Bibliotherapy:
the effects of book club training on literacy skills and social-emotional competencies in adolescents from disadvantaged communities.

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Introduction

This study examines the effectiveness of a training that promotes reading engagement, reading comprehension and social-emotional competencies in young adolescents from disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Tijms & Stoop, 2014). In these communities there is a high amount of inhabitants that are unemployed, having low-incomes, and are non-western. In comparison to peers from more advantaged backgrounds, adolescents from these communities live in a more stressful milieu (Inspectie van Onderwijs, 2014; Tijms & Stoop, 2014).

Previous research have shown that adolescents from disadvantaged communities are more challenged with reading engagement, reading comprehension and social-emotional competencies (Retelsdorf, Becker, Köller & Möller, 2011; Sirin, 2005; Swalander & Taube, 2007). This is alarming, because these skills are essential for school engagement and academic achievement (Elbaum & Vaughn, 2003; Guthrie, Wigfield, & Klauda, 2012; Romano, Babchisin, Pagani, & Cohen, 2010, Tijms & Stoop, 2014). In addition, these components have been shown to predict school dropout (Reschly, 2010) and are associated with someone's general wellbeing and quality of life in the long term (Elbaum & Vaughn, 2003, Tijms & Stoop, 2014).The following paragraphes will discuss these literacy and social-emotional skills more in-depth.

Reading engagement

In secondary education, reading is a fundamental skill that is essential for achievements in all academic domains (Cromley, Azevedo, & Harris, 2007). It is necessary to understand instructions of various courses and to accomplish homework assignments. If adolescents experience difficulties regarding reading they are often unable to keep up with course content and scholarly expectations (Reschly, 2012). Because all academic areas require reading skills to understand the course work properly, struggling readers are more at risk for poor academic achievements and school dropout (Daggett & Hasselbring, 2007; Reschly, 2010). In addition, low literacy skills are associated with unemployment, because the job market requires more reading competencies (EU, 2012; Tijms & Stoop, 2014). This is alarming because school dropout and unemployment are associated with stress, poverty and less healthy behavior (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, & Taylor; Reschly, 2010; Undheim, Wichstrøm, & Sund, 2011). For these reasons reading interventions are needed to stimulate reading behavior and academic achievement, in order to decrease the risk that adolescents from disadvantaged communities will become dropouts and unemployed (Fisher & Ivey, 2006; Reschly, 2010).

First, reading intervention should focus on reading engagement, because this is an important predictor of reading behavior. Reading engagement is the extent to which someone takes time and effort to read. It can be distinguished in reading motivation and reading attitude (Guthrie et al., 2012; Schiefele, Schaffner, Möller, & Wigfield, 2012). Someone who is highly motivated and has a positive attitude regarding reading, shows more dedication and interest to read (Guthrie et al., 2012). Although reading motivation and reading attitude might seem the same, a distinction can be made. Reading motivation is the intention to read, while reading attitude refers to the feelings that reading activities evoke (Schiefele et al., 2012; Tijms & Stoop, 2014).

Another important predictor of reading is reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is the ability to understand the purpose and meaning of a story (Lai, Wilson, McNaughton, & Hsiao, 2014). This skill is correlated with reading motivation and attitude, because someone who is highly motivated and has a positive attitude regarding reading is more likely to engage in reading activities. This practice in turn develops the reading comprehension (Schaffner, Schiefele, & Ulfers, 2013; Taboada, Townsend, & Boynton, 2013).

Reading motivation. Reading motivation can be defined as the extent to which someone is dedicated and takes the lead to participate in various reading activities. Highly motivated people read for their enjoyment and read texts that contain diverse contents, genres and topics (De Naeghel et al., 2014).

Reading motivation can be distinguished in extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (Schaffner et al., 2013). Intrinsic reading motivation refers to the intention to read, because it is inherently interesting or rewarding (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Tijms & Stoop, 2014). A person who is object-specific intrinsically motivated participates in reading activities because the text or topic is enjoyable. A person who is activity-specific intrinsically motivated reads because the reading activity is seen as a positive experience (Schiefele et al., 2012).

Extrinsic reading motivation is provoked by external reasons (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Schiefele et al., 2012). This means that extrinsically motivated readers engage in reading activities because these provide external rewards (e.g., reading faster than peers) or avoid external negative outcomes (e.g., poor grades) (Schiefele et al., 2012).

Reading motivation, especially intrinsic motivation, predicts frequent reading behavior and better literacy skills (De Naeghel et al., 2014; OECD, 2009). As a consequence, reading motivation is an important predictor for academic success (Wolters, Denton, York, & Francis, 2014).

Teachers can increase the intrinsic reading motivation of students by promoting adolescents' competence and autonomy regarding reading. Competence is the feeling of being confident during reading activities. Teachers can stimulate this skill by providing step-by-step directions, optimal challenges and positive feedback (De Naeghel, 2014; Guthrie et al., 2006; Jang, Reeve & Deci, 2010; Mouratidis, Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Sideridis, 2008). In addition to competence, teachers should promote the autonomy of their students. Autonomy can be defined as the feeling of being an initiator of reading activities. Teachers can support this by providing time for adolescents to read in their own way and by listening to the preferences of students. For example, students are more motivated to read when they choose a book that they prefer (De Naeghel, 2014; Guthrie et al., 2006; Jang et al., 2010; Reeve & Jang, 2006).

Reading attitude. Intrinsic reading motivation is positively correlated with a positive reading attitude (McKenna, Conradi, Lawrence, Jang, & Meyer, 2012). Reading attitude can be defined as the feelings toward reading (Schiefele et al., 2012; Tijms & Stoop, 2014). Because the reading attitude of adolescents depends on different contexts and purposes, a more detailed perspective of reading attitude is needed (Conradi, Jang, Bryant, Craft, & McKenna, 2013).

First, school, peers and the family of adolescents influence their reading attitude (Conradi et al., 2013; Klauda, 2009). Based on a literacy review, Klauda (2009) concluded that adolescents have a more positive reading attitude and show more reading behavior when they participate in interactive reading activities and when they are encouraged by their environment to read. For example, adolescents are more likely to develop a positive reading attitude if peers, school and family create a strong literacy environment. If school and family offer many quality books, they express implicit expectations that it is normal and joyful to engage in reading activities. If the environment provide books that match the adolescents' interests and reading abilities, it becomes even more likely that they engage in reading activities and discover that reading can be enjoyable and informative (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Klauda, 2009). Especially the value that peers place on reading activities are important, because adolescence is characterized as a period in which adolescents are more focused on the values and attitudes of friends (Oberle, Schonert-Reichl, Hertzman, & Zumbo, 2014; Steinberg, 2005). If peer express a positive reading attitude toward interactive reading activities, it becomes more likely that adolescents develop a positive reading attitude as well (Klauda, 2009).

Second, reading attitude of adolescents depends on the purposes of the reader (Conradi, et

al., 2013; McKenna et al., 2012). One can read for academical purposes, like adolescents have to read for school. Recreational purposes on the other hand refer to leisure-time reading (McKenna et al., 2012). Recreational reading is often accompanied by a positive reading attitude and intrinsic motivation (Cox & Guthrie, 2001).

Teachers who stimulate reading behavior have a positive influence on the students' reading attitude toward academical texts (Keskin, 2014). This is important, because a positive reading attitude predicts frequent academical reading and academic achievement (Keskin, 2014). However, especially a positive reading attitude toward recreational reading is correlated with frequent reading behavior, reading comprehension and literacy skills (Wigfield et al., 2008; De Naeghel, Van Keer, Vansteenkiste, & Rosseel, 2012). Teachers can stimulate this by creating interactive reading activities. Previous research have shown that these social activities increase reading for enjoyment (De Naeghel et al., 2014). In addition, teachers should provide texts that match the interests and reading abilities of their students (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Guthrie et al, 2006; Klauda, 2009; Tijms & Stoop, 2014).

Reading comprehension. Now that we have discussed reading engagement, we turn our attention to another important aspect of literacy, that is, reading comprehension. Reading comprehension can be defined as the knowledge of semantic, grammatical, lexical and organizational aspects of a text in order to understand the purpose and meaning of the story (Lai, Wilson, McNaughton, & Hsiao, 2014). One must be able to scan the following parts of a text: topic, structure, key concepts and relations between concepts (Tijms & Van Gelder, 2012).

Reading comprehension is correlated with reading motivation and is especially developed when one is intrinsically motivated to read (Schaffner et al., 2013; Taboadaet al., 2013). When students believe that they are competent in reading, they are more motivated to process the structures and connections in complex texts (Guthrie & Klauda, 2014). Reading comprehension is also correlated with a positive reading attitude. Students who are better able to understand a text, are more likely to develop a positive reading attitude. This in turn leads to more reading engagement, which stimulates the reading comprehension skills (OECD, 2009).

At high school the sentences and structures of texts are becoming more complex in comparison to elementary school. In addition, the content of texts are becoming more diverse and specialized (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007). Consequently, it requires a more sophisticated

reading comprehension of the adolescents (Lai et al., 2014). It is important that students acquire this reading skill, because it helps them to understand the course content properly (Alfassi, 2004; Reschly, 2010). Students who have poorer reading comprehension skills view the course work as more difficult than those who use adequate reading strategies (Wolters et al., 2014). For this reason it is important that teachers stimulate the reading comprehension skills of their students.

Teachers can stimulate reading comprehension by providing hands-on activities (Guthrie et al., 2006). For example, students do not only read a book, but discuss this with peers as well. During these discussions, students relate the themes of the book with their daily life issues. By using different approaches to engage in reading activities, students integrate their background knowledge with a book, which increases their conceptual understanding about a topic. This in turn makes it easier to derive meaning from a text (Guthrie et al., 2006).

