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## THE VALUE OF RE-READING... AGAIN AND AGAIN

**Bernice M. Wilson**

"Would you like this book, dear?" asks the teacher of a second grade child.

"No, thank you. I already read it."

"Then, why don't you try this one?"

The message seems to be that somehow re-reading a book is futile, if not wrong.

This implicit and sometimes explicit idea seems anti-educational, if not downright bizarre. There are many values to re-reading good stories and favorite books. A colleague of mine, a musician, laughed when I told her about the practice of discouraging the re-reading of books to young children. She said no musician would deter a beginning music student from playing a simple piece over and over again.

It seems to me that there are many values to the re-reading of books and stories. Let's just reflect on a few:

When my children were young, I read to them every night. And every night for several years they requested *Goodnight Moon* and *Are you My Mother?* Familiar books are old friends--doubly pleasurable exactly because the reader knows what is coming next. I, myself, go back every four or five years to Jane Austen. In a frightening, unpredictable world, these old friends are comforting.

As teachers, we know that repetition reinforces learning. Also, easy texts help fluency and eye movements. Confidence and motivation flourish when things are familiar. Books, moreover, have different meanings to the same reader at different times.

So, when a child says, "I read this already," why don't you answer, "Go ahead and read it again. Books are fun to re-read."

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