

INFORMATION SHEET FOR SCHOOLS, LIBRARIES, AND YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

Study:

Reading Mentors: A Reader-Response Study of Intergenerational Mentoring Relationships in Speculative Young Adult Fiction

Researcher(s):

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What is *Reading Mentors*, and why share it?

Reading Mentors is a research study exploring how young readers between the ages of 16 and 25 interpret mentoring relationships between teen and adult characters in speculative Young Adult (YA) literature. We investigate how these fictional relationships shape, challenge, or reflect ideas about adolescence, guidance, power, and intergenerational dynamics, combining literary analysis with youth-centered empirical research.

By sharing this project with young people who are eligible for participation, you offer them a chance to reflect on stories they read, articulate their own interpretations and experiences, and contribute to academic research that highlights youth perspectives while supporting literacy, critical reading, identity exploration, and youth engagement goals.

We invite young people aged 16 to 25 who read speculative YA (dystopian, fantasy, alternative history, etc.) to participate.

What does participation involve?

The study includes a **broad (online) survey (15-20 minutes)** and an **optional, more in-depth individual interview of up to one hour**.

In both, we ask questions about the mentoring relationships in four core series:

- *The Hunger Games* series by Suzanne Collins, including its two prequel novels,
- the *Shadow and Bone* trilogy with its prequel graphic novel *Demon in the Wood* by Leigh Bardugo,
- *The Testing* trilogy by Joelle Charbonneau, and
- *The Great Library* series by Rachel Caine

Participants may have read the books in English or in translation and may choose from the project's core series or suggest their own eligible YA series.

How you can help

If you would like, you can support the project by simply making the information available to young people. We have prepared ready-to-use materials which you can share in whatever way fits your setting. The materials include a poster, a PowerPoint slide, the Information Letters for the survey, and newsletter messages. You might display the poster, post one of the messages in a newsletter or digital communication platform or share the link to our website (readingmentors.ugent.be). All materials are available in Dutch and English. You are not expected to promote participation or monitor who takes part; simply offering access to the information is more than enough.

Participation and Consent

Participation is completely voluntary, and participants may skip questions or stop at any time. For the survey, passive parental consent applies for participants aged 16 or 17 (parents or guardians are informed and do not object to participation). For the interview, active parental consent is required for anyone under 18. The researcher manages all consent procedures.

Privacy and Data Protection

All data is handled according to GDPR/AVG and UGent guidelines, pseudonymized, and securely stored on Ghent University servers. The study has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy, Ghent University. Ethics approval does not imply any obligation to participate.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

With warm regards,

Janieke Koning and Elly McCausland

Contact Information

If you have any questions about the study or your participation, feel free to contact us

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