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Books in Motion: How a Community Literacy Project Impacts Its Participants

Molly Ness

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of a community literacy project on its participants. This year-long study focuses on a public library program titled Books in Motion, in which community members read children's chapter books and meet monthly to watch the book's film translation. Using a case study approach, the study's data sources included small-group structured interviews, individual open-ended interviews, written surveys, field notes, and a reflective journal from monthly film nights. Findings suggest the following: (1) Books in Motion increased community literacy interactions, (2) the program motivated participants in innovative ways, and (3) the program offered participants access to literacy resources. As communities and public libraries seek to influence children's reading today, Books in Motion illustrates reading as an act of community engagement.

Before Books in Motion, both my mom and I were readers. I would go into my room, close the door, and read a book I had chosen. I guess she did the same. But we didn't talk about what we were reading. Books in Motion changed that. Now, we read together. We are in a rush to finish each month's book so that we will be ready to go to the family film night. My favorite night of the month is when Mom and me go to the library to watch the movie and talk about the book.

Above, nine-year-old Ted (all names are pseudonyms) describes his involvement with Books in Motion, a highly popular community literacy program run by the public library in a small town (population approximately 3,000) in the Northeast. Responding to a lack of family-friendly opportunities within the town, the public library created the program in 2006 to bring community members together through shared literacy experiences. The result was Books in Motion, a monthly intergenerational book club.

An Overview of Books in Motion

Books in Motion is a public library book club which invites young readers and community members to read a preselected children's chapter book, provides participants with free copies of the book, and culminates in a family film night in which participants view the book's film adaptation in the town's public library. Books in Motion is the brainchild of Cindy, a former elementary school teacher who left the classroom to start her own family and later became the children's book librarian. With the town's per capita income of \$23,146, Cindy became concerned that children from low-income homes lacked access to books; she subsequently created Books in Motion in an effort "to get books into the hands of kids who otherwise might not have them."

Books in Motion is a monthly program. The children's librarians at the public library select a chapter book to read and discuss. Several criteria guide public librarians in their book selection: the selected book must a) appeal to readers of various ages, b) present opportunities for meaningful conversation around themes, characters or events, and c) have a film translation. These films are both classics, such as the 1962 film adaptation of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and current, such as the 2006 production of Carl Hiassen's *Hoot*. Local businesses sponsor the program and provide participants with free paperback copies of each book. Over the course of the month, participants share the book in a variety of ways including reading aloud, reading silently, and listening to audio books. Books in Motion culminates with a family film night, in which participants view the film adaptation on a weekend evening in the public library. Before the showing of the movie, librarians lead brief book club discussions. After the movie, participants discuss similarities and differences between the book and the film and evaluate which version they prefer.

Since its inception, the Books in Motion program has covered nearly twenty books (see Table 1).

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis

The Princess Bride by William Goldman

Hoot by Carl Hiassen

Ella Enchanted by Gail Carson Levine

Holes by Louis Sachar

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

The Bad Beginning: A Series of Unfortunate Events by Lemony Snickett

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone by J.K. Rowling

Charlotte's Web by E.B. White

The Black Stallion by Walter Farley

The Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Patterson

Howl's Moving Castle by Diana Wynne Jones

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory by Roald Dahl

Tuck Everlasting by Natalie Babbitt

Because of Winn-Dixie by Kate DiCamillo

The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett

Freaky Friday by Mary Rogers

Prince Caspian by C.S. Lewis

My Friend Flicka by Mary O'Hara

Typically, fifty participants attend the family film nights. Only two months after its creation, the film night overflowed to standing-room only capacity. Though initially geared toward the families of young children, access to the program is widespread; participants include teachers, school media specialists, members of the public library's board of directors, public librarians, and local school administrators. Community members of all ages are invited, regardless of whether or not they have children. Participants do not need to be library members, do not need to register to attend, and can attend as many or as few events as they choose. In designing the program, Cindy aimed "to create a program that was highly motivational, but did not exclude participants who could not commit every month. There is a solid group of families who are there month after month, but there are also new faces each month." Flyers and advertisements for Books in Motion regularly appear in the town's grocery and convenience stores, Laundromats, doctor's offices, school bulletin boards, and local newspapers.

