

Communal reading as a way to foster a reading culture: the One-Book-One-Library project at the University of Johannesburg

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Abstract

The article gives a brief overview of literacy and reading in South Africa and explores the current reading culture in the country. Organisations working towards improving literacy and strengthening the South African reading culture focus on young children and teenagers. There are very few reading projects aimed at developing a reading culture amongst university students. The One Book One Library project at the University of Johannesburg has the long term objective of creating a reading culture at the University. The article discusses the critical success factors for the project that asks the University community to ‘read the same book at the same time’ as well as the benefits of the project for both the readers and the library.

Keywords: reading; reading promotion; reading culture; academic libraries, One Book communal reading movement; literacy.

1 Introduction

John Cotton Dana discussed the lack of a reading culture in America in his article ‘The supreme importance of reading’ which was published in 1913. He stated categorically that ‘we are not a nation of readers’ (Dana, 1913:21) and warned that the inability to read, and more importantly the lack of the will to read, will hamper man’s ability to deal with the growth of knowledge that resulted from the

development of the printing press. He stated that only the habit of reading will prevent the post Gutenberg society from failure to further develop civilization (Dana, 1913:18).

Ninety seven years later, Bayless (2010:1-10) confirmed that American children have the skills to read, but that their will to read is not strong. This presents a problem because the reading skills required for functioning well in the early 21st Century workplace or the 'Gates era' (Considine, Horton & Moorman, 2009:471) goes well beyond the ability to read. There is an increased need for skills such as conceptual thinking, social environment awareness, and critical perception which are partly fostered by 'enthusiastic and habitual reading' (Bayless, 2010:9). As with many other skills, practice is important and to equip young people with the reading skills required by the 21st Century workplace, they need to read more or fall prey to the Matthew effect¹ as identified by Stanovich (Pretorius and Currin, 2010: 67).The value of habitual reading to exercise the mind is explained to young readers by Gentile (1976:378-380) in a letter to members of a reading club, concluding as follows:

It seems to me that reading allows an individual the opportunity to grow and develop insights into life and the world at large. Thus, he is able to make effective decisions that lead to personal health and happiness.

This assessment of the value and necessity of reading resonates with many educators and authors the world over and the problem identified and discussed by Bayless is not limited to America; rather it is a worldwide concern as is evident from the activities of organizations such as Reading Worldwide (2011). Sub-Saharan Africa's lack of adequate literacy and numeracy skills has long been a concern and has been confirmed by SACMEQ (Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality) (2001 and 2005). This non-governmental association's mission is to do research that provide evidence based information on the literacy and numeracy levels of learners in 14 Sub-Saharan countries, including South Africa. Studies I and II in 1995 and 2000 respectively, found the majority of learners to perform below the expected levels in these areas. The draft report on the SACMEQ III study which traced the reading and mathematics achievements of Grade 6 learners in the same countries between 2000 and 2007

became available in 2010 and initial results seem to indicate little or no improvement in the situation (Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality, 2010).

2 Literacy and Reading in South Africa

In 2006 South African Grade 4 and Grade 5 learners came last in a study of 40 countries that took part in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (Mullins, *et al*, 2007:37). The SAMECQ III Project results indicated that South Africa's Grade 6 learners are 'the second-worst readers from a group of 15 countries in Southern and Eastern Africa' (Kruger, 2011)

South Africa is a multilingual country with 11 official languages comprising of ten African languages, including Afrikaans, as well as English. Reading skills is impacted negatively by having to be able to read in at least two languages, the home language and English. Furthermore, many of the disadvantaged communities in South Africa regard reading as a technical skill with functional value for work or study purposes only. Reading for pleasure is not a priority and teachers give very little or no attention to developing a reading culture in their schools (Pretorius & Currin, 2010: 75). This is not a recent phenomenon. A study done in 1987 found that teacher training in South Africa placed no emphasis on reading at all (McKenna & MacLarty, 1987:46).

The South African Department of Education currently recognizes the need to improve reading skills and has developed a National Reading Strategy based on the following principles:

- Every learner has the right to quality education.
- All children, with the appropriate support, can be taught to read.
- Reading is a foundational skill for all learning.
- Learners have the right to learn to read in their mother tongue, especially at Foundation Phase level.

The purpose of the *National Reading Strategy* is:

- To put reading firmly on the school agenda.

