Creating and nurturing tween readers through readers' advisory services in a public library

by

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with respect to a MIS Research Project (INFO 580)

Creating and nurturing tween readers through readers' advisory services in a public library

(hereafter referred to as 'The MIS Research Project')

being undertaken by

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Abstract

Research problem: *Auckland Libraries: Te Kauroa - Future Directions 2013-2023* gives the directive to children's librarians to "create and nurture readers" (Auckland Council, 2013, p.22). This research project sets out to answer the question of how children's librarians in public libraries can effectively create and nurture tween readers through RA practices, and whether reader-response theory is an appropriate approach.

Methodology: The researcher took a qualitative approach, based on reader-response theory. Data was gathered through two distinct data gathering elements, firstly, semi-structured interviews with librarians, and secondly, semi-structured focus groups with tweens. In terms of selection, the library staff members were self-selecting, responding to an invitation by email to take part in the research, while the tweens were selected through purposive sampling, from a pool of avid readers at three branches. Nonetheless, the nine library staff came from eight different branches across the Auckland region, and the nineteen tweens from three quite different branches; one inner city, one suburban and one rural.

Results: It was found that library staff can and do effectively create and nurture tween readers through their RA practices, so long as certain practices are in place. In keeping with reader-response theory: recognising the individual nature of what constitutes a 'good' book; focusing on the appeal terms that apply to the individual reader; and getting to know the reader through asking open questions about previous books enjoyed. In addition, library staff should maintain a foundation of knowledge of tween books, share their enthusiasm about the books and reading, and suggest several books for tweens to choose between.

Implications: It is hoped that this research will provide a foundation for best practice in readers' advisory for tweens within Auckland Libraries, and in public libraries generally, and that it might contribute to the development of a readers' advisory strategy for children's librarians. Subsequent studies that delve deeper into the questions of why tweens read, a quantitative analysis of appeal concepts for tweens, and an analysis of the correlation between tween opinions of staff as advisors and staff RA behaviours, particularly in New Zealand contexts, would further expand on the findings of this study.

Keywords:

Appeal, children's librarians, public libraries, readers' advisory, reader-response theory, tweens

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1   Introduction

1.1 Problem statement

Auckland Libraries: Te Kauroa - Future Directions 2013-2023 gives the directive to children's librarians to "create and nurture readers" (Auckland Council, 2013, p.22). It is recognised that a powerful way of achieving this is through readers' advisory – a process of matching readers with books they will enjoy (Schultz, 2009, p.22). However, while there has been significant research into children's reading from an educational perspective, Childress-Campbell (2013, p.2) observes that "there has been little empirical research that focuses specifically on the children's readers' advisory interview", and while her own study examines librarians' perspectives on readers' advisory, it does not examine it from the perspective of the children. Hence, there is a lack of a research foundation on which children's librarians at Auckland Libraries can base their understanding of best practice in creating and nurturing young readers in public libraries although "having a knowledge map of quality readers' advisory service is essential to being able to provide quality readers' advisory service" (Smith, 2000, p.140).

1.2 Purpose of the study

It is hoped that this research project will help fill the gap identified above by providing and analysing qualitative data from children's librarians and readers aged ten to thirteen (tweens). The objectives were to provide a foundation for an understanding of how children's librarians in public libraries can effectively nurture tween readers through the readers' advisory consultation process, and to provide guidelines for best practice in readers' advisory consultations for this group.

The theoretical lens for this research was reader-response theory, which posits that fiction "exists in the live circuit set up between reader and text: the reader infuses intellectual and emotional meanings into the pattern of verbal symbols, and those symbols channel his thoughts and feelings" (Rosenblatt, 2005, p.24). This implies that there is no such thing as an intrinsically 'good' book – i.e. one that will nurture a love of reading for all readers – because reading is a personal process of interaction between reader and text (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 28) out of which

meaning and engagement are created. Hence, readers' advisory should involve matching readers to books they can connect with in a personal way (Probst, 1992, p.72). Indeed, many studies have supported this view, including that by Holland (1975) in which five students' analyses of the same work varied widely. He found that "these variations correlated to the personality themes and issues identified in each student's psychological profile", proving that they were understanding, and responding to, the work from the context of their own lives and personalities (Smith, 2009, p.38).

In order to test the validity of this theoretical lens, the research questions were designed so as to establish the nature of appeal and whether it is sited in the reader as well as the book, the relevance of personal interests in the reading process, as well as the concept of what constitutes 'a good book'.

1.3 Definitions of key terms

Children's librarian: Any library staff member who focuses on working with children and youth aged 0 -18 years in a public library context.

Reader-response theory: A theory of "literary interpretation" which posits "that meaning does not reside in the text, but in the mind of the reader" that is, that there is more significance in the reader's individual connection with and interpretation of the text than there is in the text itself (Reader-response theory, 2005).

Readers' advisory: Referred to hereafter as 'RA'. RA is a library term referring to "services provided by an experienced public services librarian specializing in the reading needs of public library patrons" (Readers' advisory, 2014). It can involve a range of activities from creating booklists, arranging displays and both formal and informal consultation between the library staff and the reader. For the purposes of this research, the focus is on the activities of consultation, both formal and informal. Maata (2010, p.86) explains that "the readers' advisor relationship is based not on what the librarians' definition of a good book entails, but is the process of connecting the reader to books that may appeal to his or her preferences", which is in keeping with reader-response theory.

Tweens: A contraction of 'between', or "blend of between and teen" (Tween, n.d.). While some definitions include children as young as eight or as old as fourteen, and others narrow it to eleven and twelve year-olds, it is generally accepted that fourteen year-olds are young adult readers[1], and that there is an important developmental shift at the age of ten[2]. Thus, for the purposes of this study, 'tween' refers to children aged ten to thirteen.

1.4 Rationale and significance

Previous studies into nurturing a love of reading have been carried out in an education context. For example, Irvine (2001), Maynard, MacKay & Smyth (2008) and Perry (2013) all conducted their research through schools. However, while nurturing a love of reading is obviously important from an educational perspective – because of its power to improve reading comprehension, writing and cognitive development (Krashen, 2004, p.37) – it is also of significance to society as a whole. Northern (2010, p.3) argues that a lack of recreational reading could "result in a national problem economically, socially, and civically", and last year, a UK report stated that "being a good reader is crucial for every child. It is the key to developing much of their potential" (Save the Children, 2014, p.2). Indeed, some researchers have argued that recreational reading can give the reader comfort, reassurance, courage, strategies for problem solving, help in learning to think differently, and awareness of "a larger, more spacious world" (Ross, 1991, p.509). In these ways, fiction is not just entertainment (Joseph Gold, as cited by Ross, 1991, p.507), it can have a transformative emotional power in people's lives (Begum, 2011, p.738). Therefore, nurturing a love of reading is a significant part of the public good public libraries offer, and librarians' expertise at doing so is a significant point of difference in a public library's service offering (Train, 2003, p.33).

Childress-Campbell (2013, p.6) observes that there have been "four major trends developing in RA research. These themes are: RA on the web, revising Saricks's appeal terms, listening to how readers talk about books, and taking the mood of the reader into account" (Childress-Campbell, 2013, p.6). This researcher would agree that these themes are significant, but would add: attempts to establish best practice in RA (Sarricks, 2005; Booth, 2007 and Maatta, 2010), understand children's choices (Irvine, 2001 and McCormack, 2005) and understanding how to nurture a love of reading (Kim, 2001, Walton, 2002 and Perry, 2013).

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[1] See http://www.teenreads.com/reviews/genres/young-adult-14
[2] See http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetails.aspx?p=114&np=122&id=1865

This research project has been conducted from a readers' advisory perspective because, in the opinion of this researcher, RA is the most effective, continuous means of nurturing a love of reading at a librarian's disposal, and "interest in the practice of readers' advisory… continues to be strong" amongst librarians (Beard & Thi-Beard, 2008, p.331). However, as Beard and Thi-Beard (2008, pp.331-2) observe, there is a need for "a closer tie between research into reading behaviour and the practice of readers' advisory in the library". They posit that "instead of focusing on *what* people read, we need to focus on *why* they read", and reader-response theory gives us a foundation for doing this.

It is important to focus on tweens because research has "found that children's attitudes towards reading become more negative with age" (Stauffer, 2007, p.414), and the tween years can be an important turning point in this regard (Howard, 2011a, p.46). In addition, studies have shown that "retaining an interest in reading through the teen years is essential if someone is to grow into a lifelong recreational reader" (Moyer, 2008, p.101).

Further, while previous studies by Irvine (2001) and Maynard, MacKay & Smyth (2008), conducted in New Zealand and the UK respectively, recognise that public libraries have an important role to play in children's recreational reading, they have suggested that public librarians are not generally seen by children as "sources of information about good books" (Irvine, 2001, p.43). Thus, it has been valuable to conduct this research in order to develop an understanding of how children's librarians can provide more effective readers' advisory services to children, and can potentially play a bigger role in nurturing their love of reading.

It is hoped that this research will provide a foundation for best practice in readers' advisory for tweens at Auckland Libraries, and in public libraries generally, and that it might contribute to the development of a readers' advisory strategy enabling children's librarians to fulfil the mandate to "create and nurture readers" (Auckland Council, 2013, p.22).

1.5 Delimitations, Limitations and bias

1.5.1   Delimitations

Due to the time and resource constraints of this 580 research project, this research was confined to a small selection of current staff at, and tween patrons who are members of, a single library system - Auckland Libraries. Nonetheless, Auckland Libraries is the largest library group in Australasia[3], encompassing fifty-five branches located in inner city, suburban and rural environments and serving populations from all socio-economic and cultural groupings.

1.5.2   Limitations

Librarians working at Auckland Libraries were approached, both individually and through a general email calling for those interested in being interviewed on the topic under investigation to respond. For the focus groups, in addition to conducting a pilot focus group in the researcher's own community, two librarians were selected from the pool of interviewees to help find tweens for two further focus groups. The tweens were selected purposively from a pool of avid readers known to the librarians. As a result of this, the interviewees were self-selecting and the tweens were selected on a purposive basis. Neither sample was random, and therefore the results of this study cannot be generalized to the wider population.

1.5.3   Bias

It is acknowledged that having a theoretical foundation can introduce a bias, and so every effort was made to be objective in gathering and analysing the data to test whether the research findings supported or did not support the theory (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p.159) and to stay open to new findings that emerged through analysis of the data collected. It is also acknowledged that selecting the tweens from a pool of avid readers known to the librarians, introduced a bias in terms of both their level of reading enjoyment and their interactions with library staff.

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[3] See
http://www.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/EN/About/aboutus/aboutaucklandlibraries/Pages/aboutaucklandlibraries.aspx

2   Literature Review

This literature review examines the key theoretical foundations, focuses and findings of previous research into RA for tweens and adults, with a particular focus on research into nurturing a love of reading amongst tweens and teens in both school and public library environments in New Zealand, Australia, the UK and the USA. The research context and appropriate research design for the study were developed through this examination.

2.1 The theoretical approaches of previous RA studies

While a reasonable number of previous research studies have used reader-response theory as their foundation, or at least mentioned it in their literature review, previous researchers have approached their research from various other theoretical perspectives, including educational and motivational theories.

Irvine (2001, p.iv) set out to investigate children's selection habits in NZ schools. She argued that Jean Piaget's educational theory of social and cognitive development is useful to our understanding of children's book choices since they choose books according to their developmental stage. In contrast, Heritage (2004, pp.86-7), who set out to examine the RA interview with school librarians in North Carolina, dismissed Piaget's theory, pointing out that the readers' advisor does better to treat each child as an individual, and get to know them, rather than think purely in terms of stages of development. Though she did not mention reader-response theory, her perspective was consistent with it.

McCormack (2005) and Perry (2013) also considered children's choices, although, their theories relating to adults as readers' advisors, would seem to be at odds with each other. McCormack's (2005, p.21) USA study examined children's choice awards to see if children chose differently from adults, with the intention of informing book selection policies. She took a grounded theory approach, where theories are driven by emergent themes from the data, which revealed a theory of difference between what adults and children look for in 'good' books (McCormack, 2005, pp.37-8), undermining the relevance of adult selection of books for children. In contrast, Perry

(2013), who set out to collect data in the US to support her premise that reading children's books was essential to school librarians providing good RA, argued that so long as librarians read children's books, they can be good selectors and advisors for children. Perhaps the issue is that McCormack's (2005) adults, like the librarians Burek-Pierce (2006) describes in an overview of historic librarians' attitudes, were focusing on what children 'should' be reading, rather than, as Perry's (2013) research did, finding out from children what they are looking for in a good book, and engaging with texts from the child's point of view. This approach, though Perry (2013) does not mention it, is entirely consistent with reader-response theory.

Other theoretical approaches consider motivation. Walton (2002, p.28), whose school-based USA study set out to gain deeper insight into factors that developed a child's love of reading, posited that a child's enthusiasm for reading is in direct proportion to their perception of reading as achievable. As a consequence of this, Walton's (2002) conclusions placed a greater emphasis on the importance of light reading, demonstrating how theoretical foundations can influence the conclusions of the research. Kim (2001, p.10), also researching children's love of reading in a school environment in the USA, founded her research on the idea of the "homerun book", a concept which suggests that a positive, enjoyable reading experience motivates children to keep reading. Three other research studies posited a social motivation. Maynard, MacKay and Smyth (2008) analysed data collected from UK schools by the National Centre for Research, with the objective of building a picture of children's reading, borrowing and selection practices. They concluded that children's enthusiasm for reading is founded on a culture of reading, stressing the motivational impact of reading mentors. Merga's (2015) study of twenty Australian schools concurred. Positing that an individual's conduct is a product of "meaningful social interactions" she explored how adolescents could be influenced to read more recreationally (Merga, 2015, p.37). She concluded that teachers could influence students through certain behaviours including "personal enjoyment of reading" and facilitation of in-class recreational reading (Merga, 2015, p.47). Randall (2013), who set out to examine the influence of social relationships and social media on book selection in her NZ study, did not explicitly state a theoretical foundation, but also stressed social motivation in her conclusion.