Books in Motion as a Model of Intergenerational Literacy

At the heart of Books in Motion is the understanding that literacy today is no longer confined to the institution of school, but that the institutions outside of school, including family and community, significantly impact a child's construction of literacy (*Street Cross Cultural Approaches*). With the inclusion of a wide variety of community participants, Books in Motion exemplifies *intergenerational literacy* (Gadsden). In its broad focus, intergenerational literacy explores how relationships between children,

parents, families, and community members impact literacy beliefs and practices. Intergenerational literacy includes “the processes of learning and teaching; the engagement of children by their parents, family members, and teachers in the acts of reading, writing, and problem solving; and the inculcation of values and practices that sustain such engagement” (Gadsden 872).

Books in Motion differs from many intergenerational literacy programs in that it was conceptualized solely to increase literacy opportunities within the community, not to train or teach caregivers how to incorporate literacy into parenting; participants in Books in Motion were not told how to approach their book reading. Thus, Books in Motion does not operate under the deficit model or the notion that the goal of intergenerational programs is to encourage desirable literacy practices in low-income or minority families who otherwise may not create space for literacy practices in their homes (Gadsden). In fact, Books in Motion was constructed under the belief that parents across diverse cultural and ethnic groups already engage in literacy activities with their children (Auerbach “Towards a Social-Contextual Approach”).

Who Benefits from Intergenerational Literacy?

The benefits of community literacy programs are well documented (Anderson and Morrison; Daisey; Elish-Piper; Shanahan, Mulhern, and Rodriguez-Brown). Padak and Rasinski reported that multiple groups of participants, including children, parents, families as units, and the larger society, all benefit from community literacy programs. Children are perhaps the most obvious group to reap the benefits of family literacy programs. These academic, personal, and social benefits are widespread and far reaching; in a review of 53 studies, Hendersen found unequivocal evidence of positive student achievement linked to parent involvement. Adults also benefit from participation in community literacy programs. Philliber, Spillman, and King found that adults gained an average of 1.15 grade equivalents in the Test for Adult Basic Education as a result of year-long participation in a family literacy program (560-562). Schools may also benefit from community literacy programs; in studying a literacy project involving parents and young children, Cairney and Munsie found that, as a result of the program, parents became more involved in school activities, classroom work, and decision making within the school community (401-403). As McNicol and Dalton reveal, community literacy projects benefit public libraries by recognizing the roles that libraries have in promoting literacy and by providing a higher profile through increased publicity. Finally, Edwards and Turner suggest a high likelihood that family literacy programs support young children’s reading comprehension.

Data Collection

Upon learning about Books in Motion, I believed it to be a motivating and innovative community literacy program, one that could easily be replicated in other communities at minimal cost. I undertook this study in order to examine how various community members benefited from their participation in Books in Motion. My work comes in response to Purcell-Gates, who calls for additional research in the area of family literacy (867), and to Hull and Schultz, who advocate for research of diverse literacy practices, including the out-of-school context (602-603). More specifically, Edwards points out that researchers have not asked participants in family literacy programs whether or not such programs were beneficial (562-563). I wondered how participants of all ages would evaluate their participation in Books in Motion and how the program influenced literacy within individuals, families, and the community.

My work was informed by two paradigms: 1) literacy as a social practice (Clay; Street Cross Cultural Approaches) and 2) the social-contextual perspective (Auberbach; Heath; Hiebert). From the literacy as a social practice perspective, literacy entails complex social processes that vary according to context. As Fagan explains, "Literacy cannot be described outside of social networks and the relationships that exist among their members" (260). The social-contextual perspective highlights that literacy is practiced for social purposes in social contexts. Through this socio-contextual approach, the

personal and family strengths and needs are seen as valuable assets that provide a framework for the family literacy program (Elish-Piper; Freire). As such, a community literacy program builds upon the preexisting literacy patterns within families and the larger community (Morrow, Tracey, and Maxwell). Additionally, when considering the term 'literacy,' I approach it as an ideological and social practice, rather than a set of skills or information (Gee). Subsequently, I consider the term 'literacy practices' to "describe the ways of acting and behaving that reflect power positions and structures"

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(Hull and Schultz 587). Literacy practices entail models and beliefs, whereas literacy events are individual occurrences of instances.

As the principal researcher of Books in Motion, I was also a member of the larger community. I spend approximately three months a year in this Northeast community, and have come to appreciate and visit the local public library with relative frequency. In my work as a university professor focusing on childhood education and literacy, I was attracted to Books in Motion because of its efforts to bridge the gap between school and home literacies. Prior to the study, I had no relationship with any of the participants.

