

Reading



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Perhaps one of the best stories of all time except for the fact that it has never been written, not yet at least but surely it is in the minds of one of the million readers out there whose imaginations have been stoked by all the adventures they have taken through the books they have read. While many say that the gift of reading lies in being able to learn more, that statement is more a function of the imaginative aspect of the mind. The reason for this is because in order to read, one needs to imagine.

To see something in the mind's eye is to know something. That is the goal of reading and that is the goal of all those who read, be it seriously or recreationally. There are numerous benefits to reading but for the sake of brevity, for as Polonius said in Hamlet, "(Brevity) it is the soul of wit," this discussion will limit it to three major categories: Recreational reading as an imaginative exercise, reading as an outlet and reading as a developmental tool.

One may think at first that these are mere derivatives from the main function of reading as a way of learning beyond what the senses can perceive in the direct environment but as will be shown in this discourse they are simply much more than that. Recreational reading is of course an exercise in the imagination. A scientific mind would say that reading is merely the term used to describe the process by which the optical sensors interpret the images to form words in the frontal cortex of the brain (Guthrie 1996). Yet the fact that one sees brains and eyes upon reading that sentence says that it is much more.

The crucial questions at this junction would be with regard to the color the brain imagined upon seeing the word or the color of the eyes for that matter.

As such, this allows for more creative in the brain. The additional meanings and symbols that are created by providing a different angle of basically the same event can create a new story for the same conclusion. A great story uses different elements to get the message across. Some authors employ the use of different imagery while others create conflicting storylines that are resolved in the end.

Reading is therefore a way by which a person is able to use his or her imagination. The simple act of reading triggers so many images in the mind. This mental exercise not only strengthens the mental faculties but also engages one's imagination (Guthrie 1996). Subsequent experiences and subsequent readings serve the vital purpose of expanding one's imagination (Guthrie 1996). Since creativity and ingenuity are all aspects of one's imagination, it is but logical to argue that recreational reading improves those aspects as well. The second advantage of reading is that it acts as an outlet.

Many people do not realize that reading is a way of relaxing and expending pent up tensions or energy. The synaptic impulses that trigger certain parts of the brain have tiny bits of electricity. Reading triggers these impulses. To apply the law that energy only transforms from one form to another, one is led to the fact that reading is an avenue for all of that energy. Hence, stored up energy is released through reading (Schifini 2002). As such, all the frustrations that tend to build up in the course of the week are channeled to more productive activities that result in personal growth and development.

Another way of looking at it is by thinking of reading as a manner of escaping harsh realities. Reality sucks. It is what it is and it is much more

difficult to alter. With recreational reading, however, there is no need to remain in the harsh reality (Klein 1999). One can escape into far off lands and experiences things that will never happen in this sad episode of real life. As several studies have shown, providing a person who is stressed with an outlet for pent up frustration and energies is crucial particularly in the business world.

Workplace productivity has been shown to increase due to reading programs that have been encouraged in several businesses in Japan and the United States. From a human resources standpoint, it seems that reading is useful but what most do not realize is that the good habits that reading brings is also carried over into the home and most families that encourage reading have been shown to be not only more successful but also more intact (Klein 1999). Finally, and arguably one of the most important aspects of recreational reading is the fact that it develops the mind and the person (Schifini 2002).

Much, if not all, of the knowledge that has been gained by the entire human race has been encrypted to prevent stupid people from accessing them. Only those with the ability and passion are given to opportunity to know what is stored in those dusty tomes. Much of the information in the world is still stored in words (Guthrie 1996). As one of the only means that the brain inputs new information, reading is then one of the only ways by which a person can learn new things (Schifini 2002).

This is the developmental aspect of recreational reading; as a manner of learning new things by harnessing the power of recreational reading. In the end, recreational reading is simply much more than a simple mechanical

mental process. It is also more than just mental calisthenics. Recreational reading is a way to hold conversations with somebody from another time, another dimension or another reality. It is a way to develop one's skills and improve; it a doorway to another dimension. Recreational reading, as the old timers would say, can learn ya' somethin'.