What do young adolescents and parents perceive supports reading?

Literacy experiences in the community and at home can shape a young adolescent's interest and engagement in reading. By paying attention and addressing young adolescents’ and parents' perceptions and encounters with the schooling system, we as educators and policymakers, will be better situated to take appropriate steps towards making a positive difference to reading outcomes. This research focuses on 34 young adolescent students' perceptions about learning to read and nine parents’ perceptions and experiences in supporting reading. The 11-to-13 year-old students came from six schools where overall there was a higher representation of students from diverse cultural backgrounds. The research found that even though the parents had a range of formal educational qualifications or lack of them, they all wanted their children to be successful readers. Their interest, personal experiences and perceived ability in reading were seen to be influential in encouraging children to read. The students appreciated when the teachers used explicit teaching strategies to guide their learning. Many of the students valued learning to reading as they perceived it as an essential skill for their long-term well-being and career opportunities. These young adolescents appreciated learning to read in a safe and respectful learning environment.