In order to understand the impact of Books in Motion as a community literacy project, I applied a case study approach in which I followed five groups of participants over the course of one year. As the principal investigator, I used purposeful sampling to include participants of various ages. Nearly 99% of the town's population is white; all participants in this study identified themselves as white.

Data sources include small-group structured interviews, individual open-ended interviews, and written surveys. I also acted as a nonparticipant observer in four two-hour Books in Motion family film nights and subsequent discussions, taking detailed field notes and keeping a reflective journal. Interviews occurred in person, over the phone, and via email communication. During the family film nights, I mostly interacted with the participants of the study. Thus, for the duration of the study I largely remained an outside presence to both the community and the Books in Motion program.

The qualitative data were analyzed using the principles of 'grounded theory,' involving repeated readings of multiple data sources to identify significant themes (Glaser). Upon identifying key themes, data were further analyzed through the constant comparative method (Lincoln and Guba). This approach involved four major phases: comparing observed outcomes to emerging data themes, testing and redefining themes as needed, reducing the original number of themes, and constructing a theoretical position to explain data.

Participant Group #1: Building Community Relationships through Literacy

The Powell family was comprised of Lisa (age 39) and Ed (age 42), their third-grade son Ted (age 9.5), and their kindergarten-aged son Toby (age 5.5). Two years prior to the study, the family had relocated to the area. The mother described the family as "very reading oriented," with active participation in story hours and summer reading programs in their previous public libraries. Thus, Books in Motion appealed to them as "a way to stay involved in library programs, get exposure to books we may not have already read, and be a part of community-oriented nights out." The Powells regarded Books in Motion as a "family ritual that we look forward to each month."

In fact, during months when the book did not appeal to the children, both parents completed the book and attended the film night without their kids. As relative newcomers to the area, the Powells valued Books in Motion for easing their transition into the community and introducing them to other families. Furthermore, the Powells found Books in Motion to be a motivating way to encourage their older son to become an independent reader. Lastly, Lisa Powell appreciated the collaboration between the library and local businesses, citing Books in Motion as “good community morale.”

Participant Group #2: Enhancing Preexisting Literacy Practices

The only group in the study to span three generations, the Flanagan family was comprised of mother Hannah (age 39), her fifth-grade son Billy (age 10), and Hannah’s mother Rose (age 75). The Flanagans originally were drawn to Books in Motion because of “the free books and the chance to see a movie on a big screen with other families at the end of the month.” All three family members described themselves as “avid readers,” further explained by the mother’s statement, “We don’t subscribe to any TV service or get any reception, and we limit movie and computer time. On most days, Billy comes home from school and plops into a beanbag chair by the woodstove with a book.” Thus, for the Flanagans, Books in Motion strengthened the literacy practices that already existed within the family by providing a collaborative format. Hannah also attributed Books in Motion with creating fruitful discussions between the generations of her family. Prior to the film night of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, she explained, “Reading this particular book together created juicy opportunities to talk about values like honesty, courage, tolerance, and respect with my son. I actually gained a new appreciation for this book, which until Books in Motion, had viewed as a book for adults.” Just as Books in Motion prompted her son to read a book he might not have before, the same was true for Hannah Flanagan, who is currently reading *Eragon* by Christopher Paolini.

Participant Group #3: Supporting Reading and Writing Development

Two members of the Pierce family, mother Tess (age 43) and son Matthew (age 9) read every book and watched every film with Books in Motion. Their participation was sparked by Matthew, who heard several of his classmates talking about the program and subsequently begged his mother to attend. Tess reported that, prior to Books in Motion, it was “a constant struggle” to engage Matthew in reading, most likely because of his low reading level. Because many of the books were lengthy or written above Matthew’s independent reading level, the two completed every book as a nightly read aloud. Tess very much believed that her son’s “explosion of story telling and writing” came as a result of their participation, explaining, “Matthew’s enjoyment and interest in reading independently has strengthened. Books in Motion has influenced his reading and writing progress.” Though not active

participants, other members of the Pierce family were influenced by Books in Motion; Matthew's father and five-year-old sister often listened as Tess and Matthew completed each book as a read aloud.

Participant Group #4: Introducing New Genres to Young Readers

Three members of the Greene family—mother Mary (age 39), Caleb (age 7.5), and Jake (age 5)—were instantly attracted to Books in Motion. According to Mary Greene, reading has been an essential part of her children's lives:

Reading is very important to us. I started reading to my kids on the day they were born. They have always loved to have books read to them; it was something I would always stop what I was doing just to read to them. My kids cannot go to bed without a book being read to them.

