“Work Smarter, Not Harder” – Rereading Old Favorites

Several of our MCMS students love to read. As parents, this is usually exciting. But some parents wonder, “Is it OK if my student is constantly rereading old favorites, rather than branching out and trying something new?” Well, the answer is yes… and no... and yes!

Studies have shown that there are several advantages to rereading books.

- Increase in reading speed
- Increase in critical comprehension skills (ex: foreshadowing, thematic elements, symbolism)
- Increase in “story sense” (what makes a good story; how plot is put together)
- Increase in empathy and understanding (seeing the world through other’s eyes)

The excellent thing about these academic advantages is that they happen subconsciously. They don’t even need to think about it. Their brain does the work for them.

Another strong advantage is emotional. Let’s face facts. Our students have stressful, intense lives. There is pressure academically, socially, in extra curricular activities and in family life. For many students, diving back into a favorite fantasy world is as comforting as a snuggly bathrobe. It’s a time when they can “tune out” the stress of their lives and relax. If it’s a story they are already familiar with, they don’t have to work hard to understand it. If it’s characters they know and love, it’s a chance to meet up with old friends. When you look at it this way, it’s not surprising at all that they want to reread books!

So are there any disadvantages? Well, of course, we do want our students to explore the world outside of their comfort zone. That is one of the goals of our school’s AR reading program: to encourage students to read books they have not read before. Realizing that all students and families are different, a compromise a parent might want to consider is to encourage the one “new” AR book per semester, and then allow them to read the favorites in their spare time.

Need book recommendations? Ask teachers, friends and librarians. There are plenty of people out there who love to read and would love to offer suggestions!

Good luck and happy reading!