Three key researchers, Ross (2000), Howard (2011a) and Dali (2013), explicitly use reader-response theory as their theoretical lens. Ross (2000, p.72), seeking to gain insights into "the role of pleasure reading as a source of information" through interviews with 194 keen readers aged 16-80 in North America, stated in support of reader-response theory that "reading is a

transaction between a text and a reader". Howard (2011a, p.54), who sought to understand the same phenomenon specifically for teens aged 12-15 in Canada, observed that her study strongly supported a reader-response approach. Dali (2014, p.36), who conducted an empirical study of avid immigrant readers in Canada, is perhaps the greatest advocate for reader-response theory in RA, arguing that librarians cannot talk just about book appeal factors, but must rather consider *reading* appeal, which also considers the reader-driven appeal elements such as social connection and learning through the experiences of the characters.

In addition to overt use of reader-response theory, many of the books written about RA (Sarricks, 2005; Booth, 2007 and Maatta, 2010) are consistent with this theory whether they mention it or not, and the research by Lu (2005), Moyer (2007) Bain (2009), and Childress-Campbell (2013) were also consistent with reader-response theory in that they were looking at the personal dimension of engagement between reader and text. Lu (2005, pp.14-17) founded her USA-based research on a theory of "enhanced readers' advisory", which posits that reading is an activity used to gain insight into their own lives from their engagement with the story, and that consequently librarians assist readers to find books that will help them "with personal or mental health problems" (p.14). Moyer (2007), who set out to explore the relationship "between educational and recreational outcomes of leisure reading" and "the importance of learning to the leisure reading experience" does not mention reader-response theory, but her focus on the interaction between reader and text and the pay-off of reading is entirely consistent with it. Bain (2009), who set out to establish the factors which contribute to librarians' confidence in offering RA services for adults at Auckland Libraries, founded her research on "Nell's ludic reading theory" which posits reading as a spontaneous pleasure "which changes the participant's consciousness" (Nell, 1988, as cited in Bain, 2009, p.12). This theory places great emphasis on "the right book at the right time" (Bain, 2009, p.13). Childress-Campbell (2013), who considered best practice in, and the complexities of, RA for children from the librarians' perspective in the USA, did not use a theoretical foundation although she did mention reader-response theory in her literature review (p.10). Her conclusions are also consistent with this theory, in that much of the best practice she identified relates to getting to know what the child enjoys, what their interests are and what they are "looking for in their reading experience" (p.35-36).

The theoretical approach of this study is reader-response theory. It is examining the nurturing of a love of reading from the perspective that reading enjoyment comes from a very personal interaction between the reader and the text. The reader brings to the reading process their

personality, memories, needs and mood and the way these interact with the text creates the reading experience (Rosenblatt, 1995, p.30). Hence, the same text can have "very different meaning and value" to different readers, or even to the same person at different times (Rosenblatt, 1995, p.35). This means that it is believed that if librarians are to help tweens find books that they will enjoy and that will have meaning for them, it is not enough just to know the collections. Librarians must also get to know the readers. Further, the readers' advisor must understand the "potential multiple purposes that a leisure book may serve" for the reader, including escapism, fun, understanding their world, solving their own problems, etc. (Moyer, 2007, pp.66-71). This means that one needs to consider not the quality of the book, but the quality of the reading experience (Van Riel as cited in Train, 2003, p.39) and that a 'good' book can thus be defined as "a book that suits a reader in a particular situation" and that is a highly individualised matter (Ross, 1991, p.506).

2.2 The key findings of previous RA studies

2.2.1   Appeal factors

Saricks (2005, p.40) argues that "an understanding of appeal is a keystone of successful readers' advisory work" and Smith (2000, p.139) agrees, including it as a core competency. Saricks' (2005) original appeal factors were: pacing, characterisation, story line, and frame (encompassing tone and setting), though she also talked about style. In a later work, Saricks (2009) revised these to four appeal factors which crossed genres: adrenaline (fast-paced), emotion (feeling, tone, mood), intellect (language, psychology, philosophy) and landscape ("books which have a driving sense of place" whether real or imagined) (Wyatt, 2007, pp.42-3). Saricks (2005, p.42) explained that appeal factors take advisors and readers "beyond mere subjects and plotlines" and provide a framework for describing books in ways that will help readers decide whether they 'feel' like reading them. Therefore, these considerations of appeal in RA are in keeping with reader-response theory, although they focus primarily on the books. Indeed, Wyatt (2014, p.29) observes that "Saricks and Brown owe a debt to the work of Rosenberg" since her "philosophy deeply influenced their approach to readers".

Nesi's (2010) work with teaching Saricks' appeal adjectives to students at her middle school library in Brooklyn, indicated that these appeal terms also work for children, but that strategies for understanding a child's appeal 'profile' should involve equipping them with the correct vocabulary. For example, they learnt to describe a book's pace as breakneck or unhurried, its

characters as familiar or quirky and its tone as edgy or humorous (Nesi, 2010, p.42). This enabled them to take a more active part in the RA interview, and provide the kind of information the librarian needed to recommend suitable books.

However, Saricks' models are not the only frameworks for appeal. Nancy Pearl refers instead to four 'doorways': story, setting, character and language. This system posits that "while all books have all four doorways", these doors are different sizes; with one door operating as the main entrance (Pearl as cited by Wyatt, In Press). Appeal in these terms depends on whether readers "enjoy reading to find out what happens next" (story), enjoy being immersed in place and time (setting), enjoy seeing the world through others' eyes (character) or "most appreciate skilful writing" (language). She also acknowledges that some books, such as the *Harry Potter* series, have all four doors wide open, which explains their wide appeal (Wyatt, 2007, p.43).

Three researchers, Ross (2000), Howard (2011b) and Dali (2013), founded their research on reader-response theory, and thus made the focus on the reader and their experience of reading more explicit in their consideration of appeal. Ross (2000) considers "why people read, how they select titles, and the elements that contribute to enjoyment" (Wyatt, 2015). Ross (2000) argues that readers choose books which give them insights into themselves and their lives, whether those books open up new perspectives, provide role models, reassure or are self-confirming, connect the reader with others, give them courage to change or accept things they find hard, or help them understand their world. She sees the process of selection as primarily guided by mood, that is, "readers choose titles based upon their emotional state at the time" (Wyatt, In Press). Howard (2011a, p.52) considers appeal from the perspective of the teen reader, identifying four "social reasons for pleasure reading": understanding the world, developing "social conscience and empathy", and empowerment within society, and "five primary personal reasons for pleasure reading": entertainment, escapism, relaxation, enhancement of their imaginations, and personal reassurance. Dali (2013, p.483), takes this further, claiming that since the relationship between the text and the reader is so crucial to appeal, that appeal factors must be seen to reside in the reader as well as the book. Hence, she advocates for the idea of *reading* appeal which "is defined as the power to invoke interest in reading and to set off an action of reading", a power which comes partly from the book – book-related appeal factors – and partly from the reader – reader-driven appeal factors. Book related appeal factors include genre, themes, characters, setting, style, narrative, informational value, language and author (Dali, 2014, p.33-36). Reader-driven appeal factors include such things as curiosity, social connection, escapism and learning through the experiences of characters, and in fact, much of the public good of reading discussed earlier (Dali,

2014, p.36). Looking at RA from this perspective, it is clear that the RA interview cannot simply focus on knowledge of the books, but must also "reflect the nuanced and evolved nature of the reading experience, its temporal, dynamic, personal, psychological, and social dimensions" (Dali, 2014, p.45).

Walton's (2002), Lu's (2005), Moyer's (2007) and Childress-Campbell's (2013) studies were aligned with this revised view of appeal, in that they sited appeal not just in the book, but also in the reader. Walton (2002, p.47) observes that children "enjoy reading more when they can hear and read about people like themselves". Lu (2005, P.167) observes that enhanced RA is focused on the "book's potential to help solve a problem" for the reader. Moyer (2007, p.71) found that the majority of the readers saw reading as a learning process, in which they learnt about the world, how to understand and solve their own problems and about other countries and cultures. Childress-Campbell (2013, p.35) concludes that librarians' questions should try "to pinpoint what a child is looking for in their reading experience".

2.2.2   Library staff knowledge about books

Although focusing on high school teachers rather than librarians, Merga's (2015, p.47) research indicates that personal enjoyment of reading, a willingness to engage in discussions about books and a broad knowledge of both the books themselves and popular youth culture are all important to nurturing a love of reading. Thus, it seems logical that in order to recommend books you need to read, but in the case of adults recommending books for children, this can be overlooked. While Irvine (2001, p.42) suggests librarians should rely on the recommendations of other children, Walton (2002), Northern (2010) and Perry (2013) stress the importance of reading children's books. Walton (2002, p.81) reports that all of the avid readers interviewed "reported making choices based on a reading mentor's recommendation". Perry (2013) found a strong correlation between librarians' reading practices and their promotion of reading (p.46) in terms of mentoring, conversations and displays (p.49). Childress-Campbell (2013, p.19) found that nearly all of the librarians she interviewed relied on their own reading in making book suggestions. Moreover, Moyer (2007, p.67) observed that "most librarians who read regularly… not only feel that they are more successful in their jobs, but feel that without reading, they would not be able to do their jobs well". Reasoning for this included knowing the book (p.20), being able to sell it as a good read (p.21), and knowledge of content appropriateness (p.22). Research into adult RA concurs. Bain (2009, p.67) found that "94.6% of the librarians surveyed used their own reading knowledge and experience in readers' advisory transactions" with 64.6% stating that

that was the one resource they relied on most. Smith's (2000, pp.138) discussion of core competencies included a personal plan for reading.

However, as children's librarians cannot be expected to read the entire children's collection, this personal knowledge must be supplemented from other sources. Smith (2000, p.140) acknowledged that personal reading can be augmented by reviewing journals and online resources, and Maatta (2010) encourages as best practice the use of Library 2.0 resources and RA databases. Childress-Campbell (2013, p.22-24), like Irvine (2002), mentions the value of recommendations from other children, but also found the librarians used booklists and RA websites to supplement their knowledge.

2.2.3   Asking tweens the right questions

RA texts suggest that much of the potential success of the RA interview comes down to asking the right questions. This is because the more librarians "talk to their readers and learn about them, the better they can suggest titles" (Moyer, 2007, p.76). Saricks' (2005, pp.88-9) advice is to ask open questions, including questions designed to establish appeal factors. Booth (2007, p.23-29) agrees that the active listening, paraphrasing and open-ended questions of the reference interview also apply to RA for teens, although within the context of a more conversational style. She suggests beginning with four opening questions to get the teens talking about books they have liked or disliked, and then moving onto questions specific to appeal (2007, p.29). In contrast, Ross and Chelton (2001, p.54) argue that the most important question is about the reader's mood – "tell me what kind of reading experience you're looking for". Dali (2013, p.492) similarly suggests a technique in which only one question is asked, in order to illicit a narrative from the reader about their reading. Actively listening to the narrative facilitates an understanding of both the reader and the reading experience they are looking for. The question should be deliberately vague, in order to allow the reader to interpret their own relevancy, for example "how would you describe yourself as a reader?" (Dali, 2013, pp.497).

While Irvine's (2002) research suggested we should ask questions about book appeal factors, the findings of Walton (2002), Heritage (2004), Lu (2005) and Childress-Campbell (2013) are aligned with Dali's (2013) view that RA requires questions that reveal more information about the individual child. Walton (2002, pp.41-2) advised asking what they have "enjoyed in the past,

reading level, interests, and what" they are looking for, while Heritage (2004, p.99) recommended asking questions about their reading habits as well as taking into account their "interests outside of school". Lu (2005, p.164) takes it further. She finds that for enhanced RA, the librarian needs to ask problem-driven questions in order to understand what the child needs from the story (p.164). Childress-Campbell (2013, pp.35-6) advocated that best practice revolved around open questions, designed to "pinpoint what a child is looking for in their reading experience". She advocated that questions should begin with the last book the child read then move on to questions such as 'why did you like that book?' Or 'what did you like about it?' and then to considerations of the children's interests, referring back to Peck's question, quoted in her literature review, "is there a hobby or sport you like?" (Childress-Campbell, 2013, p.10), if they are not forthcoming about books.

However, focusing on the child's hobbies may be a misapplication of reader-response theory, since, as Rosenblatt (1995, p.82) observes, it is often the case that the adolescent is not reading about the known and familiar, but about the unknown and unfamiliar. They are seeking to understand themselves, the world around them, and their role in that world. Thereby they are often reaching out into unknown territory, exploring issues they do not fully understand yet, or even consciously recognise. Indeed, the studies by Ross (2000) and Howard (2011a) support this idea. In 194 interviews with teens and adults, Ross (2000) found that readers often "used texts to make sense of life in a wide variety of situations" (p.74), with 25% of readers seeking "examples to follow, rules to live by" and inspiration (p.76). And through her focus groups with Canadian teens, Howard (2011a, p.53) found that teens "unconsciously use pleasure reading as a means" to "gain significant insights into self-identification, self-construction, and self-awareness". If tweens are often unconsciously seeking books that enable them to understand the unknown, how can librarians help them articulate what they are looking for?

2.2.4   Importance of choice

It has been argued that choice is "a key factor in reading for pleasure" (Ross, McKechnie & Rothbauer, 2006, p.39), and it is true that most of the research studies reviewed stressed the importance of choice. Irvine (2001), Heritage (2004) and Childress-Campbell (2013) took choice as a given. Walton (2002) is a strong advocate for choice in the context of free voluntary reading at school. While Kim's (2001, p.85) findings were inconclusive, nonetheless she recommends free choice as a way to "encourage children to read more". However, none of these studies

consider the importance of choice within the context of RA. Nonetheless, this preference for choice underlies the 'pile' method often discussed in RA – that is, offering several books, rather than one, to give the reader a range to choose from (Meminger, 2011, p.12; Saricks, 2005, p.89 and Booth, 2007, p.26).

2.2.4.1   What do they choose?

Since finding books children are interested in increases reading motivation, it would seem logical to "determine what children prefer to read" (Ross, McKechnie & Rothbauer, 2006, p.66), and some of the researchers have set out to do just that. Irvine (2001, p.35) focused on trends in children's reading, noting that "adventure books, humorous books and mysteries" rated highly. McCormack (2005, pp.37-8) suggested that a strong narrative, fast plot and characters children can relate to are important factors. However, Ross, McKechnie and Rothbauer (2006, p.66) point out that the results of all such studies only reveal that reading preference is very personal and conclude that they are not particularly useful. Kim (2001) and Childress-Campbell (2013) would concur. Kim's (2001, p.10) research revealed a great variety in the books reported as "homerun experiences", where homerun refers to "a particular reading material that, once read, turns children into dedicated readers".