Though Books in Motion did not alter the frequency of reading in the Greene household, it changed the nature of the books they read together, as chapter books were added to their reading repertoire. Second-grader Caleb explained, "Before, chapter books were just for school. Now my mom reads a chapter before bed and even more on snow days." The Greens also appreciated the social aspect of Books in Motion, referring to the film night as "fun for everyone." To further celebrate the social aspect of Books in Motion, the Greens frequently got together with other participants for pizza at the conclusion of the monthly film nights. Over the two years of participating, Mary Greene has become a vocal advocate of Books in Motion:

Not only do you get a free book, you get a chance to read together. On top of that, you get a chance to see the movie and find out what was different from the movie and the book. It's a great program that gets families to the library in a fun way for everyone involved.

Participant #5: Creating School and Community Connections

The final participant was Henry, who served both as a member of the public library's Board of Directors and as a fifth-grade teacher at the local elementary school. Henry's involvement in Books in Motion stemmed from his goals "to 1) expose my students to good literature and 2) introduce my students to the wonders of all public libraries in general." He reported that though he "was not really a fan of following up the reading of a book with a movie version of the same," his participation with Books in Motion largely occurred within his routine classroom instruction. Tapping into the students' motivation to read books associated with the monthly film nights, Henry used the library's selection as a daily shared reading activity. For

approximately twenty minutes each day, Henry read aloud from the book while students followed along in their individual copies. He explained that “while I occasionally talked around the rich vocabulary and comprehension opportunities that arose in these engaging texts, mostly my kids benefited from simply getting to see how fun reading together can be.” He also encouraged students to continue independently reading the books at home and through repeated readings to build fluency, and explained the following:

The bulk of our classroom participation came when students made posters and storybooks illustrating the book using their imaginations and creativity...and would then loan them to the library for display purposes, encouraging students to visit the library to see their handiwork.

How Participants Benefited from Books in Motion

When looking across case study participants, the findings indicate that Books in Motion is a promising intergenerational literacy project, which created successful avenues for literacy interactions within the community. Participants were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences with the program and would encourage other community members to participate. Three major themes emerged from the data, each described in brief below.

The program increased community literacy interactions.

Participants pointed to Books in Motion as increasing literacy interactions both inside and outside of their homes. Though all participants self-reported independent reading prior to Books in Motion, they all largely read in isolation with little interaction with their fellow readers. Participants valued how Books in Motion paved the way for parents, children, teachers, and librarians to discuss their reactions to books and their film adaptations in a communal forum. A mother explained how Books in Motion built bridges that previously were absent:

Books in Motion was one of my first experiences in which literacy was shared. It wasn't me reading the book alone; I read each month knowing that I'd come together with fellow readers of all ages in hopes of connecting and sharing our experience with the book.

Though Lisa Powell had participated in book clubs before, she had never done so with a group of readers of diverse ages, noting, “Previously my book clubs were all women of similar ages and life experiences, so often our text selections and our reactions to the books were limited by that homogeneity. Never before had I discussed books with readers ranging from age 6 to age 75!”

Not only did Books in Motion increase literacy interactions within households, but the program also facilitated relationships between teachers, families, and the community, as explained by Lisa Powell:

Books in Motion is a way to stay connected. Through reading, I stay connected with my family. My children stay connected to their classmates at school, as they discuss their reading. My entire family has stayed connected with the community as we meet monthly to discuss the books and watch the films.

Furthermore, the program facilitated relationships between families at home and their teachers at school. Hannah Flanagan noted that her son's classroom teacher notified families of upcoming Books in Motion titles and film nights in weekly newsletters. She also recalled seeing her son's teacher attend at least two film nights. Similarly, classroom teacher Henry pointed to Books in Motion as a "concrete way for students and families to see powerful connections to the public library":

Books in Motion created a space for my students to see everyone in the community—teachers, parents, siblings, classmates, grandparents, librarians, community leaders—as readers. It was empowering for my students to be a part of this engaged community of readers.

Thus, the Books in Motion program helped participants modify and re-envision their understandings of reading and literacy. Furthermore, reading became a community event; reading was transformed from a solitary event to a collaborative forum within participants' homes and the larger community.

The program motivated participants in innovative ways.

