in class not having Dutch as their first language correlates with the frequency of class trips to the Children's books museum (number: r = .37, p = .000, N = 190; percentage r = .34, p = .000, N = 189) and with giving time to read in obligatory children's books (number: r = .21, p = .004, N = 192; percentage r = .20, p = .006, N = 191).

Also, the number of non-native students in class is related to less stimulation to read from the teachers (r = -.16, p = .027, N = 190).

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study shows that there are many different types of reading promotion activities that teachers use in grade 5 and 6 classrooms in the Netherlands. Teachers seem to be focusing mainly on promoting reading of fictional texts. This is in line with earlier findings of PIRLS-2016 (Gubbels, et al., 2016). Traditionally, in the Netherlands reading promotion was associated with promoting the reading of literary fictional books (Stichting Lezen, 2012; Van Schooten, 1997). More recently, the promotion of a wider variety of text genres, fiction as well as non-fiction, is recommended by the Foundation for Reading (Stichting Lezen, 2012). Likewise, international literature indicates that reading promotion in practice primarily aims at promoting fiction and that the scope of reading promotion should be wider (Barone & Morrow, 2003; Chapman et al., 2007; Duke, 2000, 2003, 2004; Duke & Bennett-Armistead, 2003; Flowers & Flowers, 2009; International Reading Association, 2000; Moss & Hendershot, 2002; Reutzel & Gali, 1997; Saul & Dieckman, 2005; Yopp & Yopp, 2006). The results of this study are somewhat mixed, as they show that activities concerning the promoting of fiction and those that pertain to non-fiction sometimes cluster in the same components, while other components are exclusively identified by only fictional or only non-fictional items. This pattern is intriguing, since widening the scope of text genres reading promotion aims at may also be important to stimulate boys to read. We know that boys on average read nonfiction texts more often than girls (Mullis et al., 2012). Teachers in our study report to make use of newspapers, instructional texts and magazine articles more than monthly and the relative popularity of comics and magazine articles is in line with findings of PIRLS 2011 and 2016, where it is reported that children in grade 4 read more comics and magazines at home than in 2001 (Mullis et al., 2012; Gubbels, et al., 2016). There might be a shift going on to a wider variety of text genres used in class.

Another noticeable result is that activities concerning free reading are reported most frequently. Free reading implies that students are free to choose texts they are interested in. In this, Dutch teachers follow up on the advice of Sweet, Guthrie, and

Ng (1998) who state that providing opportunities to read texts that are interesting to students is the primary mechanism for motivating them to become independent and fluent readers. Also, results of Van Schooten (2005) showed that the best way to promote student reading is to have students experience that reading can be pleasurable. The relative frequent use of comics and short stories in class may indicate that teachers do try to promote reading by choosing text genres students like.

Activities that take more a scholastic approach, such as using processing tasks on children's books, are performed less frequently than free reading activities. Compulsory, scholastic activities, especially when graded, can function as cause of a form of extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is often found to lessen intrinsic motivation, which is important to reading promotion (Bénabou & Tirole, 2003).

Next, it is noteworthy that activities that are reported to be performed almost daily are activities that take little or no preparation. Activities that demand more preparation, such as outings to the library or the theatre, only happen a few times per year at the most. The same applies to activities with fiction texts, where results show that when the teacher has to do the promoting, this happens infrequently. This is also reflected in the participation in national programs; teachers more often participate when there is ready-made material to use in class. A tentative conclusion might be that teachers are more inclined to act out activities that do not need a lot of preparation and for which materials are available, which might indicate that teachers lack adequate time to prepare promotional activities or that they are not fully convinced of the importance of reading promotion. This could be interesting to find out in further research and at the same time it could be a theme to be addressed in teacher education.

As mentioned above, libraries are visited less than 'a few times a year'. In the Netherlands libraries were traditionally considered an important institution for promoting reading and the initial programs for reading promotion aiming at students were organized and acted out by librarians (Van Schooten, 1997). Due to diminishing funds for libraries, in recent years many libraries in the Netherlands have been shut down. In response, funding for schools to create their own (small) library became available. This might explain the low frequency of visits to a library reported in this study.

Results show that all reading promotional activities included in the questionnaire have a level of homogeneity and thus can be seen as indicative of one general construct (engaging in promotional activities). This implies that it is possible to speak of teachers that invest more or less time promoting reading. Nevertheless, activities to promote reading included in the questionnaire can also be seen as consisting of at least thirteen different types of reading promotional activities. The PCA shows that the a-priori categorization in the questionnaire of reading promotion in school, based on the literature read and interviews with teachers and governmental organizations, is not reflected in the structure of the data.

The finding of different types of reading promotional activities opens up the possibility to discern different types of teachers and teaching as far as reading promotion is concerned. First of all, looking into the relations between the acting out of different forms of reading promotion, teachers seem to act on the composition of the class they teach; when they have more girls in class, both in percentage and numbers, they tend to perform more different kinds of reading promotion activities and in particular introduce fictional texts and use nonfiction more often. These results suggest that teachers in their behavior tend to choose other activities than promoting reading when they have a class of mainly boys in front of them. This further widens the already existing gap between boys and girls as it is that has been reported in previous research (OECD, 2016). Teacher awareness of gender differences is important to ensure that reading activities are selected that are of interest to students (McGeown et al., 2015). Lastly, the larger the number and percentage of students in class not having Dutch as mother tongue the more often teachers choose to visit a museum or use obligatory reading material. These activities are considered more convenient perhaps and are seen as reading promotion, however, they keep those students from reading self-chosen texts, which can be quite useful in preparing these students for their educational careers.

