

Children Reading: The Voices of 4th-6th Grade

My service learning placement is a resource class of 4th-6th graders, and they specifically cover reading, math, and writing. My mentor teacher has limited time with these students, so I was unfortunately only able to interview five students. The school uses the AR system and in Mrs. Steele's class they have to pick out 1-3 books after every AR test they take. The students interviewed were four boys and one girl; Danny, Michael, Charlie, Francisco, and Maggie. This group ranges from 4th-6th grade as well.

Students greatly differed in terms of the books they truly were interested in. Three out of four of the boys were very much excited to share about their informational short reads of animals and nature. Danny, Michael, and Francisco love to read about animals, their habitats, and how different all the species truly are. Michael is fascinated by insects and enjoyed the book on insects and one specifically about bees. Danny was drawn more towards sea creatures and could name so many fish and different types of sharks. Francisco is an artist and sketches powerful felines such as; tigers, lions, and coming soon a panther. He thinks the way they move and the way they hunt is incredible. He brought up the difference of humans going to the grocery store and these animals actually working for their meals.

Maggie is more interested in travel books, but adores the Magic Tree House series the most! She feels that with these books she can actually picture herself in other places. When Maggie is older she plans on exploring the world. She was so thrilled by the few illustrations because she felt she was making her own illustrations in her head as she read along. Maggie also reads Goosebumps, but she is upset because the school does not have a lot of those books and so she has read them all more than once. I asked her if she enjoys thrill, action, and things that gets

her heart racing in books. She said “yes, because sometimes I just feel like that’s not what my world is like, you know?” Judging by this, she must like the idea of “escaping” her world and creating this imaginative world of wonder, exploration, and thrilling adventures.

Charlie is the more reserved student of the group and is not the biggest fan of reading. He does however enjoy reading about characters who own pets. He really wishes he could have a dog or a bunny. When he grows up he wants to be a veterinarian or have his own farm. These books of farm animals and family pets help him take notes of what to do and what not to do when you have animals living with you.

My students do not go to the library often; however, they visit my mentor teacher’s bookshelf every time they visit. This can be anywhere from 2-5 times a week. The students do not really know any author names yet, but they do know famous children’s book series. These students are all Spanish speaking and have not yet mastered English so they are often reading books that are lower level for their grade. I was astounded by these students because they exhibited the joy of reading, imagination and dreams, and finding an escape in their books. I love that with their personalities came different books they enjoyed. I thought it was interesting that the one girl of the group was the one who enjoyed action, exploration, and horror because none of the boys claimed this. I know to incorporate all elements of life and thrilling adventures!