Because of the unique forum of reading a book and watching the film adaptation, participants reported new enthusiasm for reading. The motivation of watching the film version of a book often prompted families to finish the book in a timely manner and through new approaches. A grandmother reported, "Books in Motion has inspired us to read books out loud to each other—whether by the fire, before bed, or in the car—which really adds a different element to a story." Additionally, Hannah Flanagan reported that discussions emerged naturally as "having both modalities makes for interesting discussions comparing the book and the movie." The incentive of watching the film adaptation motivated reluctant readers to finish books. Furthermore, the social element of Books in Motion inspired families to keep reading. Parents reported that their children were eager to read in order to participate in film nights, knowing that their friends and classmates would be in attendance. As Tess Pierce explained, "Books in Motion can be very social. The children at school keep each other up to date

as to which chapter they're currently reading, what parts of the story they like and dislike. They also plan their nights out, who they'll see, who they'll ride with, where they'll meet up for pizza after the movie." Mary Greene explained how Books in Motion benefited her second-grade son:

My oldest son has benefited from Books in Motion the most of all. He is not a strong reader but since a lot of his classmates participate in the program, he *wants* to finish the books. He can't wait to get to school and talk about what he had read and what happens next. He could have cared less to read a chapter book before we started, but now we have a list of chapter books he wants to read.

Finally, classroom teacher Henry noted that his students came to the classroom more motivated to read particular books, knowing they were a part of Books in Motion. It seems that the library program increased participants' desire to begin reading the monthly text selection, provided concrete incentives to finish books, and promoted interaction between readers of various ages.

The program offered community members access to a variety of literacy resources.

Participants also appreciated the new resources introduced through Books in Motion, including unfamiliar titles, individual text copies, and new ways to access the public library. One parent attributed a plethora of untapped chapter books to Books in Motion, explaining, "We've read books through the program that we either hadn't heard of—like *Howl's Moving Castle*—or hadn't thought to read yet—like *To Kill a Mockingbird*." Fifth-grade teacher Henry noted that Books in Motion put individual copies of books into the hands of all of his students. Because Books in Motion supplied participants with free individual copies, students were able to have their own copies for in-class shared reading and out-of-school independent reading.

Additionally, Books in Motion provided struggling readers—in both classrooms and homes—with access to texts that were otherwise too difficult to independently read. Because parents, families, and the fifth-grade teacher Henry largely used read alouds to read books, struggling readers were able to interact with texts that were previously inaccessible. Mary Greene explained the following:

There's no way my son would have been able to read and comprehend Harry Potter on his own, and I knew he felt insecure in his reading because he couldn't read the books his friends were reading. Through Books in Motion, we were able to share a book that otherwise might have been too hard for him, so he could keep up with his classmates.

This sentiment was echoed by fifth-grade teacher Henry, who noted that Books in Motion “exposed my struggling readers to books that were above their reading levels. This certainly had a positive impact on their vocabulary, their listening comprehension, and their desire to read.”

For other participants, Books in Motion provided them with new ways to access their community’s public library. More specifically, the program also encouraged participants to use their public library with increased frequency and renewed interest. Several of the families, including the Pierces and Flanagans, had been avid participants in early childhood story hours and had missed these opportunities as their children outgrew programs. One mother explained, “At most libraries, story hours are for young children and book clubs are for grownups. I appreciate there being something for this school-aged group.” One participant explained, “Books in Motion got us connected to the library and all it has to offer.” As such, Books in Motion transformed the public library into a community meeting spot.

Implications, Future Directions, and Concluding Thoughts

The findings from this study suggest that Books in Motion created a valuable community literacy experience in which parents, children, teachers, and librarians learned from each other and grew as readers in a motivating forum. Books in Motion thrives as a community literacy program, meeting the needs of a variety of participants.

These findings also confirm previous research on the benefits of intergenerational literacy programs (Anderson and Morrison; Cairney and Munsie; Daisey; Elish-Piper; Philliber, Spillman, and Kind; Shanahan, Mulhern, and Rodriguez-Brown). In particular, this library-based program seems to benefit its children, parents, family units, and other community members (Padak and Rasinski). Previous research (Edwards and Turner; Hendersen) focuses on how students’ academic skills improve through intergenerational literacy programs; the present study also highlights increased engagement and access to previously inaccessible books as the benefits that students reap from programs like Books in Motion. It is also possible that their participation in Books in Motion may lead parents to become more involved in school activities and their children’s classroom work. Finally, the public library has most certainly attained a higher public profile and increased publicity in its efforts to promote literacy (McNicol and Dalton 251).