- To clarify and simplify curriculum expectations.
- To promote reading across the curriculum.
- To affirm and advance the use of all languages.
- To encourage reading for enjoyment. This is a legitimate aspect of the teaching of reading, and
- To ensure that not only teachers, learners and parents, but also the broader community understand their role in improving and promoting reading.

(Department of Education, 2008:12)

The inclusion of promoting reading for enjoyment as part of the strategy is encouraging; however, the reality is that reading promotion in schools is more often than not part of teaching languages and literacy (Williams, 2009). The focus is mainly, and understandably on the ability to read, not the enjoyment of reading. The result is that South African children, like their American counterparts are not enthusiastic readers. Many South African readers between the age of 9 and 16 describe themselves as average readers and are more inclined to read books that are linked to a TV program or film (Machet, 2001: 6-11).

A recent study of the reading habits of adult South Africans (i.e. people older than 16 years of age) found that the South African population cannot be described as a book reading nation. The preferred reading material is newspapers and magazines and reading behavior is strongly influenced by a need for access to knowledge. Even though a high percentage of South Africans read newspapers and magazines, not all of them do so regularly with the result that the majority of the South African population can be classified as infrequent readers (South African Book Development Council, 2007).

2.1 Efforts to promote reading and establish a reading culture in South Africa

The first step in promoting reading and establishing a reading culture is to ensure access to suitable reading material and there are many organizations in South Africa which focus on improving such access. Their activities range from encouraging and supporting writers, the focus of the Centre for the Book at the National Library of South Africa, to putting books at the disposal of young readers between the ages

of 3 and 18 , which is the mission of Biblionef South Africa (2011) and Room to Read (2009). The fact that promoting reading at schools only is not enough is widely acknowledged (Bayless, 2010:6, 10-11) and organizations promoting reading in families such as Through the Magic Door (2010) and the Family Literacy Project (2010) are becoming more prominent. The focus seem to be on establishing the reading habit with younger children and this is understandable as establishing the reading habit early has a positive impact on success at school (Hughes-Hassell & Rodge, 2007:22). The most recent initiative in South Africa is the National Book Week that took place for the first time from 6-13 September 2010. The event is the outcome of a partnership between the South African Book Development Council and the National Department of Arts & Culture and aims to encourage reading amongst South Africans and to find innovative ways to strengthen publishing industry initiatives, develop writing skills and increase book sales, particularly books by South African and African authors.

2.2 The impact of owning books

The promotion of reading by the publishing industry may seem to be based on self interest but there are studies indicating that owning books is a very important part of becoming a fully literate and enthusiastic reader. One such study by the US Department of Education found that the number of books in a home correlated to test scores. In 2005, senior students from homes with more than 100 books scored 25-30% better across the board (science, mathematics, civics, history) than those from homes with less than ten books (Bayless, 2010:12). The number of books available to children in their homes has an impact simply because the child has a good chance to find books that appeal to him or her and as a result of a positive reading experience, continue to read. The reading habit gives children tools such as a good vocabulary, comprehension skills, and broader horizons all of which have a positive impact on learning at school. Evans, *et al* (2010) studied the impact of owning books on the schooling of children in 27 countries, including South Africa. The study found that having a home library of 500 or more books propel a child an average of 3.2 years further in education than would happen if the same child grew up in a home with

few or no books. This is the same advantage as having university-educated parents (Evans *et al*, 2010:179) and holds true for all political dispensations, including Apartheid (Evans *et al*, 2010:183).

The mean number of leisure books owned per household in South Africa is eight books, with the median number being 32. More than half of South Africa's households own no books (South African Book Development Council, 2007:13-14).

2.3 Communal reading in South Africa

Owning books is of course an indication of a scholarly culture in the home. It also means that children in such homes probably see their parents read often. It is also likely that children growing up in such homes were read to when small, all of which contributes to developing a reading culture. Children, young people, and adults from homes lacking in such a scholarly culture and with little or no access to books therefore are at a disadvantage. Libraries can play a role to help such children to overcome this disadvantage. Pretorius and Currin, (2010:69) stress the importance of school libraries to provide access to books to children at a young age. The South African Draft Framework for the National Book Policy acknowledges the role of libraries in promoting reading and providing access to books to people of all ages (PICC Transformation Committee, 2005:4 & 14-15). The *National Survey into the Reading and Book Reading Behaviour of Adult South Africans* found that libraries are one of the main channels for readers to get information about books and to access books (South African Book Development Council, 2007:23). The positive impact of access to books can be enhanced by initiatives and activities to share and discuss the reading experience. South Africa has a history of communal reading. Black South Africans attempted to grow a black reading public through reading groups linked with Mutual Improvement Societies in the nineteenth century and white South Africans established reading societies based on British models (Dick, 2007:38-42). The communal reading continues in current reading circles and book clubs. Participants in reading circles where a specific book is selected for all members to read and then is discussed at a circle meeting is likely to be an English speaking white woman with a post