Childress-Campbell (2013, p.35) recommended getting children to talk about what appeals to them, rather than making assumptions. Ross and Chelton (2001, pp.52-3) argue that the key issue in choosing books is mood – stating that readers often start "with their own mood at the time" when choosing books, considering what kind of reading experience they want – for example, safety vs. risk, easy vs. challenging. In this way, even the same child may be in the mood for different books at different times. While it is important to understand appeal factors, therefore, it is not useful to assume that specific appeal factors apply to all children, any more than it is useful to assume that all children will like a specific book.

2.2.5   Success of Librarian - Tween Interactions

Ultimately, children's librarians' ability to make good RA suggestions will only have purpose if children are receptive to the advice given. However, in considering whether an RA transaction has been successful, success should not be measured by whether the reader takes and enjoys the

book, but rather by the experience of the RA transaction – that they feel that the library is a place where they can receive suggestions "to meet their reading needs" (Saricks & Brown as cited by Train, 2003, p.38).

While Walton's (2002, p.85) findings imply that librarians are one of several sources of information on good books to read, Gallo (1985, p.736), Irvine (2001, p.43) and Maynard, MacKay and Smyth (2008, p.252) observe that public librarians are not generally seen by children as good sources of book recommendations. Irvine (2001, p.43) comments that this is of concern. However, her study, and that of Maynard, MacKay and Smyth (2008), do not explain why this is so. Gallo (1985, p.739) suggests that the primary reason for this is tween's perceptions of librarians as unfriendly, which is consistent with Moyer's (2008, p.103) suggestion of building a trusting relationship with the reader, Booth's (2007, p.21) advice that "approachability and an open, positive attitude are of utmost importance", and Randall's (2013, p.37) comment that "familiar relationships with staff seems to matter significantly" for under 18s. However, while Howard (2011b) finds that 78.9 percent of the 12-15 year olds she surveyed in Canada "felt that library staff are friendly" (p.330), 59.4 percent "indicated that they had no influence whatsoever on their pleasure reading" (p.332). Thus, it would seem that simply being seen to be friendly is not enough on its own.

Childress-Campbell (2013, pp.9-11) observes in her literature review that active listening, using appeal factors, celebrating their enthusiasm for a book, and making sure your body language gives a positive impression, all help support engagement with the child and thereby the success of the RA interview. Her study only looks at the children's librarians' side of the transaction, however.

2.3 Conclusion

It is clear from a review of the existing literature that it is an interesting time to be re-examining concepts of appeal, as it undergoes a rethink (Wyatt, 2007, p.40), and it is timely to consider how this rethink can inform RA for children. Since "learning an appeal framework" and "developing a customised approach to appeal" are "critical steps in studying to be an advisor" (Wyatt, In Press), it is a useful line of inquiry to consider this revised view of appeal, and how it informs best practice in RA. It is also clear that library researchers have been concerned to establish the ways in which they can more effectively provide RA, to all readers, but particularly to children, in terms of both their knowledge and their interaction with readers. Furthermore, it seems that

reader-response theory is an appropriate and valuable theoretical lens through which to explore this topic. Therefore, in the light of the literature, this current study sets out to explore:

- The appeal factors most appropriate in RA for tweens.
- the individualised nature of the books children enjoy, in the context of reader-response theory.
- the ways in which reader-response can inform RA generally, should this theory prove to be appropriate.
- whether or not children's librarians read children's literature, and what other resources they use to keep up-to-date with publications.
- the impact knowledge or lack of knowledge of the collection has on library staff's perception of their success as readers' advisors.
- the kinds of questions children's librarians ask during RA transactions with tweens.
- the factors that might contribute to children's perception of librarians as recommenders of good books and strategies that can be used to build a trusting relationship with tweens.
- interactions between librarians and tweens from both perspectives, in order to establish both what behaviours are most effective, and what the tweens want and appreciate.

3   Research Design

The research study was exploratory, studying the phenomenon of RA at several branches within Auckland Libraries. The approach was qualitative, gathering data through interviews with librarians and focus groups with tweens.

3.1 Research Questions

3.1.1   Main research question:

How can children's librarians in public libraries effectively create and nurture tween readers through RA practices, and is reader-response theory an appropriate approach?

3.1.2   Sub questions:

1. Which approach to the concept of 'appeal' within RA practices is most appropriate for tween readers?

2. What are effective RA approaches and methods:
    a. to help tweens find books they will enjoy?
    b. to encourage tweens to maintain a reading habit?
    c. to encourage tweens to try new books and authors?

3.   How are the tween's attitudes towards, and experiences of, RA influenced by the reading habits, attitudes and RA methods employed by the librarians?

4. What does reader-response theory contribute to our understanding of how best to nurture tween readers?

4   Methodology and methods

4.1 The methodology of previous RA studies

When considering the methods to be used to investigate the research questions, the approach of previous RA studies were reviewed. Nine of the sixteen studies reviewed used qualitative research methods. This makes sense for a topic that is seeking to understand a complex social phenomenon which often relies on rich personal data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p.140). Six of these gathered data through interviews and three through focus groups. Walton's (2002) study used the most comprehensive data collection methods including surveys, interviews, observations and summer tracking. While many of the studies gathered data from either librarians or children, one of the strengths of Irvine's (2001) study was that she gathered data from both the children and the school librarians, providing both sides of the story. For those studies which chose a quantitative approach, this was appropriate to the objectives of the researchers; however, the limitations of a quantitative approach are revealed by Maynard, MacKay and Smyth's (2008, p.252) inability to give any depth of explanation to their finding that librarians were not generally cited as sources of information about good books. Three of the studies examined used a mixed methods approach. This is certainly robust, drawing on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research. However, within the confines of a short research project, it is likely to result in more breadth than depth.

Table 1: Methodologies of previous studies

Approach	Approach Researcher	Country	Context	Participants	Data gathering instruments
Qualitative	Ross, 2000	North America	University library	194 adult readers ranging from 16-80.	Interviews
Qualitative	Irvine, 2001	New Zealand	Primary schools	Sixty-six year six students and 5 school librarians from 5 schools.	Written questionnaire and single and group interviews.
Qualitative	Walton, 2002	USA	1 Elementary school	212 third, fourth, fifth and sixth-grade students from ten different classrooms. Interviews focused on nineteen avid readers selected from that pool.	Comprehensive, including surveys, interviews, observations and summer tracking.
Qualitative	Heritage, 2004	North Carolina	Elementary school library media centre	Ten Library staff	Interviews
Qualitative	McCormack, 2005	USA	Book awards	The annual children's choice literary awards for grades 3 through 8 from 48 states.	Analysis of state book award programs, and children's choice awards.

Approach	Approach Researcher	Country	Context	Participants	Data gathering instruments
Qualitative	Howard, 2011a	Canada	School/ public libraries	68 teens aged 12 to 15 years.	Focus groups
Qualitative	Childress-Campbell, 2013	USA	Public Libraries	Eight children's librarians.	Interviews
Qualitative	Randall, 2013	New Zealand	Public Library	Twenty-nine Auckland teens aged 15 to 18 years.	Focus groups
Qualitative	Merga, 2015	Australia	Schools	34 students selected from 17 schools.	Semi-structured interviews.
Quantitative	Gallo, 1985	Connecticut, USA	50 schools	3,399 students in grades 4 through 12.	Questionnaire
Quantitative	Kim, 2001	USA	2 schools	251 sixth grade students.	Multiple choice and short answer survey questions.
Quantitative	Maynard, MacKay and Smyth, 2008	UK	150 schools	4182 students aged 4 to 16.	Survey
Quantitative	Perry, 2013	USA	Schools	429 school librarians.	Survey
Mixed-methods	Lu, 2005	USA	Public Library	531 adults and children.	Observation, interview, and log-keeping.

Approach	Approach Researcher	Country	Context	Participants	Data gathering instruments
Mixed-methods	Bain, 2009	New Zealand	Public Library	130 Auckland Libraries librarians.	Survey
Mixed-methods	Howard 2011b	Canada	School/ public libraries	Survey: 267 students aged 12-15. 9 focus groups of 7-12 students.	Survey then focus groups.

4.2 Methodology of this study

A qualitative approach has been chosen because the research is attempting to gain an understanding of a real world phenomenon by capturing and studying the complex details of that phenomenon. It therefore requires an approach which facilitates the collection of rich, in-depth data which reveals the potential relationships between tweens and children's librarians in public libraries, provides insights into how a love of reading can be nurtured, can test the validity of the assumptions underlying reader-response theory, and can judge the effectiveness of RA practices (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p.140).

4.2.1   Data collection

As with Irvine's (2001) study, both sides of the RA equation will be examined, combining Childress-Campbell's (2013) and Heritage's (2004) data collection method of interviewing librarians, with Howard's (2011a) and Randall's (2013) method of conducting focus groups with the tweens themselves. Hence the research had two distinct data gathering elements. Nonetheless, the findings from the library staff and the focus groups will be analysed and compared alongside each other in the discussion.

The questions for both elements of the research were designed to explore the implications of reader-response theory, and to establish whether the theory was supported by the findings. Questions were asked in both interviews and focus groups that explored the concepts of appeal, the relevance of personal interests and experiences in the reading process, and the concept of what constitutes 'a good book'. Every effort was made to ensure that the wording of these questions did not bias the responses.

Data was collected from the children's librarians through semi-structured one on one interviews rather than surveys, in line with Heritage's (2004, p.20) assertion that interviewing enables the researcher to elicit greater richness and depth in responses. The interviews were semi-structured since this allows for variance in discussion while ensuring that there is a consistent thematic approach (Qu & Dumay, 2011, p.246). The interviews took place in the "participant's setting" so as to put them at ease (Creswell as cited by Childress-Campbell, 2013, p.13), and ranged from forty minutes to one hour in length depending on the depth of response to the questions. The questions were designed to establish the participants' level of experience with RA for tweens, the relevance of reader-response theory, and their RA practices – including knowledge of books, questions asked, appeal, methods of interaction and engagement and what makes an RA transaction successful. All interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed verbatim, and participants were asked to check the transcripts for accuracy. The interview questions are attached in Appendix one.

A focus group approach was chosen for the tweens because it enables gathering a greater depth of response than is likely to result from surveys (Walton, 2002, p.14); discussion can reveal not only what people's opinions are but also "how those opinions are constructed" (Kitzinger, 1995, p.302) and tweens are likely to feel more confident and be more honest within a group of their

peers, rather than in one on one interviews (Randall, 2013, p.27). The focus groups were also semi-structured, with set questions, which nonetheless allowed scope for variance. They took place in private rooms in the tween's home libraries in order to put them at ease (Randall, 2013, p.28), and ranged in length from 45 minutes to 1 hour, depending on the size of the group. A warm up question was used, in which the researcher revealed her favourite tween books (bringing the books in as props) in order to help the groups feel comfortable discussing their book preferences. The rest of the questions were designed to establish the participants' concepts of appeal, the relevance of reader-response theory, regularity of use of the public library, level of comfort in interactions with librarians, opinions of librarians as readers' advisors, and preferences in terms of RA practices – including questions asked, appeal, and methods of interaction and engagement. The focus groups were tape recorded and then transcribed verbatim and participants were asked to check the transcripts for accuracy. During the discussion, participants were asked to identify themselves when they spoke, so that individual opinions could be identified throughout. The focus group questions are attached in Appendix one.

4.2.2   Participant selection

Given the time-constraints and limited scope of an INFO580 research project, and the fact that the research project had two distinct data gathering elements, it was a matter of deciding how many interviews and focus groups were practical within the given constraints while still providing sufficient diversity and coverage of data.

Childress-Campbell (2013) interviewed eight librarians and Heritage (2004) interviewed ten. Hence it was deemed that interviewing nine library staff would yield sufficient data. These participants were self-selecting, responding to an email invitation to staff who regularly offered RA to tweens. Nonetheless, they came from a range of different communities across Auckland – including high decile and low decile areas, and inner city, suburban and rural communities.

The number and size of focus groups used in research can vary widely (Kitzinger, 1995, p.300), for example, Randall (2013) used three focus groups of 8-11 participants. A recommended group size is four to ten members, although it is advisable to be at the higher end in order to allow for no-shows (Morgan, 1998, as cited in Bryman, 2012, p.507). In deciding on the size of the focus groups, consideration was given to getting sufficient variety of opinion, while at the same time ensuring the group was intimate enough to facilitate deeper and more detailed responses, within

the time-constraints and limited scope of an INFO580 research project. Consequently, it was decided to conduct three focus groups of between four and nine tweens selected to represent both boys and girls and the age range ten to thirteen, most of whom could be described as avid readers, and consequently likely to yield useful information about sustaining enjoyment of reading. These individuals were selected purposively (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p.152) from a pool of avid readers known to the librarians at their home libraries. Their participation was entirely voluntary. There were nineteen tweens involved in the research from three different communities, one inner city, one suburban and one rural. This number was deemed manageable within the constraints of the study, while also rich enough in data to answer the research questions.

Table 2: Demographics of Focus Groups

Age	Girls	Boys	Totals
10	2	1	**3**
11	4	2	**6**
12	5	2	**7**
13	3		**3**
Totals	**14**	**5**	**19**

4.3 Ethical considerations

4.3.1   Human ethics

As the proposed study involved human participation, it required approval from the Human Ethics Committee. It was somewhat complex ethically, involving two distinct data gathering elements with the second element involving the participation of children. Informed consent was required for all participants, but for the children, the informed consent of their parents was also required in accordance with section 1.a of the Human Ethics Guidelines (Victoria University of Wellington, 2014, p.2). This involved writing three different versions of both the information sheets and consent forms to ensure that those for the parents were free of library jargon and those for the tweens were age appropriate. These are attached in appendices two and three.