The relationship between hands-on activities and comprehension skills is also mediated by reading motivation and reading attitude. Previous research have shown that students were more interested and motivated to read when they were using different reading approaches. Even for students with less reading motivation and a negative reading attitude, participation in hands-on tasks enhanced their reading interests. This is important because reading motivation and attitude are positively correlated with reading comprehension (Guthrie et al., 2006; OECD, 2009).

Literacy skills of adolescents

Based on previous findings, it can be concluded that reading motivation, reading attitude and reading comprehension are important skills for a successful academic career. This stresses the importance that adolescents master these competencies. However, it is alarming that many adolescents do not acquire the skills that are required at high school (Durlak et al., 2011; Guthrie, Klauda, & Morrisson, 2012; Wolters et al., 2014).

Previous studies have shown a negative change in reading motivation, and attitude during the transition from elementary school to high school (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; McKenna et al., 2012; Conradi et al., 2013). Forty percent of children from the fourth grade state that reading was their favourite activity, while ten percent of adolescents from the eight grade encounter reading as joyful. Besides, sixty-eight percent of these adolescents strongly disagreed with that statement (McKenna et al, 2012). Especially adolescents' intrinsic reading motivation is declined when they enter high school, because they are starting to perceive

reading as an academic activity (Conradi et al., 2013; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Students perceive in-school literacies as a sanction, because they are obligated to read books that are typically chosen by the teacher. As previous research have shown, this decreases the reading motivation and attitude of students. The perception of reading as an obligated and sanctioned activity negatively influences their perspective of reading, both in-school and out-school. For this reason many adolescents stop reading for their own enjoyment and identify themselves as resistant or non-readers (Conradi et al., 2013).

Another explanation for the negative transition in reading motivation and attitude, is that books become seen as 'uncool' during adolescence (Merga, 2014). Early adolescence is characterized as a period in which adolescents are more focused on the values and attitudes of peers (Oberle et al., 2014; Steinberg, 2005). Adolescents who are not encouraged by their peers to read, are less likely to be motivated and interested to engage in reading activities (Klauda, 2009).

Because a decline in reading motivation and a negative reading attitude are correlated with reading comprehension, it is not surprising that many adolescents struggle with this last reading skill. Reading comprehension, on the other hand, influences reading motivation and attitude as well (McKenna et al., 2012). Struggling readers who have less developed reading comprehension skills, have multiple experiences of failure regarding reading tasks. Due to these negative experiences, reading will be associated with more frustrated feelings which in turn leads to less reading motivation and a negative reading attitude (Wolters et al., 2014). Especially during adolescence it is important that students do not perceive reading as a difficult activity, because it is a period where they compare themselves often with peers. Adolescents who realize that they are not as capable in reading as other classmates are more likely to become less motivated to read (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Previous research have shown that this leads to less reading engagement and in turn to underdeveloped reading comprehension skills (Schaffner et al., 2013; Taboada et al., 2013).

Social-emotional competencies

In addition to reading, previous research have shown that social-emotional competencies are associated with academic achievement (Durlak et al., 2011; Elias, 2004; Romano et al., 2010). Social-emotional competencies can be defined as the ability to recognize and manage emotions, maintain positive relationships, appreciate the perspectives of others and make responsible decisions (Durlak et al., 2011; Shechtman & Yaman, 2012).

Social emotional competencies can be divided in the following subcompetencies: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship management and responsible decision making (Casel, 2005; Durlak et al., 2011; Elias, 2004; Payton et al. 2009). Self-awareness is the ability to identify one's own emotions, values, strengths and weaknesses. Social awareness is the competence to recognise the emotions, values and perspectives of others. Self-management is the capability to manage and monitor one's emotions and behaviors. Relationship management is the ability to communicate and work with others. And last, responsible decision making is the competence to recognise and evaluate problems in order to make effective solutions (Casel, 2005; Elias, 2004; Payton et al. 2009).

These subcompetencies are essential for positive classroom interactions and academic achievement (Elias, 2004; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). The ability to recognise emotions in self and others, and the competence to work and communicate with others are positively correlated with social relations in school (Elias, 2004). In addition, it is important that adolescents identify their strengths in the school context, because these strengths helps them to make contributions to their classmates (Elias, 2004). These positive classroom interactions and contributions predict more school engagement, which in turn leads to better academic achievements and less school dropout (Durlak et al., 2011; Elias, 2004). Besides, the competence to manage one's own emotions and behaviour leads to better attention and less distraction in classrooms. Consequently, this predicts academic achievement as well (Elias, 2004; Wallace, Anderson, Bartholomay & Hubb, 2002).

Social-emotional competencies of adolescents

Previous studies have shown that many adolescents lack adequate social-emotional skills as they enter high school (Durlak et al., 2011; Rhodes, Roffman, Reddy, & Fredriksen, 2004). Based on a national sample in America, only 29% to 40% of the 148,189 adolescents reported that they acquire adequate social-emotional competencies like empathy and interpersonal skills (Benson, Leffert, Scales & Blyth, 2012). In addition, previous research have shown that adolescents are more concerned about their social and cognitive skills and that they are more likely to develop a negative self-concept (Rhodes et al., 2004). An explanation for these under adapted competencies is that early adolescence is a period of social-emotional and cognitive changes (Baroccas, 2012; Steinberg, 2005).

Social-emotional competencies are challenged because the transition to high school is accompanied by higher demands of these skills (Lai et al., 2014). It is a time where

adolescents develop their own identity. In this period they become able to reflect on their traits, preferences and goals. As a consequence, they are struggling to find out who they are, what they find interesting, what carrier they want, on which friends/romantic partners they can count etcetera (Code, Bernes, Gunn & Bardick, 2010; Dahl & Forbes, 2010; Reimer, Goudelock & Walker, 2006). These concerns about their self -and social-concept are especially difficult when young adolescents enter an unfamiliar and stressful secondary school environment. In this environment they need to find new friends and distinct themselves more from home (Baroccas, 2012; Dahl & Forbes, 2010). Besides these social-emotional demands, they have to deal with new academic obligations. They are faced with more sophisticated course work and they are expected to make long-term decisions, like their future academic carrier (Code et al., 2010; Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Lai et al., 2014).

Because adolescents experience social-emotional and cognitive demands, they are faced with a stressful and sensitive period (Oberle et al., 2014). For this reason it is important that adolescents receive support from peers and teachers. These relationships are important for students' personal well-being, because they provide intimacy, emotional support and care. Besides, these healthy relationships are important for their well-being in school. Students are more engaged in school when teachers are supportive and make lessons more interesting, and when peers make school a positive place to hang out. In addition, teachers and peers can provide support during exams and schoolwork, which leads to less stress (Oberle et al., 2014; McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010.

On the other hand, a lack of social-emotional skills is associated with less qualitative relationships with classmates and teachers. This leads to an increased risk of disengagement from school, which in turn leads to poor academic performances and drop out (Benson et al., 2012; Durlak et al., 2011; Elias, 2004).

Adolescents from disadvantaged communities

Based on previous findings, one can conclude that adolescents in general struggle to meet the requirements of high school on their reading engagement, reading comprehension and social-emotional competencies. However, adolescents from disadvantaged neighbourhoods in particular experience difficulties with these abilities (McBride Murry, Berkel, Gaylord-Harden, Copeland-Linder, & Nation, 2011; Tijms & Stoop, 2014).

Relatively to adolescents in general, adolescents from these communities show a negative motivation and attitude toward reading (Retelsdorf et al., 2011; Swalander & Taube, 2007). It

is documented that adolescents from a high social-economical milieu are more likely to have parents who read for their own enjoyment. These parents stimulate their children more often to engage in reading activities. On the other hand, adolescents from disadvantaged communities are less encouraged to read, because their environment is less involved in reading activities. This influence of the home-environment might explain that adolescents from high social-economical milieus are more interested and motivated to read as opposed to adolescents from disadvantaged communities (Retelsdorf et al., 2011).

In addition to reading engagement, previous studies have shown that adolescents from disadvantaged communities have poorer reading comprehension skills than their peers. This has especially been seen in immigrants (PISA, 2009; Van Diepen, 2007). They have an increased risk to obtain poor academic outcomes, because underdeveloped literacy skills make it more difficult to understand the instructions of various courses (Broekhof, 2013).

Besides reading engagement and reading comprehension, adolescents from disadvantaged communities are more challenged with respect to their social-emotional competencies as opposed to adolescents from high social-economical milieus (Ayotte et al., 2003; Polleck, 2010). Previous research have shown that adolescents from disadvantaged communities are faced with many risk factors related to poor social-emotional competencies (Ayotte et al., 2003; Tijms & Stoop, 2014). An explanation is that they live more often in a social-emotional stressful environment (Ayotte et al., 2003; Elias & Haynes, 2008; Polleck, 2010).

The deficient reading culture and the social-emotional stressful environment of adolescents from disadvantaged communities put them more at risk for poor academic achievement and school dropout (Blum & Libbey, 2004; Durlak et al., 2011; Elias & Haynes, 2008). In the Netherlands these adolescents are more than twice as likely to not finish high school in comparison to the national average (Tijms & Stoop, 2014; Van Bijsterveldt-Vliegenthart, 2012). This is alarming, because low literacy skills and academic achievement are associated with underemployment, unemployment and a loss of quality of life (Guthrie & Davis, 2003). For this reason, it is necessary to develop training programs that promote reading engagement, reading comprehension and social-emotional competencies in young adolescents from disadvantaged communities. An approach to enhance these skills is Bibliotherapy. This will be discussed in the following sections.

Bibliotherapy

Bibilotherapy can be defined as a book-club training in which the counsellor and adolescents read and discuss a book with the aim of enhancing the students' reading motivation, reading attitude, reading comprehension and social-emotional competencies (Elbaum & Vaughn, 2001). During the training small groups of adolescents read the same book, extract the meaning of the text and discuss how their lifes connect to the stories and experiences described in the book (Tijms & Stoop, 2014). As previous research have shown, these interactive reading activities improve the literacy and social-emotional skills of adolescents.