matric qualification (South African Book Development Council, 2007:10). Book clubs seem to be a feature of life for rural women who meet regularly to discuss books (Mda, 2010).

3 The One Book communal reading movement

The idea of a book discussion group or reading circle is taken to the next level by expanding it across a whole community or city in what Rogers (2002:1) calls city wide book clubs. The One Book community reading promotion movement was initiated in 1998 by Nancy Pearl, executive director of the Washington Center for the Book in the Seattle Public Library from 1993 to 2004. She retired in 2004 and became a full time reading adviser and promoter (Cole, 2006:1). The movement is based on the idea of asking a community to 'read the same book at the same time' and then to participate in various activities aimed at enhancing the reading experience. The activities range from participating in discussing the book with the author at scheduled book discussion events to public lectures, screening films of the book or films related to its theme if the book itself has not been filmed and a variety of other activities based on the theme of the selected title. Readers are supported and stimulated by making a reading guide available. The guide typically gives information about the author, the book, and the plot of the book. It gives additional information such as maps of places mentioned in the book and guides critical thinking about the book by providing a list of questions to think about or notice while reading it. The 'One Book' concept is embraced widely in America with projects in all 50 states. Specific projects are listed on the Library of Congress Centre for the Book's website by the name of the state or city and also the title and author of the selected book. The American Library Association (ALA) supports the movement by providing guidance on how to plan a One Book –project through its Public Programs Office. (American Library Association, 2003). One Book-projects are mostly used by public libraries to promote reading in their communities and has proved to be a relatively inexpensive way of doing so. It also provides a means of emphasizing the value of the library in the community and provides many opportunities for partnerships with associations and businesses in the community.

There are only a few examples of the One Book concept being embraced by higher education institutions and academic libraries. The Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) in the United Arab Emirates launched a One Book One HCT project in May 2010 under the leadership of a faculty librarian (Free Library, 2010). Reading promotion projects at higher education institutions are often part of First Year Experience programs such as the one at the University of South Carolina (Foote, 2008) and at the University of Ohio (2010). The reading of the selected title in these programs is often compulsory and compulsory reading does not support the concept of reading for enjoyment.

4 The One Book One Library project at the University of Johannesburg

4.1. Brief history of the University of Johannesburg

The University of Johannesburg (UJ) was established on 1 January 2005 after the incorporation of the Soweto and East Rand campuses of Vista University (established in 1982) into the Rand Afrikaans University (established 1967)-which took place on 1 January 2004 -and the subsequent merger of the Rand Afrikaans University and the Technikon Witwatersrand (established in 1925) on 1 January 2005.

UJ has four campuses spread over the Johannesburg metropolitan area: the Auckland Park Kingsway Campus (the main campus), the Doornfontein Campus, the Auckland Park Bunting Road Campus, and the Soweto Campus. With over 48 000 full-time students and 3000 permanent employees, it is one of the largest residential universities in South Africa.

4.2 The UJ student profile

The profile of the UJ students is determined by the fact that it is a comprehensive university as well as the political history of the country. A recent study to determine the background of UJ students found that 50% are the first generation at university (Van Zyl, 2010). They can be described as working class and it can be assumed that many of them grew up with a lack of exposure to books, both at home and at school. It is an unfortunate truth that only 8% of South African schools have functional libraries (Isaacs, 2010).

