Predicting and explaining literary reading: an application of the theory of planned behavior

The attitude toward a certain object (e.g., a fiction title) or behavior (e.g., readingfiction) plays an important role in models that predict and explain human behavior(Ajzen, 1988). In the explanation of reading behavior, various theoretical frame-works in the literature have been proposed that focus on different levels of explanation, with physiological processes at one extreme (see, for example, Miall, 1995;Hoorn, 1996, 2001; Nell, 1988a) to concentration on social institutions at the other190H.W.J.M. Miesen/Poetics 31 (2003) 189–212

(see, for example, Bourdieu, 1984; DiMaggio, 1987; Holt, 1997). The attitude construct is assumed to take an intermediate level of explanation, mediating the effects of biological and (socio-economic) environmental factors on behavior (Ajzen, 1988,1991). Although several different definitions of the attitude construct have been used by researchers, most social psychologists today agree that attitude is the tendency to respond to an object with some degree of favorableness or unfavorableness (Eaglyand Chaiken, 1993). Ajzen (1988; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) argues that individuals inevitably acquire attitudes towards a behavior as beliefs are formed about the consequences of that behavior (e.g., ‘‘if one reads literature, one will have an enriching reading experience’’), and as the subjective values of these consequences become linked to that particular behavior (e.g., ‘‘I value an enriching reading experience and to me, reading literature is the obvious way to have one’’). This idea of attitude formation is expressed in the most widely accepted theory of attitude formation, namely the Expectancy-Value model (EV) (Ajzen, 1996). According to the model, a person’s overall attitude toward the behavior is determined by the strength of the outcomes associated with the behavior and by the subjective values or evaluations of these outcomes.

**ICT as cultural capital: The relationship between socioeconomic status and the computer-use profile of young people**

It is widely accepted in the social psychology literature (e.g. Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) that behaviour is predicted by attitudes