For this reason it is not surprising that the first aim of bibliotherapy is to enhance the reading motivation and attitude of adolescents. Bibliotherapy aims to create a positive reading experience, because this is associated with more reading motivation and a positive reading attitude (Kush, Watkins, & Brookhart, 2005). A positive reading experience can be obtained by creating a safe environment. A safe environment means that adolescents are free and feel respected to discuss a book in small groups. These discussions with classmates are important, because the reading attitude of peers influences the attitude and reading motivation of other adolescents (Kush et al., 2005; Polleck, 2010).

In addition, bibliotherapy enhances a positive reading experience when it is conducted in an informal environment (Kush et al., 2005; Polleck, 2010). An informal environment means that reading should not be seen as an academic obligation, but as a recreational activity. By creating this environment, it becomes more likely that adolescents discover that reading can be enjoyable (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Klauda, 2009). One way to perceive reading as a pleasurable activity, instead of an academic obligation, is that students have to choose a book which they like to read. Previous research have shown that this personal decision to what is read, is associated with more reading motivation and a positive reading attitude (McKenna, 2001). In addition, it is important that the themes of the books from which they can choose are related to the daily life issues of the adolescents. This means that the characters of the stories are challenged with the same issues as the adolescents of the training. Consequently, they can identify themselves with the themes and characters and they are able to make predictions about the book, which have been shown to be important predictors of reading engagement (Sridhar & Vaugh, 2000; Tijms & Stoop, 2014).

The second aim of the training is to enhance reading comprehension skills. First, reading comprehension is expected to increase as the reading attitude and reading motivation of the adolescents improves (Schaffner et al., 2013; Taboada et al., 2009). In addition to this indirect

effect, bibliotherapy enhances reading comprehension in more direct ways as well. Before and during reading, adolescents are encouraged to generate questions about the text. These questions will help them to read the book more consciously and to evaluate the text more critically during a discussion with classmates (Soter et al., 2008). It is important that the trainer does not generate many questions, because this discourages the adolescents to actively generate and discuss the questions themselves (Polleck, 2010; Tijms & Stoop, 2014).

The questions and discussions about the content and structures of the book will make it easier to recognise the topic, structure and key concepts of a text. In addition, the questions and discussions stimulate the adolescents to compare the themes and characters of the book with their own lifes. By integrating their daily life experiences and knowledge with the texts, students' reading comprehension and critical thinking skills will be improved (Duke, Pearson, Strachan, & Billman, 2011).

The first two aims are directed at improving the literacy skills of the adolescents. The third and last aim focuses on the social-emotional competencies of the students. Bibliotherapy enhances this last skill by motivating students to relate the themes of the book to the corresponding experiences of their daily lifes (Durlak et al., 2011; Tijms & Stoop, 2014). Not only will they compare their situations with those of the characters, but they are also encouraged to discuss this with peers. This discussion will make them aware that their classmates can be faced with the same issues (Payton et al., 2009). On the other hand, classmates might have different perspectives about a particular issue. To discuss these different opinions, the self and social awareness of the adolescents are developed. This means that adolescents are encouraged to evaluate their opinions and integrate new norms and values. Besides discussing the perspectives of certain issues, the adolescents have the opportunity to come up with various solutions for these challenges. By generating different solutions, the adolescents will be able to resolve certain problems together. This contributes to a positive interaction between classmates, which makes it more likely that school will be perceived as a pleasant place. This in turn leads to more school-engagement (Durlak et al., 2011; McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010; Polleck, 2010; Tijms & Stoop, 2014). As previous research have shown, school engagement is an important predictor of academic achievement.

To sum up, after bibliotherapy adolescents are able to: a) construct the content and structure of the book, b) identify the characters and themes of the story, c) compare and discuss the issues of the characters and of themselves, d) recognise that peers are faced with the same issues, e) accept the various perspectives, norms and values regarding certain issues,

f) come up with solutions for certain issues and g) develop and maintain positive relationships with peers (Iaquinta & Hipsky, 2006; Tijms & Stoop, 2014). These purposes will lead to more reading motivation, positive reading attitude, high-level reading comprehension and social-emotional competencies.

One must understand that these three aims are not strictly independent, because previous research have shown that these competencies are related to each other. If students are more motivated to read, they are more willing to engage in reading activities. Especially if they experience enjoyment during interactive reading activities with peers, they develop more reading motivation and a positive reading attitude. This in turn leads to more reading engagement, which will increases their reading comprehension. This last skill is especially developed when students relate their background knowledge to a book, because it increases their conceptual understanding about a topic (Guthrie et al., 2006). In the end these abilities promote academic achievement and quality of life.

Promising results of bibliotherapy

The training that is used in the present study is a Dutch adaption of the book club intervention of Polleck (2010) in the United States. This study of Polleck (2010) conducted a book club training among 12 females of an urban high school. Most of these females lived in a stressful environment. They lived in a poor environment, most parents were divorced and many of these females acknowledged that they felt frustrated because they did not communicate with their parents about daily life issues. Not only at home, but also in school they felt alienated due to culturally different course work. Because they had other cultural values and their English was less proficient than the course work required, it made it more difficult for them to understand the academic texts.

Because their home and school environment affected their social-emotional feelings and their literacy skills in a negative way, bibliotherapy was implemented in order to give these females a chance to improve these competencies (Polleck, 2010).

Once a week the females discussed a book about abuse. This theme corresponded with the daily life experiences of the students. Before and after the training, interviews were conducted with the females about literacy, school information and family issues. In addition, surveys were taken to measure the reading attitudes of the females. Based on these book discussions, interviews and surveys, this study showed promising results. The book club training appeared to enhance several social-emotional competencies of the participants. First, their self-

awareness was increased, because the comparison of themselves and the characters of the book helped them in recognizing their own identity. Second their self-worth was enhanced, because the informal and open book club sessions made them aware that their views and opinions were respected. Third, their self-management of emotions increased. The participants found it helpful to discover how the characters of the book dealt with the same emotions that they experienced. For example, they acknowledged that these characters have learned them to control their frustrations and anger during stressful situations. Fourth, the participants were better able in making long term decisions, because the characters' choices gave them insight in their own decisions. For example, they learned to make important decisions about dealing with peer pressure and romantic relationships. And last, the social awareness of the girls increased, because they became aware that the characters and peers had different perspectives regarding certain issues. This skill had important social benefits, because all participants agreed that they were more tolerant and closer to each other (Polleck, 2010).

Bibliotherapy seemed to enhance the literacy skills of the participants as well. The girls stated that they used different reading strategies after the training. For example, they used more personal connections while reading the book. This means that the participants related the book with their own lives. This approach increased their reading comprehension, because this strategy made it easier to comprehend the book. In addition, their reading motivation and reading attitude increased as well. The participants stated that they read more often, because they were more interested in books. The girls also indicated that they read faster and that their vocabulary has increased (Polleck, 2010).

Despite these positive results, this study lacks a systemic approach. For example, the students self-selected their groups based on age and interests. Because these variables were not controlled for those variables and because the sample was small, the external validity was low. This means that the results can not be generalized to a large population. Besides, the researcher did not compare the training group with a control condition. For this reason it was difficult to conclude that the training condition showed more literacy skills and social-emotional competencies than those who did not went to the book club training. In addition, this study only used surveys after the bibliotherapy was conducted. A pretest would increase the reliability of the training effects. However, despite these limitations, this study gave insight in the positive effects of a book club training on the social-emotional competencies and literacy skills of adolescents (Polleck, 2010).

Pilot study bibliotherapy in The Netherlands

The book club training of Polleck (2010) has been used during a pilot study of bibliotherapy in The Netherlands (Tijms & Stoop, 2014). However, some adjustments were made in the pilot study in order to overcome some of the limitations of the previous study.

The aim of the pilot study was the same as that of the preceding book club training; bibliotherapy was conducted to enhance the reading motivation, reading attitude, reading comprehension and social-emotional competencies of young adolescents from disadvantaged communities (Tijms & Stoop, 2014). In the end, these skills are essential for school engagement and academic achievement (Elbaum & Vaughn, 2003; Guthrie, Wigfield, & Klauda, 2012; Romano, Babchisin, Pagani, & Cohen, 2010).

For this pilot study, 90 adolescents (12-14 years) from the first year of two secondary schools in Amsterdam participated the training. The main part (70%-90%) of the students lived in 'poverty problem cumulation-areas' (APC-areas, i.e. 'armoede probleem cumulatie-gebieden'). These areas have a high number of non-western immigrants and inhabitants that are unemployed or have low-incomes. The schools in this pilot study belonged to the 10 percent of schools with the highest amount of students from these APC-areas (Tijms & Stoop, 2014).

The participants were randomly assigned to a control condition (n=50) or a training condition (n=40). The control condition did not went to the book club training but received Dutch language lessons. The training condition consisted of 7 groups. Each group contained 5 to 8 adolescents. A short training was carried out for only eight to ten weeks. The researchers selected six books that are related to the daily life issues of the participants. For example, there were themes about romantic relationships and bullying. These books were also based on the adolescents' vocabulary and literacy skills. The pretests Nederlandse Intelligentietest voor Onderwijsniveau (NIO) – subtest Vocabulary, and the One-Minute Test (EMT, e.g. 'Één-Minuut-Test) gave insight in these skills. Based on these tests, the researchers selected books that corresponded with reading levels of sixth grade. In the first session of the book club training, the adolescents had to choose a book out of those six books that the researchers selected (Tijms & Stoop, 2014).

Each book club group was organized by a counsellor. They stimulated the discussions between the students. Before bibliotherapy has started the trainers received a protocol and a training by a research team in order to give the book club training effectively. For example, the protocol contained several questions that the counsellors could ask during the book

discussions. These were questions like: "Would you act in the same manner as the main character did?" (Tijms & Stoop, 2014).