While a few children's librarians were approached informally prior to Human Ethics approval, and one focus group was conducted as a pilot, using draft information sheets and consent forms, the other focus group participants and the majority of library staff were recruited after Human Ethics was granted. All the of library staff read the Human Ethics approved information sheets and completed the Human Ethics approved consent forms. The Pilot focus group participants and parents were given the option of withdrawing, or reading the (minimally) revised information sheets and signing the (minimally) revised consent forms. Four of the five participants and parents did so and the fifth participant was removed from the transcript.

Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were given sufficient opportunity to withdraw (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p.105). Focus group ground rules were also written up and explained at the beginning of the focus group sessions, particularly stressing the importance of respecting each other's opinions and privacy. These are attached at the end of appendix three.

4.3.2   Permission

Permission to carry out this research was sought from Auckland Libraries prior to submitting the Topic Approval Form. Please see letter signed by Greg Morgan in Appendix four.

4.3.3   Privacy

Every effort has been made to protect the privacy of participants. Interview and focus group participants are referred to using pseudonyms (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, pp.107-108). Further, while reader-response theory stresses the importance of asking personal questions of the reader, every effort was made to ensure questions did not probe too deeply into personal issues.

4.4 Data analysis

One of the major criticisms of qualitative research is that "the research processes undertaken are described in insufficient detail and are not truly transparent" particularly in the data analysis phase (Shenton, 2004, p.143). It is also noted that while there "is no single correct method for analysing qualitative data", the form of analysis "must reflect the purposes of the study" (Patton & Creswell as cited in Shenton, 2004, p.144). Consequently, time was taken to consider the method of data analysis and how the data would be presented.

As Hilal and Alabri (2013, p.181) observe, analysis of qualitative data can be "muddled, vague and time-consuming", but is a process in which order, structure and meaning is brought to the data through the assigning of coded keywords. It was decided, given the limited scope of the research to do this coding manually, rather than through NVivo. However, NVivo was examined and the foundation of its approach in establishing key themes and patterns (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p.142) was used as the foundation for the coding process and analysis.

The coded keywords were established through the research questions, the analysis of key findings and trends in the literature review, and through the analysis of the research findings. This latter enabled emerging themes to be added to the original investigated themes. The process of creating the keywords was done much like building a controlled vocabulary, to ensure that all references to similar concepts were grouped through the same controlled terms (Shenton, 2004, p.149). Once these keywords were established, the transcripts were coded appropriately by the insertion of comments in the Word documents.

It was then a matter of analysing the trends the research revealed by reading across the transcripts, including cross-referencing between the two elements of the research – the staff interviews and the focus group interviews. This process enabled both synthesising consistent responses into trends through the generation of "disciplined abstractions" (Loftland, as cited in Shenton, 2004, p.152) and noting variances. In this way, the data analysis and coding process primarily involved inductive reasoning, typical of qualitative research, where inferences are drawn from specific observations. Nonetheless, deductive reasoning was also used in the cross-examination of themes (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p.97).

The seeking out and voicing of variances was seen as crucial in order to prove impartiality in the reporting of findings, and to enable auditability of the research (Lincoln, as cited in Shenton, 2004, p.153). This was particularly critical in relation to reader-response theory, in order to ensure that the use of the theory did not result in a bias in the data analysis. In this way, analysis of the data was carried out partly in order to establish whether the data collected supported or contradicted reader-response theory. So, for example, comments on how individual appeal is, or how important it is to know what the reader is wanting from the reading experience were noted, but equally, any comments which indicated conformity of opinion were also noted as counter arguments. Through a process of summative analysis (Shenton, 2004, p.147) these findings were

synthesised into trends which would either be found to support or refute reader-response theory. In order to ensure this was done impartially, any data that contradicted the theory was reported directly through quotations, and where a majority agreement was perceived, exact numbers and quotations were given.

4.5 Data presentation

The data is presented thematically. The thematic sub-sections were defined through analysis of the codes and through grouping of related concepts, and are illustrated where appropriate by charts, in order to facilitate comparison, auditability and comprehension. It is noted that it is important to ensure that the findings are reported in such a way that they determine the relevance of the objectives and the extent to which they address the objectives and research questions of the study (Shenton, 2004, p.156).

The report includes examples and quotations in order to reduce "the distance between the data itself and the reader of the report" (Shenton, 2004, p.153). Opinions expressed by staff are quoted with a pseudonym and an identifier indicating their position (Lib) for Librarian and (LA) for Library Assistant. Opinions expressed by focus group participants are quoted with a pseudonym and an identifier indicating their age, for example, Pandora (13). This is in order to provide relevant "information about the nature of the informant" (Shenton, 2004, p.153).

5   Discussion of Findings

5.1 Appeal factors

For the consideration of appeal, the focus group participants and library staff were given the same list of appeal terms, although extra words were added to the focus groups' list to facilitate understanding (for example, 'intellect' was expanded to include ideas/ concepts). These terms were taken from all of the different theories on appeal, and where crossovers, such as Pearl's (Wyatt, 2007) 'story' and Saricks' (2005) 'storyline', occurred these were listed on the same line. There was no indication on the list of where the appeal terms came from or that that there might be groupings (it was simply given as a continuous list), although Dali's (2014) reading appeal terms were listed one after the other at the end. The terms given were: pace or adrenaline, character or characterisation, story or storyline, emotion, intellect, landscape or setting, language, escapism, curiosity, social connection, and learning from characters. The majority of selections from this list by both the tweens and the librarians were unique combinations of appeal terms. However, there were certainly appeal terms that were more popular than others. The most important appeal terms for the tweens were character and story. These were followed closely by language and pace. The next cluster was landscape, emotion, social connection, learning from the characters, curiosity and intellect. Lagging far behind was escapism.

Table 3: Appeal terms in descending order of importance for the tweens

Appeal Term	Focus Groups- 19 members	Library Staff – 9 staff
Character/ Characterisation	19	6
Story/ Storyline	19	7
Language	16	1
Pace/ adrenaline	14	7
Landscape or setting	12	3
Emotion	11	3

Social connection	11	7
Learning from characters	11	3
Curiosity	10	3
Intellect	8	0
Escapism	1	3

It is very clear that characters and story are important to tween readers – all nineteen of the focus group participants selected these appeal terms. Library staff generally recognise this, with seven of the nine selecting story and six selecting character in their list of appeal terms. Bridget (Lib), Erin (Lib), Hazel (Lib) and Isaac (Lib), all recognised this fact, emphasising story and character as particularly important in their discussion of appeal.

Fourteen out of nineteen focus group members and seven out of nine library staff listed pace or adrenaline as an important appeal factor. Riley (12), Cara (12) and Rebecca (12) all explained that without pace a story becomes boring. However, Cassie (13) disagreed "I'm not so big on pace, I find books that have pace good, but I also like books that just meander through life". Further, in talking about pace, it would be well to remember, as Erin (Lib) put it: "Just telling them it's fast paced, doesn't give them a reason to read the story. A football game is fast paced, which is great if you love football, but if you are a netball person, who cares?" It is also worth noting that there is no gender bias to boys for pace/adrenaline, although one of the library staff expressed the idea that there was. Of the fourteen who said it was important, ten were girls, and of the five who said it was not important, one was a boy. However, there did seem to be a gender bias for emotion – with none of the boys listing emotion as an appeal term, and only three of the fourteen girls leaving emotion out as an appeal term.

Several of Dali's (2014) reader-driven appeal factors were also evident. Eleven of the focus group members referred to reading for social connection, with Cassie (13) explaining that "I read a lot for social connection because my group of friends, we read so much, lots of our conversations are book based". Seven of the nine library staff also recognised that social connection was important for tweens. At least eight of the girls were reading to understand relationships and emotions, which could be variously classified under curiosity, desire for social connection and reading to learn from characters. For example Wendy (11) said "My favourite [appeal term] is

emotion because there is something about them that I really find interesting", and Willow (11) said "I like to learn through the experiences of the characters", and that seeing "what they would do in a situation" could help her in her own life. While others talked about escapism, and that you "can experience things that might never happen to you" (Willow, 11), though only one tween, and only three library staff, circled escapism as an appeal term.

It is interesting to note that the library staff did not rate the appeal terms in the same order as the tweens. The majority saw story, pace and social connection as important, followed closely by character. One third saw landscape, emotion, learning from characters, curiosity and escapism as important and only one indicated language and none indicated intellect. However, while some had fixed ideas about what they would focus on in RA, for example Erin (Lib) was adamant she would focus on "story or storyline predominantly", others said it would very much depend on the child or the book, as recommended by Childress-Campbell (2013). For example Deidre (Lib) said the appeal terms she would focus on would vary "book to book and child to child".

It is not surprising to discover that Saricks (2005) has had a strong influence on the thinking of librarians – most readers' advisory training has been founded on her theories for years. However, even so, every one of the library staff also had at least one of Dali's (2014) reading driven appeal elements included in their list, most commonly, social connection, although three also selected curiosity, learning from characters and escapism. Social connection stood out for library staff, perhaps because of an understanding that tweens, particularly, tend to follow trends and read what their friends are reading. Isaac (Lib) explained that tweens, even more than adults, liked to "keep abreast of what's socially out there". The findings from the tweens did support this idea, with eleven of the nineteen tweens agreeing that social connection was an important aspect of appeal.

Nonetheless, it is clear that library staff would do well to think more about Nancy Pearl's 'doorway' of language and Saricks' (2005) revised concept of intellect in their RA transactions with tweens, since some tweens do consider these important. Surprisingly, language was considered important by more of the tweens than pace. Cedric (11) explained that language is important because "I find that I want a descriptive piece of writing not just one that has the normal average words that a four year old could write. I want to have something that actually means something." It is possible that language may have been emphasised by the focus groups because they consisted of avid readers. As for intellect, Pandora (13) explained that intellect (or concepts/ ideas) were important because "I quite like stories which make me think".

Other appeal concepts that arose out of discussion were humour, covers, and plot twists or twist endings. Twelve of the focus group participants and seven of the library staff mentioned humour or humorous books in their discussion of appeal. Irvine (2000) also noted this in her research, however, it is important to remember that not all tweens enjoy humour, some certainly prefer things that are more serious or dark; for example, three mentioned preferring horror books and one true life survival books. Covers were mentioned by seven of the nineteen focus group members and six of the library staff. Those tweens who mentioned them agreed that they were an important element in their decision on whether a book was appealing or not. For example Matilda (10) explained she was attracted to "Bright colourful covers". Four of the tweens also mentioned enjoying plot twists or twist endings. This was a common comment for those who enjoyed mysteries.

Furthermore, the findings of this research project support Dali's (2014, p.33) findings that genre is one of the most significant elements of book appeal. All of the focus group members and all of the librarians talked about book appeal in terms of genres. Walter (11) said: "all people have different opinions and like different genres." Deidre (Lib) explained that she always tried to establish what genres the tween enjoyed in RA transactions: "I usually try to establish that, do you like fantasy or do you prefer to read books about ordinary kids, or mysteries." Charlie (LA) also stressed that she asked about genre preferences "do you like dragons and fantasy or action and spies?" explaining this was because "it all depends on what the kid likes. Like if you're trying to sell a kid on a book with dragons and they don't care about dragons, it's not going to sound good to them". It is worth noting here that seventeen of the nineteen focus group members and eight of the nine library staff had more than one preferred genre, with all of them referring instead to having, as Cassie (13) put it, "a set of" preferred genres. In addition, several referred to genres they did not like. Pure fantasy and horror were the least popular genres, and science fiction was not mentioned by any of the focus group participants and by only one library staff member as a preferred genre and by two as a genre they tended not to read. Only one, Mary (12), said "I can read any book" although she did have preferred genres. Thirteen focus group members mentioned enjoying *Harry Potter* and post-apocalyptic books like *The Hunger Games*, *Divergent* and *Maze Runner*. These highly popular books were also (not surprisingly) frequently mentioned by library staff. The next most popular genre was true life stories, whether funny or serious, with twelve of nineteen focus group participants and seven of the nine library staff mentioning these kinds of stories. It was also common for people to mention reading and enjoying something that was not their usual genre, most notably those who did not usually read

fantasy enjoying *Harry Potter*. Nonetheless, the findings imply that a focus on genres when considering appeal would appear to be consistently useful.

In conclusion it would seem that there is no one perfect combination of appeal terms for every tween, in keeping with the individuality of appeal suggested by reader-response theory. Nonetheless, the findings would seem to suggest that a combination of Saricks' (2005) and Dali's (2014) approaches, combining book driven appeal elements such as character, story and language, with reading driven appeal elements such as social connection and learning from characters, is the most suitable way forward in the rethink of appeal. However, in keeping with the findings of Kim (2001), Ross, McKechnie & Rothbauer (2006) and Childress-Campbell (2013), beyond having a good understanding of what is trending for tweens, an understanding of which appeal factors are relevant should be dealt with on a case by case basis. This can be achieved by listening to how the tween talks about books they have enjoyed. The way they describe the books will give clues as to what their key priorities are in terms of appeal.

In this way, rather than attempting to reduce appeal concepts down to a list of four, as Saricks (2005, 2009) and Pearl (Wyatt, 2007) have done, the readers' advisor needs to be equipped with a wide repertoire of appeal concepts, which they can then draw on in different combinations during the RA transaction. For example Cara (12) said she'd recently enjoyed a series of books because "they are quite exciting and there's a lot happening in them, and they have quite a lot of twists in them, so you don't know what's going to happen." With this tween the advisor could talk about pace and storyline and focus on the mystery genre. Walter (11) said "I liked the Maze Runner, *Scorch trials*, it describes a lot about the scenery and the character which made me visualise a lot". With this tween the advisor could talk about setting and character and start with a focus on the post-apocalyptic genre. In these ways the readers' adviser can then focus on the same appeal terms as the tween when talking about books they are suggesting. Where the tween is less forthcoming, the findings would suggest that a focus on story and character is most likely to open up conservations.

5.2 Effective RA

5.2.1   Knowledge about the books

The majority of the staff interviewed, in accordance with the perspectives of Walton (2002), Northern (2010) and Perry (2013), read tween literature as part of their preparation for RA. Of the nine library staff interviewed, six indicated that they regularly read tween fiction, ranging from an estimated ten to 250 tween books a year, two indicated that they occasionally read popular tween literature, and one indicated that she never read tween literature, though she did read some teen literature. While seven of the nine library staff indicated that they tried to read across genres, all acknowledged that they had preferred genres, with five mentioning true life stories, four mentioning fantasy, and two historical fiction. Conversely, some genres were mentioned as ones that they never read, with three mentioning that they avoided horror and two, science fiction.