However, the National Department of Basic Education in terms of the National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996), proposed an action plan which sets norms and standards for school libraries to be enforced by April 2011 (South Africa, Government Gazette, 2010). This is a step in the right direction but came too late for a generation of South African young people that grew up without the benefit of having a school library. In addition to this, a high percentage of these learners are from very poor environments where buying books is not an option with the result that they grew up without the benefit of access to books. Many of these young people who are currently enrolled at universities are battling to overcome the disadvantage of growing up without books and an established reading culture. Academic staff at South African universities increasingly comments on the fact that students lack sound reading and writing skills. At UJ there is also a worrying trend for students not to buy their prescribed textbooks. While it may in some cases be because of a lack of funds it was found that even students who receive bursaries that include a specific amount earmarked for textbooks, do not buy any textbooks. These earmarked funds cannot be used for anything else with the result that the money is returned to the bursary scheme at the end of the academic year. There are two possible reasons for this situation:

- a) the students do not come from households with a culture of buying books
- b) they prefer to return the money to the bursary scheme in view of the fact that they have to pay back 50% of the bursary after graduation and see not buying textbook as a way to minimize their debt.

4.3 Meeting the challenge of creating a reading culture

Against this background the University of Johannesburg Library and Information Centre (UJLIC) was challenged by a peer review panel which evaluated the library in September 2008 to find a way to get students to read more and to read wider than their prescribed books. The UJLIC considered the challenge carefully because it considers itself to be one of the most important support systems for the academic activities at the University, especially with regard to supporting the student's ability to read, evaluate, interpret, and apply what they have read. It was concluded that there was a strong and justifiable focus on reading for academic reasons at the University but that too little attention is given to reading for

enjoyment and relaxation. Reading a good book is a wonderful pleasure and supports academic reading because it provides the opportunity to discover new ideas, learn about new places, and to explore different cultures, people, and backgrounds. It can stimulate self-reflection and critical thinking and allows one to think about issues which impact on family, relationships, society, and the environment in an objective yet engaged manner. The UJLIC consists of four campus libraries and it was decided that any project embarked upon should allow the campus libraries to work together, but also allow them to adapt to the characteristics of the campuses they are situated on. The One Book concept seemed to offer all that was needed to meet the challenge and the One Book One Library project was decided upon. Subsequently the UJ community was invited for the first time to ‘read the same book at the same time’ in the second semester of 2009 and 2010. Following on the success of the first two years, the project will continue in the second semester of 2011.

5 Managing the project

The One Book One Library project is managed by a committee consisting of representatives of all the campus libraries. The only proviso for membership is an interest in reading and enthusiasm for the project. The committee followed the American Library Association’s guidelines for planning community reading projects (American Library Association, 2003). For the 2009 project the Department of English at the University was invited to form part of the project and representatives of the Department participated in the selection of the title and the compilation of the reading guide. In 2010 a member of the UJ Academic Development Services requested to be part of the committee. The library bought as many copies of the selected title as possible and students and staff could borrow it in the normal way from the various campus libraries. The loan period for undergraduate students was two weeks, four weeks for post-graduate students and eight weeks for staff .

5.1 Selecting the title

In view of the fact that the project is about the enjoyment of reading and creating a culture of reading, the most important criteria for the selection of the title were that it should

- a) be acknowledged as good literature but should also be easy to read.
- b) have a linear plot but also raise moral issues and have a strong message.

Other criteria were:

- c) The language of the text should be accessible and understandable for a wide audience i.e. undergraduate students, post-graduate students, and academic staff.
- d) The text should be by a South African author.
- e) Availability in more than one language will be a strong recommendation.
- f) The theme of the text should be of interest to a diverse student and academic community
- g) The text should be in print.
- h) The text can be fiction or non-fiction.

The project committee and library staff in general was invited to nominate titles for the project and the committee did the final selection of the title from the list of nominations. Ideally speaking the student community should participate in the nomination and selection process but it was decided to only involve them once the project has been established and has gained understanding and support from the UJ community.

5.1.1 Selected titles

The selected title for 2009 was **Three-letter Plague** by Jonny Steinberg. The title for the 2010 project was **Black Diamond** by Zakes Mda.

Three-letter Plague is a groundbreaking work of reportage about how a rural South African community perceives the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It explores the reasons for resistance to test for and receive treatment for the disease despite the availability of treatment. **Black Diamond** is a satirical work exploring the upcoming Black middle class in South Africa and the concept of becoming a Black Diamond i.e. wealthy, powerful, and prominent. These people flaunt all the trappings of wealth such as expensive cars, big houses, and ‘brand’ clothing. It also explores racial stereotypes in South Africa, turning it upside down and exposing their ironies.