To measure the effect of bibliotherapy on reading motivation, reading attitude, reading comprehension and social-emotional competencies, various questionnaires were included. Reading attitude was divided in recreational attitude and academic attitude. The social-emotional competencies that were measured were the abilities to express emotions, the confidence to gain academic achievements and the competencies to deal with difficult social situations. In addition, the students vocabulary and technical reading skills were measured. Each questionnaire measured the variables before and after the book club training. The results of the pretest and posttest and the results between the training condition and control condition were compared in order to examine the effects of bibliotherapy on both groups (Tijms & Stoop, 2014).

The pilot study revealed significant training effects on reading attitude, reading comprehension and social-emotional competencies. Although no significant effect on reading motivation was found, at the end of bibliotherapy a trend was shown in which the training group was more motivated to read than the control group (Tijms & Stoop, 2014).

Based on this pilot study, the researchers concluded that bibliotherapy has a positive significant effect on reading attitude, reading comprehension and social-emotional competencies of young adolescents from disadvantaged communities (Tijms & Stoop, 2014).

The present study

Because the pilot study had promising results, the present study will examine the effectiveness of the same book club training. However, this study includes four important improvements: (1) a larger sample, (2) a longer training period, (3) a new questionnaire, that is psychometrically well tested to measure reading attitude effects, and (4) a long-term follow-up measurement. The research question will be the same as that of the pilot study: Does bibliotherapy have a positive effect on the reading motivation, reading attitude, reading comprehension and social-emotional competencies of young adolescents from disadvantaged communities? To answer this research question, it is divided in the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: At both the end of the training period and the follow-up measurement, the training group has better reading comprehension skills than the control group.
Hypothesis 2: At both the end of the training period and the follow-up measurement, the

training group has a more positive reading attitude than the control group.

Hypothesis 3: At both the end of the training period and the follow-up measurement, the training group has a more positive reading motivation than the control group.

Hypothesis 4: At both the end of the training period and the follow-up measurement, the training group has better social-emotional competencies than the control group.

Hypothesis 5: For all outcome measures, the differences between treatment group and control group are either the same at post and follow-up measurement or an interaction is present due to a larger difference at the follow-up measurement.

Method

Design and analysis

The present study used a randomized pretest-intervention-posttest-follow-up design. This means that the surveys were conducted before bibliotherapy (pretest), at the end of bibliotherapy (posttest) and 4 months after termination of bibliotherapy (follow-up).

Analyses of Covariance (ANCOVA) were conducted in order to measure the training effects at the end of bibliotherapy (posttest) and four months after termination of the training (follow-up). Within-subjects are the training effects during the posttest and follow-up. Between-subjects are the conditions: training group and control-group. The continuous dependent variables are the training effects: reading motivation, reading attitude, reading comprehension and social-emotional competencies. The pretest are used as a covariate. This covariate is more able to explain the unexplained variance, which reduces the error variance. This in turn makes the independent variables more visible, which enhances the power (Vickers & Altman, 2001). Based on previous research it is hypothesized that the training group have better literacy skills and social-emotional competencies during the posttest and follow-up measurement than the control-group. For this reason, one-tailed tests were conducted.

Participants

For this study, 215 participants (12-15 years) from the first year of three secondary schools for vocational education (VMBO) in Amsterdam participated the training. The three schools

belong to the 10 percent of schools with the highest number of students from APC-areas in the Netherlands (Tijms & Stoop, 2014).

The participants were randomly assigned to the training condition (n=77) or the control condition (n=138). The training condition contained 13 book club groups. Each group consisted of 5 to 7 students. As opposed to the training groups, the control condition did not participate the book club training but received usual Dutch language lessons ("business-as-usual" condition). In Table 1 the descriptive characteristics of the participants are presented.

Intervention program

The training was carried out by weekly sessions during a five-month period. Once a week the students in the training condition read and discussed a book for 45 minutes. They received 13 to 16 sessions. During the first session, the students selected a book from the ones that the trainer selected for them. These books matched the adolescents' literacy skills and their personal challenges and interests. In addition, each student received a notebook in which they could write down their thoughts while they read the book (Tijms & Stoop, 2014).

Each group was organized by a trainer. The trainers were bachelor and master students in Developmental Psychology. Before bibliotherapy has started the trainers received a protocol and two days of training in order to give the book club training effectively. The protocol contained guidelines on how to act during each session. For example, the protocol made clear that during the first session the students had to choose a textbook and understood the idea of a notebook. The trainers encouraged the students to actively participate during the sessions. They provided a safe informal environment and made sure that the discussions stayed on-topic (Tijms & Stoop, 2014).

Measures

Various questionnaires were conducted to examine the effect of bibliotherapy on reading motivation, reading attitude, reading comprehension, social-emotional competencies, vocabulary and technical reading. All surveys were conducted before bibliotherapy (pretest), at the end of bibliotherapy (posttest) and 4 months after termination of bibliotherapy (follow-up), except for vocabulary and technical reading that were only used as pretests.

The Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ; Wigfield, Guthrie & Gough, 1996; Dutch translation: Förrer & van de Mortel, 2010) has been conducted to assess the intrinsic

and extrinsic reading motivation of the participants. The questionnaire contains 33 items. For example, an item states: *"I like to read about new topics"*. Each item is rated by the following four-point scale: 1) very different from me, 2) a little different from me, 3) a little like me, 4) a lot like me. The internal consistency of this scale (Cronbach's α) is .92 (Tijms & Stoop, 2014).

Reading attitude was assessed by The Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ) – Reading (De Naeghel et al., 2014). This questionnaire is divided into two parts: recreational and academic reading activities. Each part consists of the same 24 questions about their reading attitude towards these activities. For example, an item states *"I read in my spare time because reading is a pleasurable activity"*. Each item is rated by the following five-point scale: 1) agree a lot, 2) agree, 3) do not know, 4) do not agree, and 5) disagree a lot. The internal consistency of the test is .92 and of both subscales .94 (De Naeghel & Van Keer, 2013; De Naeghel, Van Keer & Vanderlinde, 2014).

Reading comprehension was assessed by the Vlaamse Test Begrijpend Lezen (VTBL - Van Vreckem, Desoete, de Paepe & Van Hove, 2010). During this test the students had to read a story and answers 26 multiple choice questions about this text. Two of the 26 questions appeal to their memory, because they have to be answered without access to the text. The other questions do not rely on their memory and can be answered with information from the text. For example, a question of the test is: *"What means 'impulsive' in the text?"*. Each item has four answers. The answers of the example are: *a) fast, b) difficult, c) without thinking, d) no rush.* The reliability of the test is .78.

Students social-emotional competencies were assessed by the subtest Selfconcept of the School Attitude Questionnaire (SVL-A; Smits & Vorst, 2000). This subtest consists of 24 questions and measures the abilities to verbally express emotions, the confidence to gain academic achievements and the competencies to deal with social issues. For example, an item states: *"I am always friendly towards my classmates, even if they are not kind."* Students can answer each question with the following three-point scale: a) true, b) do not know, c) not true. Because the abilities to express feelings and to deal with social situations are more related to social-emotional competencies than the confidence to perform successful at school, a subscale is made of the first two variables. This scale is called 'Social-Emotional Skills'. The internal consistency of the test is .93 and of the subtests .83 (Vorst, 1990).

To ensure that the books corresponded with the students' vocabulary and reading skills, two measures were conducted to assess those abilities before bibliotherapy has started (pretest). Vocabulary was assessed by the subscale Synonyms of the Nederlandse

Intelligentietest voor Onderwijsniveau (NIO) (Van Dijk & Tellegen, 2004). The test consists of 30 items. Each item contains a target word and five words from which one is the correct synonym. For example, an item contains the target word *'sad'* and has the following possible synonyms 1*) quiet, 2) unhappy, 3) shy, 4) lonely, and 5) desperate*. The reliability of the NIO is .83. The One-Minute Test was conducted to measure reading fluency (Een-Minuut-Test, EMT; Brus & Voeten, 1973). It consists of 116 unrelated words of increasing difficulty. The adolescents have to read as many words correctly within 1 minute. The internal consistency of the test is .87 (Van den Bos, Spelberg, Scheepstra, & de Vries, 1999).

Variables

All variables that are measured during the present study are presented in Figure 1. As can be seen in this graph, bibliotherapy aims to improve the literacy skills and social-emotional competencies of the participants. Literacy skills are divided in Reading Motivation, Reading Attitude and Reading Comprehension. The social-emotional competencies are divided in Selfconcept and Social-Emotional Skills. The arrows imply the correlations between the variables.

