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## Reading as Belonging: Secrecy, Ritual, and Collective Authorship in Adolescent Literary Practice

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### Abstract

The article investigates the role of reading in the cognitive, emotional, and social development of children and adolescents, with particular attention to the factors shaping their reading habits. The theoretical section outlines key cognitive, psychological, pedagogical, and sociocultural dimensions of reading, and discusses the specific challenges posed by contemporary digital media environments. The empirical section presents an example of good practice, namely the “Secret Society of Young Readers,” an extracurricular reading initiative implemented at school level with the aim of cultivating reading culture.

The programme is designed to introduce books to students in a creative, deliberately secretive, and play-oriented manner, thereby positioning reading not as an obligation but as a pleasurable and socially meaningful activity. After ten monthly sessions, participating students completed a survey. The results indicate that most members reported increased motivation to read and began to view books as a source of relaxation, emotional refuge, and peer interaction. The findings further suggest that the elements of secrecy, exclusivity, and informal group discussion played a central role in fostering group cohesion and sustaining interest in reading.

The article argues that reading continues to be a constitutive factor in both the personal and educational formation of young people and that innovative pedagogical approaches—particularly those that frame reading as a shared, affectively positive, and socially valued practice—may contribute to the preservation and revitalisation of reading culture among today’s youth.

**Keywords:** Young Adolescents, Creative Approach, Literacy, Motivation, Secret Club