

Reading for pleasure 'boosts social relations'



Reading is associated with escapism and relaxation

Getting stuck into a good book can boost people's ability to relate to each other and increase their empathy, a report suggests.

A review of research for the Reading Agency says reading for pleasure does much more than boost educational outcomes among adults and children. One recent study quoted - of 4,000 UK adults - says reading for pleasure can help them enjoy social occasions more. It can also boost children's emotional understanding, the research adds.

In general, the study found reading was associated with enjoyment, relaxation and escapism.

'Recognising feelings'

The research involving a poll of 4,000 people that is cited by the report looked at how mental and physical health can be boosted by the enjoyment of reading.

It said those who read regularly for pleasure:

- were less likely to have feelings of stress and depression
- had more self-esteem
- were more able to deal with difficult situations
- had better sleeping patterns

It also cited research carried out in Germany, with children aged seven to nine, that looked at possible links between literacy and emotional understanding.

The report focused on the impact of after-school literacy sessions in which children's books with emotional content were read and discussed by the group. It found the scheme enhanced the children's emotional vocabulary, knowledge and understanding of emotions.

Increasing understanding

It also found boys were more "positively influenced in their capability to recognise masked feelings than girls".

The report concluded that: "Reading is closely linked to increasing understanding of our own identities and can also play a large part in relating to others, understanding their world views and so forth."

Sue Wilkinson, chief executive of The Reading Agency, said the findings of the report showed that "everything changes when we read".

Source; <http://www.bbc.com/news/education-33733356>