All of the staff who read tween literature referred to using their own knowledge of books in RA, and in accordance with Moyer's (2007), Bain's (2009) and Childress-Campbell's (2013) findings, six of them saw this as their most important resource, and an important part of being a readers' advisor. Erin (Lib) said "You have to read the books, you have to enjoy the books yourself" in order to be successful at RA. Deidre (Lib) said: "It's no use saying you should read this just because it is popular. You need to read at least some." Hazel (Lib) said "readers' advisory is about how much you read, you need to be a really good reader and have a really good memory and you learn by reading the books." However, the one staff member who did not read tween books, did not see this as an impairment in her ability to conduct RA transactions, believing that her research and knowledge of books coming across the counter was sufficient. Nonetheless, Hazel (Lib) would disagree. She argues that "You need to read the book so you can then sell it with a bit of passion."

In accordance with recommendations by Smith (2000), Maatta (2010) and Childress-Campbell (2013), all nine of the library staff interviewed indicated that they do some sort of research on tween literature. All nine indicated that they read reviews, six mentioned websites, six mentioned getting recommendations from the tweens themselves, five referred to staff creating their own sets of reviews, four mentioned blogs, and three mentioned Instagram. The most commonly

referred to resources were: Auckland Libraries' own tween eNewsletters, Good Reads[4] and books that list similar authors such as *Who Next?: A guide to children's authors[5]*.

Table 4: Reading tween literature

Library staff	Yes	Neutral	No
Do they read tween literature?	8		1
Do they believe librarians should read tween literature?	6	2	1
Do they see their reading as their primary resource?	6	2	1
Do they research about tween literature?	9		

As for the tweens in the focus groups, when asked whether it mattered to them whether the librarian has read the book they were recommending or not, twelve indicated that it did matter, six indicated that it did not matter to them either way, and only one said it was not relevant.

Table 5: Do tweens want library staff to have read the book they are recommending?

Yes	Neutral	No
12	6	1

It is interesting to note, however, that of the nineteen tweens, three spontaneously observed that adult opinions of books can differ to children's, consistent with McCormack's (2005) study, which revealed a theory of difference between what adults and children look for in 'good' books. Masie (10) explained "because we are tweens we have kind of the same opinion but what adults think sometimes might be a bit different". Further, seven of the tweens observed in relation to this question that since different people react to books differently, a librarian's opinion of the

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[4] See http://www.goodreads.com/
[5] Warren, V. & Yardley, M. (Eds.). (2011). *Who Next?: A guide to children's authors* (4th ed.). Loughborough, U.K.: Loughborough University of Technology, Library and Information Statistics Unit.

book might not be the same as theirs. Portia (11) said "the librarian might have a different taste in books than me". This is consistent with reader-response theory. Nonetheless, it was evident in this discussion that the tweens appreciate librarians sharing their opinions of books, even though they acknowledge those opinions might not be relevant. They like hearing what librarians think about a book and they appreciate the opportunity to share appreciation of a book or series with library staff. Wendy (11) explained: "it's really nice when the librarians have read the same series that you are reading and they've got something to relate to you - it feels nice."

The findings of this research indicate that reading and research exist on a continuum rather than being an either/ or scenario as Smith (2000) observes. If librarians only read, there will be gaps in their knowledge, because they cannot read everything, and of course, everyone has a bias in terms of genres. If they only research, then as Moyer (2007) and Hazel (Lib) argued, they lose that repertoire of books they can talk passionately about, and a potential connection with tween patrons. Therefore, while it may not be essential to read tween literature it is certainly the case that many of the best readers' advisors do. In conclusion, the research findings indicate that librarians should do neither one nor the other exclusively, but both to the degree they are comfortable with.

5.2.2   Asking the right questions

All of the tweens said they would generally feel comfortable answering questions in the readers' advisory transaction. Willow (11) observed "I like it when they ask questions when making recommendations, instead of saying just 'hey, this is a good book'". All the focus group members agreed that they would be happy to be asked questions about personal interests and hobbies, so long as, as Maggie (12) put it, "the question isn't too close and personal, if it's like hobbies and what books you like". However, as will be discussed under the reader-response theory, the majority did not see questions about hobbies as a particularly good indicator of what they might want to read.

Overwhelmingly, the tweens' suggested that questions in the readers' advisory transaction should focus on books they have previously enjoyed. For example, Maggie (12) suggested librarians should ask "what kind of books you've read before and enjoyed", and Walter (11) "what type of books I liked". Cassie (13) said "I find that probably the most important question a librarian could ask is about other books you've read, because they are helping you find a book so if they know your past experience with books, then it's easier for them to predict what you'd like".

Cassie (13) also suggested library staff should ask "have you read the really popular books?" because these books were "popular for a reason". Others suggested a focus on genre, for example, Pierce (12) suggested "Whether you liked fantasy or adventure or thriller or sci-fi".

The library staff agreed that the best questions to ask tweens were focused on the books the tweens had previously enjoyed, and that they would ask questions about hobbies only as a last resort. For example, Erin (Lib) explained "You often go into their interests if they have no idea what book they like, if they are not a reader at all." Questions about the books fell into three broad categories: those that were very general, just asking about books the tweens had previously enjoyed, those that focused on genre, and those that focused on appeal terms. Those questions most commonly suggested were in keeping with those suggested by Childress-Campbell (2013) – general questions about books they had previously enjoyed.

As for Ross's and Chelton's (2000) focus on mood, five of the library staff also agreed that asking questions that gauged what the tween was "in the mood for" might be a good question, although there was some concern that this could come across as too personal a question. Erin (Lib) suggested she might ask: "What do you feel like reading?"

Table 6: Readers' advisory questions

General questions	Bridget (Lib) "what was the last book you read that you enjoyed?" Or "Can you tell me about what sort of books you like to read?"
	Erin (Lib) "What have you read recently, what do you like about it?"
	Erin (Lib) "What do you feel like reading?"
	Isaac (Lib) "'What is a book you've enjoyed reading?" Or "What do you like reading?" Or 'What's your favourite book?"
	Hazel (Lib) "Tell me the best book you've ever read. What's a book that really sticks with you in your mind that you've really enjoyed?"
Genre questions	Bridget (Lib) "Do you read funny books? Do you read adventure books? Do you like exciting books?"

	Deidre (Lib) "Do they like fantasy or do they prefer…" Fleur (LA) "Do you like books that are funny, or are you looking for a mystery to solve?"
Appeal term questions	Greta (Lib) Pace - "Do you want a book that's really exciting, lots of adventure, going to have you on the edge of your seat?" Bridget (Lib) "Did you like the character, the setting, the story?"

As recommended by Saricks (2005) and Booth (2007), the general questions are perhaps the best to ask, since they are all open questions, which encourage the tween to volunteer more information. Questions about genre and appeal terms tend to be more closed, with 'yes' or 'no' answers, although as previously discussed, it is certainly useful to get a feel for their preferred genres, and this can be used to clarify the tweens' preferences. If the tween does not go into enough detail in their answer, the readers' advisor can prompt them with further questions. For example, Bridget (Lib) suggested "What did you like about it, what didn't you like about it, would you recommend it to others?" as follow up questions, which are very similar to the clarifying questions suggested by Childress-Campbell (2013).

While these questions may seem to be focusing on the books rather than the reader, nonetheless, in answering them, the reader reveals a great deal about their preferences. As Erin (Lib), explains "you can get to know them in a couple of minutes while they are there just by finding out what they like." Further, this circumvents the problem of how to ask questions about what the reader is looking for when what they are looking for might be an unconscious desire to seek understanding of the unknown. For example, with those readers like Prue (12), who are trying to understand relationships, emotions and death, you do not need to ask them directly if that's what they are looking for, if they have told you their favourite books are *If I Stay* and *The Fault in our Stars*, and when they talk about them, they focus on those aspects.

5.2.4   Importance of choice

Consistent with the literature review, for example, Kim (2001), Walton (2002), and Ross, McKechnie & Rothbauer (2006), the findings indicate that both the librarians and tweens recognise that choice is really important. The majority of staff and focus group participants agreed that being given a choice of several books during RA is thus preferable.

Table 7: Choice

Tween focus groups	Library staff
Do they want choice?	**Do they recommend choice?**
17 of 19 participants expressed a desire to be given a range of books to choose from	8 out of 9 recommend giving tweens choice
One said they would rather just be given one book	Only 1 did not mention choice
One said she did not mind either way	
How many to choose from?	**How many to offer?**
16 said 'several'	5 spoke about choice in general terms – a range, several
Only 1 said '1 book'	2 suggested 4-5
Only 1 said 'about 5'	1 suggested 6
Only 1 said she did not mind	

Cara (12) said: "I would prefer them to give me a few to choose from because then I can make the decision myself". Cassie (13) explained that this was because: "everyone's book opinion is so diverse and different, what they enjoy or what they think you'll enjoy will be quite different to what you actually do enjoy, so having options is good". Cedric (11), Cara (12), Rebecca (12) and Pierce (12) all commented that being given options also meant that you were not put on the

spot, and made it easier to reject some of the suggestions made without, as Rebecca (12) put it, "hurting anyone's feelings". However, there was one notable exception. Prue (12) observed "I'd rather they'd just give me one book because I'm not too brilliant at choosing books". Most of the focus group participants were vague as to how many they should be given to choose from, stating merely "several", although Pierce (12) suggested "maybe five to pick out of".

As for library staff, there was no direct question about choice, but rather it was allowed to arise naturally from discussion. Unprompted in this way, eight of the nine interviewed recommended giving tweens several books to choose from. Those who mentioned an exact amount suggested a range from four to six, although Greta (Lib) observed: "I wouldn't give them too many books because I think you can overwhelm them. I usually give them four to five". Isaac (Lib) explained why he believes choice is important: "They often get underrated in that department, because adults make their choices for them." Indeed, in a related theme that emerged, several staff observed that parents try to restrict children's choices. For example, Charlie (LA) mentioned the problem of parents not letting tweens choose, describing one interaction where "the father kept trying to say, 'no let's get this one.'" Charlie's response was to say "'he wants to read this one, and that's a good sign. Let him take it". This will be discussed further under the emerging theme of the parent triangle.

Seven of the library staff also recognised the importance of not putting tweens on the spot, and stressing that they did not have to take, read or enjoy all the books they were being offered. Bridget (Lib) said she always told them "you don't have to read it just because I've given it to you", and Erin (Lib) said she stresses "if you don't like them you don't have to read them because the whole idea about reading is to enjoy it".

Another related discussion that emerged was around assigned reading books at school. Cedric (11), Cassie (13) and Portia (11) all commented that trying to get a whole class to read the same book did not work for everybody. Cedric (11) had not enjoyed *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief:* "a lot of boys in my class loved it, and it was me and my friend who just couldn't get through it". And Portia (11) commented that *Kensuke's Kingdom* was "predictable and boring... but we had to study it for ages". Given that tweens are often given little choice in their reading at school, it is even more important that in a public library context, where they are focused on reading for pleasure, they should be given choice rather than being told, as Cedric (11) put it, "this one's really good, you should read it".

In conclusion, the research findings gave overwhelming support to the pile method in RA (Meminger, 2011, p.12), with a nominal caution not to overwhelm tweens with choice. For this reason, it is perhaps best practice to offer no more than four to five books to choose from.

5.3   Success of Librarian - tween Interactions

It is important to remember that the population samples for the focus groups were taken from a pool of avid readers known to the librarians at their home branches. This introduced a bias in the sampling on the question of interactions between librarians and tweens. Nonetheless, the findings were revealing.

The majority of the tweens in the focus groups were regular library patrons, visiting the library at least every two weeks, and some of them visiting several times a week. They all indicated that there were librarians they knew better than others. Fifteen of the nineteen tweens in the focus groups indicated that they would be more comfortable asking for readers' advisory help from a librarian they knew, and it was clear in all three groups that the tweens had preferred librarians they would ask for help. Hence, the findings were consistent with Randall's (2013, p.37) that "familiar relationships with staff seems to matter significantly". Furthermore, the tweens consistently ranked librarians they knew higher in terms of their book recommendations being relevant. Masie (10) commented "You can get kind of nervous if you go up to someone you don't know. So you're better off asking someone you know because they know what books you like." Portia (11) agreed, saying it could be "awkward" asking someone for advice and Wendy (11) explained that some people can feel shy. Cedric (11) explained he would rather deal with a librarian who already knew him "rather than going through the whole thing over and over again. You get one librarian that you really like and you just keep using them".

Consistent with the recommendations of Booth (2007), Moyer (2008) and Childress-Campbell (2013), eight of the library staff agreed that it was important or at least very helpful to get to know tweens, though some acknowledged that it was difficult given the busyness and transient nature of their patrons. Hazel (Lib) explained that it was easier to get to know the tweens if you stayed in a small community library because they grow up with you. Nonetheless, it is possible to achieve in busy suburban libraries as well. Charlie (LA) said "I spend most of my time getting to know the kids" and Isaac (Lib) says "it's about developing a relationship" with the tweens.

Seven of the library staff said that they actively approached tweens as well as responding to being approached. Hazel (Lib) said "I'm not backwards in coming forwards with kids I don't know, I will definitely approach them." Erin (Lib) explained it was about being observant "I notice, I watch when people are looking at the shelves", and Deidre (Lib) said "I eavesdrop on conversations" in order to respond to cues.

The tweens expressed the opinion that librarians needed to have the right attitude in order for tweens to feel comfortable with them. Pierce (12) observed that librarians were "helpful" and Pandora (13) that they were "friendly", however, it seems that this does not apply to all library staff. Wendy (11) said that library staff needed "to look approachable, not to look like they are a mean person and they don't like kids" and Willow (11) recommended that "sometimes if librarians, well some of them already are, but if they could try to be approachable." When prompted to explain what they meant by 'approachable' Maggie (12) explained "easy to talk to and understand what you are trying to get at" and, Matilda (10) said "ask if they could help" and Willow (11) suggested they needed to get out from behind the desk and wander around the library more.

