



# "I got in trouble for listening for over 2 hours!"

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## Introduction

Crescent School is a Grade 3-12 day school for boys in Toronto. The Crescent Library collection did not include audio books. The focus of this investigation was to see what affects the introduction of audiobooks (Playaways) to the collection would have on Middle School aged boys and their pleasure reading habits.



As part of the International Boys' School Coalition Research programme, this action research project represents best practices to expand my own professional development and to improve the education of the boys in our schools. The collaborative effort in the approach and learning that happens is an excellent role model for our students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

My goal was to engage and re-engage boys to great literature and to build pleasure reading habits. The Middle School was chosen as many boys begin to drop their pleasure reading habits.

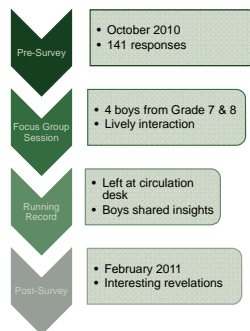
## The Action

The Playaways were introduced to the 160 MS boys through assembly announcements and display marketing in Library.

### Guiding research statements:

- Harris (Varley, 2002), states "the actual task of reading is not the main event, but the mechanical prelude to engaging the content."
- Audio players can enhance the reader's experience of the written text.
- Lesene (2004), found that adolescent students would actually prefer to have more reading aloud.
- Scieszka (2009), "one of the best things we can do to help boys read is to expand the definition of 'reading'."

## Data collection and analysis



## Results and discussion

"I like being able to listen while at the same time do something else."

•Less than 1% of respondents used audiobooks before the introduction of the Playaways to the collection

• 33% of the boys tried the Playaway

• 93% of those who tried believe that they are a good option for a Library to have

• 66% believe that having the latest release in Playaway format would encourage them to read the book by listening

•The **MP3 format** was enticing to the boys, they could use their own headphones and the unit was small enough to fit in a pocket (like an iPod or cell phone)

• **Convenience** in the forms of listening in bed, in the dark, in the car and not being carsick and being able to multi-task (do other activities) while listening was an appealing attribute

• The completion of a book in a **faster** time created a sense of accomplishment and for some, initiated the selection of another Playaway

• Perception that you don't learn anything by listening kept many boys from trying was the strongest deterrent from the boys to experiment with the Playaways

• But, even if they didn't try, 74% still felt they were an option and may still try them out in the future

"It helps you read the book faster."

"Books are too big and overwhelming to look at - listening is better."

"I read for an hour and a half last night!"

**"It's a lot easier to get caught up in the story."**

## Conclusions



The novelty of the device attracted the boys to consider reading which was the aim of this project. For those who embraced the Playaways as a way to read for pleasure, this was an effective option to introduce. Boys need 'just in time' service and it was made apparent that the latest titles were important to the selection of a story (print or audio). The ability to get through a book faster by listening created a powerful sense of accomplishment that acted as a motivator to keep reading. Instant gratification has always been a way to helps boys complete tasks.

### Implications for Practice:

- Create a more powerful marketing plan (visual displays and information on Library website) to extol the virtues of audiobooks to the students
- Invite boys in Grades 5 & 6 to use audiobooks and thus build up habits to use them when they are older
- Ensure that latest released titles are available
- Invite boys to suggest titles that should be in the collection
- Continue to build the collection



## Literature Informing the study

Booth, D. (2002). Even hockey players read. Markham, Ont: Pembroke.

Brock, R. (2009). *Do Guys Listen? You bet they do!* Retrieved September 5, 2010, from Librarian's Corner website: <http://www.booksontape.com>

Lesene, T.S. (2004). Making the match! The right book for the right reader at the right time, grades 4-12. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers

Pope, K., Peters, T., Bell, L., Bastian, Jessica. (2009) Find a Way to Offer Playaway. *Searcher*, March 1 Accessed August 12, 2010 from [www.allbusiness.com](http://www.allbusiness.com)

Scieszka, J. (2009). Guys Listen. In *Guys Listen* [personal quote]. Retrieved September 5, 2010, from Books on Tape website: <http://www.booksontape.com/guyslisten.cfm>

Varley, P. (2002). As good as reading? Kids and the audiobook revolution. *Hom Book Magazine*, 78(3), 251-263.

## Further Information

For more information on this project I can be contacted at [tcislak@crescentschool.org](mailto:tcislak@crescentschool.org). The full reports of this and similar projects undertaken as part of the IBSC's Action Research Program can be viewed at <http://www.theibsc.org/>. An online copy of this poster is also available on the IBSC site.