Figure 1: an overview of the variables that will be measured during the present study.
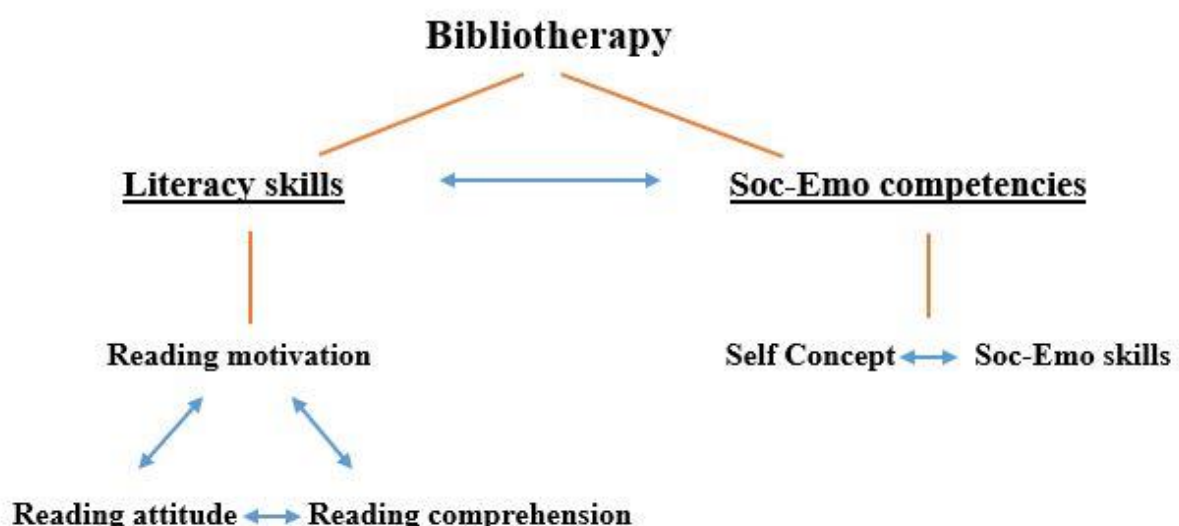
<center>**Results**</center>

Sample characteristics during baseline assessment

Due to practical reasons (e.g., absence of school at the moment of test administration, moving to another school after the summer break), several participants did not complete their posttest or follow-up test. Because an ANCOVA was used to measure the training effects at the end of the training ánd at the end of the follow up, only the participants who completed the tests before the training, at the end of bibliotherapy and four months after the training were analyzed. For this reason, 57 participants who did not complete all tests were not taken into account during the analysis. Eventually 58 participants of the training group and 100 participants of the control group were analyzed. In Table 3 the number of participants of each test are presented.

Based on the remaining participants, descriptive characteristics of the training group and control group were measured at the time of the pretest. These scores are presented in Table 1. To ensure that both groups were equivalent with regard to their reading skills and social emotional competencies during the baseline measurement, possible differences were measured with X^2-tests for categorical variables and t-tests for continuous variables.

The analysis revealed no significant differences between the training group and control group on the categorical variable Sex Ratio ($X^2 = 3.55$, $p = .06$). No significant differences were found on the continuous variables, except for the variable Recreational Reading Attitude ($t = 2.09$, $p < .04$). At the time of the baseline assessment the training group had a more positive recreational reading attitude ($M = 81.57$, $SD = 20.32$) than the control group ($M = 87.66$, $SD = 17.60$). Note that a lower score of this variable means that one has a positive reading attitude, because the five-point scale of the SRQ is contrariwise (1= agree a lot, 5=disagree a lot). Because the training group and the control group did differ on their recreational reading attitude, the training effect of this variable has to interpreted carefully.

Table 1: Descriptive characteristics of the training group and control group.

Baseline Measures	Training (N=58)		Control (N=100)		Test	
	M	(SD)	M	(SD)	t / X²	p
Sex ratio (M : F)	37:40		86:52		3.55	.06
Age	13.3	1.22	13.1	1.15	-1.24	.22
Reading Fluency RS	73.50	15.39	76.68	13,18	1.52	.13
Vocabularly	10.66	3.86	9.89	3.32	-1.52	.13
Reading Comprehension	10.42	5.51	11.00	4.87	0.66	.51
Reading Attitude	152.88	41.57	163.75	39.02	1.75	.08
Recreational	81.57	20.32	87.66	17.60	2.09	.04
Academic	77.42	20.46	81.78	19.04	1.39	.17
Autonomous	70.70	26.09	78.33	21.90	1.91	.06
Controlled	86.53	18.15	90.98	17.04	1.60	.11
Reading Motivation	76.99	18.56	76.85	20.33	-0.05	.96
Self Concept	58.93	8.ll	58.65	8.74	-0.21	.83
Soc-Emo Skills	39.78	6.21	39.36	6.24	-0.45	.66

Correlations between variables during baseline assessment

The correlations between the continuous variables are presented in Table 2. Correlations were measured because previous research have shown that the literacy skills and social-emotional competencies are related to each other.

Based on the analysis it can be concluded that Vocabularly is significantly correlated with Reading Fluency. In addition, a small but significant correlation was found between Vocabularly and Reading Comprehension. This is not surprising, because previous research have shown that the knowledge of semantic features of a text is a part of reading comprehension, because it helps to comprehend the story in a better way (Lai et al., 2014). Reading Comprehension is also related to Reading Motivation, which corresponds with previous research as described in the introduction (McKenna et al., 2012; Wolters et al., 2014).

Reading Attitude in general is highly correlated with Recreational, Academic, Controlled and Autonomous Reading Attitude, because the first variable is the total score of the last parts. Additionally all sub-attitudes are highly related to each other. Although it might seems surprising that recreational attitude is correlated with academic attitude, and that controlled attitude is related to autonomous attitude, previous research have shown that reading for their own enjoyment (recreational and autonomous) increases if teachers stimulate a positive academic attitude in the classroom (academic and controlled) (De Naeghel et al., 2014).

In addition, all reading attitudes are related to Reading Motivation. Relatively to Recreational, Academic and Autonomous Attitude, the reading motivation of the students is less highly correlated with Controlled Attitude. This might suggests that the questionnaire that measured Reading Motivation (e.g. MRQ) focused mainly on the intrinsic motivation of participants. This means that someone read because the text is inherently interesting or rewarding (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Students who read because it is provoked by external reasons (e.g. controlled reading attitude) shows less reading motivation and a positive reading attitude (Schiefele et al., 2012).

	Voca	Reading Compr	Reading Att	Recreat Att	Acad Att	Auton Att	Contr Att	Read Mot	Self Conc	S.E. Skills
Reading fluency	.28**	.13	.06	.14	.11	.09	.07	-.02	.07	.09
Vocabulary	-	.23**	.05	.06	.02	-.02	.01	-.09	.04	.05
Reading Comprehension		-	.05	-.05	.04	-.15	.15	.21*	-.16	-.09
Reading Att. Total			-	.84**	.86**	.91**	.82**	-.50*	.06	.08
Recreational Att.				-	.76**	.88**	.73**	-.56**	.05	.11
Academic Attitude					-	.83**	.81**	-.54**	.03	.07
Autonomous Att.						-	.51**	-.69**	.04	.05
Controlled Attitude							-	-.26**	.04	.11
Reading Motivation								-	.04	.05
Self Concept									-	.94**

* = Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-sided)

** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-sided)

Table 3: effects of the training at the end of the training period and the follow-up measurement.

Variable	Group	Baseline		Post		Follow-up		Condition			Time			Time*Cond		
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F	p	η^2	F	p	η^2	F	p	η^2
Reading Comprehension	T (N=49)	10.42	5.51	13.44	4.50	14.12	5.39	3.30	.04	.03	.13	.72	.00	.59	.45	.01
	C (N=68)	11.00	4.87	11.92	4.36	12.04	5.09									
Reading Attitude Total	T (N=37)	152.88	41.57	164.63	44.91	163.40	32.76	.18	.34	.00	.41	.84	.00	.07	.79	.00
	C (N=61)	163.75	39.02	168.33	37.07	169.37	38.54									
Recreational Attitude	T (N=54)	81.57	20.32	85.94	22.46	82.97	17.73	.39	.27	.00	.04	.85	.00	1.34	.25	.01
	C (N=82)	87.66	17.60	86.78	17.64	87.83	18.86									

Academic Attitude	T (N=49)	77.42	20.46	79.72	20.00	82.28	15.67	.59	.22	.01	.41	.53	.01	.24	.63	.00
	C (N=77)	81.78	19.04	84.01	18.51	84.30	18.40									
Autonomous Attitude	T (N=46)	70.70	26.09	74.91	28.86	76.54	22.09	.00	.50	.00	2.37	.13	.03	.37	.55	.00
	C (N=49)	78.33	21.90	75.25	24.36	79.13	24.98									
Controlled Attitude	T (N=51)	86.53	18.15	90.98	15.84	90.27	16.69	1.62	.10	.02	.10	.92	.00	.08	.78	.00
	C (N=75)	90.98	17.04	95.82	18.34	93.94	17.48									
Reading Motivation	T (N=57)	76.99	18.56	75.60	21.13	78.16	17.72	5.09	.02	.04	10.75	.00	.09	1.45	.23	.01
	C (N=100)	76.85	20.33	75.02	21.01	71.94	21.89									

Self-Concept	T (N=58)	58.93	8.11		57.67	7.74		56.52	8.76		.06	.41	.00		.40	.81	.00		.10	.75	.00
	C (N=99)	58.65	8.74		58.07	9.60		57.40	10.09												
Social-Emo Skills	T (N=58)	39.78	6.21		39.11	5.55		38.50	7.35		.09	.38	.00		2.46	.62	.00		.06	.81	.00
	C (N=99)	39.36	6.24		38.95	7.04		38.65	7.37												

Training effects

In order to meet the assumptions of normal distribution, linearity and homogeneity of regression slopes, outliers were corrected if they passed the maximum critical value of each scale, using Grubb's test, also called the ESD (Extreme Studentized Deviate) method (Grubb, 1969). This test examines the largest deviation from the mean by measuring the maximum of outright differences between the values and mean of each scale. This score is in turn divided by the standard deviation of the data. If this score is larger than the maximum critical value, it is called an outlier. An outlier is than corrected to the critical value (Grubb, 1969).

This test revealed that the scale Vocabularly contained one outlier in the training group. This score was corrected from the original score 24 to the critical value score 23. The baseline measurement of Self Concept had one outlier in the training condition. This score was corrected from 30 to 33. All other scales had no significant outliers. In addition to the correction of outliers, total scores were deleted if more than ten percent of the (sub)questionnaire was not filled in. To test the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes we examined the interaction between the covariate (pretest) and the independent variable (condition) for the ANCOVA's. For none of the outcome measures a significant interaction (all $F \leq 2.49$, all $p \geq .12$) was present, the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes it therefore not broken.

After the deviant scores were corrected or deleted, the means and standard deviations of the training effects at the time of the posttest and follow-up were measured. For each dependent variable Repeated Measures ANCOVA were conducted in order to examine the training effects between the training group and control group at the posttest and follow-up. All results are presented in table 3.