All of the library staff stressed that attitude was important in interactions with tweens, and some of them acknowledged that not all library staff were good at interacting with tweens, for example Greta (Lib) observed "I think some people are frightened of children full stop" and Isaac (Lib) observed that some staff "get scared about" doing RA with tweens. But they said there was nothing to be scared of. In terms of strategies for building a trusting relationship with tweens, all of the library staff saw being friendly, approachable and accessible as important, recommending being positive, enthusiastic and relaxed. Six of them specifically mentioned not talking down to tweens but treating them the same as you would an adult, "with the same respect" (Bridget, Lib). Greta (Lib) observed "I don't treat the tweens any different to how I treat anyone else". Active listening, as advocated by Booth (2007) and Dali (2013), was also mentioned several times, and seeing "their concerns as valid, and their likes and dislikes" (Erin, Lib).

Isaac (Lib) expressed the opinion that "it is really vital to libraries' survival that people understand that there is someone at the library particularly for tweens and teenagers that you can come in and ask for recommendations from and that they are easily approachable and have a love of reading and just want to share it with people." Indeed, the tweens indicated that they did appreciate adults sharing their views of books, and agreed that once librarians get to know them, and what they like, they could be very good at recommending good books. Matilda (10) said: "I

think" librarians do make good recommendations "especially if you know the librarian and like what they like, and they can tell you that they really enjoyed it and think that you will enjoy it." Prue (12) said "I really like recommendations because my favourite books have been through recommendations" from librarians. Riley (12) said: "they are really good at recommending books to me" and Cedric (11) said: "Librarians often have a lot more knowledge of what kids my age like, because they see kids who come, they often hear about books that are good and will often pass it on to children our age. And it's a lot easier, because they know about a lot more than you will."

In terms of measuring success, the majority of library staff felt that the ultimate success was, as Deidre (Lib) put it: "someone comes back to me and says 'We enjoyed those books so much, what else can you recommend?' and that may not happen every week, but it does happen". However, realistically, they all concurred with Saricks' belief (as cited by Train, 2003, p.38) that you needed to measure success more immediately, by how the transaction went. Bridget (Lib) said "I guess success for me would be if I recommended five books and they took two of them. Even just borrowing them and giving them a go that would be enough for me." And Greta (Lib) said success was about "how happily they go out of the library. Again, body language, how relaxed they seem, how willing to engage."

The research findings are consistent with Walton's (2002) and Childress-Campbell's (2013) findings that tweens can and will listen to the recommendations by librarians so long as certain conditions are in place. These conditions include: knowing or at least feeling comfortable with the librarian, feeling listened to and respected, and the librarian coming across as friendly and sharing their enthusiasm for reading. Of course, a positive past history with RA interactions also helps.

5.3.1   Other Techniques/ Methods

When discussing their RA methods eight of the library staff talked about actually being among the shelves and pulling off books as they suggested them, rather than doing RA at the desk with the computer. Erin (Lib) explained "I always find it's best to actually be at the shelves actually looking at the books rather than looking on the catalogue, because with the catalogue most of the time the books you find are not in your library because we have fifty-five libraries." And Charlie (LA) said "It's easier to do RA at the shelves, because then they get something to go

away with." Isaac (Lib) agreed, observing that this was a big plus for the tween "because that way they are getting some value from their library visit."

All the tweens also referred to being with the books as the library staff helped them find something, giving them the opportunity to look at the books being suggested. Rebecca (12) also mentioned looking through the returned books with a staff member who told her "the short version of what the books were". Cedric (11) and Riley (12) referred to using their own returned books to give staff an idea of what they were looking for. Riley (12) said "when I've really enjoyed a book I bring it back and tell" the library staff "I really liked this, is there something like this or in the same genre?"

Staff mentioned two other RA techniques – displays and recommended folders. Five of the library staff referred to having specific displays to support their RA practices. Bridget (Lib) referred to a recommended reads display that she maintained daily, with books she personally recommended, and Isaac (Lib) referred to a similar concept at his branch. Deidre (Lib) referred to stands of popular genres. Five staff mentioned RA folders which were either kept behind the desk for staff or out amongst the shelves for patrons to look at. These were created by staff at that branch or shared amongst networks. For example, Charlie (LA) said "Behind the desk we keep readers advisory folders, we have one for children and one for YA as well, so I sometimes contribute to that, or look at what other staff members have recommended as well." Whereas Hazel (Lib) said "I photocopy the book cover and write a very small two sentence summary on the back. And say if you liked such and such you'll like this and it's laminated, because I find they really like that visual and it's on a key ring, it's like a flipchart and they flip through and they are used constantly. I come back after the weekends and they are all over" the place because tweens have been looking through them.

5.3.2   Engaging tweens with new suggestions

When asked what was most likely to help them make a decision on whether to take a book being suggested, the tweens talked about telling them a little bit about it, but not too much, as Portia (11) explained "otherwise it kind of ruins it." Other techniques they suggested included showing them the cover, or the blurb, or opening the book and giving them a chance to read a passage from it. Willow (11) said "it really helps when the librarian recommends a book and then gives it to me to read it, like read the back." When asked how they knew when they had found a good book, they made the same comments. Masie (10) said "I first go for the front cover. And then I

read the back to see if I like it" and Walter (11) observed that he would know he'd found a good book from "the book cover and the first few pages". Therefore, these techniques are used by the tweens whether or not a librarian is present.

Library staff agreed that these techniques worked well. Isaac (Lib) said "I put it in their hands, so they are holding it, and I let them browse through it while I look for something else". And Bridget (Lib) explained that this enabled "them at the end to make that decision independently, which I also think is very important too." Indeed, by giving tweens the opportunity to do what they would normally do anyway in assessing the book themselves, the adviser is supporting their independence as well as giving them choice. However, in using this technique, staff need to be aware that sometimes the tween will not want to look at the book, and that there is no point trying to get tweens to do this if they really are not interested. Abigail (LA) said "I guess with kids it's on their face, they either take it off you… you can tell if they are keen or not." And Greta (Lib) said it was a matter of noticing if "their body language is no, they've been totally put off by the cover."

Seven of the library staff emphasised the importance of enthusiasm in encouraging tweens to give a new book or author a try. They explained that if you are wanting to encourage tweens to read something, you need to make sure you're talking about something that you can feel enthused about. Erin (Lib) said "when you're talking about books, it's the books you loved that you will be enthusiastic about" and Hazel (Lib) said "The main thing is if it's a book you love you've got to project that passion and enthusiasm onto them." This gives further support to the idea that it is helpful for staff to read at least some tween books as recommended by Walton (2002), Northern (2010) and Perry (2013). Although Merga (2015, pp.40-1) was looking at the influence of high school teachers on recreational reading, nonetheless, it is interesting to note that she drew similar conclusions – that sharing an enthusiasm for books had a significant impact.

5.3.3   Following up

Most of the library staff recommended asking some kind of follow up question at the end of the RA transaction, though they were philosophical about whether they would actually receive feedback on how the books went. Bridget (Lib) said she asks them "to come back and let me know if they've liked the books" and Deidre (Lib) said "I say to them let me know what you thought." In situations where they do come back with feedback, this gives an opportunity to

further refine recommendations based on how they have gone with the previous suggestions. As Hazel (Lib) explained, once you have found out which one they have enjoyed the most, you "can go from there" making further suggestions based on their choice. And as Deidre (Lib) explained, it is also useful to know "if they didn't like it" because that also helps you further refine your suggestions. Particularly when receiving negative feedback, library staff said it was important to, as Bridget (Lib) put it, be OK with criticism and not get "too upset if their books aren't winners". And make sure to emphasise to the tween that that's OK. Charlie (LA) explains that when they tell her "'I didn't finish it'" she says, "that's cool, at least you tried." Greta (Lib) said she emphasises to them that she values their opinion either way. She tells them "If you think it's a dud, tell me, if you think it's worth recommending to your friends, people your own age, come back and tell me that, because what you recommend is then what I will recommend."

5.4 Reader-response theory

None of the library staff had heard of reader-response theory, which is not surprising, given this researcher had also not heard of it before beginning this study. Nonetheless, their opinions were consistent with it. Focus group members also gave supporting evidence for reader-response theory throughout the discussions.

Sixteen of the nineteen focus group members and all nine library staff explicitly stated that enjoyment of and engagement with books was an individual matter that varied from person to person. While the remaining three focus group members did not state it explicitly, they did not contradict it. Bridget (Lib) explained that "I think every child needs to be treated individually". Further, all of the focus group members and all of the librarians demonstrated their individual tastes, particularly in terms of genres and in terms of appeal factors, as already discussed under that section.

The variety of books mentioned throughout the interviews and focus groups was also a testimony to this individuality. For example, Cedric (11), Cara (12) and Cassie (13) all said they had tried but given up on *The Hobbit* because they did not like it, but Riley (12) observed that he had "really liked it". Cassie (13) demonstrated this vividly with an anecdote about a book club she belongs to: "I remember at the teen book club, we were talking about *The Selection*, which was the book I really loved and [another member and I] were both like 'it is...' and then he said 'absolutely terrible' and I said 'absolutely fantastic' and so the opinion about a book can vary

enormously". And the focus groups encompassed a wide range of favourite titles from *Dork Diaries* to *Thirst*, *Divergent* to *Polar Boy*.

The question of whether this focus on the reader could be extended to matching books to tweens through their personal interests and hobbies as suggested by Heritage (2004) and Childress-Campbell (2013) was less clear cut. Six of the seven library staff said they might ask a tween about their hobbies, but only if the tween could not think of a book they had enjoyed or were 'reluctant readers'. Overwhelmingly, their preferred focus would be on what books the tweens had enjoyed in the past, as already discussed under the section 'asking the right questions'. Only five of the nineteen focus group members said hobbies were relevant. Cedric (11) said: Because if you enjoy surfing, you want "a story about it because you know what's going to happen and what the character's feeling rather than just being left feeling like this isn't relevant to me." However, seven said hobbies were not relevant. Portia (11) explained "it doesn't really matter what my hobbies are. Like Triss (from *Divergent*), my hobbies aren't fighting and stuff, but I still really like the book". The remaining seven remained neutral, saying hobbies might have some relevance. Nonetheless, it was generally agreed that preferred genre had more relevance than hobbies. Willow (11) explained "I don't really mind" if the character has the same hobbies, "so long as it's in the genre I like".

Therefore, the findings support the idea that the child's hobbies are often not relevant to their reading interests, and that Rosenblatt (1995, p.82) is correct in observing that the adolescent is often not reading about the known and familiar, but about the unknown and unfamiliar. Thus, starting with questions about what books they have enjoyed is more likely to reveal what they are looking for in a book than questions about their hobbies. While this may seem to suggest a focus on the book rather than the reader, as has already been discussed under the section 'asking the right questions' the tween's explanation of books they have enjoyed is often revealing of themselves.

As to the question of what constitutes a 'good' book, all of the focus group members and all of the library staff agreed that genre preferences had a strong influence on perception of this. Pace also rated highly, with fourteen of the nineteen focus group members indicating that a 'good' book was fast paced, or gripping, or you could not put it down, though the books they felt were like this varied. All of the library staff stated that what constitutes a 'good' book depends on an individual's personal response to it. Greta (Lib) summed this up nicely: "I think a good book is a bit like a good wine, it's good as far as you go, it's your own absolute personal experience with

the book". However, while some indicated that this meant any book could be a 'good' book, and referred to titles such as *Goosebumps* and *Famous Five* which are considered of low literary merit but can be seen as 'good' books simply because they hook a lot of kids into reading, others stated that a 'good' book should have certain qualities such as "originality" (Bridget, Lib & Isaac, Lib), something "that touches your soul" (Erin, Lib), or "pushes your boundaries" (Bridget, Lib). Nonetheless, they all concurred that it's about "finding the right thing for the right person" (Hazel, Lib), thereby emphasising the highly individualised nature of opinion on what is a 'good' book.

In deference to the fact that the focus groups were made up of members under eighteen, the research questions did not probe deeply enough into their personal lives to prove a "live circuit" (Rosenblatt, 2005, p.24) between reader and text, nonetheless, some evidence arose from the discussions. Consistent with Ross's and Chelton's (2001) findings, a few of the tweens referred to reading based on their mood at the time. Prue (12) explained that "what kind of genre I want" "depends what mood I'm in". While Walter (11) spoke explicitly about wanting to find out if the characters "have the same personality as me", a possible example of one of Howard's (2011a, p.52) "personal reasons for pleasure reading" - personal reassurance.

Beard and Thi-Beard (2008, pp.331-2) argue that research should focus more on why people read, a perspective entirely consistent with reader-response theory. Though the questions did not probe too deeply into this, nonetheless some evidence arose from discussions. Fourteen of the nineteen focus group participants revealed that they read for excitement, and consequently wanted fast paced books and page turners. Seven of the nine library staff also recognised that pace was important for tweens. As already discussed under the section 'appeal factors', several of Dali's (2014) reader-driven appeal factors were also evident, such as reading for social connection, curiosity, and reading to learn from characters.

There was also evidence of reading to find out, as discussed by Ross (2000) and Moyer (2007), with eleven of the nineteen focus group participants mentioning learning through reading fiction, and eight of the nineteen also circling Intellect/ ideas/ concepts as appeal terms. Winona (13) said "I like learning through the experience of the characters and seeing how they react to things". Pandora (13) said "I quite like stories which make me think and I also like learning stuff from them". Cedric (11) said "I also want to learn through the experiences of the character to be able to relate it to real life to learn through it to see what mistakes they make". Willow (11) and

Walter (11) mentioned learning about other countries; Walter (11) said "If they, for example, go to a place such as USA, if I went to America that means I might know a lot about it".

In conclusion, while library staff and tweens are not consciously aware of reader-response theory, nonetheless, they believe in its philosophy. There is overwhelming support for the idea that people respond individually to books, and that what constitutes a 'good' book is an individual matter. Consequently it is true that we need to spend time getting to know the reader in order to find them a book they are likely to enjoy, although the assumption that this involves getting to know their hobbies is not necessarily relevant. However, the issue of reading as a transaction between reader and text, though supported by the findings, was not fully demonstrated in deference to the privacy of individuals.