The title selected for the 2011 project is **Infanta** by Deon Meyer. The book was originally written in Afrikaans. It was translated into several languages, including into English as **Devil’s Peak** and into French as **Le pic du diable**. The book will be made available in all three these languages.

6 Participation

6.1 Reading

In 2009 a total of 442 people read the selected title during the 2 month reading period. A breakdown of participation per campus library is provided in Table 1

Campus	Number of copies	Total Checkout	Renewals
Auckland Park Bunting Road Campus	52	116	26
Auckland Park Kingsway Campus	74	236	62
Doornfontein Campus	33	56	21
Soweto Campus	18	34	17
Total	177	442	126

Table 1: Circulation statistics for reading **Three-letter Plague** in 2009

In 2010 the reading period was extended to 3 months and there was an increase of 31 in the number of copies available. A total of 932 people read the book. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the participation per campus library.

Campus	Number of copies	Total Checkout	Renewals
Auckland Park Bunting Road Campus	53	242	39
Auckland Park Kingsway Campus	91	435	97
Doornfontein Campus	41	165	29
Soweto Campus	23	90	90
Total	208	932	184

Table 2: Circulation statistics for **Black Diamond** in 2010:

Numbers given is for the end of the official reading period. Statistics indicate that the reading of the titles continued after the official reading period. The number of checkouts for **Black Diamond** increased by 240 to 1172 by 24 May 2011. The increase for **Three-letter Plague** was 315 which brought the total number of readers to 522. The bulk of the copies of the two titles were withdrawn from the collection on 24 May 2011 and sold to library clients at a reduced price.

6.1 Discussion groups

One discussion group was held in each of the campus libraries. In 2009 the discussions were led by the campus librarians and a total of 88 people participated. The discussion groups were relatively small but the discussions were lively. Participants in the discussion groups were asked to complete an evaluation form and respondents indicated that they found the interaction with their fellow readers very stimulating. Four students who did not in fact read the book attended the discussions and completed the evaluation form. They indicated that they read the reading guide and was interested in hearing other people's views on the book.

In 2010 the author of the book, Zakes Mda, led the discussions himself and a total of 278 people participated of whom 158 completed the evaluation form. The discussions were lively and Prof Mda commented on the high quality of the questions asked by the students

Table 3 provides an overview of the demographics of participants in the discussion groups, based on the completed evaluation forms.

Year	Male		Female		Undergraduate		Post-graduate		Staff		Total respondents
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
2009	30	34%	58	66%	47	53%	4	5%	35	40%	88
2010	58	37%	98	63%	108	68%	16	2%	29	18%	158
Total	88	36%	156	63%	155	63%	20	3%	64	26%	246

Table 3: Demographics of the participant in the discussion groups

7 Critical success factors and lessons learned

The two critical success factors of a One Book- project are selecting the right title and the availability of copies of the selected title in libraries and bookshops.

7.1 Suitability of the selected title

Selecting a suitable title is the most critical success factor. Suitability does not only refer to the topic and the readability of the text but also a much more practical consideration such as the length of the book.

For instance, although it is a very worthwhile read about a topic of vital importance for young people in South Africa, **Three-letter Plague** had the disadvantage of being quite a lengthy book (326 pages). This might not pose a problem to strong readers but definitely intimidated the average and weak readers. Since the project is aimed at winning students over to read for enjoyment the book was not really suitable to attract a wide reading audience. The 442 people that did read it during the official reading period reacted positively as can be seen from some of the remarks received during the evaluation of the project:

- It has increased my knowledge tremendously. I can never have the same attitude I used to have on HIV. Incredible (*Female, undergraduate student*).
- ... I also learned that having AIDS does not mean you are dying (*Female, undergraduate student*).
- It opened a whole new world for me. I got to know the complex issues around HIV & AIDS (*Female, undergraduate student*).
- I need to be supportive to HIV positive people (*Male, academic staff*).
- An eye opener – understand better – not all about using condoms (*Female, non-academic staff*).
- It's real, be careful, educate others (*Female, undergraduate student*).
- The book made me realize that HIV/AIDS is not the killer of people but people themselves and stigma. People's belief (*Male, undergraduate student*).