5.1 Limitations and suggestions for future research

This study is one of the first to systematically survey teachers in order to see what reading promotion activities they perform This was done by means of an exploratory study with a newly devised questionnaire. With the knowledge this study has generated on tendencies, variation, structures, and correlates of reading promotion activities, the questionnaire can be improved. A next version of the instrument may contain a more balanced representation of the components that are present in the teachers' report on their practices. Building on teachers' perception of their own reading promotion behavior, is relevant because it can function as the beginning of more specific observations of reading promotion patterns. A relevant question is therefore whether teachers make a distinction between the promotion of reading fiction and non-fiction, or whether they consider reading promotion to be independent of genre. This line of research is especially important because only a small number of studies have reported the behavior of teachers when they aim to promote reading. More research needs to be conducted into what effects different kinds of reading promotion have on students.

In our study we used self-reports for measuring behavior and hence we cannot exclude the possibility of a desirability bias. Using log files or observations of class practices over several weeks probably gives a more valid indication of behavior (Otter, 1995) and might serve as a check on the data to be collected with the improved questionnaire.

5.2 Implications for educational practice

Teacher education programs can take several of these results into account. First of all, the variety in activities and materials could be highlighted in curricula, especially as the different fiction and nonfiction genres generate different learning outcomes for students. Furthermore, it might be functional to demonstrate some types of activities, since the incidence of quite a number of reading promotion activities seems to be rather low. Maybe different types of students could be drawn to different types of reading promotion activities. At the same time with these reported different aspects of reading promotion teachers are able to check for themselves what kind of reading promotion they tend to use and what kind of activities they might be able to use in future, in order to please all types of readers to enhance their reading enjoyment and thus behavior and proficiency.

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APPENDIX

Components of reading promotion behavior of teachers, items, Cronbach's Alpha, number of respondents (N), number of items (n) and item-test correlations (r_{it}), the standard error (se) and standard deviation (SD). Items of components with alpha's below .6 are not summed. Therefore means, standard errors and standard deviations of these items are given per item.

Cronbach's alpha's, means	N	α	r _{it}	М	se	SD
Component 1: Introducing texts				3.12	.06	.76
Reading children's books to the class			335			
Introducing new fiction			648			
Introducing fiction classics			647			
Using processing tasks on children's books			509			
Promoting children's books			732			
Advising student on children's books			572			
Component 2: Using new media	194.				.08	1.06
Using computers, tablets, e-readers in class			499			
Using website texts			499			
Component 3: Organizing outings and obligatory reading	192.					
Visiting bookstores				1.08		
Visiting Children's Museum of Literature				1.06		
Giving free reading time with obligatory books			267	2.36	.11	1.51
Component 4: Using audio books and themed tables	194.					
Using audiobooks				1.65		
Using a themed table	400			2.01		
Component 5: Using nonfiction	192.			3.05	.06	.86
Reading nonfiction aloud			543			
Using newspaper articles			558 - 77			
Using articles out of magazines Giving free reading time with obligatory nonfiction			577 429			
Component 6: Organizing obligatory activities	193.		429			
Visiting the library	193.		250	1.93	07	0/
Visiting the library Visiting the theatre				1.78		
Component 7: Inviting parents & writers, buying reading material	186.			1.76 2.55		
Buying nonfiction	100.		597		.00	.03
Buying fiction			689			
Giving free reading time nonfiction			448			
Talking to parents about reading behavior			676			
Inviting writers in class			603			
Letting students make a reading dossier			497			
Component 8: Using the internet to search	193	-		1.65	.07	.92
Using the internet to search for books						
Component 9: Stimulating free reading	192.	325				
Giving free reading time with self-chosen fiction			267	4.39	.05	.70
Stimulating students to read			226	4.39	.05	.70
Reading as a teacher while the class is reading			253	3.01	.11	1.50

TEACHERS' READING PROMOTION ACTIVITIES		27		
Component 10: Reciting	188.752	2.55 .05 .70		
Letting students recite	.49	93		
Using magazines about reading	.40	01		
Using poetry	.522			
Using the internet to search for background information on writers or children's books		.546		
Using drama texts	.449			
Advising students on nonfiction texts	.536			
Component 11 Using short stories		191.564		
Using short stories		.4063.30 .07 1.03		
Using instructional texts	.4063.26 .10 1.34			
Component 12 Using comics	194			
Using comics	191.764	3.42 .08 1.12		
Component 13: Organizing student tasks and where to find answers		2.67 .06 .77		
Letting students assess fiction		.595		
Letting students give book presentations		.493		
Organising book talks		.577		
Pointing out websites about books	.618			
Using movies about books		.315		
Using tutor-reading by peers	.447			