Reading Comprehension. The ANCOVA revealed a significant main effect of condition, with a small-to-medium effect size ($F = 3.30$, $p = .04$, $\eta 2 = .03$). Moreover, the results revealed neither a significant main effect of time ($F = .13$, $p = .72$), nor a significant interaction between condition and time ($F = .59$, $p = .45$) (see Figure 2). The ANCOVA therefore indicates that the training group had significantly better reading comprehension skills than the control group over the two post-measurements, thus supporting Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 5. To gain more insight into the main effect of condition, two post hoc tests were conducted. This analysis revealed that the main effect of condition was significant at the follow-up measurement ($F = 3.04$, $p = .04$, $\eta 2 = .03$) while no significant effect was found at

the post measurement ($F = 2.16$, $p = .07$, $\eta 2 = .02$).

Figure 2: training effect of Reading Comprehension over time
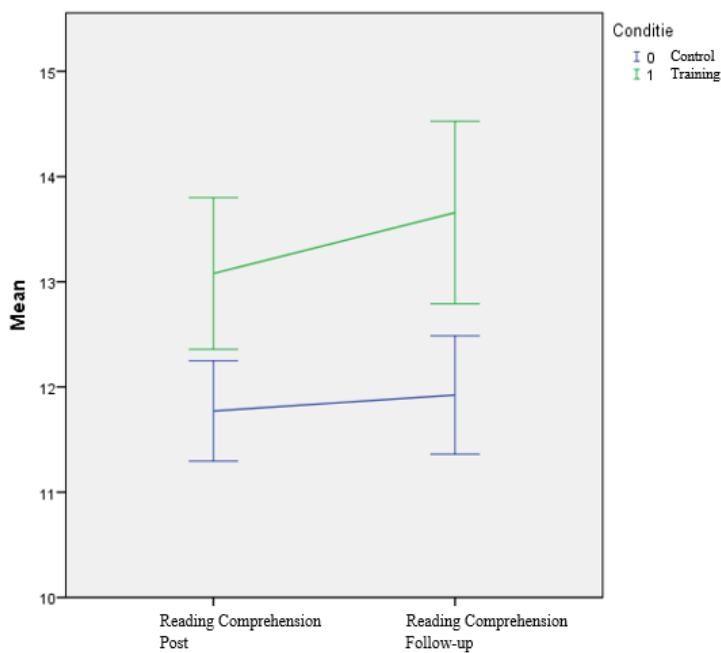
Reading Attitude. As can be seen in Table 3, no significant main effect of condition ($F = .18$, $p = .34$) and time ($F = .41$, $p = .84$) was found. Figure 3 suggests that the training group developed a more positive reading attitude between the posttest and follow-up (note that a decline in the graph is positive, because the five-point scale of the SRQ is contrariwise). However, no significant interaction effect is found between training condition and measurement moment (posttest and follow-up; F= .07, p =.79).

Because previous research have shown that one can read for different purposes, the variable Reading Attitude has been divided in four types of reading attitude, i.e. recreational (REC) attitude, academic (ACA) attitude, autonomous (AUT) attitude, and controlled (CON) attitude. In accordance with the results on the total reading attitude score, no significant training effects were found on the four subscales (REC: $F = 0.39$, $p = .27$; ACA: $F = .59$, $p = .22$; AUT: $F = .00$, $p = .50$; CON: $F = 1.62$, $p = .10$). No significant main effect of time was

found either (REC: $F = .04$, $p = .85$; ACA: $F = .41$, $p = .53$; AUT: $F = 2.37$, $p = .13$; CON: $F = .10$, $p = .92$). In addition, no significant interactions between condition and time were present at the level of subscales (REC: $F = 1.34$, $p = .25$; ACA: $F = .24$, $p = .63$; AUT: $F = .37$, $p = .55$; CON: $F = .08$, $p = .78$).

Overall, one can conclude that the reading attitude questionnaire failed to reveal any
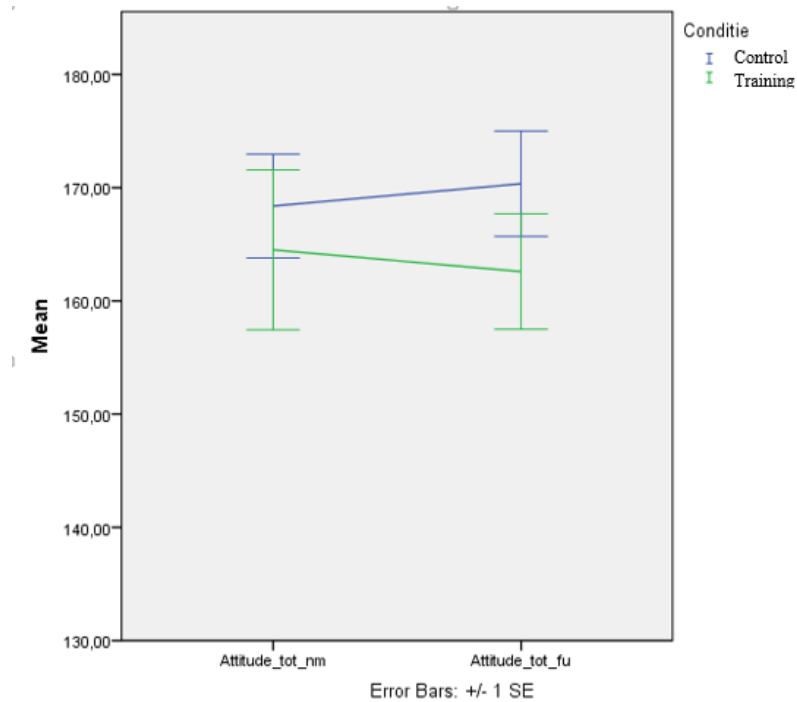
significant effects of bibliotherapy on the reading attitude of the adolescents. For this reason Hypotheses 2 and 5 are rejected.

Figure 3: training effect of Total Reading Attitude over time

Figure 4: training effect of Recreational Reading Attitude over time
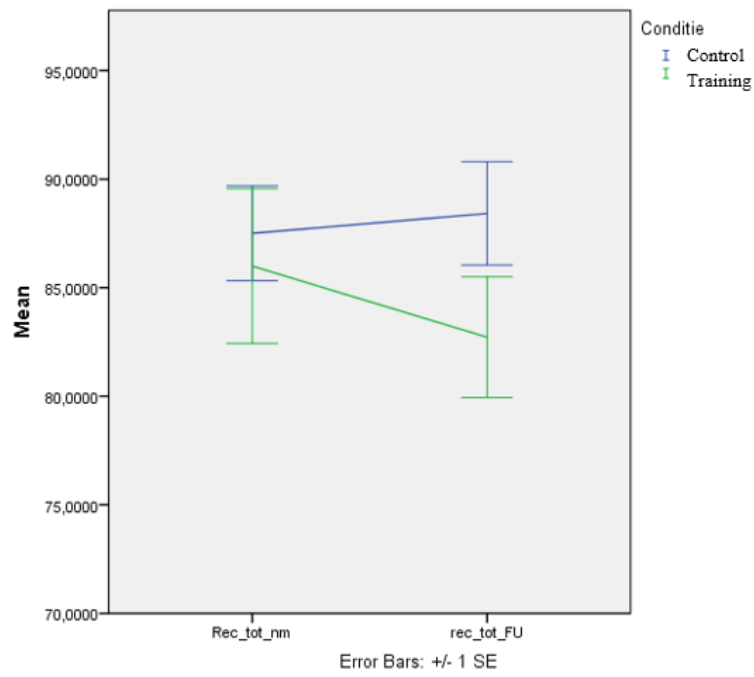
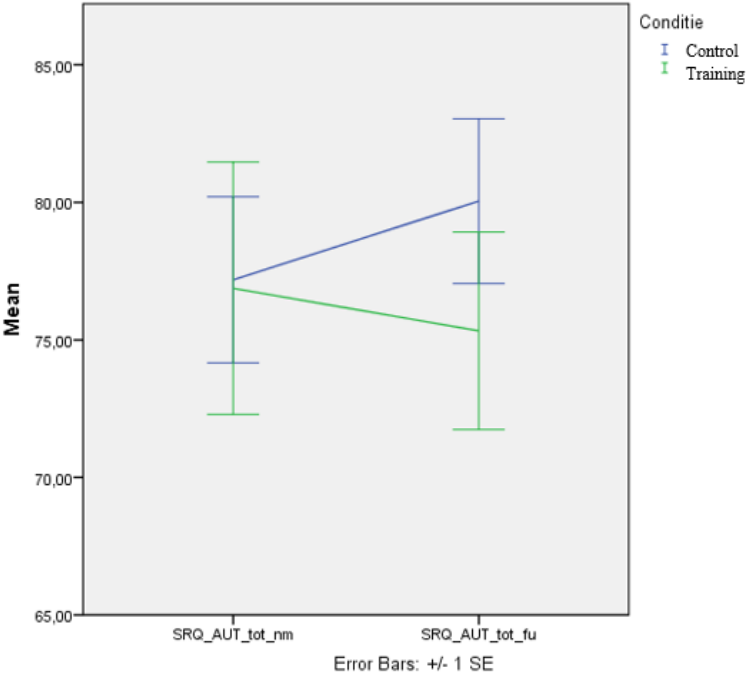Figure 5: training effect of Academic Reading Attitude over time
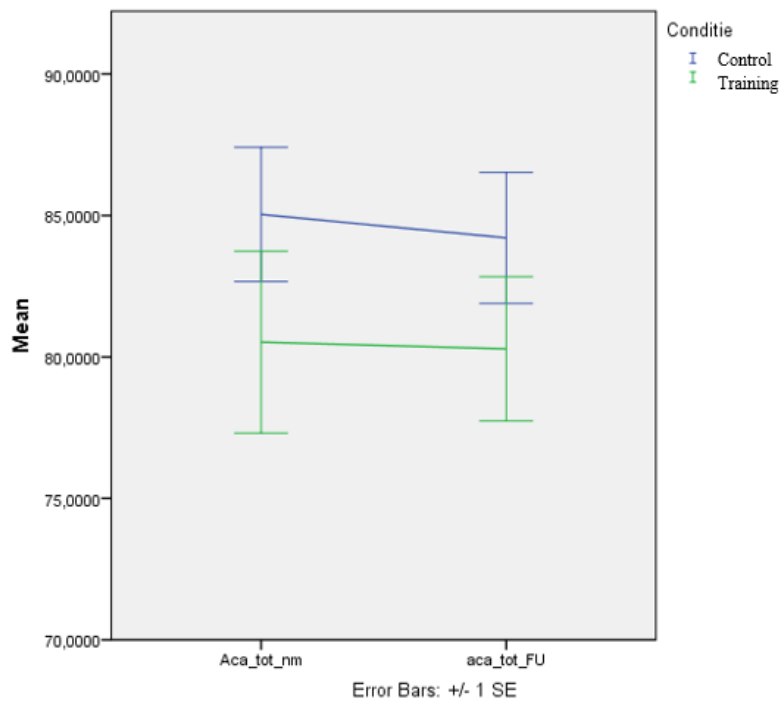
Figure 6: training effect of Autonomous Reading Attitude over time
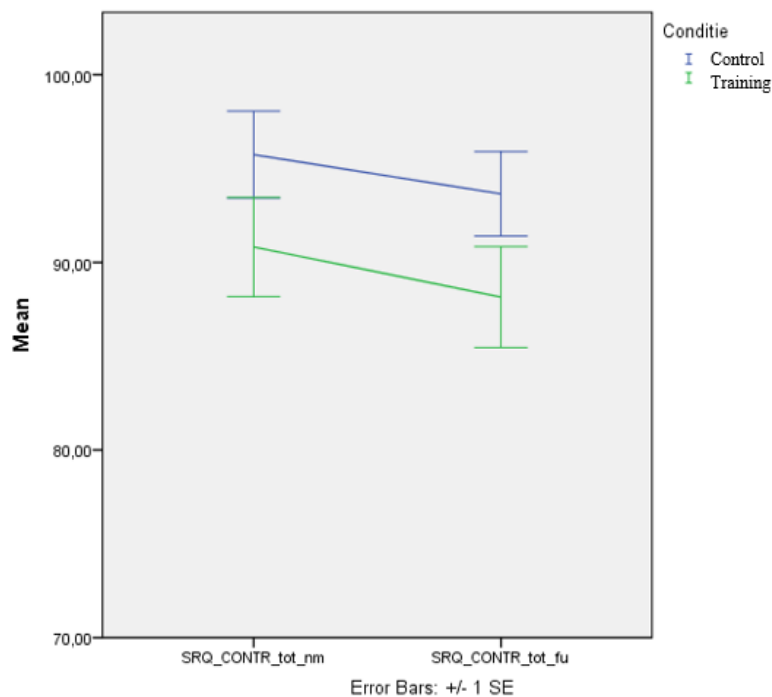
Figure 7: training effect of Controlled Reading Attitude over time

