

Digital reading experience as an awakener of reading motivation among adolescents

In my presentation, I will examine the possibilities of digital reading, e-books and audio books, to increase adolescents' reading motivation and boost reading of fiction. My analysis is based on the pilot data of my future larger research, which was gathered with qualitative surveys and interviews from a group of students of grades 7–9 after they had tested a service called Bookbeat. In my analysis, I examine the user experiences of the digital reading experiment and attitudes towards reading in general. Based on the data, I have mapped the factors of digital reading that could increase reading motivation. Despite the limited amount of data, the material collected on the experiment is nevertheless the first of its kind in Finland. In addition, my research offers new information on the problems associated with reading for pleasure based on the youth's perspective as well as guidelines for further research.

Based on my pilot data, one can draw tentative conclusions that digital books, with their features that tie the reading experience closer to the ways young people enjoy their spare time, have a positive effect on reading motivation. The digital format makes it easier to read fiction, helps to find an interesting book and offers the youth of the digital age a natural platform for experiencing reading and thus lowers the threshold of reading a book. My research backs up the notion that inspiring young people to read should happen in interaction with the cultural turning point of reading. It is essential to take into consideration the youth's willingness to use other media than printed text and to not underestimate the literal conventions characteristic of youth culture, digital communication, through which the young people express themselves and seek experiences.