Black Diamond, covering only 207 pages, was much more inviting and manageable for readers with average and weak reading abilities. In addition the book addresses serious issues but in a light hearted way that does not diminish the importance of the issues raised. Participants were asked about the impact it had on their perceptions of the different cultures in South Africa and a few of their responses are listed below:

- ...it made me question my life, the men I have dated and the crime situation in SA (*Female post-graduate student*).
- I personally have negative stereotypical perceptions about the different cultural groups in South Africa. When they are combined in a beautiful novel [such] as this you appreciate the uniqueness of the cultural diversities (*Female, undergraduate student*).
- It was like looking into a mirror and seeing myself but through some else's eyes (*Female, undergraduate student*).

- It was extremely funny and was an opportunity to laugh at some of the issues that confront South Africans on a daily basis (*Female, academic staff*).

7.2 Availability of copies

The availability of copies of the selected title is critically important for the success of the project and libraries that run such projects normally make as many copies as possible available to their patrons. The City of Chicago libraries for instance bought 2 500 copies of their selected title in 2001 (Roger 2002:17). The UJLIC had a very small budget for the project and in 2009 bought 177 copies of **Three-letter Plague** at a total cost of R25 765-83. In 2010, 208 copies of **Black Diamond** was bought at a total cost of R40 090-00. The number of copies was totally inadequate for a student body of 48 000 spread over four campuses and given the interest in the project thus far, a serious effort will be made to find a sponsor for the 2011 project.

In addition to the above, the variation in loan periods for the different client types referred to in par. 5, also had an impact on the availability of copies. The possibility of standardizing the loan period for the One Book One Library title on two weeks should be investigated to try and give more people access to it. The option to renew should also not be available for the selected title.

In the city wide projects readers are encouraged to buy their own copy of the book as well and publishers and bookshops tend to be natural partners and supporters of the projects. It was hoped that some of the students and staff at the UJ will buy their own copies but that did not happen to any great extent. To encourage students to own books, it was decided to sell the selected title to them at a much reduced price at the end of the reading period. This also served to recoup some of the money that was spent on the project to be used in the next round, and made space on the library shelves for the next selected title.

7.3 Author participation

Having the author available to lead the discussion of the book adds a very special dimension to the reading experience. Both Jonny Steinberg and Zakes Mda currently live in the US and in the 2009 project Jonny Steinberg could not participate in person. A blog was created with the idea that it will give readers an opportunity to interact with him. However, there was very little interest in the blog from the readers' side and the reasons seemed twofold:

- a) Blogging is not something that young people are excited about. They seem to regard it as too formal and academic
- b) Marketing the blog took more time and effort than expected and in the end many of the readers were not aware of it.

Participation in the discussion groups were low with 88 people attending the discussion groups hosted by the campus libraries.

For the 2010 project a Facebook group was created and this was much more popular with 83 people joining the group and contributing to discussions. Zakes Mda himself also joined the group and his participation gave it added impetus. In addition to this, he agreed to visit South Africa to lead the discussions of **Black Diamond** in the four campus libraries and this proved to be a strong drawing card. A total of 278 people participated in the discussion groups. Attendees at the discussion groups completed evaluation forms and 67% of the respondents indicated that the possibility of meeting the author influenced their decision to read the book and participate in the discussion groups. The opportunity to meet a high profile author such as Zakes Mda had the unintended result that a high percentage (33%) of the students participating in the discussion groups had not yet read the book at the time the discussion took place. However, it seemed to inspire them to read it afterwards. At the time the discussions took place between 6 and 10 September 2010 (seven weeks after the start of the project) 663 people have read the book. On 22 October 2010 the number had increased to 932.

8 Value of the project and way forward

Creating a reading culture is a long term project and it is difficult to assess the full impact of the project at this stage. Indications are that students who participated in the reading found it interesting and stimulating and there were requests that the project should not be limited to one title per year only. The committee has agreed to investigate more ways of stimulating interest in recreational reading and one of the possibilities that will be investigated is partnering with the Johannesburg Metropolitan Community Library Service to improve access to suitable non-academic titles.

The project gave library staff the opportunity to get to know the students and their way of thinking better. It also helped students to understand the value that the library and reading could add to their lives. The project committee plans to continue with the One Book One Library project and hope to secure donor funding so that the number of copies of the selected title can be increased and the number and type of related activities can be extended.

Notes

¹ The term comes from the book of Matthew in the New Testament, 25:29: For to every one who has even more will be given, and he will have more than enough; but the one who has nothing, even the little he has will be taken away from him. (Good News for Modern Man)

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