It is also important to note that though the participants in this study were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences with Books in Motion, this trend may not be true for all participants of similar intergenerational community literacy projects. It would be prudent to seek out participants who made conscious decisions to end their participation with such projects in order to understand any possible feelings of exclusion,

intimidation, disinterest, or dissatisfaction. In particular, Books in Motion drew a participant base of young, white families. While outside the realm of the present study, it would nonetheless be useful to locate and interview participants who may not fit these demographics and thus chose either to not participate or to discontinue participation. Because all of this study's participants remained actively engaged with Books in Motion over extended periods of time, it was difficult to find anyone who disliked the program. These critical voices might be useful in shaping similar projects that are even more diverse and more inclusive.

Books in Motion appears to have helped participants understand that “literacy entails a broader web of social relationships than between child and teacher or principal” (Fagan 261). In encouraging participants to share books through collaborative conversations and monthly meetings, Books in Motion exemplifies that “literacy does not and cannot occur in isolation. It is always part of social relationships” (Fagan 262). Participants have begun to understand that reading can be both “social as well as personal activities” (Behrman 26).

Books in Motion's Ongoing Success and Future Directions

Three years after its creation, Books in Motion continues to thrive and impress even its original creators. Cindy, the public librarian, has come to regard Books in Motion as a “delightfully surprising success which speaks to the need in the community for activities involving young families.” Each month has brought a new surprise, with adults outnumbering children for *To Kill a Mockingbird*, a surge of older children for *Hoot*, and minimal participation for more current movies, such as *Bridge to Terabithia*, which children had recently seen in theaters. She has also reached out to local schools through school newsletters and emails to encourage teacher and administrator involvement. Further, Cindy seeks continual feedback from the community and asks participants for suggestions for upcoming titles.

The success of Books in Motion has led the public library to start a teenage version, replicating the program for adolescent readers in the community. In its early months, Books in Motion for Teens read *Fight Club* by Chuck Palahniuk, *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* by Ann Brashares, and *Stormbreaker* by Anthony Horowitz, Antony Johnston, Kanako Damerum, and Yuzuru Takasaki. Despite these popular titles, participation was low, which Cindy attributed to “teenagers rebelling at the very idea of all reading the same book at the same time and then showing up to watch the movie—way too organized for them.” Thus, the original format was revamped; rather than a film night housed at the public library, participants in Books in Motion for Teens now travel together by bus to a movie theater in the area. Cindy explained the altered format:

What has worked is Movie Premier Nights, where we take a busload of teens to a movie in the theatre. We have done this with three movies based on books: *Twilight*, *Inkheart*, and *Harry Potter 6*. Most of the kids have already read the book, and they love going as a gang to the movies. Watching a DVD at the library holds no thrill for a teen. We have really learned that our audience for Books in Motion is between first- and fifth-grades, with an occasional middle schooler depending on the book. As such, we found creative adaptations to extend the idea of Books in Motion to teenagers.

It would be logical to continue research on similar intergenerational literacy projects to understand how they influence students, parents, and community members. While it was outside of the scope of the present study, it may be prudent to do follow-up investigations on how community literacy programs impact students' academic achievement. Several questions arise when considering the impact of intergenerational literacy programs on particular participant groups, all of which would be fruitful areas for future exploration: Do such programs influence parents' involvement in their children's schools? Do public libraries see a surge in use or new patrons because of these programs? How can teachers draw connections between these programs and their individual classroom instruction? It is likely that the success of Books in Motion may be attributed to the nature of the participants, most of whom described themselves as 'avid readers' prior to their participation; thus, it would be interesting to see whether similar programs with reluctant or non-readers impact participants' reading practices. Finally, it would also be useful to investigate community literacy programs similar to Books in Motion that draw more diverse participants; the homogeneity of the present study's participants is a factor to consider in efforts to extend similar programs to communities with more diverse populations.

Concluding Thoughts

Though research by the National Endowment for the Arts points out the decline in reading habits of our young people, reading continues in engaging and creative formats through programs like Books in Motion. As communities and public libraries seek to influence children's reading today, Books in Motion exemplifies how community members can benefit from a low-cost community literacy program. In creating Books in Motion, the public library simply provided space, resources, and opportunities rather than any sort of instruction about how participants should approach literacy. An easily reproducible model for communities across the nation, Books in Motion has transformed reading into an act of community engagement.

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