Reading Motivation. The ANCOVA revealed a significant main effect of condition, with a small-to-medium effect size (F = 5.09, p = .02, partial η2 = .04). Moreover, the results revealed neither a significant main effect of time (F = 10.75, p = .00), nor a significant interaction between condition and time (F = 1.45, p = .23) (see Figure 8). The ANCOVA therefore indicates that the training group had significantly higher reading motivation than the control group over the two post-measurements, thus supporting Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 5. To gain more insight into the main effect of condition, we conducted two post hoc tests. This analysis revealed that the main effect of condition was significant at the follow-up measurement (F = 5.19, p = .01, partial η2 = .04) while no significant effect was found at the post measurement (F = 1.87, p = .09, partial η2 = .02).

Figure 8: training effect of Reading Motivation over time

Error Bars: +/- 1 SE
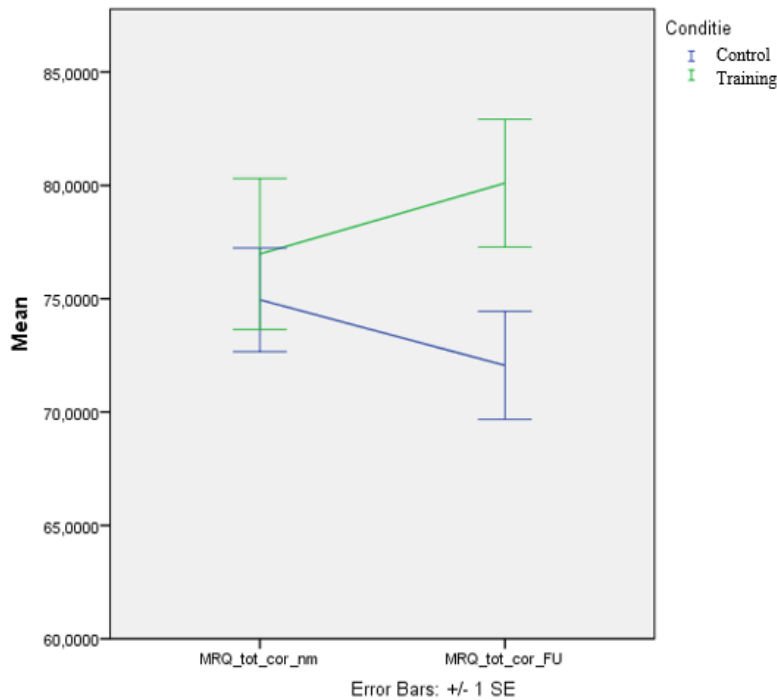
Social-emotional competencies. The social-emotional competencies of the adolescents were measured by two scales. The ANCOVA on Self-Concept showed no significant effect of condition ($F = .06$, $p = .41$) and time ($F = .40$, $p = .81$) . In fact, the control condition had higher scores on this scale as compared to the training group. In addition, no significant interaction effect was found ($F = .10$, $p = .75$). As can be seen in Figure 9, the Self Concept of both groups declined between the posttest and follow-up measurement. However, this decline is not significant.

Both groups did not differ on the second scale Social-Emotional Skills as well. The ANCOVA revealed no significant main effect of condition ($F = .09$, $p = .38$) and time ($F = .06$, $p = .81$). Besides, no significant interaction effect was found ($F = .06$, $p = .81$). In fact, Figure 10 indicates that this social-emotional skill of the training group declined during the follow-up measurement, while this competency remained the same in the control group. However this decline should be carefully interpreted, because it is not significant.

Based on the results, one can conclude that bibliotherapy had no effect on the social-emotional competencies of adolescents. In fact, these skills might decline over time. For this reason Hypotheses 4 and 5 are rejected.
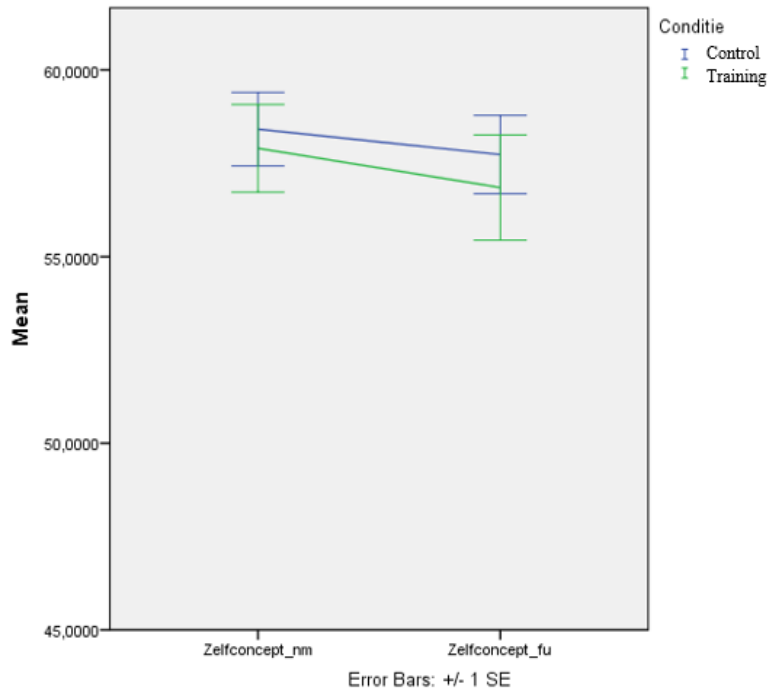
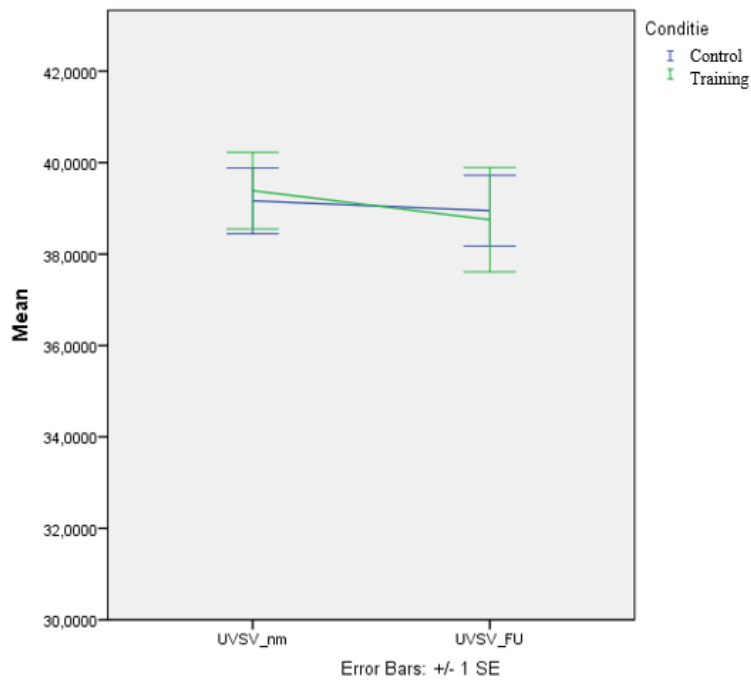Figure 9: training effect of Self Concept over time

Figure 10: training effect of Social-Emotional Skills over time

Discussion

This study examined the effectiveness of a book club training on literacy skills and social-emotional competencies. Three high schools were recruited where bibliotherapy has been given to adolescents from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. During a five-month period, the training was conducted to improve the reading engagement, reading comprehension and social-emotional competencies of the students. This study is the first that examined the short-term and long-term effects of bibliotherapy by using a randomized pretest-intervention-posttest-follow-up design.