5.5 Other emerging themes

5.5.1 Parent Triangle

While there was no direct question asking about doing RA for tweens with parents present, nonetheless, this theme emerged naturally out of discussions with all of the nine library staff interviewed. It was not mentioned by the tweens in the focus groups, with the majority of them speaking about dealing with librarians directly themselves. The key issues raised by library staff were balancing the discussion with the parent and child, dealing with parental biases on books and giving parents' guidance on the suitability of books.

Seven of the nine library staff explicitly stated that it is important to speak directly to the tween rather than just the parent. Isaac (Lib) explained that this is important because if you just speak with the parent then "you don't actually have an understanding of what" the tween wants "and they don't feel comfortable enough to talk". Erin (Lib) pointed out that RA discussions should always be with the tween, because after all, that is "the person who is actually reading the book". Where the tween is too shy to talk, Bridget (Lib) says she will talk "to the parents too, and just try to include them in the conversation as much as possible". While Deidre (Lib) and Abigail (LA) did not explicitly state that they tried to speak to the child rather than the parent, Deidre (Lib) referred to a process of showing the child several books and asking them questions directly, and saw the child gaining confidence in her recommendations and coming back to ask her for more recommendations directly themselves as a success.

Four of the nine library staff explicitly referred to the issue of parental bias, namely, that the books the child is interested in being too easy. In line with the perspectives of Walton (2002) and Krashen (2004), this was seen as an unhelpful perspective by all five library staff. Erin (Lib) explained that "Sometimes you have to let the parent know that it's OK to read as many books as they want to even if they think it's too easy for them, because that's how they build up their love of reading". Greta (Lib) and Charlie (LA) both said they point out to parents that it is great that the tween is interested in reading at all and to let them follow their interests. And while Deidre (Lib) felt that they should be reading closer to their level, nonetheless, she pointed out that it was important that "they don't feel judged".

Three of the library staff explicitly referred to parents seeking advice on whether books such as *The Hunger Games* were suitable for their children to read. This can be a common issue with tweens who are advanced readers, because they are wanting to read books in the teen section and parents aren't sure whether the books are suitable in terms of content. The advice here was to give the parents enough information to make the decision themselves, because it must be taken on a case by case basis. Hazel (Lib) explained that with *The Hunger Games* she says to parents "it depends. It's not sex, drugs and rock and roll, that part of it is fine, but there is kids killing other kids, so it depends how sensitive your child is". In giving this kind of advice, the readers' advisor needs a thorough knowledge of the book's content, best gained through reading, as suggested by Walton (2002), Northern (2010) and Perry (2013).

5.5.2   Reading levels

As there tends to be a strong emphasis on reading levels in research in an education environment, for example, Walton (2002), Heritage (2004) and Childress-Campbell (2013), and this report is focused on recreational reading in a public library environment, it was decided that a consideration of reading levels was outside the scope of this research. Nonetheless, it was mentioned at least in passing by all nine of the library staff interviewed and so arose as an emerging theme.

Eight of the nine library staff talked about gauging the tween's reading level. Six of those felt that the tween was the best judge of the level of book they were wanting, and that finding the right level was a process of showing the tween the size of the book and the print on the page, and asking them if it looked too easy, too hard or about right. Bridget (Lib) referred to "using that five finger rule", which Heritage (2004, p.77) explains is where a child holds up a finger for each

word they do not understand or cannot read. Five fingers or more for one page would mean the book is too hard. One of the remaining two, Isaac (Lib), said you could often tell from observing the tween what their level was likely to be, the way they talk to you, the language they use, and whether "they are still in childlike mode".

Also of those eight, four commented that the tween might be wanting to read at a lower level than they were capable of. While one of those four felt that this was an indication of reluctance to read, the other three felt that it was a positive. Bridget (Lib) said it gave them a "sense of accomplishment in reading them", and Erin (Lib) explained that "it's more important to enjoy it than to get to a certain level".

Conversely, three of the staff felt that the tweens might be capable of and wanting to read books at a higher reading level than normal for their age, but not necessarily ready for the content. In this situation, Abigail (LA) commented that if "you know there's material in there that's not appropriate" parents "appreciate honesty", and Hazel (Lib) made the same observation. In order to do this, library staff need to know the content of the books, and be honest about that content with both the child and parent so they can make informed decisions.

The tweens themselves did not discuss reading levels, although Cassie (13) commented that "*The Diary of a Wimpy Kid* sort of came out after I was past that stage" and Portia (11) observed that a school assigned book had been "way too easy for some of us". Nonetheless, it was evident from the books they mentioned that many of them read a range of levels. For example, Cara (12) mentioned *The Hunger Games* alongside *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid,* and Pandora (13) said she'd recently enjoyed the junior book *City of Death*, but had also read the adult book *The Da Vinci Code*. Wendy (11) referred to a deliberate strategy with reading levels, depending on the situation she was in: "if you've got a short time before getting somewhere, like if you're reading a book in the car, I usually have like a quick graphic novel to read, but if you're reading in bed at night or you're going on a long car journey, usually a nice thick chapter book." These findings are consistent with Walton's (2002, pp.51-3) observation that too much focus on reading levels can limit choices.

Indeed, it was generally acknowledged that tween readers are, as Fleur (LA) commented, "quite a fluid category in terms of the maturity, and reading ability and interests", and this is perhaps one of the greatest challenges for the readers' advisor. Hence it should not be assumed that a tween is or should be reading at only one level, and the readers' advisor would do best to be guided by the tween's interest at the time rather than by an assessment of what level he/she should be

reading at. In this way, during the RA transaction, the readers' advisor can simply give readers the opportunity to say whether the book looks about right, something Heritage (2004, pp.79-80) refers to as the "just right" principle.

6   Conclusion

In relation to the research questions posed, the results of this research indicate that library staff can and do effectively create and nurture tween readers through their RA practices. Though not consciously aware of reader-response theory, those who are successful at RA approach it from a perspective consistent with this theory – that reading pleasure is an individual matter, that what constitutes a 'good' book varies from patron to patron and that the RA transaction should be led by the tween's interests and focus. Hence a reader-response approach to RA is both appropriate and useful, giving a foundation of understanding to the individual nature of reading, the purpose of reading and what constitutes a 'good' book.

It is also evident that a rethink of appeal is necessary, and that this rethink needs to take into account the fact that not everyone responds to the same set of appeal factors. Again, during the RA transaction, the advisor needs to be led by the focus of the reader in terms of what appeal terms apply to them. Thus, in the consideration of appeal, library staff would be best served by having a wide repertoire of appeal concepts which are then tailored to the individual reader during each transaction. This repertoire should include both book related appeal factors, such as story, character, language and pace, as well as reading appeal factors such as social connection, learning from characters and curiosity.

In addition to these practices, effective RA approaches and methods for tweens include:

- a foundation of knowledge of tween books built up from both personal reading and research,
- a respectful and friendly attitude towards the tween themselves, whether or not a parent is present,
- asking open questions about previous books enjoyed, and getting the reader to share enough information to help the advisor understand what they are looking for,
- sharing an enthusiasm about books and reading,
- giving the reader several books to choose from,

- an emphasis on the fact that what is important is that the tweens find books they will enjoy – that they don't have to read or enjoy everything they are given, and that the readers' advisor is engaged in a hunt for those books the tween will really connect with.

Perhaps though, the most damaging to their perception of library staff as recommenders of good books, is the feeling that staff are unfriendly, disrespectful of the tweens opinions or not approachable. Therefore, it is clear that training or mentoring in dealing with RA for tweens would be of benefit to those staff who are less comfortable with doing it.

Given all of these effective practices, it is clear that tweens can and do have a positive attitude towards library staff and their ability to recommend 'good' books, and they will keep coming back for more recommendations when this relationship has been established. Therefore, with these practices in place, library staff are well equipped to fulfil the mandate of creating and nurturing readers.

7   Recommendations for Effective RA

1. RA can be approached from the theoretical perspective of reader-response theory, appreciating the highly individualised nature of tween patrons' book requirements.

2. While it is useful to know what is trending for tweens, recommendations should be dealt with on a case by case basis through actively listening to what the tween is saying about what they enjoy.

3. In RA transactions, library staff should talk about appeal in the same terms as the tween – that is, they should take clues from how the tween talks about books to learn what appeal terms are the priority for the individual child.

4. Library staff should make the effort to read some tween literature in genres they enjoy and research in all genres – read reviews, blogs, websites, and talk to the tweens about what they are reading.

5. In RA transactions, library staff should ask open and general questions that get tweens talking about books they have enjoyed or what they 'feel like' reading.

6. In RA transactions, library staff should give tweens several recommendations to choose from, perhaps four to five, unless the readers' advisor senses that the child is feeling overwhelmed by too much choice.

7. In RA transactions, library staff should make the effort to get to know the tweens a little, and talk to them about their book preferences.

8. Library staff should be approachable, friendly and accessible.

9. Library staff should do RA transactions at the shelves and can use displays and RA tools that work to support their recommendations.

10. Library staff should be enthusiastic about the books they suggest – which means recommending books they genuinely appreciate.

11. Library staff should ask the tween to come back and tell them how they have gone with the books staff have suggested. Both positive and negative feedback should be received equally, as this supports a process of continuous improvement.

12. In RA transactions, library staff should try as much as possible to deal directly with the child and get them talking even when the parent is acting as an intermediary.

13. In RA transactions, library staff should let the child gauge whether the book is at the reading level they are seeking.

8   Suggestions for future research

This research project has explored the appropriateness of a reader-response theory approach to RA, and certainly found evidence to support this approach. However, the scope of this research project, and the sensitive nature of the ethics of questioning children, meant that it did not fully explore the transactional nature of tweens' reading. It would be interesting to build on the work already done by Howard (2011a) in Canada, delving deeper into this personal interaction between the reader and the text, by exploring the questions of why tweens read, and what they get out of the reading process, particularly in a New Zealand context.

This research project has suggested that the best approach to appeal is to be flexible, using a wider range of appeal terms as a foundation and applying a subset of these to RA transactions based on cues from the specific reader. Dali (2014) has done significant work already in establishing what this wider repertoire of appeal terms might be, however, it would be interesting to conduct a similar quantitative study specifically with tween readers, to establish what that range of appeal terms should be for NZ public libraries.

This research project has found evidence to support the idea that the success of creating and nurturing tween readers comes down to certain behaviours and practices of library staff. It would be interesting to conduct a quantitative study similar to Howard's (2011b), of tween opinions of library staff as recommenders of good books which correlated their attitudes with library staff attitudes and behaviours, in a New Zealand context.

Appendices

Appendix 1:   Questions

Interview questions for library staff

Research Project Title: Creating and nurturing tween readers through readers' advisory services in a public library.

Researcher: Rhiannon Beolens, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington

1. How long have you been at Auckland Libraries? Did you work in libraries elsewhere before you came here?
2. Did you have formal training in conducting the readers' advisory interview? If not, how did you learn it on your own?
3. Have you heard of reader-response theory? If so, what does it mean to you?
4. Do you read tween literature?
    a. How many tween books would you read per month/ per year?
    b. What types or range of genres do you read?
5. Do you try to keep abreast of developments in tween literature? How? i.e. reading reviews, receiving recommendations from tween patrons, etc.
6. What readers' advisory resources do you regularly use in RA? – such as reading maps, reviews, databases, what next books, etc.?
7. How often do you encounter tween fiction readers' advisory enquiries?
8. Tell me about your experience of undertaking readers' advisory with tweens.
9. During an RA transaction:
    a. How do you establish an open and comfortable conversation with tween readers?
    b. What sorts of questions do you ask tween readers to establish what they like to read?
    a. What appeal terms do you use? (list provided for participants).
        i. E.g. pace, characterisation, storyline, tone (Kenney, 2010, Nesi, 2010, Kimmel, 2012, Sarricks, 2005)
        ii. or Sarricks rethink: adrenaline, intellect, emotion, landscape (Wyatt, 2007)

        iii. or Pearl's doorways: story, setting, character, language (Wyatt, 2007)

        iv. or Dali's (2013) reading appeal concept – escapism, curiosity, social connection, learning from characters?

    b. How would you define 'a good book' in the context of RA?

    c. How do you "tell the story" of how it's a 'good' book for them to read?

    d. Where a tween has come looking for a particular author or series that isn't available, how do you go about helping them find other books they might also enjoy? And how do you encourage them to give the unknown book a try?

    e. How do you gauge success? Do you follow up?

10. What methods do you use to get "non-approachers" interested in reading? Do you approach them individually? And how do you approach them?

11. Do you believe that it is important to get to know the reader as well as to know the books? How would you go about 'getting to know them'?

12. Do you ask about the tween's interests or hobbies or other questions personal to them, such as mood, or what they are looking for in their reading experience?

13. What do you think are the most important things for the child in the readers' advisory transaction?

14. What characteristics or behaviours, in your opinion, make someone a good readers' advisor for tweens?

15. What sorts of things do you feel librarians can do to help nurture and maintain a love of reading in tweens?

16. Is there anything else you'd like to add about RA for tweens?

Focus group questions for the tweens (age 10-13)

<u>**Research Project Title:**</u> Creating and nurturing tween readers through readers' advisory services in a public library.

<u>**Researcher**</u>: **Rhiannon Beolens, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington**

1. I've brought some of my favourite books along today – do any of these appeal to you? (Harry Potter, Rick Riordan, Hunger Games, Divergent, Apothecary, Spirit Animals, Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Dork Diaries…). Tell me about why or why not.
2. Tell me about a book you recently enjoyed reading.
    a. How would you describe it?
    a. What do the terms: pace, characterisation, storyline, tone, story, setting, character, language, escapism, relaxation, social connection and learning from characters mean for you when you think about reading – and do any of these terms help you explain what you enjoy when reading? (List provided for participants).
3. How often do you come to the public library to look for books?
4. Would you feel comfortable asking a librarian for a book recommendation? – why/ why not?

Rate how comfortable you feel asking a librarian for a book recommendation. 4 is very comfortable, 1 is I wouldn't ask (Participants provided with scale and asked to circle appropriate point):

5. How important is it for you to choose your own books? For example, if a librarian recommends books to you, would you prefer for them to give you several to choose from, or just recommend one?
6. Do you think librarians make good book recommendations? – why/ why not?

