

Promoting the Habit of Reading English Books in College Students

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“Reading is dreaming with open eyes.”

We read so many articles, posts, and inspirational quotes on how reading can improve our life. Most of us seem to agree [with them] as well. There is a whole community of readers and authors that apparently seem to be growing. Reading is prescribed in every other English medium school.

Then why is it that students struggle the most in reading books? Reading, something so basic and deeply ingrained into our consciousness, ends up being a challenging task for many budding minds. The primary purpose of this essay is to address and find the best solution for the lack of motivation to read among the youth of today. Research suggests that students who read a lot in school fail to read so much in college. The pressure that college puts on the students deters them from reading English fiction or non-fiction books for leisure. One faces the difficulty in keeping their eyes open long enough to read even when they acquire some free time for themselves, the reason being that they are mentally exhausted.

The young people seek their dopamine release from being lost in the world of social media, binge-watching series, and video games. Today, in this fast-paced world,

people would preferably seek instant gratification than a delayed pay-off. What they do not realize is that the common practice of seeking instant gratification is what is lowering the attention span of our youth. This, in turn, is the main reason that students do not have the patience to enjoy a book.

Now that we have addressed the issue, let us look at some solutions that can help with the lack of reading interest among the young adults.

Reading Club

Reading should be made a shared intellectual experience for the students. Emphatically, Reading Club should be a whole experience in itself. The students could discuss their emotional experiences, their thoughts, opinions, and various points of analysis among their peers and their teachers. If students associate the Reading Club with positive experiences, they will be more inclined to see reading in a renewed light. The whole point of leisure reading is to enjoy it.

Furthermore, humans are inherently social, so if they feel like they belong to a group that respects their opinions and supports them, and would want to keep being a part

of the said group, they would actively participate in the activities of the group. If all the members of the group are reading and discussing actively, the non-readers will also be motivated to read to contribute to the discussions and become a more active member. There shall be no judgments on their thoughts on the books they have read. They can read comic books or classics, and both would be treated equally in the Reading Club. They can freely express themselves, and in doing so, they will feel accepted by their peers and professors. From the comics of DC and Marvel universe to classics of Leo Tolstoy, all literature is literature. Literature should be revered as such.

Activities like making a small but engaging book report recommendation for everyone in the college to read can inspire students out of the reading club to partake in reading activities as well. Additionally, it will give the students a platform to share their love of book with others. Digital blogging or making an account on social media can engage the students in the way that students can genuinely enjoy. Many books are made into movies and series. Students can watch them and make a comparison between them and the book. This task will validate them as they enjoy watching such media.

The seating arrangement should not be like a classroom. In a classroom, there is minimal space for a free form of communication, where people are not even facing each other. It should be in a round-table or a horse-shoe formation, which will increase the chances of face-to-face communication. This way, the students will be much more comfortable, and it will not feel like a formal environment. We

see these seating formations in libraries, so conducting the meetings there could be a great idea.

Additional provisions like light snacks and biscuits while the discussions are happening are likely to enhance their positive association with the act of reading and discussing their latest book selection with the group.

The Reading Teacher

Children do not learn what we tell them; they learn what they see. Similarly, college students also idolize their professors like they did their school teachers. If we want to create a culture of reading, it will not happen if their teachers themselves are not familiar with the literature.

The students have seen their school teachers go into the classroom, read what the textbooks taught, and explain it the best they can. Those teachers did not encourage students to go beyond the textbooks because they did not go beyond the textbook. Naturally, the responsibility now falls on their professors.

If they want their students to read independently, they ought to set an example for the students. We ought to read books, poems, short stories, and even comic books. We cannot just tell our students how critical reading is; we have to show them how amazing it is. The teaching staff have to familiarize themselves with an array of young adult, contemporary, and diverse literature, and become a recommender, not a prescriber.

A friendly competition between the faculty and the students can also be a great idea. A reading challenge encourages them to

enhance their reading [of] English books. The teacher can call for a quick poll of the favourite books of the students and then read the most voted-for book. Then give the review of the book. This will give the students an opportunity to engage more with the teacher and share their love for books. This exchange of recommendations will give a boost to the rapport between them both.

When the faculties show how passionate they are about reading, the students are sure to follow suit. When they discuss openly with their students and with other teaching staff what they felt like when they were reading some book or story, the students will also open up about their own emotions, and it will allow both of them to connect reader-to-reader.

College Literature Fests

College students these days do not have a high attention span thanks to the quick endorphin release by the technology at hand. They would instead engage in something that gives them immediate satisfaction, whereas, reading is a slow burn.

College fests are great fun for students where they can let loose and enjoy a rather informal environment. Festivities like slam poetry, creative writing workshops, writing competitions, and many more have the potential to engage students in the world of English literature. It can give them a platform to express themselves in front of the public.

They connect with professional authors, listen to their stories, writing experiences, and how reading made a significant impact on their lives. They find inspiration, and they

find a diversity of genres. They are then able to see that [they] no one expects them to read just one sort of book. Whichever genre they desire, there is always some author to provide a fantastic book for it.

They get the stage to talk about a book that has inspired them or has left a deep mark on their hearts. Readers can share their love for books with other readers, and that is how the reading community will grow reader by reader.

A Final Word

Reading for leisure is not just desirable; it is necessary for students to learn effectively. It aids their critical thinking skills and makes them reflective individuals. Reading makes them emotionally intelligent and empathetic towards others. It gives them recognition because they relate themselves with the characters in the story. It teaches them that they are not alone in the world. Books provide some emotional support of sorts.

To make reading more attractive to students, the teaching faculty has the most significant role to play. The college should also make provisions for students and give them more autonomy over it. Books have the capacity of flowing in the veins of students. It grounds them to reality, yet it allows them to escape to a new world.

The reading speaks to the aesthete inside, and once that aesthete is awake, it can never go back to sleep.

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