Effects on reading comprehension

The book club training has a positive impact on reading comprehension. Although the main analysis revealed that an effect of this variable has been found on both measurements, the post hoc analysis has shown that the training effect was especially prominent during the follow-up measurement while no significant trend was found immediately at the end of the training. However no significant time and interaction effects have been found, which suggests that there are no large differences between the posttest and follow-up measurements. For this reason one can conclude that a non-significant trend during the posttest is most likely the result of a loss of power due to the post hoc analysis. For this reason it can be hypothesized that a training effect will be present immediately at the end of the training as well. This means that the reading comprehension skills of the adolescents can be improved at the short-term. However, future research is needed to replicate this effect in order to make more reliable conclusions. For this future study more participants need to be recruited in order to make sure that the loss of power due to post hoc analysis will not affect the main effect in a negative way.

Although the effect in the short-term should be replicated, the present study can make reliable conclusions about the long-term effect of bibliotherapy on reading comprehension. Based on the strong effects during the follow-up measurement, this literacy skill is especially enhanced four months after termination of the training. One reason for this long-term effect might be that bibliotherapy uses a different method to enhance this literacy skill than classical reading courses in students' curriculum. During the training students are not only stimulated

to extract semantical features of a text – which is the aim of classical reading courses - but they are also encouraged to relate the book with their own experiences in daily life. This approach of using personal connections while reading the book makes it easier to comprehend the text. Because this study made clear that the book club training has a positive effect on the reading comprehension of adolescents, it is recommended that this personal approach should be conducted in the students' curriculum.

Effects on reading motivation

This study showed that bibliotherapy improves the reading motivation of the adolescents. The main analysis revealed that an effect of this variable has been found on both measurements, while the post hoc analysis has shown that reading motivation was especially improved during the follow-up measurement while no significant effect was found at the end of the training. Because no significant time and interaction effects have been found, one can conclude that this non-significant trend is the result of a loss of power due to the post hoc analysis. Future research is needed to replicate the short-term effect of bibliotherapy on the reading motivation of adolescents.

Based on the strong effects during the follow-up measurement one can conclude that the book club training has a long-term effect on the reading motivation of adolescents. Because the training effect is still rising at the time of the follow-up measurement, one can carefully hypothesize that more stronger long-term effects can be found as time progress. For this reason it is useful to incorporate bibliotherapy in the students' curriculum. Instead of the classical courses in which students are extrinsically motivated to read (e.g. high grades), bibliotherapy focuses on the intrinsic reading motivation of adolescents. By providing interactive reading activities and books that are related to their personal lifes, it becomes more likely that adolescents read because it is inherently enjoyable. Based on previous research, one can conclude that this is important because reading motivation is an important predictor of school engagement.

In addition, reading motivation improves the reading comprehension of adolescents. Previous studies and this study have shown that reading motivation is significantly correlated with reading comprehension. For this reason it is presumable that bibliotherapy does not only have a direct effect on reading motivation, but probably also an indirect effect. Future research could examine the mediating effect of reading motivation on the reading comprehension of adolescents.

Effects on reading attitude

As opposed to the study of Polleck (2010) and the pilot study in the Netherlands (Tijms & Stoop, 2014), this training did not enhance the reading attitude of the adolescents. An possible explanation for this discrepancy is that these previous two studies assessed reading attitude by different tests. Polleck (2010) made conclusions based on interviews with the participants. The pilot study used the Bazar Reading Attitude (Broeder & Stokman, 2013) to measure this variable (Tijms & Stoop, 2014). Future research could examine the methodological differences between the Bazar Reading Attitude and The Self-Regulation Questionnaire - Reading (De Naeghel et al., 2014) that we have used to measure reading attitude.

   Although no significant training effects on reading attitude has been found, the training group developed a more positive recreational attitude and autonomous attitude over time, while these attitudes of the control group declined. In addition, the recreational and autonomous attitude of the training group enhanced more as opposed to their academic attitude. Although these effects were not significant, it suggests that bibliotherapy stimulates reading for own enjoyment more than reading for academic purposes. This hypothesis is in accordance with previous findings of Polleck (2010) and the pilot study in The Netherlands, because both studies revealed that the recreational attitude was significantly improved. Future research is needed to differentiate these purposes more explicitly in order to find out if the book club training stimulates recreational and autonomous reading attitude more than academic and controlled reading attitude.

   Although the book club training did not improve the reading attitude of the students, it might have a positive indirect effect because this study has shown that reading attitude is significantly correlated with reading motivation. Because bibliotherapy succeeded in enhancing the reading motivation of the adolescents, it can be hypothesized that reading motivation indirectly effects the reading attitude of the students. For this reason, future research could examine the mediating effect of reading motivation on the reading attitude of adolescents. Because reading motivation is especially highly correlated with recreational reading attitude and autonomous reading attitude, future research should focus on the effect of bibliotherapy on reading for students' own enjoyment.

Effects on social-emotional competencies

The book club training did not improve the social-emotional competencies of adolescents. In the present study a questionnaire was used that tapped a limited number of social-emotional skills, i.e., the ability to verbally express emotions and feelings, and the competencies to deal with difficult social situations. Future research could examine the effect of bibliotherapy on a more diverse set of social-emotional competencies. Because the book club training of Polleck appeared to enhance the self-worth, self-management, social-awareness and decision-making of the adolescents, it is recommended to find out if these skills are improved when a randomized pretest-intervention-posttest-follow-up design is used.

In addition, it is advised that future book club trainings should focus more explicitly on the social-emotional competencies of adolescents. The two-days training and the protocol that the trainers of this bibliotherapy received, focused mainly on literacy aspects. Instructions were given about the questions that counsellors could ask about the book. Consequently, the quality and quantity of social-emotional learning was less controlled for by the protocol and partly depending on the group dynamics during the sessions. It is recommended that the trainers of future book club interventions are also instructed to focus on the social-emotional competencies of adolescents. For example, trainers could motivate students to talk more about their daily life issues. This is possible if the trainers create a save informal environment and organize small groups of students. In addition, elements of social-emotional learning (SEL) training methods, such as that of Frey, Bobbitt Nolen, Van Schoiack Edstrom, & Hirschstein (2005), can be included more explicitly in the protocol. The counsellors of this study of Frey and colleagues (2005) conducted a weekly social-emotional intervention to decrease agressive behavior and increase empathic behavior of adolescents. Prior to the intervention, the trainers received a training and lesson scripts. These scripts stated explicitly which aims have to be fulfilled after certain lessons and what strategies have to be used to acquire these goals. For example, if the trainers completed fifty percent of the lessons, the students should have mastered the basic skills of problem-solving. By role-plays and videotapes about difficult scenarios, the participants were stimulated to discuss and learn solutions to resolve various issues. Bibliotherapy can build on this study by setting up the aims and strategies of each lesson more explicitly in order to make sure that the counsellors stimulate the social-emotional competencies that should be acquired.

During the intervention of Frey and colleagues (2005), the counsellors saw each other twice a month. During these sessions they discussed the progress of the training and their

experiences as a counsellor. In addition, they gave advices on how to act during various scenarios during the training. These sessions were helpful for the trainers and made sure that they gave the intervention effectively. For these reasons, bibliotherapy can adopt this idea by organizing monthly sessions for the counsellors. In the end, bibliotherapy will not only be effective in enhancing literacy skills, but also in improving students' social-emotional competencies.

Conclusion

The book club training increased the reading comprehension and reading motivation of adolescents from disadvantaged communities. Although the short-term effects of these literacy skills should be replicated, this study can draw reliable conclusions about the long-term effects. Four months after bibliotherapy has ended the students showed better reading comprehension skills and higher reading motivation.

Unfortunately no effects of bibliotherapy on reading attitude and social-emotional competencies have been found. Nevertheless, based on previous research and this study one can conclude that these variables are related to reading comprehension and reading motivation. For this reason it can be hypothesized that the reading attitude and social-emotional skills can be improved as the latter two are enhanced. Future research is needed to examine these mediating effects.

In addition, future book club trainings should focus more on the social-emotional competencies of adolescents. By providing a training, protocol and monthly sessions to the counsellors, they gain more insight in the aims and strategies to enhance the social-emotional skills of the students. By incorporating abovementioned recommendations, the effectiveness of bibliotherapy will be enhanced.

There are not only scientific implications, but also practical ones. Up to now, bibliotherapy is only conducted in various high schools in the United States (Polleck, 2010; Tijms & Stoop, 2014). Based on previous studies and this study, more schools in The Netherlands should adopt the book club training in the student's curriculum as well. By using interactive reading activities and a personal approach during reading courses, the students' reading comprehension, motivation and attitude will be enhanced. These literacy skills will not be improved by extrinsic motivating factors, but by the intrinsic needs of the students. In addition, previous research have shown that the interactive reading activities stimulate the social relationships between classmates and teachers. This makes it more likely that

adolescents will perceive school as a positive place to hang out. In the end, this leads to more school engagement and better academic achievements.

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