

How a simple summer reading policy can benefit the future of society

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This summer of mine was frigid yet sweltering. My first few weeks of this wondrous season were consumed with visits from a variety of doctors and nurses who worked at the hospital at which I was staying.

The book *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote was a prominent distraction to the madness. Its enticing descriptions and true testimony kept me in continuous intrigue. Although this intrigue might not be present in all book choices, implementing a summer reading policy is in some way an attempt to shrink the disinterest in reading nationwide. A summer reading policy requires the students to read one or more books during their summer break. My high school's summer reading policy now requires each grade level to read different books from the same genre. The school has a unique way of implementing the policy.

It counts the summer reading assignment as 10% of the students' first cycle grade. This technique gives students the incentive to complete the assignment. Some even end up liking what they read. In its attempt to maintain present and future interest in reading, Murrow's summer reading policy is a vital initiative. According to the National Endowment of the Arts, "teens and young adults read less often and for shorter amounts of time compared with other age groups and with Americans of previous years." The NEA also notes that "reading scores continue to worsen, especially among teenagers and young males.

By contrast, the average reading score of 9-year-olds has improved." I surmise that the summer reading policy at Edward R. Murrow High School aims to reverse those trends with teens so the minds of the future aren't

damaged. Over the past decade or so the desire to read literary pieces such as novels and newspapers has declined, and my high school's summer reading policy is pointed toward incline. In her essay, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Cannot Read" Francine Prose shows grave concern for this issue and gives one reason she thinks contributed to it. She argues that high school students aren't being given challenging books.

And when they are, their teachers don't focus on the true meaning of the book rather they on the societal problems connected to it . Prose also describes how a play she read in high school touched her. She writes: "Although I knew I would never ever resemble the decrepit adults around me. Shakespeare's genius, his poetry, his profound..

. managed to me that I could be that mythical king." She wants students to be taught in a way that at least makes them feel identified to it. If that happened more often, then maybe more young people will be compelled to read not only because they have to but that is what they fancy. A high school summer reading policy gives students time to further interpret what they're reading and its details for a chance to feel the pleasure that Prose speaks of. This pleasure is not felt by all, at all.

There are some that don't see the Murrow summer reading policy necessary. Those students don't realize that that extra book is helping them, and supporting the nation's society in the time ahead. The people who don't agree with the immediate "purpose" of a high school summer reading policy should see how beneficial it be for them and others in the long run t's their nation in jeopardy . If a school doesn't have a summer reading policy that's

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okay, but it should be doing something to assist with this problem: that less and less young adults are reading, whether it is a novel or a magazine. Technology has taken over, and a number of newspapers have stopped publishing.

Francine Prose and Edward R. Murrow High know how somber regaining society's interests in reading is. Without small gestures like my high's school's summer reading policy soon no one will view the nation as a community of readers. Everyone will just be attracted to the visual.