Rate how good you feel librarians are at making good book recommendations. 4 is very good, 1 is not good at all (Participants provided with scale and asked to circle appropriate point):

7. Tell me about an experience you've had with a librarian trying to help you find a book – whether it resulted in finding a good book or not.

    a. Can you remember what sort of questions you were asked?

8. When a librarian recommends a book to you, what works, what doesn't? E.g. telling you the plot, giving you an idea about pace, etc. Would it help if they read aloud a passage, or gave you the opportunity to read one?

9. Do you want to know that the librarian has read the book or that other tweens have enjoyed it? Why would or wouldn't this be important to you?

10. When a librarian is recommending books, they may ask you some questions about you – such as what your interests are, what hobbies you like, or what movies you watch. Would you feel comfortable answering these questions?

11. What sort of questions about you do you think would be relevant to your reading?

    a. For example, if you play soccer, dance, ride, or do parkour would you want to read a story about that?

    b. What other sort of questions do you think someone should ask to find you books you might enjoy? E.g. ideas, themes or experiences that you, as an individual, are interested in? Optional extra prompt: do you read to find out about things?

12. If you've come looking for a particular book or author that isn't available, what might encourage you to try another one you haven't heard of?

13. How do you know when you've found a 'good' book?

14. Do you like to read a variety of books? Do you sometimes feel like reading one type of book and another time a different type? Can you tell me why?

15. Can you remember the first book that really switched you on to reading? What was it about it that you liked?

16. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about books, reading and/ or the library?

Appendix 2: Staff Interviews Human Ethics Documents

SCHOOL OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
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Library Staff Participant Information Sheet

Research Project Title: Creating and nurturing tween readers through readers' advisory services in a public library.

Researcher: Rhiannon Beolens, School of Information Management, Victoria University of
                  Wellington

What is the purpose of the study?

I am a Master of Information Studies student at Victoria University of Wellington. As part of the completion of my Master of Information Studies degree, I am undertaking a research project. The project is designed to enhance understanding of how children's librarians in public libraries can effectively create and nurture tween readers through readers' advisory practices. It is hoped that this research will provide a foundation for best practice in readers' advisory for tweens at Auckland Libraries, and indeed in public libraries generally, and that it might contribute to the development of a readers' advisory strategy enabling children's librarians to fulfil the mandate to "create and nurture readers" (Auckland Council, 2013, p.22). Victoria University requires, and has granted, approval from the School's Human Ethics Committee.

What will participation involve?

With permission from Greg Morgan, I am inviting children's librarians from several Auckland Libraries branches to participate in this research. Participants will be asked to take part in a one-on-one one hour interview. Permission will be asked to record the interview, and a transcript of the interview will be sent to participants for checking.

Confidentiality:

Participation is voluntary, and you will not be identified personally in any written report produced as a result of this research, including possible publication in academic conferences and journals. All material collected will be kept confidential, and will be viewed only by myself and my supervisor, Prof. Anne Goulding, **Research Degrees Programme Director**. It will not be possible for you to be identified personally in the final report as participants will be identified only through code-names.

The report will be submitted for marking to the School of Information Management and deposited in the University Library and selected results may also be submitted for publication in scholarly journals. Key staff members at Auckland Libraries may read my final report to see if it can inform best practice in readers' advisory at Auckland Libraries.

Should any participant wish to withdraw from the project, they may do so until the 30th August 2015, and the data collected up to that point will be destroyed. All data collected from participants will be destroyed within 2 years after the completion of the project.

Contact for further information:

Please let me know by email whether you agree to participate. If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me at beolenrhia@myvuw.ac.nz or telephone 09 3729572 or 021 0799420, or you may contact my supervisor Prof. Anne Goulding at anne.goulding@vuw.ac.nz or telephone 04 463 **5887**.

Rhiannon Beolens

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Library Staff Consent to Participate In Research Form

Research Project Title: Creating and nurturing tween readers through readers' advisory services in a public library.

Researcher: **Rhiannon Beolens, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington**

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that I may withdraw myself (or any information I have provided) from this project, without having to give reasons, by e-mailing beolenrhia@myvuw.ac.nz by the 30th August 2015.

I understand that any information I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and their supervisor, the published results will not use my name, and that no opinions will be attributed to me in any way that will identify me.

I understand that the data I provide will not be used for any other purpose or released to others.

I understand that, if this interview is audio recorded, the recording and transcripts of the interviews will be erased within 2 years after the conclusion of the project. Furthermore, I will have an opportunity to check the transcripts of the interview.

I understand that the report will be submitted for marking to the School of Information Management and deposited in the University Library. I understand that this report may be submitted for publication in scholarly journals. Key staff members at Auckland Libraries may read my final report to see if it can inform best practice in readers' advisory at Auckland Libraries.

Please indicate (by ticking the boxes below) which of the following apply:

☐   I would like to receive a summary of the results of this research when it is completed.

☐   I agree to this interview being audio recorded.

Signed: _____.

Name of participant: _____.

Date: _____.

Appendix 3: Focus Group Human Ethics Documents

SCHOOL OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
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Guardian of Discussion Group Participant Information Sheet

Research Project Title: Creating and nurturing tween readers through readers' advisory services in a public library.

Researcher: Rhiannon Beolens, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington

To parent and caregivers:

Please take the time to discuss the goals of this research project with the child you are caring for. If you are happy to give consent for him/her to participate in the focus group session, please read and sign the attached consent form.

What is the purpose of the study?

I am a Master of Information Studies student at Victoria University of Wellington. As part of the completion of my Master of Information Studies degree, I am undertaking a research project. The project is designed to enhance understanding of how children's librarians in public libraries can advise tweens on what they may like to read. It is hoped that this research will help public libraries develop their reading services for tween readers. Victoria University requires, and has granted, approval from the School's Human Ethics Committee.

What will participation involve?

With permission from Greg Morgan (Senior Manager in Auckland Libraries), I am inviting children aged 10 to 13 from several Auckland Libraries branches to participate in this research. Participants will be asked to take part in a discussion group with other children of similar age. Participants under the age of

16 require their guardians to understand the purposes of the project, discuss it with the child, and give their consent to the child's participation.

Each focus group session should last approximately an hour. I will be providing refreshments during the course of the session. I will be recording each session in audio format on a digital recorder.

Each participant will be asked to attend a focus group at {**where/ when**}, where they will be joined by about 6-8 other participants and myself. As the investigator in this project, I will be leading the focus groups. I will ask a series of prepared questions about what they like to read and why, and how they find books to read at the library. I may ask further questions if the conversation leads to new topics. Participants will be asked to attend a focus group at a library which is their home branch and the sessions will be run during the branch's opening hours. The session will be recorded on a digital recorder, and a transcript of the discussion will be sent to participants for checking.

Confidentiality:

Participation is voluntary, and you and your child will not be identified personally in any written report produced as a result of this research, including possible publication in academic conferences and journals. All material collected will be kept confidential, and will be viewed only by myself and my supervisor, Prof. Anne Goulding, **Research Degrees Programme Director**. It will not be possible for you or your child to be identified personally in the final report as participants will be identified only through code-names.

The report will be submitted for marking to the School of Information Management and deposited in the University Library. This report may also be submitted for publication in scholarly journals. Key staff members at Auckland Libraries may read my final report to see if it can inform reading services at Auckland Libraries.

Should any child wish to withdraw from the project, they may do so without question by e-mailing beolenrhia@myvuw.ac.nz before the focus group session which they have agreed to attend on {{a specific date}}, and the data collected up to that point will be destroyed. All data collected from the children will be destroyed within two years after the completion of the project.

Please explain to the child in your care that any information provided by the other participants in the focus group must be also kept confidential. **This is the participant code of confidentiality: any kind of information shared by any of the group members must remain anonymous as it has been shared in absolute confidence, to maintain the safety and privacy of each participant.**

Contact for further information:

If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact me at beolenrhia@myvuw.ac.nz or telephone 09 3729572 or 021 0799420, or you may contact my supervisor Prof. Anne Goulding at anne.goulding@vuw.ac.nz or telephone 04 463 **5887**.

Rhiannon Beolens

Participant Information Sheet for focus group participants

Research Project Title: Creating and nurturing tween readers through readers' advisory services in a public library.

Researcher: **Rhiannon Beolens, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington**

I need your help!

I am a Master of Information Studies student at Victoria University of Wellington. As part of my studies, I am doing a research project.

What is the purpose of the study?

The project is aimed at helping children's librarians in public libraries understand how they can help tween readers find books they will enjoy reading.   I have approval from Auckland Libraries and Victoria University to do this research.

What will participation involve?

I am inviting you to take part in this research. This will involve a discussion group with 6-8 other children of around the same age. The session will take place at \<name of Library\> on \<date/time\>.   During the session you will be asked about what you like to read and how you find books to read at the library. Your parents or guardians must agree for you to take part in this project so please discuss it with them.

Each discussion session should last around an hour. You will be given refreshments during the session. The session will be recorded on a digital recorder. Following the session, I will type up the recording and send you a copy so that you can check it.

Confidentiality:

Taking part in the discussion session is voluntary, and you will not be identified personally in any report. Anything you say will be kept confidential, and will be seen only by myself and my supervisor, Prof. Anne Goulding. When I write the report, I will give you a code name so nobody will know that you took part in the discussion or what you said.

If you decide that you don't want to take part after all, that is not a problem. You can let me know that you do not want to take part by e-mailing beolenrhia@myvuw.ac.nz before the focus group session which you have agreed to attend on {{a specific date}}, and I will get rid of all your information. All the recordings of the sessions will be destroyed two years after the project has finished.

Any information provided by the other tweens in the focus group must be also kept confidential to make sure everything is safe and private.

Contact for further information:

If you have any questions you can contact me at beolenrhia@myvuw.ac.nz or telephone 09 3729572 or 021 0799420, or you may contact my supervisor Prof. Anne Goulding at anne.goulding@vuw.ac.nz or telephone 04 463 **5887**.

Rhiannon Beolens

SCHOOL OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
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Guardian Consent to Participate in Research Form

Research Project Title: Creating and nurturing tween readers through readers' advisory services in a public library.

Researcher: Rhiannon Beolens, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction. The child in my care, and I, have discussed the goals and process of this project and I give consent for him/her to be involved in the focus groups.

I understand that I may withdraw my child (or any information they have provided) from this project, without having to give reasons, by e-mailing beolenrhia@myvuw.ac.nz before the focus group session which they have agreed to attend on {{a specific date}}.

I understand that any information my child provides will be kept confidential to the researcher and their supervisor, the published results will not use his/her name, and that no opinions will be attributed to him/her in any way that will identify him/her.

I understand that the data my child provides will not be used for any other purpose or released to others.

I understand that this discussion will be audio recorded, the recording and transcripts of the discussion will be erased within two years after the conclusion of the project. Furthermore, the child in my care will have an opportunity to check the transcripts of the discussion.

I understand that the report will be submitted for marking to the School of Information Management and deposited in the University Library. I understand that this report may be submitted for publication in scholarly journals. Key staff members at Auckland Libraries may read my final report to see if it can help with their services.

I agree that _____, who is under my guardianship, may take part in this research.

Please indicate (by ticking the boxes below) which of the following apply:

☐   I would like to receive a summary of the results of this research when it is completed.

Signed: _____.

Name of guardian: _____.

Date: _____.

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Tweens Consent to Participate in Discussion Group Research

Research Project Title: Creating and nurturing tween readers through readers' advisory services in a public library.

Researcher: Rhiannon Beolens, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that I may withdraw myself (or any information I have provided) from this project, without having to give reasons, by e-mailing beolenrhia@myvuw.ac.nz before the focus group session which I have agreed to attend on {{a specific date}}.

I understand that any information I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and their supervisor, the published results will not use my name, and that no opinions will be identified as mine in any way that will identify me.

I understand that the data I provide will not be used for any other purpose or released to others.

I understand that this discussion will be audio recorded, the recording and transcripts of the discussion group will be erased within 2 years after the conclusion of the project. Furthermore, I will have an opportunity to check the written record of the discussion.

I understand that the report will be submitted for marking to the School of Information Management and deposited in the University Library. I understand that this report may be submitted for publication in scholarly journals. Key staff members at Auckland Libraries may read the final report to see if it can help them with their reading services.

Please indicate (by ticking the boxes below) which of the following apply:

☐   I would like to receive a summary of the results of this research when it is completed.

Signed: _____.

Name of participant: _____.

Date: _____.

Focus Group Ground Rules

<u>**Research Project Title:**</u> Creating and nurturing tween readers through readers' advisory services in a public library.

<u>**Researcher**</u>: **Rhiannon Beolens, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington**

Focus Group Ground Rules for the tweens (age 10-13):

1. I want you to do the talking, and would like everyone to participate. I may ask you by name to contribute if you haven't said anything for a while.

2. However, if at any point you don't want to answer a question that's fine – you don't have to answer it.

3. **Any information provided by the other tweens in the focus group must be kept confidential** to make sure everything is safe and private. WHAT IS SAID IN THIS ROOM STAYS HERE.

4. Other members may have different opinions to yours, and that's OK. Respect the opinions of other group members as you would expect them to respect your own.

5. There are no right or wrong answers. Everyone's experiences and opinions are important. Speak up whether you agree or disagree. I want to hear your individual opinions.

6. Respect other members when they are talking and wait your turn.

7. I will be recording this discussion group because I want to capture everything you have to say. I won't be identifying anyone by name in my report – I will be giving you a pseudonym/ made up name so your identity will be kept confidential.

Appendix 4 – Approval To Conduct Research

Auckland Council
Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau

14 January 2015

Human Ethics Committee
Victoria University of Wellington
PO Box 600
Wellington 6140
New Zealand

I give permission for Rhiannon Beolens to interview Libraries staff and patrons aged 10-13 (with their parent's permission also) and to name Auckland Libraries in her research for her MIS research project Info 580, which will be conducted between March and October 2015.

The topic of this research is how children's librarians in public libraries can create and nurture tween readers (aged 10 -13) through the readers' advisory process within the context of reader-response theory.

I request that should she intend to publish any of her findings, Rhiannon first discuss that with Allison Dobbie, Manager Libraries and Information.

Yours sincerely

Greg Morgan
Acting Manager Libraries and Information

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