

The Importance of Reading

Dale Easley's blog

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I believe in the importance of reading. And I know its pleasure. I spent a lot of hours when my kids were small reading to them, often as much for my pleasure as theirs. They would lie with their head in my underarm, resulting in my wife referred to as "marking their head," sort of like a dog peeing on a lamppost. My elder daughter came of age in the time of Harry Potter, and we attended several Coming-Out parties for Harry's latest. When Half-Blood Prince came out, Ananda was 8, one of the youngest at our local Border's Bookstore (sadly now a BAM). We got our book at 1:00am, raced home and read aloud until 2:30am, slept, woke up, and read aloud all day until 2:30am the next morning when we finished it. Ananda and I have had some great times before and since, but that will remain a favorite memory.

I've been trying to create more of my own material for my students and friends to read. Recently, I came across NarrativeMagazine.com. From the About page is this statement:

"Literary readers are more than twice as likely as nonreaders to vote, to volunteer, and to be active participants of the communities in which they live. They are more likely to be healthy, to be hired, to create art, and to achieve both academic and economic success. Reading encourages and develops empathy and emotional sophistication, logical thinking, clear expression of ideas, and the ability to comprehend complex and opposing thought systems. Reading opens minds and changes lives. "

Their view is one I can wholeheartedly adopt. And I can add to it as a science teacher, that my best students are widely read. Science promotes an alternative view of events and processes that can be jarring to those raised in a restricted environment. Reading prepares students for questioning, looking for alternatives, and reaching across disciplines. Good stuff.

I've submitted several pieces of writing to narrativemagazine.com and now impatiently await their verdict on its acceptance. I'll let you know if I hear anything.